

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A journey only begins when the first step is taken. And the journey the Human Rights Documentation Unit (HRDU) has embarked on began when that first step was taken in 1995; the Human Rights Yearbook 1994 was published that year. This book, the Human Rights Yearbook 1995, is the second effort by the HRDU to document the ongoing human rights violations in Burma.

For decades, the people of Burma have been living in fear under the reign of terror by the military. But Burma is an isolated country and these widespread human rights abuses are rarely known to the outside world. Reports about the abuses, passed on by word of mouth, gradually fade away from the mind with time. The effort by the HRDU is to correct that situation and fulfill the need of the people of Burma.

The people of Burma are described as cordial, hospitable, sincere and loving. This has always been our national trait and we are proud of it. But what cannot be known to the outside world is that our people today are subjected to daily abuses by the military, and the smiles we see on them hide the anguished lives they are leading.

The generals of the State Law and Order Restoration Council, SLORC, who changed the name of the country from Burma to Myanmar, have decided to declare 1996 as Visit Myanmar Year. They believe that the visitors would see newly built buildings and assume that Burma has developed under their rule. This ambitious scheme has already ravaged the lives of people all over the country. Millions are conscripted as forced labor in tourism promotion projects, villages relocated from income-generating areas and taxes imposed without any legal justification to finance infrastructure projects.

SLORC has claimed that for the first time in decades, regional development work is being carried out in the border areas following its cease-fire arrangements with armed ethnic organizations. The truth is, under the guise of regional development work, SLORC has been conscripting local people to build roads, bridges and rail tracks. People are told to report without fail to their designated work sites, bringing their own food and tools, and are forced to work without compensation in voluntary projects. Local villagers are also made to pay porter fees to the regional "law and order restoration councils" and the local army units if they want to avoid being conscripted as porters. Giving security as an excuse, villages are forcefully relocated to clear the way for the construction of the death gas pipeline from the gulf of Martabam to Thailand. People who have lived for generations and earned their living in these areas are not only relocated to new areas but also conscripted to work in projects to prepare for this pipeline.

In the meantime, SLORC is holding a sham national convention of its own delegates to draft a new constitution that would embody the principles to perpetuate military rule in Burma. The vast majority of the representatives elected by the people in the 1990 elections are not allowed to participate in this convention. Those who are allowed to participate are not permitted to freely discuss their views.

SLORC military dictators use threats, blackmail and illegal arrests as tools to control

the people. In 1995, thousands of political prisoners are still being imprisoned for their beliefs. In some detention centers, political prisoners are kept in isolation cells, deprived of food and water for long periods, and subjected to torture. SLORC however finds it easy not to take any legal action against its accomplice, the Opium Kingpin of the Golden Triangle, Khun Sa, and is even providing security for him.

SLORC is also refusing to hold talks with either the leaders of the election winning party, the National League for Democracy, headed by Nobel Peace Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, or with the other leaders of opposition parties to resolve national issues.

There was a dilemma for the members of the Human Rights Documentation Unit in undertaking the task of publication of this book. It was a task we hated doing and, at the same time, we knew it was something that had to be done without fail. In other words, the process of compiling human rights abuses had a very profound impact on us. We were emotionally overwhelmed by the tragic events that plagued the lives of our people. But we also understood that to leave these events unrecorded would even be a greater tragedy. We could not let the suffering of our people be forgotten. We therefore took it upon ourselves to inform the world about the ongoing human rights abuses in Burma, hoping that justice would be done one day.

The Human Rights Yearbook 1995 records tragic events that are unheard of in civilized countries, and the reader will come to experience the anger, bitterness and sorrow that we felt in compiling this book. We sincerely hope that this book will provide an insight into the life of the people under SLORC and why it is imperative for the world to cooperate with us in freeing Burma from the yoke of military rule.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to the law students of Norway and the members of the Norwegian Burma Council for their unwavering support in making this book possible. In addition, I would like to thank all ethnic organisations and many individuals who supported this project. The very existence of the HRDU would not have been possible without the assistance from these friends of Burma. I have used the opportunity made available to me by the emergence of the HRDU to work closely with organizations that are noble and just and have a profound sympathy for the people of Burma. I therefore wish to put on record my profound gratitude to KHRG, HURFOM, M.I.S, ABSDF, S.H.A.N NLD(LA), SAIN and Images Asia, for their enthusiastic assistance and cooperation for the publication this book.

For any shortcomings in this book, I alone must accept responsibility. Finally, a wish by the members of the HRDU: May the journey toward a peaceful and prosperous Burma where human rights prevail and toward establishing a pleasant life for the people be short and quick.

Thein Oo
Minister of Justice (NCGUB) and
Coordinator
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS, TERMS AND MEASUREMENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABSDF -	All Burma Students' Democratic Front
ABSL -	All Burma Students League
aka -	also known as
ALP -	Arakan Liberation Party
approx -	approximately
ASC -	Arakanese Students Congress
BAD -	Border Area Development programme
B.E. -	Burmese Era
Brig -	Brigadier
BI -	Burma Issues
BIG -	Burma Information Group
Bn -	Battalion
BPP -	Border Patrol Police (Thailand)
BRC -	Burmese Relief Center
BSPP -	Burma Socialist Programme Party
Capt -	Captain
CNF -	Chin National Front
Comdr -	Commander
Col -	Colonel
Coy -	Company
Cpl -	Corporal
CPPSM -	Campaign for the Publicity of the People's Struggle in Monland
DDSI -	Directorate of Defence Services Intelligence
DKBA -	Democratic Kayin (Karen) Buddhist Association
DPA -	Democratic Patriotic Army
Dta Baw -	The Yellow Ones (the common Karen names for DKBA)
FEC -	Foreign Exchange Certificate (officially valued at US\$ 1 = 1 FEC; unofficial/black market US\$1 = 110-120 FEC)
ft -	feet
FTUB -	Federation of Trade Unions, Burma
Gen -	General
HRDU -	Human Rights Documentation Unit
HRV -	human rights violations
HURFOM -	Human Rights Foundation of Monland
IA -	Images Asia
IB -	Infantry Bn
IDC -	Immigration Detention Centre (Thailand)
Ind -	Independent
Lt -	Lieutenant

kg -	Kilogram
KHRG -	Karen Human Rights Group
KNLA -	Karen National Liberation Army (military wing of KNU)
KNPP -	Karenni National Progressive Party
KNU -	Karen National Union
Ko Per Baw -	The Yellow Headbands (the common Karen names for DKBA)
Ko Per Kit -	The Striped (usually red-and-white) headbands (a relatively small group which has allied itself with DKBA. It started as a civilian organisation focused on preserving Karen culture but at some point was either subverted or forcibly taken over by militant DKBA members. Ko Per Kit members now carry samurai-style swords which they say must be used to kill someone if they are drawn, and operated together with DKBA troops.)
Ko Per Wah -	The White Headbands which was recently formed. Formed by a monk who then allied himself with DKBA chief U Thuzana.
Ks -	Kyats (approx. value: official US\$1 = 6 Ks; unofficial US\$1 = 110-120 Ks)
LIB -	Light Infantry Battalion
LID -	Light Infantry Division
LORC -	Law and Order Restoration Council (on the local, regional, etc., levels)
Maj -	Major
Ma Wa Ta -	Township-level SLORC authorities
MDUF	Meik-Dawei United Front (a 100 strong ethnic Tavoyan armed opposition group formerly known as DPA)
MIS -	Military Intelligence Services (aka DDSI)
MIS -	Mon Information Service
mm -	millimetre
MNRC -	Mon National Relief Committee
MOGE	Myanmar Oil & Gas Enterprise
MOI -	Ministry of Interior (Thailand)
MOU -	Memorandum of Understanding
MSC -	Military Strategic Command
MTA -	Mong Tai Army (led by Khun Sa)
n.a.	[not available]
Na Wa Ta-	State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)
NBC -	Norwegian Burma Council
NCGUB -	National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
NGO -	Non-governmental organisation
NLD -	National League for Democracy
NLM -	The New Light of Myanmar
NMSP -	New Mon State Party
Pa Wa Ta -	State-level SLORC authorities
Pali -	Sanskrit
Pvt -	Private

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Pyi -	Country
pyi	eight-condensed-milk tin
SAIN -	Southeast Asia Information Network
Sd. -	Signed with signature
Sgt -	Sergeant
Shwedagon -	The Great Pagoda in Rangoon
SHRF -	Shan Human Rights Foundation
S.H.A.N. -	Shan Herald Agency for News
SLORC -	State Law and Order Restoration Council
sq	square
SSA	Shan State Army
SSIA	Shan State Independence Army (now know as SSA after joining the latter army)
SUA	Shan United Army (now-defunct when MTA exits)
SURA	Shan United Revolutionary Army (now-defunct when MTA exists)
Ta Wa Ta-	Division-level SLORC authorities
TOC -	Tactical Operations Command
TRC -	Tailand Revolutionary Council
USDA -	Union Solidarity and Development Association
Ya Wa Ta-	Town-quarter-level or Village-level SLORC authorities
yrs -	Years

TERMS

Baht -	monetary unit of Thailand (see under "Measurements").
Black Areas -	areas fully under the control of anti-government forces.
Bo -	military commander.
Brown Areas -	areas partially under the control of anti-government forces
Daw -	an honorific used to address an adult female
furlong -	(see under "measurements").
jaggery -	a hard brown crystallised substance which is obtained from boiling sugarcane juice and also sap from toddy palm stems, and used as brown sugar or syrup
Kawthoolei -	Karen name for the Karen nation.
Khun -	form of address to an adult Thai male
Ko -	form of address to a young male.
kyat -	monetary unit of Burma.
longyi -	sarong in Burmese language
Ma -	form of address to a young female.
Mahn -	form of address to a male.
Maung -	form of address to a young male.
Mehm/Min -	form of address to a young male
Mi -	form of address to a female.
Movement	the SLORC appoints a village "headman" (not the same as the real
Paper-	headman), usually against his will, and this man is then authorised

Na Ka Sa -	to issue movement papers to his villagers, verifying who they are. Burmese abbreviation for paramilitary border patrol on Burma's Bangladeshi border.
Nai -	form of address to an adult male.
Naw -	form of address to a female.
plah -	Karen measurement of distance, from elbow to fingertip (1 plah is under 2 feet).
pya -	100 pyas = 1 kyat.
ringworm -	derogatory SLORC reference to KNLA soldiers.
Sai -	form of address to a young male.
Sangha -	Buddhist order of monks.
Sao -	male of royal descent.
Saw -	form of address to a male.
Sayadaw -	Buddhist abbot.
Tatmadaw -	Burmese Army.
Thakin -	master (used to address the British colonial rulers; later politicised by the Burmese independence movement in the '30s).
tickle -	(see under "Measurements").
tin -	(see under "Measurements").
tract (village) -	area consisting of 4-6 villages.
U -	an honorific used to address an adult male.
viss -	(see under "Measurements").
White Areas -	area fully under the control of the Tatmadaw.

MEASUREMENTS

acre	1 acre = 4,840 sq yards = 0.407 hectare 2.471 acres = 11,960 sq yards = 1 hectare 640 acres = 1 sq. mile = 2.590 sq kilometres
baht	1 baht = 100 satang = US\$ 0.04 25 baht = US\$ 1
FEC	1 FEC = US\$ 1 (official) 1 FEC = US\$ 110-120 (unofficial)
furlong	1 furlong = 220 yards (1/8) mile = 201 metres
kyat	1 kyat (Ks) = US\$ 0.15 (official) 1 kyat = US\$ 0.008 (unofficial) 6 kyat = US\$ 1 (official) 110-120 Ks = US\$ 1 (unofficial)
lakh	1 lakh = 100,000
tickle	1 tickle = 0.576 ounces = 16.33 gram
tin	1 tin (rice/condensed milk) = approx 250 ml
viss	1 viss = 3.6 lbs = 1.633 kg 622.22 viss = 1 long ton (2,240 lbs) = 1.016 metric tons

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NOTE ABOUT SPELLINGS:

Since there are no standardised transcriptions for Burmese, Mon, etc., in the Roman alphabet, words are spelt variously, according to different spelling conventions or usually by how they “sound” (Halockhani refugee camp is a classic example of this, by Westerners as well as Thais and locals). In addition, spellings have further been confused by the ruling junta’s official Burmanisation of well-known, historical English spellings (like Myanmar for Burma).

Despite this, and to avoid confusion and politicisation, this report will restrict its usage to the established and more widely-accepted anglicised spellings, since this report was written in English.

A list of various alternative spellings from sources are provided as follows:

Ayeyarwady -	Irrawaddy
Bagan -	Pagan
Bago -	Pegu
Bamar -	Burman
Dawei -	Tavoy
Hinthada -	Henzada
Hpa-an -	Pa-an
Kayah -	Karenni
Kayin -	Karen
Kyaing Don -	Kengtung
Magway -	Magwe
Mawlamyine -	Moulmein
Muang Tai -	Mong Tai
Myeit -	Mergui
Myanmar -	Burma
Patheingyi -	Bassein
Pyaw -	Prome
Sittoung -	Sittang
Sittwe, Sittway -	Akyab
Tanintharyi -	Tenasserim
Thandwai -	Sandoway
Thanlwin -	Salween River
Taungyin -	Moei River
Toungoo -	Taungoo
Yangon -	Rangoon

BURMA AT A GLANCE: FACTS AND FIGURES

Country name:	Union of Burma (1948); Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma (1974); Union of Myanmar (1989).
Area:	261,000 sq miles.
Coastline:	1,600 miles.
Population:	47 million.
Urban population:	26%
Population density:	160 people/sq mile.
Refugees:	[300,000 in Thailand; 20,000 in China and India; 50,000 in Bangladesh].
Internally displaced:	about two million people.
Birth rate:	2.1%
Life expectancy:	59 years.
Adult literacy:	19.4%
School attendance:	26.7%
People per telephone:	348.4
People per TV:	22.0
People per doctor:	12,500
Infant mortality:	79
Languages:	Arakanese, Burmese, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, Shan, Wa, English and more than 100 minority dialects.
Religions:	Buddhist (85%), Animist (5%), Christian (4.5%), Muslim (4%), Hindu (1.5%).
Per capital GDP:	US\$ 676; (Industry 10%, Agriculture 46%).
GDP (PPP):	US\$ 31 billion
GDP growth:	6.4%
Per capital GNP:	US\$890
Saving % of GDP:	12%
Reserves excl. gold:	US\$ 0.7billion
Cur acct. balance:	US\$ 0.2 billion
Exports 12 months:	US\$ 0.8 billion
Inflation CPI:	21.8%
Foreign debt:	US\$ 5.3 billion
GDP spending:	3.1% on military (non-SLORC figures; over 50%), 2.2% education, 0.8% health.
Wage earners:	6 million (estimated).
LDC status:	Since 1987
Natural resources:	tin, plutonium, zinc, copper, cobalt, gold, rubies, jade, teak (80% of world's reserves), fish (704 metric tons/year), gas, oil, rice, sesame, groundnuts.

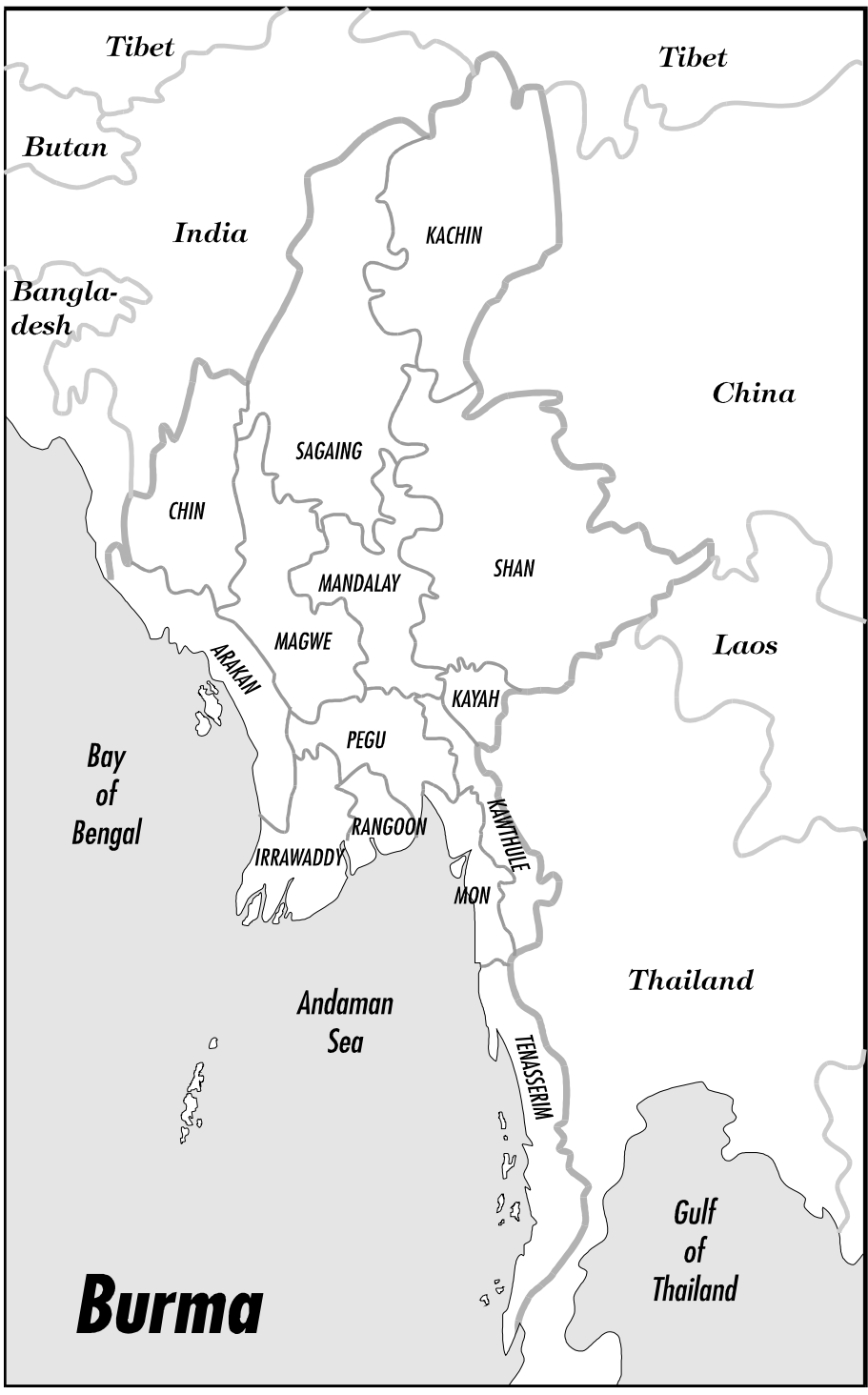
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Map of Burma showing State and Division Borders



Graphics by Radio Burma Group 1995