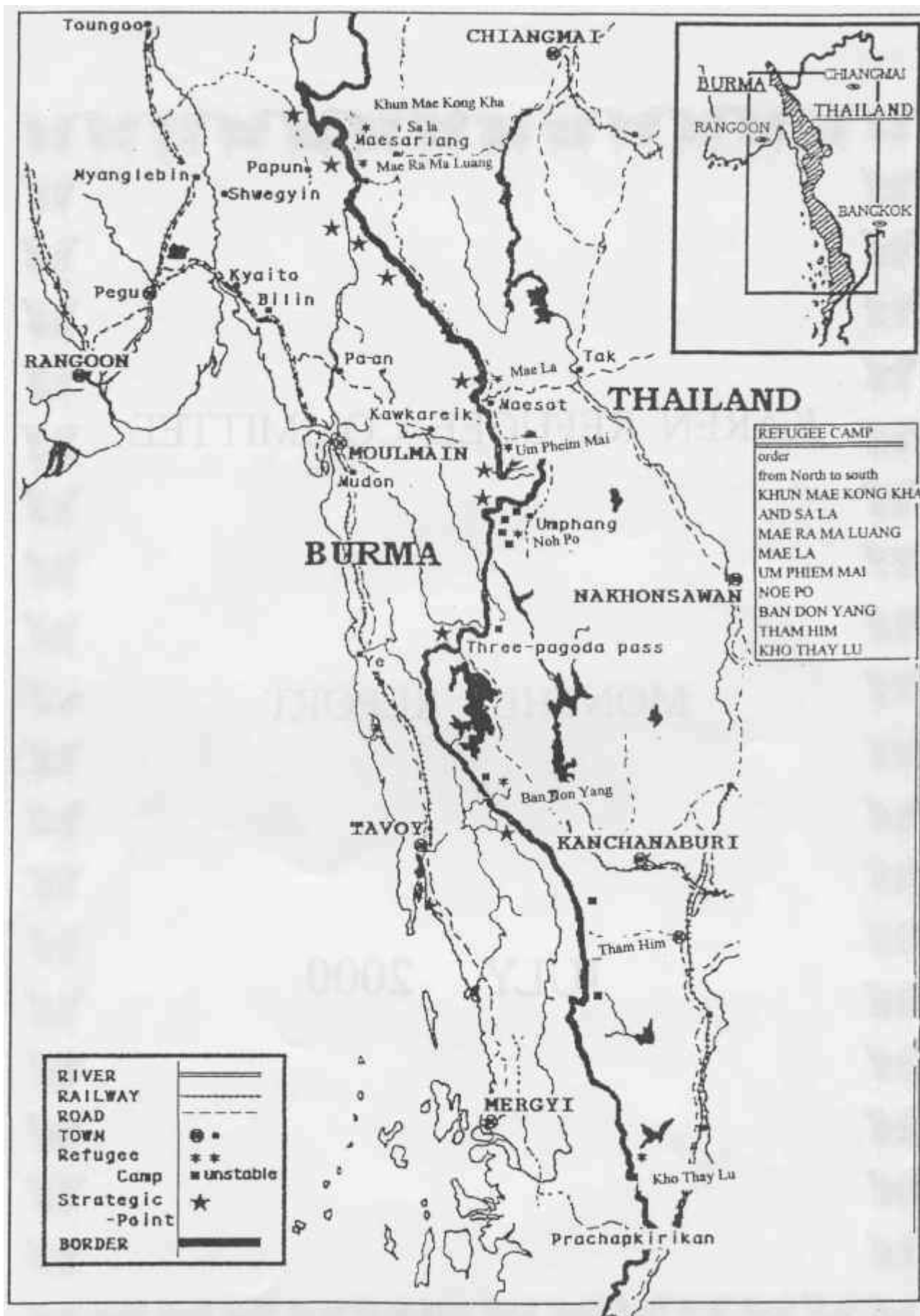


KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

JULY 2000



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May 19<sup>th</sup> will go down in history as a Black Day for Burma. On that day in 1947, the Flower of Burma's Leadership was gunned down by power hungry opponents, which act must have dealt a severe blow to the stability of the country, which was then on the verge of Independence. Burma is reeling from that blow ever since.

July 7<sup>th</sup> 1962 will also go down in Burma's history as another Black Day. That Day was to be remembered by many, especially Students, as the culmination of the confrontation of the confrontation between the Students and the Military, which had taken power through a Coup, Just four months earlier, on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. In the confrontation, many Students lost their lives, and by dawn of the next day, the Students' Union Building was demolished by the Military. It is sad irony that most of Burma's Leadership had their initiation at that same building.

With Independence in 1948, there was a brief respite of Peace and Stability, which many recall as the Good Old Days. It was rudely marred by the advent of Military Rule beginning March of 1962 under General Ne Win, whom many has come to regard as Burma's "Architect of Retrograde". The Military, that has ruled Burma ever since, became more and more repressive, proceeding with its own inept and erring ways. To them peace and stability means to be deaf, dumb and blind. Their success was such that Burma, from being one of the most affluent, had become one of the Least Developed Country in the world. Only recently the World Health Organization Classified Burma as the Least caring for its citizens in fields of Medical and Health. That comes as no surprise. In present day Burma, it is common practice for Medical People to be called "A Tha Byar Sayas" or simply "Mercenaries."

This July, Universities are being reopened, which for most of the past decade remain closed. This trend is most disturbing as "Students" who are the "future" are being affected. The future, stunted, can never be good for the country.

Elsewhere, world attention was much focussed on the meeting in Durban, South Africa. That was the 13<sup>th</sup> world conference on HIV/AIDS. Report was that there are now 34 million plus people infected world-wide with HIV- Two thirds of the infected are in Sub-Saharan Africa alone, which is expected to lower the life span of the region's people to 30 Years average. Ex-President Mandela was saying that there will be one and a half million orphans in South Africa alone by the year 2005, because of AIDS. Then, there was the poignant presentation by one AIDS victim during the conference, testifying that he was alive these last three years, only because of being able to afford \$400 daily worth of HIV suppressive drugs. It is questionable how many AIDS sufferers, will be able to afford \$ 400 daily. Reports indicate that East Asia is in line, to be hit by HIV in a wider and more intensive scale.

For Refugees in this Border area, though, the Talk of the Day is "Repatriation". But for repatriation to be Voluntary, as have been stressed, there need to be change for the better inside Burma. But, change, if it ever were to come, can only be at the initiation of the Military. Even as of the 9<sup>th</sup> of this month, SPDC Military Troops attacked a "Displaced" Camp near the Border, forcing over 2000 displaced people to cross over into Thailand. The same repressive measures are being perpetrated in the Kayah, Shan and Chin States; which indication is that, the Military Junta, as ever, seem reluctant to effect change for the better. To all appearances, the Military is in a position what in Burmese would be called "Kyar Mee Sweh" which translation would mean "Pulling a Tiger's Tail". Holding onto a Tiger's Tail is quite dangerous, but then, releasing the hold can also be suicidal. It's a no win situation.

And, talking of suicide, a U.S. Court in Florida ordered five Tobacco companies to pay compensation to affected smokers, to the tune of \$ 145 Billion. By which, one can reasonably assume that, Medical Companies may be made to pay damages to Drugs Abusers, in days to come.

## **NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS JULY 2000.**

MAE SOT AREA	CAMP	No.of families	Over 12 YRS		9-12 YRS		Under 8 YRS		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
	Mae La Camp	5,956	10,797	10,404	1,921	1,856	4,299	3,971	34,284
	Um Pheim Mai Camp	3,095	5,156	4,903	1,396	1,277	1,395	1,541	15,668
		9,051	15,953	15,307	3,317	3,133	5,694	5,512	49,952
NORTH	Mae Ra Ma Luang	1,411	2,925	2,533	558	505	1,096	1,041	8,658
	Khun Mae Kong Kha And Sa La	2,102	3,977	3,697	887	774	1,533	1,500	12,368
		3,513	6,902	6,230	1,445	1,279	2,629	2,541	21,026
S O U T H	Noh Po	1,703	2,776	2,567	1,234	1,130	513	584	8,804
	Ban Don Yang	714	928	1,047	235	217	489	469	3,385
	Tham Him	1,694	727	656	1,304	1,335	1,892	2,154	8,068
	Kho Thay Lu	66	62	82	8	5	54	63	274
		4,177	4,493	4,352	2,781	2,687	2,948	3,270	20,531
	Grand Total	16,741	27,348	25,889	7,543	7,099	11,271	11,323	91,509

## **RICE AND OTHER ITEMS RECEIVED DURING THE MONTH.**

FROM	Rice 100kg sacks	Salt Kilos	Fish- paste 16kg tins	Yellow Bean Kilos	Chilies Kilos	Cooking Oil 13.75 liter tins	Cooking Fuel Kg.
B.B.C	7,495	20,000	3,333	50,010	6,250	46,499	344,160
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 and emergency Relief.

MSF- Support in Medical and Health facilities.

AMI-

ARC-

MHD-

ZOA (ABWAid)- Support in Educational facilities.

ICS. (Asia)- Support in Educational facilities.

TOPS - Support in Educational facilities Support for Nursery, Orphans and Elderly.

COERR- Rice and Educational Support " for Orphans. Widows and Elderly.

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 supported with remuneration for KRC members and workers.

UNHCR- For Registration Protection and Ultimate Safe Repatriation.