

Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Parents: U Thaung Nyunt & Daw Yee Aung
 Family: Married with two children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Thar Yar Gone village, Mudon Township, Mon State
 Source: ABSDF

I was arrested by local police while I was on my way back home from a theatre show and I was locked at the military headquarters of LID 22. I was then sent to Moulmein, then to Pa-an, then to Hlaingbwe and finally to Shan Ywa Thit. I was forced to carry rice ration for SLORC soldiers. I was also forced to collect bamboo for temporary shelters of the soldiers on the way to Manerplaw.

Interview: 238 - HRV: Displacement, Livelihood, Refugee

Name: Saw Maw
 Age: 58
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Animist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Source: Images Asia

We have to move to many places. We cannot stay a long time in one place. We stay only two days or sometimes three days and then move into the jungle or on the mountains. We have no choice.

We need food, rice and blankets . If you can help us we would be very happy. In one day, we eat about three (milk) tins of rice each, with some salt and some fish paste.

We try to cook with fire wood. We often cannot cook in winter and it is very difficult in the rainy season.

Interview: 239 - HRV: Women, Child, Torture, Livelihood, Displacement, Minorities, Execution

[Interview with a Karen Woman from KNU 3rd Brigade Area.]

Source: Images Asia

The SLORC soldiers came and detained a number of women from our village. The people gave SLORC money for the release of the detained women. The SLORC took the money but didn't release the women.

The parents then gave relatives food to pass onto the women because the relatives lived close to Taungoo Prison. When they captured these women two men were also captured. The name of one of these men was Esamet (32) and Damimi (30).

When the men were captured, the SLORC soldiers kicked the two men with their boots and blood flowed from their nostrils, eyes, and mouths. They could not walk, so SLORC left them in the village. They tied up the nine women and took them away. So when SLORC came to tell us (about the condition of the women), we knew that they were only trying to make money off us. Some of the villagers realised paying SLORC a "ransom" would only be wasting money. They thought that it would be better to help the destitute parents. We heard nothing else about the girls. We never saw them again. The parents or their relatives never saw the girls while they were detained. The relatives knew that the food had not been forwarded to the women. They only received prison food. When the women were not returned, we asked the village headman if news of this could be forwarded to the media, the BBC, or news magazines. The headman said that we had to be patient because the SLORC military officer had warned that if the news was forwarded to media outlets, they would return and burn our village and shoot us. The officer who gave the order is Ba Kyi. I have many stories of Ba Kyi raping many girls but no dates. I don't remember their names or their ages but I can refer to my notes.

These stories come from people (who served as porters) who said that they stayed at Pwawor Camp, where we saw SLORC commit many bad mistakes. When they arrived we asked them questions. How SLORC treat the people and the soldiers isn't true. Even when the soldiers are rich, they won't give the people medicine. If someone is sick and the disease worsens, SLORC kicks the person into a ravine and leaves them there to die. The quality of the food is bad. They mix it with rotten beans and sand. Some porters were very elderly, some children as young as eight or ten. Some men were as old as my grandfather. All were forced to carry heavy loads. If they refused, they were beaten. They cracked their heads and kicked them into the valley.

I can start talking about the condition of the village from 1993. I don't know the names of the officers who kicked the soldiers, but the regiment was 50 or 57. I have the notes in my book.

I will tell you about the plains village. The area in our township is plain. We are Karen. In our township there are three communities, Kwilah, Geyber and Muthat. The people who stay in Muthat are very close to the military. The SLORC combined the small villages into one large village. The SLORC relocated the villagers into one so they could control them.

When we relocated into one big village there weren't enough houses and many people had to sleep without shelter. After relocation, SLORC made us stockpile our paddy. We couldn't keep food at home. The SLORC entered our homes and counted how many people were living there so they could ration our food. For one

person, SLORC allocated two small cans of rice per day. When we asked for more they said that we would give it to the rebels.

The conditions were miserable when everyone began relocating together. Some wanted to move back, so we asked SLORC if they could stay in their village of origin. The SLORC said that if we wanted to stay where we were, everyone had to pay 50,000 Ks. The people raised the money and gave it to the army officer. Two days later he returned and told us we had to relocate completely within 3 days. This was in December 1994, after harvest. Everyone was disillusioned, most were just crying. What could we do? We had to do what SLORC said. We tried to help the other people as much as we could. We asked for assistance from district officer and shared what little food we had.

The SLORC troops were stationed beside Papun town. One girl who was raped was named Theu. Her parents were very poor. Her parents sent her to get some vegetables. Ba Kyi took her beside the road and raped her. The girl lay beside the road unable to walk. Some villagers found her and took her to the hospital. I sent my second secretary to the hospital. The young girl was discharged but still couldn't walk. This is all I know about the girl. When I arrived here I was told she was dead. This happened when I was on security duty in 1991.

Ba Kyi is a bad man. I know more rape cases which he has been involved in. He is tall and strong. It would be better if Ba Kyi was dead. But I am not afraid of him. We are all bitter.

The SLORC made us relocate. They camp around us so that they can control us. Every three days the women must go on security duty. I know SLORC took ten women from one village. In the day time, the women would cut wood and in the evening they would be subjected to security duty and rape. It is difficult to live under these conditions. I complained to women's organisations and spoke to them personally. The married women were prepared to talk about what had happened to them, but the "virgins" were too embarrassed to tell their stories. They [SLORC] do this to the people for not associating with the rebels. They rape the women to eliminate the Karen bloodline. They want to destroy our people and force us to speak Burmese in our village.

As other villagers had been moved into this one village, we could not plant our crops. We had to negotiate with SLORC. If there is no peace SLORC said that they would blame the villagers. If one shell of the rebel falls into the village, SLORC said they would blame the villagers for giving information and they would burn our village and kill us. They told us this many times. We tried to abide by SLORC law but they came and took our food anyway.

They distributed letters to the villagers. Two or three soldiers posing as villagers also infiltrated the village. They tried to persuade the villagers not to support the Karen (the KNU) and tried to separate the Karen people. They pretended to be

farmers. They infiltrated the farmers to receive information about the Karen. These men are SLORC. This has been happening since 1991, but recently we have been harassed more than in previous time. Last year some villagers still remained in their villages of origin. This year they want all villagers to relocate.

If I had to tell you all my suffering I could not hold back the tears. This case started in April in 1993. If they couldn't find enough men in the village then they would force the women to hand over their jewellery and anything of value. Do you want me to tell you the exact dates? In June they went to Jubaset village and captured 20 men. They detained some women and demanded 3,00 Ks from each. The SLORC also went to other villagers and demanded rice and food which the villagers gave due to fear. Then they returned to Jubaset village where the men are fishermen. They work hand-to-mouth, fishing or farming where and when they can to make a living.

In August SLORC IB 351 went to Thitold and Nomboh area and killed the men who were watching the buffaloes without any reason. They also went to other villagers and punished the people without reason. They also questioned a man for being short, and then they slapped his face. Then they saw a girl preparing her face with thanaka (Burmese make-up), and they slapped her face. In Jubaset, a soldier told an old man to act like a frog. The man was too old and frail to get up and jump, so they shot him on the spot.

The SLORC continues to torture, rape and take our food. They cannot commit any worse atrocities than they have already committed. All SLORC soldiers stationed near our village commit these atrocities. They commit these crimes unendingly. The officers never take action against the soldiers. In August/September/October 1994, our villagers suffered more than they had ever before.

In Mone Township, SLORC IBs 351, 48 and 39 patrolled our area. Torture techniques practise by all these units are always the same. In Nomboh, SLORC searched for a KNU soldier. When they could not find him, they stole things from his house, beat his wife and asked the young daughter to hold his penis. Then a soldier kicked her until she lost consciousness.

Interview: 240 - HRV: Women, Livelihood, Minorities, Child

Name: Rosie
Age: 45
Sex: Female
Ethnicity: Karen
Source: Images Asia

The location of my village is near the mountain. The soldiers would treat our villagers very badly, demanding us to collect wood and bamboo and deliver it the

same day. Sometimes we could not due to our own farming and chores. So for each stick of bamboo failed to deliver, they would charge us eight kyats. Sometimes they would ask us to cut wood when there was nothing they could take from us. We could not rent a cart so we had to transport it ourselves. When my husband was away, I would take my youngest daughter, but not my oldest daughter who was 15 years old, just beginning to menstruate and become a woman. As it was difficult to find the big wood which SLORC demanded, we had to climb up to the top of the hills. As SLORC speak badly and don't respect young women, I dared not take my eldest daughter.

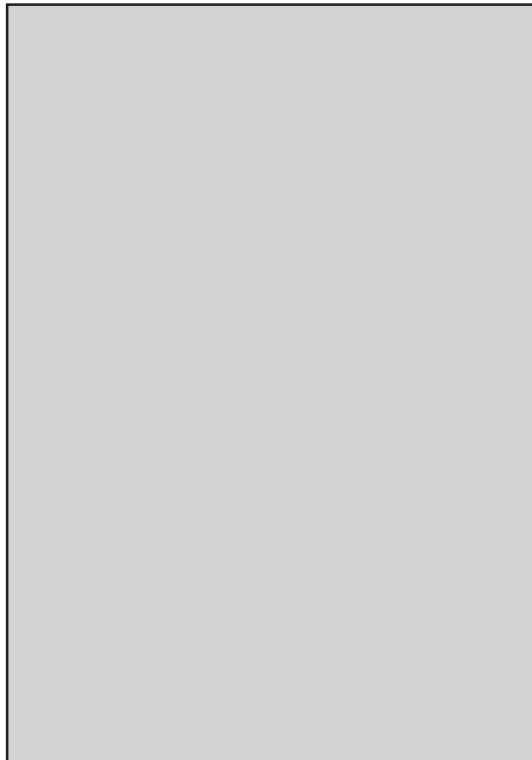
The SLORC would make us carry fire wood for SLORC's own families and demand rice and food too. They call us rebels and want to destroy us. They say that we disobey them and are sympathetic with the rebels. If you are talking of suffering, suffering is my whole life. I'm not angry anymore. But, I'm tired of my people suffering all their lives.

I will be happy if a cease-fire occurs. I can never trust the Burmese. I think that they are playing a game. But if the ethnic forces resist, I think that they will have problem. In my opinion I believe that SLORC will force them into negotiation. Because of their small number they may suffer otherwise and encounter difficulties.

Interview: 241 - HRV: Slavery, Detention, Movement, Livelihood

Name: Aung Paing
 Age: 29
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with one child
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Mudon Township, Mon State
 Interviewed: February 1995, Paw Pa Hta Area
 Source: Images Asia

They caught me while I was leaving Ameral for another town to visit my sister. I got to the army check-point and they asked me for my papers. I said that I had left them at home. They said, "Come down for a moment if you have forgotten your papers." Then they sent me to the



soldiers.

At the time I was alone between Thanbyuzayat and Kamawet. After they caught me, they didn't give me enough food. I wasn't given any money for my work as a porter. I left by boat from Moulmein to Pa-an. Three porters went with me and we had to carry rice through the jungle. We weren't allowed to rest on the way, instead had to work all the time.

The SLORC soldiers made us suffer a lot. Now that I have escaped I feel free, I'm very relieved. When I was with SLORC, I was not free and not happy. Now I want to get back home. I'm very worried because my wife is pregnant and my baby is about to be born. I dare not tell you my all feelings about SLORC, because I am afraid they will kill my family, and they will bring them to the front line and expose them to suppression.

Interview: 242 - HRV: Slavery, Livelihood, Child

Name:	Naing Oo
Age:	31
Sex:	Male
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Married with four children (three deceased)
Address:	Mudon Town, Mon State
Source:	Images Asia

I came with about 20 others who were taken as porters. I stayed with SLORC Army over one month. I've been here now for about 15 days. During that time, SLORC Army never gave us enough food, water and medicine.

They didn't give us any money. They didn't give us anything. Eventually we ran and escaped. First I was caught at 10:30 p.m. by the soldiers from LIB 210 while I was in a cinema hall of Mudon city. I don't remember the name of the major.

We had to carry about 18-20 viss (about 30 kg) of weapons and other things that they brought. We were never given a rest. I did not see if any other porters were able to run away like me. Ever since I escaped I've been thinking about what happened to us and about our suffering at the hands of SLORC. Some people had enough money to give to the military and they were allowed to return home. Now I want to go back home. I am not sure how I can make it, but I will follow some people who know the way very well.

When I return home, I have my wife, my mother in law and my daughter of two years and I need to find money and food. If I am not there, no one will be able to provide food and other things. I am afraid we may face problems.

Interview: 243 - HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture

Name: U Thaung
 Sex: Male
 Interviewed: February 1995
 Source: Images Asia

My name is U Thaung. The SLORC captured me in Mudon, Mon State. They caught me beside the garden while watering flowers for my boss, at noon. I don't remember the date, I guess it was about a month ago. After that, they took me to the village leader and I had to stay under the village headman's house. I saw another three people who were also under the house.

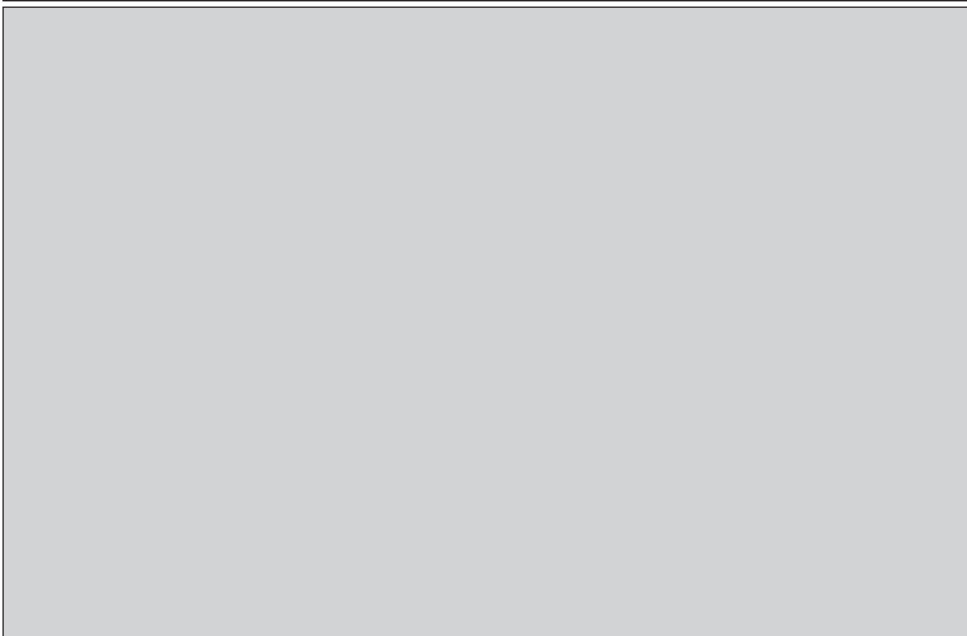
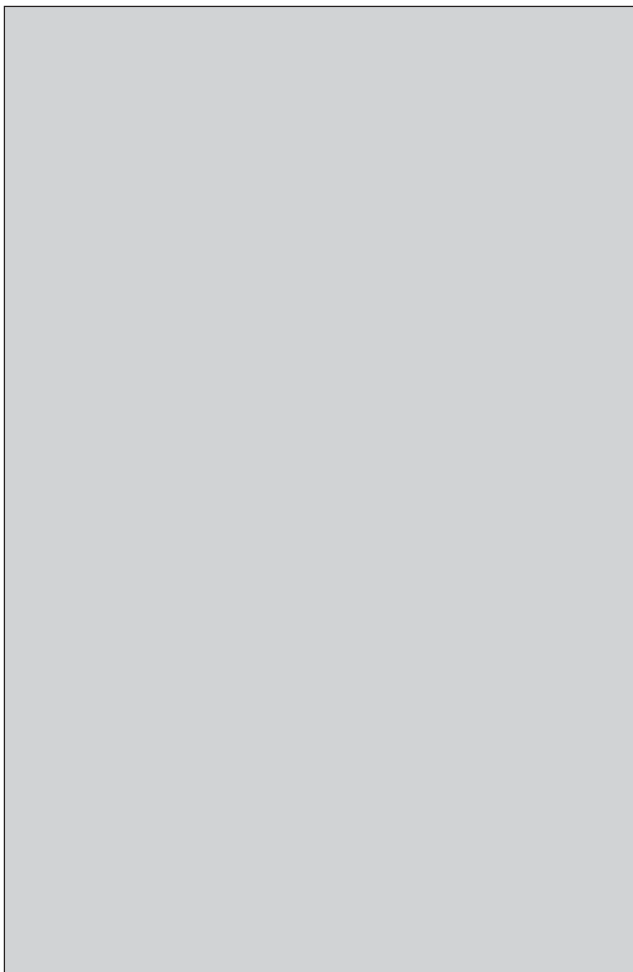
After that, they took us to LIB 210 and kept us in the dormitory. We stayed there for three nights and then we travelled by car and then by boat. There were nearly 400 people taken as porters. We were sent to Pa-an. After Pa-an, they sent us under the mountain to xxxx. I stayed there one night and left the next morning at 6.00 am. They sent me to the big mountain. They sent us to another place and we had to sleep in a bamboo grove. The next morning at 10.00 am, they called the artillery corps.

The first day I carried six 81mm mortar shells. The next day I had to carry seven shells for the same mortar plus a tin of oil. The first time they gave us a packet of dry rice, and at night some rice with some salt. It was not nearly enough for us. We had to climb this mountain and we rested there.

That night 17 porters escaped. The next day the soldiers ordered us to carry the shells and the guns to another place. We had to carry these weapons. I didn't try to escape at that time. But I had to climb the mountain the next day, where they were fighting the Karen soldiers on "English Mountain". Then SLORC returned and made us climb another mountain. There they found a stream and decided to cook some rice. After that, they walked to the valley. By that time it was dark and they decided to sleep. They slept at about 8.00 p.m. During the night, the fighting started again on English Mountain. It was then that I decided to try to escape. Four porters also followed me. It was about 1:30 a.m.

The soldiers didn't shoot at us when we escaped. By that time there were only two young soldiers there. The four of us were all together, but one was so sick that he had to stay at the soldiers group in the tent. When we arrived here we were so happy and relieved. The Karen soldiers provide enough food for us. They don't force us to carry anything. At first the Karen couldn't provide us for medicine. But when we crossed the mountain, there were Karen soldiers and nurses and they gave us injections when necessary. If I have to suffer when I return to my home, I will.

I saw a SLORC major with two stars on his shirt, but I can't remember his name. He was from LIB 210. I also saw DKBA. You can tell them from SLORC because they wear different uniforms. The DKBA wear a yellow bandanna with a monk's



symbol. On their arms they wear the symbol of a monk's fan. The SLORC and the DKBA travel together. I saw that they were friendly and they walked together.

While I was carrying some shells they hit me and kicked me if I could not carry them. They beat me hard. If I could not carry them, they would beat my head with a gun, very hard. My head split open and there was much of blood. They hit my head with a gun because I could not carry the things due to my feet were in pain and could no longer walk. When the basket strings broke, I stopped to fix them. The SLORC soldiers ordered me to stand up. That's when they beat me with the gun. When they hit me, I tried to stand up and I twisted my ankle.

Interview: 244 - HRV: Slavery, Torture

Name: Maung Aung
Sex: Male
Address: Moulmein, Mon
State
Interviewed: February 1995 at
Paw Pa Hta Area
Source: Images Asia

My name is Maung Aung. I'm from Moulmein. While I was sleeping at my home, SLORC soldiers visited me and asked me if I had any visitors. I said that I had had no visitors. They asked me to follow them for a moment. The next day, they sent me to LIB 209 and they gave me food.

On the 15th, they sent us by boat to Pa-an. That day they did not feed us. On the 16th, they sent us from Pa-an to another place and that's where they gave us food. We had been brought by truck from Pa-an to another place where we bought rice and slept there one night. The next morning, they ordered us to carry two baskets of weapons and shells.

The first day I carried the shells, but after five it was very heavy and I could not carry it anymore. I could not climb the mountain. At that time, another soldier came to me and gave me a box of shells and his food bag. At that time, the fighting started and I accidentally dropped the shells. A soldier came from my behind and kicked me four times. I fell and said that I would collect the shells, but he said no. He said "No, you are not allowed" and kicked my face and hurt my mouth very badly.

The next day, they said that they were going to climb another mountain. It was then that I discussed with my three friends that we would leave the shells and try to escape down the mountain. When we were doing this, one of my friends trod on a mine and injured his leg. Later, when we talked with a Karen soldier, he told us that my friend who trod on the mine was dead. I don't know what the man's name was, but he was 55 years old. We left with the Karen soldiers. They gave us some rice and we cooked. We had enough food. We also killed an ox, rested and they didn't force us to carry anything. We slept very well and we were very happy with them.

The next day, they said that SLORC would be returning to burn our camp, so we decided to move to another place. We had medicine for the villagers. We went by car to Manerplaw. They didn't force us to do anything. We had food and were happy.

One person in our group was leading the way. He was from the DKBA. He had a yellow bandanna with a monk picture on it. At that time, they killed two buffaloes. They only gave us a little meat. The DKBA and SLORC soldiers drank, ate and sang together. They were very happy. I saw another officer, he had a star on his shirt, but I don't remember his name. He had a pistol, a phone and a knife on his wrist. The DKBA did not talk to the porters.

Interview: 245 - HRV: Slavery, Torture

Name: Ni Toe
 Sex: Male
 Address: Rangoon
 Interviewed: February 1995, at Paw Pa Hta Area
 Source: Images Asia

My name is Ne Toe. I come from Rangoon. At 9.00 p.m. on 20 December 1994, SLORC soldiers captured me at a tea shop. I tried to escape but I could not. Some of my friends did escape. They took us by truck to Mingaladon (airport and army base). The next morning they gave us a little food. Then they sent us to Pa-an. They sent us to LID 22 where we slept one night. Then we started for Sahatit.

From there we carried baskets of shells until we arrived to Boloungon. There we rested. Then, we left for English Mountain. We stayed there for three nights. On the way they kicked and hit me. While we were resting on English Mountain, they said that our food was gone. So we had to carry other things again. One of my friends and I had to carry a large sack of rice. We said we could not carry this, it was too heavy. We said that we could carry half now and half later, but they did not agree with us. Between the path and the mountain slope, we slept one night in a bamboo grove.

The next morning, we went down the mountain and saw a stream and some Karen

villagers. We asked them where they had been. They said that they had been to Maethawah. We went there and saw a little house and stayed there for three nights. In three days we didn't have any food, sometimes just water. But we did have banana plants. For one day, they gave us only a cup of water.

I saw 7 or 8 DKBA. They had yellow material on their heads. The officer in our group was called U Tin Line. He had two stars on his shirt. His battalion is 207. I saw the DKBA and SLORC staying together, laughing, talking, and getting drunk. I will try to return to Rangoon. I have to do my job there.

Interview: 246 - HRV: Slavery, Forced Labour, Detention, Torture

Name: Bo Gyi
Sex: Male
Interviewed: February 1995, at
Paw Pa Hta Area
Source: Images Asia

I want to tell you about SLORC suppression and violation, but I am afraid. If I tell you about them, SLORC will kill my family and force them to the front-line and suppress them.

They caught me on 3 September 1994 and said that I would have to carry their food and other things. The first time they said that it would be voluntary work. But it was not and still they didn't give us any money. Then, as we were being sent back, they called for more, so we ended up in Pa-an at 10:30 p.m.

I was part of 23 people from Hlaingbwe-Tilon. We had to go with artillery corps of IB 231. We started to leave Pa-an and then we rested at Hlaingbwe. Then we started to go off again from Sahatit at 10:00 p.m. We slept in Sahatit one night and left at 8:00 a.m. on the following day. Then we started to go again and we continued to IB 962. We had to carry big guns like 105mm, 120mm and 85mm mortars and we were kept in jail. We couldn't go anywhere and had to sleep on the ground. All 75 of us were in jail.

We stayed at IB 962 and then we were changed to LIB 208 and the following day we had to start our trip through the jungle, having to climb many mountains without

rest. We were forced to walk all day and all night, carrying two 5.5 guns and two boxes of ammunition. I didn't have enough food on the first day. The following day, I got just a small bowl of rice with some water, without even salt.

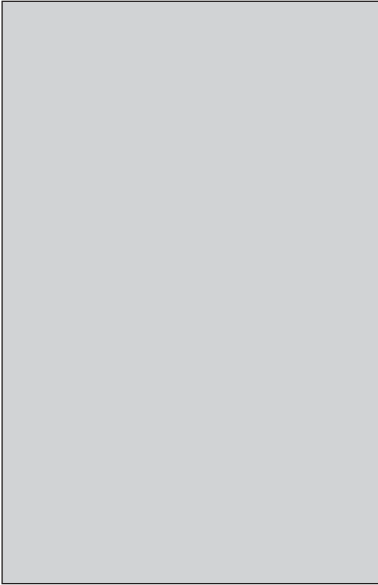
Then we had to begin to climb the mountain and at that time, the Karen and SLORC started fighting. Those carrying the 5.5 guns were forced to go to the front. While in the front line, a bamboo stick pierced a fellow porters' foot. While he stopped to try to remove the bamboo, his basket of weapons and shells on his back fell down and SLORC soldiers hit and kicked him. He then stood back and fell into the valley after being subjected to further kicking by the SLORC soldier. Later, the soldier ordered him to carry the basket of shells again.

Then we started to go to the valley. At that time it was too dark and we could not see anything. So we slept on the mountains. We could not see the way because of the dark and my friends and I became separated. The following day, we left off again for another mountain. The fighting was going on at the back of the mountain. The soldier ordered me to go to the front. I had to go fast in the front. Then I saw many of my friends died. I could not look at the blood. I became so afraid.

At that time there were only three of us left and we discussed how to escape. Everyone agreed with me. So, that night we went to sleep and woke up at 2:00 a.m. and ran away. We had come to realise that if we did not escape, we would die. So we decided to take the chance and flee. When we escaped, we ran into the Karen soldiers. They welcomed us and helped us. They gave us food, medicine and let us rest. They made a tent for us and the Karen soldiers gave medical injections to the porters who were suffering and who needed medical help. We stayed with the Karen soldiers for one week in the jungle. They did not leave us in the jungle. They brought us to their head quarters. We stayed at their head quarters happily and relieved.

If I go back to my home town. Since I want to do the right thing, I will confront and oppose SLORC. We were all treated badly. Some of us were burnt with fire, some of us were beaten and our bones were broken. Anyway, I have decided to confront and oppose SLORC.

I escaped from LIB 208. I don't know the name of the commanding officer, but I know he is a major because he had two stars on his shirt. I saw about 10 people from the DKBA group. All were wearing yellow bandannas around their heads, and they were wearing uniforms. They also showed SLORC the whereabouts of the Karen revolutionaries. I did not see any monks. The SLORC treat the DKBA like friends. The SLORC gave them food, supplies, anything that they needed. On their right arm, the DKBA have a symbol of a monk's fan. They wear a yellow bandanna around their head, with a picture of a monk at the centre of their forehead. I was wounded on my shoulder and my feet. This was a result of the beatings. I had so many wounds.

Interview: 247 - HRV: Slavery, Torture

Name: U Par
 Sex: Male
 Interviewed: February 1995, at Paw Pa Hta Area
 Source: Images Asia

My name is U Par. They took me from Kyaikmaraw Township to Pa-an and the following day, they sent us to the jungle. The soldiers made us carry six 81mm mortar shells.

I didn't have any food for three days. After that, they gave us some food, but not nearly enough. We had to start to leave again and I was very tired, so I sat on the ground. They didn't like this and they kicked me. They said I had to walk again. I was alone when they first caught me. I slept in the jungle one night and the following morning I met a Karen major who helped me

and gave me some food. There were many porters who came from different places. Being in the jungle, when I was tired and could not carry things, the SLORC soldiers kicked me with their boots. It was very painful.

Interview: 248 - HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture

Name: Tun Tun
 Sex: Male
 Address: Moulmein, Mon State
 Interviewed: February 95, at Paw Pa Hta Area
 Source: Images Asia

My name is Tun Tun. I live in Moulmein. When I took a visitor out to the road, a SLORC soldier told the visitor to follow him. The soldier ordered him to get into the truck and sent him to the police station. When I arrived at the police station, I saw over 40 people there. They sent us to LIB 210. Although they fed us twice a day, they didn't give us enough food, only a piece of palm. We had to stay there more than 10 days.

Then they took us by boat to Pa-an. When we were in the boat, two porters jumped

into the river and then later another porter. When the porters jumped into the river, the soldiers kicked us with their boots and hit us very hard. Then they sent us into the jungle. When I climbed the mountain, the soldiers kicked me. Later, some porters ran away. Then there were seven of us left. We, the porters, were not able to talk each other. They ordered us to carry rice. I said that I couldn't carry all the amount they wanted. They gave me more loads and they kicked when I said that I couldn't carry them. After that, when my friend and I were across the field, we escaped and eventually came across Karen soldiers. They called us and we stayed with them together. When the fighting began, we helped them firing the shells. I estimate I carried about 50 viss.

The first time we tried to escape, there were three of us. We escaped and came across a stream. We went to it to drink the water. Then SLORC saw us and asked if we were KNU. As they shot at us, we ran away. But only two of us escaped. They caught the other porter, beat and kicked him, maybe they killed him.

I didn't know the officer's name who was commanding us. But I saw the DKBA with yellow material around their heads. I didn't see any monks.

Interview: 249 - HRV: Slavery, Execution

Name: Ko Htwe
 Age: 30
 Sex: Male
 Address: Shan State
 Interviewed: February 1995, at
 Paw Pa Hta Area
 Source: Images Asia

My name is Ko Htwe. I'm 30 years old and from Shan State. They captured me near Thaton, when I went to visit my friend's house. The soldiers just said to follow them for a moment.

At one stage, I didn't have any food for four to five days. They didn't give us any money for carrying their loads. They said nothing about when they would release us. I escaped alone. The soldiers were from LIB 209. We were made to carry rice sacks in the jungle. I started at 10:00 a.m. and finished at 10:00 p.m. I only carried rice sacks for one day.

I don't remember the place I had been when I escaped. I started to cross the stream and I slept on a hill. As I heard two friends of mine had been killed, I ran until I got here. I met some Karen soldiers and they took us to their place and cooked for us and gave us rice.

In my group, I saw two soldiers from the DKBA. They had yellow bandannas on their heads. One had an M16 [assault rifle] and one had an AK [assault rifle]. On the right arm, they had a monk's fan, on the left arm, I don't know. I don't know what the writing said because I could not read it. I don't know what nationality they were. I only noticed the yellow bandannas. They soldiers wore blue army uniforms.

I'm very worried about going back because my child is only three months old and my wife is alone. And because SLORC have detained me, she is alone to do the work.

Interview: 250 - HRV: Slavery, Torture

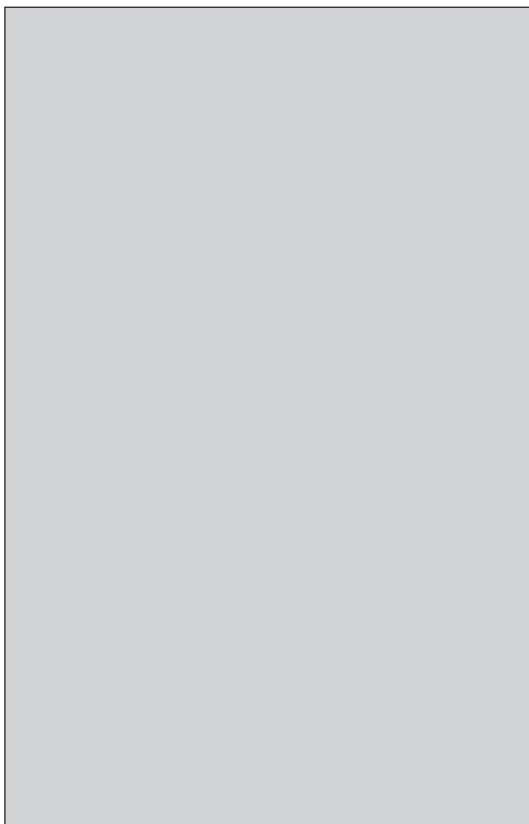
Name: Nyi Nyi
 Age: 30
 Sex: Male
 Family: Married with two children (one deceased)
 Occupation: Gardener
 Address: Kyaikmaraw Township, Mon State
 Interviewed: February 1995, at Paw Pa Hta Area
 Source: Images Asia

My name is Nyi Nyi. I'm from Kyaikmaraw Township. I'm 30 years old. I think I was taken as a porter for over a month. At home I have a family. I had two children, but one died. I am a gardener.

I was captured at my home by the SLORC soldiers and sent me to their headquarters. The following day they sent me to the jungle. I had to carry a rice sack sharing with my friend. The following day I tried to escape. I have been here now perhaps 20 days. When I was in the jungle, SLORC did not treat me badly as I carried the things. But like my friend, some cannot. So SLORC treated them badly.

Interview: 251 - HRV: Religion, Livelihood

Name: Husein
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Burmese
 Religion: Islam



Address: Moulmein, Mon State
 Interviewed: February 1995
 Source: Images Asia

I am a Muslim living in Moulmein. We used to have freedom of worship in religion. Now the SLORC government have denied us from those freedoms. They threw stones through the windows with glass panes of the mosque and destroyed the building. We were still inside the mosque at the time. After we finished worshipping, four ladies outside the temple warned us that if we went outside we would be captured by SLORC. But, after we finished worshipping we went outside. We saw three ladies lying on the ground. One was standing and, I asked her if she was all right.

Then the soldiers attacked us. They didn't give us any medicine or hospital treatment, even though we

were hurt. My head was hit with rifle butt and smashed with stones many times. My family warned us not to come back because SLORC would capture and torture us. So we escaped and hid in the jungle.

I am not politically involved. I am only a wage labourer. We got 15 Ks a day for our work, which was never enough for us. But we could not do anything about it, rather had to suffer many things. We did it for our lives. The officer who beat me was Col Tin Win from IB 21.

Interview: 252 - HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture

Name: Ko Thaung
 Sex: Male
 Interviewed: February 1995
 Source: Images Asia

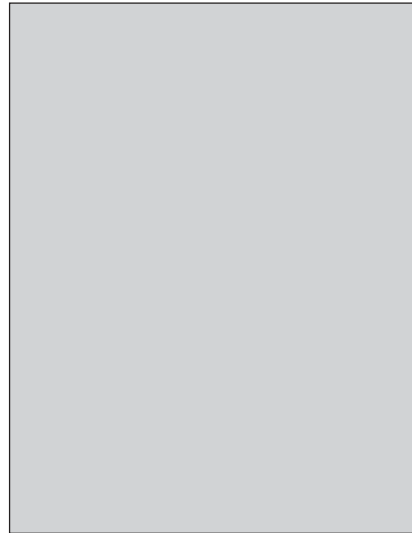
Three months before I first came to this area, SLORC started a so-called "human rights organisation". They organised this because they wanted the people to believe them and follow their leadership. But as for me, I didn't want to do anything. If they called me I didn't listen. Because of that, they suspected that I had joined with

the KNU rebel group. So they put me in prison for three months. After that, along with some porters, they sent me in the jungle to serve as porter for LID 66 for one month.

When I was in the jungle, they tortured me many ways. I had to carry their bags. I was very tired because I had climbed a big mountain carrying heavy things. When I felt tired, I took a rest on the way. When they saw me resting, they told me to hurry and they hit me with their guns and kicked me in the head with their combat boots. I couldn't stand it for long and I managed to escape from Guyton village when they began to leave the jungle. I threw my rice sack to the ground and tried to run. They shot at me with their guns, causing my foot was hit. But I tried to rush into the jungle and escaped to Yebu. Then I returned to Kamamaung where I stayed one month before I decided to join the forces in the revolutionary area.

Interview: 253 - Forced Labour, Slavery, Detention, Execution

Name: Mammad
Age: 23
Sex: Male
Ethnicity: Burmese
Religion: Islam
Family: Single
Address: Roadside, Mettawa, Karen State
Interviewed: April 1995
Source: Images Asia



They captured me at Kawkareik. I am Islamic. I'm not married — I'm still just a student. I've never been part of any political organisation or activity.

It was at 4:00 a.m., when we were sleeping that SLORC came and took us, forcing us to go with them. They took six of us, they put us in jail for just two hours. There were 400 people in the jail with us, I guess.

We were taken as porters. After Kawkareik they sent us to Hlaingbwe in the jungle. They said nothing to us when they captured us. If we were not able to carry their supplies they hit us with machine guns and kicked us. They gave us just a bit of rice, but sometimes they didn't give us anything, not even water. Sometimes we had to eat (boiled) banana plants. They never paid us or gave us enough food. We had to carry weapons and shells weighing over 22 kg. I saw over 1,000 porters, some were old men. Some were about 45-50 years old but I didn't see any women or children.

The SLORC soldiers were from LIB 201 and LID 22. I don't know the names of any of the leaders. In addition to carry loads, we had to dig holes. We had to walk over 20 miles in one day and we were only allowed to take 30 minutes-one hour rest during the day. They gave us a little rice and nothing else. The SLORC soldiers ate meat, fish and beans. They hit me many times in my stomach, because the other porters had escaped, and when the soldiers asked me about it I said I didn't know what happened to them. They asked me why I didn't know and then hit me. In the afternoon at 2:30 p.m., I tried to escape too. I saw them kill three or four porters with bayonet knives.

I want to try to go back now. But it will be very difficult as I cannot go anywhere where there are SLORC soldiers.

Interview: 254 - HRV: Execution, Women, Slavery

Name: Saw Htwe
Sex: Male
Ethnicity: Karen
Source: Images Asia

When I was living in my village, I saw many SLORC soldiers kill villagers. I've seen a SLORC soldier kill a woman and try to kill her baby. We took the baby to hospital and it didn't die. I was then captured by a SLORC soldier. He took me back to the jungle and forced me into portering to carry SLORC equipment for ten days. I was lucky enough to escape. I have many wounds on my back.

Interview: 255 - HRV: Women, Detention, Livelihood, Torture, Execution, Refugee

Name: Daw Kyu
Age: 37
Sex: Female
Source: Images Asia

I left Klordey with my son and arrived at Shwegun, Hlaingbwe Township in Karen State. When we arrived at Shwegun, the soldiers on the riverside told the people to come down from the boat. They captured me and my son. Then they took us to a nearby store and left us there. The soldiers said that they would call the officer. A few minutes later, the soldiers came back and said to us, "Do you want to leave your things or do you want to go to the soldier camp?" I said that I would leave my things. For all of my belongings, I had to pay 30,000 Ks. Then they released us and we returned to our village.

In Pa-an Township, SLORC (LID 22) arrived at 12 O'clock. They said to the leader

of the village that they hadn't eaten yet for that day. The leader collected some food from the villagers and gave it to them. They returned later that evening at 4:00 o'clock. When they had arrived to the village, they went to the toilet many times. They said that perhaps the leader of the village had poisoned their food.

They went to capture the leader and two young men. Then they took them from the village and hit and beat their faces and kicked them. They took plastic and melted it in the fire and put it on the young men's faces. Then the SLORC soldiers poured boiling water on them and hit them with bamboo sticks. The leader from Potor village is U Mor Nark. After being tortured for a few minutes, he was killed by the soldiers. The following morning, villagers from Mizekatey called the chairman to collect the dead leader's body. But the chairman didn't go because he was afraid of SLORC. As the villagers could not convince the chairman, they themselves went to Potor village. When they arrived at Potor village, they asked the villagers to give them U Mor Nark's body. Some people agreed and handed over the body. Then SLORC said not to take the body to Pa-an. But the villagers took the body there anyway.

Along the way travelling by boat, SLORC soldiers shot at the boat. When they arrived at Pa-an, they took the body to the hospital to examine the cause of death. They wanted to prosecute the soldiers. Pothongkyi went to U Mor Nark's wife, gave her 20,000 Ks and told her not to tell anyone about her husband. The villagers didn't agree and wanted to continue prosecution. But later on, the case was closed.

When I lived in Minzekatey village, Tutonkyi group of SLORC troops were controlling the road construction between Hlaingbwe and Shwegun. One person per house, regardless of gender, had to work on the roads with his/her own tools. In case of absence, each person had to pay 50 Ks. If we could not pay 50 Ks, we had no choice rather than working there.

I have decided that I don't want to go back to my village. From now on, I will stay in this refugee camp.

Interview: 256 - HRV: Refugee, Repatriation, Livelihood

Name:	Maung Kyaw
Age:	22
Sex:	Male
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Christian
Interviewed:	30 April 1995, at Kawmawlayko Refugee Camp
Source:	Images Asia

In our camp, 350 houses were destroyed. After they burned the camp, they said all of the refugees must return to Burma. If they didn't go, the DKBA would return

and kill the refugees. For me it's very dangerous. The SLORC strategy is to isolate the KNU and then employ the DKBA to attack the refugee camps. Hopefully the Thai government can protect and provide security for us. We don't care about the DKBA, but if the Thai government cannot protect us, it will be a very dangerous situation. I'll also mention that the DKBA attacked with RPG7, big guns and then burnt our camp. The SLORC also associated with the DKBA in this incident.

If Thailand repatriates us to Burma, they'll want every man to join with the DKBA. If we refuse, they will not hesitate to burn the Karen refugee camps. This will force the families to live on the land during the rainy season. Many problems will arise. Although we are supposed to pay money to SLORC, we cannot afford it as we have no job.

The SLORC attacked the KNU and the refugee camps because they knew about the KNU's strength. In the community of the refugee camp, behaving as they have been, SLORC will be able to control the civilians.

In the day time we stay in the camps. In the night time we leave, for fear they would repatriate us to Burma. If we refused they would not hesitate to kill us. Therefore, during the night we must flee to the jungles and the mountains.

Interview: 257 - HRV: Refugee, Repatriation, Livelihood, Portering

Name:	U Zin
Age:	55
Sex:	Male
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Buddhist Monk
Interviewed:	30 April 1995, at Bornor Refugee Camp
Source:	Images Asia

At the time the DKBA first encamped in the camp, nobody stayed there. Everybody was afraid so they escaped to the jungle. Then the DKBA said that nobody was to stay in the village. They burned the houses in the camp without saying anything. They shouted loudly that no villagers were to stay in the camp and they burned it to the ground. They said that if we did not go back to Burma, they would burn everything.

We can stay, we have to stay, we have no alternative. As for me, I sympathise the villagers. If I leave, they may all leave. So we will stay together. Everybody is worried and afraid of DKBA's return. I don't know what they will do if the Thai sent the refugees back to Burma. The DKBA came and announced more than once in the camp that they want all refugees to return back to Burma. When some villagers refused, they came and burned the camp. As for the people who returned to Burma, sometimes the SLORC authorities use them as porters or volunteers. But if

the Thai Army sent me back to Burma, I would go.

I am also a monk and the DKBA are Buddhist. But I don't know what they are feeling. I am thinking many things, but I feel useless. The DKBA have the power to kill the people. It's exactly what they are doing, but I do not know details.

We still don't know if we will be able to stay or not. We will not go back willingly. We know that they will kill us. We have to stay like this. As for me, I think I will never go back. They can kill me, I don't care. Some people who go back to Burma have no jobs, no food, and their lives are in danger. If we go back, we will have similar problems, so what can we do?

I don't listen to Myaing Gyi Ngu monk. We stayed in Thu Mwe Hta and also Thaw Lae Hta together. When a monk, Kootor came to build a pagoda, I moved to Bornor. Myein Gyi Ngu and I were in disagreement. That was the reason for me moving to Bornor.

I didn't stay with them, so I don't know exactly what his monks are doing now. I knew they organised the people in relation to their religious affairs. Many people went to stay there, but I only know limited details. U Thuzana is a religious name of Maung Nge. He is a leader of having no control over the DKBA who are satisfied with their activities. They can burn refugee camps with no discipline from their leader.

I think the DKBA and SLORC united to burn the camp which is far away from them. As there were many activities in the camp, it was very hard to differentiate SLORC from the DKBA. One person said that they had seen one SLORC soldier with a "Maha Bandoola" symbol and two knives on his shirt, but I didn't witness this myself. I didn't see a DKBA uniform, but there were many people in civilian clothes. Some refugees asked if they could return. The soldiers had no time to answer as they were too busy with looting clothes and food from refugees who arrived before.

Interview: 258 - HRV: Refugee, Repatriation, Livelihood, Execution, Child, Displacement

Name:	Saw Than
Age:	35
Sex:	Male
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Buddhist
Interviewed:	30 April 1995, at Bornor Refugee Camp
Source:	Images Asia

The first time the Thai government said that as the DKBA will visit in this camp, don't go anywhere, but hide your belongings somewhere. After three minutes we

heard the DKBA arrive at the camp and they shot the gun and the shells in the camp a few minutes later.

At that time, I ran out of the camp and hid under a tree. I said to my wife and children to hide in the hole. Some people said to the children "don't run". Then I said, if you don't run you will be killed because the shells are falling and the houses are burning. So we couldn't stay and we escaped to the jungle and somewhere in the mountains. Then the DKBA arrived to the camp and they asked where the people had gone. They burnt down all the houses. They found some people hidden in a hole and asked them, "Do you have a gun, if you do I will shoot you now". After that they went back. When they came back, they shot around the camp and stole all the new clothes in the houses.

The SLORC came together with the DKBA. They were speaking different languages and wearing different uniforms. But the DKBA had to obey the SLORC soldiers. If SLORC order something, the DKBA have to do it. As SLORC fired a shell into the camp before the DKBA burnt the camp, we could not do anything. When the people pleaded with the DKBA, "Don't shoot", they didn't shoot, but they burnt everything.

The next time they came, they said that the people in Bornor refugee camp were very naughty. We ordered them to go back to Burma, but they didn't go. What can we do? If we stay here they can do like this and if we go back to Burma, we are afraid of being killed or taken as porters.

The pastor's daughter was killed. Her name was Kamu Paw. She was 18 years old. When the shells hit their house her leg was hit. She couldn't move. Her parents tried to help her but they couldn't as their house was burning and they were caught inside. Her parents died in the hospital.

At 7:10 a.m., the police said that the Thai government would come and hold a meeting. After a few minutes, some people said that the DKBA had arrived. At that time we could not get our things ready. A few minutes later, we heard them shooting the gun. I went back to my house and took my children to the hole to hide. I could not bring any belongings. I left my wife and my children in the hole and I ran out of the camp to hide myself under the tree. A few minutes later, I went back but couldn't find my wife. When I saw my house was on fire, I took some clothes and ran away. Later, when some people said that the DKBA had gone back to the border, I returned to see our house.

The children cannot eat and drink because there is no food. They were crying because they were afraid of the guns and shells. The people are forced to stay at so many places in the jungle — under trees and beside the river. Now, we have no food.

Interview: 259 - HRV: Refugee, Repatriation, Livelihood

Name: Maung Aye
 Sex: Male
 Interviewed: April 1995, at Bornor Refugee Camp
 Source: Images Asia

I was blinded when a SLORC soldier shot me. When the DKBA came to burn the camp, I hid in a hole and now I just stay in the camp and do nothing. The one who set the camp on fire was close to me at that time and the DKBA asked if there were any KNU soldiers there and if they met, they would kill them. They saw me, but they didn't do anything. They said that we had misbehaved because we hadn't gone back to Burma. There were maybe 200 DKBA. If we don't go back to Burma within one or two days, they might come again.

Interview: 260 - HRV: Women, Refugee, Repatriation, Livelihood

Name: Naw Tin Mya
 Sex: Female
 Interviewed: April 1995, at Bornor Refugee Camp
 Source: Images Asia

The shell dropped while I was cooking. Although I managed to escape from being injured, all my belongings were destroyed.

While we were eating in that morning, we heard the shelling. So we ran out of the house and entered into the bunker. All our cooking utensils were destroyed. Now I have to eat at my neighbour's house. When I left the house, I begged them not to burn the house, but they did anyway.

I have no husband because we are divorced. He left me and ran away. The people said that I could contact the DKBA, but how can I make contact when I have no food or anything. They ordered us to go back to Burma and I said to them, "I have no rice or anything".

During this time my husband was not at home. They told us to move as the Thai Army was coming. We have nothing. They, the DKBA, had weapons and walkie-talkies and a phone. Please I only have rice and chilli. (Speaks to children during the conversation between the two women). We have to live in village camp because it is such a hard life. But the refugee camp was better. We had to borrow a mosquito net.

Interview: 261 - HRV: Torture, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Slavery, Child, Women, Refugee

Name: Nai Moe
 Age: 29
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with five children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kywetalin village
 Source: Images Asia

I left my village with my family because I could not stand the torture of the Burmese. To avoid forced labour for construction and extortion of money, I left.

For portering, we had to pay 400 Ks each month. We also had to pay for their food. Moreover, we had to pay water tax. People were forced to fetch water for their (SLORC's) army out-post in Kyaukkadin village. If we could not go to our assignment, then we had to pay 200 Ks. They would send a message to the village headman by letter and the village headman would collect the money for the villagers.

Just before I left my village, I had to go for my assigned duty and work on the railway construction site in Yar Phoo village, about in November [1994]. Altogether 5 people from my village, including I myself, had been forced to work and could not refuse their order. I went there because natives from our village had already been working there. It was seven days for one rotation.

Not only did the soldiers beat the labourers, they forced us to work cruelly. The work started in the morning until they ordered us to stop. I saw some labourers beaten. If they found us resting or stopped working, we were beaten. One person was beaten so hard that his head was cut. I also saw many women and children, and old people at the work site. As I said before, they beat a man badly. Finally this man ordained as a monk because he was scared so badly.

We didn't get anything from them. We had to take our own food. When we had good quality rice, they exchanged it with their own unrefined and old rice. People had to carry water from the stream and to the out-posts. We had to buy medicine with our own money. We were never paid for our labour, but if I could pay 500 Ks, I would have been released.

We travelled to the work-site on foot. Our main tasks were digging the earth, carrying and levelling the ground, filling in low levels. We started at 6:30 a.m. and worked until 12:00 p.m. After 1 hour break for lunch, we continued from 1:00 p.m.

until 6:00 p.m.

The SLORC soldiers in that working area were from LIB 406. There was one battle when we were in the area, about in November [1994]. I was not sure, but I thought it was with the Mon.

Eventually I fled the work site. I just ran away at about 5:00 p.m. while the soldiers went elsewhere. The guards were posted on two sides. One at the back and the other at the front. Altogether there were about 6 soldiers and about 40 labourers.

When I escaped, all my personal belongings were left there. I ran toward my village, but I lost the way. Fortunately I found a man in the jungle and he guided me to my village.

I have no idea about my future, but I hope to live and work here on the farm. But I don't want to go back home as long as they are there. I am afraid of them.

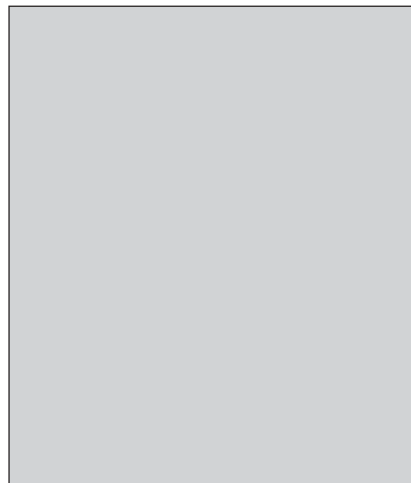
There is no water in their out-post. Villagers had to fetch water from the stream at the foot of the hill and carry it up to the top of the hill where the soldiers had set up their out-post. We had to carry 50 tanks per day to fill up the water tank.

The people in Kywetalin village are paddy farmers, some also cultivate cash crops. I left my farm. I don't have any paddy fields. I just left my land there. I used to grow betel nuts and cashews. I didn't earn much, only 5-6,000 Ks, Ks per year because it was a new plantation.

In our areas, we had to pay 400 Ks for one time and another 200 Ks for every month to the army since October [1994]. That means that I had to pay all my earnings to SLORC. To survive, I had to do extra jobs at other people's farms. Giving half of it to them and half for my survival. Before that I had to labour as a porter rather than paying money.

Interview: 262 - HRV: Torture, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Slavery, Refugee

Name: Nai Taung
 Age: 46
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with five children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: xxxxxx village
 Source: Images Asia



I'm not involved in any political activities. I'm just an ordinary civilian. I left my home because I could neither work nor pay the Burmese soldiers money. We were forced to work as so-called "volunteer labourers" for LIB 410 or for railway construction. If we could not go for work, we had to pay money. If we flee from work, we also had to pay money for the release of the conscription, 3,000 Ks a time. We had to earn our food, we also had to pay money for them. We had nothing left. We had sold out all that we had owned. Besides, children were also not well. So I finally left with all my children.

If I could not go, I had to hire another person. Yes. I went to work twice for the construction of LIB 410 in Kaleinaung village, in Yebyu Township. In January [1995] we had to build living quarters and make furniture such as tables and chairs. Villagers were divided into two groups to work for the soldiers regularly in turn, so that the whole village should not be ruined by conscription while some were serving as porters. I went only for LIB 410.

Before I was a farmer. I had six acres of paddy. I also have a garden and grew cucumbers and betel-nut. I had paddy fields and farm separately. If I didn't have to pay taxes and porter fees to the soldiers, it would be enough. But out of 100 baskets, we only had a bit left after paying them all for the last three months. Children felt sick and I had nothing to pay, so I left.

If you refused to go and if you were conscripted by force, you had to pay 3,000 Ks for release. So it was better to flee and avoid the conscription. We had to go twice a month because there were only a few people in our village. If the children got sick or for any other emergency business, we had to hire a person at the rate of 1,800 Ks.

At first it was once a month, but now it's more often because all have fled. We had to go twice or three times a month. This year the soldiers came to conscript the villagers to work as labourers since the end of rainy season. But the whole railway construction work was started at harvest time of last year, about September [1994]. We were forced to do it, otherwise we would have been arrested.

The SLORC battalion sent a letter to the headman ordering to conscript 5-10 people, as many as they wanted. Then the headman opened the letter before the others, saying that it was up to the villagers, whether they went or not. He was unable to do anything himself. Only two people from my village went with me to work at the LIB 410 because our village is small. I have never been arrested by SLORC, apart from being taken for forced labour. The work site was at LIB 410 in Kaleinaung village. I went on my own because I was afraid of being arrested. If you didn't go, you had to flee, otherwise they would come to arrest you. Some had to go to work as porters. We worked at the site in two week shifts.

About 100 labourers were working there. Some had to cut trees and bamboo plants. Some had to build offices. I had to make furniture such as tables and chairs.

There was no health care. If we got sick, we had to take care of ourselves. We had to take food from home and we had to sleep on the ground. four or five people, from near our village, were beaten for sleeping because of tire and coming late to work. They were not at the same work site as me. I asked all these question while we had a break or time for sleeping. It was said that they were beaten because they slept while working and because they were late for work. I saw them being beaten from a distance, because they were assigned to another group.

We had to pay if we could not go in our turn, once a month or twice a month. The SLORC never gave us any money for working. They didn't ever say we would be released if we paid them money. I travelled to the work-site on foot and I had to carry everything.

We had to make furniture such as tables and chairs and also we had to build living quarters and offices. Two people from our village and others had to work together. They said that we helped build houses and their battalion. They made exceptions for children and people who were too old. They took middle aged men. About 55 years old men were working there. We worked from morning until night. We had a break only at lunch time. We started at 7:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., then lunch, then resumed work at 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. We bathed at the well.

I myself was never beaten. Also there was no fighting this summer while we were there. We couldn't leave work until we were replaced by another group. Now maybe I have to stay here, cutting bamboo cane and picking thatch, but my son is living at Payaw camp. I won't go back to my village until the situation becomes quiet again. Nothing is left there. Whoever can work on my land can take it. Whatever happened to my big wooden house, I don't care. I cannot say for sure if I could reclaim my properties and land, but if conditions favour, I would like to take them back.

When the village headman received the letter from the SLORC soldiers, he didn't force us to go. He showed us the letter and told us we could go or flee. Everybody understood that one had to work or flee, or else he would be arrested. I had waited for some time to see whether the situation was going to improve in the village. But as it was getting worse and nothing was left there, I had no choice but to leave the village.

Interview: 263 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood, Slavery, Refugee

Name:	Nai Seik
Age:	60
Sex:	Male
Ethnicity:	Mon
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Married with four children (one deceased)

Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kyaukkadin village
 Source: Images Asia

I've never been involved in any political activities and I'm not a member of the New Mon State Party. I came because my daughter is living here. I came to visit her. I was living in Kyaukkadin before .

I left my village to stay here. I left my farm and all my personal belongings there. I plan to go back if the situation changes for the better. I will go back if the situation becomes stable. I couldn't stand any longer continuing to pay money to them. I left cows and my house there. Once a month, we had to pay about 200 Ks for porter fees. Other people also had to pay money, but for me they asked 200 Ks. Finally I left pretending I was going to visit my daughter.

Burmese soldiers collected money through the village headman. I had to pay 200 Ks per month. I paid for two times. As long as I can remember, I only paid twice. I am not sure if my wife and children have had to pay also or if they are still paying now. After the first two times, SLORC came to collect money again. I had nothing left to give and nothing to say to them, so I left for this camp where my daughter is living.

There was an army out-post at the top of hillock in the eastern side of the village. The SLORC soldiers stayed there all the time. They didn't explain why they collected the money for portering. We just paid the money. I 'm not sure what the other people had to do. As I was old, I was not conscripted. I know some people were forced to work on the railway construction and some were forced to carry burdens for the SLORC soldiers. People went to work on railway construction. Since I am an aged man, I had never worked there, but I had to pay them 200 Ks whenever they came to collect the money. Finally I had nothing to pay them, so I left. There were some family members and my house left behind in my village.

Most of the people in Kyaukkadin village are Mon, but there were some Burmese from Zinbyeit village who came to work. I don't know if the Burmese suffered under the soldiers as the Mon did. The village headman arranged for them and it depended on him.

Interview: 264 - HRV: Slavery, Torture, Execution, Disappearance, Women

Name: Nai Shwe
Age: 34
Sex: Male
Ethnicity: Mon
Source: Images Asia

I returned home on leave and I was arrested on the way. They questioned me like from where I had come and what my purpose for being there was. I said that I had come from Mudon Township to work as a carrier. Then they forced me to carry their load of military equipment.

We slept in the paddy field for one night, then we proceeded to Blehkaloh via Lawsai, Kyaukkadin and Alesakhan. Having arrived at Blehkaloh, they arrested three men in a hut and tortured them by cutting their backs with a knife and putting salt in the wounds. The victim's wife and parents were there with him. Accusing the victim of being a dacoit, the soldiers forced him to confess that he was. Despite his persistence of being innocent, the soldiers tortured him so cruelly that he lost one eye. After two days, his parents were released. But at about 8:00 p.m., the soldiers shot at him three times, killing him on the spot. His name was Haling. They beat him so hard that one of his eyes came out. He was about 30 years old.

The man was forced to confess that he was a dacoit because they thought that he was involved in a crime which took place on that day. But I thought he was innocent. He was arrested at his hut while looking after his cows. Four people were arrested, tied and beaten. They were not given food or water. They arrested all of his family members at dagger point and interrogated. Only one old woman, their mother, was left behind in the hut. The other members of his family didn't see him tortured. He was taken to Alesakhan. They had no evidence whatsoever to accuse him of being a dacoit. But they accused him and beat him.

Though they said that they were cow hands and denied that they were dacoits, soldiers did not accept that answer. In the evening they were tied up with ropes and tortured, without food or water, also the old woman. When they found a home-made gun, they accused him again and took him to Alesakhan where they tortured him by cutting his back with a knife. He was also tied to a tree and left to be bitten by ants. The next evening, father and brother were released, but he was shot and killed with three shots at 8:00 p.m. Though they said that they were cow hands and denied that they were dacoits, soldiers did not accept that answer. In the evening they were tied up with ropes and tortured, without food or water, also the old woman. When they found a home-made gun, they accused him again and took him to Alesakhan where they tortured him by cutting his back with a knife. He was also tied to a tree and left to be bitten by ants. The following evening, his father and brother were released, but he was shot and killed.

One bullock cart driver, who was found along the way, was also arrested and taken away.

It wasn't the first time I saw villagers beaten in the same way. In one case, a villager was tied up with a rope and beaten. Though we porters offered food and water, it was denied, even from us. Only a little rice and fish paste were given. The man was accused of being a Mon soldier. I have no idea of his fate as I had fled.

I was very lucky to escape. They didn't allow me to go anywhere and if I went somewhere, they followed me, even to the toilet. But on that day, two of their groups left for military operation. I seized the opportunity and ran away under the pretence of going to have a bath. I could not take all my personal belongings.

For rice they gave me just that. (Indicating with his hand) No curry, only a little fish paste. We had to sleep on the ground. Sometimes we could eat until we were full. Sometimes half full. But no curry, only fish paste. I had no other jobs, I had to carry military equipment only. We were not allowed to go anywhere else. We had to carry the equipment to the monastery in Lawsai village via the bullock cart station, Kyaukkadin, Blehkaloh. I fled from that monastery. When I saw the other man tortured, I was so scared that I was breathless. They also said they would kill me too. I could not sleep that night. When I was also threatened to be killed, I thought of a plan to escape.

Inferiors were often scolded by their superior SLORC officers, blamed and threatened. They were even beaten when the porters escaped. When I was in Blehkaloh monastery, one porter escaped. Because of that, soldiers were punished to be taught a lesson.

Interview: 265 - HRV: Child, Torture, Livelihood, Execution, Slavery

Name: Maung Ngwe
Sex: Male
Interviewed: 22 April 1995
Source: Images Asia

I did not want to stay at my house, so I became a soldier. In the time of the pro-democracy uprising, I had three friends. In my village we had a bad man, an inhumane man. I killed him, I cut his throat and he was dead. Two of my friends escaped. At that time the SLORC government and soldiers had caught the people. I had to become a soldier to avoid punishment. And when I became a soldier, they could not catch us because we belonged to the SLORC government. The man who I killed was Kyar Gnot. At that time, I was 17 years old. But I lied about my age because to become a soldier you had to be 18 years old. I knew people who were 11, 13 and 20 they all claimed that they were 18. Anyone can become a soldier.

Beside Kobie village, there was a stream . So we killed some people beside the stream because we could dig a hole easily and bury them easily. If we didn't bury them properly some animals would see the hole. We were also worried the villagers seeing it . Sometimes when we kill two people, we put them in the same hole. If the villagers know about the people we catch, later they will question us. We say we release them, but actually we kill them.

When I defected, we had come to this area to buy and sell timber. Later I needed money, but could not get it and I was very angry. At the night time, I went to shoot the gun. I shot at the Major and he shot me too. Later they took my gun and I couldn't do anything. The following morning I stole my gun and tried to escape the area. If I didn't escape, I knew very well that I would be taken to jail and bashed.

Before that the Major and I were like brothers. We were belonged to the worst battalion. If we saw some people, we hit and kicked. Some people were innocent, but if we were drunk, we would verbally abuse the villagers and proceed to beat and kick them. Sometimes if the chairman of the village was unlucky, we beat and kicked him too.

When we entered a village, we took all of their clothes, food, chickens and pigs etc. They did not give them to us. We took all their things violently. We caught the porters and if they didn't want to leave, we'd beat and kick them and take all their money.

When we arrive at the village we take all the goods except money and clothes. We take all the food. If we don't get what we want, we will take something else. If we don't get anything. we'll catch porters and beat them. We grab things at random and do things without thinking. In the village we drink alcohol, get drunk, crazy and violent and then we leave. In the next place we do the same things again. We do it at every village, not one village is left untouched.

When we enter the village everybody is afraid of us. We arrest porters, ask them to carry bags, and if they can't carry, we beat them. At the time I was a soldier, our officers and us were like brothers.

The leader of the village asked the man what was wrong with him but nobody answered him. His stomach hurt and somebody had sent him to the hospital. My major lied to the leader of the village, saying the cow kicked him and he was killed. Finally the leader of the village and all of the villagers knew that the major had kicked him. Then when the chairman of the village asked the doctor, he lied to the chairman because the major gave him money. So the doctor said that the cow kicked him and killed him.

In Karen state, Mo Kar Mee village, we were looking for a man accused of being a thief. We went and surrounded the thief's house. We couldn't catch the thief so we caught his wife and child instead. We shaved the head of his wife and put her in the

stocks, and when her husband came back we released her. After we released her, we killed her husband. We weren't really after his wife, so we released her. We wanted to kill him, so we caught his wife. If we didn't catch his wife, we could not catch him. I didn't shave her head, but I took her to jail. My major shaved her head.

Now I don't think about the future, I don't care about anything. I don't think of anything. If I have to die, I will die, I don't care. Between Three Pagodas and the new village of Mokata, many soldiers moved to the other side.

Interview: 266 - HRV: Child, Women, Torture, Livelihood, Slavery, Minorities, Displacement

Name: Maung Htoo
 Age: 18
 Sex: Male
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married
 Interviewed: 18 and 22 April
 1995, at Thai Mon
 border
 Source: Images Asia

I joined SLORC because I had no parents. I haven't seen them since I was a child. I was alone and stayed with my neighbour. My friends asked me to go with them and become a soldier. I was 17 at that time. I joined LIB 409. Our monthly salary was 600 Ks. But usually I received 300 Ks and the battalion kept the rest. They didn't give us enough money but we had to buy our uniforms and other things including food. I had to buy my uniform with my salary. To afford that, I had to save money for three or four months. I wrote a complaint letter to the captain but they didn't care about it. I didn't want to give them the money but the high ranking officers cut our salaries every month.

My duties were those of an ordinary soldier. All over the past year, I was in battle four times: twice in Kawza, once in Sin Phyu Taing and another in Mikyawdawn. In Sin Phyu Taing, we burned down the village. We didn't beat the villagers but we took some porters to carry our goods. It was around that time that I escaped. We burned down the village because the commander ordered us too. The villagers ran away into the jungle.

The relationship between high ranking officers and the soldiers wasn't always good. But the soldiers of our level helped each other. I was hit many times by the high ranking officers when I disagreed with them. I wanted to just live and get by, but I couldn't be there. Even if I tried to avoid getting into trouble, they still punched and kicked me. Other soldiers got the same treatment, so we were angry.

If the soldiers did something that they disliked, then the officers hit the soldiers. The soldiers couldn't stay freely but under a strict rule. The soldiers couldn't go anywhere by themselves. If we committed any crime, we got the worst beatings. They were beaten five times each before and after going to jail. I was hit 3 or 4 times when I was there.

If we didn't salute them they hit us. Sometimes if we didn't see them and couldn't salute them, then we were hit too. If we couldn't do the work in time of request, they hit us and put us in jail. We were angry because we were still hit even though we did the work that they ordered. When they asked about the people from this side (revolutionaries) and if the villagers didn't know or didn't answer, they beat them.

The soldiers used to loot the villagers, arrest the men and beat, catch the women and rape. When they accuse the villagers, whether they are revolutionaries or not, they beat them. Mostly we stay at Hangan village and patrol to Yinye village. We rob, arrest men, do unjust things, beat, punish and if we see shops, we take things. Before I came here, I saw one major raped two girls who were riding bicycles while I was on patrol (running point). The major alone, pointed a gun at them, took their gold rings, watches and bracelets, then raped them. So what can we do? We were just subordinates.

Although the major didn't force us to watch, he didn't try to hide. He asked the column to stop while he raped the two women. We stopped and took position in the wood beside the field where he did it and we saw everything. His name was Maj Tha Myint, Comdr of Coy 1, LIB 409. Bn Comdr was Kyaw Zaw Lah and his deputy was Nyan Aung. I was very ashamed but the major didn't care at all. I was so angry that I even wanted to kill him myself. That's why when we return to our base camp (Hangan), I left my battalion.

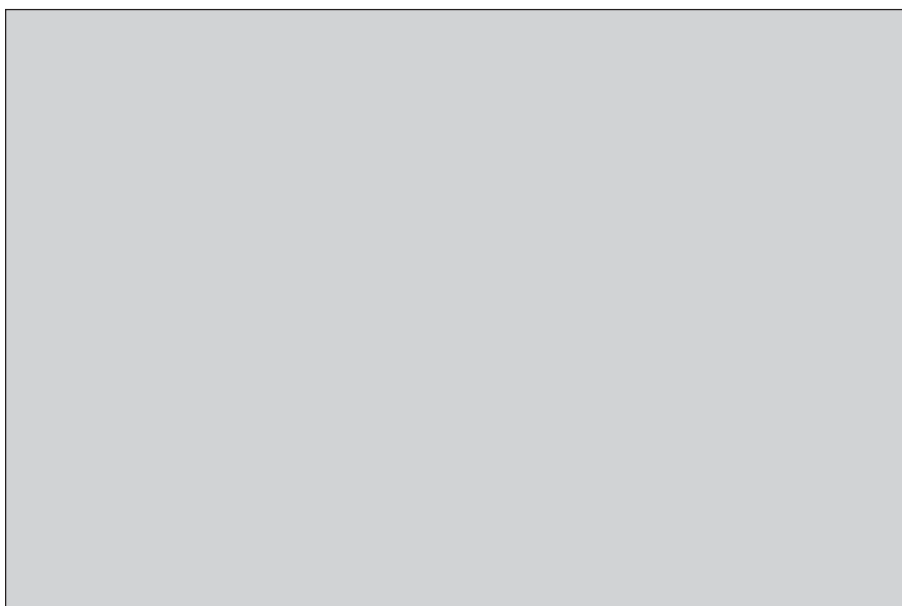
One woman was 19 and the other was 20 years old. Both were Mon. When the major was raping, they cried. Afterwards, they went back to their village. The major didn't say anything to the women. When the chairman of the village knew about this case, he appealed to the commanding officer. Then they were punished and they had to suffer from contributing labour for the railway. I escaped one night after the rape case. I think SLORC is a bad government. I will stay here and fight against SLORC.

I don't know any detailed information about the gas pipeline. But I've seen foreigners in LIB 410. When the foreigners went to find the pipeline route in Kawza village, they were killed in the cross-fire between SLORC soldiers from LIB 410

and the Mon. Six foreigners were there and they were just visiting the forest and surveying for the pipeline. They didn't wear uniforms, they wore short pants. They spoke English but I didn't know what nationality they were. After the fighting, I saw the dead body of a foreigner. They took him to their battalion.

We knew the foreigners were doing work concerning the pipeline because they usually stayed with us. I saw that the other three foreigners were in the car and went back to the battalion. The foreigners and the major had a good relationship.

Interview: 267 - HRV: Torture, Slavery, Livelihood, Refugee, Displacement, Minorities



Name: Par Par
 Age: 40
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with one child
 Occupation: Carpenter
 Address: Tavoy, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 22 April 1995
 Source: Images Asia

I started to leave Kabyawah for Ye-Lamaing. At the time the SLORC soldiers caught me and hit me. They kicked me and beat my head with their guns, kicked me in the teeth, blindfolded me and struck me with many things. Then they sent me to the jungle. They blindfolded me for two days and didn't give me any food. Then my

mother and a friend came from Kabyawah and negotiated with the SLORC soldiers. After that they released me.

They asked me questions before they beat me. They asked, "Can you read the letters on my shoulder?" and I said I couldn't because it wasn't in Mon language. Then they said that I was lying so they hit me and beat me with a gun. Then they asked me who was the chairman of Kabya village. I answered, "U Aung San" and they again said that was I lying and hit me, kicked me, and beat me in the mouth with their guns. They asked me if I knew where the rebels stayed and I said that I didn't know. Again they said that they didn't believe me and beat me. The man who did it had a star on his shirt, but he wasn't a captain. He was from IB 31. After the beating I took some Baidow [herbal] medicine, but he soldiers didn't help me.

The SLORC soldiers caught porters from Kabya village. My grandfather called me and told me to go so that I escaped. I don't want to return to my village because they take porters there, and they beat the villagers. If they see you they take all your money. From a single person, they took 5,000 or 6,000 Ks. We have to give it to them but we have no money, so I don't want to go back to Burma. When they beat me, it was about six months ago. After they caught me they took me to the mountains with the pagodas on top near Kabyawah. I just arrived in this area two days ago, but for the pervious five months I was living in my village. I decide to leave because I couldn't work there any more. I spent my time running and hiding, so I decided to leave my village.

Interview: 268 - HRV: Livelihood, Torture, Displacement, Refugee, Women

Name:	Mi Tin Win
Age:	20
Sex:	Female
Ethnicity:	Mon
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Married with one child; but already died
Occupation:	Farmer
Address:	Yebyu Township
Interviewed:	April 1995
Source:	Images Asia

I was never involved with any political organisation. The SLORC soldiers came to my village and entered my house. They ask for this and that. When I could not respond, they seized everything in my small shop, things like cooking oil, salt and chillies. They also took all my hens and tools but they left the roosters behind. When I couldn't say anything, they slapped me in the face. I had to follow them while they were searching for things in my house because I was afraid they would try to drop something there to incriminate us as Mon supporters. They asked me if

I had any connection with the Mon army. When I told them the truth, that I didn't, they didn't understand and they yelled at me at gun point. I was so frightened! I was able to hide my money before hand.

I fled the village in fear of being beaten and tortured. I left in March, I don't remember the date. I came to Payaw because of fear and suffering. We had to evacuate the village whenever they came. When we stayed hiding in the jungle we had to take food from the other villages. Sometimes we had to eat rotten food. So we fled the village. Nobody was left in the village. All fled and I left too. They are all here now. Now I have to work any job I can find. My husband has already left for another village to see if he can find a job.

Interview: 269 - HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Refugee

Name: Ye Aung
 Age: 23
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Tavoyan
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with one child
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Yebyu Township
 Interviewed: 22 April 1995
 Source: Images Asia

When SLORC took me, the first time they called porters and they said they'd give us 5,000 Ks per month. We had to walk with their group and they didn't give the money at the beginning. First we had to work for 10 days. After 10 days, they let us go back to village. But after 10 days they didn't give us any money or food, we had to take food by ourselves.

I heard them talking about the gas pipeline and that they would use the hole for a pipe line. Five hundred people worked there. I didn't see them hit or beat the porters or the workers.

I've worked on this project since January [1995] and I didn't get the money, but I had to do it because they came and took us for work. If I didn't go, they would punish us and each household would have to pay 200 Ks. We work 11 hours a day.

They put the pipe in the hole after we dug the hole, and I heard that they would join it with a pipe from Thailand to the Burmese border. They will join pipe line between Phaungdaw and Thailand. They dug the hole in Phaungdaw village. The soldiers will patrol the pipeline in the area.

Interview: 270 - HRV: Women, Child, Livelihood, Forced Labour, Torture, Refugee



Name: Daw Myaing
 Age: 36
 Sex: Female
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with four children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: April 1995
 Source: Images Asia

I've never been involved with the Mon soldiers. The SLORC soldiers came to the village to conscript the people to work at railway construction site in September [1994], but they started to build it last year [1993]. They stopped in the rainy season and continued to conscript people after harvesting. They conscripted the villagers through the village headman. Every time they took seven people from each village to work for seven days. If the village is bigger, they conscripted more. After every seven days, new seven labourers were sent to the work site to be replaced, otherwise, the old ones had to continue their work. Except in the rainy season, labourers had to work for the whole summer. There were hundreds of labourers who were conscripted from various villages.

We had to afford any medical problems at our own expense. We had to buy our food with our own money. Otherwise we had no food to eat because we didn't get anything from them (SLORC). They paid us nothing for our labour. Those who

rendered their services did not need to pay money (porter fees). They were released from work after completing 7 days work and if new porters came for replacement. We were digging the ground, filling up the trenches, that's the kind of work we had to do. While we were working, the soldiers guarded us. The work-site was at Welbil. About 100 labourers, including women and children and aged persons, worked there. We can never say for sure how many women were there because the number of them varied from time to time. When the men were away for work, women and children had to go to work instead of the men.

I don't know the soldiers' battalion. They weren't from nearby my village. But I thought that they were from Tavoy. They made us carry as much as we could, but not too much so that we could do it for a long time. We started in the morning until 9:00 a.m., then continued work until 4:00 p.m. When the labourers had more refined rice, the soldiers often exchanged it with their unrefined and old rice. They did it very often.

In September or October [1994], I once saw a man taken away from the work-site because they thought that he was from the Mon Army. He was tied with rope and beaten so badly that the man almost succumbed to death. In reality, he had come to work for them but they accused him of being a Mon soldier, so the village headman had to interfere.

They put his head in a plastic bag, tied him with rope, made him lie down on the ground and rolled a bamboo stick over his body. While doing so the plastic bag was put on and off every half hour. He was all bruised and blue making his limbs swollen. Nobody could say anything, everyone just looked on.

Another time the army tied up 8 people with ropes and the soldiers demanded 80,000 Ks. When they could not afford to pay the money, they were taken to the army camp. At night time, they were made to sleep in the trench dug up by the villagers. Because of being tied up tightly all together, they moaned in pain. They couldn't climb out of the trench and their hands were bruised. They were finally released after we gave 80,000 Ks. They were kept in this way 4 nights. The householders had to give rice for them. They were only detained so SLORC could extort money. The 20 soldiers and also militia who did this were from Mintha village. Every village had to pay 30 baskets of rice to those soldiers. Other villagers also suffered, some even had to buy sarongs for the wives of the soldiers.

I was so scared to be tortured in the same way as that other man because I refused to do what they wanted me to do. I had to flee finally, otherwise I would be arrested and tortured in the same way. Either I had to escape it or I would be subjected to more work and torture. I had to abandon my land and properties.

Now there were less than 30 households left in our village. If the situation gets worse, I would not return home because six villages had already been under the strict control of SLORC soldiers. There was no peace in that area.

Interview: 271 - HRV: Women, Slavery, Livelihood, Torture, Refugee

Name: Daw Khaine Khaine
Age: 50
Sex: Female
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with three children
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: April 1995
Source: Images Asia

They came to our village to conscript porters, but we could not give them any. They needed them for carrying military equipment. About 100 soldiers arrived and ordered us to carry loads as far as Ah Mae village. Those who had been conscripted never returned. Because of that, the village headman was afraid to conscript porters any more and shunned them. Villagers had to flee or pay money. If they could not pay, then they had to do the labour for them. As both the village headman and the villagers could not do for them, they conscripted porters by themselves.

If one paid, it was not necessary to serve as a porter. My husband had to serve as a porter five times. He was chosen as a member of the village committee. My husband was asked to follow the soldiers by carrying loads as far as Mae Daw. But the soldiers did not let him go back when they had arrived to Mae Daw village. The village headman did not follow to ask soldiers let him go back. He begged the soldiers to let him go back only after they had arrived at a very far distance. Not long after that, my husband was conscripted again. So finally we fled the village.

To escape conscription, some had to pay 1,000 Ks and some had to pay 2-5,000 Ks. It depended on the people. I have always fled to another village, so I have never had to pay. The whole village fled. We had to pay 100-200 Ks for their food. They asked about 15,000 Ks for the whole village. They collected the money through the village headman. If we hadn't fled, I think we would have paid about 500-600 Ks weekly. I always fled from the village whenever the Burmese soldiers came. Everyone in the village fled except for the women.

Finally people from Ah Mae and Chabone fled from the villages for good. If they were caught, they were forced to carry loads of food and military equipment. If they could not carry the load, they were kicked from behind. They had to carry burdens to Mae Than Taung village which took about 12 hours. After arriving at the village, if the person was lucky enough to be substituted with another person from his own village, he was allowed to go back home. Our village headman never tried to meet the soldiers. So we had to flee by ourselves. Other village headmen always requested the soldiers to let their villagers return home whenever they were at another village. We got to the other villages on foot of course. Sometimes we

had to go along the mountains until we had arrived at Kawza. People were afraid of falling down while walking on the mountain in the dark. Work lasted for one month or two months, it depended on the military operation. They stayed at the village only one or two days.

Once my husband and my son were sent as porters to go as far as Welbel village. We were told the village headman would give them 10,000 Ks. When they arrived at Kanut Karain village, the soldiers gave them only beans and coconut meat left over from making coconut milk to eat. There was never enough food given. They were allowed to return only after getting to Alesakhan. Since that time, he has never gone to work as a porter. That last time, they had to work for nine days. They allowed us to go back after getting to Alesakhan. We received exactly 10,000 Ks from the villagers.

We had to go from Chabone, Ah Mae, Thaung Sune, Mut Karain, Kin Mun Chaung along the motor road to Alesakhan, over the rocky mountain. As my husband told me, it was a very mountainous journey. My son had to carry bean sacks. It was so heavy. I carried ammunition, rice, beans and other things. About 25 kg. I am so afraid to talk with you. I will face trouble if I go back to the village.

Talking about Maethawah

They came to conscript people for portering before water festival, about March/April. They didn't conscript women and children. Only my husband and my son had to carry.

It was meaningless to continue staying there. We were always on the run. We could not stay in hiding for a long time. Finally we came to this camp together with many other people. I left my farm in the village.

Interview: 272 - HRV: Livelihood, Women, Minorities, Torture, Refugee

Name: Ni Ni
Age: 18
Sex: Female
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Single
Occupation: Farmer & Timber trader
Address: Yebyu Township
Interviewed: May 1995, Payaw Refugee Camp
Source: Images Asia

I've never been involved in politics. While I was work-

ing on someone else's farm, the SLORC soldiers came. I was questioned such as where did I come from, where was I going, and why I didn't stay at home etc. I was so scared of them that I ran away. I was staying in hiding in the jungle for eight days, one day without food and the other days only eating rice soup. I was worried because one of my female relatives was asked by a soldier to go with him and marry him, something like that. She ran away from them and left the village.

It is disgraceful to marry a SLORC soldier because they are of different race, it is bad to marry a Burmese. I hate to marry them. As they tortured us, I hated them. They tortured the villagers by beating them. I heard about it happening in every village.

Just before I left my village, I met them on the way back from the farm. They questioned me and when I couldn't answer, they aimed their guns at me. They forced me to speak their language. Only the commander questioned me. I don't know his name, but he was a captain.

When the soldiers entered the village, we fled for the farm and they followed us again there. Then they asked all sorts of questions such as why I did not stay in the village. One woman was taken away, so I was so scared and fled the village. After eight days, I arrived at Chabone village. Later I returned to my village because I thought that they had fled. They called me at that time and talked to me. When I could not respond, they aimed their gun at me twice.

I came here not to stay in Payaw, but to look for my elder sister who is in Thailand. If I cannot proceed, I will stay here. I have no idea what she is doing now because she left 13 years ago. I had no plan to stay here. I would like to look for my sister who is working in Thailand. I heard that she is selling things.

Interview: 273 - HRV: Livelihood, Women, Torture, Refugee

Name:	Mi Mi
Age:	24
Sex:	Female
Ethnicity:	Mon
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Married; in pregnant
Occupation:	Farmer
Address:	Yebyu Township
Interviewed:	May 1995, Payaw Refugee Camp
Source:	Images Asia

I've never been involved in politics. When the SLORC soldiers came to our village, we were arrested and tortured. We fled from our village because we were afraid of them. Whenever they came to the village, we had to stay hiding in the fields.

I saw people being tortured. Since the men always have to avoid from being arrested, we had no time to work for our survival. The soldiers also took our rice which we left as well as our food and belongings. We were unable to make a living in our own village, so we stayed around in other villages. We did odd jobs because we could not stay in our own village.

We came to Payaw because we heard that some food was provided in this camp. As we had no chance to work in our village, we left for this camp. It's not such a problem in dry season, but in monsoon it's very difficult to find a job. So we left our home place.

Of course we want to live in peace. We would like to see peace between the Mon and the Burmese. If the Mon and the Burmese don't shoot at each other there will be peace in our area. Because of the fighting, villagers have had to flee all the time in the cross fire. We had no time to work. We would like to see a better future.

Interview: 274 - HRV: Livelihood, Women, Slavery, Torture, Refugee

Name: Mi Ong
 Age: 60
 Sex: Female
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with eight children; Husband deceased in 1994
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Yebyu Township
 Interviewed: May 1995, Payaw Refugee Camp
 Source: Images Asia

I lost all my paddy farm and I left three farms in my village. Five children are working in Thailand and the other three are living together with me. I also have one grandchild. I donated money in the monastery and took part in social affairs, but I never took part in any political activities.

The SLORC soldiers didn't make any problems for me, but my sons had to flee all the time. The soldiers conscripted people for portering and forced them to carry heavy loads, so their shoulders got bruised and rotten. One man was left unconscious outside our village. We had to carry that man into the village and treat him. We, all women, had to do that because there were no men in the village. The man was from Mae Thantaung village and his father's name is U Pan Pyay. After recovering, his father came to take him back.

One of my son had no particular problems. The other one lost consciousness and all his shoulders got bruised. He told me that he was kicked two times. He was kicked twice and questioned if he knew about this and that, this person or that person.

When he could not respond, they'd kick him. I didn't see it. He told me after he arrived back from portering.

When the soldiers entered the village they stole our belongings and looted our houses. They took my 12 fowls, three plates and spoons. They also took fruits from my farm while they were staying in our village for about one month. They never asked permission from us when they took your personal belongings. No way! They also seized a bucket of rice. Everybody got angry when their belongings were taken by force. I was also afraid of them. I alone left my home when they entered the village. Other people dared not stay and fled away. But they did nothing to me. I heard about other villagers being beaten, but I didn't see it myself because I never went out.

Interview: 275 - HRV: Women, Child, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture, Refugee

Name: Daw May Nwe
Age: 60
Sex: Female
Ethnicity: Mon
Family: Married
Address: Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: May 1995
Source: Images Asia

The mother of this baby passed away in Sinkyaw village. She died of a disease, 3 months ago, about in March. The baby is one and a half years. He is tiny because he is sick. We went to the hospital and they gave some tablets [*in this refugee camp*]. Being an old woman, they did not take me to work on the railway construction site last year [1994]. They conscripted only strong young ones. I had to pay for not going to work. Because of that I could not even afford to have a sarong. It's not regular, the porter fee, sometimes 300 or 400 or 500 Ks, it depends. Sometimes twice a month, sometimes three times. I earned only 10 or 20 Ks a day, enough for daily bread. I grew vegetables to earn money for survival.

I left my village this month and arrived at Payaw less than two weeks ago. I've seen so many people taken to be beaten by soldiers, but I can't tell you about it in detail, because the people were taken to the army camp and beaten there. Ah Phaung was also beaten. Now the situation is worse than it was five years ago because of those Burmese. When we had a little, they took it all away. We fled because we had nothing left for food. When I left the village I could not carry anything other than three pots. It was very tiring to come across the mountain. It took two or three days. We slept three nights on the way. If the situation is quiet there, I will return. If not, I won't. I fled in fear of oppression.

Interview: 276 - HRV: Women, Livelihood, Refugee, Displacement

Name: Naw Ah Mu
 Age: 71
 Sex: Female
 Ethnicity: Karenni
 Family: Married with four children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Interviewed: 24 July 1995
 Source: Images Asia

I came to the border in 1991 and I always heard the fighting and the sound of gunshots. Always there was fighting between SLORC and the Karenni Army, so I was very afraid. The bullets landed in my house and I was very afraid of them, and I ran away. I've come here because I am very afraid. I also came to this particular place because one of my daughters was here, so I came to see her.

I came with my daughter. I have four children, now they are all married with families, but my daughter who is here has no husband because he died.

The situation here, with SLORC, is worse now than it was under the Japanese. The Japanese tied my husband up and slapped his face because I gave food to the Englishmen. I give them only rice and chicken. They tied his hands behind him and pulled out a big stick and beat here on his chest until he was in agony. It was in 1950 — I was married in 1943 and my husband died in 1950. At that time my eldest daughter was only six years old and I have four, so the youngest one, at that time I was pregnant with her, five more months and I would deliver.

At that time the Burmese and Karenni were fighting and he was shot and he died then, in 1950. Then I was left with the responsibility of four kids who were so young, so it was very difficult and we faced so many troubles. I was a teacher at that time, so I could afford only to send one of my daughters to school. My second child I sent to become a house servant, cooking, washing and cleaning to get the money for her education. Now all of my children are married. We lived in xxxx and we made the underground. But the government soon found out and crushed it all. As they took all of our jobs, we were left with no work at all. One of my daughters decided to move here, now she stays in the house here.

In British time, pre-war time I was 16 years old and then the Japanese came. My husband was caught in a Japanese prison. I went to the head of the village and became a teacher for 20 years. I then went back to my mother village to find all my children married. After that, I never opposed SLORC, I just lived quietly trying to survive, but they came and burnt down my house in my village, so I had to move to Moe Kyi Mia and live with my daughter.

As I'm getting old, physically I am deteriorating. I can no longer see or smell and

it is difficult for me to eat. I was working cutting grass when I got a splinter in my eye so now I have blurred vision. I have no teeth, so cannot chew meat, can only eat vegetables. My daughter had a serious problem with the liver so she went to Mae Hong Son and had an operation. She has come back here but she has not properly recovered. She is always complaining of pain inside. I have one son who is looking for work in Burma. But I have not heard any news from him. I am not worried about myself, but their future. I am worried about them very much but I have no money and I am very old. So I just have to stay quietly. If I had money, I would get my eye fixed and return back to Burma.

Interview: 277 - HRV: Livelihood, Refugee, Displacement, Women, Child

Name: Nwe Nwe
Age: 38
Sex: Female
Ethnicity: Burmese
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with six children
Occupation: Trader
Interviewed: 25 July 1995
Source: Images Asia

We are worried about the health and education of our people here. Especially in the rainy season, we aren't able to live easily here. I suffered a lot of difficulties already and I am still worried about our future — education, health, and everything.

I left my home town and fled to the jungle with my husband. I joined the demonstrations. I worked as a teacher. When I arrived here, I found that my education was not enough. When I saw the education level of the children here, I realised they were very poor and wanted to help them very much. Some children have had no education at all though they are grown up already. I have children and I feel like other mothers, the need to make the children's education more developed, more successful in the future.

Our organisation is looking after our children as much as they can. But if there is other help to raise our children's education and health, we can proceed to fulfil our aims and objectives without worries for our children. We're not worried about ourselves, but about our children.

Interview: 278 - HRV: Refugee, Displacement, Child, Women, Torture, Slavery, Livelihood

Name: Naw Thein Mya
Age: 33

Sex: Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Family: Married with seven children
 Occupation: Weaver in a Karenni refugee camp
 Interviewed: August 1995; in Karenni Area
 Source: Images Asia

I weave bags and sew things like that. I have some animal husbandry projects that involve raising chickens, pigs, ducks, turkeys, and Muscovy ducks. I think we've moved to and from for more than 10 times since we arrived here. I stayed at Huay Poo Kaeng for three years and here for three years.

Whenever we run we have to take care of our children, we never worry about our animals or our things. Children must be the priority. The problems we face in the fields of education and health are very bad. Now one of my children is 15 or 16 years old, but he's still studying at 5th standard. The school has been closed often. Sometimes the students can study for only one or two months and the school closes again. It hurts us and makes us feel bitter in the heart. The worst is in rainy season. Just after I gave birth to our fifth child, we had to flee the fighting, and my husband was in the front-line.

If the fighting between the revolutionaries and the SLORC troops broke out in or near my village, the villagers will surely be abused — hit or beaten — by the SLORC soldiers. Sometime SLORC ask for porters from the village. So I went to find my son and brought him back to stay with us here. This camp is a bit better than the others. I am unhappy when I have to face difficulties but now I have become used to it. If you're told to go as a porter and you don't want to go, you have to pay a fine. If you don't have money then you have no choice.

I would like to see my children get an education whether they stay inside or outside Burma. If they have an education I believe they won't have to face so many difficulties.

I was a porter when I was 16 and still a student. I had to carry food for the Burma Army to the village that was about three hours' walk from our village, and then they released me because of being a student.

I've never personally seen anyone beaten by the soldiers. But I've heard it often occurred. If there was fighting in or near the village, the village leaders would be beaten or bashed with rifle butts by the SLORC soldiers.

If you don't want to be a porter, you have to pay money, about 100-200 Ks to SLORC. In the past, the Burmese currency was valuable, but not now. Two hundred kyats was a big amount when I was taken as a porter. If the SLORC troops wanted chickens or pigs, they'd just steal from us.

Sometimes I feel very bad about the situation. One of my children studied at a school in another refugee camp, but when the fighting started the school was closed and the students had to move to another place for study. I am often worried about him because I heard the other refugee camps were facing many problems like a lack of sanitation, dysentery outbreaks and malaria. In some places, people are dying of these effects.

Interview: 279 - HRV: Livelihood, Refugee, Child

Name: Htwe Htwe
 Age: 27
 Sex: Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Family: Married with three children
 Occupation: Teacher
 Address: Pa-an, Karen State
 Interviewed: 25 July 1995
 Source: Images Asia

I have joined many other women who arrived ahead of me and now I stay here in Karenni area.

We had a lot of difficulties when we arrived in this area. We didn't have these experiences before. We didn't know how to stay in the jungle, how to survive in the jungle like this. But after a while, we used to it.

The future for our children is very uncertain. We will have to see the situation. If the situation is getting better, it will be good. If the situation is getting worse, I don't know.

Interview: 280 - HRV: Livelihood, Refugee, Child

Name: Myint Myint
 Age: 12
 Sex: Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Interviewed: 26 July 1995
 Source: Images Asia

I studied at Yaung Ni Oo school last year, and it closed when we had to flee the fighting. As the exams came up, the fighting started so we had to run. We moved here and I studied at Nan Awn school. Then the same thing happened when I studied at Nan Awn school this year. When the time for exams came we had to run again. The situation's not good. We still haven't had a chance to finish our exams.

Now I'm going to study at Yaung Ni Oo school again. It has reopened. But I don't know how long Yaung Ni Oo school will last.

Interview: 281 - HRV: Livelihood, Refugee, Displacement, Torture, Slavery

Name: Saw Than Maung
 Age: 33
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Karenni
 Family: Married with four children
 Occupation: Medic at a Karenni refugee camp
 Interviewed: August 1995
 Source: Images Asia

My name is Saw Than Maung. I work in a clinic. When I lived in KNPP territory, I was trained by a French voluntary nurse. Before we came here, I moved from camp to camp (camp 3 to camp 4). After the enemy destroyed our camp, we had to move to this camp. When we were in the old camp, the most common disease was malaria. When we moved to this camp most people suffered from malaria and diarrhoea. Fourty patients come to our new clinic for everyday. As we had to keep moving from place to place, we lost our medical list and the medicines, causing to face with problems.

The SLORC soldiers came to our village and tortured the villagers. They also caught and ate our animals. We are not able to live peacefully in our village. As they arrested porters and destroyed our crops and village, we had to escape. Due to the inhumane actions of SLORC, we have suffered much and have lost heart.

Interview: 282 - HRV: Livelihood, Refugee, Displacement, Minorities, Slavery

Name: Tony Ku Mon
 Age: 49
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Kayan
 Religion: Roman Catholic
 Family: Married with five children
 Occupation: Chairman of Karenni Refugee Committee
 Interviewed: August 1995
 Source: Images Asia

Before I was on the other side of the border because I was still working for KNPP. I don't know the exact name because I don't have an exact place to live, or I didn't

have an exact place to live. So my family and I have to move here and there again and again. It depends on the military situation on the border because the situation is not always stable. One time I stayed in one place for one or two years and maybe less than one year and then move again. It's been like this throughout my 19 years in the jungle, because of the military situation and SLORC troop's activities in our area, especially after 1988.

Right now, I am responsible for the refugees. I mean I am the co-ordinator providing information to people who want to know more about the Karenni people, or who want to donate some things for our people. I take full responsibility for Karenni refugees.

We've only been at this particular site right here for a couple of weeks. That is after the rumours that SLORC troops might march onto Thai soil three or four weeks ago. The main problems of health are malaria, respiratory infections and diarrhoea. These are very common.

I don't know for my future as well as the future of Karenni people, because I have had try to be optimistic always during the past years. But recently my optimism has disappeared. With the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, I become a little more optimistic, but still how can I, because power is still in the hands of SLORC and I find the it is very difficult to trust SLORC.

When the cease-fire agreement was signed, all the people, including myself, were happy that maybe there would be no more fighting in our homeland. People wouldn't have to worry anymore for their day to day livelihood. But after SLORC broke the cease-fire agreement, things seemed to become very bad. I don't know what to say, things became worse than before for our people. After the agreement was broken, we came here to the border area.

The entire camp moved because nobody dared to stay in a camp which was so close to the border. Everyone had to move as SLORC troops were marching over the border. The camp we were in is on the Thai side and right now SLORC troops stay on the other side. Nothing yet has happened to that camp. It may be safe, it may be unsafe, it depends, because SLORC are moving rather slowly, more slowly than before. I think they want to set up a permanent base on the border.

During those two months that the cease-fire held, everything was peaceful with no problems. People came and went from further inside Karenni to the border to see their relatives. People would go for the week-end deep inside Karenni land to see relatives because it was all right. I don't know what to say, I don't know what I have to say because we have requested many times that the international community try to mediate between the acting groups and the dominant Burmans because this problem has been going on for decades. Now I think if there is no mediator between us then the reality of any peace in the so called "Union of Burma" won't come back quickly.

We have troubles like refugees as we are living on the Thai soil and we experience many difficulties just trying to make a living. So on behalf of our refugees, I would like to ask people of the Free World to give, to help give funds to the NGO groups or BRC which are all helping us with our essential needs like rice and vegetables that I think are very important. So it's important that they have enough funds to help our people.

Since SLORC broke the cease-fire agreement, the refugee population on the Thai side has increased almost by 1,000. SLORC troops marched across the border area about a month ago. Because the NGO's, our donors BBC and IRC, came to rescue not so long after the new arrivals, right now we are not experiencing too many difficulties here. If there were no NGO's or BBC or IRC, people would have to suffer more. They might have brought some food from their former villages, but I think the health situation would cause very big problems.

The situations of Somalia and Rwanda must be much worse than ours, I don't know, this is just what I've learnt from radio or newspapers. It seems their life is much more poorer than ours. If they have suffered more it could be because they have a much larger population and Africa is subjected to a worse environment and weather. The environment has caused it to be more serious, it seems to me.

If one is a man of sense, he would get depressed of being forced to become a refugee. You feel inferior if you're in a foreign land. Our struggle for autonomy has been going on for more than 40 years, so we have suffered a long time, but the situation for all the people became very bad some 20 years ago. That is during the BSPP government period. Not much before that, and it become worse under SLORC's suppression than it was under the BSPP. It has become worse as there has been more fighting. SLORC is giving more trouble to the people than the BSPP.

In the past two to three weeks some porters have arrived here. Maybe more than 30 or 40 porters have fled from SLORC in addition to those who have fled to Thailand or this village here. That was part of the break down of cease-fire agreement by SLORC. SLORC will keep their own terms. Because you see, with a cease-fire, we have a point where we can say that no SLORC authorities are able to use forced labour in the Karenni land, and no SLORC troop can cross into KNPP designated areas without advanced information. They gave no information that they were coming, because they ask many people to serve as their porters. That is, they forced them. According to the porters, they say that they were not asked, they didn't know anything of the soldiers coming and surrounding them and then asking them to get into the truck and with no time to go and see their wives and children. They had to go and do what the soldiers asked them to do. They said first they had to spend one night in the prison in a very small cell which should only fit 20 people, but in their case there were 70 people. No where to sleep, no one could go outside for toilet or shower or anything. If you had to go to the toilet, then you had to go in the cell.

SLORC collected these porters before they came to the area. I mean in Ricoh, the capital of Karenni, to carry rations and ammunition. According to one porter, he says that everyone had to carry 30 kg or something like that, of ammunition or rice or both.

Interview: 283 - HRV: Livelihood, Displacement, Refugee, Minorities, Women

Name: Win Win
 Sex: Female
 Family: Married with a daughter
 Interviewed: August 1995
 Source: Images Asia

When I used to live in my village, we could work freely. Later on when we planted crops for food and other things, the SLORC troops came and ate our food and animals. Then even when we moved to another place, we can still be disturbed by SLORC troops.

We are afraid of SLORC because they are not our people. Generation after generation they have made our people suffer. This time we have no choice but to run to the jungle.

We don't have enough food for our families. This year is the worst because of flood, we cannot plant the paddy. Sometimes we have to go to cut wood for three or four days. When we return SLORC have been there and most of the villagers flee to the jungle again.

We also don't have any medicine. When we run out of things, what can we do? I have to go to my relatives or my neighbours, and take the rice which they have left over. My daughter is now studying at a school, but I don't know what will happen to her in the future.

Interview: 284 - HRV: Torture, Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Pvt Aung Kyaw Hein
 Serial No.: 905785
 Age: 18
 Sex: Male
 Education: 7th Standard
 Parents: U Poe Tun and Daw Win Win Myint
 Family: Single
 Address: Mi Kyaung Kan village, Khin Tan village-tract, Meiktila, Mandalay Division

Source: S.H.A.N

(He and Zaw Min Oo defected to MTA on 8 August 1995, bringing two BA63 (G3) automatic assault rifles, 180 rounds of 7.62 mm and 2 grenades.)

I joined the military service in 1993 and attended military training at Ho-pong and Taunggyi, southern Shan State. After the training on 10 August 1993, I was sent to Mong Hpayak. I was with Coy 1 of LIB 330 under the command of Lt-Col Khin Maung Nyo. In Tachilek Township, there were clashes with MTA. I was sick at that time and arrested by MTA. I was sent to Thailand for treatment. As I did not know how to speak Thai, I crossed the border in Shan State. Once I was on the Burmese side of the border, I was arrested and transferred to the army. I was detained and again sent to the front-line where I was subjected to beatings and torture. I fled because of the military's forced portering on the civilians. I did not get full amount of my salary. L/Cpl reduced our rations and sold them outside for playing cards. When I could no longer bear the discrimination, I told the deputy battalion commander. Upon hearing it, L/Cpl punched me in the face until the blood oozed from my noses. As I could no longer bear for being subjected to punishment, I fled from them.

Interview: 285 - HRV: Livelihood, Execution, Slavery, Displacement

Name: U Thein Aung
 Age: 56
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Mon/Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Medic
 Address: Kyauktayan village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 16 June 1995
 Source: HURFOM

[Because of hardship for the survivals in the time of Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), the civilians had to move from one place to another to get more income for their families. U Thein Aung briefed his previous situation and how he decided to move to Kyauktayan.]

Q. When did you arrive at this village and why?

A. I arrived at this village about ten years ago. Ten years ago, after I retired from being a medic in the government hospital, I moved here. At that time, I tried hard to get some income in my native town, but I got very small which could not provide for my family as the price of commodities were increased every day. So I decided to leave for this local fishing village to receive more income than in my native place Bilin. As the black-market was booming, many boats travelled to Penang Island of Malaysia which

made the people from this village every suitable to receive more income. When I started moving here, I was only one and later my family came and joined me. This village was absolutely under the control of the New Mon State Party and the situation was better than the current time. As no Burmese troops could reach to this area, we were free to work and no need to pay tax to the Burmese troops from our income. So, in this village, I was the most respected person as I always helped the local villagers as I can.

- Q. Please brief me the ill-treatments of Burmese troops as you know.
A. But last four years ago, the Burmese troops tried to control this area. At that time, I considered some of them were good and some were bad. Anyhow, I helped them when they asked as I was a former government servant. Last two years, when they started the railway construction and tried for total control in this area, they have treated the villagers inhumanely, I disagreed with them for everything they did. As I have stayed with this Mon and Tavoyan community for 10 years, sometime I also complained to respective commander of the troops for ill-treatments to the villagers. But I was not able not overcome to solve that problem and protect them at all. At the end, even my son was killed by them.

[Continuously, he explained about how the Burmese troops executed his son as below, when asked the following questions.]

- Q. Can you tell me the terrible story of your son?
A. Yes. I can. My son, Chit Pow, was young and only 23 years old. He was killed in January 1995. At about noon on 24 January, about 150 troops from LIB 410 led by Col Ye Myint arrived at Kyauktayan village. I thought they came from Kyaethonenyima village where they have a military base. On that day I was at home. My family members never fled from the village when any Burmese came into the village because I have been a medic for a long time and I ever helped the Burmese troops when they asked. As soon as they arrived at the village, one soldier came to my house and told my son to meet the commander. My son went down from the house and followed that soldier. I thought as normal that the commander would ask for some helps from my son. I never thought they would kill my son, who at that time was a section leader in the village. I believed that my son was ordered by the commander to go somewhere or to another village to collect the information about the Mon troops. In the evening I also went to the house where the commander stayed, but I did not ask anything about my son as I still believed he was used to do something by commander. In the morning on 25 January, as the Burmese troops left our village, I could not meet the commander again. I still believed my son followed with them or went to other village.

One week later I started to worry because my son did not return home yet. To ask for where he was, I went to the military headquarters of LIB 410 in

Zinba. When I arrived there, I met the commander and asked him about my son and he told me they had already released my son on half way. I insisted them that my son did not return home yet. He said he did not know where my son went and he thought my son would have another purpose after the Burmese troops released him. He said he did not use my son as porter, just for a bit help to show the way. I was confused and returned to my home. My family waited for him for another one week but he did not return.

After that I had to inquire about my son where he had ever visited. Then I went to several villages like Kwaethonenyima, Phaungdaw, Daneekyar, Natkyizin and etc. I spent for two months to look for my son and during that period I also met the commanders from LIB 410 for many times. Consistently the commanders replied me my son was released on the half way and they did not know where he was. They did not take any responsibility for my son's missing. My wife always cried and pushed me to search for my son. Even attempts by the help of village leaders, the time passed over and we hardly received any information about him.

Q. Later, how did you know your son was killed by the military?

A. After two month, I still inquired for my missing son. Sometimes, I thought he travelled to Penang Island of Malaysia without telling me. One day when the Burmese troops from LIB 408 came into Kyaethonenyima, I met their commander Col Khin Maung Aye there. I knew him very well and I told him about my missing son. Even when the time I told him about this story, I never accused the Burmese soldiers from LIB 410 of killing my son. As I was a former government servant, I never considered the soldiers would kill my son. After I completed the story of my missing son, Col Khin Maung Aye smiled and told me to donate alms to the monks for my son. [It means his son already died and according to Mon or Burmese tradition, after someone die others need to donate alms to Buddhist monks to avoid the evil and pray for better of the dead person's next life.] I still did not believe in his words and thought he made a joke. After two weeks, I travelled to Phaungdaw again to collect information about my son. There I met Col Khin Maung Aye again and he told me the same words as in Kyaethonenyima. I asked him what happened to my son. And he explained to me that my son already died. I asked him for what crime the soldiers killed and where they buried the corpse of my son. He said he did not know the exact place, but he was sure that my son already died. I was very surprised and sorrowful. As I knew, my son has never made anything wrong to them like contacting or supporting the Mon troops. I didn't know why they killed my son.

Then I inquired the way which LIB 410 used on 25 January when they moved to their headquarters. One week later, I knew the way and I tried to find out the place where the soldiers buried my son, but I could not figure out any suspicious place. I also inquired the farmers, who resided along the way LIB 410 used, about my missing son. One day in the first week of

April, an old farmer who resided beside the road came and informed me that on that day (25 January) while he was working on his farm, two soldiers came to him and borrowed his hoes and went away. But he did not hear any gunshot, he said. As soon as I got that information, some villagers and I went to his farm hut, which situated close to the way the troops used, and we tried to find the place the soldiers buried my son. On the following day we found out a suspicious position as we saw a grenade there. Then, when we informed the NMSP authorities about the grenade, they came and took it. And we exhumed the position and at the end we saw the corpse of my son.

Q. How do you think for what reason the soldiers killed him?

A. I still do not know for what reason they killed my son. He was young and sincere. He never acted or performed any kind of opposition to the military. I don't know why the soldiers killed him. I never thought they would kill my son like this. Whenever I asked the commander why they killed my son, he always denied. As I knew, my son was a sincere man and he never contacted any rebel group. Sometimes when the rebel came into the village, he never met or supported them in any way. I also told the commander that if my son committed some kinds of opposing behaviours to the Burmese troops, they could inform me. I agreed to arrest and detention if he made wrong sometimes. I think my son did not commit any crime to face the punishment of death penalty.

Q. Do you have plan to put trial on the soldiers who killed your son?

A. You see, I would like to do so. But as long as I stayed here, I think I could not put them on trial. This area is black area. They can do as they like. If the area like my hometown (Bilin), I will put them on trial for killing my son. Here, we cannot receive any just decision.

[He was dissatisfied with the military too much, and also described other executions on innocent people like his son by the military, but not the same events. He also mentioned about those dead villagers.]

Q. Besides the execution of your son, have you ever heard other cases of killing?

A. Dislike my son, other villagers from this village ever died on the way when they were conscripted as porters. I have not been so sure whether they died of hardship or from torture by the Burmese troops. Normally, if one porter could not carry the heavy loads the troops offered, that porter would be beaten by soldiers. In this year, from Kyauktayan village alone, I heard three conscripted porters died when they were with the troops along the operations. The first one, Maung Sein, died around Budee village, situated south of our village and the second villager, Ah Baing, died in Thaung Khun village while the last person, Aung Naing, died in Kawza village. According to the villagers and released porters, most of dead porters were

severely beaten by the soldiers and they died from tortures, but some porters died in the cross-fire.

- Q. Of them, do you know whether they died from tortures or in the fighting?
- A. Maung Sein and Ah Baing died from tortures by the Burmese soldiers. Firstly, the troops used them as porters and when they could not carry the loads such as foods or ammunitions of the soldiers, on the way, they were severely beaten to death. Aung Naing died in the fighting between Mon troops and Burmese troops near Kawza village, the biggest village in the area. When the Burmese troops launched an operation, they were ambushed by Mon troops on half way. In this case, the Burmese troops used him and other porters to walk ahead of the troops as human shields. When he died, the troops insisted that they used him only to show the way, not as human shield.

Interview: 286 - HRV: Forced Labour, Slavery, Livelihood, Torture, Execution, Displacement

Name: Nai Sike Kao
 Age: 29
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kyauktayan village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 16 June 1995
 Source: HURFOM

[The following story is related to interview 285 conducted with U Thein Aung who mentioned about three dead porters. This interview states the death of Nai Ah Baing who died from severe torture by Burmese soldiers. The interviewee was an eyewitness for this human rights violation by the Burmese soldiers. Firstly, the interviewee explained how often the Burmese military came into the village, before and after it was destroyed.]

- Q. How often the Burmese troops came into your village in this dry season and what kinds of ill-treatments they commit on villagers?
- A. The Burmese troops came to our village about three times at the beginning of dry season. As usual, when the Burmese troops came into our village, they always arrest the villagers to use as porters even though the villagers had paid porter fees recently. For this dry season, in October and November 1994, the villagers were conscripted as labourers for the construction of Ye-Tavoy railway and as porters. Furthermore, starting from December, when the troops came to the villages, they asked taxes for railway construction and other military buildings, but they did not take labourers for rail-

way. Our villagers had to pay nearly 25, 000 Ks every month to the Burmese troops to avoid from such forced labour. Although they did not conscript forced labourers, they asked more money and they arrested more porters in the village when they came. Many males have even been arrested as porters since December. And after our village was being destroyed in the last week of March 1995, males were also arrested as porters on the way, on the farmlands, and in places where they were displaced together with their families.

Q. How many times have you ever been conscripted as porter in this dry season?

A. I have been as porters for two times in this year. I was arrested on my farm in December last year while I was harvesting paddy. When my paddy was ripe, my wife delivered a child, I lost half amount of paddy produced from my farm. It lasted for six days along with the Burmese troops to carry ammunition. They took security along the railway construction site and when the troops arrived at Paukpinkwin military base, they released me. For the latter time, I was arrested on 15 May on my farmland again. For that time, we had to carry heavy burdens to Kwaethonenyima military outpost which situated one and a half day walk from our village. In this time, one of the porters from our village died after being beaten severely by the Burmese soldiers. I was the one who brought him to the village.

[He told his experiences when he and his friend were used as porters in May. His friend died on the way.]

Q. Please describe me the whole story about that dead porter?

A. On 14 May, about 100 SLORC troops from LIB 408 arrived near our village. They arrested me secretly on my way to home in the evening. I returned to take some left facilities to start new cultivation in coming rainy season. When I was arrested, Ah Baing, 36 years old, was with them and I did not know where he was arrested. Although we were not staying in same section of the village, we knew each other. When we were arrested, there was no villager in the village and mostly they were displaced outside the village. After arrested, the soldiers gave me some loads which was comprised mostly the belongings of the villagers from other villages. On the first day, the troops advanced to Min Galon village where we slept one night.

From there, all of us moved to Chaung Phar village in the following morning. When we left, the soldiers did not feed us any food. Along the way as the soldiers did not allow us to take a rest, we were too tired because of scorching sun. On the way to Chaung Phar village, Ah Baing was terribly tired because of heavy load. So he could not walk like the soldiers and his steps were slow down. Then the soldiers told him to walk quickly, but he could not walk. The soldiers were angry at him and beat him to walk quickly.

But he could not walk at all and asked for water. Instead of offering water, the soldiers beat him. Three soldiers including one sergeant beat him several times in front of all porters and told us that was punishment for the lazy one. They beat him with rifle butts and kicked with combat boots. After several times of beatings, he became weak and weak. When the soldiers asked why he did not walk like others, he insisted he was recovered from sickness just two days ago and explained why he could not walk. The soldiers did not believe him and they continuously beat him.

Q. Did he get any injury on his body and what happened at the end?

A. He did not get any physical injury. I think he got internal injuries a lot. As the soldiers beat him mostly in the stomach, we could not see outside injury. After several times of beatings, at the end, he became losing consciousness and fell down on the ground. No one dared to help him because we were afraid of the soldiers. After losing consciousness, the soldiers asked other porters who knew him. I replied to them I knew him. Therefore they told me to bring him to Chaung Phar village. We arranged a salon stretcher to carry him to Chaung Phar.

Q. Did you have an eyewitness when he died?

A. I was an eyewitness when he died in Chaung Phar village. We carried him to Chaung Phar with stretcher, but the medic in the troops did not treat him at all. After walking for one hour, we arrived at Chaung Phar village, but as there were no body in the village, we could not get any traditional herbals medicine. The soldiers did not ask about his conditions and we treated him as possible as we could. We offered him some coconut juice. But he did not recover to continue for another breath and we knew he could not survive. We went to the medic and appealed for help. Later he came and gave him some medicines. I did not know what kinds of medicine. About five minutes later, he died in that house.

Q. What was the soldier's response after he died?

A. After he died, again the soldiers warned us not to claim he was died from several beatings by them. They also forced us to tell his family and his native villagers that he died of weakness and sickness. When the troops left from Chaung Phar, they put me with other villagers to bury him. So, the other man returned back to Kyauktayan and informed his family about his death. In the evening his family came to Chaung Phar and with the helps of those villagers we buried him in the following afternoon. Even though I did not claim the man was died from beatings, his family and villagers knew well what happened to him.

Interview: 287- HRV: Displacement, Livelihood, Slavery, Torture

Name: Nai Maung Htaik
 Age: 41
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Fisherman
 Address: Kyauktayan village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 16 June 1995
 Source: HURFOM

[After Kyauktayan village was destroyed by SLORC troops, the villagers have been displaced in several places outside the village. They were threatened by SLORC soldiers that if they were arrested they would be killed.]

- Q. Could you manage for fishing after the Burmese troops destroyed your village?
- A. I could not manage too much. I could go to the sea for fishing only two times after the Burmese soldiers destroyed our village. After that my family has been displaced like other villagers. We dared not stay in the village because we were frightened the Burmese soldiers for accusing us of being supporters of Mon rebel. I temporarily resided with my brother's family in his pineapple plantation. The survival of our family has depended on some products from that plantation and borrowing rice from him. He is a farmer. To get some small income, I went to the sea for two times to fish. Although I got fishes, there was no market in our village to sell them. Therefore I needed to send those fishes to Daneekyar village. It was inconvenient and my fishes became useless to sell both times. Later I decided not to fish again.
- Q. At present, what are other hardships for your family and those who were displaced like you?
- A. We are the most lucky family among our villagers as we stayed in the plantation where is easier to get foods. Many families have been terrible for survivals to receive foods and suitable shelters. When we had no more opportunity for fishing, every family had not enough income to buy foods so that they had to borrow rice or money from other villages like Kawza and Hangan. Other families have been taking shelters along the seacoast together with five to ten families in one place. They were spread in several places. Some families were staying in the forest or in the valley of mountainous areas to the east of our village. Most of them have been suffered from shortage of foods. Those who were taking refuge in coastal area had to eat fishes or crabs without rice. If we got rice, we kept it well and made rice soup. Because of shortage of food and improper shelters, mostly women and children suffered from sickness. No one dared to return to the village.

I was also arrested and subjected to forced portering one time when we were displaced. It was in May.

Q. Do you hope you can return back to your village again?

A. I would like to return back to my home as soon as possible, but the situation did not allow us from making decision to return. I am sure, if the villagers were arrested by the Burmese soldiers in the village, they would severely be punished and tortured to death. I think in this rainy season we could return back if the troops did not launch military operation very often. It is also difficult for them to move from one place to another because of water level.

Q. Can you tell me your other experiences before or after you was displaced?

A. In this dry season, I was conscripted as a porter for one time before I was displaced or escaped from my village. It was in February. When the Burmese troops from LIB 410 came into our village I was arrested and taken by them for three days as a porter to carry ammunitions like 60 mm mortar shells. When the troops arrived at Natkyizin military outpost, they released all porters. Nothing happened to the porters except subjected to beatings a little bit when they walked slowly. In the second time, when I was arrested and press-ganged into porting, one porter from our village was severely beaten by the Burmese soldiers. They released me with that suffered porter on the half way.

[He explained about one porter who was severely tortured by SLORC troops in May.]

Q. Please explain me the whole story for the who was subjected to suffering terrible porter.

A. On 6 May, when I returned back from finding some sea products, the Burmese soldiers who came from Daneekyar village suddenly arrested me on my way to temporary shelter. The troops was from LIB 408 and the numbers of soldiers were nearly 150 men with about another 40 porters. After being arrested I was forced into portering to carry some belongings. I thought those belongings were looted from another village by the soldiers. Among the porters was Nai Khaing (47) who I knew as he was from our village. He told me he was arrested in Daneekyar village while he was borrowing some rice from his relatives there.

Before we left there, he was looked like weak and too tired as he carried loads from Daneekyar village. After being arrested, I had to carry some loads and we proceeded to our village, Kyauktayan. When we arrived there, the soldiers gave a little food and slept there for one night. At that night, Nai Khaing became sick of malaria. He was not able to sleep for the whole night. In the morning his face was faint and weaker. When the troops warned to be ready for the trip, he told the soldiers he was not so well and to release

him. They were angry at him and one sergeant slapped him. Then they gave him yesterday's heavy loads to carry. They did not reduce his loads although he complained to them. Then we left Kyauktayan for Ah Buee village.

About 10 O'clock, because of heavy loads and weakness, he was too tired and impossible to continue carrying the loads. Finally he was intolerable, and he dropped his loads to ground. The soldiers behind him was angry with his manners and came and beat him. One sergeant accompanied with two soldiers also beat him. The sergeant beat him with a stick and the soldiers beat him with rifle butts and kicked with combat boots. The sergeant continuously beat him until his stick was completely broken into pieces. But he found another stick to beat him. He was terribly lied down on the ground and no one dared to help him. Only after three sticks were totally broken into pieces, the sergeant stopped beatings. He lost consciousness and was not able to stand up. Then, the sergeant informed the medic to check his condition. The medic came and injected some kinds of medicines which I did not know. After that, when they asked all porters who know Nai Khaing well, no one dared to answer. At the end, I replied that I knew him well and he was from our village. So, the sergeant told me to wait Nai Khaing until he died and to inform them quickly if he died. He also warned me that if I failed to inform them about him, they would punish me. They never left any food for us.

Therefore, I waited for Nai Khaing as the troops left for Ah Buee village. About half an hour later, I carried Nai Khaing in my back and brought him to Kyauktayan as quickly as I could because I would like to save his life. After one hour's walk, he was awakened when I called him. I was very glad and continuously bringing him to the village. Half an hour later, he told me he could walk and he managed for walking with my assistance. After four hours' walk, we arrived back near the village in the evening. We entered into one of my friend's hut and found out one traditional herbals medic to treat him. After one week treatment with traditional medic, he was recovered.

Interview: 288 - HRV: Displacement, Torture, Livelihood, Slavery, Forced , Labour, Women, Child, Execution

Name	Nai Thein Khae
Age:	56
Sex:	Male
Ethnicity:	Mon
Religion:	Buddhist
Occupation:	Farmer
Address:	Thaung Khun village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division

Interviewed: 13 June 1995

Source: HURFOM

[Before SLORC deployed the battalions around this area, the villagers happily inhabited with their own culture and community structure. In this interview, Nai Thein Khae, one of village headmen, explained about SLORC troops' destruction of community structure and its culture.]

Q. When did you leave your village and can you explain me the structure of your village before the Burmese troops arrived there?

A. In the past, our village had been a very enjoyable and all villagers were lowland farmers. We also had a monastery and a primary school in the village. Even our village was a small one, all the villagers were relatives and helped each other. By the encouragement of Education Committee of NMSP, we could manage a small school for promotion of our children's education. We had no problems with Mon troops even though those soldiers came from several parts of Mon State. But last three years ago we have been unsafe because of regular military operations by the Burmese troops. Since then, the Burmese soldiers always asked for perpetuate forced porters and tax payments. Although we provided them as we could, it was not enough for them. Every time they came to our village, they always looted the villagers' belongings as bandits. Again, when they started the construction of railway, we have been suffered from perpetual forced portering accompanied with tortures all the times, leading us to become displaced persons like this. All villagers abandoned our Taung Khun village just recently.

Before I left my village in second week of May, there were only five families left in the village. At the beginning of dry season, there were nearly 50 households in our village and most villagers were farmers while some had plantation like betel nut or coconut. We left our village when could no longer tolerate form the inhumane and brutal tortures of the Burmese troops.

Q. What kind of tortures have your villagers suffered when they stayed in village?

A. Briefly, at the beginning of dry season, we had to provide labourers for the railway construction without payment and later, the Burmese troops always arrested the villagers to used as porters in their military operations. At the same time, we had to pay many kinds of taxes for the troops and the villagers were getting poor and poor. At the end, they abandoned their village and displaced in several places outside the village. Then only five families left in the village including mine. As the military burnt some houses in the village, we had to abandon it again.

Q. Firstly, can you tell me the experiences about the conscripted labour by Burmese troops for their constructions?

- A. In the whole dry season, the Burmese troops continuously conscripted at least 7 labourers for every month for the railway construction and other military buildings. I had to arrange the rotation of the villagers for equal labour among them. Those villagers were subjected to contributing labour in the construction of railway and then the military barracks or in cutting trees to make railway sleepers, lumbers and other facilities for railway and other development infrastructure, as they were ordered. They ordered me to provide them at least two tons of hardwood every month and to saw it according to dimension of sleepers and planks they needed. So the villagers had to go to the forest and set up saw pit there until they complete their assignment. In this case, we had to find the saws by ourselves because the Burmese troops never provided. After the villagers had made the suitable facilities, they themselves had to bring them to the military barracks or to the construction sites. If the villagers could not provide the facilities they needed, they sent a letter and warned me to comply with their orders. Because of hardships and time consuming in their own jobs, half of the villagers had fled from the village at the end of February [1995]. I could not prevent them. So in February, our village were not able to provide the required number of labourers for portering and making hardwood facilities. Then the troops came to our village and ordered me and other villagers to fulfil the labourers they needed. I told them that I could not prevent the villagers from leaving the village and reducing labourers which we have to provide. They responded me to organise my own villagers by myself and they did not want to know about the escape of villagers and my problems. They also ordered me that those who were absent for providing labours, each person had to pay 1,000 Ks as a ransom. Starting from February, we had to pay ransom for the villagers who escaped from the village.

Besides the conscripted labourers, the military always took at least two porters every time they came and porter fees from the village every month. In December, I told them as our village was small and not populated, it was very hard us to provide labourers for in both construction and portering. The military told me they would consider on that and later they informed me to free from portering, instead our village had to pay them some money to hire porters. They asked us to pay 100 Ks for each houses instead of porter. The villagers helped each other and pay porter fees. I don't think they would hire porters with our money, but they would put it in their pockets. Furthermore, for the military barracks which were built in Natkyizin, each had to provide about 50 bamboo posts per month, from January to March.

[When the villagers were displaced, they were starved because of shortage of food for sometime. During harvest season, the villagers did not have enough time to reap their crops because of forced labour for the railway construction. The village headman briefed about that suffering.]

Q. Can you tell other problems after the military conscripted your villagers as forced labourers and other sufferings when you could not provide the labourers as they needed?

A. Whenever the Burmese troops conscripted the villagers, mostly the men were subjected to labourers for the railway construction or other buildings, so that we faced great difficulties during harvest in December. Mostly the women had to manage to harvest the paddy and it was unable for them to manage everything. Therefore, the villagers lost some paddy because the women could not enable to collect crops during the harvest as they had to care their children. So, we had to keep our rice well to be enough for the whole year.

One day in March, as I told you, after we could not provide the troops' needed sleepers and lumbers, they were angry at us and came into the village. As soon as they arrived, they told me to gather all the villagers in my house. As I was afraid of being tortured by them, I organised all the left villagers to come to my house. They beat all male villagers, most of them were some 60 years old. They alleged us of being lazy and unwilling to respect their orders due to encouragement by Mon troops. It was a punishment as we could not provide them the labourers and facilities they needed. Besides providing labourers and facilities, the troops from LIB 408 also asked four sacks of rice [eight Burmese baskets of rice, 35 kilogram for one basket], every month. Sometimes, without demanding, some Burmese troops looted rice in the village whenever they came. There have been many battalions active in this area and only LIB 408 officially asked while the other troops loot it. At the same time, as the villagers had not enough time to work their own jobs to get some small income, they had to sell their own rice.

As the villagers had to pay and offer their time too much in the military demands, later they were facing shortage of food. The villagers who stayed in the village and displaced outside have been suffered like this since February [1995]. Starting from February, some villagers needed to borrow rice from another big village for the survival of their families. Since December [1994], the Burmese troops issued an order saying that if they met someone with rice more than for one meal, they would punish. Two of our related villagers — Nai Gyor and Nai Ah Htae — who returned back from Daneekyar village after they borrowed rice were found by the Burmese troops on their way and severely beaten. Those cases were happened respectively in February and March. After being severely tortured, they had to receive for nearly two-week treatment and spend a lot of money for it. In fact, the villagers had to be in great caution for their later movement.

As the villagers were accused of being supporters of the rebels, the SLORC troops have the legal rights to shoot any villager and rape any woman in the village. And, they have always reported to their superiors that they com-

mitted such abuses only to the rebels and supporters of rebel.

- Q. Were there some inhumane ill-treatment to villagers like shooting, rape and execution created by Burmese troops?
- A. One day in the second week of January, while most men in the village had to work in building of military barracks or in the forest to saw sleepers and blanks, the women left in the village and one of them was raped by the Burmese soldier from LIB 408. That woman was a mother of two children. [The village headman did not want to mention her name as the rape case quietly occurred in the village]. At that night, the troops slept in our village and they separately stayed in several houses. At that time, while most of the men were away one soldier raped that woman at about mid-night. Afraid of being killed by the soldier, she dared not cry out for help. But in the morning she came to me and other villageheadmen, and told her last night incident.

The shooting case also happened in March by LIB 410. In the second week of March, about one company of Burmese troops came into our village and attempted to arrest some porters. We had already paid for porter fees to LIB 408, but LIB 410 dissatisfied with us. So, they came into our village and arrested for some porters. Suddenly when the villagers knew that the troops were arresting for porters, the villagers tried to escape and the soldiers opened fire on those who fled in front of them. My grandson, 11 years old boy named Ong Par, was also afraid when he heard the sound of the guns and joined the others who were fleeing. The soldiers shot at him and he got severe injury in his right thigh. I treated him nearly one month and spent a lot of money, but his right leg was absolutely paralysed and could not walk well.

- Q. What were the last situations of your village before you abandoned? And, please mention the difficulties in the situation of displacement?
- A. Actually, I don't want to abandon my village and so, I firmly stayed in the village until only five houses left there. However, at the end, I also could not tolerate for the ill-treatments of Burmese soldiers and decided to leave the village. As we have good surroundings in the village, at least we did not have to worry to get vegetables and domestic animals for foods. We could manage the better life than we are displaced like this.

After a small fighting broke out between Mon troops and LIB 408 in second week of April, we had no opportunity to stay any longer in our village. The fighting took place between our village and Daneekyar village. Two Burmese soldiers died in the fighting and retreated to our village after the fighting ceased. As soon as they arrived at the village, they informed me to meet them immediately. So I met their commander and I knew that they were from LIB 408. There were about 100 troops. When I met him, the commander said why we did not inform them about the Mon troops staying

around our village. I replied to him that I did not know about the Mon troops around our village, and complained that those Mon troops came from another area. Because of my arguments, they were angry at me and slapped me there times. At the time before the fighting, I did not get any information about the activities of Mon troops or Burmese troops. Moreover, they asked me to show the base of Mon troops. I told him I did not know the base and he accused me of being supporter of Mon troops and slapped me again. Because of my consistent denial on the location of Mon troops, at the end, he ordered his men to burn down my house. They did not allow my wife to pick up the belongings in the house. Three houses were burnt down as the other two were close to mine. Then the soldiers entered every house left in the village and confiscated all the villagers' belongings. How can we stay under the accusation of the Burmese troops that our village turned in to a rebel base. Therefore, we had to leave our village.

Interview: 289 - HRV: Displacement, Forced labour, Livelihood, Minority, Expression, Detention, Torture, Women, Slavery, Child

Name	Nai Tware
Age:	39
Sex:	Male
Ethnicity:	Mon
Religion:	Buddhist
Occupation:	Farmer
Address:	Daneekyar village (Hoit Kyar village in Mon), Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed:	15 June 1995
Source:	HURFOM

[Similar to other villages, Daneekyar village also suffered the abuses and related conscription of forced labourers in dry season by SLORC troops. Nai Tware explained his experiences why the villagers were displaced.]

Q. At presence, what is the whole condition of your village? Please tell me the living condition of your villagers, the structure of village and their recent suffering?

A. Mostly, our villagers are lowland farmers who cultivate paddy in the farmlands around our village. Some villagers have betel nut plantation in the east of our village. Normally, the production of paddy from our farmlands is enough for the survival of village's population. However, we have to share that rice production to the Burmese military every year as they forcibly took it. Because of such confiscating rice from us, the villagers did not have enough rice and had to borrow or buy some before the harvest every year. In our village, we have a small primary school for education of the chil-

dren. But the school could not manage for the whole educational term because the children too escaped from the village with their parents. Even though the school has been established, it is very hard to get a teacher for the whole school year because of the unstable situation of the village. Sometimes, the Burmese troops also arrested our schoolteachers by alleging them of being the supporters of Mon rebels. Traditionally, the teachers taught the children in Mon language and the Burmese troops anyhow were dissatisfied with those school courses. For the treatments of the patients, we have no medic and clinic in our village. The traditional herbals medicines could not cure some diseases. Therefore we had to bring those serious patients to Kawza village [Khao Jae village in Mon] where we can get possible treatments from medic. For the poor villagers, as they had not enough money, they were not able to receive the treatments and died.

Q. Did the Burmese troops conscripted your villagers as slaved labourers for the railway construction?

A. Yes. Since November 1994, we had to provide at least 25 men for the railway construction every month under the command of LIB 408. When the villagers were subjected to labours in the construction sites in the last dry season, they had to bring their own foods and received no payment from the Burmese troops. Under rotation basis, one villager had to be as labourer about 2 weeks and replaced with another one by village headmen. Our village had to provide labour at the working sites until February [1995], when they nearly completed the construction of Yebyu-Tavoy part. In the labour camp, they did not receive any treatment from the military medics whenever they became sick. They had to work in the fixed time for the whole day in the rain or sun. For sick villagers, they collected some money and bought medicines and treated each other.

Besides the conscripted labourers for the railway, the military also asked hard- wood for sleepers. At the same time, while some villagers were working for the railway construction, some went into the forest to cut trees for hardwood. We had to give only those hardwoods but I think they did not use them all for the railway construction, instead they sold them for extra incomes. Sometimes, the military ordered us to make lumbers from those hardwoods for use in building schools and military barracks. But I have never seen any lumber used in the school around our areas. Because of such perpetual labour conscription by the military, the villagers have not enough time to work their own jobs. Then, they became displaced persons after abandoned their home community.

[Accusation of rebel supporters on villagers have been a normal case in local area and the villagers were severely tortured for this. One of the villageheadmen, Nai Tware explained about that.]

Q. Please describe me about your experience and other kinds of abuses violated by Burmese troops?

A. In first week of January [1995], I was arrested by the Burmese troops form LIB 409 led by Lt Nan Aung. They arrested me and other four village leaders. They tied all of us and brought to Maethanthaung village. The military did not tell us for what reason they arrested us, and they beat us with sticks, with rifle butts and kicked with combat boots several times. While they were beating, they asked us to show the arms hiding places of the Mon troops. When we told them that we did not know about the places, they continuously beat us. Actually, they accused us of harbouring the Mon troops. We were severely tortured to admit that we were supporters of Mon rebels and that we hid rebels' arms. When they could not receive any fact from us, they covered our heads with plastic sheets and poured water on it. This was the worst kind of tortures among those they used. They used this method of torture to whom they accused as rebels or rebel-supporters.

When they could not get any evidence for keeping arms, they brought us to our village again. When we arrived there, in fear of being tortured by the Burmese soldiers, most of the men fled from the village. Because of those escapees, they accused us of harbouring the Mon soldiers in our village before they arrived. They pressed us to show the houses of Mon soldiers. When we replied that most of Mon soldiers' families stayed in Tavoy district head quarters area of NMSP, they were dissatisfied with us and beat us again and again. Then, the commander told us to organise our villagers to return to the village as soon as possible in order to check them who were the Mon soldiers. When we replied we could not easily manage for the return of those villagers, they tortured us again and again.

About half an hour later, they arrested a woman and accused her of being a wife of Mon soldier. They brought her to us and to prove she was a wife of Mon soldier. As we knew well that she was not as they accused, we denied their accusation. They also slapped her in front of us to admit their accusation. They interrogated her nearly one hour and sometime slapped her during their interrogation. She cried but no one dared to help her. She consistently denied. They were dissatisfied with her answers and slapped her terribly. Because of guarantee by the village leaders, and when they did not get any answer they needed, they released her. They also released all of us. They warned us if they heard that the Mon soldiers came and stayed in our village, they would burn down our village. Before they left, they looted a lot amount of rice from our village and forced the elder villagers to carry it to their military outpost in Maethanthaung village.

One week later, when LIB 408 returned from southern areas, they came into our village again and arrested Nai Ha Toi (47 years). They accused him of being a Mon soldier. I was not in the village at that time. They severely tortured him by beating with rifle butts and kicked with combat

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boots. They covered his head with plastic bags and poured water on it. They asked him to show hidden arms in the village. As he was an ordinary villager, he consistently refused. The more he refused, the more they inhumanely tortured him. He became like a mad man in village as a consequence of severe ill-treatment.

I could not recognise all the dates when the Burmese troops came into the village. It could say they came very often, at least four times a month. Mostly the troops from LIB 408 regularly came and sometimes, troops from other battalions also came. Because of such a severe ill-treatment, most villagers had to flee from the village whenever the troops came. It has been common. Previously, only two village headman, Nai Sla Kyin and I, left in the village when the troops from LIB 408 came. No one dared to meet them and fled away. So far we were always conscripted as porters every time when we could not manage for possible villagers to go as porters. Every time they came, they looted all the belongings in the village in front of us. While the commander was talking with us, all his men entered every house and took everything. They always accused our village of becoming a rebel base to have legal rights to take the belongings of the villagers.

In the first week of March, one company of Burmese troops led by Capt San Wai from LIB 408 came into our village and asked for 15 porters to carry foods, ammunitions and other confiscated belongings of villagers. At that time, there was no men in the village except us, two villageheadmen. I tried to explain them about the real situation in the village why the villagers had to flee. They never accepted any of my complaints and just said to quickly gather the demanded porters and if not, they must use women as porters. I had no choice but I could not manage to meet their demands. Then they arrested about 15 women in the village for portering. As I was worried about some troubles they could make, I asked the commander to allow me accompanying with those female porters. But they refused and forced the women to carry heavy burdens which were unfeasible to women's strength. Then, the troops and the women porters proceeded to Kyauktayan. When they arrived at Kyauktayan village, the troops released them and they quickly returned to the village. But most women got severe bruises on their shoulders and backs. When they arrived back, as they were too afraid of portering in the future, most of them escaped to the jungle and joined with their husbands, becoming displaced persons.

In the eve of [Burmese/Mon] new year festival [before April 14], a company of Burmese troops from LIB 410 led by Col Tin Shwe came into our village. When they arrived, they arranged a meeting with villageheadmen. At the time, we had all four headmen in the village. The villageheadmen who left in the village were mostly the elders, except me. In the meeting, they explained us they would not conscript any porter from our village like LIB 408 has done and told the villageheadmen to persuade the villagers to

return to their own village. As we believed the commander's words, we agreed with their proposal. So far the villagers who were displaced in the jungle and along the coastal areas, returned back to the village. One week later, the troops from LIB 410 came into our village again and then changed their minds. They said that as they had troubles and were impossible to carry loads with the number of their troops, they asked the villagers for helps. They said to me they just took the villagers to Chaung Phar village and when they arrived there, they would release all of them. Anyhow, as we were afraid of being ill-treated, we offered them 15 villagers as porters. But the commander broke his promise. When the porters arrived at Chaung Phar village, the soldiers did not release them. They continuously used those villagers as porters until they arrived to their military base in Paukpinkwin village. On the way for the whole two days, the villagers had no opportunity to take a rest and sometimes they were beaten by the soldiers when they could not walk as quickly as the soldiers did. Severe treatments by LIB 410 led the villagers to flee into the forests and coastal areas again. Later, we did not believe any word of them.

One month later, in the second week of May, the Burmese troops from LIB 406 came into our village again and asked the remained elders for 10 porters. There were no more young men in the village and it was difficult for those elders to arrange. When the elders told them about impossible arrangement to get the porters, the soldiers were angry at them and, at the end, the soldiers tied all men in the village and tortured them for the whole night. At that time, I was in my betel-nut plantation. In the morning, one of my daughters came to me and informed about the ill-treatment of the Burmese troops. Then, I quickly returned to the village. When I arrived at the village, they forced me to arrange 15 porters quickly and, if not, they would continuously keep torturing those elders. Immediately, by the helps of women in the village, we arranged to get 15 porters. I told those women to find their husbands or sons to return to the village quickly to help stop ill-treatments against the elders. In the evening, we could get 15 porters and they released the elders. Those villagers who arrived back from hiding places were also beaten or kicked by the soldiers. They were angry at me and beat me for the reason of allowing the villagers to hide outside the village. The troops also asked for four baskets of rice (one Burmese basket rice equal to 35 kilograms weight). A total of 15 villagers including me became porters and had to carry ammunition, foods and rice to Kyauktayan and restlessly to Mae Taw (Ah Mae in Mon) village.

After being terribly maltreated by SLORC troops, at the end, the villagers including women and children had to abandon their village and displaced in difficult situations.

Q. In which situation, all your villagers including women and children abandoned the village?

- A. After a fighting occurred closely to our village in the second week of April, the Burmese troops from LIB 408 accused all villagers of being supporters of Mon rebels and as a consequence, they burnt down our village. In the fighting, the Burmese troops lost two arms and retreated to our village. Another reason was, on the way they retreated, they found some amount of rice stored in the jungle and they were angry at us. As soon as they arrived at our village, they called and asked me why we did not inform them about the Mon troops around the area and kept the rice for whom. They tortured every villager whoever they met in the village. They also asked for the compensation of their losing arms in the fighting or to buy two arms to substitute for the loss. When we complained at them we had not enough money or belongings for that compensation, the soldiers were angry at us, entered every house and took away belongings of the villagers. When they were pleased with getting valuable belongings, they burnt down the whole village and then they shouted at us to stay with Mon rebels, or they would kill us if they meet us in the village. No one dared to stay in the village and abandoned the village.

Interview: 290 - HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labour, Execution, Slavery, Women, Child, Torture, Displacement

Name: Nai Chohn
 Age: 64
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Mae Taw (Ah Mae in Mon) village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 17 June 1995
 Source: HURFOM

[Mae Taw village is close to the gas pipeline construction area and most villagers were considerably accused of being the supporter of Mon troops. As the village is perceived posing a threat to the gas pipeline construction, the SLORC troops tried to destroy this village.]

- Q. Please describe me the background of your village?
 A. Normally, we villagers are mostly farmers and very few are fishermen. We have farmlands around and the sea is about two hours' walk from our village. In our village, mostly all of us are like relatives, and lived peacefully and supportively among ourselves. We also have a monastery and a school for the education of the children. Previously, before the Burmese troops started the construction of Ye-Tavoy railway, the living condition was better, but after that, we have been faced with many kinds of difficulties for

survival. We could not get enough time to work on our farmlands because of conscription of labourers and could not stay in the village due to allegation by Burmese troops to us of being the Mon rebels.

Q. What kinds of ill-treatment the Burmese troops have committed on your villagers and when?

A. At the beginning of this year [1995], approximately in the second week of February, about 60 Burmese troops from LIB 409 led by Sgt Han Myaing arrived at our village, arrested village secretary Nai Tun Maung (36) and killed him after accusing him of being a supporter of Mon troops. Normally, when the Mon troops arrived at the village, every villager ever met with them. As soon as they arrived at the village they tried to arrest all male villagers, leading the men fled from the village. For Nai Tun Maung, he did not expect the Burmese troops' accusation and stayed in the village. After the troops could not arrest the men in the village, they arrested 11 women for portering. Among them, there were some girls who were only 14 years old, but forced to carry their loads. They had to carry heavy burdens including foods and ammunitions to Chabone village which was two hours' walk from our village. The troops also brought Nai Tun Maung with them. When the troops arrived at Chabone village, they released all women, but tied Nai Tun Maung with ropes. Then, they beat and asked him to admit that he was a supporter of Mon troops. They severely beat him and interrogated where he hid the arms of Mon troops, how much taxes he gave to Mon troops and etc. Because of his refusals, they were angry at him and brought him to Kyaethonenyima military outpost early in the morning on the following day. No one could help him. When the troops arrived at their outpost, they interrogated him again and severely tortured. They were dissatisfied with him too much and in the evening they brought him under one bridge outside the village and shot dead.

After Nai Tun Maung was killed, every villager was frightened the Burmese soldiers and whenever the troops came into the village, they consistently escaped. The elders and villageheadmen mostly left in the village were always severely treated by the Burmese troops. The villagers staying outside the village also had to pay many kinds of taxes such as payment for the military barracks, for construction of Ye-Tavoy railway, porter fees and security fees for gas-pipeline and etc., to the Burmese troops. The villageheadmen paid for those taxes every month. In November and December of last year [1994], we had to work in the railway construction, and later many villagers refused and escaped from labour conscription. The troops also threatened the villagers that if they did not agree to pay taxes, they village would be reduced to ashes. As the taxation by Burmese troops were higher and higher all the times, the villagers have nothing left to pay. Then the troops came into the village and confiscated all belongings of the villagers. In March and April, the troops also ordered the villagers to move to Kyaethonenyima village where they based. Most of the troops from LIBs

408 and 410 asked for the taxes and confiscated the belongings. When the villagers refused to move, the troops from LIB 410 came into the village in second week of April and burnt down some houses and one rice mill. After that we were displaced in this place [The place is in the forest far three kilometres from the village]. Actually, the troops always tried to destroy our village. I think they always accused our village of being a rebel base and vulnerable to destroy their proposed gas pipeline construction.

[The interviewee explained the on going situations of human rights abuses after the SLORC troops alleged Mae Taw village of posing a threat to the planned gas pipeline construction.]

- Q. How do you think your village was related to gas pipeline construction security and then Burmese troops destroyed it and what other violations were committed by the troops connecting with pipeline?
- A. In comparison, the Burmese troops came into the village more than the Mon. But consistently, as the villagers were always fled for fear, they accused all male villagers of being supporters of Mon troops. Normally, Mon troops came into our village about three times a month, but they did not ill-treat us and we could stay in the village before the village secretary was killed. I think in February, most of pipeline construction facilities were put on the sea-bank opposite our village by the military. As they were really worried that the Mon troops would destroy the construction facilities, they relocated our village to cut off contact with Mon troops. The place where they put construction facilities was named 'Kin Taung' and no villager was allowed to go to that side. For the security of the pipeline, the military set up bases respectively in every village around that area. Since February, when the troops demanded increased taxes, they told the villagers they had to hire about 10 labourers instead of our villagers to build the military barracks and other buildings on the Heinze Bok Island. This military base is to be used for the security of pipeline construction, mainly for offshore pipeline, and the landing-pad is for military helicopter. According to the Burmese troops, they did not want us to work at the construction site on Heinze Bok Island as they never trusted us. Thus, they just took money from us every month. Before, we had to pay a monthly tax of about 20,000 Ks and in February, the military asked 40,000 Ks including labourer hiring charges on Heinze Bok Island. They said our village had to provide 10 labourers for every month, but instead of those labourers, they increased taxation. According to the Tavoyan villagers conscripted to work in construction site said that they have never received any payment for their labour on Heinze Bok Island. Besides such taxation, the village had to provide 20 baskets of milled rice to them every month, as they told, to feed labourers in construction site. To pay such taxation, the villagers had to sell their own livestock like oxen, cows, and farmlands and etc.

Q. When did the villagers flee the village and how were they suffered? Where did they displace and how their temporary site look like?

A. We can say, the villagers were escaped from their village when the military came into the village. As I mentioned above, before and after our village secretary was killed by the Burmese troops, any man dared not stay in the village as the military accused us of being rebels or rebel-supporters. After that, as the military used women as porters, some women joined their husbands and displaced at the mountainous area in the east of our village. Even though we were displaced, we had to pay taxes every month. Sometimes, we returned to village for a short time, took some belongings and came back here [interviewee was displaced] immediately.

We have stayed for nearly four months with temporary shelters. Our group comprised of four or five families are staying together at a place where we think the Burmese troops could not reach. Before, as the Burmese troops came into the village not so often, we could get some rice from our village. Later in March, When the troops came often into the village and took rice from the village as tax or forcible confiscation, the villagers could not get enough rice for their families. Then they tried to get rice from another village. But it was so unsafe for them to travel and enter into other villages because the Burmese troops were always launching military operations around the area and taking bases in big villages where they could get possible rice supply. Hence, the villagers had to eat rice soup and sometimes we have no rice. At that time, we had to eat fish, crabs and prawns without rice.

Because of shortage of food and clean water, women and children were suffered from malnutrition and various kinds of diseases such as skin diseases, diarrhoea and etc. One nine years old girl named Mi Nue died of malnutrition and diarrhoea. Other two infants died of malnutrition and sickness infected from mothers. As there was no medic around this area, we had to transfer serious patients to Kyaethonenyima village. But it was not so easy to bring them as the Burmese troops could arrest us on the way and even the quacks there dared not treat us as they were threatened by Burmese soldiers not to treat our villagers for we have always been regarded as Mon soldiers.

But we could return to the village for two weeks before the New Year festival [The Burmese new year festival is 14 April of every year]. During those days, as no Burmese soldier came to our village, we were able to stay safely. After the festival, they came into the village again and all the men escaped again. They ordered the remaining villagers, elders and women, to relocate to Kyaethonenyima village immediately. The troops were from Kyaethonenyima-based LIB 410. Because of the refusals to relocate, the troops burnt some houses and one rice mill. Since them, we have been displaced and no one dared to return to the village again. I do not know for

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sure whether we can return to the village in the coming raining season for cultivation. About 20 families fled to the refugee camps where they can get enough assistance for survival. [For interviews with people from Mae Taw village, see also Interview 140-143] We, the villagers who left here, don't want to abandon our farmlands and hope we can return to our village in coming rainy season.

Interview: 291 - HRV: Livelihood, Force Labour, Torture, Detention, Women, Slavery, Child, Displacement, Minority

Name: Nai Htwe
Age: 52
Sex: Male
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Chaung Phar (Knot Krone in Mon) village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: 19 June 1995
Source: HURFOM

- Q. Please describe the life of your villagers and the structures of your village before you escaped from there?
- A. Recently, in the stable situation, there were nearly 100 households in our village and most of the villagers were lowland paddy-cultivating farmers while very few were betel-nut or coconut plantation farmers. We had one monastery as we were Buddhism. We also had a small primary Mon National School for promotion of education of our children. We had no medic or clinic in the village. Serious patients were taken for treatments in Kawza (Khao Jae in Mon) village which situated nearly one day walk from our village. Sometimes when the Mon troops came into village, the troops medic ever treated the patients in the village.
- Q. What kinds of labour conscription on villagers at the beginning of this year?
- A. Firstly, the Burmese military conscripted our villagers as labourers to work in the railway construction site. It was started in November and December of last year [1994]. At that time, our village had to provide about 20 labourers every week under the command of LIB 408. Besides the conscripted labourers, we (the villagers) also had to pay taxes, as they told, to buy railway sleepers. And, sometimes the villagers were also conscripted in disengaging parts of fishing vessels in the sea coast. I think those fishing vessels were plundered by the Burmese troops in the sea and they sold all parts of the vessels such as engines, radar, radio, fishing nets, lumbers and etc., after they were disengaged. Some vessels, which travelled forth and back to Penang Island of Malaysia for illegal import and export were also

confiscated by the military and brought to the coast. They did not report to the senior authorities about the confiscating vessels and they sold all parts of vessels to merchants in Ye and Tavoy town and other big villages. The merchants sold it to ship builders again to get more profit. The Burmese soldiers did such kind of business under the command of respective battalion commanders.

Furthermore, the military collected many kinds of taxes. While the villagers were working for the construction in November and December [1994], they were also demanded money to buy facilities for construction such as railway sleepers. Thus, every house in the village had to pay 2,000 Ks every month for railway facilities. The designated work-site for our villagers was near Paukpinkwin village. After December, the military even had to stop the construction because most villagers around the railway escaped from their villages and most headmen refused or were impossible to arrange for labour demand. Some villagers fled to the refugee camps along the border not only because they had not enough times to work their own jobs for survivals but also the military always asked for payment of construction facilities. Later, when the villagers could not provide the demand, the soldiers looted belongings and livestock of villagers. When the villagers were not able to provide labourers or money, they asked the village to give them 3 tons of hardwoods for every month. They said this hardwoods was for railway sleepers and for military barracks. In February [1995], the villagers tried to saw hardwoods and gave them. According to the information we received from the military outpost, all the hardwoods were sold and the soldiers just collected money as they could while taking responsibilities around the railway construction sites.

In March, there were no male villagers in the village. Aside from providing labourers and money, when the villagers had no time to saw hardwoods in the forest, the commander from LIB 408 was angry at the villagers. They sent a letter to villageheadmen to meet them immediately. As the villageheadmen were frightened the possible punishment of the military, they dared not meet the commander. Therefore, the villageheadmen did not meet the commander in the set deadline. One day in the third week of March, a company of troops from LIB 408 came into the village and tried to arrest all men in the village. As the villagers were afraid for being tortured by soldiers, most of them fled and only elders and villageheadmen were left in village. Then, the soldiers arrested 12 elders and villageheadmen and brought them to the military outpost in Paukpinkwin village immediately. When the troops arrived at Paukpinkwin, they severely tortured those villagers for refusing to meet them and accused the villageheadmen that the villagers were encouraged not to meet them by Mon troops. Then, they wrote a letter and sent it to our village. In the letter, the commander asked to pay them 15,000 Ks immediately or if not, they would kill all villagers. They detained those villagers and tortured them everyday. The rest villag-

ers immediately collected the money and gave them within three days. After five days in detention and giving 150,00 Ks, the soldiers released them.

After that, the villagers had nothing to pay them more and even the villageheadmen escaped from the village to avoid from possible arrest when the troops came into village. Every time the Burmese troops came into the village, the villagers including women fled from the village. Normally, when the troops could not meet any villager, they entered every house and looted all belongings. Before new year festival, one day in the first week of April, the troops from LIB 410 came into the village and arrested four villagers — Nai Zain, Nai Htapoe Dot, Nai Kyaw Win and Nai Kyi Win. The troops used those villagers as porters to carry heavy loads such as ammunitions and other supplies. The military launched an operation along the railway and at the end our villagers were conscripted to their outpost at Ah Bue village until June. They did not release those villagers. We don't know for sure whether they are still alive or dead. According to information we got from Ah Bue village last month, they were still alive and they became slave labourers in the military outpost and sometimes, they were subjected to work at construction site in building military barracks on Heinze Bok Island as permanent porters.

[During interview, he also has knowledge about the dead porters in the military operations in recent months and described about that in detail.]

- Q. Did you ever seen some villagers died of ill-treatment by Burmese soldiers?
- A In December 1994, when the troops from LIB 406 came from Maethantaung village, they entered our village. When they arrived, they asked for two porters and we agreed to provide them. They also told the villageheadmen to bring a man who was sick outside the village on the way they came. When the troops left, some villagers including me went outside the village to find the sick man. When we arrived at a place, the porter, about 35 years old, already died from beatings, and bruises were found on his body. Actually, he was tortured by the soldiers and then died. But he was look like a sick man. As he was sick and he could not walk well, the soldiers beat him to death. The bruises in his body showed evidences that he was severely beaten with rifle butts, sticks and kicked with combat boots by the soldiers. We brought him into the village. Some villagers knew him and he was a villager from Kyaethalin. Therefore we informed his family and in the following morning, his family arrived at our village and we came to know that he was sick when arrested.

In the second week of February, a porter from Natkyizin also died after being severely tortured by the soldiers. On that day, about 50 troops from LIB 408 came into the village and told the women about a dead man outside the village and asked them to pick up and bury him. According to

them, that porter was died of sickness. At that time, all men in village already escaped in fear of being arrested by Burmese troops. Although they were informed, no one dared to go and bring the dead porter. In the evening, when an elderly man came back from collecting forest products, he saw that dead man aged about 28 years old and informed the abbot to bring him back to the village. Then the villagers brought him back to the village and found his whole body was full with bruises. We knew he was died from torture, not as the soldiers claimed he was died of sickness.

Another porter who died from torture was a villager from Kyauktayan. In the first week of April, when LIB 410 arrested four villagers (as mentioned above), one porter also died in our village. At that time, there were about 30 porters with them. The dead porter was look like sick, so that he could not carry loads and the military beat him, according to other porters who told the female villagers. He was sick before the troops arrested him in his village, Kyauktayan. He also told them about his sickness, but the troops did not pay attention on his words and forced him into portering. On the way, as he could not walk as quickly as the troops, the soldiers from behind beat him severely. Then, other soldiers joined and beat him, and at the end, before they arrived at our village, he was died from severe torture. But when the troops arrived at village and they told the villagers he was died of some diseases and not mentioned that he died of torture. [The name of the Kyauktayan villager porter is Ah Baing and for his whole story please see Interview 285, 286]

[He explained the last situation of his village and why all villagers, including women and children, had to abandon their own native village].

Q. Can you describe me the last situation of your family and why you and other families were displaced?

A. One day in the last week of April, a company of Burmese troops from LIB 410 came into our village again and made a disturbance to the village. When they arrived at the village, as all male villagers fled, only two villageheadmen — Nai Nyan Tin and Nai Thaung Sein— were left. In our village, we have four villageheadmen. When they arrived, they asked for the other two headmen. Nai Nyan Tin responded that they would return in the evening. In the evening, as those villageheadmen did not appear, they were angry at them, tied up and beat them severely. In the following morning, when the other villageheadmen still did not arrive, they prepared to burn down the houses of those headmen. When Nai Nyan Tin prevented them from doing so, they were angry at him, but they kept on burning down those two houses. They did not allow anybody to pick up and collect belongings inside the houses. After they burnt down two houses, they ordered Nai Nyan Tin and Nai Thaung Sein to run in front of them along the road in the village. While running, they shot them from behind. Nai Nyan Tin got severe injuries in his thigh.

At night the troops slept in the village and a soldier attempted to rape a mother of two children, Mi Aye Pin. Her husband had already fled from the village and she was left with her young sons and aged father in her house. At about 11:00 p.m., a soldier who slept in the room outside entered her room and tried to rape her. When he touched her, she cried out for help to her father. Although the soldier slapped her in the face and closed her mouth, she was able to shout anyway. As soon as her father heard her cry, he lit a lamp and the soldier fled away. The man knew that soldier well and informed the rape case to the commander in the following morning. But the commander ignored about that and did not punish his man.

Because of severe tortures and created unsafe situations, both men and women in the village have to take refuge here with many difficulties. Actually, no one would like to abandon their village and good surroundings of their homes.

Interview: 292 - HRV: Force Labour, Child, Women, Livelihood, Religion, Torture, Slavery, Disappearance

Name: Maung Hla
 Age: 40
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Rakhine
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with four children (age 13 to 18, all students)
 Occupation: Trader
 Address: Mingan Section, Sittwe Town, Arakan State
 Interviewed: December 1995
 Source: KHRG

[“Maung Hla” fled Sittwe and arrived in Bangladesh as a refugee in October 1995.]

The construction of a Buddha museum is now going on in Sittwe and SLORC soldiers are using forced labour of the people from the quarters of Sittwe Town, including children, elderly women, young girls, and men from all walks of life. They force them to work for them. Even at night, SLORC don't let people go home. They demand that the people complete the work. They let some of the attractive young girls go home only after midnight. Now the people are feeling afflicted to see this happening. I have worked there myself three times. The first time was on 10 September 1995. Each family has to work one day at a time. All the families from Sittwe have to work one day each by turns. This project started in 1991, in Ma Gya Myai Quarter of Sittwe. It is quite big, spread over a wide area. They are building it in paddy fields. Some fields were owned by villagers and they were moved from there. The army forcibly occupied that land and relocated the villagers somewhere. Part of these fields was also owned by an orphanage. The orphanage got no compensation, because SLORC has no regulation for compensation.

SLORC is trying to collect and find all the ancient Buddha images and gather them in this museum. Then later they will take them all to Rangoon. That is the reason why they are building this museum. The government is trying to collect all the Buddha images and other ancient objects from all over Arakan State and they have already made a list of all our ancient precious objects in all the monasteries.

The people don't like this museum. Now it is almost finished. It is a two storey building. They still have to start building the partitions to make separate rooms. The roof is already finished as well as the external walls. Only the people from Sittwe Township have to do the work. Everybody has to go — Rakhines, Muslims, Hindus, Christians. In each quarter SLORC orders some families for one day and people have to rotate turn by turn. They take 200 to 300 people per day. It has gone on continuously since 1991. They never interrupted the construction work.

Everyone has to work at least three times a month. Before September my younger brother always went for our family. When I went I had to carry sand, bricks and wooden planks. One group of soldiers from IB 20 under Western Command were there to supervise the work. While I was working there, I saw soldiers throwing stones at people who were taking a rest for a little while. They also hit them with a cane stick, kicked them and scolded them rudely. But I was not beaten up. Some people were badly hurt. While one woman was having a smoke and sat down, a soldier brutally took the cigarette out of her mouth and kicked her in the belly with his combat boots. Then he hit her with a cane stick. She fell down and lost consciousness. It must have been internal injuries, because she was not bleeding. She was 17 years old.

Some elderly women had to come and work in place of their sons and daughters. They were scolded by the soldiers without any respect: "Why are you coming here? You are useless! Where are your sons and daughters?" These elderly women were like the soldiers' mothers but the soldiers didn't pay any respect to them. [Reverence for elders and parents is a cornerstone of society in Burma.] There are many women, more women than men, at the labour because many men are doing their business, so their wives have to substitute for them. There were some pregnant women working, but not in an advanced stage of pregnancy. Some women came with their babies. There were children seven or eight years old working there too, and elderly were about 60 years old. There were many young girls, some were students. The soldiers ordered the most attractive ones to stay as late as midnight. Normally the work continues until 6:00 p.m. but they ordered these girls to work overtime. You can easily imagine why they kept them! But if they were raped, they wouldn't reveal it because of our society.

If a family was absent, they have to pay 200 Ks for one day. This is extortion. We have to work from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.. For lunch, we could take a break for half an hour. We had to bring our own food, and we got no pay. They never even promised anything. SLORC allowed us to use tools. The tools were provided by the army. The army brought all the building materials. To carry bricks and sand

they are using people's trucks, not their own.

All over Arakan state, forced labour is going on: road construction, building of military camps, etc. For example, in remote areas people depend on their cultivation but they have to go all the time to work in military camps or at road construction. They have no time to do their own cultivation. They have to crush stones, cut bamboo, cut iron bars for building purposes and they have to be porters for the army without any pay.

They are building a highway between Sittwe and Rangoon. The people from Sittwe have to build the part of the highway in Sittwe area. Those who are living in other townships have to do the part in their own township. I worked on this highway myself, in July 1995. We had to build the road embankment [*because the land is low-lying, all roads in Arakan must be built on embankments*]. First we had to dig the ground nearby, then carry the loose soil and build the embankment. The embankment is two or three feet high. Each section of town has to finish an assigned length of the embankment. After it is finished, they can go home. I worked there only once, for seven days. It was too far from my house, so I had to stay there at night. It was seven miles from home. I went there on foot.

When we stayed at night, we had to build a shelter. Some heavily drunk soldiers came there, entered the shelters and made troubles for the girls and to their relatives who were trying to protect them. They started to quarrel, kick, punch, and hit people with their rifle butts. The soldiers always went and got alcohol in the nearby villages. They came back drunk and then did whatever they wanted: they kicked, they beat, they punched whomever they wanted. Many different battalions are in charge there. In Sittwe Township alone, there are 20 battalions.

That highway goes through the paddy fields owned by people. They get no compensation. This project started after SLORC seized power [1988]. It will never be finished. It will take forever because what they finish during the dry season is completely destroyed in the rainy season. SLORC have started many such projects of road building: Kyaukpyu to Rangoon, Sittwe to Maungdaw via Amumaw. Also Kyauktaw to Buthidaung and Sittwe to Rathedaung. All since 1988.

They also catch porters in Sittwe, as they do throughout the country. They order the quarter leader to provide a certain number of people. If people can't go, they have to pay 1,000 Ks. I never went as a porter because I gave money. I don't know where they take them, probably to the front-line. There is no time limit — most of the time they are gone for two or three months. Some never came back. Some came back suffering seriously from malaria and other illnesses. We also learned that they shot the ones who tried to escape. Maung Soe and Maung Gong from my quarter never came back. That was in 1991.

In Nga Pi Kyan village, Pauktaw Township, some people had a shrimp farm but the SLORC soldiers confiscated it and started their own shrimp project there under the

name "Military Welfare Farm". Near the Kaladan River, in Pu Na Kyan Township, soldiers came and caught people to build embankments for a shrimp project. [In Arakan there are two types of shrimp farms: one kind in the river near the sea where stone barrages are built to divide the areas for the shrimps and another kind, along the river, where ponds are dug divided by earth embankments and using irrigation from the river.] They use people to dig ponds and build embankments. Most of the men in that area fled to Sittwe. In the absence of men, the soldiers took elderly women, girls and pregnant women. One pregnant woman was forcibly taken and she gave birth at the work-site at the shrimp farm. That happened at mid-day, in March 1993. They started these projects in 1989. There are many shrimp farms like this in the coastal area, including Sittwe Township.

In Sittwe Town there are bases of IBs 263 and 264 and etc. I don't remember all the battalion numbers because there are so many. The people have to work — not only to build the camps but also to look after their cows. The cows and buffaloes belong to the people, but they demand that the villagers give their cattle and buffaloes, and then order the villagers to look after their own cattle and buffaloes in the camp compound. The soldiers get the milk and the meat to eat and to sell at the market. The soldiers even sold some cows at the roadside on the way to their camp. And the villagers have to build shelters and bring food for the cows. Some people have a paddy field near the military camp and their fields are now completely occupied by the military. On top of that, these villagers have to plough the field and harvest the paddy for the soldiers. After that, the soldiers sell it all at the market. This is happening everywhere in Arakan.

Sittwe, the capital of Arakan, is also the capital of the military. There is actually no trade. It is all in the hands of the army. All kinds of businesses are in the hands of the military in Sittwe. In Rambee Township, Ann Township, Myebon Township, the soldiers give orders for firewood from there and the villagers have to cut it and send it to Sittwe. They use this wood for baking bricks.

Also, the boat owners have to get permission to go anywhere. The army always takes their boats. They forcibly take the boats and check the boat authorisation documents. Even if there are 150 boats, they never get tired of checking. The army has a list of all the boat owners, and they give orders directly to them to carry sand or things, or even for their personal use. Whenever they need, they take them. And the people have to provide the fuel themselves. In Sittwe, fuel is called "army oil".

When we look at the scene of Sittwe, we first see a green military uniform in the street. We can only see people in green military uniform. Of course we are afraid of them. And not only in the streets, on the buses, in the boats, in the cars, there are soldiers everywhere. That's why we call Sittwe a military town.

"Development" means road construction. The people have to give money and labour for that although they are not willing. People are starving more than before. In Sittwe, they also ordered families who have a house on the street-front to build a

brick house surrounded by a brick wall and a pavement with their own money. If they fail to do so, they have to move. Then, the soldiers build a brick house on these people's land and sell it. The people even have to build the pavement with their own money although the pavement is public and belongs to the government. On the waterside, all the houses were completely destroyed by SLORC. Now it is a wasteland and the people had to move out of town. SLORC said: "When the foreigners visit this area and travel down the river, this is not beautiful for their sight. These houses are too ugly."

The army built a hotel called "Sittwe Hotel" at the seaside for tourism year ["Visit Myanmar Year 1996"]. They used forced labour to build it. It is a SLORC hotel. The hotel contractor is the son of former Trade Minister Kyaw Ba but he didn't pay the workers [Gen. Kyaw Ba is now Minister of Tourism, responsible for preparing "Visit Myanmar Year 1996"]. That hotel is medium-size. It is a three-storey building.

I haven't been to Ngapali for the last three years [*Ngapali on the Arakan coast is promoted as one of Burma's two main beach resorts*]. There were coconut plantations belonged to the people. The military occupied them and built bungalows on them, bungalows for the army and for the officers, and also Gen. Ne Win's bungalows [*Gen. Ne Win was absolute dictator of Burma from 1962-88, then he created SLORC*]. They also built bungalows for recreation for disabled military men and for tourists. The coconut plantations were along the seaside, up to Kyat Taw. There is also a small island there. This island is named "Gen. Ne Win's island". It is only for his family and they raised oysters for pearls. This is his pearl business. His sons and daughters and their in-laws are staying there and it is the family business centre. No one is allowed to enter that area. It is surrounded by soldiers. Previously it was controlled by the Department of Pearls and Fisheries. Now they control it themselves. On the way from Ngapali to Gwa, the son of Gen. Than Shwe [current Chairman of SLORC] built a hotel in 1994. He used forced labour for the construction too. In Sittwe, the son of Gen. Than Shwe also forced the people to build barrages for a shrimp project in the Sittwe-Ong Dine River.

The army is now fishing in the sea with the people's boats and with the boats that they seized from the Thai fishermen [*trawlers seized from Thai companies illegally fishing in Burma's waters*]. People have no more space to fish in the sea. We are dependent on fishing from the sea. But people can't go because the army is taking their boats all the time. One Australian company [joint venture] started their business in Sittwe. The company name was Thin Di Aung. They brought in all the fishing equipment, boats, nets, etc. to catch fish and shrimp, to pack them and send them to Australia. But they were not able to fish or send any fish to Australia. Although they got SLORC permission, they were not allowed to fish in the sea [by the Army]. They were there for one year without any business activities. Their fishing trawlers became all rusty and then they left.

Now in Arakan it is very difficult economically. After I left, because of me, my

family had to go to the military camp for investigation and torture. When I was there, my wife did sewing and tailoring to survive. But I don't know about her present condition. I was not the only person oppressed by SLORC. It is all the people from Burma. We suffer so much because of forced labour. Until they have to resign from power, they will torture the people.

[Notes: According to other sources from Arakan, the Buddha museum in Sittwe is now known as the "Dukkha Museum", which means "Museum of Suffering". At the museum construction site in September 1995, a 14-year-old girl named Ma Ni Ni was repeatedly raped by soldiers until she lost consciousness and died. She was a 9th Standard student at No. 1 State High School in Sittwe.]

Interview: 293 - HRV: Force Labour, Women, Child, Torture, Livelihood, Execution, Religion, Slavery

Name: Salai Lian Cung
 Age: 20
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Chin
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Single, seven brothers and sisters
 Occupation: Student
 Address: Storm Quarter, Kalemmyo Town, Sagaing Division
 Interviewed: 9 November 1995
 Source: KHRG

I left because there were so many problems in Burma. I had problems with the army because while I was doing forced labour in January this year [1995], I heard about the killing of a soldier on the railway construction so I was worried about my cousin's sister. She was also working on the railway with her baby, but at a different place from me. I was so worried about her and during rest time I asked a soldier if I could go there, but he did not allow. When I had to start working again, I couldn't do it and I just stood there. That soldier ordered me to work but as I didn't do it, he beat me. Then I left the work.

I had to work on the railway [Kalemmyo-Gangaw] for six times. The first time was in October 1993. I had to go myself because I am the second eldest son. My parents are of old age and couldn't do this work. I have seven brothers and sisters. My eldest brother already left home. I always had to go because my younger brothers and sisters were too young and not fit for this. I had to go sometimes for two weeks, sometimes three weeks. Therefore I missed school.

My quarter is part of Kalemmyo Town. For workers, SLORC gave an order to the town council, and the council ordered the people. They told how many people had to come from each quarter. The town council must get the quota of people they

asked for. The people of Storm Quarter were divided into 6 groups. Each was again divided in two: A and B. At each time, all 6 groups had to go. When they first started, everyone had to go. But later, they called only A and then B could rest. When A finished, then they called B and A could rest. About 160 people from our quarter had to go at a time, in all 6 groups.

We had to work about 20 miles away from Storm, near Nat Chaung. The first time it was in Tang Go, near Nat Chaung, about 22 miles away, and then in Zing Gelin, near Kalemmyo. We had to work at different places each time and it was always according to their orders. I had to go with my own bicycle. At night we couldn't go back home. We were kept near the river because we had to cook for ourselves. So that place was a little far from the work-site, about two falongs [one falong = 220 yards, so the distance was 440 yards]. The women stayed together at another place. We had a large roof covered with a plastic for all of us. There were three elderly men among us and they arranged everything for us. For the women, they built some huts with bamboo and branches. There were no guards at night.

For work, the men between 20 and 30 years old had to dig the ground. There were many teenagers and they had to carry the loose soil. It was hard work, especially digging. I had to carry the loose soil, but not only that. It depended on the situation. I also had to load the loose soil into baskets.

Most of the workers were young, mainly teenagers. One girl was only 10 years old. No one else from her family could go. There were elderly who were about 50 years old. They were working as cooks for the others. There were many women and most of them were old. Some babies were brought along with their mothers. The women did the same work as the men, but everyone was always changing duties with each other.

We had to bring our own food. The people had to bring their own tools. No salary. It was a must for each family to go. But the rich people hire someone else to go for them. So for them, there is no problem. But for those who cannot pay, they must go. That's why sometimes young children and elderly women have to go. If you couldn't go, some people had to pay 1,200 Ks, some 1,500 Ks. It depends on the villager. I think it depends on their family conditions. [*These are fines paid to SLORC if a family cannot go or hire a replacement.*]

At work, some groups had 20 people, others 30 people. It varied according to the group. There were soldiers around. They didn't do anything. Just walking here and there to watch us. If people weren't working, they hit them. Sometimes on the back, sometimes on the head. There was a boy who was very young. The soldier was also very young. About 20. They started quarrelling, the soldier called another soldier and they hit the boy badly. He was badly injured on his head and he was hospitalised in Kalemmyo. The leader of the B group sent him to hospital. He was in hospital for about one week.

For another story, I only heard about it because it happened at another place. A woman with a baby was working on the railroad and her baby was crying. She asked a soldier if she could go and feed her baby but the soldier didn't allow her. But she went to her baby anyway to feed him. Then the soldier hit her. All the workers saw the scene. One of them was a relative of that woman. He was so angry and he went to hit the soldier with a pitchfork and that soldier died on the spot. Another soldier also saw the incident and shot the villager dead. At that time, all the people started beating the soldiers. There were three soldiers who were guarding their group. One of them ran away and another one died as well. After that, those people had their workload increased as punishment. That group had to do three times more work.

Problems between soldiers and villagers happened all the time. Most of the workers were young and the weather was very hot. Many wanted to go and swim in the river during and after their work. But it was not allowed. Some young soldiers had problems with those from B group who were swimming and they started quarrelling. Then, a senior officer came and called all of the young villagers to their camp. They never came back. Maybe they were killed.

As far as I know, six people died on this railroad while I was working there. Some died in the river. It was very hot and the river was very big. Two boys went to swim and drowned. The others died of malaria. Most of the people got sick, but it was a must to keep working.

Even in the rainy season, if the weather was fine, they would call the people. It depended on the weather. Each group had to do a stretch of embankment: the height was 30 ft, the length 40 ft and the width about 15 ft. Also, my younger brothers and sisters had to crush gravel at home, in the town. They had to do this three times. The first time, they had to make 1 ft x 10 ft x 10 ft of gravel. The second time, SLORC demanded 60 cooking-oil tins of gravel [big tins, about 15 litres each]. They had to send the gravel to the railway by themselves.

The last time I worked on the railway was in March 1995. Some of the villagers were called after March, but mostly before March. By March, the construction was over. But afterwards, they were still calling villagers to pour water on the tracks to harden the ground. Now they also call people to guard the railway, not all the time, but it happens sometimes when an important person comes.

Most of the troops on the railway were not from Kalemmyo. They were from Gangaw [most likely IB 50]. There are many battalions around Kalemmyo — IBs 87, 88, 89 and Military Intelligence unit. There is a quarter called San Piang very close to the army camp. Many soldiers are staying around Kalemmyo. So there are many problems with the villagers. Mostly the junior soldiers are causing troubles to the villagers. Sometimes they take villagers' bicycles. They don't ask, they just use them. The women dared not go out in the streets, only in groups of two or three. They are so afraid of being raped by the soldiers. They call people to the army

camps for cooking. They summon not only the people but also their vehicles. Whenever they need them, they order them to come to carry all the army things.

These camps have been there since 1989. The soldiers occupied the graveyard. They also called local people for loke-ar-pay ['volunteer', but actually forced] work. The graveyard was belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. They announced that the tombs must be taken away within three days, otherwise they would be destroyed. So the people had to take their bones. But most of them couldn't. Then they bulldozed the graveyard. This order was given by Maj Aung Khin. While they bulldozed and crushed the tombs, one of the crosses stood up again after the bulldozer passed over it. The bulldozer passed again over that cross but again the cross stood back up. So the bulldozer driver was freaked out and dared not pass over again. But Maj Aung Khin ordered him to pass over again. The driver refused and dared not destroy the cross. He was dismissed on the spot and Maj Aung Khin drove the bulldozer himself and destroyed all the graveyard.

The stronger people are called as porters. Not many from my quarter, but I know two boys from Storm who had to go as porters for two months before they were released, in December 1994. There are so many taxes: house taxes, bicycle taxes, (25 Ks per year), TV taxes (150 Ks a year), even if you have a tape recorder it is 60 Ks per year.

There was a USDA rally held in February 1995 [*Union Solidarity Development Association, SLORC's attempt to establish a 'mass support' organisation — people nation-wide are forced or threatened into joining and attending rallies, which are then shown in the media by SLORC as signs of popular support*]. The government occupied one of the female high schools to organise it which was attended by General Khin Nyunt himself [*Secretary-1 of SLORC and head of Military Intelligence*]. A group was formed in the school of each quarter in town, and the USDA members were also present. [*Note: those who fail to attend USDA rallies face possible expulsion from school, loss of their jobs, having their water or electricity power cut off, or beatings and fines.*]

I left and arrived at Moreh, at the Manipur [India] border on 17 March 1995. I know nothing about how my family is doing now.

[*Note: Moreh is on the Manipur side opposite Tamu. Chin refugees get no assistance in Manipur, so some try to get to Delhi and register as 'persons of concern' with UNHCR to receive 1,200 rupees (US\$ 35) per month -- however, UNHCR is now rejecting many people who apply for this. India has never signed the international conventions on protection of refugees.*]

Interview: 294-HRV: Livelihood, Force Labour, Religion, Displacement, Refugee, Repatriation

Name: Ven. U Thinmanee
 Sex: Male
 Age: 60
 Ethnicity: Rakhine
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Monk
 Address: Maungdaw Town, Arakan State
 Interviewed: December 1995

The Na Sa Ka groups 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 are in Maungdaw and they have a commander in chief in one camp which is known as Gree Kweh Ray [Na Sa Ka is a SLORC combined force including army, police and border security operating in Arakan State along the Burma-Bangladesh border — the abbreviation Na Sa Ka actually stands for 'Border Welfare, Development and Defence']. Kerosene, salt, fish both sea fish and freshwater fish, everything is controlled by Na Sa Ka. They control all the businesses in Arakan. And they sell everything! They build their camps on people's land and occupy illegally five or ten acres. When they build their camp, they block the irrigation system of the toddy tree plantations of the farmers nearby. If the villagers can't provide bricks and bamboo, they need to pay 1,000 or 2,000 Ks for their buildings. The people also have to contribute labour. When they finish making the bricks with the people's money and labour, they then sell them in the market for four or five Ks each. They take rice from the villagers by force: 12 baskets for each acre, without paying. They take it for their camps. They export the surplus for dollars, especially to Bangladesh illegally.

They are building a 24-mile road from Maungdaw to Kyin Chaung where the Na Sa Ka headquarters is located. In the area named Za Kain Brawn, they bring prisoners from the jail. They fence the area and use the prisoners to break rocks. They give them one milk-tin of rice for two and they can't even stand up [because of the chains and weakness from hunger — one milk-tin is not even enough to feed one]. If half a milk-tin of rice is not enough, they can scratch the trees and eat leaves to fill up their stomach.

They also take civilians in the villages. The villagers can't bear their treatment and try to escape from the work before completing the roads and the bridges. Now, they recruit launch owners to carry the villagers to the work site and the launch owners are obliged to feed the villagers for five days. If the boat owners don't agree to carry the labourers, Na Sa Ka blocks the river for some time and the boat jetties get damaged by the salty water. Na Sa Ka also takes Jeeps from the people by turns. They have their own Jeeps, but they use them only for shopping and for their personal use.

Na Sa Ka has increased its religious activities in Arakan State. Most of the reli-

gious functions are organised by them. They go to the government departments like administration, schools, etc. and tell the civil servants to donate money for religious functions. Then they bring with them 20 or 30 yellow robes and donate these to the monks. They show this on TV so that the people can see. Na Sa Ka is now building Hanenda pagoda in Sittwe. The lower part is like the Shwedagon pagoda. For this purpose, the ministers donated money but this is only to show off [SLORC ministers have themselves shown on TV almost every night donating money to such projects]. Then they made a list of other people who had to donate money and how much. They don't use any money from the government, only people's money. SLORC organised sport competitions in Sittwe and they demanded Maungdaw township to give 200,000 or 300,000 Ks, and they collected this money from the people. The same events happen everywhere in Arakan State. Not only for Arakan State. If there are youth games in Kachin State, we also have to give money. When they organise those competitions they also need wooden boards and bamboo to build the fences and the galleries, and the people of Burma have to give all of it.

If one of their ministers plans to visit our area, we never know in advance when he comes. But at least one week before, they block all the roads, they take the vehicles and Jeeps, they stop the traffic, they don't allow people to go outside of their houses. So people cannot go to work. It is like an undeclared curfew. If the people can't go outside and go to their work, how can they earn money? This is one effect on our economy.

In Maungdaw they are using forced labour all the time. The army first enter the market and grab 50 or 100 people. They take them to the site to build bunkers, military camps, fences, and they tell them to finish the work within one or two days but it takes them a week. They also pick up the young boys from the monastery [lay children who help the monks to collect alms-food]. We can't raise our voices against their activities. This has become daily routine in our country.

On the west side of the Meyu River, they are starting to build a road going directly to Sittwe. They are using forced labour for this purpose. They gave an order for 'volunteers'. We didn't hear about a prisoner camp there. The prisoner camps are only in Maungdaw area, close to the Na Sa Ka headquarters. The area is called Za Ghan Brun. Prisoners have to work breaking rocks and they never loosen their chains. These prisoners have a short-term sentence or they are about to be released. They come not only from Sittwe but from all over the country. According to them, some are political prisoners. None of them are prominent political prisoners. But some second line political leaders are there. Some political prisoners go to the prisoner labour camps so that their sentence will be reduced.

In Maungdaw Township, the road to Na Sa Ka headquarters has been extended. Villagers from remote areas have to send the stones to the town. Laying stones and tar on the road is done by the soldiers. The army gets money to do the work, but they save this money for their camp. The stones come from remote areas of Rathedaung, Buthidaung and Minbya. If the villagers cannot collect the stones,

they need to hire labourers with their own money. They have to dig 10 x 10 x 10 ft of stones. Each village has to dig six holes, some more, some less. It depends on how much bribe money they can pay. From Minbya, the army carry the stones themselves with a big boat. They take the boats from Maungdaw, Minbya, and other places by force. They even took the boats of the pilgrims while they were travelling down the river. They stop the boats passing in the river and take them.

They say, "If your wife is dying or if your husband is dying, leave them. Finish your work first and then you can organise the funerals." Even the sick people are not spared. The Buddhist ceremony in November had to be stopped because of their building work. On all the holy days of Buddhism, we, the monks, have to go first to the military camp to perform the ceremony for them. Only after we finish the function there we can go and hold the ceremony with the people.

They have a project worth 900,000 Ks for 'border development'. They collect this money from the Sittwe traders in the name of border development. When any officer from the army travels from Maungdaw to Buthidaung and from Buthidaung to Maungdaw, the people have to give money for their fuel. The Jeeps are military vehicles, not people's vehicles. And the people also have to give food, everything they need. As the launches are also taken from the people, and they can't go anywhere. We are suffering economically because the traders can't move. When the high ranking officers come to play the games, they ask the people to bring them beer and they demand the Arakanese people to cook traditional food for them. People have to provide everything for them. When they tell us that they want to eat our traditional food, we have to prepare it and bring everything to their camps. Sometimes, military officers say they want to meet with the Buddhist monks. They demand the people to prepare things so they can donate these to the monks. Usually the Buddhists can afford to give 100 or 200 Ks as donation from their pockets at the temple. Although these officers give 20,000 or 30,000 Ks to the monastery, we know that this is not from their pockets. They demand all this money from the people. Also, some military informers cheat the people. They collect money in the name of their major or commander but keep the money for themselves.

The new trade road to Bangladesh [*the recently opened Maungdaw-Teknaf road*] is totally controlled by Na Sa Ka. Na Sa Ka even runs one restaurant in Maungdaw. The river boat traffic is completely in the hands of Na Sa Ka. They confiscate motor launches and other boats to carry material and people and to prepare their roads and their buildings. Some motor launch owners were forced to sell their launch or to give it to Na Sa Ka. Now these boats have been put on auction. The Na Sa Ka commander-in-chief and his second commander are posted in Arakan for two years, then they are transferred. By the time they leave, they are as if they were winners of the lottery! Military officers are loyal to higher officials. They know all about it. SLORC will have to leave power one day or another. So money is everything for them. They are not so interested in power but in money, because they have no confidence in SLORC.

To start a new business, people have to deposit one million kyat in the bank [*so the money can be taken by SLORC / Na Sa Ka if the owner doesn't pay them their cut*]. Na Sa Ka also takes people's land. They build houses, offices, buildings for themselves but they also occupy land for their families. They are doing like this. Even to the poor people who are living just by fishing with their small canoes, Na Sa Ka come and demand tax for the boat. Those who are close to the Naf river to Bangladesh [the Naf River forms the border] have to give money to Na Sa Ka. Even the smugglers have to pay them off. They even seize goods from the traders who are trading legally and who pay their taxes in Maungdaw and Buthidaung. The traders are losing their capital and becoming bankrupt. Also, many people who owned food stalls lost everything because of Na Sa Ka. They got some money from Japan or Norway to start their businesses again but land, shops and everything are in the hands of Na Sa Ka. Even the jungle is occupied by Na Sa Ka, so we don't even have firewood for cooking.

SLORC is still relocating villagers now. They give a small field, about one acre for five families, for paddy cultivation and one cow for three families. This is not a sufficient compensation for the villagers who have lost everything. What can they do with that? [*In a normal village, each family will have at least two or three acres of paddy field.*] Now their lives become very hard. They have to catch crabs and some fish to sell at the market to make a little money, just to live hand-to-mouth. In Mrauk U area, the army completely destroyed a Muslim village and built a military camp. They moved all the Muslims to Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships and they scattered them around. Before they destroyed the village, they promised them they would give land for cultivation, compensation for their houses and money to start businesses. But they never gave them anything. The village name was Pa Ring Kala Ro and this happened last year [1994]. Some of them escaped because they were starving. They promised them land, cows, everything but where can the government get land and cows for them? The military had to build a bridge in Kyauk Taw area and they wanted to relocate one Muslim village for that purpose. But later, they changed their decision after taking money [*for the bridge*] from the villagers. Now they have decided to build the bridge at another place closer to the military camp, because there are Rakhine and Muslim insurgents in the area.

The people get power supply only one time in four days up to 9:00 p.m.. The military get it all night. When Na Sa Ka require fuel, they requisition all the fuel. When Khin Nyunt's wife visited Maungdaw, they didn't provide any power supply in the town and they said that there was not enough fuel [*Khin Nyunt is Secretary-1 of SLORC and head of military intelligence; his wife is head of the "Maternal & Child Health and Welfare Organisation", which is used for SLORC media PR and is partly supported by UNICEF*]. During the religious ceremonies, especially for the [Burmese] full moon days in September and November, there was not enough kerosene to light the lamps. We dared not complain about it to the high ranking officials. If we complain to them, we will face lots of troubles with the local authorities. That's why nobody dares complain to the higher authorities.

They are building a new hotel on the graveyard in Maungdaw, and for this they have moved the graveyard. They explained that the graveyard was in the middle of the town, and this would not look good to the visitors. Now, the government has projects all over Burma and they are relocating cemeteries everywhere. They can even move pagodas and monasteries. In every town, SLORC is building one hotel. In Sittwe, they already built the "Sittwe Hotel". Now they are building one in Maungdaw.

At present, all the prices of commodities are skyrocketing but the government announces that they have no responsibility in this since all the businesses have already been privatised. They say inflation is the people's fault. When SLORC trade minister visited the shrimp farming area, the owners told him their opinion: "The government gives us a very low price. We need higher prices. We cannot sell at a price which doesn't even cover our expenditure. We will be forced to close our shrimp farms." [*Despite SLORC's claims of privatisation, companies cannot form without their involvement and most basic commodity producers are forced to sell only to SLORC at SLORC prices.*] Then the trade minister promised to arrange a better price and went back to Rangoon. But later Na Sa Ka came, interfered and forced them all to sell at the lowest price. Their radio propaganda says one thing but they are doing different things and the people are suffering a lot, more than previously.

Now SLORC is secretly drawing a constitution without any participation from the various States [*at the 'National Convention'*]. This is not acceptable to us and this is illegal. There is no genuine representative from our political organisations, ALD and NLD [Arakan League for Democracy & National League for Democracy]. One representative of Arakan State at the National Convention is Tha San Hla. He is from Kyauk Taw and belongs to Aung San Suu Kyi's party [NLD]. The two others are from Sittwe and they are from the Mro Khami Party. They are not Arakanese, they are from ethnic groups in Arakan. SLORC is aware that they don't know anything about politics, so they choose them to use them as puppets. SLORC came to Gree Chaung village and took two doctors and some government officials and sent them as people's representatives and labour representatives to the National Convention. Now the people are suffering a lot because they have no more doctors. Still, there is no single doctor in that village. Until the completion of the National Convention they can't come back to their duties. How many months or years it will take, we don't know!

Q: Do the Muslims repatriated from Bangladesh get their land and property back?

[*Referring to the 300,000 Rohingya Muslims who fled a SLORC religious pogrom in 1991-92 to Bangladesh, 250,000 of whom have now been forcibly repatriated to Arakan by Bangladeshi authorities in co-operation with UNHCR and SLORC*]

A: I don't know. But UNHCR is there, and have some projects for their welfare such as wells, etc. and construction of new roads. Rakhine people also need wells, but when they submit a request, Na Sa Ka refuse it and tell UNHCR that Rakhines don't need them. Previously, during BSPP govern-

ment [Burma Socialist Programme Party, Ne Win's 1974-88 regime], there were three kinds of citizenship's: full, naturalised and associated [these were used to make ethnic and religious minorities into second- and third-class citizens]. Now, they have cancelled all that. They may start again after the completion of the National Convention. Then they must hold general elections. The present government is executing the previous socialist plan. Now, SLORC is starting to set up industries, commercial companies, bridges, etc., but actually that was the plan of BSPP. During the BSPP, the Muslims were registered as Muslims on their NRC [National Registration Card] and, now they want to be registered as Rohingyas. But SLORC rejected this. Then the Muslim community demonstrated against SLORC's decision. The meaning of "Rohingya", SLORC don't know it. When they ask the Muslims the meaning, they also don't know. We are known as Rohon in Islamic countries, as Arakanese in Europe, as Rakhine in Burma and as Moghs in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Now the Rohingyas claim our name as theirs without even knowing about that. The demand by Muslims is excessive, I think. They can demand to be citizens of Arakan by birth and as Muslims. That's enough.

[This explanation of his views has been included here because it reflects a common attitude among Rakhines, an anti-Muslim sentiment which has often been exploited by SLORC and the BSPP.]

UNHCR started building their offices in 1993. They built them themselves without the help of the government. They have an agreement with SLORC. Both are trying to get back the refugees from Bangladesh by saying that the situation is good now and that they will provide everything they need. Most of the refugees already came back. Some are still remaining in Bangladesh. Now UNHCR is doing what the Muslim people say. They are creating more tension between the Muslim and Rakhine communities.

UNHCR gives them 500 Ks for a family of three or 1,000 Ks for a family of four or more. At the reception centre, the government gives them rice, oil and some food [*this is donated by UNHCR but distributed by Myanmar Relief Dept*]. Whether they give them money or not, I don't know. They receive all the things from UNHCR. Now they have decided to give education to Muslim women and men, especially for the Burmese language. UNHCR is looking for teachers to teach them. I don't believe they will succeed because every village has their own primary school run by the government but none of the Muslim girls go there for study. They have their own school to learn the Koran in Arabic and they don't learn Burmese. But the government have a law that all the citizens of Burma should learn the Burmese language and must be literate.

UNHCR also built their offices on people's land. The people demanded compensation from UNHCR officials. They had to approach them secretly

because of SLORC. The officials gave a proposal and the landowners had to accept it but it was not a good price. When the owner demanded 100,000 Ks, he only got 10,000 Ks. Maybe the government takes the compensated money from UNHCR, we don't know, but we know that UNHCR also takes people's land. The people who lost their land are furious with UNHCR. We can't complain to UNHCR. We can't complain to the government. Where should we complain? SLORC take our land, UNHCR also take our land. When the government allocated land to UNHCR, why did UNHCR take it? They should know. They are deployed here to bring peace and people's welfare under the banner of peace. Presently, that's what the Arakanese people are asking themselves. The landowners have demanded 100,000 Ks and UNHCR haven't met their demands yet.

In Maungdaw, we have an irrigation system with pumps. If we use it, we can make a second paddy crop in the year. But UNHCR pump the water from there and now the people don't have enough water for a second cultivation. In the dry season, we usually got 100 baskets of paddy but now only 30 baskets. We can't grow a second crop because we don't have enough water. UNHCR asked the people how much money they need to pay for compensation for the paddy. They offered 5,000 Ks — not per year, only one time. But we are lucky to get at least something. *[At current prices, 5,000 Ks is only worth about 12 tins of paddy, normal crop for about 1/3 acre, and the shortage of rice continues to grow worse.]*

SLORC is using forced labour to build roads, because they promised UNHCR they would build roads and bridges so they can travel more easily. But so far SLORC has only Maungdaw bridge to show for it. They called the bridge Shwe Za after a [Rakhine] king. It is at Wee Ma La village and it is only a temporary bridge. They have lots of projects to build bridges.

UNHCR is digging wells and building roads on people's own land. They have no plans and we are compelled to see that without being able to complain. Some are on Rakhine land, some on Muslim land. They don't distinguish between the two. But for the labour, they only choose Muslims, no Rakhines. All the construction contracts are made with Muslims. Some Rakhines are employed in low jobs, such as carpenters. They started a sewing training for the Muslim women and the trainer was a Rakhine woman. She is the only one. That was the only training, but it had already stopped. They say they are helping people raise chickens, but only on a very small scale. People can't make a living with this kind of business. They give only 500 Ks to start it. As each bamboo costs 5 Ks, the money is very little indeed. *[One breeding-size chicken costs over 100 Ks.]* UNHCR is offering jobs and people stop their own work to work for them but it doesn't give them enough income. One worker earns 1,500 Ks [per month — a family cannot be supported at this rate]. For cooking and washing clothes, they pay 400 or 500 Ks [per month]. This is not only for Rakhines, for

Muslims too. People thought that they would earn a lot of money by working for UNHCR. We see UNHCR staff with their houses, with their cars, with their generator but we don't know what they are really doing. They bring in their petrol themselves, also their timber and stones. They don't use anything from Maungdaw.

Q: Do you know of any people killed by SLORC in the area?

A: How can I find out? UNHCR should try to find out. They came here for that reason, to look after the people's welfare. But they are not able to find out such things since they are not active. Some people in the jungle might have been killed under landslides [while doing forced labour] but I don't know. This is daily routine: punching, kicking, beating and abusing. SLORC arrests smugglers and legal traders alike, whenever they like. How can I answer? UNHCR is working here and they are receiving salaries. But they fail to hear about it because they are neglecting their duties.

Q: The Chinese government made a request to SLORC to borrow the Mahamuni Buddha image from Arakan for religious ceremonies. Is this true?

A: We don't know whether they requested it or not. This is an invaluable thing for us and a symbol of peace and prosperity in Arakan. In the past, when the Burmese came to Mrauk U to take the Mahamuni Buddha, the people refused and they failed to take it away. But they declared that they took it and built a raft with gold and silver. The raft was put on a ship and they sailed to Rangoon declaring that they had taken the Buddha image. On the way, when the ship was in Sittwe harbour, some people were strangely killed on board. Now the Burmese have one in Mandalay [it is unclear whether the original is in Arakan or Mandalay — many believe the Burmese stole the original and took it to Mandalay, then sent a copy back to Arakan.] But they say the Chinese want the Buddha from Arakan. But we don't know if it is true that the Chinese really want it or if it is SLORC who want it. We believe in our astrologists. Maybe SLORC is trying to change the "yettara" [good luck] of the Arakanese people. That's why they took it in the past, and that is probably the reason why they come to ask for it this time too. And they use the Chinese as a pretext. After one month, Intelligence officers came to Sittwe and investigated to find out who had opposed them taking the Buddha image. They made a report stating the Arakanese people are starting a revolution and were trying to demonstrate.

We had to give lists of all ancient Buddha images to SLORC. And SLORC told us that if we lose any of them, we will have to pay a fine. [The list is most likely because SLORC wants to confiscate some of them for tourist museums or sites in Burman cities.] We monks, if we don't obey the government's orders, we will also have to go to jail. SLORC is building a Buddha museum near the Youth Sports Complex in Sittwe. They are collecting by several means ancient images and objects from the monks and from the people to take to the museum. If we discover precious ancient

objects from Arakan, they claim it is from Burma. They have been digging at the ancient site of Vesaly and we believe that they found things there. But SLORC have yet to show what they found. SLORC have decided to carry out research with foreign archaeologists. But they haven't started yet. SLORC told the Buddhist monks: "If you lose any of the ancient Buddha images, it will be your responsibility." So some monks were afraid of this and handed over all the images to SLORC. To protect our traditions, I will never hand them over. We can't hand over our history. Some local authorities, collaborating with SLORC, even threatened the monks saying that in case of loss, it will not only be the responsibility of the monks but also of the worshippers. They put pressure on the monks to hand over the Buddha images to SLORC. SLORC raided some Buddhist temples in Mandalay. They admitted that they stole some Buddha images. They might do the same thing in Arakan State that they did in Mandalay. When they come to the monastery, they don't come with archaeologists and experts. Just with soldiers. According to them, they come on archaeologists' recommendations. But the archaeologists have no idea of the army activities in this. SLORC said to us, monks, that they are sent by the National Historical Institute of Rangoon. But this is not true.

SLORC formed Buddhist Monks organisations in the townships, districts and villages. The monks have to obey their orders, whether they are willing to join or not. Buddhist monks can't do anything without the permission of SLORC. For example, building extensions or new buildings in the monasteries are only allowed with the authorisation of the township or district Sanghas [monks organisation — the Sangha is a major component of Buddhist tradition, but in Burma SLORC has taken over control of them]. If we approach them for permission and if we fail to satisfy them, we will never be granted any permission from them. If we don't keep good relations with SLORC officers, with village and township LORC authorities and with Na Sa Ka, we can't do anything.

Interview: 295 - HRV: Livelihood, Women, Force Labour

Name:	Ko Htun Win
Sex:	Male
Age:	38
Ethnicity:	Burman
Religion:	Buddhist
Name:	Daw Than
Sex:	Female
Age:	52
Ethnicity:	Burman
Religion:	Buddhist
Address:	Amarapura Township, Mandalay Division

Interviewed: March 1995
Source: KHRG

Q: How long did you work at the Mandalay Palace moat?

Ko Htun Win: I worked three times there. First, we had to clean the site all around the moat. The second time we had to clear all the mud and weeds, and the third time we had to take out the mud. We had to load the mud on trucks. As the mud was very soft, we had to load it little by little on the trucks. They disposed it near Mandalay zoo, at the foot of Mandalay Hill. They also dump some at various monastery compounds. The monks requested the army officers to unload the mud in their monastery compound [to level the ground]. Some people were playing tricks. For example, a group of 30 workers had to load six trucks with mud but they would bribe the soldier who was supervising the work so that the soldiers would register more truck loads than they had actually filled. Sometimes we'd pay three or four kyats each. Sometimes, five kyats per person. If a girl in a group is familiar with a soldier, this group gets favoured. So sometimes we hired prostitutes to join our group.

Thirty people were assigned to one truck. If the group included both men and women, the number was 30. If there were only men in the group, the number was 20. They had to load five or six truckloads of mud everyday. If the rain was heavy, the work was suspended.

Daw Than: We had to work on the rainy days too, as long as the road was not too slippery for driving their trucks.

Ko Htun Win: We had to provide one person from each family, and that person had to work for 10 days. It had nothing to do with the number of people in the family. If you could not send anyone, you had to pay 600 Ks. If you can't go and you have no money, you have to sell your belongings. Their rules are very strict. The rule is: "If you cannot go for work, you have to pay. If you cannot pay, you have to go to work." We have no choice. We cannot do anything about it. Sometimes some sympathetic local authorities help us to reason with the SLORC authorities. Sometimes it works.

We had to bring our own food and tools. The government provides money for the workers, but the Township level officers eat up all that money [*i.e. nobody is paid*].

Now, they are using only prisoners. Prisoners and soldiers. People said they were from Mandalay jail. Some are shackled, some are not. They shackle those who are notorious. It depends on their sentences. They dare not force the political prisoners to work. They use only criminals.

Q: Did you have to work in road construction or road repair work?

Ko Htun Win: Ko Moe and Ma Ni who came together with us had to work on the road construction in Amarapura. That construction was supervised by the Civil Works Department. I did not have to work on that.

Interview: 296 - HRV: Livelihood, Women, Force Labour

Name: Maung Sein
 Age: 37
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Pwo Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with five children (age 5 to 15 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 19 December 1995
 Source: KHRG

My village is located south of Kawkareik, near the Han Thayaw River. There are over 30 houses in my village. It is quite close from here. It is also close to a base of SLORC IB 330, where there are about 50 soldiers who ordered us to cut wood and bamboo. And if there was another work to do, we were ordered to do it. Each day two of us had to go for sentry duty. If we failed to go, we had to give 100 Ks each as compensation. We went in the mornings and came back in the evenings. When they told us to go find liquor for them we had to go. Sometimes when they ordered us to go and send letters to distant places, we had to obey. We had to eat our own food — their rice supplies were exclusively for them. They also ordered us to find good quality of timber and then made us pulling those logs. They sold this timber in Kawkareik and did business. We did not receive anything at all. It's sheer bullying. We were forced to do it despite our resentment. They didn't even provide us food, we had to take our own food.

As for me, I did the work. I had to go twice in a month. People who didn't go have to pay 100 Ks each day — for three days that means 300 Ks. Villagers close to SLORC had to go to carry out their errands while villagers in remote areas had to carry their loads. Soldiers watched us while we were working. While I laboured hard drawing the heavy logs, the soldiers shouted at me and abused me like anything. Imagine, harsh words swore at you while you were bending under the weight of heavy logs. Women had to go too, over ten at a time — it included unmarried ladies. Today our village had to provide 20 workers. Tomorrow another village will have to provide 20 workers. The next day another village will have to give 20 people. Such is the rotation. Two people had to guard their barracks and 20 people were given hard labour assignments whenever they needed us. There's no distinction between the young and the old - those old folks who were not able to go had to give 100 Ks per day.

They demanded our chicken and ducks and we were forced to give them, for sure. That happened two or three times a month. And they demanded rice, certainly. Their rice supplies were in very poor quality. So they took our rice of good quality and gave us back their poor one. They did that to every village which was within their reach. They came in the evenings and stole all the fowls from the villagers. When they came, sometimes we fled but sometimes we didn't. When they opened fire on the people they usually missed, because people ran very fast for their lives. Last year they shot into our village at random and hurt some people.

In August this year they took some of our farmland, took some cattle from the villagers by force and ordered us to till the ground for them. That land yielded 200 baskets of paddy. Then when these soldiers had to transfer to another area, they forced the villagers to buy the crops. That earned them 3,000 Ks from each village, 9,000 Ks altogether from three villages. [*The crop was not yet ready for harvest when the soldiers left.*] When a new group of soldiers arrived, they repeated the same thing. One person from each house had to go and work for four days each month, bringing their own tools. For those who didn't go, the soldiers seized their cattle and never returned them. So people had to go despite all the inconvenience. Now the harvest is finished. The villagers were forced to reap and winnow the crop, and then the soldiers took it away with them to the city and sold it to the merchants. It has happened over and over again. The soldiers who do this were from IB 230.

This year, it's just the same as last year. Those who can endure, they endure, and those who cannot, leave the area right away. Since more people are leaving, only a few remain there. More and more people have lost their ability to endure it any longer. There were over 100 households in my village, now only 30 remain. Some moved to places far away from the military camps, some fled into the jungles, while some fled into Thailand. As for me, well, I will watch what my neighbours do and if they move I will move.

Interview: 297 - HRV: Women, Livelihood, Slavery

Name: Pi Yeh Paw
 Age: 67
 Sex: Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with five children (age 23 to 45 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kya In Seik Gyi Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 20 December 1995
 Source: KHRG

Our village is close from here. We paid them [SLORC] their dues, but still when

they came, they took our chickens and other birds. They took even the small chickens and the eggs under the brooding hens. As we were not able to stop them, we had to endure it. They didn't listen to our objections. But when I chased them with a stick, that made a difference! They never came to stay, just to steal. They came and took over 10 viss [16 kg.] of chickens, and after eating them all they came back again in search of more chicken curry. If we didn't do what they wanted, they would harm us. What sort of people are they? They come very often, the last time was just a day or two ago. Just wait and you'll see, they'll be back again in three or four days. They came in a group of forty. They are from LIB 310 which has been here for the last 2 months [before that it was IB 231]. All the SLORC troops were looters. They even took our clothes if they were not too old.

Our village had 200 or 300 houses, I think. So they could not enter into every house. They roamed along the streets of big villages and grabbed whatever they saw along the way. They took everything they saw. Porters always had to accompany them. They had to carry the chickens — Burmese soldiers would never carry anything by themselves, you need not ask about that. The porters also had to carry melons and pumpkins. The Burmese soldiers picked our pumpkins and things to cook with the chickens they stole from us. My son had to go as a porter, and when he couldn't, I had to pay a porter fees of 150 Ks per day. Every two days, people had to go in groups of five [on rotating basis]. That's not easy. Do you think that's easy, brother? If we didn't go they molested the villagers. I had to carry their loads myself.

Moreover, we had to give pork to LIB 310, and we also had to go work for them where their Column was based. People from other two villages had to go very often. They had to plant paddy, plough the land and dig the soil for the soldiers.

A woman had to give them two of her son's [hand-woven] shirts. They were in very good quality — one shirt costs 1500 Ks. These Burmans are so cunning — they begin by asking for just one betel-nut, then they end by taking away sacks of it. I said to them, "You take our things to go and sell, don't you?" They admitted it and said they did. We dared not hang our sarongs out to dry at night — if it's not too old and worn, they would steal it. They are gamblers and when they lose gambling, they just take a hintha duck and sell it for 200 Ks. I had no love for them. As we had to bear so much bullying, we certainly felt bitter.

I have not yet met any Ko Per Baw. I only heard about them. They said something and they did something else. Their leaders said that they didn't eat meat, but their soldiers did and stole sarongs from the villagers. I heard that when they arrived in Raw Keh and Pah Kya, they stole chickens and clothing. We did not want to see such things. People said they'd come, but they never came. It is good that they don't appear. It is best that we don't encounter them, don't you think so?

Interview: 298 - HRV: Execution

Name: Naw Say Wah
 Age: 22
 Sex: Female
 Ethnicity: Pwo Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with two daughters (age 3 months and 3 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kya Inn Seik Gyi Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 21 December 1995
 Source: KHRG

[Naw Say Wah's husband who was 37 years was killed by SLORC on 17 or 18 December 1995 — see interview 299.]

My husband went to another village to do farm work with other people there. It was within the last 10 days. They arrested him at that village. He was going to get some cattle vaccinated when a column of Burmese soldiers arrived and arrested him. They took him to the military camp, about three miles away. He was there for four days. I went to the camp along with the village headwoman. The officer asked me, "Don't you love your husband? What does he do for his living?" I said, "He is a farmer." We asked to see him but they did not allow. I had to come back home. They said that after one or two days he would be released for sure. But after two days I heard news that he was killed, and they told me to make offerings to the monks. Now I am living with my mother. I am so desperate because of my two children — the elder is three years and the younger is only three months old.

Interview: 299 - HRV: Torture, Detention, Livelihood, Execution, Women, Force Labour, Slavery

Name: Pi Beh Wah
 Age: 61
 Sex: Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with two children (age 12 and 43 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 21 December 1995
 Source: KHRG

The headman of that village told us that Naw Say Wah's husband had been arrested. He wanted her [his wife] to come to him. Her husband lives in our village but was working in another village. As his name was not registered in that village, SLORC

came there and asked about him. As soon as they caught him, they asked him about his work and he said he was a farmer. They beat him as soon as they arrested him. They said, "You tried to run away because you are a Ringworm!" [*derogatory SLORC name for Karen soldiers*]. He told them he ran away because he was afraid of them. Then the Burmese soldiers took turns hitting him, some of them with their rifle butts. They tied him with a rope, they pulled off his shirt and sarong, covered his face with his own sarong and kept beating him. Then they took him away to the military camp. When the villagers went and asked about him, the Burmese soldiers asked them what he did for his living. They told the soldiers that he's only a farmer. They told them again and again. The soldiers kept asking, "Has he got a gun?" and the villagers told them he didn't. The officer said, "The prisoner says he has a revolver". The villagers answered, "He said that in fear of you, because you applied harsh interrogation on him". The officer said, "The village heads wouldn't dare sign vouching that he has no weapon". Then the headman spoke for him, and said, "He was just an ordinary farmer when he lived in my village. I'll sign for him." The officer threatened him by saying, "If that's the case, you'll have to sign now. But if the truth comes out one day, you'll not only be imprisoned but also given the death penalty." The village headman said he would sign even if they killed him, because he would stand on the side of truth. As he signed his name, he asked the officer to let the young man go back with him. The officer said the man would have to be detained one or two more days for more interrogation and only then he could be released.

A day or two later, the headman heard that it was very hard for the young man, that they continued beatings him without resting and that the victim was crying because of severe beatings. So he was going to go to the camp again, but that morning the Burmese soldiers came to the village. They started asking questions about whether there were insurgents there. They started making trouble, arresting people here and there at random, including women and children. The headman had to vouch for all of them. He said, "Please set all my people free, set free everyone you've accused of being rebels. If any of them have been rebel soldiers once, that was because they were afraid of the rebels. Now they are doing nothing against you. You're asking about the past, like speaking to the dead. How can the dead come out of their graves? It is the present matters." Then the soldiers let everyone in the village go, but they demanded food and chickens. The villagers were afraid and had to give it to them, and when they got the rice and chickens they went to leave. The headman asked again, "Major, sir! Please tell me whether you have killed the young man or whether he lives. If he is dead we have to make offerings to the monks and prepare a funeral according to our Karen custom. His wife is in deep trouble, and she has no relatives here. Tell us if she should go back to her village." The Burmese Major answered, "Then send his wife back. You can call the monks, and his wife can go back." He didn't say that he had killed Naw Say Wah's husband. We asked the people in the village around the Army camp and they said yes, they saw him and his head was beaten to a pulp, his eyes were destroyed and he had turned blue all over so maybe his bones were broken. He was tied with a rope. The soldiers finished him with a knife. Then they dug a hole and buried him there.

This is how they are. They ask us for pigs and chickens, and if we cannot give them then they threaten to bombard us with big guns. We have to go whenever they summon us, day or night [village elders are constantly summoned to the camp to receive orders]. We cannot disobey them, or they will fine us or when we go to Kawkareik they will arrest us. They are harassing the people not only from our village but also from other villages to death. [She began pointing to people in the room.] Look at those people, they were tortured by the soldiers but they were lucky enough to survive. As for his daughter, they molested her, raped her and then murdered her. She was only 20 years of age then, and had 2 children. They are so cruel. What can we do? If I were a witch, I would be able to kill and eat them. That's all I want to say.

The officer responsible for killing Naw Say Wah's husband is a Company Commander. The porters from our village told me how he ordered his men to kill the victim.

As an elder I have to provide them porters and labourers. We have to send our villagers to help repair their camp buildings at Kawkareik, carrying our own food and things with us. We have to finish the work in the time they set — if five days, we have to finish within five days. If they ask 100 people, we have to send 100 people. They also demand that the villagers give them wood and bamboo. We can never expect anything from them. On the contrary, when the villagers are reluctant to go I have to plead with them to go, because I'm afraid that if the soldiers come the village will be destroyed. I have to say, "My son, please go — we cannot overcome them yet, so please go and work without pay for them." They don't even give you water to drink while you work for them. We cannot even borrow the pails from them when we want to draw water. Once I complained to the officer — I said, "We are working now for your welfare and the welfare of your military families, it is not for us to come and put up with this. Why are we even denied water?" Only then did they give us water. I said to them, "If you don't like it, I will report it to higher authorities". I thought they were a bit afraid of such confrontations. The soldiers were a bit afraid of our village because of this. As for the village on the other bank of the river, they were given hell and never had time to rest.

They demanded our village to give 20 viss [32 kg.] of betel-nuts, and 11 baskets of rice during last month. As for my village, when they demanded five baskets I gave them only six pyis [1 basket = 16 pyi]. They demanded 2,000 betel-nuts. What do they want with betel-nuts at this time of peace negotiations? I rebuked them telling them they should not lower the dignity of the Tatmadaw [Burma Army] like this. We have to be tactful and diplomatic like that when we cannot meet their demands. When I said that, we were exempted from giving it. If the young man who was killed had been from my village, the tragedy wouldn't have happened. But the village heads of those other villages were too afraid. They had been beaten so very often. Sure the other village headwomen were beaten. They had to go whenever they're summoned, even at midnight, and they could only come home at 4:00 a.m. Who knows what the soldiers would do to those headwomen at such time of the

night? People from my village didn't have to suffer like that. If they called us, we did not go. I was a village head, I was not a guide. I knew how to deal with both the government and the rebels when it was necessary. If they asked to serve as their guide at night, I refused them. This was not my duty. The younger village headwomen asked me to go along with them, they said they needed my presence. How would their husbands feel seeing them going off with Burmese soldiers in the middle of the night? I told the Burmese Major frankly, "Suppose your wife or daughter were called by a Karen rebel under similar circumstances, even for only one night, even if that Karen rebel actually did nothing to the women, how would you feel then?" And I was exempted. But the other village headwomen had to go. Those women had to fan them while they were eating, they even had to wipe their mouths after their meals — these things had been witnessed by people. As for me, the soldiers won't even allow me to get close to them — maybe because I stink like anything, and those other women were pretty.

They sent us written orders for things, and they even wrote what they would do to the village head if the village failed to comply. Such-and-such amount at so-and-so time, they wrote it all. Sometimes as they were so irritating, we used them for toilet paper. Now things are getting worse. Before, we only had to fear SLORC, and the Karen rebels, but now we are also in fear of the Yellow Headbands [DKBA]. When I asked the SLORC major whether they provided rice for the Yellow Headbands, he said they did and he complained that the Yellow Headbands ate three times a day [Karen generally only eat two meals a day]. "If that so, why did you call them?", I said. "You yourself called them here, so if you can't feed them just send them away. We didn't have any rice to give them." There used to be just two sides in this war, now we're up to three already.

I'm certain it would be best if there were no SLORC. They are so oppressive. Even when the villagers tell them truthfully that they're not rebels and sign statements, they still mistreat them. They don't follow the law they've laid down. They tell us to report to the officers about any misconduct by a soldier, but if we do that the soldiers will shoot us dead! Everything is in their hands and they can fabricate anything they want. It is so unpleasant, I can't even express it in words. Now it is our lot to fear 3 sides — one kind of fear for SLORC, another kind for KNU and still another for the Yellow Headbands. Village headwomen were often murdered, and no one even knew who did the crime, SLORC, KNU, or the Yellow Headbands. So I'm overcome with disgust, I want to resign from being a village head. It would be all right if they listened to us, but they never paid attention to what we said. It's such an insult when SLORC says they'll slap me in the face, even though I'm the age of their mothers. They've never dared actually do it. They only threatened to shoot me one time, and that time it only ended up with beatings. It's because when they said they'd shoot me I told them sarcastically, "Do it then, since the SLORC issues you ammunition to shoot us". They drew their knives to intimidate me, they said, "You old woman!", and one of them hit me with both hands on my shoulders. He shouted, "If you were not the age of my mother, your cheeks would surely have burst!" They scolded at me so much that it hurt my teeth [a common figure of speech]. I don't

want to speak about them anymore.

I'm getting old now and tired of running here and there. In awhile SLORC will come and shoot, then the rebels will shoot — it's not easy being in between the two forces and trying to appease them. Better to leave them alone and let them shoot their guts out. When I began to be bold to both sides, they thought this old lady was very brave. I am already 61 years old and I am not bothered so much if I should die. Of course, I would like to die in a good death. While one is trying to do good, but receiving evil in return, that's nothing but Kaman, merits and demerits of one's past existence. When one's old like me there's scarcely any wind left to speak, one gets her hands and feet knocking together. We can't even afford to buy one tin of condensed milk — what a situation! It used to be that when we had to take 30 viss of chickens to them, then sometimes they used to give us one tin of condensed milk. Whenever one needle comes out from them, one big axe has to go out from us. There's no use in speaking about SLORC, and I have exhausted all my words. There is just one thing I want most, and that is to see peace and justice before I die.

Interview: 300 - HRV: Force Labour, Livelihood, Torture, Displacement

Name: Saw Day Htoo
 Age: 31
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with three children (age 2 to 8 years)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kya In Seik Kyi Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 21 December 1995
 Source: KHRG

[Saw Day Htoo is a village elder who is often summoned to the SLORC camp.]

I had to go to their camp sometimes once a month, sometimes three times a month. I had to do their errands. All of us had to go to weed the grass and roof their huts. At a time, about 10 or 20 or 30 or as many as demanded villagers had to go. Only men — from about 17 or 18 years old up to age 30 or 40 — went. Sometimes we had to go only for one day if it is at a nearby village, but we had to go to Kawkareik, it took for three days and three nights. I had never asked them what was their Battalion number. We also had to give them pork, 15 viss [24 kg.] whenever they wanted. They sent their orders through the Secretary or Chairman of the village.

They had demanded a list of all the people and numbers of cattle, carts etc. in the village. I couldn't guess why, I really had no idea. [The list is most likely to determine quotas for forced labour, confiscation of bullock-carts, extortion of money

and livestock and crop confiscation.] I didn't give them the list because I dared not do it. They insisted, but I told them I did not finish yet. The officer scolded at me for taking so long and said other villages had done it already. I told him as I was staying in a remote place, I had no time to make out the list.

When they came, it would not be easy. They said we must not run away when we saw them coming. Those who were blacklisted as rebels [even if they're not] already left the village because they were afraid. Also, over 10 households of people from another village came to stay in our village because they could no longer endure the atrocities done by SLORC [there is a SLORC camp at that village]. Even their own Burman people could no longer bear their oppression and many of them have fled the country. SLORC says they help the people, but we can't trust them. They eat our rice, drink our water, force us to work for them, and yet they still do not hesitate to beat us, even elderly. They call us "dogs", so people feel grossly insulted. We are afraid. They usually arrest the elders, that's why I am afraid. If we do not do their bidding they say they'll burn our houses and confiscate our rice. As they said they would make havoc in our village, we were afraid this might happen. They called villagers from Ker Paw Hta and Kya Ker Wah villages, and when the villagers didn't go they marched on those villages and burned all the houses. That is why we're afraid.

Interview: 301 - HRV: Livelihood, Force Labour, Women, Child

Name: U Maung Shwe
 Age: 40
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Karen/Shan
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with four children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 22 December 1995
 Source: KHRG

[There is a SLORC Army camp located right in U Maung Shwe's village.]

There are 210 houses in the village. They are Burmans, Mons, and Shans — three groups. There are a few more Mon than the others. SLORC camp is in the middle of the village, near the monastery. They've had their camp there for about seven years. Now there is only one Company — about 100 soldiers — at the camp. In the camp, they have barracks and a storehouse for food supply, but most of the soldiers live outside the camp. Some of them stay in the monastery and some in the village. They stay in the houses of the villagers. They use firewood stacked by the house owners for cooking.

We had to work for them. During the rainy season, they brought in logs and we had to saw them into planks. I didn't know from where they got those logs. [Information from other villages confirms that they force villagers further up the river to cut the logs and float them down. His village is on the river.] We had to pull the logs up the river bank and cut them, then pulled the planks down and loaded them onto boats. We had to take turns doing that work for one day. Your turn came around every three or four days, sometimes once a week. We had to provide up to 30 people each day. If husbands were not at home then the women had to give money — 150 Ks per day. If people were sick, they had to explain the situation and then when they recovered again they had to do the work they missed. As for porters, they had to go for six days at a time. If you were not able to go, you had to pay 150 Ks per day, so 900 Ks for six days. Women could do the work, but the children were too young to do it. Women had to do a variety of works, such as carrying sacks of rice, or carrying their things when they moved from one place to another. Also, one or two villagers had to be on standby as messengers. Sometimes they had to go and buy food for the soldiers, sometimes they had to go and obtain video cassettes.

For the camp and the troops, we had to give 15 viss [24 kg.] of various kinds of meat, as well as chickens that we had to buy for them. We didn't have to give them oil or salt, but they sometimes took these things from our kitchens. How can we refuse them? We are afraid. Sometimes the soldiers arrested or beat the villagers. This year, people arrived late for forced labour were subjected to beatings. Later on, the soldiers have become more familiar to us as they have been in our village for a long time, but we are still not free from fear.

Only the village elders were allowed to go in and come out of their camp. The people who were arrested from other villages [and brought to their camp] were not allowed to see anyone. The last time they went to a village and arrested some people, kept them inside a school and then took them away by boat. They brought the people secretly, sometimes after dark.

There were 300 houses before, but only 200 houses are left now. The others have gone, some to Thailand. Among them are Mons, Shans and Burmans as well. The situation now is not good. Some people are well off but many are poor. There is no stability. As we can't avoid, we have to work for the soldiers. They rule us with absolute power. What they demand and what they say, nobody is willing to do or hear. But we want to stay undisturbed. What can we do, when they are using force against us? Those who remain in the village do so because they have their property there. For those who are poor, they stay because they have no money to leave. If they had money, many people would not hesitate to leave the village. This is the situation of our village.

Interview: 302 - HRV: Livelihood, Force Labour, Slavery

Name: Pa Boe
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Pwo Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single
 Occupation: Trader
 Address: Kya In Seik Gyi Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 24 December 1995
 Source: KHRG

[Pa Boe is one of many traders who go with trading boats on the Han Thayaw River.]

Our village is on the Han Thayaw River and there are 300 houses. I have lived in the area since I was born. I have a house there and I stay with my father. SLORC troops from LIB 310 stay at Kya In. It's not their Battalion Headquarters, it's a Company camp. There is no Company Commander there, only a Sergeant. I don't know his name because I haven't been in their camp. There are only 12 soldiers there, together with four People's Militia. Sometimes the People's Militia stay in the camp, sometimes in the village. They are from our village. They were forced to join the militia, of course. It is a must to become a People's Militia man. They had to stay in for six months, then they were changed. The Army didn't pay them — the villagers had to give them their pay. The villagers had to give them money, and with that money they bought rice. Each militia man got 450 Ks per month [US\$3.75 at market rate, only enough for about 10 kg. of rice; a SLORC Army private got 750 Ks per month]. They stayed with the soldiers in the camp, but their duty was to watch the boats which moving to and fro. They had no other duty. The village elders wanted to abolish the People's Militia — they said it was not necessary, and they grumbled because we had to pay money. But as it hasn't been abolished, the villagers still have to join.

We also had to work in the gardens and fencing for the soldiers, and we had to dig their trenches. We didn't always have to do this kind of work — only when their superiors were coming and they needed to clean up the place. Sometimes we had to go once in a month, sometimes twice, for one day or half a day each time. One person from each house had to go. If no one from the house could go, we had to report to the headman and he pleaded for us to be exempted. Whenever there were columns going to the front-line, we had to go as porters. They are always going to attack — even now, there are some such soldiers [a column heading for an offensive] in our village. We had to pay porter fees, sometimes 300 Ks or as much as 500 Ks. It depended on the person and the length of porter duty. Sometimes we had to go as porters for two or three or four days — there were no set time. I had to go six or seven times a year. Sometimes we had to take our own food, sometimes they fed us. We had to carry rice, food supplies, shells and ammunition, from Kya In to An

Kong. Sometimes they used our boats to carry the things in rainy season since it was difficult to transport things on porter's backs.

There are four boats in our village [motorised *wooden trading boats about 20 ft long, owned by traders*]. At their camp they made our boats standby for duties. Each turn was seven days. One boat had to serve them for seven days while another boat had to be on standby. [*Therefore, boat owners could only use their own boat one week out of every two.*] I only made this trip up the river once a month. The boat was not mine, it's someone else's. We brought things like chillies, onions, cooking oil, candles and soap. On the way back, when it's betel-nut season we took betel-nut, and when it's pepper season we took pepper. Before we could start a trip from the village we had to ask permission. There were also checkpoints along the way. We had to face them and gave them money — 500 Ks, or sometimes 700 Ks [per trip]. We didn't always see them at each checkpoint — they were only there at certain times. But when we saw them face to face, they made their demands. Then we had to give them 40 or 50 or up to 100 Ks, whatever they asked. There were checkpoints near Mudon and An Kong where we almost always saw them.

In rainy season, one basket of rice cost 1,000 Ks then it was down to 600 Ks, so we were a little better off [*the price was down in Kya In because it was harvest time, but 600 Ks was still about double of a year ago. Prices of 1,000 Ks would lead to starvation among most of the population*]. We did not want to give the soldiers all the things they demand. But as for us, we just had to live with our problems and hardships. What we needed most was forbearance.

Interview: 303 - HRV: Livelihood, Force Labour

Interviewed: December 1995
Source: KHRG

[*The following note was written by two Mon traders from a village on the Gyaing River, not far east of Moulmein, in Mon State. They earn their living by carrying goods between the coast and inland in small riverboats.*]

There are about 1,000 houses in our village. Each household had to pay 50 Ks for 'occasional porters'. For the People's Militia, we had to give 30 Ks per month regularly. We had to do 'volunteer work' from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., and we received no payment for that work. For each house, we had to dig a trench 2 ft x 4 ft x 3 ft. We could not stay at our homes most of the time because of their work. We had to be on standby to move them with our boats [all boat owners were forced to rotate being on call to go with their boats whenever SLORC troops wanted a boat for any reason]. We had to pay 100 Ks if we were unable to work on the road construction in Kawbein Town.

At Kyon Doe and Kya In checkpoints, if we didn't pay as much as they wanted they

...tied us up, they delayed our journey, they abused us, and only 3 or 4 hours later we were allowed to cross the checkpoint. As there were too many checkpoints where they collected money, we found it hard to make our living. There's nothing left for us to spend. These were what we had to pay:

	Per person	Per boat
1. Kayah checkpoint	20 kyats	40 kyats
2. Than Leh checkpoint	15	30
3. Kauk Yoh	30	60
4. Kayit	100	200
5. Gyaing	125	250
6. Yay Gin	300	600
7. Kyon Doe	200	400
8. Kyon Doe Paddy Buying Centre	100	200
9. Kyon Doe wharf charges	30	30
10. Kyon Doe upper checkpoint	400	800
11. Kan Ni	20	40
12. Mi Galon	30	60
13. Kammayeik South	40	80
14. Kammayeik North	40	80
15. Kya In southern checkpoint	200	400
16. Kya In northern troop station	100	200
17. Kya In people's militia	100	200
18. An Kong camp	30	60
19. Ku Tone	200	400

As the days of the year went by, the prices of commodities became higher and higher. Today one pyi [about 2 kg.] of rice costs 65 Ks and one viss of cooking oil costs 240 Ks. Last year, rice was 40 Ks per pyi and oil was 200 Ks per viss.

We are never free from anxiety when we are in our village. There are so many people who go to find work in Thailand — maybe over 500 just from our village. For now, we merchants take assorted goods like shrimp paste and fish paste to a village [on the up-river of Han Thayaw]. When we go back we carry betel-nut, coconuts, citrus fruits, bananas and a variety of other fruits.

Interview: 304 - HRV: Execution, Torture, Livelihood, Force Labour, Movement, Minority

Name: Maung Kyaw
 Age: 30
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with no children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kya In Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 20 December 1995
 Source: KHRG

They killed a man from our village. His name was Pa Khaw [this happened in April 1995 — see interview 305]. People were herding buffaloes. As he was poor, he was hired. On the way back he visited one of his friends near the Mah Lay River. The Burmese troops which came from Mudon saw them. If they had run away they could have escaped, but they thought the soldiers wouldn't mind them coming to visit their friends. But the Burmese soldiers came up to the house and seized them. They took Pa Khaw, who is not a Karen soldier. He is a innocent villager. He never joined the revolution. The soldiers threatened him in many ways, and accused him of being a soldier. They asked many things. They poured water into his nostrils, tied up his feet and hung him by his hands. He was in great agony and it seems he wanted to die because of suffering so much. At last after being tortured so much, they killed him on the bank of the Meh Nya Hta River. He was shot and thrown into the river. It was too late. He was just a simple and, a good man. I have friends at Meh Nya Hta, and they witnessed the shooting.

He was arrested with the other four. They were kept at a military camp at which the commander is a sergeant. He asked for a goat as ransom and five bottles of honey. It was not the season for honey, but somehow we managed to find some. He said he would free the prisoners. They arrested five, killed one and released four. Those four were very pale after being so long in the holes. It took many days for their wounds to be healed. Pa Noh [see interview 305] had one of his ribs broken, and he also told me that soldiers used bayonets to hurt him. They burnt his chin with fire. It is hell for you if the Burmese soldiers catch you. You have to be very clever and talk to them amiably. You have to pit your wits against their cunning.

The Burmans are still coming here sometimes. They summoned us to go and work for them, and if we didn't show up, they came to us and speak softly. They tried to trick us. If what they wanted was chickens and when the owners were not there, they stole them. They also took away good clothing on sight if they liked it. They are just like great robbery gang. Two or three of them visited me in the daytime, then at night they came steal my livestock and belongings. Do you think they stop molesting us even after we meet their demands? No, not at all. They took every-

thing. They came up and talked to us in the house, then they stole the chickens under that very house. As they pointed their guns at us and threatened us, we can't do anything. They didn't even carry their loot, they took porters to carry it for them. The porters were forced to carry loads beyond human strength. Do you think they would give some of the extra chickens to the porters? No, they would never do that. The porters had to take their own food supply. The porters had only rice and salt to eat. The soldiers had nice curries, but they never shared it with the porters. We had to hire porters for them and also provide rice, salt and fish paste for the porters. We had to give 3,000 Ks per month as porter fees. We had to give them pork, 15 viss [24 kg.] each month. To get that we had to kill a pig, and the pig might weigh over 25 viss, maybe 30 viss. So it really cost us more than that. We had to go around the village for collecting money [to pay the owner of the pig], sometimes 35 Ks per house, sometimes 45 for a bigger one. For some villagers who were poor and didn't have enough to eat were allowed to put in only 15 Ks. Other villages were worse off than ours. We were better off, but even though we paid them their tribute regularly they still didn't leave us alone. Even though we were a long way from them, we ourselves had to go to serve them once a year, digging the earth, clearing bushes in the scorching sun and cutting down hardwood trees like 'tala or', and we could never complain. This year it is not yet time — later in dry season we'll have to go. Last year, we had to go twice. Once we had to fence their compound and the other we had to cut and sweep the area and dig the earth. We had to dig up stone slabs with pickaxes and lift them with spades. There were 100 houses in the village. As many as 30 people had to go for three days at a time. They made us sleep in tumble-down shacks, with mosquitoes biting all night, and we had to carry water from far away. Ah! It's very very unpleasant.

There were very few who lived in their sights and escaped their atrocities. Just a month or two ago we went to celebrate Thadingyut festival [October 1995]. More than 30 of us went. When the Burmese soldiers saw us they said our crowd was too big. I told them we needed many people to carry things — there were 20 or 30 viss of onions, 20 viss of jigger, over 20 viss of sugar, two tins of fuel ... How can one or two people carry that? But we had to sit in front of them, and they searched everything, ourselves and our belongings. The camp commander himself led the search. I asked him to give me a paper to allow me to go and buy food for the festival. He said he would and started asking me questions. I answered his questions one by one. As I was speaking, he slapped me in the face. Why did he insult me like this? He slapped me twice. I was angry at that manner. Then he sent me away without any paper. So all 30 of us could do nothing. We had to go on without papers. Then, at Hlaing Wa bridge in Kawkaik they gave us more troubles. I hate them. Slapping and beating are just the usual insults we have to suffer.

When they come to our village they always ask, "Hey! Are there any Karen rebels here? How many families have connections with them?" They never accept "No" for any answer. They force us to answer "Yes" to their questions, then they beat us. If you can speak Burmese you will be better off, but even then they will hit you at least once or twice. There were very few instances when we were not beaten. Lately,

they didn't come because whenever we heard news that they would come, we went and gave them pork beforehand. Once they had pork, they would not come. If we didn't give it, sure they'd come. Because of this, we always had to live in fear! Everyone is afraid of them. That is why we have to oblige them. They tell us that they will come and punish us if we don't pay. From here to their place is six miles, about two hours. Their stay is never permanent.

They have been telling us to give them a list showing the number of villagers and bullock-carts in the village, and the numbers of cattle. They said they were collecting this list so that they could distribute medicine among us. As for me, I don't believe they would ever give us medicine. Just think! When we went work for them they never even offered us a small piece of meat, we had to take our own food. They would never be generous to us. [The list is most likely to determine forced labour quotas, availability of bullock-carts to be commandeered, and relative wealth of the village for extortion purposes.] They wanted this list, and once they had it they would use it to exploit us. So we were reluctant to give them the list, and we did not finish it yet. They have sent papers ordering it once or twice already.

I almost can't express what I think about SLORC. How do you feel about them, after hearing what they do to us? We hate them and we are bitter, but we have no choice but to do their bidding. We don't do it in goodwill. If you try to talk to them you will surely suffer.

I saw the Ko Per Baw [DKBA]. They haven't been here, but they came to Aw Paw village. They wanted to organise us, they told us to go back and stay with them. But we could not go with them. They said if the Burmese mistreat people they would shoot them. They said they would keep their weapons, and that's why they had no agreement with SLORC. We can't easily trust them, and we are afraid. We don't know them or their place very much. Their battalion commander is Pa Nwee, he's tattooed his name on his chest. He came during August-September. They said if the KNU comes back to them, they will not be harmed or hurt. Maybe they are making propaganda. I don't know much about this thing. Their leader is the Myaing Gyi Ngu monk and they go their own way. [DKBA has tried to make inroads into this area by playing on the villagers' lack of knowledge of what is happening further north. So far they have had very little success. Pa Nwee is from Bee T'Ka area, and at one time was thought to have been executed by SLORC — see Interview 71-82]

Interview: 305 - HRV: Torture, Execution, Detention, Livelihood

Name:	Pa Noh
Age:	45
Sex:	Male
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Married with six children (age 1 to 19 years)

Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kya In Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 20 December 1995
 Source: KHRG

I was arrested during the last Thingyan Festival [*Water Festival, mid-April 1995*]. The whole Burmese company composed of more than 100 soldiers came. I heard them call themselves "commandos". They arrested me at a village, nearly four hours' walk from here. They have a base there. They accused me of being an Intelligence officer, but I was only herding other people's buffaloes. After they arrested me they covered my face with a piece of cloth. One soldier held me down and poured water into my nose. They accused me of being a spy and said I was lying. I think it was because there was a group of us — there were 17 buffaloes, so we needed a crowd to drive them. They caught five of us together, but later they divided us into two groups. They just kept saying, "You are secret agents of the insurgents". They didn't say anything else. We told them we were just herding buffaloes. But they doubted what I said, so one of them cut deeply into part of my neck — now it has healed. They cut me here and there with bayonets on the neck and face. They made me lie down on my stomach and dripped hot wax on my back. They lit a bunch of candles and fixed them on a row all along a stick, and this was the instrument they used to torture me [by dripping a drop of wax and then sticking a candle on it, the soldiers affixed a row of lighted candles along a stick, making an impromptu candelabra. By holding up this stick and tipping it, a whole row of drops of hot wax would fall on his back]. It was too painful to bear. I tried to resist but it was all in vain. They held me down.

It was done by soldiers — NCO's with two or three stripes [*Corporals and Sergeants*]. I don't know their names — we never even saw their faces! Each of us was tortured like that for one hour at a time. They did that to us three times every night, at 8:00 p.m. Later they kept us in an 18-feet-deep hole. We could not see because we were kept blindfolded. Everyday they came to inspect us at 4:00 p.m. They dropped stones that struck our backs and heads, causing us bleed. They did this to all of us — there were many holes. They put two of us in each hole. The other pair was in a hole quite far from us. I supposed they were treated the same. One of us [out of the five] was killed. They accused him too of being a spy. He could not speak Burmese. They accused him of being a soldier of the rebel army, and of hiding his weapons in the water. They ordered him to go and retrieve his weapons from the stream and when nothing was found, the poor man was killed. He was killed in the water. I didn't see it because I was blindfolded in the hole. Nobody saw it, they just saw his body floating in the water. His name was Pa Khaw. He was over 30 and came from Thaton [but settled in Kya In Township]. He was still young. He has a wife and a child just three or four years old. As her husband is now dead, I think she will have nothing more to eat.

Among the other four arrested, one is about 45 years old, another is about 20 and the other one who is my nephew is 35. They kept us there for one month and 18 days.

The torture lasted for the first 10 days of detention. That 10 days of torture did so much on our faces and backs, causing horrible to look upon. Our faces and backs were all bruised and blue, and our skulls were cracked. After that time, they put us down in the holes. Then they kept throwing stones down on us in the holes. At least two stones were dropped on us each day, on our heads and backs, causing us bleed. We could not see because we were blindfolded. The blindfolds were taken off only when we were released.

These holes are in their military camp. In the holes they gave us rice with dal curry, sometimes once a day, sometimes twice. We had to release our bowels in the pit, in a pail. Each day they lowered a rope, and we tied the pail to the end so they could draw it up to dispose it. The pits were 18 ft deep, 6 ft across at the bottom and only 3 ft across at the top, shaped like a 'tee luh tha' fruit [wider at the bottom, narrowing at the mouth]. Two of us had to stay in each pit. At night as they closed the pit with mats, we could hardly breathe. We asked them to open it up a little bit, but when it rained they covered the top so tightly that I nearly died of suffocation. If they hadn't opened it up in time, we would all have died then.

We never heard them saying anything about our release. My wife tried her best to get me out. Then there was a plea made by a monk, and the village headman also pleaded for our release. But the soldiers didn't allow anyone to see us. Then they dropped a rope for us and pulled us up from the holes. Only when I reached the surface, the Major told me that I could go. My wife was there with the village headman. I didn't know why they released us — I think it was because the people, who were pleading for us, told them that we are Karen farmers who had herded their buffaloes. I think that's why the Battalion Commander finally ordered our release. After all, we were not ever soldiers as being accused. They didn't release us at the same time. They freed my nephew one day ahead of me. We were released one at a time. I was released second. They sent me back on a bullock cart. I could walk, but as I was so weak, I could hardly step forward. You could see the bruises all over my limbs. What could I do? They covered our eyes for so long, for the whole month. As soon as they uncovered my eyes on my release, I could hardly see, my eyesight was blurred. It was about 7:00 p.m. and it was already dark. The following day, it was better. To heal my one of my wounds here [bayonet-wound on his left chest], it took a whole month.

Now I dare not go and see the Burmese again. How can I be happy over my plight? I'm so sad and bitter. I'm not a fighting man. But all I can say is that those people are not real soldiers. When I was there they even ordered me to dig a hole, I don't know why. My Burmese is so poor that at first I didn't even know what they meant. They forced me to dig that hole with a piece of bamboo. Imagine that! It was not even mature or properly dried. Just imagine using a piece of bamboo as a spade or a pick-axe! As I had to work all day, my hands got blistered all over and it hurt so much. I was able to dig only a shallow hole because it was not easy to dig with bamboo. I had to scoop out the earth after breaking it up with the bamboo. A 45 year old man arrested along with us was forced to do it with me. I had to do it blind-

folded. They kept my eyes covered and wouldn't even let me see while I was digging. They also bound my neck and my waist, very tightly, so I couldn't move properly. What purpose was that hole for? It was just torture, that's all. Those people are not soldiers.

Interview: 306 - HRV: Detention, Torture

Name: Saw Ler Wah
 Age: 44
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married, two children aged 3 and 14
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kya In Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 21 December 1995
 Source: KHRG

The Burmese detained me when I went to herd buffaloes at a village near the military camp. The Burmese came to the village and surrounded us. I don't know their Battalion, but I knew their officer who is a Captain. There were many of them, I guess about 100. They arrested us and took us to their camp. We didn't understand why. They asked us whether we were soldiers or not. We told them we're not, we're just ordinary farmers. There wasn't a soldier among us. They locked our feet in wooden stocks and abused us. They gave us only a very small amount of rice with beans. They tortured us while our feet were bound. They poured water into our nostrils. They accused us of having guns with us when we were herding the buffaloes, but we never had guns. They tortured us for quite a long time. We reached their camp in the evening and they started interrogating and torturing us, then a day later they tortured us again. Just imagine! They always asked whether there are any Kaw Thoo Lei soldiers. We told them there are not, but they were bent on accusing us of lying. Then they'd beat us and torture us again. They hit my mouth and broke one of my teeth, and it bled badly. They arrested five of us — one died, and four were left. Later, the four of us were put in the pits in pairs. I was put in the pit with a man who was 20. The one who was killed was Pa Khaw. When he was killed we were in the pits and saw nothing. We only found out when we came back. Of the other two, one was Pa Noh [see interview 305].

They made us stay in the holes for one month, we just had to stay there and they gave us food, just rice with one or two spoonfuls of beans twice a day — it didn't do anything to our hunger. We were blindfolded and tied with ropes behind our backs. The holes were hot, and very deep. They were only this wide [he indicated five or six feet]. At the bottom there was just bare earth. To go to the toilet we just had to use a place at the bottom of the hole. It smelled awful. There were many holes like that in the camp, but at that time, only four of us were there. They told us we had to

wait until someone came and paid for us. People came, but they didn't release us. We waited and waited, and were released only a month later. When people from our village came, they wouldn't allow them to see us. Only when they came for the third time we saw them. Then the soldiers told us "You can go. Climb up!" They kept us blindfolded, and went with us. I was pale and thin. After that it took quite a long time for my vision to get better, nearly a month. My other wounds only healed after I got some injections. I still have some pain now. I have trouble in working, because it's painful to exert myself.

The villagers had to give 35,000 Ks for each of us before we were freed. My family had to pay too. We had to sell things to give them the money, because if not they wouldn't let us go. Because of that and the costs for medicines, I had to sell all my cattle. I'll never go back to my village. We are staying here [another village]. So long as I hear the Burmese are coming, I'll run away. Some people from my village have already fled to Thailand. We have to be afraid of them, we have to flee. I can never go back there.

Interview: 307 - HRV: Women, Execution, Livelihood

Name: Naw Lah K'Paw
 Age: 40
 Sex: Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with two children, (one died of disease, another surviving child aged 4)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 20 December 1995
 Source: KHRG

[Naw Lah K'Paw's husband Pa Khaw was killed by SLORC in April 1995 — see related interviews 304-306]

I cannot remember what month it was, whether it was Tazaungmone or Thadingyut. While he was herding buffaloes, he was killed. I have no idea why. The owner of the buffaloes brought the news. I did not know where to go, I dared not go. [A friend remarked: "She asked us to go and help, but when we arrived there we could not do anything, he was already killed."] Now we just stay here like this. I am tilling the land together with my brother.

Interview: 308 - HRV: Women, Livelihood, Displacement, Forced Labour, Slavery

Name: Pi Eh Wah
 Age: 56
 Sex: Female
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with seven children (age 21 to 37 years), one deceased
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kawkareik Township, Karen State
 Interviewed: 20 December 1995
 Source: KHRG

[Pi Eh Wah told the story of how SLORC soldiers shot and killed her daughter Aye Myint — see Interview 64. After failing to arrest Pi Eh Wah's husband, they approached their house at midnight, called them out and then immediately opened fire, killing Aye Myint and seriously wounding Pi Eh Wah and her daughter Naw Paw Htoo. Pi Eh Wah was shot through the chest, and Naw Paw Htoo was hit in the leg and the belly. The two women had to spend a month in hospital, but first they had to get an admission letter from the SLORC commander responsible for the shooting, who wrote that they had been shot by Karen soldiers. The shooting was in December 1994 and they were discharged from the hospital in February 1995. The following interview follows up the story since their returning home.]

This is my daughter, Naw Paw Htoo. She is 37 and married with two children (age 3 and 16 years old). As we no longer dared stay in our village, we moved to another village. SLORC wanted to arrest me, but they failed. [Naw Paw Htoo added: "My mother dared not go home, but I went back. SLORC tried to catch me but when they couldn't, they burned my house."] Now I still hear the news from our home village. People there say the Burmese are doing everything they like and committing atrocities. The village has to send pork to them every five days. Sometimes 10 viss [16 kg.], sometimes 15 or 17 or 20 viss, even 25 or 26 viss. Whatever the soldiers demand, they have to comply. In that village, we have to do so many kinds of things, hard labour in many forms. We have to work at their camps and build their barracks. We have to cut down bamboo plants. There were 90 houses in our village. Sometimes the whole population or sometimes 10 or 15 villagers have to go.

In our new village, we do not have to give anything because we are just visitors there. The other villagers have to send things. I don't know exactly what are they because I haven't asked them about it. As for my own village, we had to send once a week, sometimes even more than that. We even had to send them our rice. SLORC soldiers came very often to our old village, as well as new village. Since they have shot us, every time we see them we are very afraid. They stay by themselves and cook their own food, but they catch our chickens and pick our fruits and vegetables. They take things by force. If we say anything to them they shout at and abuse us.

Usually we have to pay porter fees, but they also demand porters for three days. We have to give 150 Ks if we fail to go. If people have no money, they have no alternative.

There are three battalions in our area. The closest group is not so far from here. Now we do not know what will happen in the future, we have no place, no house and no land. We don't know what to think, we just carry on day by day.

Naw Paw Htoo: The soldiers came and sold us their rice at a cheap price, and they took our rice free of charge. Their rice was not good, it smelled bad. But everyone had to buy their rice. They dumped their bad rice at the headman's house, and he had to sell it. Then they took our rice of good quality for nothing, and if they felt too lazy to cook it, we had to cook and pack it for them. They were always behaving like this, so how could we go on living? Sometimes we are afraid and have to flee. When they imposed "curfew", we could not go out after 6:00 p.m. If we did, they beat us. We were not free to work as we liked for our living. Nothing is easy nowadays. They levied taxes for our rice mills and sugar cane mills, and even for video recorders. We had to pay them five baskets of rice for each recorder.

Interview: 309 - HRV: Livelihood, Detention, Displacement, Slavery, Torture,

Name: Saw Kaw Thaw
Age: 30
Sex: Male
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Ka Doh Hta village, Kawkareik Township, Karen State.
Source: KHRG

[The following account was given by Saw Kaw Thaw after Ka Doh Hta village was attacked by SLORC troops in November 1995]

At 3:00 a.m. on 7 November 1995, SLORC troops came to Ka Doh Hta village with the strength of over 300, and surrounded the village immediately. At 4:30 a.m. they came in and occupied the village, and all the villagers there tried to flee. The first group of fleeing villagers were caught and detained by the SLORC soldiers. Those behind the first group were also caught, and were tied up with 30 feet of green nylon rope. These villagers, including me, were forced to stay in a place north of the village. About 40 minutes later, we saw smoke coming up from our houses, and I realised that they were setting fire to our houses and paddy barns. Then the soldiers took our group back to the village, untied us, and told us to put out the fires that had just started in some of the houses. After the fires were out, they gathered us in the middle of the village and tied us again with the same rope.

The soldiers left our village at 3:00 p.m. on that day. We had to go along with them and carry their loads. We were afraid and desperate, but we had to go on with their heavy loads if we wanted to survive. We slept at Myo Haun village for one night. During that night we were still tied up. In the morning, they took away the rope that bound us and gave us rice to eat. They gave each of us a lump of rice and some salt and said, "Eat or you'll die!" Immediately after eating, they forced us to carry their loads to Kawkareik. When we got there, they put the loads onto trucks. Then they held us in the confinement in the camp of IBs 230 and 231. They put us inside holes in the ground. The holes are 12 ft deep and about 9 ft across at the bottom. The only light was through a small hole at the top. In the morning, they took us out for interrogation, and that was when one of them punched me twice in the face. Then he hit me three times in the back with the butt of a G3 rifle, and my back was cut open. The elderly men who were with me were also punched in their faces. They punched each of them four times." [The villagers were then released and told to go home. The reason for the attack on the village is unclear. It was conducted by troops from LIB 355 (based in Thi Ho Dan) commanded by Maj Hla Maung and LIB 300 (based in Kawkareik) commanded by Maj Myint Win. In the process of the attack, the troops burned houses and paddy barns, looted or destroyed household belongings, and poured out and destroyed rice supplies.]

Interview: 310 - HRV: Slavery

Name: Mg Boat
 Age: 40
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Pa-O
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with eight children
 Address: Sike Khaung village, Hsi-hseng Township, Shan State
 Interviewed: At Thai-Burmese border area
 Source: KNWO

He was arrested as a porter by SLORC soldiers. He had to carry ammunition and food supplies during Tie Lone Hein operation launched by SLORC against KNPP. When he fled and arrived Karenni refugee camp 2, he was suffering from Cerebral Malaria seriously. He escaped on 14 September 1995. Therefore, he was not able to answer his experiences of being porter in the SLORC column. Medics from Karenni refugee camp 2 on the Thai-Burmese border tried taking medical treatment before he died. Later on, he died of malnutrition and cerebral malaria.

Interview: 311 - HRV: Slavery

Name: Nai Nal
 Age: 25

Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Manaw
 Religion: Christian
 Parents : U Sar Aye & Daw Anyin Sal
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Nan Phair village, Pasawng Township, Karenni State
 Source: KNWO

Nai Nal was arrested on 26 June 1995 by SLORC soldiers from Coy 4 of IB 102 on the way. During Tie Lone Hein operation of SLORC against KNPP, he had to carry a heavy load of ammunitions and food supplies, and when he was not able to carry, SLORC soldiers kicked and slapped him. Each two porters in the column were given only one condensed-milk-tin of rice per day. Finally when he could not carry heavy loads because of malnutrition. As he was not able to bear anymore, he managed to escape. He arrived at Karenni refugee camp 5 on the Thai-Burmese border area on 25 July 1995.

Interview: 312 - HRV: Slavery, Torture, Execution

Name: Ko Hla
 Age: 17
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Shan
 Religion: Buddhist
 Parents: U Chit Maung & Daw Aye Bon
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Wan Mo village, Pasawng Township Karenni State
 Source: KNWO
 Interviewed: At the Thai-Burmese border area

Ko Hla was arrested in May 1995 by SLORC troops from IB 102 together with his elder brother, U Soe Tint (35) who was sick. He had to carry ammunitions for the troops. His brother also had to carry a heavy load, consisting of ammunition and other supplies for the SLORC troops. U Soe Tint slipped many times along the way and he was beaten and kicked. Finally when he could not carry heavy loads because of malnutrition, the SLORC soldiers left him in the jungle. When he returned, they shoot and killed him

Ko Hla witnessed the killing of 26 porters by SLORC soldiers. Some were killed while they tried to escape and others were killed as a result of illness like U Soe Tint. When Ko Hla was not able to suffer anymore, he managed to escape. He got mine injuries on his legs.

Interview: 313 - HRV: Slavery, Torture, Execution

Name: Maung Latt
Age: 27
Sex: Male
Ethnicity: Padaung
Religion: Christian
Parents : U Nyi Rie & Naw Klar Phaw
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Shee Mi Saw Tarr village, Demoso Township, Karenni State
Source: KNWO

Maung Latt was arrested on 26 July 1995 by troops from Coy 4 of SLORC IB 102 on the way. He had to carry a heavy load of ammunitions and food supplies and when he could not carry, SLORC soldiers kicked and slapped him. Every two porters in the column were given only one condensed-milk- tin of rice per day. Finally when he could not carry heavy loads because of malnutrition he escaped to the Thai-Burmese border area on 25 July 1995. As he was not able to stand anymore, he managed to escape. He arrived at Karenni refugee camp 5.

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