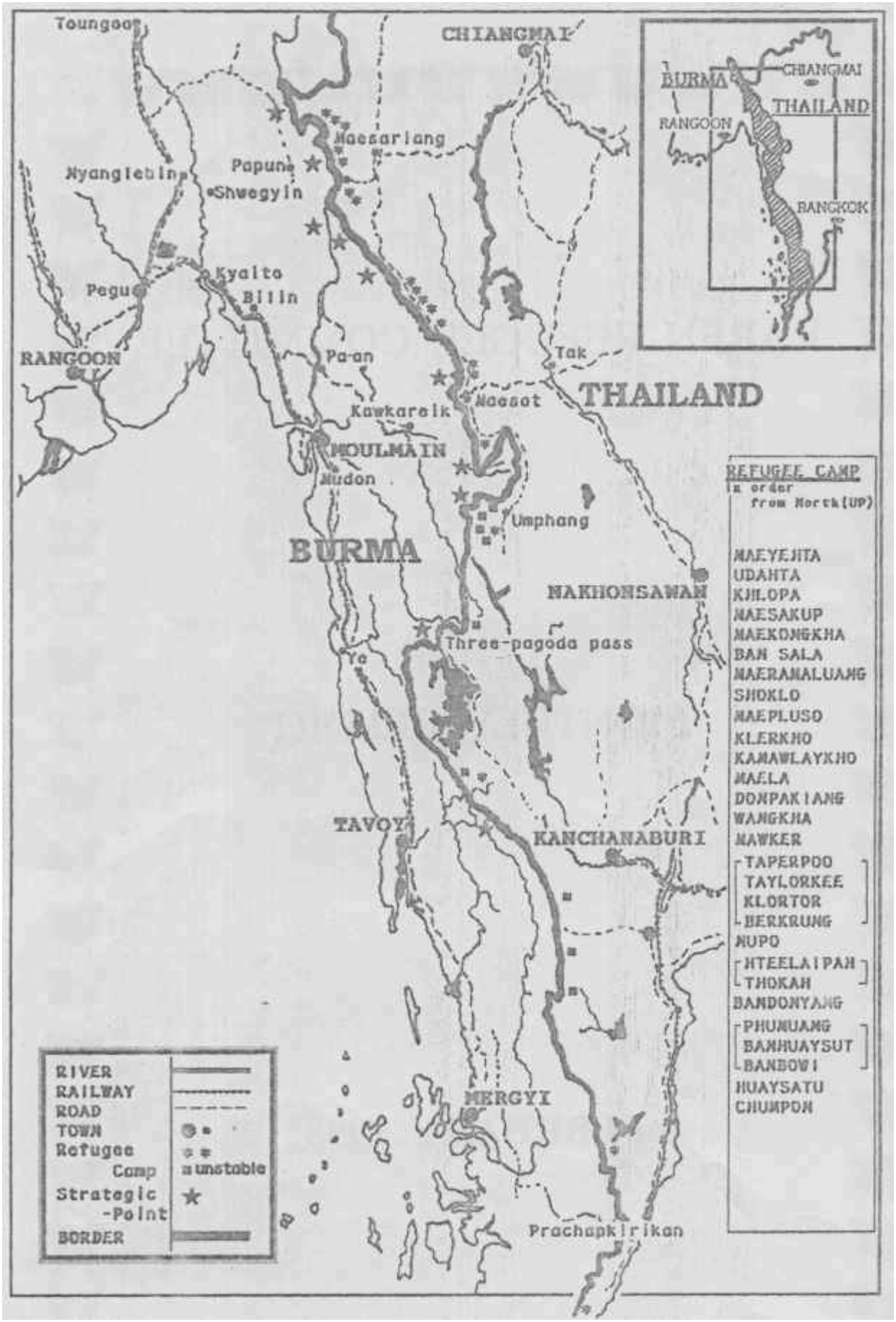
KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

FEBRUARY 1998


Toungoo
CHIANGMAI
Maesariang
Papun
Nyanglebin
Shwegyin
Kyaito
Pegu
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RANGOON
Pa-an
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THAILAND
Kawkareik
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MOULMAIN
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NAKHONSAWAN
Three-pagoda pass
Ye
TAVOY
KANCHANABURI
MERGYI
Prachapkirikan
BURMA
CHIANGMAI
THAILAND
RANGOON
BANGKOK
REFUGEE CAMP
in order
from North(UP)
MAEYEHTA
UDAHTA
KHLOPA
MAESAKUP
MAEKONGKHA
BAN SALA
MAERAMALUANG
SHOKLO
MAEPLUSO
KLERKHO
KAMAWLAYKHO
MAELA
DONPAKIANG
WANGKHA
MAWKER
TAPERPOO
TAYLORKEE
KLORTOR
BERKRUNG
NUPO
HTEELAIPAN
THOKAH
BANDONYANG
PHUMUANG
BANHUAYSUT
BANBOWI
HUAYSATU
CHUMPON
RIVER
RAILWAY
ROAD
TOWN
Refugee
Camp
unstable
Strategic
-Point
BORDER

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February is an ominous month for us Karen Refugees.

February of 1997. The SLORC military onslaught on the Karen controlled region in the Thai-Burma border resulted in an exodus of displaced people into Thailand. February 1997 was also the time of worry and fatigue for the refugees as a result of two refugee camps being burnt down by the enemy near the end of January 1997.

Since January of 1998, yet another frustration for the refugees was in the offing, as rumours were flying around that some reftigee camps in the border region will be relocated.

Shoklo reftigee camp in the middle sector was ordered to be relocated to Mae La, beginning February 2nd 1998. Shifting over one thousand families with nearly seven thousand people will not be an easy task, of which most of those involved are agreed. Also, the place for relocation, Mae La is an established camp with somewhat limited space. So, newly moved families will have to be relocated in different zones in Mae La camp. (Zones A, B and C with its different Sections.) There will be separations and disruptions in families and groups which would result in disenchantment. Stress, tension, toil and temperament can only be imagined.

It is apparent that those with the responsibility for relocating did not take the task to be an easy one. Meetings were held, committees were formed and detailed plans were made with tasks allocated in anticipation of problems to be met.

The relocation of Shoklo camp began as planned on the 2nd of February 1998. However, the relocation process is proceeding at a slower pace than anticipated. Hitches, big and small are a plenty and too numerous and detailed to be narrated.

As of the 25th of February 1998, figures received of relocated people are: 680 families with total population (4053). So, many families and personnel with materials are still in need of being transported.

Yet, another big task for the responsible Authorities, the KRC and the NGOs is being focused in the Northern region of Mae Sa Riang. There, four reftigee camps, Mae Yeh Hta, Klo Pah, U Dah Hta and Mae Sa Kup are to be relocated to Mae Ra Ma Luang camp. Over ten thousand refugees will be made to shift. (Statistical figures in attached list.)

Mae Yeh Hta was the first reftigee camp ordered to be moved, relocation to begin on the 12th of February 1998. Latest statistics show that Mae Yeh Hta camp has 297 families with a total population of 1797. Expectation was that the relocation process would go according to plan. But, on the day relocation was to begin, people refused to be moved. Refugees, as a whole objected to being relocated. They refused to dismantle their huts. They refused to load their household materials and refused to be transported by the vehicles provided by BBC. Even some school children were seen to demonstrate in opposition to the relocation. There was an impasse for which all, including the authorities, were unable to resolve. The authorities, including the military were reluctant to use

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force. The KRC and the NGOs were unable to provide any solution. The NGOs especially SBC must have felt profoundly piqued by the outcome, as it stands to account for transport vehicles already ordered. Also, the reception people at Mae Rama Luang must have felt dismay, having toiled long and hard to set up temporary shelters and preparing food for hundreds of newcomers who would never come.

Latest development is that Karen Eiders responsible for refugees are trying concertedly to counsel and persuade refugees from these four camps to comply with the demands of the Authorities. The authorities have legitimate reasons for wanting these camps to be moved and as refuge seekers, we were just temporary residents where change of location would not be of much difference in camp living.

The Thai authorities have given a grace period of 15 days, which is up to the *end* of February, for Karen elders and refugees to resolve the crisis and start moving from these camps to the designated location or otherwise, beginning the first of March 1998. We hopefully expect the camp refugees to be relocated as there are signs of compliance.

The KRC appreciates very much that the Authorities responsible for relocation, have never resorted to force. Also they have shown great tolerance in asking refugees to comply to the demand for relocation.

We know and understand that the Thai Authorities are exercising Sovereignty, and that, for legitimate National interests-Security of the State and Protection of precious National Resources.

Our gratitude goes out, especially to the long suffering NGOs, for their never failing tolerance and understanding, and never deviating from the path of sincere assistance and support.

Sincerely,

(Robert Htwe)
Chairman.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS.

	CAMP	No.of families	Over 12 YRS		5-12 YRS		Under 5 YRS		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
MAE SOT AREA	Wang Kha (Huay Ka Lok)	1613	3075	2915	966	848	476	489	8769
	Mae La Mae La T.B (Clinic) Prosthesis Workshop	4105	8480	7702	3497	3180	1338	1440	25637 104 20
	Sho Klo (Mae Song) *	1034	2075	2044	945	917	394	390	6765
	Maw Ker	1352	3016	2623	767	683	684	610	8383
		8104	**16646**	**15284**	**6175**	**5628**	**2892**	**2929**	**49678**
NORTH	Mae Ra Ma Luang	788	1567	1464	652	495	352	335	4885
	Khun Mae Kong Kha	553	897	1006	399	402	272	302	3278
	Sa La	471	968	858	351	353	129	114	2773
	Mae Sa Kup **	415	800	801	292	259	121	176	2449
	Khlo Pa **	442	838	823	319	275	199	216	2670
	U Da Hta **	545	1221	1003	381	362	214	224	3405
	Mae Ye Hta **	297	635	533	259	203	86	81	1797
		3511	**6926**	**6488**	**2653**	**2349**	**1373**	**1448**	**21257**
SOUTH	Noh Po	1785	3396	2839	1060	1000	786	781	9862
	Ban Don Yang	317	348	389	271	234	129	117	1488
	Tham Him	1624	2231	2331	1020	996	640	723	7942
	Hti Yo Ki	204	264	291	106	73	93	101	928
	Kho Thay Lu	70	77	85	22	16	36	44	280
		4000	**6316**	**5935**	**2479**	**2319**	**1684**	**1766**	**20500**
	Grand Total	**15615**	**29888**	**27708**	**11307**	**10296**	**5949**	**6143**	**91435**

** Relocated to Mae La camp'- (1) camp; Sho Klo still in process of relocation.*
***Relocated to Mae Ra Ma Luang (4) camps; Mae Sa Kup - Khlo Pa - U Da Hta - Mae Ye Hta.*

RICE AND OTHER ITEMS RECEIVED DURING THE MONTH.

FROM	RICE 100kg sacks	Salt Kilos	F-paste 16kg tins	Yellow Bean kilos	Chillies kilos	Cooking Oil 13.5 litre tins	Bamboo Charcoal. Kilos	Sawdust Logs Bundles
BBC	8686	22550	3591	84240	1370	235	48480	146599
COERR	350	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note I. C. S. Asia is providing financial support for repairs of School buildings at Mae La and Wang Kha camps for the Academic year 1998/99.

DISTRIBUTION OF RICE AND OTHER ITEMS RECEIVED.

Camp	ITEMS							
	Rice	Salt	Fish paste	Yellow Bean	Bamboo Charcoal	Chillies	Cooking Oil	Sawdust Logs
Wang Kha	1365	3500	584	12240	48480	-	-	
Mae La	4127	10250	1710	35940	-	-	-	32588
Sho Klo	573	2700	453	9540	-	-	-	-
Maw Ker	1314	3350	561	11760	-	~	-	8421
Noh Poe	1637	2750	283	14760	-	-	-	105590
KRC/MSF	20	-	-	-	-			-

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