13. Abuse of Women

13.1 Background

In January 1998, the SPDC-sponsored National Working Committee on Women's Affairs stated that ".... Myanmar women have no need to demand their rights for they can enjoy their rights on equal terms with men." However, evidence to the contrary suggests that Burmese women have a very great need to demand their political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. Throughout history Burmese women have suffered discrimination. Society and tradition in Burma tend to denigrate the role of women. For example, although women constitute an estimated 40 per cent of the workforce, few women have ever been allowed to rise to top government positions. Gender discrimination also severely restricts women's rights to express their legitimate interest in social and political affairs. Women – particularly ethnic (non-Burman) women are extremely vulnerable under the SPDC regime.

Burma is a signatory to the 1952 UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Though the SPDC has made some token changes, establishing women's organizations and limiting some forms of violence against women, discrimination against women is still pervasive, and fundamental changes necessary to uplift the status of women and improve the human rights situation in general have not occurred.

There are many indicators of male dominance and female subordination throughout Burmese society. Women and girls are educated less frequently, leading to a higher literacy rate for men than women. Women also have less access to power and decreased ability to make and implement policy, as evidenced by the fact that relatively few women serve in important government positions. Women are frequently exploited sexually and economically, as demonstrated by a growing sex industry in Burma. Highly restrictive access to contraception and abortion means that women lack control over their reproductive health. Additionally, women are either excluded from the official workforces or relegated to low-paying, unskilled jobs in the national economy, as indicated by official statistics.

The SPDC has repeatedly denied all reports of human rights abuses against women by citing the existence of equal rights and five key laws which, it argues, prevent any such abuses from occurring: the Suppression of Prostitution Act (1949), the Myanmar Buddhist Women's Special Marriage and Succession Act (1954), the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Law, the Nursing and Maternity Law, and the Penal Code. SPDC consistently states that women in Burma have always shared equal status with men, making a women's movement in the country unnecessary. Indeed, women suffer equally, if not more. Despite SPDC's denial of the existence of human rights abuses against women in Burma, there has been overwhelming evidence of a disturbing pattern of grave human rights abuses and humanitarian neglect throughout Burma since 1988, in which women have been particular victims.

13.2. Women in politics

Burma signed the UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women in 1954, and under this convention, women are guaranteed equal rights with men. However, like many other social and political protocols approved by governments in Burma, such declarations of intent conceal a very different social reality. General Ne Win staged a military coup in 1962 by overthrowing the elected parliamentary government. Since then, the military has controlled the entire nation, and both political and administrative sectors are monopolized by current or former military officers. Despite the theoretical equality Burmese women are supposed to enjoy, few have ever reached senior positions. In the "People Assembly" of General Ne Win's government there were a few women representatives, but they were not elected by the people. They were instead selected by the central administrative system. These women did not have a chance to express their opinion and views in the assembly. They had to act and speak under the pre-planned programs and no criticism was allowed.

Under the present military regime, women's political and social rights are still denied. Besides, those who confront the political system and fight for human rights are treated just as harshly as men. Many of the hundreds of thousands of women who joined the democracy movement were arrested and reportedly killed by the security forces. Today, women who become politically active, by expressing their opinion in favor of human rights or simply by aligning themselves with a particular political party, are systematically discriminated against and harassed. A number of women have been imprisoned with long sentences in Burma for their political beliefs and activities. Many have been harassed, interrogated and detained from time to time because of their family members' involvement in politics.

Concerning women rights, the SPDC has claimed "As women in Myanmar have been enjoying their full rights, no special arrangements will be necessary . . . Myanmar women have been enjoying equal rights since the beginning of its civilization thousands of years ago. With the development of civilization, the role of women has also been enhanced. In accordance with Myanmar cultural traditions handed down since the time of our ancestors, Myanmar women are under no restrictions, enjoying equal status and equal rights." But the SPDC's chronic hatred of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is the unmistakable sign of discrimination against Burmese women in politics and inequality with men. The main intention of SPDC towards Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is not to let her be involved in politics in future in Burma. From a very early stage, the SPDC attempted several times to defame her so that she would not be involved in politics. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been physically attacked by the SPDC-sponsored group USDA. Slanderous statements by the SPDC are routine and her ability to move freely is severely restricted. These kinds of restrictions on and harassment of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi are clear evidence of the violations of both "Convention on the Political Rights of Women" and "Convention on the All Forms of Discrimination against Women."

A number of well-known women political prisoners remain in detention and more women politicians have been arrested and sentenced to long term imprisonment in 1998. (Please see details in Chapter 2) The treatment and health conditions of women political prisoners are of great concern because many abuses against women prisoners take place and health problems are common in Burma's prisons. Female prisoners are usually mistreated

and their health ignored. The testimony from former women prisoners states that a number of them were forced to give birth in their cells without medical assistance.

13.3. Partial lists of women political prisoners arrested in 1998

◆ On February 8, while Nan Khin Htwe Myint, elected NLD representative from Paan, was on her way to Rangoon to attend the Union Day celebrations held by the National League for Democracy, the car she was traveling in was stopped and searched at the Thaton checkpoint. After the search, noticing that some parts of her traditional Karen dress was missing, Nan Khin Htwe Myint raised the matter with the personnel who conducted the search. The search party charged her with obstructing the function of officials. The following day, the court sentenced Nan Khin Htwe Myint to two years' imprisonment for disturbing public servants on duty and was sent to Moulmein Prison immediately to serve her sentence. (***Source: ABSDF***)

◆ In late February 1998, Suu Suu Win and Khin Moe Aye, both female students, were arrested along with Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw and two other ethnic leaders U Tha Ban and Khun Sai. All five were accused of supplying historical background and other information to student leader Aung Htun who wrote a history of the Burmese student movement. In April the military regime sentenced the two female student leaders to seven-year prison terms for allegedly assisting a student historian in his work to write a history of the Burmese student movement. All were charged under Section 5(j) of the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act and under Section 17 (20) of the 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Act. Three men were sentenced to ten years imprisonment. All five were refused access to legal counsel. (***Source: HRDU***)

◆ In the first week of April, Daw San San, elected NLD MP from Seikkan township, Rangoon and vice-chairman of the NLD Rangoon Division organizing committee was given twenty-five years imprisonment sentence after being accused of distributing false information domestically and internationally. She was arrested in October 28, 1997 and has been held without charge. She was sentenced for conducting radio interviews with the BBC (British Broadcasting Service) and RFA (Radio Free Asia). (***Source: Inside Burma***)

◆ During May and June 1998, the following leaders of DPNS on Mandalay Division were arrested and charged with prison terms of seven years and more: Ko Nyein Chan, Ko Yar Kyaw, Ma Thida and Ma Ommar. (***Source: DPNS***)

◆ In August, 1998, Ma Ni, a female member of DPNS was arrested along with Ko Aye Ko, Tin Ko Aung, Min Naing and Kyaw Soe, all are members of DPNS in upper Burma. (***Source: DPNS***)

◆ On August 12, 1998, Naw Ohn Hla, Daw Cho Cho Myint, Ko Khin Kyaw and Ko Hla Win, all members of the NLD who went to visit Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in her car stranded at Anyasuu village, Htantabin township, Rangoon Division, were arresteded by the SPDC. (***Source: Inside Burma***)

◆ On September 6, 1998, Daw Myint Myint Aye, female secretary of the organizing committee, Mandalay Division, and Dr. Thein Lwin, chairman of the Meikhtila township organizing committee and MP elect, were arrested. (***Source: Inside Burma***)

◆ On September 11, 1998, Ma Mi Mi Khaing, a member of NLD Youth Central Supporting Group, was arrested on her way home. She dropped by at her friend's house on

the day of arrest and after she left, MI officers forcibly arrested her on Mandalay Road, in Northern New Dagon town, Rangoon Division. The MI officers led by Sergeant Tun Sein blocked the whole road and arrested her. She was later handed over to Rangoon Eastern Military Command. (***Source: Inside Burma***)

◆ On September 14, 1998, Ma Khin San Yee from Mingla Taung Nyunt township, Rangoon Division was found with the NLD documents at her room at the guest house in Magwe. She was arrested and charged with Emergency Act 5(j). (***Source: HRDU***)

◆ On September 21, 1998, the MI tried to arrest Ma Cho Cho and Ma Khin Khin Hlaing, both members of the Youth Wing, Thaketa township, Rangoon Division, at the bus stand in Shwedondine township, Rangoon. They escaped and the MI surrounded the residence of thse two young girls at night. (***Source: Inside Burma***)

◆ On September 22, 1998, Daw Sandi Win, incharge of Magwe Division NLD women's affairs, was arrested and charged with the Emergency Act 5(j). (***Source: HRDU***)

◆ On September 24, 1998, NLD member Ma Hnin May Aung from Thingangyun township, Rangoon Division, was arrested and taken into custody by a team consisting of MI, police and ward leaders. Two video cameramen were present at the time of arrest. When she asked to see the warrant, they replied "no warrant is necessary because this is not an opium case. The presence of the ward elders is sufficient. You can go and report us to whoever you like." They ransacked the house and seized whatever papers they found. (***Source: Inside Burma***)

◆ On the night of September 29, 1998, one member from the NLD central women group and twelve other organizing committee members were arrested. (***Source: Inside Burma***)

13.4. Women and forced labor

Loke-are-pay is a Burmese expression that is often rendered in English a "voluntary labor", but in reality it means "forced labor" which has been endemic in Burma in resent years. An increasing number of women, including young girls, those who are pregnant and aged, have been forced to work on SPDC infrastructure projects as well as porters in ethnic war zones. Hundred have died from beatings, exhaustion, accidents and lack of medical care.

In this forced labor for infrastructure projects across the country, women are also conscripted as unpaid laborers regardless of their gender. Many of the worse human rights abuses against women, including beatings, murder and rape, have taken place while they have been engaged in forced labor duties in military bases or in the forced labor work-sites. In the name of so-called development programs, women and young girls are not spared forced recruitment into what amounts to slave labor. They toil at public works, for infrastructure and on more specific "tourism promotion" projects.

The SPDC has continued its widespread use of porters to carry military supplies, stand on sentry duty, build and maintain army camps, and act as human minesweepers. The SPDC has no qualms about using women for such jobs. While the SPDC battalions generally prefer male porters because they can carry heavier loads, some battalions deliberately demand or capture women porters in order to provide captive rape victims. SPDC soldiers generally select unmarried girls under the age of 18 for "porter duty." Women are considered more

versatile and useful to these battalions. They can be employed as porters, human shields, property to be sold, and, of course, for sexual entertainment for the soldiers.

When these young girls are finally permitted to return home, they often discover they are pregnant. Many attempts to abort by using primitive methods are sometimes fatal. Despite the fact that the girls are violently raped and humiliated against their will, cultural norms require secrecy in the decision to abort; they fearthat if the villagers learn that they have been raped, they will be unable to get a husband.

Even women with small infants are forced to report for portering duties. In some cases, a woman porter can be seen carrying a baby on her chest and a heavy load of mortar shells on her back. In other case, soldiers order women to leave their infants behind in the village, where they must hope that other villagers will care for them. As part of portering duties, women with infants must also report for rotating shifts of usually three to seven days, building and maintaining army camps, cooking, cleaning, doing errands for soldiers, and standing sentry. Such duties are rotated among families. If a family cannot provide an able-bodied adult in its turns, a child must report for duty. In conflict areas, able-bodied men are often afraid to report for duty because the soldiers often accuse the men of being rebels and then torture or execute them at will. In these cases, women or girls are sent to replace the men. SPDC soldiers use women and children to sweep roads for landmines each morning before they attempt to use the road. The soldiers hope that their use of women and children will dissuade nearby villagers from supporting any opposition groups. Often SPDC soldiers will force a large number of children ride along the road in an army truck or a bullock cart and search for landmines.

13.5. Rape and sexual violence by the military

Rape in war zones has been outlawed by the UN Geneva Convention and many other international rules; however, women from Burma remain unprotected by the SPDC; rape and sexual exploitation at the hands of SPDC soldiers is a common occurrence for women in Burma. Women are subjected to rape and other sexual assaults in a variety of contexts: in their villages and fields; during flights; while they are serving as forced laborers or forced porters; and under assorted pretexts in which soldiers abuse their authority and claim to be checking women's documents. Women are raped by SPDC soldiers in their own homes, while they are internally displaced, and while they are on their way to seek asylum in neighboring countries.

Women in the war zone often experience systematic rape and are being forced to perform humiliating and degrading acts in public or in front of members of the community and their family. They experience such things within the context of being a target of the occupying forces, the SPDC army, who see them as a means of humiliating the enemy, terrorizing them and using them as part of their war tactics. Rape has been used as one of the deliberate strategies of genocide against the ethnic members. Not only has the SPDC been unable to provide the ethnic women of Burma adequate protection against violence by the armed forces, but also military system itself fosters extreme abuses.

Women porters or women being temporarily held hostage have been raped by soldiers in the frontier areas and on military bases. Local women are raped during their forced labor duty on SPDC's development projects or at their places of work. Women who

fled to Thailand to escape the situation in Burma are still not guaranteed safety. Some women are raped during the deportation process back to Burma or right after they are forced back to the country.

Testimony from women indicates that rape is a widespread form of torture. Police and Military Intelligence officials use rape and sexual harassment to torture women when they detain and interrogate them. These law enforcement officials use various forms of torture such as rape and sexual abuse to extract information from women detainees.

13.6. Incidents of rape and sexual assault by the military

13.6.1. The situation of refugee women

Ethnic minority groups in Burma are often caught up in the SPDC's counter insurgency efforts against armed ethnic groups who have been seeking autonomy since the end of British rule in 1949. The SPDC has undertaken forced relocation in ethnic areas for a variety of political, military and economic reasons: to assert control over ethnic nationalities; to create "free-fire zones" under the "Four Cuts" policy of cutting sources of food, arms, intelligence, and recruits between civilian communities and opposition groups; to clear the way for infrastructure development projects. During the offensive against the ethnic armed groups, SPDC soldiers commit atrocities such as rape, extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, torture, beatings, and forced portering. As a result of these human rights violations (combined with severe economic difficulties, caused in part by the SPDC's arbitrary tax policies), hundreds of thousands of people have sought refuge in neighboring countries.

Refugees from Burma number around 161,000 in Thailand and 200,000 in Bangladesh. Large numbers of refugees are also in the borders with China and Indian border. It is estimated there are a further one million internally displaced persons inside Burma. More than 80 percent of refugees from Burma are women and their children. Unfortunately, these vulnerable refugees often face further persecution in supposed safe-haven neighboring countries. Refugee women often face the insecurity in the refugee camps due to attacks or threat of attacks on refugee camps by SPDC troops and SPDC-backed armed groups. In March 1998, there were a number of attacks on Huay Kaloke, Maw Kel and Mae La camps in Thailand by the DKBA an SPDC sponsored group in which a number of refugees were killed and hundreds more were injured.

There is no doubt that refugee women, particularly those on their own, are more vulnerable to exploitation and deprivation of rights at every stage of flight, than are refugee men. In Thailand particularly, refugee women often suffer abuses which are in violation of international standards established by the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. However, Thailand is not a party to the UN Convention; in fact, no one entering Thailand illegally from Burma is permitted to apply for asylum. As a result, there is no permanent international presence within the refugee camps, leaving the refugees, especially women, vulnerable to sexual abuse by the Thai Border Patrol Police and other authorities concerned. Thai authorities have agreed with the UNHCR's involvement in the protection of Burmese refugees along the border; however, it is not clear yet how the UNHCR will be involved and the degree of protection it can offer.

13.6.2. Burmese women migrant workers in Thailand

In resent years, dramatic increase in human rights abuses forced many young men and women to leave Burma in search of a better life. The human rights violations committed by the SPDC, the prolonged civil war waged in ethnic areas, and systematic economic mismanagement by the regime, continue to devastate communities through Burma. These abuses continue to destroy people's lives and are thus central considerations for women when making their decision to migrate to Thailand. Originally, Burmese people saw Thailand simply as a place of refuge, but the previously booming economy in Thailand also attracted them for potential employment. Many are people who have fallen through the refugee camp safety nets along the Thai-Burma border, who have been trafficked and who work under conditions of debt bondage. Currently there are at least one million undocumented Burmese migrants living and working in Thailand.

In Thailand at least half the undocumented Burmese population are women working in the manufacturing, sex and entertainment, domestic services and construction industries, far below official minimum wage limits and predominantly, under situations of debt bondage.

With little knowledge of the country to which they are moving, its language and its laws, as well as with no country of origin to take responsibility for them, Burmese women have little or no power to bargain, make requests, or to extricate themselves from situations that they did not anticipate or want. The degree to which others can exploit this vulnerability depends to a large extent on the power and information that migrants have to protect themselves. The ability to protect oneself depends partly on understanding immigration laws, the labor laws, and the laws regarding prostitution.

13.6.3. Burmese women sex workers in Thailand

In an effort to escape the dire economic and social situation in Burma, many young women flee to Thailand for jobs. Many women have been exploited and forced into the sex trade. However, those women who temporarily escape the sex trade and find a legitimate job are often lured into it by the prospect of making big money. The number of young girls from Burma who have been induced or coerced into working as sex workers in Thailand is unknown, but an estimated number of Burmese girls and women working in sex industry in Thailand is approximately 50,000.

Most of the girls trafficked in Thailand are from poor rural families and were lured from Burma with promises of jobs in factories or as domestic workers. The girls travel to the border, accompanied by a relative or companion, and meet a Thai agent who pays the relative/companion between $400 and $800. From there the girls are taken to brothels and are effectively indebted to the brothel owner, and must work until they pay off both the price paid for them as well as the agent's cut, plus interest.

There foreign girls and women working in the sex industry in Thailand are violated in a number of ways, regardless of how they were recruited. Traffickers, clients, and Thai government officials abuse them physically, verbally, and sexually. These women are subjected to debt bondage, illegal confinement, and risk HIV infection.

The girls are generally prevented from leaving the brothels. If they do mange to escape, they are often too ashamed to return to Burma. They have not heard of AIDS and

are not aware that the use of condoms prevents the spread of HIV. Language barriers exacerbate the problem. If they manage to return home, they have few real options, and as a result often re-enter the profession by opening or working in brothels in Burma.

Burmese sex workers who are "rescued" in police raids are often detained by Thai authorities on immigration charges and are held for months in detention centers where they face further abuses. From detention, they are deported to Burma, where again they face arrest under Burma' immigration laws for having left the country illegally and risk being held at Rangoon's infamous Insein Prison.

Burmese and Thai authorities have attempted to coordinate their efforts to prevent the trafficking of women and children. One such measure has been to deny single women visas to neighboring countries. However, this is discriminatory and fairly ineffective anyway because most women are able to cross the border without interference. So far, Burma has signed but not ratified the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Person and the Exploitation of Prostitutes and Others.

13.6.4. Burmese women and HIV/AIDS

Women in Burma are at risk because of the failure of the SPDC to provide adequate health care facilities and education. Despite the recent flurry of "development" in Burma, little attention has been paid to the hospitals, schools, or social welfare and educational facilities, especially in grossly underdeveloped rural areas. While the number of HIV-infected individuals continue to rise in Burma, the general public remains woefully uninformed about the risks, protection and education. Women particularly suffer greatly from the lack of special attention and public education.

Prostitution and the risk of HIV are widespread, yet the SPDC-controlled media does not supply adequate public health information to the populace in any systematic way. The SPDC's widespread restrictions on the media, freedom of expression, and the right to community participation are some of the main obstacles that Burmese must overcome to acquire information on even the most basic health care questions. Moreover, traditional mores in this conservative largely Buddhist country conspire with SPDC's repressive nature to prevent prostitution and the sex trade the primary reason for the spread of HIV/AIDS from being publicly acknowledged.

Obviously, stopping the spread of HIV/ADIS and other sexually-transmitted diseases is closely linked with ending the spread of prostitution and the allure of the sex-trade. However, even if women were well-informed of the effects of HIV, there remained compelling reasons for them to enter the sex trade or begin a career of prostitution. Economic upheaval and ethnic warfare in Burma create a powerful incentive for women, even young girls, to earn money to support their families.

The number of Burmese women working in prostitution in Thailand and Burma continues to rise. Health officials estimate that women constitute at least one-third of all cases of HIV-infection in Burma, according to a report by Southeast Asian Information Network, a NGO based in Thailand. Other reasons for the high incidence of HIV among Burmese women are the country's poor medical facilities, including unhygienic injections and the frequent need for blood transfusions after childbirth due to anemia or poor prenatal care.

Under the 1949 Prostitution Suppression Act, four training schools, with a capacity for up to 600 former sex workers, were established in Rangoon, Mandalay, Mergui, and Kengtung under the Department of Social Welfare. Women attending these schools were chosen for some of the first HIV-testing programs in Burma. In 1994, UNICEF interviewed 78 residents in one training school; 70 percent had sexually-transmitted diseases and 8 percent were HIV-positive. Not surprisingly, 98 percent had no knowledge of AIDS or how it could be prevented, according to the UNICEF report.

While the number of active commercial sex workers has increased dramatically in response to social and economic upheavals since 1988, it is nearly impossible to estimate accurately the number of young women involved. Some young girls are forced to enter prostitution to support their families, while other have taken it up while trying to eke out a living on the streets. However, much of the sex trade is covert and therefore difficult to analyse; girls as young as 12, under the control of pimps, frequently move among different houses to work or are brought directly to a "client's" home at night.

13.7. Rape of Women List

◆ On January 18, 1998, eighty soldiers from IN 66, led by deputy commander Htun Myint arrested eleven villagers including five women who were clearing forest to prepare the land for rice cultivation. All of them were from Ho Lin village, Murng Pan township, Shan State. The soldiers kept the men and women in separate places. They tied the men to the trees for two days and nights while the officers raped the women. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On January 25, 1998, Major Aye Ko of LIB 517 arrested Loong Zarng Thun, aged 35, and Nang Zarng Sai, aged 36, of Huay Wawn village, Phawng Seng tract, Loi Lem township, Shan State. At night the troops gang-raped Nang Zarng Sai and killed the couple on the next day. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On January 28, 1998, troops from LIB 515 led by Major Soe Phyu arrived at Mawk Zarm village, Nam Pa Luk tract, Murng Kerng township, Shan State. They went to the village headman's house and ordered him to gather 20 villagers to serve as porters. The commander also ordered the headman's wife to look for a guide. When only the daughter of the headman, Nang Zing Yunt, aged 17, was left, Major Soe Phyu raped her in her bedroom. When the headman came back and found out about the rape, he struck Major Soe Phyu with firewood on the head. The soldier shot the headman dead and also shot Nang Zing Yunt. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On January 29, 1998, a military column from LIB 308 led by commander Lt-Col. Ngwe Thein arrived at Baw Naw Khee village in Belin township, Mon State. The soldiers shot at U Tin Aung while he was hiding in his farm hut wounding him in his shoulder. The soldiers rounded up his wife Daw Ma Kyi and her sisters Naw Mu, 32 year-old and Daw Dah, 28-year-old. They were taken away and released on February 3. All of them were repeatedly raped during their detention. (***Source: HRDU***)

◆ On February 1, 1998, Captain Han Sein from Murng Sart based IN 49 raped Nang Kyar Oo, agedd 18 from Murng Sart town at her village house while her parents were in their fields. Although she informed to the community leader about the rape and the leader complained to the battalion commander, no action was taken against Captain Han Sein. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On February 6, 1998 in Tee Saw Ku village of Shadaw township, Karenni State, two sisters named Na Meh, agedd 15, and Su Meh, agedd 14, were going to their fields in the forest together with their younger brother. They met troops from SPDC IB 54 based in Loikaw. The soldiers tied up the small boy, then raped the two girls throughout one day and one night but did not kill them. (***Source: KNWO***)

◆ On April 8, 1998 at 1 p.m. in Ku Baw Deh village in Mae Se township, southeastern Karenni State, Naw Mu Kreh, agedd 28, was found in the forest by troops from LIB 423, who raped **and then killed her. (*Source: KNWO*)**

◆ On April 11, 1998 at 3:30 p.m., the troops from LIB 423 found and raped Ywa Hay Mu, aged 23, in Ku Baw Deh village. They also raped and killed Pweh Ko Tah Mu, aged 9. Naw Tah Lu, aged 24, was raped and killed by Colonel Min Din, commander of LIB 423. All three women were from Ku Baw Deh village, Mae Se township, southern Karenni State. (***Source: KNWO***)

◆ On May 11, 1998, Nang Zarm Hawm, aged 14, was repeatedly raped and than burnt alive in her farm hut some 6 km east of Laikha township, Shan State, by Major Myint Than. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On May 18, 1994, Nang Kham. Aged 20, and Nang Lu, aged 17 from Na Loi village, Nang Oom, aged 16 and Nang La Koi, aged 16, from Wan Loi village, Loi Khio village tract, Murng nai township, Shan State, were raped and murdered by troops from IB 225**.** (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On June 6, 1998, troops from IB 273 came to Kyon Kanya and Khawza Chaungwa villages in Ye township, Mon State and forced the villagers to gather. Then they singled out 29 people including three women. All were taken to Magyi village by boat and interrogated about the activities of an armed group in the area. During the interrogation, one of the women, Mi Tin Nin, was gang-raped by the soldiers. (***Source: MIS***)

◆ On June 25, 1998, a patrol troops of LIB 517 arrested a group of villagers who were working on a farm in Phawng Seng track, Laikha township, Shan State. Two women from the group, named Nang Nu, aged 20, and Nang Zum, aged 18, were singled out and accused of being wives of ethnic armed soldiers. They were later gang-raped by the soldiers. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On July 15, 1998, three women from Nar Kharn village, Murng Nai township, Shan State, were raped and killed, together with one man from the same village, by troops from LIB 524 led by Commander Khing Hla Win. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On July 17, 1998, Commander Han Aung of Laikha-based LIB 515, raped Nang Mya Non, 28, a married woman from the outermost quarter of Laikha town, Shan State. She reported the case to the village headman, but the rapist denied it and shot her dead instead. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On July 20, 1998, Aung Myint Sein, No 3 company commander from IB 230, seized Saw Par Ker's daughter, Naw Paw Lu Htoo, aged 16, of Tapaw village, Nyaunglebin district, Pegu Division and raped her. After the rape, he shot her dead with his carbine through her private parts. (***Source: KIC***)

◆ On July 25, 1998, Major Thein Oo and his troops from LIB 515 raped Nang Zarm, aged 16, from Zaet Lawk village, Laikha township, Shan State. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On July 27, 1998, Major Thein Oo and his troops from LIB 515 also raped Nang Nu, aged 13, until she fainted. She was from Phawng Seng village, Laikha township, Shan State. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On August 1, 1998, troops from LIB 515 led by Commander Thein Aung and his troops raped Nang Zarm Hawn, aged 14, and Nang Thuay, aged 14, from Zaet lawk village, Laikha township, Shan State. On August 17, 1998, Corporal Zaw Latt and Privates Maung Soe, Win Naing and Than Htike from Division 1, LIB 546 came to Win Gyi village, Kawkareik township, Karen State. They all went to house of Ma Myint Khaing, a married woman who had given birth two days earlier and tied up her husband's hands. They did not give any reason. Both Ma Myint Khaing and her mother Daw Sein Aye, 51 years old were raped in the house by all the soldiers. Ma Myint Khaing suffered from mental disorder after the gang-rape and was sent to Kyonedoe Hospital. (***Source: HRDU***)

◆ On August 10, 1998, five women were gang-raped by the troops from LIB 524 led by commander Khin Maung at a farm 7 km east of Kunhing town, Shan State. They were captured with four men in their fields when the troops arrived. The women were separated from the men and were raped the whole night by the soldiers. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On August 14, 1998, Aye Oot, a 14 year- old sixth grade student was raped by Corporal Naing Htay from LIB 324 at Murng Yaen village, Namtu township, Shan State. She was on her way back from school when she was raped. Her parents complained about this to an officer, but no action was taken against the rapist. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On August 17, 1998, Major Tin Aye and other four soldiers from LIB 546 based in Kyondoe, Karen State, came to No Phardoe village in Kawkareik township, Karen State. They raped Daw Wah Say and another unknown woman from the village. They later stabbed and killed Saw Doe, husband of Naw Wah Sat. (***Source: HRDU***)

◆ On August 19, 1998, Captain Shwe Nyunt, commander of company 2 of IB 65 in Murng Ton, raped Nang Zing Yo, aged 17, in a farm hut in Nar Pa Kao village, Murng Ton township, Shan State. She reported the case to the authorities but no action was taken. She was later fined 5,000 *kyat* for defamation. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On October 14, 1998, Nang Lam, a seven- month pregnant woman from Nam Hoo village, Nam Zarng township, Shan State, was beaten and her sister Nang Zu was beaten, raped and robbed by troops from IB 22 led by commander Than Nyunt at a farm three miles south of the Mark Mong Kawk village relocation site. They were accused of being wives of the Shan resistance soldiers and killed. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On October 19, 1998, SPDC troops led by Captain Htun Maung from Kunhing township, Shan State went on patrol and met Nang Zarm Oo, aged 26, Nang Nu Harn, aged 18, Nai Sai Leng, aged 22, and Nang Mawng Zing, aged 20, who were working in fields 5 km north of Kunhing. All of them were rounded up and taken by the troops. They were repeatedly raped by the commander and his soldiers for two days and two nights. They were released when they arrived back to Kunhing, and were warned not to report the rape to anyone or they would be killed. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On October 19, 1998, two privates Maung Kyi and Than Htaik, from Company No 1 of Captain Sein Win of IB 227, raped Nang Seng Mawn, aged 17, at Wan Nam village, Murng Yarng township, Shan State. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On November 18, 1998, SPDC soldiers from IB 286 based in The Chaung village in Thayetchaung township, Tenasserim Division, killed nine villagers accusing them of being KNU supporters. These nine villagers were Saw Kalay Sa, Saw Htoo Mee, Saw Dah Bu, Saw Yo Mhwe, Saw Pauk Htoo, Saw Pwa Pwa, Naw Si as well asan unnamed two-year- old girl and a three- year- old boy. They were all from Tanyin Chaung village and

were found by the soldiers while they were working in their fields. They were accused of providing food for KNU soldiers and killed later. Naw Si was gang-raped before she was killed. (***Source: HRDU***)

◆ On September 10, 1998, a platoon of the Burmese army led by Sergeant Aung Shwe, from LIB 303 based in Mawlaik, Sagaing Division, came to Congthia village, Thantlang township. They forcibly collected six villagers including one woman to act as porters. On their way to the next village, the sergeant ordered his troops and five porters to go ahead but he ordered Miss Nunau (name changed) to stay behind with him. Then the sergeant raped her. She reported this to the village elders. (***Source: CHRO***)

◆ On September 12, 1998, troops from LIB 374 based in Kyauktaw township, Arakan State, rounded up U Hla Pyo, aged 50, Ko Tha Sein aged 30, Daw Hla Myint aged 42, and Ma Nyo Nwe, aged 18, from Shwe Hlaing village in the region. They were forced to carry military equipment and the two women were repeatedly raped by the troops. All four were killed after their service. (***Source: HRDU***)

◆ On September 27, 1998, Nang Kya Non, aged 26, of Kaeng Lom village which had been forcibly relocated to a site in Kunhing township, Shan State, was gang-raped by troops from IB 246 led by commander Myint Oo. She was found with her younger brother on her farm located 3 km from town. She was seized to act as a guide by the troops and raped for whole two nights by the soldiers. (***Source: SHRF***)

◆ On December 7, 1998, a military column led by Major Aung Thein Oo from LIB 341 rounded up five Karen women including Naw Phawra, 33 year old, found working in their fields. They were taken from their huts and gang-raped by the soldiers. Later all five women were killed and their bodies were left under bushes. (***Source: HRDU***)

◆ On December 10, 1998, Captain Soe Hlaing from LIB 424 raped and killed Nang Sa, aged 19, at Nawng Kaw village, Wan Zard, Kaesee township, Shan State. She was raped on her vegetable farm outside of her village. After raping her, the captain beat her on the head with a heavy stick that caused her death. He then took her necklace and some money. (***Source: SHRF***)