

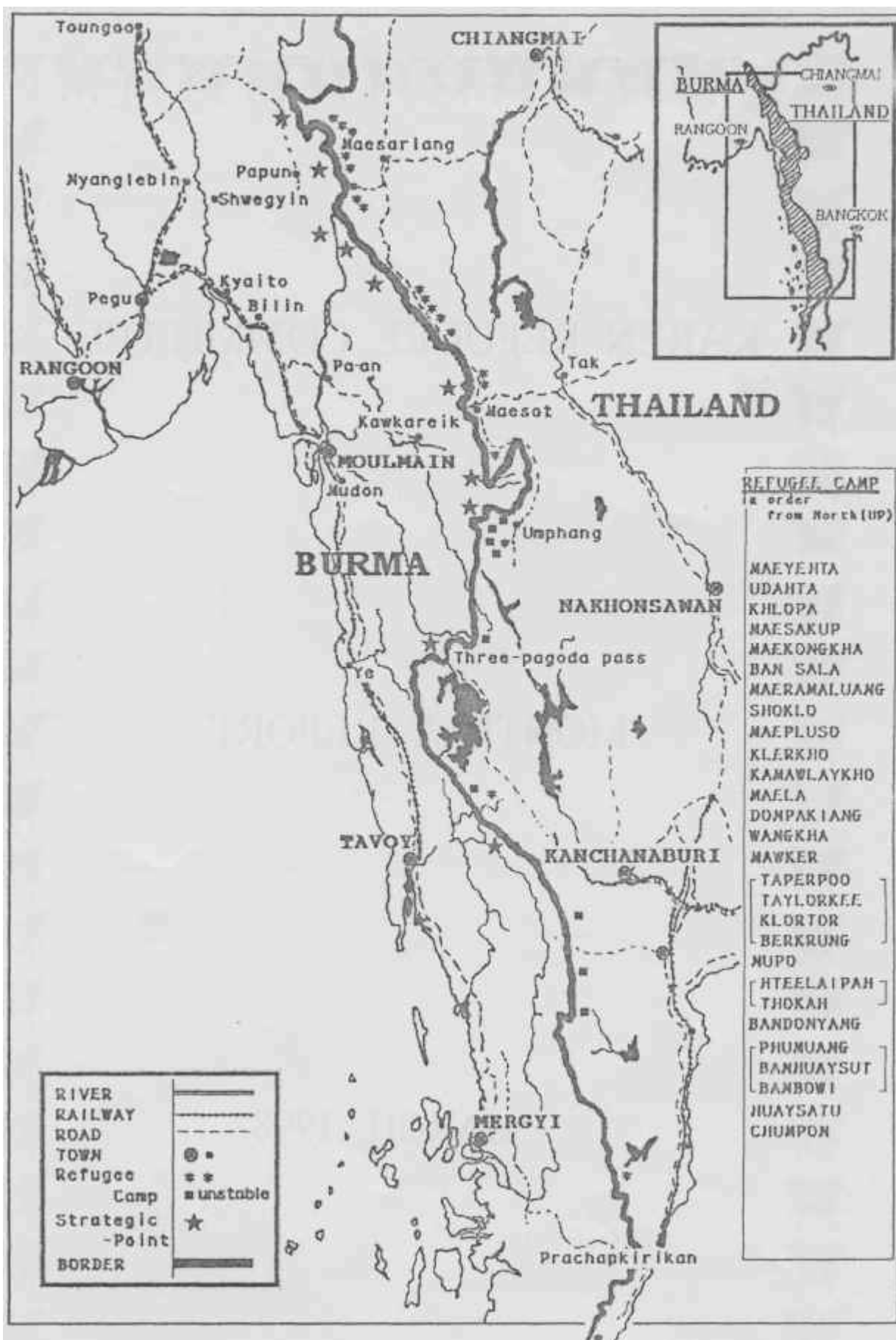
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KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

MARCH 1998



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MARCH - 1998 is a most trying month for people directly concerned with the Border Refugees.

With the relocation of refugees from some camps still unresolved, there were warnings of imminent attacks on all the refugee camps in the Border region.

The warnings must have been taken lightly, for on the 11th of March 1998, the Refugee Camp at Huay Ka Loke (Wang Kha) was attacked and burnt down, by SPDC(SLORC) and DKBA soldiers. Estimates of the attacking force vary from two hundred to three hundred.

The attack came in the early hours and was so swift and intense, that camp people had very little time to collect their things, trying to get away in the turmoil. Almost the whole camp was burnt down within an hour. Altogether over thirteen hundred houses, together with churches, hospitals and a Mosque were burnt down. More than seven thousand people were directly affected. Four people, including a pregnant mother died and more than thirty people injured, some very seriously.

The reason for the attack may be obscure, but the fact was that pre-attack shelling and firing of small arms was severe and intense. This was done with definite intent to kill. The attackers also came well prepared. They have brought lighted torches and petrol bombs to achieve their purpose of burning down the whole camp. Any attempt at resistance or protection, was not evidenced.

The attackers withdrew after an hour of lire-works, content with what they have achieved while camp refugees were left in turmoil, in suffering and grief.

Help for the refugees were not late in coming. The injured were sent to hospitals before morning. Emergency food and water were being sent in by day-light. Cooked rice packets prepared by Dr. Cynthia's Clinic and from other groups and individuals were sent in.

There was much concern and out-pouring of sympathy. But, the task, as usual falls heavily on the NGO's the bulwark of support, for the refugees. At the emergency meeting between KRC and NGOs discussions were made to address the problem without delay.

Breakdown of support - Aid/Relief Material was effected as follows:-

1. BBC - to start anew with food support as the regular supply had all been destroyed.
Support/Material include, Rice, fish-paste, salt, yellow beans, cooking oil and sardines. BBC also give support material like mats, blankets, mosquito nets, plastic sheets, cooking pots and charcoal. It was a heavy burden indeed.
2. MSF - is chiefly concerned and helping with the needs in Health and Medical fields, it also supported with water containers (Jerry cans) and drinking cups. MSF advised people to boil drinking water and is monitoring incidences of ailments and diseases, as preventive measures.
3. H.I. - made their commitment to support with the need in plates 410 dozens, Bowls-205 dozens, Spoons-653 dozens and ladles-108 dozens.
4. ZOA - made their commitment to support with 200 sets (3 pieces each) of cooking pots.
5. TOPS - to support with cooking pots (120 sets)

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6. SMRU - made commitment to help support with clothing (Sarongs)
7. COERR - made commitment to help support with plates, bowls and cooking pots.
8. ADRA - made commitment (Through Mr. Ben Walker), to help support with Frying pans, mats and Slippers.
9. DR. CYNTHIA'S CLINIC, helping with cooking and preparing emergency rice packets. Also to help support with Lady's clothing plus personal use and some men's clothing.
10. - KRC - to help with registering Aid/Material received, sending of rice packets, water for emergency use and support material. All in all, there was no shortage of sympathy and goodwill, evidenced by the offer of Aid/Relief material together with personal services.
11. Later ICS-Asia came up with support/relief material as- Stoves-1360 pieces, Cooking pots- (200) sets, Jerry cans (60) pieces, Frying pans (52) pieces. In all, response from aid groups was most heartening. But as if this were not enough trouble already, another problem appeared. This time it was another refugee camp to the South. Maw Ker Camp(45) Km south of Mae Sot was attacked by SPDC and DKBA troops on the 23rd of March 1998. 1:10 AM local time. (50) houses and two monastery buildings in section 6 & 7 were burnt down. (15) people were injured, (5) seriously. Over three hundred people are affected including Monks and Novices. The attacking force was estimated at around (50).

Shelling with mortars as well as small arms were used in the attack. Indiscriminate shelling and bullet trajectory (as in Huay Ka Loke) leave no doubt about the intent to kill and this on refugees who will in no way retaliate.

Resistance to these attacks or efforts to defend the camps were not evidenced in both instances. In between, there was also shelling of Mae La Refugee Camp to the north of Mae Sot, but attack on the camp was not achieved, due to security measures initiated by the Thai Authorities.

Now with pouring ins of Sympathy and Compassion for the refugees, we are seeing that goodness in humanity is being evidenced.

It now remains for people in responsible positions to address the problem of relocating these people to a location with some semblance of security and normalcy.

We are very much encouraged to hear that UNHCR and Western Embassies have shown particular concern over the attacks on refugee camps. We feel heartily that it is a very good and positive step.

We support the relocation of Refugee Camps and support efforts to find a sustainable solution to the problem.

The KRC is always happy to commend the Royal Thai Government for the generous provision of refuge for the refugees in Thailand over many years.

Our gratitude goes out to the Groups and individuals, especially, the never failing NGOs for their understanding, sympathy and tolerance and their provision of relief support and services for the Refugees.

Karen Refugee .Committee.
Mae Sot.

Dated: 31st of March 1998.

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NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS.

MAE SOT AREA	CAMP	No.of families	Over 12 YRS		5-12 YRS		Under 5 YRS		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
	Wang Kha (Huay Ka Lok)	1586	2998	2846	955	826	465	480	8570
	Mae La	4953	10248	9316	4155	3831	1562	1640	30752
	Mae La T.B (Clinic)								100
	Prosthesis Workshop								20
	Maw Ker	1350	3050	2620	799	715	608	591	8383
		7889	16296	14782	5909	5372	2635	2711	47825
NORTH	Mae Ra Ma Luang	850	1746	1565	718	543	363	351	5286
	Khun Mae Kong Kha	553	897	1006	399	402	272	302	3278
	Sa La	814	1644	1472	530	546	260	258	4710
		2217	4287	4043	1647	1491	895	911	13274
S O U T H	Noh Po	1743	3352	2827	1246	1194	619	628	9866
	Ban Don Yang	317	348	389	271	234	129	117	1488
	Tham Him	1653	2328	2373	1035	1019	661	728	8144
	Hti Yo Ki	204	264	291	106	73	93	101	928
	Kho Thay Lu	70	77	85	22	16	36	44	280
		3987	6369	5965	2680	2536	1538	1618	20706
	Grand Total	14093	26952	24790	10236	9399	5068	5240	81805

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RICE AND OTHER ITEMS RECEIVED DURING THE MONTH

FROM	Rice 100kgs. sacks	Salt Kilos	Fish-paste 16kgs tins	Yellow Bean Kilos	Blanket Bales Kilos	Mosquito Net pcs.	Chillies Kilos	Cooking Oil 1 lt. bottles & 13.5 lt. bottles	Sawdust logs bundles Kilos	Bamboo Charcoal Kilos	Plastic Sheeting Pcs.	Sweater bales
B.B.C	12,192	31,900	4,049	111,480	473	2,500	4,710	45,048 bot. 2205 tins	35,263	48,390	800	115
COERR	350											
ICS-Asia	To support with extensions in four school buildings in Mae La camp to enable students shifted from Shio Kio to be integrated into Mae La School.											

Distribution of Rice and other items received

CAMP	ITEMS											
	Rice 100kgs. sacks	Salt Kilos	Fish-paste 16kgs tins	Yellow Bean Kilos	Blanket Bales Kilos	Mosquito Net pcs.	Chillies Kilos	Cooking Oil 1 lt. bottles & 13.5 lt. bottles	Sawdust logs bundles Kilos	Bamboo Charcoal Kilos	Plastic Sheeting Pcs.	Sweater bales
Wang Ka	1,367	3,500	584	12,240	124	2,500	-	8,244		48,390	1300	30
Mae La	4,915	12,300	2,050	43,200	201	-	-	28,920	30,810	-	800	49
Maw Ker	1,314	3,350	559	11,750	70	-	-	7,884	8,383	-	-	17
KRC/MSF	35	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Na Po	4,911	12,750	856	44,280	78	-	4,710	2,205	316,770	-	19	-

For the months of March, April & May.

Support/Relief material provided by the NGOs for refugees affected by attack burning of Wang Ka and Maw Ker camps.

NGOs	cooking pots pcs.	Plate dozens	Bowl dozens	Table spoon dozens	Ladle dozens	Charcoal Stove Nos.	Sarong pcs.	Jerry Cans pcs.	clothing bundle	Plastic Cup dozens	Frying Pan pcs.	Sandal dozens	Monk Robe sets	Laundry Soap pcs.
B.B.C	1300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
COERR	450	200	105	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
I.C.S	600	-	-	-	-	1,360	-	60	100 doz.	-	52	-	7	-
ZOA	600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MSF	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1300	-	218	-	-	-	2850
H.I	-	410	205	653	108	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOPS	306	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SMRU	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WEAVE	96	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ADRA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	253	-	-

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