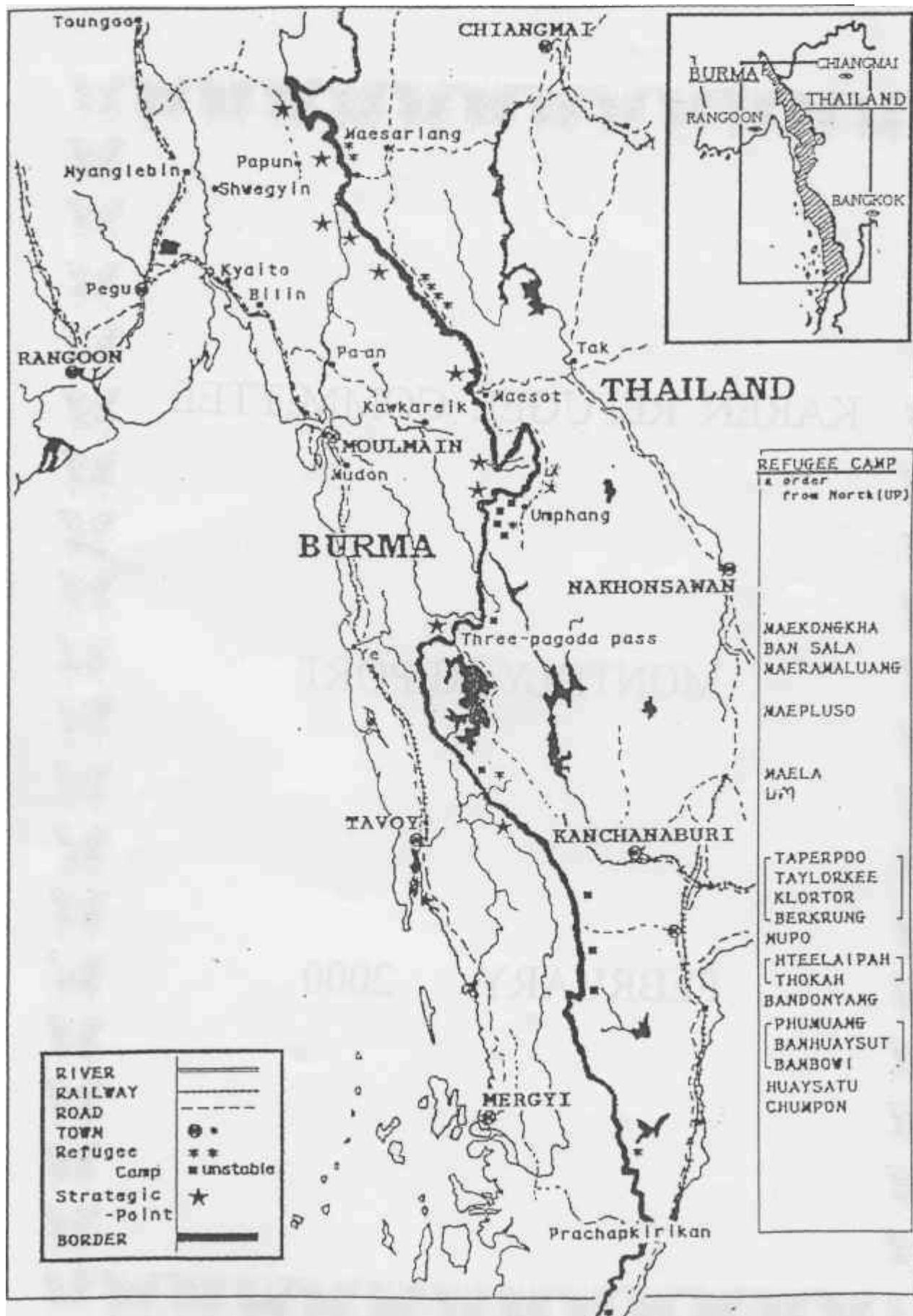


KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

FEBRUARY 2000



KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE.

FEBRUARY 2000.

The 12th of February is the Day, for us to reflect and remember. The day has come to be celebrated as UNION DAY in Burma. It was on this day in 1947 that an agreement was signed at a little town in the Shan State called Pang Long. Signatories were the Burmese AFPFL led by General Aung San, the Shan Saw Bwas, the Kachin and Chin Chiefs. One outstanding agreement was provision of allowance for any Ethnic State to have the choice of separation from the Union after the elapse of (10) years as a Union Member State. When there was comment about the wisdom of allowance of separation by the Ethnic States, General Aung San was reported to have remarked that if after (10) years of living together and the Ethnic people still want separation, then it would be inefficiency on the part of the Burmese.

Burma achieved Independence from British Rule, thanks chiefly to the Agreement, on the 4th of January 1948. The Independent Union of Burma was governed by the AFPFL government headed by Prime Minister U Nu (General Aung San didn't live to see the day of Independence as he and other leaders were assassinated on July 19th 1947.)

After the elapse of (10) years, under the AFPFL Government, there was heard, dissenting voices from Ethnic Peoples, citing discrimination and inequality. There were calls for separation from the UNION as was provided in the Pang Long Agreement. The result was the taking over of power and imposing of Military Rule by General Ne Win (Some believe power was handed over to the Military by U Nu to forestall Ethnic separation.)

The Military, having tasted power, was in no mood to hand back power to the civilian and have continued to impose its iron grip over the country, unto this day. Today, Burma from being one of the most developed in South East Asia and dubbed the "Rice Bowl of Asia" was now being relegated to the status of the "Least Developed Country."

Around the world, we saw Military Despots come and go. In Uganda, Central Africa, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Argentina, Chile, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia. What we have come to know was that Military rulers with their lust for power invariably achieved only in bringing misery to their own countries.

Conflicts and misery apart, Man needs to be reminded that the world is always getting a bashing from the forces of Nature as well. We see volcanic eruptions in the Philippines and Iceland. We see devastating storm rain-floods unleashing their fury on countries like Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Australia. Latest reports say many people are being stranded for days on high grounds, homes and treetops and rescuers having a very hard time trying to save thousands of these stranded people.

For us Refugees, on our part, we are hearing of questions asked with regard to "Repatriation. Our position is that we have sought refuge in a sympathetic host country to escape injustices and repression. We have received sanctuary, for which we shall always be grateful. And we have no doubt that the supporting Groups and NGOs are also ever willing to support us with our basic needs.

With the Military in Burma, still intransigent, still in no mood to allow for change for the better, sending back Refugees at this time can only be "Forced Repatriation." To which there can only be objections.

However there are developments around the world that could be called encouraging. The fall of the Military in Indonesia, the Election outcome in Iran and the meeting of differing East Timorese groups in Singapore are indications that there is room for optimism for those striving towards achieving justice and equality.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS FEBRUARY 2000

MAE SOT AREA	CAMP	No.of families	Over 12 YRS		9-12 YRS		Under 8 YRS		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
	Um Phiem (Zone A)	1685	2923	2781	993	894	454	640	8685
	Um Phiem (Zone B)	1402	2235	2134	399	379	- 874	825	6846
	Mae La	5835	10777	10322	1885	1825	4056	3753	33136
		8922	15935	15237	3277	3098	5384	5218	48667
NORTH	Mae Ra Ma Luang	1307	2675	2325	529	485	933	917	7864
	Khun Mae Kong Kha And Sa La	1942	3739	3456	827	697	1396	1399	11514
		3249	6414	5781	1356	1182	2329	2316	19378
S O U T H	Noh Po	1645	2678	2510	1111	1040	561	591	8491
	Ban Don Yang	417	558	605	142	129	306	271	2011
	Tham Him	1654	2339	2381	1037	1017	680	745	8199
	Kho Thay Lu	66	62	82	8	5	54	63	274
		3782	5637	5578	2298	2191	1601	1670	18975
	Grand Total	15953	27986	26596	6931	6471	9314	9204	87020

RICE AND OTHER ITEMS RECEIVED DURING THE MONTH.

FROM	Rice 100kg sacks	Salt Kilos	F- paste 16kg tins	Yellow Bean Kilos	BL	Mat	Mosquito Net Pcs	Chilies Kilos	Cooking Oil 13.75 liter tins	Cooking Fuel Kg-
B.B.C	7,597	19,522	3,254	48,858				6,102	45,406	336,147
COERR	350									

We shall always be grateful to the Thai People and Government for their sympathy and understanding in allowing us safe refuge.

We are also indebted to the NGOs for their Supports and Services.

BBC- Support in Food and Shelter Material.

MSF- Support in Medical and Health facilities.

AMI - "

ARC - "

MHD- "

ZOA (ABWAid)- Support in Educational facilities.

ICS. (Asia)- Support in Education facilities.

TOPS - Support in Educational facilities.

COERR- Rice and Educational Support.

H.I Support for Refugee Handicaps with Prosthesis and rehabilitation and also year-end sporting events for Handicaps.

NCA (Norwegian Church Aid) has been providing KRC with administrative & Organizational Support. It has also made commitment to support with remuneration for KRC members and workers.