

4. Forced Portering and Labor

4.1 Background

Since Burma became a member of the International Labor Organization in 1955, it accepted the ILO Convention on Forced Labor No.29 "Concerning Forced Labor," in which it agreed to "suppress the use of forced labor or compulsory labor in all its forms within the shortest possible period." The Convention defined forced labor as "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself (or herself) voluntarily."

However, having ratified this Convention, the regime has failed to implement it, even though it was approved over 40 years ago. The widespread use of forced labor by Burma's military junta is well-known internationally. Since 1964, ILO Committee of Experts for the Application of Conventions and Recommendations has addressed the practice of forced labor in Burma. The ILO Assembly has adopted condemnatory resolutions using strongly critical language regarding Burma's breaches of ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 29.

On March 27, 1997, in accordance with the Article 26 of the ILO Constitution stating that if a country fails to meet the world's labor norms and standards, and violates human rights, then the ILO has the right to form a special commission of investigation, the ILO established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate a complaint brought by workers' delegates to the 1996 ILO Conference. The establishment of this Commission of Inquiry is the strongest legal action that the ILO can take against a member state and it found the government in breach of ILO Convention 29. The complaints addressed the active and continued use of forced labor by the regime in Burma and its apparent unwillingness to repeal legislation allowing the use of forced labor.

In the course of its inquiry, the Commission received over 6,000 pages of documents and heard testimony given by representatives of a number of non-governmental organizations and by some 250 eyewitnesses with recent experience of forced labor practices during the hearing in Geneva and in the course of the Commission's visit to the region. A comprehensive report on "Forced Labor in Myanmar (Burma)" by the Commission was released on July 2, 1998. Summaries of the testimony given by these witnesses, including women and children who had fled from forced labor, are appended to the Commission's report. The regime in Burma, abstained from attending the hearings and did not authorize a visit by the Commission of Inquiry to Burma arguing that "such a visit would not contribute much towards resolving the case" and "would interfere in the internal affairs of the country."

As was noted by the Commission of Inquiry, its report "reveals a saga of untold misery and suffering, oppression and exploitation of large sections of the population inhabiting Myanmar by the Government, military and other public officers. It is a story of gross denial of human rights to which the people of Myanmar have been subjected particularly since 1988 and from which they find no escape except fleeing from the country."

In its conclusion on the substance of the case, the Commission stated "there is

abundant evidence before the Commission showing the pervasive use of forced labor imposed on the civilian population throughout Myanmar by the authorities and the military for portering, the construction, maintenance and servicing of military camps, other work in support of the military, work on agriculture, logging and other production projects undertaken by the authorities or the military, sometimes for the profit of private individuals, the construction and maintenance of roads, railways and bridges, other infrastructure work and a range of other tasks.”

Laws which permitted the use of forced labor were promulgated by the colonial rulers. Following independence in 1948, successive Burmese governments have continued the practice of forced labor, citing as legal authority the “Village Act of 1908” and the “Township Act of 1907.” The two laws require that laborers be (a) otherwise not employed, (b) physically fit, and (c) paid a reasonable fixed wage that is agreed upon beforehand. To date, neither of the two most prominent forced labor laws has been repealed. After repeated demands from the ILO that the government repeal the Village and Township Acts which allows for the forced recruitment of labor, the regime stated in October 1997 that it had amended the two laws, but indicated that they would be included in the new constitution, rather than promulgated immediately.

Whenever the status or use of these laws, overwhelming evidence shows that the SPDC enforces a strict regime of forced labor throughout the country. However, the SPDC denies allegations of all forms of forced labor. It has responded a number of times that there is a tradition in Burma going back centuries, according to which people voluntarily contribute labor in the belief that it is a noble deed. On some occasions, the SPDC has described this as a Buddhist cultural tradition. The SPDC reported in 1993 that for the previous four years, local people had been voluntarily contributing their labor for the construction of roads and bridges, and that there is no coercion involved. These voluntary contributions, according to the SPDC, should not be considered as forced labor. The SPDC-controlled newspaper has reported that “the people of Myanmar are always aware of these development projects and welcome them wholeheartedly, and they are willing to take part in them whether they benefit from it directly or not.” Since mid-1996, the SPDC press organ, *The New Light of Myanmar*, has repeatedly carried articles on uncompensated labor, including statements by GOB officials admitting the regime’s reliance on “community service” for public infrastructure development, but claiming that this service has been voluntary.

In truth, tens of thousands of men, women, and children of all ages are forced each year to work without compensation at construction sites, army camps, or as porters for the army. The SPDC recruits forced labor by means of intimidation, coercion, and naked kidnapping. Laborers are taken away from their harvests and other forms of wage-earning only to spend weeks on uncompensated hard labor. They are not even provided with basic necessities like food or tools. If a person refuses to work on SPDC’s labor projects, he must pay exorbitant fines, pay a substitute workers, or worse he is beaten or killed. Indeed, beating, rape, and even murder are common even if a villager agrees to cooperate with the army’s round-ups.

In 1995 the SLORC issued two secret directives concerning the practice of forced labor on development projects. Directive No. 125 instructs all State/Division Law and Order Restoration Councils to stop using unpaid labor contributions in national development

projects. It requires that “in obtaining the necessary labor from the local people, they must be paid their due share.” Directive 125 also instructs the local authorities to “avoid undesirable incidents,” so as not to cause “misery and suffering to the people in rural areas ..” Directive No. 82 instructs the Rangoon Division Law and Order Chairman and the Ministry of Agriculture “to stop the practice of obtaining labor from the local people without monetary compensation” in the construction of dams in Rangoon division. The UN Special Rapporteur on Burma commented that as these directives were secret, they were not accessible either to the people to whom they applied, or to anyone trying to protect the rights of persons accused of breaking the laws.

The labor the SPDC calls voluntary is the most degrading, backbreaking, and inhumane kind that exists anywhere in the world. Villagers used as porters must carry packs for the army that amount to half the villagers’ weight. In conflict areas, they are sent ahead of troops to act as human mine sweepers or human bullet shields. Often the SPDC sends children ahead to sweep for mines to deter neighboring villagers from supporting oppositions the SPDC. This work is done without compensation. The porters are meagerly fed and sometimes not fed at all. If they get sick from disease, malnutrition, or exhaustion from their work they are offered no medical assistance and are often beaten and even killed.

Forced labor on roads, railways, and other infrastructural projects is becoming even more prevalent as the SPDC pushes forward with its “development” agenda. For these projects, the SPDC usually sends written orders to villages demanding a quota of one or more laborers per household for shifts of one or two weeks; usually a family’s turn will occur once per month on each project in their area (this is in addition to all other forced labor requirements such as porters and work at army camps). The villagers must perform forced labor and their parents must stay home to work the fields to provide some food for the family. Meanwhile, local battalions sap community finances and food where they are stationed.

No excuses are accepted for evading SPDC’s labor requirements. If adults in the household are sick or if the household consists only of a grandmother caring for her orphaned grandchild, the SPDC still requires that someone from the family go to the labor site; alternatively, the family must hire a substitute, the fee for which has increased dramatically over the past year. Sometimes, people can bribe a soldier by paying heavy fines or “porter taxes,” but usually the only option is to send a laborer or flee the area and risk being captured and beaten. On some projects, the army assigns each village or family a specific work task; in these situations, parents often take their children with them so they can finish their work assignment as quickly as possible and return home.

It is abundantly clear that these laborers are not working voluntarily; coercion and force are used to make people work on these labor activities. The “system” for recruiting labor is well-established. Typically, a local LORC commander contacts a village headman, or in urban areas, a council chairman, by written order. The order describes the number of laborers needed by a certain date for a particular infrastructure project. The consequences for not fulfilling such an order are not explicitly stated, rather they are intimidated through the enclosure of a bullet, chili, or a piece of charcoal that often accompanies an order. The enclosures are meant to be symbolic of the consequences that wait on those who will not follow SPDC’s orders; bullets mean that they will be shot and killed; a chili means they will be in “hot water” or that their animals will be cooked; and charcoal means that their

village will be burnt down. The village headman or council chairman then has to select families to work on a rotating basis. Sometimes, village headmen intercede or try to reduce the demands put on their communities, despite the implicit threats, but this can be fatal for them, especially in ethnic areas where on failure to cooperate with the army, the headmen would probably be accused of aiding ethnic armed groups.

In urban areas the SPDC has decreased its demands for forced labor, because it fears the possibility of uprisings in the cities and because forced labor in the cities is more visible to foreign visitors. Instead, the regime uses convicts for forced labor in the cities or brings in villagers from rural areas, while those who live in the cities simply pay cash in lieu of doing forced labor. In some forced labor projects on tourist routes the SPDC has even taken to paying forced laborers, though the amount paid is usually 20 or 40 *kyat* per day, which is no more than 25 per cent of the money needed for daily food. This allows them to show foreigners that forced laborers are “paid,” even though in the rest of the country forced laborers are never paid.

42 Portering

The use of civilian porters by the military is common in areas of armed conflict along the borders with Thailand, Bangladesh, and India, where SPDC troops have regularly staged offensives against ethnic armed groups. The regular major offensives which the SPDC troops conducts against the ethnic armed groups requires large quantities of supplies and equipment and could involve the use of thousands or even tens of thousands of civilian porters for period of several months. Offensives take place regularly in dry season, during which time civilians are taken from their villages and forced to endure dangerous and exhausting conditions. The use of porters has become less common in recent years since many ethnic groups reached cease-fire agreements with the SPDC, but their use continues in areas where fighting still continues. Both Karen National Union (KNU) and the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) have reported that the use of portering continues unabated as the SPDC steps up its military presence in the region. In both conflict and non-conflict areas the military demands porters on a regular basis for a wide range of duties, such as carrying equipment and supplies for routine patrols, carrying provisions to the local military camps, carrying out various duties at military centers or staying at the camp on “stand-by” in case they are needed.

The methods used to procure porters varied. Orders to provide porters emanate from the highest levels of the military command structure. The quota might be spread over a number of districts or townships. The order would be transmitted down the administrative command structure, so that a given village would be required to send a certain number of porters to a certain gathering point on a certain date. In cases where it is difficult to fill the quota in this way, the authorities resort to rounding up civilians in urban areas. The civilians are rounded up by the military at homes, at work places, stations, cinemas, and even at schools, to carry military materials and other supplies. In the absence of a sufficient number of able-bodied men, the military take women, children, the elderly, and persons otherwise unfit for work. In addition to rounding people up in an organized way, or ordering local authorities to provide them, the military also capture people at random from villages and rural areas which they pass through.

Conditions for porters are horrendous. Porters are generally required to march over rough, mountainous terrains carrying heavy loads, including foodstuffs, mortar shells, heavy artillery, and cooking and general camp equipment for the troops. Porters for the military camps are also ordered to build bunkers, clear the surrounding area of bush and mines, carry water and supplies to the camp, and work the recently confiscated fields for the army. Porters are given very little food, if any. Rations of food where supplied are meager; on average, each porter is given one to two cups of cooked rice and an equivalent quantity of water each day. Sometimes, porters are not provided any meals for many days at a time. Physical exhaustion, malnutrition, and beatings often cause porters to become very ill or seriously wounded; the SPDC does not provide them with medical care. Porters attempting to escape these atrocious conditions are killed or shot. Porters who are persistently slow, or who are unable to carry their loads because of exhaustion, sickness or injury are often severely beaten and forced to continue, or if this is not possible they are abandoned or killed. The killing of porters who could not continue appeared to be more common in potential conflict areas. In such areas, porters are not usually shot, but are beaten to death, have their throats cut, are thrown down the mountains sides, or into rivers with their hands tied behind their backs, or burned alive. In addition to those who were executed, many porters have died from disease, particularly malaria and general weakness.

Porters are not normally released until their replacements arrive. Sometimes it is difficult for replacements to be sent, either because the troops are a long distance from the home village, or because their whereabouts are unknown. In such cases porters might have to work for considerably longer periods.

Porters are also exposed to dangerous combat situations. These can include exposure to mines, booby-traps and ambushes. Soldiers sometimes force the porters to walk ahead of them in areas where mines or ambushes are suspected in order to minimize the exposure of troops to such dangers.

43. Forced labor for the military base

In areas where there is full SPDC control and no resistance, the villagers are placed completely at the disposal of the army. They must continually undertake rotating shifts of forced labor acting as servants at each of the military camps near their village. New military camps are always being established. Whenever a new battalion moves into an area, the nearby villages are forced to collect and provide most of the building materials for the camp, then at least one person per household is required to perform forced labor building the barracks and bunkers, digging trenches and erecting fences.

Villagers must also spend up to two weeks per month performing forced labor on infrastructure projects, such as roads, railways and hydroelectric dams, which the army implements to consolidate its control and attract foreign investment. Villagers must also pay the cost of these projects; the SPDC-controlled media often describes these “self-reliance basis” projects, meaning those which are constructed entirely with the forced labor and money from villagers; the money forced out of villagers for these infrastructure projects is listed as “people’s contributions” and usually amounts to one-third to half the total budget. However, in reality any money provided by Rangoon is simply pocketed by local and higher-level authorities, while villagers are forced to pay anywhere from 100 to 300 percent

of the actual cost of the project to these same authorities. In addition, many army camps confiscate their farmland without compensation and then force them to grow rations and cash crops for the army or for export. Peasants must also perform forced labor, gathering building materials for army camps and participating in money-making activities for the local army officers, such as logging and brick-baking. An average family must send one person for each of three or four types of forced labor every month; women must often do this labor because men are more likely to be beaten by soldiers at the work-site, and children must often go because their parents need to work in the fields for the survival of the family. If the village fails to comply with requests for forced laborers, materials or money, the village elders are arrested and often tortured, houses are burned down, or the army simply storms the village and takes two or three times as many people for labor as were originally requested.

In addition to constructing the military bases and working for the army-run self-reliance activities, the villages also have to provide a number of workers on a permanent basis to carry out a number of services at the camps, such as cleaning and maintenance, cooking, collecting water or firewood, washing clothes and acting as messengers. These messengers are the ones who would normally deliver written orders or summonses from the camp to village heads. These persons might sometimes be able to return home at night.

From Thayet Chaung township in Tenasserim Division alone, more than 600 people from a total of 47 village tracts are daily conscripted and used as laborers in the military camp in townships. A total of more than 3,000 people from the hundreds of villages in 10 townships are daily conscripted to serve as general factotums at the military camps in the region.

In areas where there is any possibility of conflict, villagers must undertake sentry duty at army camps; often most or all the soldiers sleep, leaving only unarmed villagers as sentries with orders to wake them up if anything happens. Villagers must also clear roadsides of scrubs and trees for anywhere from five to 100 meters on each side of military supply roads in order to decrease the chance of ambushes. In such areas, villagers must stand as sentries along roads and railways, with two to four villagers posted every 200 meters along the route. If anyone is seen on the road, they are supposed to send a signal up the line by beating on bamboo sticks. In the morning and near the conflict areas, village women and children are often forced to sweep roads with branches to detect landmines.

44. Forced labor at the army's "Income Generation Projects"

In some rural areas thousands of acres are confiscated and the villagers must perform forced labor on a variety of projects undertaken by the military. These projects include cultivation of rice and other food crops, cash crops such as rubber, shrimp farms, kilns for producing bricks, and logging activities. These projects are often promoted in the media as "local income-generation", but all proceeds go to the army. Officers also steal the wages and rations of rank-and-file soldiers and then order their soldiers to survive by looting the villages. All farmers who still have land must hand over 25-50 percent of their crops as a quota to the army and are paid only 10-20 percent of the market price. The quotas increase every year, even when there are bad crops and natural disasters, and farmers often have to sell their belongings to buy rice at the market price so that they will have enough to pay the

quota and avoid arrest. Many of the crops grown by forced labor and those handed over as quotas are used to support the army, but local officers take and sell a great deal of it, and it is likely that much of it is also sold to foreign companies for “counter-trade” export; “counter-trade” is a practice whereby foreign companies convert profits earned in *kyat*, the local currency which cannot be exported, into exportable goods by buying agricultural products from SPDC agencies.

In forested areas, villagers are also regularly ordered to cut and haul prime quality hardwood logs to local army camps or sawmills, where other villagers or sawmill owners are then forced to cut the logs into timber without compensation. The timber then disappears into market with all profit going to local military officers, while orders are issued forbidding the villagers to cut any trees for their own use. Also many military officers nationwide have also established brick-baking kilns at battalion camps. The villagers are forced to cut and deliver all the wood required to bake the bricks, while the rank-and-file soldiers are forced to bake bricks for eight to ten hours a day in addition to their normal military duties. The officers then sell the bricks on the market for their own benefit and pay no compensation to anyone.

45. Infrastructure development and maintenance

Civilians are used in the infrastructure and “development” projects such as construction and maintenance of roads, railways, bridges, airports, hydroelectric schemes and tourist-oriented projects. Although in 1996 the SPDC announced that civilians would not be used any more in the railway construction and irrigation projects, there are credible reports that the use of forced labor remained widespread throughout the country. The regime has claimed that the infrastructure projects in the remote regions are part of its Border Areas Development Program and that it will improve access to markets, schools, and health care. However, there has been little indication that road construction has facilitated social development, and the existing schools and hospitals in the region remain woefully understaffed and under-equipped. The regime frequently claims these projects are being undertaken for the villagers’ benefit, admonishing villagers to uphold their responsibilities to their district and the nation by participating in them. In fact, as these infrastructure projects are implemented almost entirely with forced labor, rather than improving their living conditions, they cause greater hardship for local people.

People might have to travel considerable distances to work sites, particularly for more extensive projects requiring large numbers of laborers. It is very common for civilians to have to walk for several hours to reach a work site. When a village, household or peasant is required to complete a given amount of work, people are not able to leave until that work is completed. Often, a time period is specified within which the work has to be completed. If the work is not completed to the satisfaction of the soldiers supervising the work, that village, household or peasant would not be allowed to return home, and those involved might be beaten or otherwise punished. People usually have to bring their own food and necessary tools. If they become sick, they are not treated, and usually have to pay a fine or arrange a replacement to enable them to return to their village to seek medical attention.

4.6 Yadana Natural Gas Pipeline Project

Forced labor has allegedly been used in association with the construction of the Yadana natural gas pipeline project in Tenasserim Division. It is the most controversial infrastructure development project in Burma because of repeated allegations that the SPDC has used forced labor, and that troops providing security have used forced porters on a project which includes several international oil companies as investors. Additional allegations include the forced relocation of villages near the pipeline and claims that the Ye-Tavoy railway, on which the SPDC is widely acknowledged to have used forced labor, bears some relation to the Yadana project. The United States Embassy has reported that the Ye-Tavoy railway is being constructed in order to facilitate Burmese army operations in the pipeline area because the existing highway's usefulness was limited during the wet season. It also reports that "during the past two years, diverse press and Internet reports, often based on refugee sources in Thailand, repeatedly alleged that this extension of the SPDC railroad is being built with an amount and harshness of forced labor that is unusual even by contemporary Burmese standards." Construction purportedly took place 24 hours a day during the dry season. The oil companies vigorously deny that forced labor has occurred on the Yadana project and maintain that there is no connection between the pipeline and the Ye-Tavoy railway. The SPDC, which has acknowledged using uncompensated labor to construct at least one other gas pipeline project, calls allegations of forced labor on the Yadana project "totally unfounded."

In 1982, large natural gas deposits that were to become known as the Yadana field were discovered in the Andaman Sea, approximately 30 km south of Burma's Irrawaddy Delta region. Thailand's demand for energy and a desperate revenue shortage in Burma led the SPDC to consider developing this resource in the late 1980s. The SPDC solicited commercial support for a proposal to construct a pipeline that would deliver natural gas from the offshore Yadana field to Thailand, across southern Burma's Tenasserim Division. In late 1991, the SPDC reached a preliminary agreement with the Petroleum Authority of Thailand to deliver gas from the Yadana field to Thailand. Insurgencies along much of the southern part of the Burmese-Thai border posed serious security risks to the proposed route. At the time, the World Bank advised that the pipeline be rerouted "away from the Burmese-Thai border where conflicts between Rangoon and the minority Karen group still continue."

Although several alternative routes were considered, Burmese and Thai authorities agreed by mid-1992 that the pipeline should follow a route similar to the one originally proposed. The route ultimately chosen crosses the Thai-Burmese border at Nai Ei Taung where less than 25 km separate the Thai border from the Andaman Sea. Ethnic insurgents have held much of the inland hills along that border since Burma's independence in 1948. Because Nai Ei Taung and the Zinba River valley below it are inhabited by ethnic Karen and have been held by the Karen National Union (KNU) since the 1960s, the chosen pipeline route required the GOB to assert effective military control over the region before construction across the inhospitable terrain could begin. Improved logistical and transportation infrastructures were needed to establish such control in the region, as the only means of transportation along the coastal plain other than dirt bullock-cart tracks was one occasionally paved road running north-south. In July 1992, the French oil company Total signed a

production-sharing contract with Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), Burma's state-owned oil production company, for evaluating, developing and producing gas from the offshore Yadana field. The American company Unocal joined the project as a co-venture in January 1993, and the national oil company of Thailand, the Petroleum Authority of Thailand Exploration and Production Public Company, Ltd. (PTTEP) joined the project early in 1995. The pipeline is to be 36 inches in diameter throughout its 416 mile length, which includes 215 miles underwater in the Andaman Sea, 39 miles overland in Burma, and 161 miles in Thailand. The project is scheduled to begin delivering gas in 1998 and is expected to raise approximately \$164 million per year from gas sales alone. Estimates of the SPDC's total revenues including dividends and taxes on the project range as high as \$400 million per year.

Allegations of human rights abuses, particularly of forced labor in the construction of the pipeline and associated infrastructures, have been vigorously denied by the oil companies. They have stated that now workers on the project were hired by the army and that all were voluntary employees who were paid well for their work. The oil companies have also emphasized their role in the development of local communities along the pipeline route. Although expatriate staff were recruited to build the actual pipeline itself, evidence suggests that Burmese nationals built the majority of support facilities for the pipeline including:

- The pipeline center (PLC), or base camp, with about 60 buildings to house expatriates and Burmese nationals, completed in October 1995. The PLC is surrounded by layers of chain-link barbed fences separated by "a clear field of fire" with two underground bunkers in the center of the camp;
- A dirt landing strip near the PLC, completed in January 1996;
- A temporary logistical base or "flying camp" to support construction that was accessible only by air, located near the mid-point of the pipeline;
- A jetty on the western bank of the Heinze River estuary, just north of the PLC;
- At least a dozen helipads, including two at the base camp.

According to Unocal, "The Total affiliate, as project operator, is responsible for all day-to-day operations relating to the pipeline, including hiring all labor . . . The Government of Myanmar does not provide or arrange for personnel to work on the pipeline." However, during a January 1996 visit to the pipeline, a US Embassy officer reported that "Total officials stressed that Total pays these local workers directly, even though they are hired by the army." The Embassy added that Total's own briefing materials indicate that, between February 1995 and mid-January 1996, 463 villagers were "hired" by Burmese Infantry Battalions (IB) 273, 401, 403, 407, and 409 and quartered in those battalions. The same Total briefing materials indicate that Total supplied weekly a food ration to the villagers "in the battalions." Refugees interviewed by the Karen Human Rights Group claim that they were forced to build project facilities including a helipad near Migyaunglaung used by civilian helicopters transporting Westerners and construction supplies and barracks for IB 408 between Kanbauk and Ohnbinkwin. These refugees were also allegedly forced to collect porter fees for "pipeline *loke-are-pay*" (forced labor) by IB 404 at Hpaung Daw. Human Rights Watch and other groups have reported similar interviews with individuals claiming they were forced to clear sections of the pipeline corridor or to build other facilities to support the pipeline. The work was being performed in an area that poses a significant risk to the workers.

In January 1996, a Singapore-based Unocal official responsible for monitoring the treatment of workers on the pipeline said that laborers were paid directly by Total and “that the rate at which these workers run away has decreased sharply since the start of the project.” By definition, workers can cease voluntary labor when they desire to change jobs or cease working altogether. The statement that workers on the project had “run away” may constitute an acknowledgment that at least some persons were coerced into working there.

Human rights groups and ethnic opposition groups have reported a significant increase in the number of Burmese army battalions stationed in the pipeline area since 1993, suggesting that the purpose of this build-up was to provide security for the pipeline. While the pipeline was under construction, a military facility was built on Heinze Island which is allegedly used to provide off-shore security for the pipeline. The UN Special Rapporteur on Burma reports that the military ordered 200 civilians to go to Heinze Island for two weeks in May 1995 in order to clear ground, build a helicopter pad and construct several buildings. The civilians did not receive any compensation for their work and had to pay the fuel bill for the boat that took them to the island. Troops in the area have also been accused of forcing civilians to build army bases and of pressing local villagers to serve as porters and provide other support for their security operations.

As of 1996, five battalions (IBs 273, 403, 404, 408 and 409) were assigned to the area. The map indicates that the location of these units directly on the pipeline corridor remains basically unchanged; however, the number of battalions stationed directly along the route has increased to six, with two other battalions operating just above and below the corridor. The 1998 map indicates that the battalions currently providing security for the pipeline are IBs 273, 282, 401, 406, 407, 408, 409 and 410. The presence of these battalions is consistent with reports by NGOs and opposition groups in the area.

Refugees who recently fled to Thailand identified many of the same battalions identified by Total as having “hired” civilians to work on infrastructure development projects and serve as military porters in the area of the pipeline. Transcripts of interviews published by the Karen Human Rights Group include similar allegations of forced labor and forced portering.

Burmese army units have also allegedly relocated villages in the area of the pipeline. Officials from the oil companies, while not denying charges that the SPDC forcibly relocated villagers, have told that “such relocations were without the direction and knowledge of the oil companies.” A Unocal brochure claims that “since the production-sharing contract was signed in 1992, no villages in the vicinity of the pipeline have been relocated.”

Credible evidence exists that several villages along the route were forcibly relocated or depopulated in the months before the production-sharing agreement was signed. Villagers said that it occurred in 1991. Several villages close to the pipeline were ordered to relocate and their residents either fled to refugee camps or complied with the relocation order. Residents of one village told that their village was ostensibly relocated for security reasons, but that, with the assistance of Total, they were able to petition the government to allow them to return.

The Electrical Generating Authority of Thailand paid for an advertisement in the *Bangkok Post* in 1995 that stated, “Myanmar has recently cleared the way by relocating 11 Karen villages that would otherwise obstruct the passage of the gas resource development project.”

The completed Ye-Tavoy railway runs from north to south for 110 km between the coastal towns of Ye and Tavoy and will cross the pipeline, which runs from east to west, near Kanbauk. The use of forced labor on the construction of the Ye-Tavoy railway was widespread and it was said to be being built “with an amount and harshness of forced labor that is unusual even by contemporary Burmese standards.” Although there is no evidence that suggests the railway was designed to support actual construction of the pipeline, military operations, including pipeline security, could be facilitated by the railway. There is evidence that the original route of the railway reflected military, rather than economic or engineering concerns. Embassy reports described road access to the pipeline area during the wet season as “limited” and noted that “pipeline security could be materially facilitated by the railway now under construction between Ye and Tavoy.” The urgency of building the railway, which at one point involved 24 hour construction by forced laborers, and the fact that the railway was scheduled to become operable at approximately the same time as the pipeline, suggest that the military placed a high priority on access to the pipeline provided by the railway.

The only merit to the original route of the railway was that it gave the military full access to areas where armed opposition groups traditionally operated the rainforest hills along the Burmese-Thai border. The original route bypassed local population centers and was abandoned after being washed out twice by rainwater flowing down the sides of the hills during the annual monsoons.

47. Prison Labor

The number of prisoners in Burma increased considerably after the military’s coup de’tat in 1988. Since then, prisoners, including political prisoners and student activists, have been used not only in labor camps but also as laborers at military bases. Prisoners are also regularly sent from prisons and labor camps across the country to be used by the army in major offensives. They continue to wear prison uniforms and are usually kept separate from the other porters.

Prisoners serving relatively short sentences are preferred to prisoners serving longer sentences because it is thought they will be less likely to attempt escape. Thus, those doing forced labor are often those who are in jail for “non-crimes” such as curfew violations, selling goods without a SPDC license, or cursing SPDC soldiers. However, political prisoners are sometimes sent to the hard labor camps where the access to their friends or families is more difficult.

In many cases when used as operations porters, convicts are held and continued to be used as porters well after the expiration of their prison sentences. Convicts doing forced labor are generally treated much more brutally than ordinary civilians and are routinely used in very dangerous work, such as blowing up rock faces or digging at cliff-sides, in which many of them are killed. They are beaten and otherwise abused on the slightest provocation, given far from adequate food, and medical treatment is virtually nonexistent for them should they fall ill.

As a result of the increase in the prison population since the military regime took power, and in order to cope with the shortage of prison facilities, the SPDC has established at least six new Win Saung battalions (porter battalions). These Win Saung battalions are

mainly used to create a ready supply of porters to the frontiers; prisoners are kept ready for porter duties while working at the army battalions. According to eyewitnesses, the treatment of prisoners at prison battalions is barbaric, as one might expect. Only those prisoners who can afford to pay bribes (from 50,000 - 70,000 *kyat*) can avoid being recruited into these porter battalions.

4.8. Partial List of 1998 Forced Labor Projects

Shan State

Inle Lake Beautification Project, Shan State
 Kun Hein-Parkaw motor road, Kun Hein township, Shan State
 Ta Sarng - Murng Pan motor road, Shan State
 Ta Sarng - Murng Ton motor road, Shan State
 Nam Serng - Punlon motor road, Shan State
 Murng Sert - Murng Ton motor road, Shan State
 Tacheleik -Kengtong motor road, Shan State
 Nam Zang military air base, Nam Zang township, Shan State
 Shwe Nyaung - Nam Zang motor road, Shan State
 Nam Zang - Murng Nai motor road, Shan State
 Shwe Nyaung - Taunggyi motor road, Shan State
 Mae Pan stream hydropower station construction, Murng Sert township, Shan State

Karen State

Kyeikdon - Kya-ein-seik-kyi motor road, Karen State
 Kyeikdon - Kyodoe- kawkereik motor road, Karen State
 Wah Lay- Kyo Glee- Po Yay motor road, Karen State
 Kyo Glee - Tee Kee Plar motor road, Karen State
 Kyeikdon - Saw Hta motor road, Karen State
 Bridge construction over Gyaing River, Karen State
 Saw Hta - Lay Po Hta motor road, Karen State

Mon State

10,000 Acres Farmland Project, Thaton-Belin motor road, Mon State
 Ye - Kyaung Ywa - Leik Poke motor road renovation, Mon State
 Thein Zayet - Mee Laung Zayat motor road, Mon State

Karenni State

Demawsoe - Daw Tamagyi motor road renovation, Karenni State
 Mawchee - Taungoo motor road, Karenni State
 Loikaw - Ye Yaw motor road, Karenni State
 Pun River - Shadaw motor road renovation, Karenni State
 Loikaw - Taunggyi motor road extension, Karenni State
 Daw Law Khaw - Bwe Lai motor road construction, Karenni State

Ngwe Taung Summer paddy Cultivation, Ngwe Taung , Karenni State

Tenasserim Division

Ye-Tavoy motor road, Tenasserim Division

Bonti-Tavoy Highway motor road, Tenasserim Division

Ale Sakhan - MNSP Tavoy District Headquarters, Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division

Le Taung Ya - Yoka Moo Ku motor road, Tavoy, Tenasserim Division

500 acres cashew nuts field, Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division

Moe Htaung - Bokeyyin motor road, Tenasserim Division

Kawthaung - Mergui motor road, Tenasserim Division

Myinntha - Bongti motor road, Tenasserim Division

Sagaing Division

Hanthawaddy Land Project, Kalaymyo township, Sagaing Division

Tha Nan - Ton He motor road, Kabaw valley, Sagaing Division

Airbase, Klemyo, Sagaing Division

Laeshe - Htanmathi motor road, Sagaing Division

Yinmabin Land Development Project, Yinmabin township, Sagaing Division

Rangoon Division

Kongyangone salt fields, Rangoon Division

Htantapin land development Project, Rangoon Division

Ah-lae village - Aye Ywa village, Htantabin township, Rangoon Division

Pegu Division

Pa Thee Dam construction Project, Pegu Division

4.9. Incidents of Forced Labor by Region

4.9.1. Tenasserim Division

Bonti - Myinntha motor road

Using over 400 inmates from Mergui and Insein Prisons, many of them political prisoners, the SPDC authorities have begun additional forced labor projects in Tenasserim Division. The latest such projects are the construction of battalion facilities in Tenasserim township and the Myinntha - Bongti road. Over 100 inmates of Mergui Prison are currently being held in a forced labor camp at Thon Ma Kar village, where they are constructing offices for the military. The prisoners began work on November 23, 1998. On the same day SPDC authorities used six heavy trucks to move 300 inmates of Insein Prison to Tavoy. They arrived in Myinntha village on November 26 to begin work on the planned road between the Thai border town of Bongti and the coastal seaboard at Myinntha. The SPDC authorities are hopeful that increased cross-border trade using the planned road will generate much-needed hard currency for the regime.

The new projects have been named “New Life” projects No. 4 and 6. It remains to be seen how many lives will be lost in the completion of such “new lives.” (*Source: Yoma 3*)

Construction of Dykes in Thayet Chaung township

The SPDC LIB 403, 404 and 405 conscripted and forced more than 200 people living in Laba, Hsitaw and Pinyinbyugyi villages, Thayet Chaung township, to construct a long range of dykes continuously for four months. This construction began in February 1998 in order to make 4,000 acres of formerly flooded land cultivable. The three battalions claimed that the newly cultivatable land belongs to the military.

More than 2,000 laborers, including a large proportion of women and children, were forced to work without pay. They also had to bring their own food and tools. Many of them became sick during the four months’ period of the forced labor due to the appalling working conditions, but were not given any compensation. Because of the large number of those conscripted, many of the local inhabitants were deprived of access to their own means of subsistence. (*Source: MIS*)

Rice Cultivation project on Pyingyi Island, Launglon township

In 1997, the SPDC confiscated more than 1,000 acres of rice fields on Pyingyi Island in Launglong township and another more than 700 acres from Yebae and Ka Nyon Kyun village tracts from the same township, Tenasserim Division. No compensation was paid to 300 farmers. These rice fields were confiscated for an experimental modern rice cultivation project of the SPDC.

In 1998, the SPDC military battalion conscripted more than 500 local people from the island to work as unpaid laborers on this experimental project. Only a few tractors were provided by the authorities and most of the work was done with manual labor. The SPDC troops led by Captain San Lin from the LIB 104 supervised the implementation of the project in collaboration with some SPDC agricultural officials. (*Source: MIS*)

4.9.2. Mon State

Ye Tavoy railway project

The Ye-Tavoy Railway which was notorious for massive use of forced labor during its construction, was inaugurated on March 26, 1998. It took four years of construction using forced labor of the local civilians, including women, old people and children. International human rights organizations have condemned this construction with its massive use of forced labor. Many died of exhaustion, mistreatment and natural disasters during their forced labor service. Though it was inaugurated in March, it did not remain long in service. The railroad was forced to close down 52 days after its official inauguration due to damage caused by heavy rain in the region. The foundation for the railway were eroded in the floods between Gangaw Daung and Pauk Pin Gwin in Kanbaw.

From May 27, 1998, about 3,000 civilians have been forced to work once again in

the reconstruction of the railway. People from Yebyu, Launglon, Tovoy and Thayet Chaung townships in Tenasserim Division have been ordered to repair the railway depending on their own food and tools. Each is ordered to dig a pit of earth 10 feet wide and one foot high within a day. They have to carry the earth to replace the bedding for the railway. Some are ordered to cut the 50 pieces of wood 4.5 feet long in a day. There are some soldiers from battalions under the Division 8, but they do not actually work on the construction. Instead they are for media propaganda and they receive 20 kyat a day for their fake service in the reconstruction work. (*Source: HRDU*)

4.9.3. Shan State

Forced labor in agricultural projects in Namtu township

From January to August 1998, the SPDC troops and various government departments forced the people in Mung Yaen tract, Namtu township, Shan State, to cultivate maize on 600 acres of land for them at a place near Nam Tawng Kong village. The villagers had to clear the jungle, dig out roots, till the land, grow the maize and weed the farm regularly until the harvest which they had to reap and give to the SPDC authorities.

During the period between the clearing of the land up to harvest time, the amount of forced labor equivalent to 20,000 people from Wan Zarm village tract, 6,032 people from Nar Ngu village tract and 750 people from Nam Tawng Kong village tract was used. It is estimated that during the harvest, the amount of forced labor equivalent to not less than 10,000 people. After growing the maize, the villagers were still obliged to grow sesame and soya bean for the authorities. (*Source: SHRF*)

4.9.4. Karen State

Taungoo - Baw Gali Gyi motor road

People from all villages around Baw Gali Gyi village in Taungoo district, Pegu Division, were ordered in March and May 1998 to clear the trees and bushes along the sides of the Taungoo- Baw Gali Gyi motor road. Forty to 50 people had to go each day; all men, women and children who were able to work had to go.

This road was entirely built with the forced labor of villagers in the area and was only finished in 1997. Not only did it cause a great deal of suffering in terms of forced labor, but it allowed the increased militarization of the area and has caused the displacement of many people from their villages as a result. The road passes through very difficult terrain but was mostly built by hand; like all other roads in this area, it was incompetently engineered by military officers, made only with dirt and with no proper drainage. It is largely destroyed every rainy season and must be rebuilt with the forced labor of villagers, every November-December.

Taungoo - Mawchee motor road

At the beginning of 1998, the SPDC ordered construction to begin on a new road

from Taungoo to Mawchee, the main town of southern Karenni State. This follows the route of an old pre-World War II road which is no longer usable. The straight-line distance is about 80 km, but when completed the total length of the new road will probably be 150 km because of the difficult terrain it has to pass through.

The new road is to use the existing road from Taungoo as far as Baw Gali Gyi, but in early 1998, villages began receiving written orders demanding people for forced labor on a permanently rotating basis to clear a new route east of Baw Gali Gyi. Orders were issued under the demand by the IB 48 based in Baw Gali Gyi. Every three days, 40 people from Baw Gali Gyi, Baw Gali Lay, Thit Say Taung, Kyuak Pon and Pyaung Tho villages in Baw Gali Gyi village tract were ordered to work for the road construction with their own food and tools. Laborers including women, had to work under the strict supervision of the military soldiers.

Work was suspended during the rainy season from June to October 1998, but has not resumed. SPDC troops at the other end of the route in Mawchee have also been forcing villagers there to do road construction labor as well. (*Source: KHRG*)

4.10. List of individual incidents in 1998

◆ From January to August 1998, SPDC troops and various departments had forced the people in Murng Yaen tract, Namtu township, Shan State, to cultivate maize on 600 acres of land for them at a place near Nam Tawng Kong village. The villagers had to clear the jungle, dig out the roots, till the land, grow the maize and weed the farm regularly until the harvest which they had to reap and give to the SPDC authorities. During the period between the clearing of land up to harvest time, the number of forced laborers used totaled 20,000 people from Wan Zarm village group, 6032 people from Nar Ngu village group, 750 people from Nam Tawng Kong village. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ In January 1998, villagers from Ye Bon, New Lain, and Kyauk Shut villages in Tenasserim Division were ordered to work on hill cultivation owned by the LIB 408. Each household in the villages required to send one person every week to work without pay. (*Source: HRDU*)

◆ In January 1998, Kard Phui, Wan Kyawng, Wan Nar, Wan Leng, Pang Leng and Wan Pang villages-all in Murng Kerng township, Shan State-were ordered to move to Murng Kerng town within three days. (*Source: SHRF*)

◆ On January 6, 1998, LIB 710 commander Major Thein Htun and IB 39 commander Major Myo Lwin seized Kler-lar villagers in Taungoo district, Pegu Division, for portorage. (*Source: KIC*)

◆ In mid February, 1998, two conveys totaling 50-70 military trucks loaded with prisoners from prisons in other parts of Burma were brought to Kyeikdon and Saw Hta in Karen State to begin forced labor on the construction of several roads in Kyeikdon townships. The prisoners totaled between 1,500 to 3,000. (*Source: KHRG*)

◆ In February 1998, local villagers from Ale Sakhan, Kyauk Kadin, Kywe Talin and Raphu villages in Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division, were ordered to work the road between Ale Sakhan and NMSP's Tavoy District headquarters. They were ordered to work there with their own food and tools once in 10 days. The NMSP is building this new road for its supply route. (*Source: ABSDF*)

◆ On February 2, 1998, troops from SPDC IB 73, camping at Nuaunglebin Gwin, Htantabin township, Pegu Division, forced the villagers from that village to cut wood and bamboo. Then the troops sold the wood and used the proceeds as their ration money. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On February 27, 1998, Captain Tin Maung Shwe from LIB 118 of SPDC Division 44, ordered Kru See and No Aw Aan villages in Thaton district, Mon State, to cut timbers for building camps and said the villages failing to do so would have to pay 15,000 *kyat*. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On March 10, 1998, Tactical Command (2) led by Lt-Col. Thein Maung together with LB 73 battalion commander Thein Lwin forcibly collected porters from nearby villages and used them as mine sweepers along the road from Kalay Soe Khee to Tae Tho village. Among these porters were two 12-year-old girls and two 11-year-old boys. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On April 17, 1998, SPDC commander Swe Myint ordered the town community leaders and other village tract headmen in Murng Ton in Shan State to provide laborers for splitting rocks at a place called Loi Put, located 35 miles from the town. Over 300 civilians were collected and transported to the work site and forced to work from April 17-30, 1998. No pay or no food was provided. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ Starting on April 22, 1998, soldiers started to build three camps on the hills just south of Daw Tah Hay and P'yah Pyu villages in Tee Thay Ka village tract, Loikaw township. To build the camps, one person from each house in the 25 villages of Tee Thay Ka village tract and Tee Lon village tract had to work in rotation, bringing their own rice and without getting any payment. The officer in charge of constructing the camps was Captain San Hlaing. (**Source: KNWO**)

◆ Since May 1998, villagers from Awin Shwe, Shwe Yaung Pya, Zee Win, Kalaung Ain, Mayangone and Mi Chaung Ai villages along the Thaton-Belin motor road in Mon State have been ordered to work at the sugar-cane plantation owned by Division 44. This plantation is 3,222 acres wide and run by the LIB 3, LIB 7, LIB 9 and LIB 24 under the Division. Each village is ordered to send 10 villagers daily to work at the sugar-cane project. Not only are the villagers required to bring their own food and tools, but they are also ordered to provide 12 viss of pork in every fifteen days to the troops led by Captain Naing Lin from LIB 8. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ Since May, 1998, SPDC troops in Murng Pan, Larng Khur, Murng Nai and Nam Zarng townships in Shan State have been forcing civilians in the areas to split stones near Ta Sarng, near the Salween River. Ten persons from each township have to work for 15 days after which they are replaced by another batch of forced laborers. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ In May 1998, Lashio-based IB 41 forced civilians to cultivate rice for the military in the area of Parng Larn village tract in Murng Yai township, Shan State. Villagers from the village tracts of Wan Zarng, Ho Ter, Parng Larn, Nam Sawm, Luk Khai and Quarter 1,2,3 of Murng Yai town had to provide laborers for cultivation over the entire period. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On May 24, 1998, commander Myint Hlaing of No. 2 Tactical Command and battalion commander Myint Han of the IB 48 forced villagers of all ages and both sexes from Baw Gali and Kaw Thay Doe villages in Htantabin township, Pegu Division to clear bushes on both sides of Baw Gali-Mawchee motor road. Most of the villagers are Christians, but they were forced, even on Sundays, to work without time for rest or worship. (**Source:**

KIC)

◆ On June 4, 1998, the Golden Triangle Military Command Region Commander Maj-Gen. Thein Sein ordered major Hla Htwe to confiscate 13 plots of land and rice fields owned by villagers of Kingka In Kaeng Tung township, Shan State. This was for the purpose of expanding military base there. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On June 15, 1998, troops from IB 30 and IB 59 under the No.3 Tactical Command forcibly gathered more than 30 women from Kaw Thay Doe and Baw Gali villages in Htantabin township, Pegu Division, and used them as porters to carry supplies to Busu Khee army camp. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On June 24, 1998, troops from IB 2, IB 8 and LIB 1,3,9,102,108 demanded one person from every household from Hteepaw, Ma Ei Has, Mi Chaung Ain, Mayagone, Klaw Theh, Shwe Pyaung Pya, Lah Aung Leh, Strong, and Tawya villages in Thaton township, Mon State, to clear the land for an army plantation project. Anyone who failed to appear was fined 5,000 *kyat*. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On June 28, 1998, troops from column 2, of LIB 440 led by commander Kyaw Min demanded 250 villagers from nearby and forcibly had them clear bushes around the villages of Koka, Tala Seik, Kyee Binsuu and Lein Bin Wai, Nyaunglebin district, Pegu Division. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ In July 1998, 10,000 acres of farmland from the 20 villages along the Thaton-Belin motor road were confiscated by the Division 44 based in Thaton, Mon State. These farmlands were taken by the military for their "10,000 Farmlands Project" in the Division.

◆ The villages are Mayagone, Mi Chaung Ai, Kalaung Inn, Shwe Yaung Pya, Ah Win Gyi, Zee Win, Cahung Zauk, Ye Wei, Kama Sai, Donwon, Taphet Swe, Shwe Hlwe, Taung Lay, Shwe Ein Ton, Dauk Yak, Khe Mauk, Tattu Gone, Kyat Khee Khat, Thit Cha Taung and Ka Dee villages. These villages also had to provide one villager from each household for forced labor on the farms. They were ordered to clear the ground, cut the trees and build the farm huts for the military. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On July 11, 1998, Major Aung Soe of LIB 102 ordered the civilian population to provide laborers for weeding the soya bean and corn farms owned by the military in Murng Pan township, Shan State. Ten persons each from 15 villages each day had to bring their own food and tools to do the work. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ On July 21, 1998, troops from IB 59, led by second commander, Thura Sein Win, rounded up 32 villagers for forced labor. Four were from Takot Soekee, two from Mae Kolaw, two from Mae Kleehta, two from Mae Waing, four from Toe Makhee, three from Lar Wahko, four from Klookee, two from Pway Day and the rest from other villagers. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ Since August, one person per household has been ordered to work on canal construction in Myaung township, Sagaing Division. The villages affected for the forced labor are Magyiboke, Twinggyi, Shwepan, Kyao, Pa Reinma, Shwe Pan Gyun, Thiri Zaya, Oke Hne Boke, Myasan, King, Boo Gaing, Kopin, Kyaung Yit, Naset, Tama Saygan and Zayat Gone, all in Myaung township. The authorities also collected a total of approximately five million *kyat* at a rate of 50 *kyat* per acre from the people. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ In August 1998, each household from 21 village tracks in Inle Lake was ordered by the SPDC to grow 40-150 plants on the bank of Inle Lake during the rainy season. It was part of a project called the "Inle Lake Beautification Project," to grow 800,000,000 plants

in order to attract more tourists to the Inle Lake in Shan State. Due to the drought in 1998, the level of water in Inle Lake was lower than usual so the SPDC troops in the region forced the local villagers to grow plants to beautify the lake's surroundings. A pit 2ft wide and 1ft deep was required for each plant and the villagers had to dig them. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ In early August 1988, 30 villagers from Legyi village, 20 villagers from Yengangyi village, and 10 villagers from Sin Zwe village, Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division, were ordered to work on dyke construction on the farms owned by IB 409. These three villages had to supply 60 villagers every week, and pay 350 *kyat* for each person who failed to come to work. (**Source: Yoma 3**)

◆ In August and September 1998, every household in Paya Kyo, Kyarkan, Nyaung Larn, Ohnbin, Sin Min Aing, Kantha, Sakangyi, Palu, Aung Chan Tha, Bolay and Ye Kyaw was ordered to supply forced labor at the embankment on the eastern margin of Khayan township, Rangoon Division. Those who failed to appear were ordered to pay a fine of 3000 *kyat*. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ On August 6, 1998, the commander of the Tactical Command No. 3 in the Southern Command forcibly gathered 10 women from Kaw Thay Doe, Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and ordered them to work as porters for the army for two days. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On August 27, 1998, 10 villagers from Naung Bo village, Hlaingbwe township, Karen State, were taken as porters by the troops from IB 81 led by Major Yu Lwin. They were forced to carry heavy loads with the columns fighting in the KNU 7th Brigade area. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ Since September, 1998, LIB 506 at Nam Lan in Hsipaw township, Shan State, have been forcing the civilians in the area to cultivate crops for them. All the villagers in Wan Zing tract have to provide 70 laborers per day to work on the 60 acres of land which were once peanut and sesame farms and had been confiscated from the villagers. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ In September 1998, troops from LIB 234 came into the Bpeh Gkaw Der village, Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and ordered the village headman to provide 10 porters. (**Source: KHRG**)

◆ On September 17, 1998, troops from IB 48 went into Kaw Thay Doe village in Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and forcibly conscripted 50 villagers as porters to carry food to Naw Soe military camp. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On September 21, 1998, Major Htun Htun Aye, Major Thin Kyaw, Captain Maung Maung Lay and Captain Myo Lay ordered villagers in Tavoy district to work on the construction of Le Taung Ya - Yoka Moo Ku motor road. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On September 29, 1998, 30 males were rounded at the video halls in Kyaukkyi by the soldiers from LIB 351 led by battalion commander Lt-Col. Khun Naung. Only those who were able to give 10,000 *kyat* were released later and the rest were taken as porters for mobile columns moving into Papun district. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ In October 1998, several acres of cultivated land of the villagers at Nam Pawng village in Lashio township, Shan State, were confiscated by SPDC troops for building new military bases. Crops such as rice, sesame, peanut and soya beans on the land were destroyed and the land turned into a new military base for LIB 522, 243 and IB 41 using forced labor. (**Source: SHRF**)

◆ In October 1998, 500 people from Htantabin township, Rangoon Division, were

daily forced to clear virgin land for the military in the area. This was monitored by Major Lwin Soe from the military unit based in Anyasuu on the Rangoon-Nyaungdon road. People were forced to work continuously in rain and sun without any rest. U Myo Myint from Nyaungyoe village of Htantabin township was bitten by a poisonous snake on October 29, 1998. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)

◆ In the first week of October, villagers from Le Kaung Ywa and Thaput Lein village tracts in Tenasserim Division were summoned to attend a meeting without fail since it concerned their moving back to their former villages which had been relocated in 1996. Each household was required to send one representative to the meeting on October 3. When the villagers arrived at the meeting place, soldiers from LIB 432 and 342 surrounded them and singled out the able-bodied men and women; around 250 people were taken as porters. (**Source: *HRDU***)

◆ Since October 5, 1998, 400 porters from Tavoy, Yebyu, Launglon and Thayetchaung township in Tenasserim Division have been used at the Bonti-Tavoy highway motor road construction by the IB 224 based in Bokeypin township, Tenasserim. They were ordered to clear the bushes and trees along the motor road between Mitta and Bonti village on the Thai-Burma border. Another 500 porters were sent again on October 12, 1998 and currently about 1,000 porters are being used as forced laborers on the highway construction. (**Source: *HRDU***)

◆ On October 14, 1998, Htun Chit and two of his family members were stopped at a checkpoint of IB 280 stationed at Thuka border gate on the Thai-Burma border. Three of them were on their way back to Burma after working in Thailand. They carried one Honda motorcycle with them. Usually the soldiers at the checkpoint do not pay attention to the people passing the gate who have to pay 100 *bhat* for each as a tax. However, Htun Chit was arrested and sent off with the troops as a porter; his motorcycle was also confiscated. His two female family members did not hear anything about him until they went back to Thailand after waiting three days at the gate. (**Source: *HRDU***)

◆ On October 19, 1998, SPDC troops from LIB 311 ordered the villagers from Muang Tin village, Mung Yawng township, Shan State, to provide bamboo for making a fence for their camp. Each family was forced to provide 300 split-bamboo pieces within three days. On October 25, 1998, column 2 of the SPDC LIB 73 led by commander Soe Paing went into Malardaw village, Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division, and conscripted 50 villagers, including women, to carry supplies to Saw Tay Doe and Keh Podoe village. (**Source: *KIC***)

◆ On October 25, 1998, troops from LIB 311 ordered the villagers from Mung Tin village, Mung Yawng township, Shan State, to provide bamboo for making fences for their military camps. Each family was forced to provide 300 split-bamboo pieces within three days. (**Source: *SHRF***)

◆ On October 27, 1998, a column of IB 73 led by commander Soe Paing collected 38 porters from Malardaw village, Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division, and sent them to Saw Tay Doe village to carry food supplies. (**Source: *KIC***)

◆ Since November 1998, villagers from Thauung Gone and neighboring villages near Kongyan Gone salt fields, Rangoon Division, have been conscripted forcibly to work on these salt fields by the IB 70 commanded by Captain Sein Tin. Villages that cannot supply labor are required to give 9,000 *baht* a week per village. (**Source: *Inside Burma***)

◆ On November 17, 1998 a group of SPDC troops from LIB 432 led by Major Htay

Aung captured three villagers from Kyauk Mechaung village at Hsaw Lomot, Tenasserim township, Tenasserim Division, beat them up and forced them to serve as battlefield porters along with other villagers. After that they took these three villagers to Bokeypyin. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ On November 21, 1998, SPDC southern command headquarters seized 12 villagers from village tracks in Tantabin Township, Pegu Division, and forcibly used them to transport food supplies to the army camp at Baw Gali village. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ On November 27, 1998, troops from IB 35 went into Kaw-thay-doe village, Taungoo district, Pegu Division, and forcibly gathered 30 villagers to carry food supplies to Busu Khee and Naw Soe army camps. (**Source: KIC**)

◆ In December 1998, eight townships in Monywa district, Sagaing Division, were allotted 500 acres each on the Hanthawaddy Land project in Kalaymyo township of Sagaing Division and Gangaw township of Magwe Division. The authorities demanded two villagers to contribute labor from each village tract or each township to work the land. One hundred laborers were required within a month to work once in fifteen days. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ In December, 1998, Yebyu township PDC in Tenasserim Division ordered the villages in the Talaiyar village track along the Ye-Tavoy motor road to repair the road at their own expense: Talaiyar, Kalone Hta, Dauk Lauk and Padauk Gone villages were affected. Each house hold was assigned to work a section five feet wide and 50 feet long. They were ordered to collect stone and sand with their own expense. Each house was also forced to give 400 *kyat* for tar for the road. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ In December, 1998, villagers from Labine, Theegone, Kyat, Thaminthat, Nyaunggine, Tawa, Khinesha, Wayong, Lattabya and Moke-loke village tracks in Yinmabin township, Sagaing Division, were ordered to work at a project where land was developed for the welfare of public servants. People were forced to supply the labor and they were not given appropriate remuneration. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ In December 1998, Kyauk Michaung, Kwin Shay, Ywa Thit, Ywa Haung, Kyonlung, Phagyi, Ahngan, Kyaung Ywa, Leik Poke and Nga Lay Chaung villages along the motor road between Ye and Leik Poke village in Ye township, Mon State, were ordered to send one villager from each house to work on the renovation project of the motor road of Ye and Like Poke. Each village was ordered to dig two pits which were 6 x 6 x 1 ft each. (**Source: Yoma 3**)

◆ On December 10, 1998, all male villagers from Mae Pu, Mae Chon, Lagun Pyo, Nga Lay, Wah Kha Hta, Bolo Khee, Pa New Law, Htee Pawlaw, Mae Wai and Kyauk Taung villages in Belin township, Mon State, were rounded up and taken as porters for the IB 18 that was responsible for supplying food to Mae Pali, Gagun and Mae Wai outposts in Karen State. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ Between December 10 and 15, 1998, every household in the village tracts of Tamangyi, Kyone Two, Yogyi, Magyikan, Peinkan, Hlabelu, Aleywa, Ayeywa and Sher Kataw was forced to dig one and a half pits at an embankment of Kayan creek situated below the villages of Aleywa and Pagan Taung in kayan and Thanlyin townships, Rangoon Division. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ Since December 10, 1998, LIB 18, which is responsible for transportation to Mae Pali, Gagone and Maewine military outposts, has been arresting every able villager between 12 to 60 years old to work as porters in 19 villages, including Maepu, Maechon, Lagonpyo,

Ngalay, Wakharhta, Bolowkhee, Pa-new-law, Htee Paw Law, Maewine, and Kyattaung, in Belin township, Mon State. (**Source: HRDU**)

◆ Between December 12 and 15, 1998, every household in the village tracts of Pyinma Gone, Kyini Chaung, Kyong Kan, Nyaungbin Tha, Zeebyubin, and Kinmon Chone was forced to dig two pits at the embankment of Kinmon Chone creek near Kinmon Chong village, Khayan township, Rangoon Division. (**Source: Inside Burma**)

◆ Between December 27 and 31, 1998, every household in the villages of Kama Kalo, Kamamat, Maungma, Paukpin, Kama Pakaw, Oake Po, Maukkathan, Kyutaw and Jone Jone Gya was forced to dig two pits at the embankment of Saema creek situated close to Paukpin village, Khayan township, Rangoon Division. (**Source: Inside Burma**)