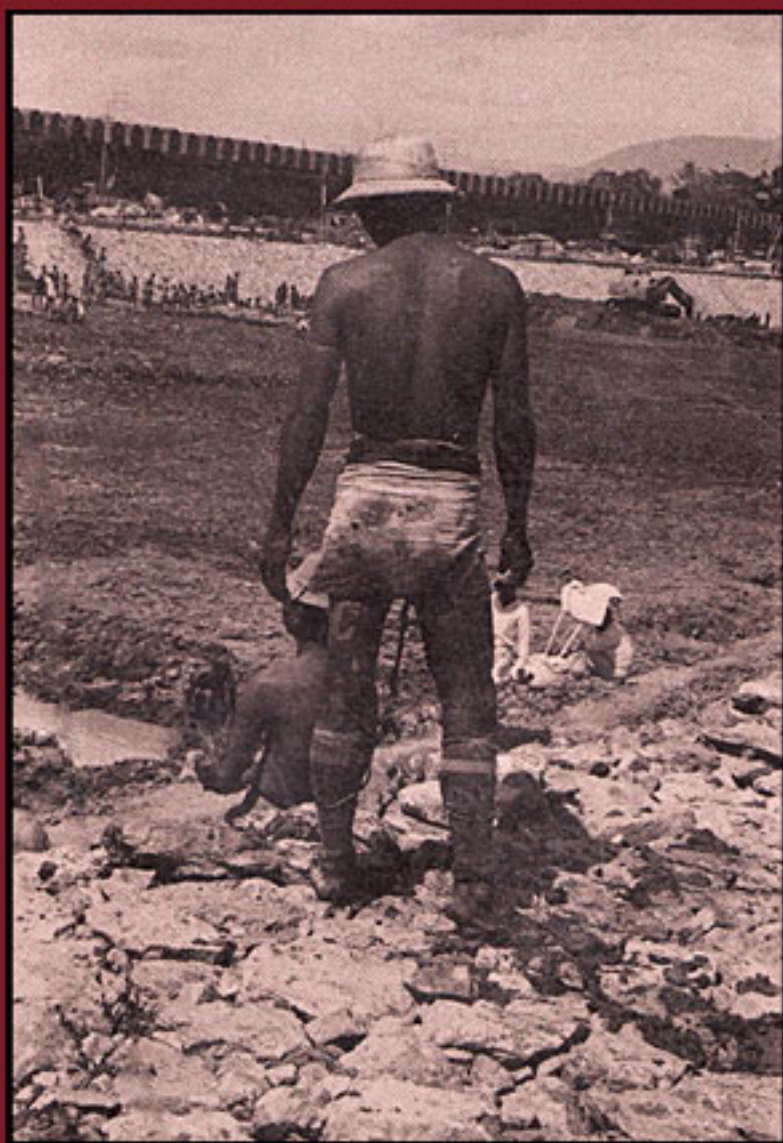


HUMAN RIGHTS YEAR BOOK 1994



BURMA

**HUMAN
RIGHTS
YEAR BOOK
1994
BURMA**

This book is dedicated to the countless citizens of Burma
who have sacrificed their homes, their freedom, and their lives to lifting
the veil of terror that shrouds the truth in Burma today.

First Edition: 1000 copies, September 1995
Published by: Human Rights Documentation Unit (NCGUB)

With generous Support from:
Norwegian Law Students' Humanitarian Action
&
Norwegian Burma Council

Layout designed by:
HRDU

Printed at:
Government Printing Office
National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma

Information contained in this book may be freely reproduced and distributed. Copies
of supporting documents on human rights violations are available on paper or
computer disk.

For further information, please contact:
Human Rights Documentation Unit
P.O. Box 7, Bung Thong Luang Post Office
Bangkok 10242, Thailand
or
Norwegian Burma Council
Josefinesgate 9, N-0351 Oslo, Norway
Tel: +47-22.56.79.10 Fax: +47-22.56.79.10

Views expressed in this book are not necessarily those of the National Coalition
Government of the Union of Burma.

PREFACE

BY

HE DR SEIN WIN

PRIME MINISTER

**THE NATIONAL COALITION GOVERNMENT OF
THE UNION OF BURMA**

The military that has ruled Burma for the past 33 years has turned the country into a police state, where military intelligence holds sway. Fear is the constant companion of the common people who, under these circumstances, have let their survival instincts take precedence over all others. Individual rights and freedoms are thought of as something unattainable, beyond the reach of the people.

This situation in itself is the very aim of the generals, who have mastered the art of instilling fear. They have made use of fear as a tool to perpetuate their rule. Murder, torture, imprisonment without trial, and other rights abuses are the direct result of the generals' plan to hold on to power in Burma.

It is with this background in mind that we have decided to publish "HUMAN RIGHTS YEAR BOOK 1994: BURMA". We need to record these indiscriminate abuses for historical purposes, as well as to keep the world on alert that all is not yet well in Burma.

Year after year, human rights organizations and the United Nations' own Special Rapporteur on Burma have been submitting reports about the crimes committed by the military junta. And every year, the international community has also been condemning the junta.

The cumulative effect of the international community's pressure on the generals has begun to bear fruit; Daw Aung San Suu kyi has now been released. But her release is not an end in itself and should only be the beginning of the democratization process in Burma. It is even more important now for a collective effort to ensure that the generals make the next crucial concession, to begin talks on democratization with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

This book we hope, will serve to remind the world that millions of people live under repressed conditions in Burma and that our attention should not be diverted away from them. We still need to remain vigilant about the ongoing abuses and about the hundreds of other political prisoners who are languishing in jail today.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is a difficult task.

On the one hand, I am pleased and proud to present to you the most comprehensive and up-to-date yearbook on human rights violations in Burma - or as the military junta refers to the country - Myanmar.

On the other hand, I am very sorry for you, the readers. There is nothing pleasant about what is going on in Burma today. The delightful memories of my childhood have been replaced by images of starving villages, tortured porters, bare hill tracts, sounds of gunfire and explosions coming nearer and nearer. Indeed, the word "Myanmar" has now become synonymous with human rights violations.

That is not to say that the wealth of kindness and goodness of over 43 million citizens of Burma has vanished. Indeed, the country as a whole is ruled by a small number of people, and this book is aimed at informing and warning the international community what is going on in far-flung corners of the country - as well as in the very neighbourhoods where the SLORC leaders are living, in order to urge that every means be used to put an end to the mass crimes that are being committed, unintentionally or intentionally. Now is the time to work on behalf of the oppressed people.

This book is also therefore dedicated to the millions of Burmese people whose lives have been directly touched by a government out of control, the people whose sole function has become to serve the state, which actually means the regime while that state bankrupts and destroys the very country it should protect and nurture. The voices of the people are seldom heard because of a muzzle of fear which is in place over the entire nation. More disturbing, many voices have been beaten into submission, coerced into silence, or physically ripped out. This book is an attempt to let the people's collective voice be heard.

This book has been laboriously compiled, written, and published for a world audience. A world we are waiting to hear from. A world which professes belief in the good of humanity. A world in which we have placed our hopes.

Voices cannot kill. They can only be killed. Yet ultimately they are the strongest weapons leading to the emergence of collective consciousness to stop the violence, to end misunderstanding, to halt the senseless promotion of hatred.

This book aims to show through evidence, documented facts, the true situation of Burma today. Our three simple requests to the world; listen to the facts, think about what you want for yourself, and take action according to your heart and morals.

During the preparation of this book, we have had to overcome many obstacles. Although we aimed for comprehensiveness, this has not always

been achieved. Problems of communication and accuracy plague any information gathering because Burma is a country in which all media is state-controlled and where even personal travel is restricted by the military regime. Nevertheless, due to the excellent collection and research work by a host of groups and determined individuals from around Burma, what we feel to be an accurate picture of the country as a whole has been presented here.

My heart-felt appreciation must be expressed for the generous assistance of our friends in Norway, who are dedicated to the ideals of humanity in a place even so far and isolated as Burma must seem to them. The advice and assistance of the Norwegian Burma Council have often served the needs of all Burma's peoples, and have given us support and strength when we required it most.

The planning and publication of this book would never have been possible without the Humanitarian Action (HUMAK) of the law students of Norway's universities, and their friends. We owe you all a deep honour for your caring about the suffering of your fellow humankind. My special thanks to advisors Tore Lindholm and Hugo Stokker who journeyed from the delightful Norwegian winter to the unbearable heat of South Asia to provide us with guidance and useful suggestions in the final stages of this book.

Lastly, but never least, I wish to thank those dedicated staff, individuals, and groups who gave their commitment to improving the situation in Burma. Although many names must go nameless at this time, I will see that they will never be forgotten and one day - soon - will be widely known. For now, I hope you will accept my sincere gratitude for your efforts. Later in this book, many - but by no means all - contributors have been listed, and we urge readers to contact those organisations which are identified for further information and, of course, to lend them your support.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to the entire staff of the 1993 Human Rights Yearbook for Nepal who, without knowing, have been a constant source of inspiration for us in the making of this book.

For any shortcomings in this book, I alone must accept responsibility. Finally I pray, with the millions of my people inside our beloved homeland and spread around the world, that the years ahead will not always require the publication of books like this.

Thank you all very much.

Onward, Burma!

Thein Oo

Coordinator

Human Rights Documentation Unit

CONTENTS

PREFACE	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS, TERMS AND MEASUREMENTS	7
BURMA AT A GLANCE: FACTS AND FIGURES	12
ETHNIC PEOPLES OF BURMA.....	15
HEADLINES IN REVIEW: EVENTS OF 1994	18
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN 1994	24
JUSTICE AND LAW IN BURMA.....	53
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND BURMA	66
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WITHIN THE ARMY.....	71
FACTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN BURMA 1994.....	77
(I) Facts About Human Rights Violations: An Overview.....	79
(II) Extra-judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions	88
(III) Arbitrary Detention and Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances	102
(IV) Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	111
(V) Freedom of Belief: Discrimination Against the Right to Practice Religion	116
(VI) Freedom of Opinion and Expression	119
(VII) Freedom of Assembly and Association.....	123
(VIII) Freedom of Movement	126
(IX) Abuse of Women.....	128
(X) Rights of Child	137
(XI) Forced Labour and Slavery	140
(XII) Deprivation of Livelihood	173
(XIII) Minority Protection	187
(XIV) The Refugee Situation.....	188
(XV) Forced Repatriation	209
(XVI) Internally Displaced Persons	217
(XVII) Forced Relocation	225
(XVIII) Miscellaneous	233
PERSONAL ACCOUNTS.....	248
SELECTED SLORC ORDERS	447
BRIEF REPORT ON SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA	488
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	506
LIST OF RESOURCES AND CONTRIBUTORS.....	511

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS, TERMS AND MEASUREMENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABSDF	- All Burma Students' Democratic Front
ABSL	- All Burma Students League
AIG	- Kyi Shwe, Anti-Insurgent Group of the SLORC Army (not under any battalion)
aka	- also known as
approx	- approximately
BAD	- Border Area Development programme
Brig	- Brigadier
BI	- Burma Issues
BIA	- Burma Independence Army
BIG	- Burma Information Group
BLC	- Burma Lawyers' Council
Bn	- Bn
BP	- Bangkok Post
BPP	- Border Patrol Police (Thailand)
BRC	- Burmese Relief Centre
BSPP	- Burma Socialist Programme Party
BURMA	- Burma Rights Movement for Action
CNF	- Chin National Front
CNLD	- Democratic Organisation for Kayin National Unity
Comdr	- Commander
Col	- Colonel
Coy	- Company
Cpl	- Corporal
CPPSM	- Campaign for the Publicity of the People's Struggle in Monland
CRDB	- Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma
DAB	- Democratic Alliance of Burma
DDSI	- Directorate of Defence Services Intelligence
DKBA	- Democratic Kayin (Karen) Buddhist Association
DPNS	- Democratic Party for a New Society
DVB	- Democratic Voice of Burma (Oslo & Dawn Gwin studios)
FEC	- Foreign Exchange Certificate (officially valued at US\$1 = 1 FEC; unofficial/black market US\$1 = 110-120 FEC)
FTUB	- Federation of Trade Unions, Burma
HRV	- human rights violations
Ind	- Independent
Gen	- General
GOSDA	- Graduates and Old Students Democratic Association
HRDU	- Human Rights Documentation Unit

IB	- Infantry Bn
IDC	- Immigration Detention Centre (Thailand)
ILO	- International Labour Organisation
Lt	- Lieutenant
KHRG	- Karen Human Rights Group
KIO	- Kachin Independence Organisation
KNLA	- Karen National Liberation Army (military wing of KNU)
KNPP	- Karenni National Progressive Party
KNU	- Karen National Union
KRC	- Karen Relief Committee
Ks	- Kyats (approx. value: official US\$1 = 6 Ks; unofficial US\$1 = 110-120 Ks)
KSNCD	- The Kachin State National Congress for Democracy
KWO	- Karen Women's Organisation
KYO	- Karen Youth Organisation
LIB	- Light Infantry Bn
LID	- Light Infantry Division
LORC	- Law and Order Restoration Council (on the local, regional, etc., levels)
Maj	- Major
MIS	- Military Intelligence Services (aka DDSI)
MNLA	- Mon National Liberation Army (military wing of NMSP)
MNRC	- Mon National Relief Committee
MOA	- Mirror of Arakan
MOI	- Ministry of Interior (Thailand)
MOU	- Memorandum of Understanding
MSC	- Military Strategic Command
MSF	- Medincins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders)
MTA	- Mong Tai Army (led by Khun Sa)
NBC	- Norwegian Burma Council
NCGUB	- National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma
NCUB	- National Council of the Union of Burma
NDPHR	- National Democratic Party for Human Rights
NGO	- Non-governmental organisation
NLD	- National League for Democracy
NLM	- The New Light of Myanmar
NMSP	- New Mon State Party
NUP	- National Unity Party
PND	- Party National Democracy
SAIN	- Southeast Asia Information Network
Sd.	- Signed with signature
Sgt	- Sergeant
SHRF	- Shan Human Rights Foundation
SLORC	- State Law and Order Restoration Council
SNLD	- Shan Nationalities League for Democracy
TOC	- Tactical Operations Command
USDA	- Union Solidarity and Development Association
VDS	- Volunteers for Displaced Shans

TERMS

Baht	- monetary currency of Thailand (see under "Measurements")
Bar Zi Than	- The Song of the Gong (KYO publication)
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 crystal substance which is obtained from boiling sugar cane 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 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 Paper	- the SLORC appoints a village "headman" (not the same as the real headman), usually against his will, and this man is then authorised to issue movement papers to his villagers verifying who they are
Na Ka Sa	- 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 Pya = 1 Kyat
ringworm	- derogatory SLORC reference to Karen 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 '30s)
tickle	- (see under "Measurements")
tin	- (see under "Measurements")
tract (village)	- area including 4-6 villages
U	- form of address to 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 = US\$ 0.15 (official) 1 Kyat = US\$ 0.008 (unofficial) 6 Ks = US\$ 1 (official) 110-120 Ks = US\$ 1 (unofficial)
lakh	1 lakh = 100,000
tickle	1 tickle = 0.576 ounces = 16.33 g
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

A 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 camps 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 has been written in English.

A list of various alternative spellings from sources has been provided below.

Ayeyarwady	-	Irrawaddy
Bagan	-	Pagan
Bago	-	Pegu
Bamar	-	Burman
Dagwin, Dawngwin	-	Dawn Gwin
Dawei	-	Tavoy
Hinthada	-	Henzada
Hlockhanee	-	Halockhani
Hpa-an	-	Pa-an
Kayah	-	Karenni
Kayin	-	Karen
Kyaing Don	-	Kengtung

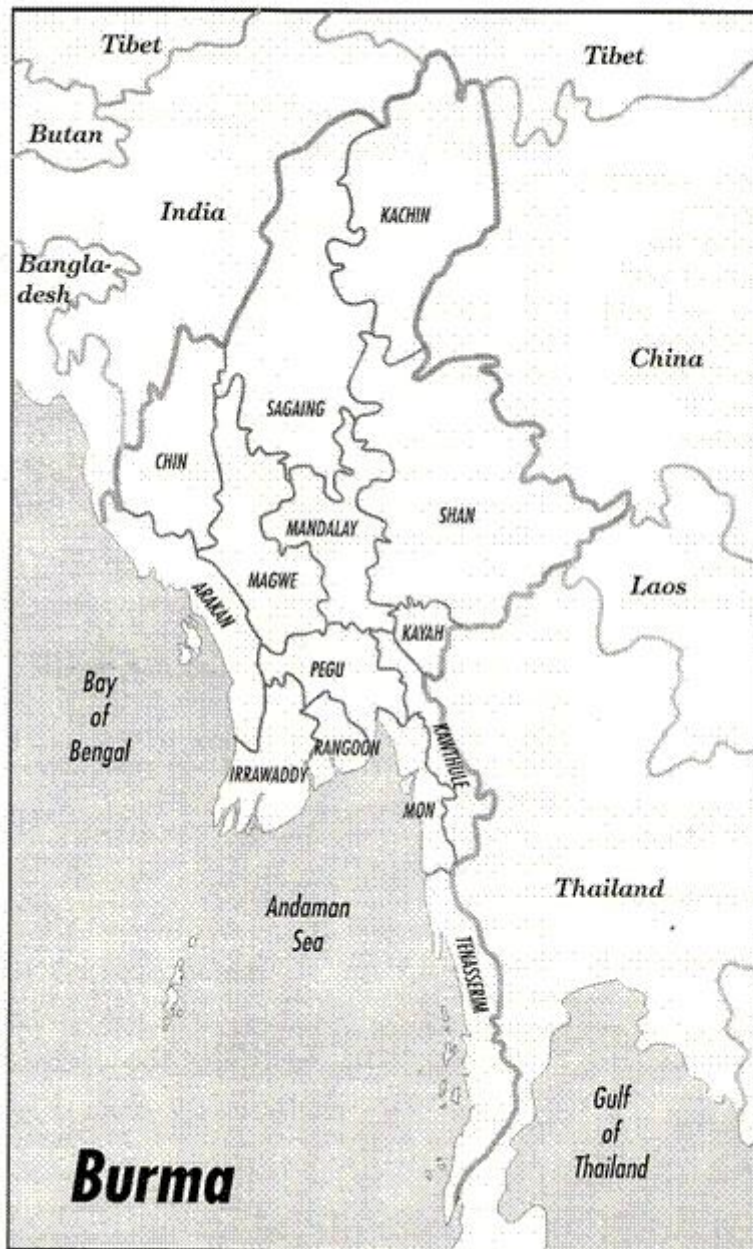
Magway	-	Magwe
Marnaplaw	-	Manerplaw
Mawlamyine	-	Moulmein
Muang Tai	-	Mong Tai
Myeit	-	Mergui
Myanmar	-	Burma
Pathein	-	Bassein
Pyay	-	Prome
Sittoung	-	Sittang
Sittwe, Sittway	-	Akyab
Tanintharyi	-	Tenasserim
Thandwai	-	Sandoway
Thanlwin	-	Salween River
Thaungyin	-	Moei River
Toungoo	-	Taungoo
Yangon	-	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	:	43.7 million
Urban population	:	24%
Population density	:	160 people/sq. mile
Refugees	:	300,000 in Thailand; 20,000 in China and India; 270,000 in Bangladesh
Internally displaced	:	more than 1 million people
Birth rate	:	2.1%
Life expectancy	:	62 years
Adult literacy	:	19.4%
School attendance	:	26.7%
Languages	:	Burmese, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon, Shan, Wa, English, plus over 100 minority dialects
Religions	:	Buddhist (85%), Animist (5%), Christian (4.5%), Muslim (4%), Hindu (1.5%)
Per capital GDP	:	US\$ 408; (Industry 10%, Agriculture 46%)
GDP spending	:	3.1% on military (non-SLORC figures; over 50%), 2.2% education, 0.8% health
Wage earners	:	6 million (estimated)
LDC status	:	Sine 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
Agriculture	:	68% of workforce employed in agriculture; 15% of land arable; under 50% of potentially productive land under cultivation
Rice exports	:	3.5 million tons (1930s); 2 million tons (1962); 20,000 tons (1988)
Opium production	:	1,300 tons (1988), 2,400 tons (1994) (70% of US market)
Administrative areas	:	7 States (Arakan, Chin, Mon, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Shan); 7 Divisions (Irrawaddy, Magwe, Mandalay, Pegu, Rangoon, Sagaing, Tenasserim)
Last election	:	May 1990
Next election	:	Unknown

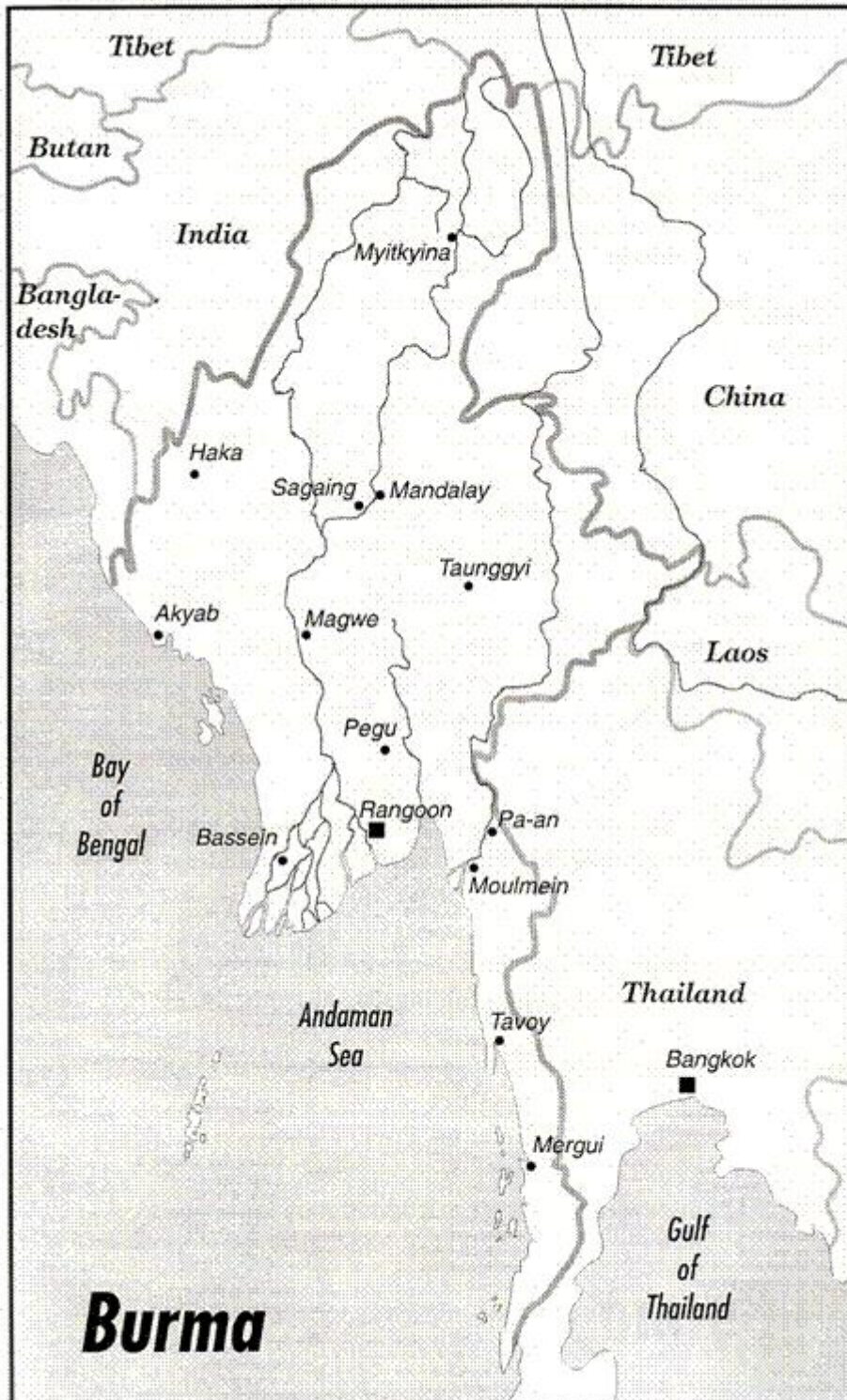
- Form of government : Military dictatorship (State Law and Order Restoration Council, 1988, membership expanded 1992)
- Government address : State Law and Order Restoration Council,
Ministry of Defence, Signal Pagoda Rd, Yangon,
MYANMAR [mail addressed to "BURMA" will
most likely not be delivered]

Map of Burma showing State and Division Borders



Graphics by Radio Burma Group 1995

Map of Burma showing Cities of States and Divisions



ETHNIC PEOPLES OF BURMA

The 43 million inhabitants of Burma, like China and India, are made up of a diverse mixture of culture, languages and peoples due to successive waves of migratory tribes descending from the north in ancient times, which appears to be continuing today.

Colonisation by the British has also left its political mark on the country, arbitrarily drawing political boundaries and often dissecting a single indigenous nation – as occurred in the case of the Chins, whose nation is divided between Bangladesh, Burma and India.

Reliable figures are not available since the last attempt at any real census was by the British in 1931. There is especially lacking any real statistics from the ethnic groups themselves.

Here is a brief look at the peoples of Burma, with maps and a chart from Martin Smith's 1994 "Ethnic Groups in Burma".

MON-KHMER includes Mon, Wa and Palaung: Ancestors of the Mon-Khmer ethnolinguistic group were the first recorded civilisation in Indo-China. By the 16th century, the Mon ruled much of Burma, Siam and even parts of Laos and the Shan States. In the late 18th century the Mon capital, Pegu, was finally taken by the Burmans. Mons introduced Buddhism to the Burmans, and the Burmese script is based largely on the Mon. Yet in recent history the Mons have seen their language and culture being eroded by successive Burmese governments, and no less so by the SLORC.

TAI includes Shan minorities: The Shans came to the hills and plains of northeast Burma in the 9th or 10th century, at about the same time as the Burmans, as part of the major Tai immigration from China to southeast Asia. They controlled much of central Burma during the 14th and 15th centuries and even under British rule they maintained a great deal of autonomy under the rule of Sawbwas.

TIBETO-BURMAN includes Akha, Arakanese (Rakhine), Burman, Kachin, Lisu, Naga and Zo (Chin): The Burmans make up the majority ethnic group in Burma. The Arakanese are also Buddhist and like the Mon and Shan, once had an independent kingdom which was involved in frequent wars with the Burmans as well as Indian and Mongol invaders. Arakan was only conquered by the Burmans in the late 18th century. The Kachin and Zo (Chin) live mainly in the hills near and over the Chinese and Indian borders.

KAREN includes Karen, Kayah (Karenni and Padaung), Kayaw and Pa-O: The Karen probably moved down to Burma in the 6th or 7th century. They occupied the mountainous region covering (and crossing) most of the modern long Burmese-Thai border. Today there are also large populations of Karen in the Irrawaddy Delta area and in all urban centres.

OTHERS include Anglo-Burmese, Chinese, Indian and Rohingya: As well as indigenous minority groups, Burma also has large populations of naturalised

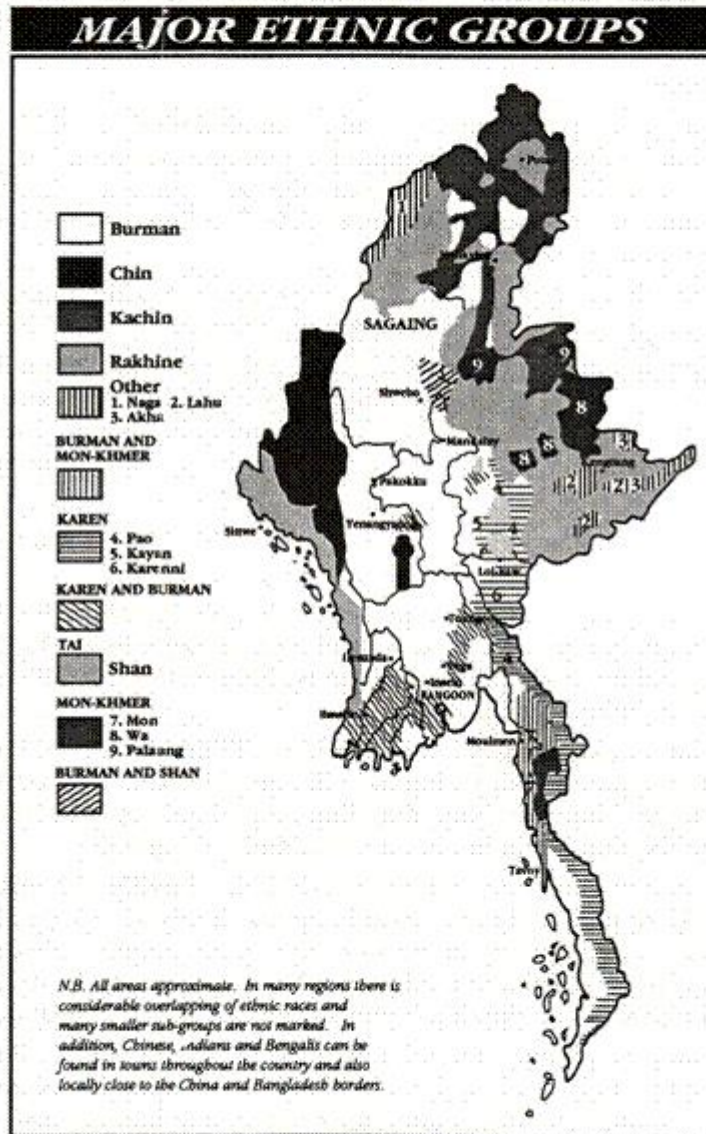
immigrants. Many of these first came to Burma during the British occupation when Indian administrators were brought in to run the country, and Chinese and Indian traders dominated the economy. Bengali-speaking Muslims, known as Rohingyas, were also brought into Burma by the British colonial rulers, who themselves often inter-married or had children with all indigenous peoples and then educated their children abroad.

MAJOR ETHNIC GROUPS OF BURMA

Name	Population	Main Religion(s)	Main Armed Opposition group(s)
Akha	100,000	Animist	_____
Burman	29,000,000	Buddhist	members of Democratic Alliance of Burma and CPB
Chin	750,000-1,500,000	Christian, Animist	Chin National Front
Chinese	400,000	Buddhist, Taoist	_____
Danu	70,000-100,000	Buddhist	_____
Indian	800,000	Muslim, Hindu	_____
Kachin	500,000-1,500,000	Christian, Animist	Kachin Independence Org:*
Karen	2,650,000-7,000,000	Buddhist, Christian	New Democratic army*
Karenni	100,000-200,000	Christian, Animist	Karen National Union
			Karenni National Progressive Party
			Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front*
Kayan	60,000-100,000	Christian, Animist	Kayan New land Party*
Kokang	70,000-100,000	Buddhist, Taoist	Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army*
Lahu	170,000-250,000	Animist, Christian	Lahu National Organisation
Mon	1,100,000-4,000,000	Buddhist	New Mon State Party
Naga	70,000-100,000	Animist, Christian	National Socialist Council of Nagaland
Palaung	300,000-400,000	Buddhist	Palaung State Liberation Party*
PaO	580,000-700,000	Buddhist	PaO National Org:*
			Shan State Nationalities Liberation Org:*
Rakhine	1,750,000-2,500,000	Buddhist	National United Front of Arakan
			Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front, Rohingya Solidarity Organisation
Shan	2,220,000-4,000,000	Buddhist	Mong Tai Army, Shan State Army*

Tavoyan	500,000	Buddhist	Tavoyan Liberation Front
Wa	90,000-300,000	Animist	United Wa State Part

1. All figures are approximate and involve considerable ethnic overlap. Generally, the lower figures on the left are government estimates based on strict interpretations of ethnicity, while the higher figures on the right are ethnic minority estimates, which usually include more local inhabitants and ethnic sub-groups within different territories.
2. Parties marked with asterisk (*) had cease-fires with the SLORC in November 1994.



Source: Martin Smith, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, Zed Books, 1991

Headlines in Review: Events of 1994

JANUARY 8 - NSC PLANS STRINGENT MEASURES TO CONTROL BURMESE REFUGEES: Thai National Security Council (NSC) deputy-general Kachapai Burntpat says Thai security will work out stringent measures to strictly control Burmese ethnic groups in refugee camps to prevent them from engaging in anti-Rangoon activities.

JANUARY 17 - THAIS SEIZE MEDICAL SUPPLIES FOR BURMESE: Medical supplies destined for Burmese groups in the jungle, sent by Norway and worth 830,000 baht, were stopped and confiscated by Thai authorities on the Thai side of the border near Mae Sariang in Mae Hong Song Province.

JANUARY 21 - CHINA HELPS BURMA MODERNISE ITS FORCES: With Chinese support, SLORC is rapidly expanding and updating its armed forces; informed estimates are that weapon purchases range from US\$ 400 million in the last three years to US\$ 1.2 billion, helping the junta to stay in power.

JANUARY 28 - BACTERIOLOGICAL WARFARE?: SLORC aircraft spray a strange yellow powder over the headquarters area of the NMSP.

JANUARY 29 - SLORC FORCES ATTACK KNPP: LIB 421, 250 and 261 and IB 102 launched a lightning attack against the KNPP around midnight near Danai Khong San Village, 10 miles north of Loikaw, in an attempt to force the rebels into signing a ceasefire agreement.

JANUARY 30 - NGOS MAY FACE CRACKDOWN OVER AID TO REFUGEES: Thai authorities planned to clamp down on NGOs aiding Burmese in border camps, requiring registration of aid, etc.

***FEBRUARY - THAIS RELOCATE LOH LOE CAMP:** Thai authorities begin to forcefully repatriate thousands of Mon refugees to the Burmese side of the border at Halockhani, within walking reach of Tatmadaw outposts at Three Pagodas Pass.

FEBRUARY 14 - BURMESE ALLOWS US OFFICIALS TO VISIT SUU KYI: US Congressman Bill Richardson (D-New Mexico), UNDP representative Rahim and New York Times reporter Philip Shenon meet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at her house in Rangoon as a goodwill gesture.

FEBRUARY 19 - BURMA PRESS-GANGS THOUSANDS TO BUILD NEW RAILWAY ROUTE: SLORC rounds up and forces thousands of villagers to build a railway line in the southeast of the country between Ye and Tavoy, to be ultimately used as a military supply line to the insurgent area where the proposed gas pipeline will cross into Thailand.

FEBRUARY 24 - MONS WANT TREATMENT OF KINSMEN IN BURMA PROBED: Thai Mons urged the UNHCR to look into the plight of their ethnic brothers in Burma who face brutality and human rights abuses at the hands of SLORC.

- FEBRUARY 24 - UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR DELIVERS REPORT: Yozo Yokota accused SLORC of committing atrocities on a wide-scale in a 27-page report to the 53-nation UNHCR, stating, "...the violations of human rights in Myanmar [Burma] [...] remain extremely serious [...] and the imposition of oppressive measures directed, particularly, at minority groups."
- MARCH 3 - AMOCO DECIDES TO CALL IT QUILTS IN BURMA: The American oil and gas multinational Amoco announced that it would halt its exploration activities in Burma and would leave the country by the middle of 1994, admitting the corporation paid millions of US dollars directly to the Burmese junta only as a "contract-signing fee".
- MARCH 5 - BURMESE BATTALIONS POISED TO HIT REBELS: The SLORC military continues to attack ethnic groups, with the latest threatened drive against the Mon freedom fighters of the NMSP, located on the Thai border opposite Sanghklaburi, Thailand.
- MARCH 9 - MORE BURMA MUSLIM REFUGEES ARRIVE IN BANGLADESH: More than 100 Burmese Muslims crossed into Bangladesh, jeopardising efforts of repatriating 200,000 Burmese refugees.
- MARCH 11 - BURMA PROTESTS U.S. PLAN FOR RADIO FREE ASIA: SLORC has protested against US plans to set up a new short-wave radio station called Radio Free Asia to broadcast into East and Southeast Asia
- MARCH 29 - THREE THAI COMPANIES SUBMIT BIDS FOR BUILDING DAMS ON SALWEEN: The Thai ambassador to Rangoon said three firms from his country have submitted proposals to construct dams on the Salween River as part of a massive seven-dam and water diversion project along the Burmese border.
- APRIL 5 - BURMESE FORCED TO WORK TO DEATH: Burmese opposition leaders in exile say that at least 21 Burmese workers press-ganged to build a SLORC railways have been worked to death since September of last year; CPPSM and KHRG release separate reports on slave labour for Ye-Tavoy Railway in support of the natural gas pipeline to Thailand.
- APRIL 22 - RIGHTS COMMITTEE CHIEF SEEKS TO MEET SUU KYI: The chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Justice seeks permission to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the Burmese leader under house arrest. The report was later denied.
- * MAY - SLORC IN SHAN STATE: SLORC intensifies offensives against Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army intensified, sending a wave of refugees and escaped porters across the Thai border with allegations of human shields and minesweepers.
- MAY 1 - NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATE ESCAPES TO LIBERATED AREA: Daniel Aung, MP-elect from the Lahu National Development Party and presidium member of SLORC's national convention, fled Burma because he lost faith in SLORC's political process due to the regime's restrictions on speeches, debates, and suggestions by delegates.

MAY 24 - THAILAND: BPP PUSH BACK BURMESE VILLAGERS FLEEING FIGHTING: Thai Border Patrol Police and Army Region 3 troops pushed back about 300 Burmese who tried to flee the SLORC army, who regularly conscript villagers as porters, near the border pass at Mae Sai.

MAY 25 - BURMESE TROOPS SEIZE PORTERS FOR KHUN SA BATTLE: Burmese government troops have seized hundreds of people from this border town to serve as porters in nearby hills where they are battling Golden Triangle opium warlord Khun Sa.

MAY 28 - SEVEN BURMESE SAID ARRESTED FOR BACKING RANGOON PROTEST: At least seven Burmese citizens were detained and disappeared after showing support for a European who staged a protest in Rangoon demanding the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the fifth anniversary of the general elections which her party won.

* JUNE - ARAKANESE VILLAGERS KILLED: The Rohingya Solidarity Organisation says that SLORC has killed 150 villagers in Arakan State in June in response to attacks mounted by the RSO in the Maungdaw area which began in April of this year.

JUNE 12 - UNHCR VISITS THAI-BURMESE BORDER: A UNHCR team, for the first time, makes a six-day fact-finding tour of Burma's eastern border. Team Leader Ruprecht von Arnim concluded that any repatriation of Burmese refugees should be voluntary and monitored by the United Nations.

JUNE 21 - BURMESE LABOUR CALLS FOR SLORC EXPULSION FROM ILO: Maung Maung, Secretary of the FTUB, attended an ILO Conference in Geneva said that SLORC, which does not allow trade unions, should lose its seat, as their labour representatives are appointed by the military regime and not workers, in addition to the gross violations perpetrated against the ILO Conventions.

JULY 1 - MON REFUGEES UNDER PRESSURE FROM RANGOON: The National Democratic Front of Burma has accused Thai authorities of trying to pressure the NMSP to agree to ceasefire talks with SLORC by threatening to repatriate Mon refugees living in Thailand.

JULY 4 - SLORC ARRESTS DISSIDENT: Dr Khin Zaw Win, a former UNICEF employee, was arrested at the airport leaving Rangoon to return to Singapore, where he was completing his master's degree, and accused of carrying anti-SLORC documents in his luggage. His wife was later allowed to visit him, but she had to wear a blindfold during the meeting.

JULY 11 - REPATRIATION OF ROHINGYA REFUGEES ACCELERATED: Following a two-month lapse after protests by the UNHCR and the expiration of the MOU, the repatriation of Burma's Rohingya Muslim minority was increased as only 55,700 of the 272,000 had been already sent back.

JULY 13 - BURMESE FORCED INTO SLAVE LABOUR: For the first time, city people are being mass-conscripted for forced labour as thousands of men,

women and children are forced to provide free labour at least three days a month in order to “spruce up” Mandalay for 1996 “Visit Myanmar Year”.

JULY 21 - MON REFUGEES ATTACKED: In an apparent retaliatory move by IB 62, refugee villages in the Halockhani area along the Thai-Burmese border are attacked, ransacked and burnt; several villagers were taken for portering and 6,000 refugees fled back across the Thai border, where they had been repatriated from in February.

JULY 22 - BURMA FOREIGN MINISTER DENIES HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM: SLORC foreign minister Ohn Gyaw admits at the ASEAN meeting in Bangkok that he “didn’t think Burma had any human rights problems”.

JULY 26 - MON REFUGEES ORDERED OUT ‘DESPITE RISKS’: Thai officials have ordered the return of 6,000 Mon refugees taking shelter in Kanchanaburi Province after Halockhani area refugee villages came under attack from Rangoon forces on 21 July.

AUGUST 4 - FRESH WAVE OF MONS FLEE CLASH WITH GOVT FORCES AT HALOCKHANI: More than 500 Mon civilians fled into Thailand after a fierce battle between Mon rebel soldiers and SLORC at Halockhani camp – fighting which Thai authorities claim was finished and demanded the return of refugees by 10 August.

AUGUST 4 - SLORC ARRESTS MORE DISSIDENTS: U Khin Maung Swe, U Sein Hla Oo, Daw San San Nwe and her daughter Ma Myat Mun Mun Tun were arrested as a “support group” working in collusion with Khin Zaw Win, that “received, collected and redistributed publications from exiled organisations” and “fabricated and sent anti-government reports to some diplomats [...] foreign radio stations and visiting journalists”.

AUGUST 10 - UNHCR SEEKS HALT TO PLANNED EXPULSION OF MON REFUGEES: UNHCR has made an urgent appeal to the Thai government to halt the planned expulsion of 6,000 refugees from its territory, as Thailand continues to “repatriate” 500 Burmese economic refugees from Thailand each week to Halockhani without supplies since all aid was blocked by Thai authorities.

SEPTEMBER 9 - MON REFUGEES REPATRIATED: After all NGO aid was stopped the month before, after food stores were seized by the Thai BPP, the last of the Halockhani refugees returned to the remains of their villages on the Burmese side of the border, “I would not call this a voluntary repatriation,” said a UNHCR official.

SEPTEMBER 9 - THAILAND AGREES TO BUY NATURAL GAS FROM BURMA: After two years of negotiations with the Burmese junta, Thailand signed an agreement to buy natural gas from the Yadana offshore fields in Burma’s Gulf of Martaban at an estimated US\$ 400 million per year.

SEPTEMBER 20 - THE LADY EMERGES: Senior members of SLORC met opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize winner and

prisoner of conscious, at a government guest house before the scheduled UNGA meeting. Television viewers saw brief pictures of “The Lady” talking to the generals. State television and radio gave no details about the discussion.

SEPTEMBER 29 - INDIA EXPELS CHIN REFUGEES: 1,000 refugees from Chin State that have lived in Mizoram for years were rounded up by Indian authorities and forcibly repatriated to SLORC directly as relations warm between the two countries and Chinese influence in Burma grows.

OCTOBER 6 - 7-15 YEARS FOR DISSIDENTS: Khin Zaw Win was charged with violating the Official Secrets Act and foreign-exchange regulations; four others were also sentenced to harsh sentences for allegedly helping to distribute “information injurious to the state”.

OCTOBER 10 - BURMESE DISSIDENTS BEGIN SEMINAR IN MANERPLAW: A host of resistance organisations began intense meetings to discuss the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) draft constitution of the Federal Union of Burma at Manerplaw.

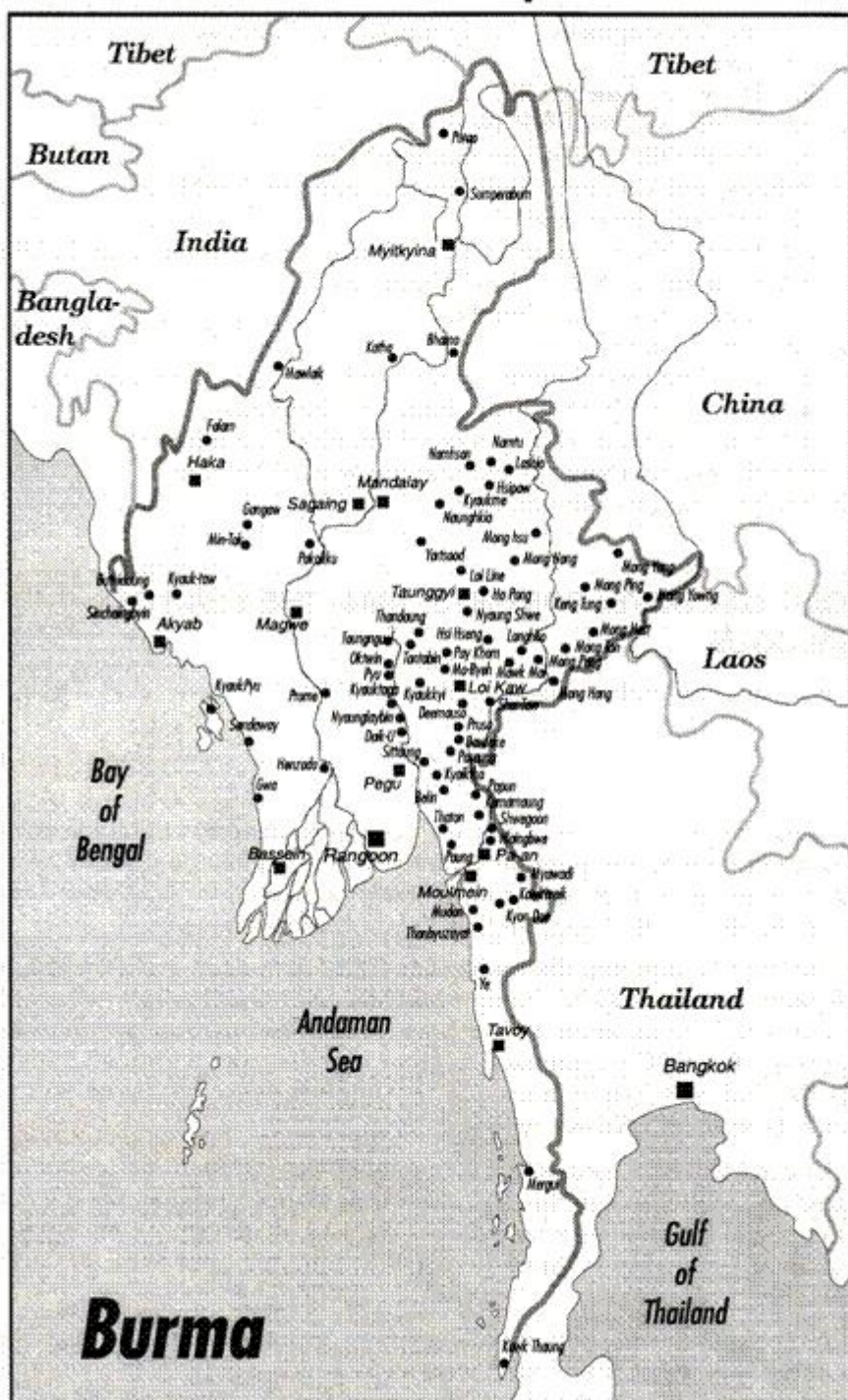
OCTOBER 29 - THE GENERALS MEET THE LADY AGAIN – Once again Burmese dissident Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with SLORC for three hours of “frank and cordial” talks on Burma’s current political situation, but no other information about the meeting were released.

NOVEMBER 3 - PEACE AND DEMOCRATIC FRONT FORMED: Eight ethnic groups that have signed ceasefire agreements with SLORC form an alliance to back their demands for swifter progress towards democracy by freeing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and recognising the 1990 election results. The PDF (Peace and Democratic Front) members also agree on military cooperation in case one of its members is attacked.

NOVEMBER 17 - ‘STRONG EVIDENCE’ OVER BURMA’S GERM WARFARE: An international NGO visited Karen territory to investigate the mysterious balloons being dropped from SLORC planes, and the disease epidemics which followed.

DECEMBER 10 - MANERPLAW ATTACKED BY SLORC: The military junta in Rangoon broke its own unilateral ceasefire and launched a simultaneous attack on the headquarters of the KNU and Burmese democratic forces at Manerplaw, as well as on the headquarters of ABSDF at Dawn Gwin.

Townships where Human Rights Violations in this book took place



POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN 1994

- I Political Developments: 1994 - the Year of Dialogue
- II Background:
 - 2.1. The Rise of the SLORC
 - 2.2. SLORC and the Civil War
 - 2.3. The SLORC and the International Community
- III Political and Constitutional Developments: 1992-1994
 - 3.1. Political Liberalisation
 - 3.2. The SLORC's National Convention and the Establishment of USDA
 - 3.3. Relations with the Ethnic Minorities
 - 3.4. Narcotics and the Civil War
- IV Economic Reform
 - 4.1. The Economic Reform Process 1988 —
 - 4.2. The Build Up of Foreign Trade and Investment
 - 4.3. Two Variations of Lop-Sided Economic Development
 - 4.4. Repressive Development and the Year of Tourism
- V The International Response

(I) POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: 1994 - THE YEAR OF DIALOGUE

In chronicling political development in SLORC's Burma, 1994 will be remembered as the year of the emergence of dialogue, symbolised by the September 20 meeting between Aung San Suu Kyi and SLORC leaders — General Tan Shwe and Lt Gen Khin Nyunt.

The emergence of an apparent willingness on the part of SLORC to enter into dialogue with the political leader personifying the democratic opposition was ushered in by the ground-breaking meeting of US Congressman Bill Richardson with Aung San Suu Kyi on February 14.

The widely reported discussion between Richardson and Suu Kyi was followed, first by SLORC Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw's indication at the July ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) foreign ministerial meeting, of SLORC's agreement to enter into dialogue with the UN Secretary General, and later by a meeting in August between UK-based Buddhist monk, U Rewatta Dharma, with Suu Kyi.

Undoubtedly the pro-active elements of the international community seized on the Richardson-Suu Kyi meeting as a hopeful signal that the handful of liberal concessions which the SLORC had offered since Gen Tan Shwe took over leadership in April 1992, might now turn out to be more than cosmetic.

As the subsequent signs of willingness to dialogue emerged, a number of countries took what they hoped were steps which would offer political and economic incentives to the SLORC to demonstrate a commitment to substan-

tive dialogue about further political change.

However, despite a second meeting between SLORC and Suu Kyi on October 28, and a first meeting between the SLORC and a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, by year's end most observers agreed that the trend towards dialogue had, unfortunately, been reversed.

Noting the SLORC's continuing tight control over the constitution-drafting process of its National Convention, and the resumption of its military offensive against the Karen ethnic rebels, it would appear that the SLORC has reverted to maintaining a hard political line, in defiance of international opinion.

(II) BACKGROUND

2.1. The Rise of the SLORC

The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), Burma's ruling military junta, came to power through a coup on September 18th 1988. This coup, however, actually ushered in only a new phase of what had been already a long period of thinly disguised military dictatorship.

The collapse of Prime Minister U Nu's elected government in 1958 was followed by a caretaker military government under General Ne Win. U Nu was returned to power in the elections of 1960, but the taste of military rule was too great a temptation for Ne Win, who ousted U Nu in a coup in 1962, and established his current long-running dictatorship.

Ne Win steered Burma into a period of socialist isolationism, initially ruling through a Revolutionary Council, later through the military-dominated Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP). Having overthrown the liberal, nominally federal, constitution that had been adopted at the time of independence in 1948, the BSPP drew up a new one-party, unitary constitution, adopted by referendum in 1974.

Ne Win headed Burma's government under the new constitution as President until his retirement in 1981, but he retained his predominant role through his leadership of the BSPP until 23 July 1988, when he resigned at the height of the 1988 popular uprising.

General Sein Lwin, a close colleague of Ne Win, was then installed as his successor, but was replaced on August 23 after his bloody suppression of the uprising failed to overcome popular opposition.

Sein Lwin was replaced in turn by Dr Maung Maung, another close colleague of Ne Win and the only civilian who had risen to prominence in the BSPP.

Dr Maung Maung promised multi-party elections, but popular unrest continued to grow until military Chief Of Staff Gen Saw Maung, in what might be called a pseudo coup, established the SLORC, and forcefully suppressed the popular movement.

In fact, Burma has been continuously under military dictatorship since 1962, and Ne Win and his close ex-military and BSPP colleagues are widely reputed to continue to direct the current military government.

SLORC's declared purpose was to restore law and order and to hold multi-party elections. Despite sweeping restrictions on political activities, political parties were allowed to register in competition with SLORC-supported National Unity Party (effectively a re-named BSPP).

The National League for Democracy, led by former general Tin U and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, quickly emerged as the leading opposition party. Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of Burma's (and the Burmese military's) founding father, Aung San (who had been tragically assassinated on the eve of Burma's independence), had returned to Burma in 1988 from Britain, where she lived with her British husband.

During the 1988 demonstrations and in the early period of election campaigning, she emerged as a charismatic figure spear-heading the attacks on Ne Win and the role of the military in politics. She was placed under house arrest on July 20, 1989 and prevented from participating in the election.

Altogether 93 political parties contested the elections on May 27, 1990, but the NLD succeeded in gaining 392 of 485 seats, while the SLORC-supported NUP won only 10. Having initially given the impression of being willing to return power to the civilian winners of the election, on July 13, 1990, the military began openly to retreat from this position.

On the eve of a meeting of victorious elected NLD members of the Pyithu Hluttaw or National Assembly, at which a provisional constitution based on the 1947 constitution was to be adopted, the SLORC issued Declaration No.1/90, stating that it held power under martial law, was not bound by any constitution, and would hold power until it had ensured that a sufficiently strong constitution was in place.

A new wave of arrests followed, and in December 1990 a group of 12 elected members fled to the rebel-controlled Thai border area to form a government in exile, the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB). By mid 1991, the SLORC had effectively destroyed any popular political party activities inside Burma, maintaining total control of the media and a rigorous surveillance of all political activity.

2.2. SLORC and the Civil War

Conflicts between the Burman population in the central areas and the many non-Burman ethnic nationalities in the mountains, between the assimilating impetus of Rangoon-focused nationalism and the looser "self-determination" approach of the ethnic minorities has been a central theme of Burma's troubled history since independence in 1948.

Significantly, Gen Ne Win justified the military's seizure of power in 1962 on the basis of its fear that the elected government was embarking on a

course which, in response to non-Burman demands for a "genuine federal union", would lead to the disintegration of the nation and the state.

The 1947 independence constitution, which established a quasi-federal "Union of Burma", was quickly recognised by the non-Burman nationalities as highly unsatisfactory, and became a key reason for the out-break of civil war.

The 1947 constitution provided a number of levels of local autonomy for minority nationalities, and made provision where necessary for "union states" to be established in order to accommodate their desire for more substantial autonomy. However, the limited powers of these union states made them little more than administrative arms of the central government.

In the lead-up to independence, some of the minority nationalities, the Kachin for example, settled for this form of autonomy in return for favourable boundary definition. Due to the persuasive powers of Aung San, who spoke of "unity in diversity" rather than simply "unity", the leaders of the Shan and Karenni states, (whose sovereignty had been technically recognised by the British and who believed therefore that they had a stronger claim to a separate independence), opted for inclusion as "union states" in the new Union of Burma. In return, they were given constitutional recognition of their right of secession after a ten year period.

The situation of the Karen people at that time was unresolved. It had been anticipated in the constitution that a Karen State would be formed¹; civil war broke out, however, before this was achieved. The central government was challenged by armed revolutionary communist movements as well as by armed ethnic organisations.

Following the withdrawal of the military "caretaker" government after the elections of 1960, discussions instigated by the non-Burman nationalities concerning the need for a truly federal form of government were resumed with the U Nu government. Thus, Ne Win sought to justify his second coup, on the eve of a major federalism conference, by reference to the threat of national disintegration.

Ne Win ruled from 1962 until 1974 without a constitution. Then in 1974, a carefully staged referendum endorsed the introduction of a new constitution, which provided for a Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma, but which was essentially a unitary constitution.

The 1974 Constitution established nominally autonomous "states" for the seven key non-Burman nationalities, carefully balanced by seven "divisions" within "Burma proper" or, as it is seen by the non-Burman, seven Burman states.

The 1988 uprising marked a watershed in the civil war, for the bloody crackdown on pro-democracy forces drove them into the arms of the military's civil war enemies, the armed ethnic minority rebels, and they grouped together under the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB)². The coalescence at the border of the non-Burman ethnic minority rebels nationalities and the

mainly Burman pro-democracy exiles was symbolically important on two counts.

First, the crushing of the democracy movement in 1988 had captured international attention, and when the Karen headquarters at Manerplaw became the headquarters of the new alliance, the civil war on the Thai border and elsewhere became vastly more newsworthy.

Second, for all that this opposition alliance was engaged in armed struggle against the SLORC, the political cooperation between the allies reflected their common recognition of the political nature of Burma's problems, and their acceptance of the need for a political solution to the problem, including that of the status and autonomy of the ethnic minorities.

The political basis of the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) forged at the end of 1988 between ethnic and pro-democracy groups, reflected the willingness of the democracy groups to support the vision of a future democratic Burma in which the non-Burman nationalities would achieve self-determination through federalism.

While this new opposition alliance was being forged, the SLORC meanwhile was preparing a massive military offensive. A vast expansion of the army was undertaken after 1988, huge arms purchases were made (mainly from China), and by the end of the 1991/92 dry season offensive, Manerplaw itself was under attack and 70,000 refugees had fled into Thailand.

2.3. The SLORC and the International Community

International condemnation of the repression in military-dominated Burma emerged in response to the suppression of the pro-democracy movement in 1988. Burma's main aid donors, Japan and Germany, cut off their assistance, and lesser Western donors followed suit, effectively starving Burma of foreign exchange. There was a significant difference, however, in the response of the West (and Japan) and that of Thailand and the other ASEAN states (and China).

In 1988, the West thought the SLORC could be defeated through something approaching a sanctions approach, specifically through the withdrawal of aid. The World Bank and Asian Development Bank also froze loans to Burma, and the Japanese aid, which had propped up Burma's failing economy during the 1980s, was withdrawn. But formalisation of a Sino-Burmese trade agreement in July 1988 opened the way for China, through trade and credit, to effectively undercut all attempts to cripple Burma's military regime by economic means.

ASEAN chose to take advantage of economic opportunities presented by Burma's emergence from isolation. They refused to be involved in efforts to bring about change in Burma by pressure, but argued that change would be effected by bringing Burma out of isolation through a "normal relations" approach to diplomatic and economic ties with Burma.

Pressed at their July 1991 foreign ministers meeting to protest the SLORC's abuse of human rights, the ASEAN ministers declared themselves to be following a policy of "constructive engagement". They resisted the idea of conditions being put on economic relations with Burma, implying that their approach would enable them more effectively to influence Burma to adopt international human rights standards.

Critics of their approach saw this as a mere rationalisation of what amounted to opportunism. Despite economic support from China and ASEAN, formal international policy is reflected in increasingly stern UN resolutions in the Human Rights Commission (beginning in 1989) and the General Assembly (beginning in 1991). Since 1990, the UN has authorised a Special Rapporteur to report on the situation in Burma to the Commission and the General Assembly.

Since the 1991 General Assembly debate on Burma, resolutions condemning the regime have received unanimous support. The 1993 General Assembly resolution broke new ground in requesting the Secretary General to take steps to implement its resolution.

(III) POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS: 1992-1994

3.1. Political Liberalisation

SINCE the beginning of 1992 the position of SLORC Chairman, Gen Saw Maung had been under scrutiny, with his behaviour becoming undisguisedly erratic. On April 23 it was announced that Saw Maung had been "retired" due to ill health. He was replaced by Deputy Chairman and Armed Forces Chief, General Tan Shwe.

series of liberal concessions followed. Many political prisoners were released and the family of Aung San Suu Kyi, still under house arrest, were allowed to visit her. Further concessions followed. In August universities were re-opened and, responding to repeated approaches by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Burma acceded to the Geneva Conventions on war.

In September, the curfew in effect since 1988 was lifted and some martial law powers were revoked. The SLORC continued with spasmodic releases of political prisoners through 1993, also commuting death sentences to life imprisonment, and reducing sentences of more than 10 years to ten years.

In November 1993 an agreement was signed with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), allowing the UNHCR to open an office in Rangoon and begin monitoring the return of Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh to Arakan State. During 1994, the SLORC agreed to discuss a request by the ICRC that it be permitted to monitor the situation of political prisoners in Burma.

Immediately following the April 1992 SLORC leadership change, SLORC

also announced a unilateral cease-fire, following its biggest dry-season offensive yet against the opposition's headquarters at Manerplaw. Fighting did resume later in the year at the beginning of the new dry season, but after capturing another key Karen position in the north of Karen State, a situation of de facto cease-fire re-emerged, perhaps best characterised as low-intensity warfare as distinct from a resumed offensive.

SLORC's strategy apparently had changed from one of defeating its ethnic armed enemies militarily, to one of pressing the ethnic minorities to accept cease-fires. These cease-fires, which did not involve political settlements, but allowed the ethnic groups opportunities to pursue business deals in the border area, gave the SLORC certain military and political advantages, among which the appearance of pursuing an end to the civil war and thus softening the international community's condemnation.

Overall, however, the concessions made by the SLORC during 1992 and 1993 were widely regarded as cosmetic rather than substantial, and did not succeed in weakening the UN's resolutions.

3.2. The SLORC's National Convention and the Establishment of USDA

As the SLORC took steps in 1990 to back away from recognising the outcome of the election which it had lost by a landslide, it gestured in the direction of the need for a new constitution as a prerequisite for any future transfer of power to a civilian government.

The first concrete step towards what was to become the SLORC's National Convention, charged with drawing up a new constitution, emerged immediately after Gen Than Shwe's appointment as SLORC Chairman in April 1992.

SLORC appointed a 28-member Coordinating Committee, with members chosen from among the emasculated political parties still permitted to function, and a military-dominated Steering Committee of 15 members. On July 10th, 1992, the composition of the National Convention was announced. The 702 members had been hand-picked by the SLORC, and these included only 99 of the 485 representatives elected in the 1990 elections.

The National Convention formally opened in January 1993. Delegates were alarmed to find that six basic principles had already been laid down by the SLORC, including "a leading role in politics for the military".

By the end of its third, highly orchestrated session (September 1993), the National Convention had accepted the 104 Principles proposed by the SLORC, including military representation in parliament and reservation of the position of President to a person with a military background. Further sessions were convened from June to September 1993, from January to April 1994 and in September 1994.

Early in the life of the National Convention, in April 1993, one of the

elected representatives, Khun Marko Ban, fled to the liberated area, and was able to provide details of the processes being used by the SLORC to impose its will on the delegates.

A year later, in May 1994, a second elected representative, U Daniel Aung, a member of the National Convention Presidium, also fled to the liberated area, and described the frustration of the delegates and again detailed the measures taken by the SLORC to dominate the proceedings and silence any independent action in the Convention.

In September 1993 the SLORC began to assemble the second major component of its envisaged future political machinery, a successor party to the discredited BSPP and its successor, the NUP, which had fared so badly in the 1990 election.

The new organisation - an "association", not a political party (and hence open to membership for civil servants and army personnel) - is known as the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA). It appears to be modelled on the Indonesian government's successful election-winning machine, Golkar.

In January 1994, 26 big stage-managed rallies were held, attended by approximately 4 million people who had been coerced into publicly demonstrating their ostensible support for the SLORC.

3.3. Relations with the Ethnic Minorities

IN 1989 the SLORC had pioneered a strategy of bringing about cease-fires with war-weary armed ethnic opposition which had emerged in the wake of the collapse of the Burmese Communist Party.

Cease-fires were concluded with a number of groups in the far north-east of the country, in the Shan State, an opium producing region, most significantly with the Wa, which left them armed and quasi-autonomous within defined areas, thus circumventing their potential alliance with the Manerplaw-based opposition alliance.

The second phase of the SLORC's cease-fire strategy, put into practice after April 1992, was aimed at the ethnic organisations involved in the opposition alliance. It had the effect of neutralising the ethnic organisations and so isolating and weakening the pro-democracy movement, i.e. it began to undo the alliance between the ethnic rebels and pro-democracy groups.

In 1993 the new strategy paid off. Agreement on a cease-fire was reached between the SLORC and the Kachin Independence Organisation and its army, a leading member of the NDF and DAB.

The agreement was reached after protracted, more or less secret, bilateral negotiations in defiance of DAB policy. DAB policy demanded that the SLORC negotiate a national cease-fire with the DAB collectively and a national political settlement. DAB policy complemented the policy of the NCGUB which focused on a national political settlement based on the recog-

nition of Aung San Suu Kyi's leadership and transfer of power by the SLORC to the elected representatives.

The agreement with the KIO was probably reached during early 1993, but was formally acknowledged by the KIO late in 1993, in time for the UN General Assembly debate on Burma. Again, however, the UN's unanimous condemnation of the SLORC's record was not weakened.

The KIO clearly had a difference of opinion with its erstwhile allies, arguing that it cease-fires may be the condition necessary for eventually negotiating a genuine political settlement with the SLORC.

The KIO, however, invited to lay down its arms and participate in the National Convention, chose to retain its arms and only to observe the National Convention proceedings because it believed that the proceedings were beyond its influence.

The National Convention has accepted that the constitution will provide for seven states (for the major ethnic minority groups) and seven divisions of "Burma proper" as in the 1974 constitution.

During 1994, a major issue under consideration by the National Convention has been the issue of autonomy for ethnic minorities. It has been proposed that a form of intra-state autonomy will be provided for certain specified groups amongst, according to SLORC, 135 ethnic minority groups within Burma.

This does not address what has always been the political problem underlying the civil war, i.e. the relationship between the dominant ethnic Burmese and the seven major non-Burma ethnic nationalities in terms of ethnic influence in the central government and significant autonomy for the ethnic minority states.

There is no indication, in the SLORC's approach to cease-fires and the National Convention that the SLORC has any real commitment to exploring a basis for genuine national reconciliation.

In November 1993 SLORC issued well-publicised invitations to the Karenni, Mon and Karen armed rebel organisations, i.e. the remaining three of the big four ethnic rebel organisations of the NDF and DAB, to enter into cease-fires and "return to the legal fold".³

At the end of 1993 the New Mon State Party began negotiation, and in January 1994, the major Karenni rebel group, the KNPP, began talks. Both groups continued negotiating with the SLORC through 1994 but without any agreement being reached. At the end of 1994, only the KNU had failed to begin negotiations.

Cease-fires were achieved with the smaller Karenni groups, KNPLF (May), the KNLFP (July) and with the SNPLO (September) so that at the end of 1994 the SLORC was able to present its achievement of cease-fires with 13 rebel organisations. The Karen National Union leadership, (Karen President Bo Mya being chairman of the DAB and the peak umbrella organisation, the

National Council of the Union of Burma or NCUB), chose a more defiant stance vis a vis cease-fire negotiations, declaring early in 1994 its willingness to talk with the SLORC if talks were held outside Burma and with UN mediation and demanding that talks should be about achieving a nationwide cease-fire and a national political settlement in accordance with DAB policy.

However, during 1994 talks policy became the focus of debate within the KNU, because of internal pressure (from the people) and external pressure (from Thailand).

Attempts by the KNU to involve the international community in support of "substantive dialogue" rather than cease-fire talks alone began in the period immediately prior to the 1994 ASEAN foreign ministers' conference. An approach was made to ASEAN appealing for assistance to identify a formula through which dialogue between the KNU and SLORC could begin.

There was no direct response, but because of the SLORC's agreement announced at the ASEAN meeting to dialogue with the UN Secretary General, the KNU submitted a request to the Secretary General to attempt to bring about a commencement of dialogue.

The KNU followed this up with a proposal for a basis for KNU-SLORC dialogue which it submitted to the Secretary General during the preliminary phase of the UN-SLORC dialogue, which took place in New York between SLORC foreign minister Ohn Gyaw and representatives of the Secretary General.

3.4. Narcotics and the Civil War

NARCOTICS production in Burma's northeast developed in parallel with the civil war. Efforts by the SLORC to wind down the civil war by striking cease-fire agreements with ethnic rebels in exchange for a form of unofficial autonomy has not been paralleled by any serious undercutting of the narcotics industry.

At independence Burma produced an estimated 30 to 40 tons of raw opium. Production stands now at about 2,500 tons. Production grew most rapidly in the period following the SLORC's coming to power in 1988, directly reflecting political and military developments in the northeast.

The first big expansion in opium production in Burma was brought about by the remains of Kuomintang (KMT) forces which crossed into Burma from China's Yunan Province in the wake of the communist victory in China. The Burma-based KMT built up its armed forces with the support of the Taiwan-based KMT government and launched several attacks on Yunan during the early 1950s.

It recruited soldiers locally and forced local hill-tribes farmers to grow opium which was then taxed by the KMT. Annual production had increased to 600 tons of raw opium by the mid 1950s with opium established as a viable cash crop in the hills of the Shan State at a time when war between the

Burma army and the KMT was disrupting the rice economy.

Disruption spread during the 1960s after Ne Win's 1962 coup as ethnic rebellion spread and the nationalised economy collapsed. As the black market grew, so did the opium trade but a second big expansion occurred during the late 1980s, this time to finance the armed insurgency of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB).

During the 1980s the CPB, which led probably the strongest armed force confronting the Burmese central government, suffered a severe economic setback as a result of, first, a change in Chinese policy which withdrew support for armed revolutionary movements and, second, a loss of control of cross-border trade into China. This left the CPB heavily dependent on revenue from opium production, which increased rapidly after 1987.

Cultivation increased from 92,300 hectares in 1987 to 142,742 hectares in 1989; this was reflected in a rise in heroin exports from the region, up from 51 metric tons in 1987 to 123.5 metric tons in 1989.

After the collapse of the CPB, and the fragmentation of the ethnic minority-based CPB army into a series of four ethnic armies, the SLORC negotiated cease-fires which provided them with economic autonomy but little economic assistance. Subsequently, cultivation of opium has increased to 165,800 hectares in 1993 reflected in an increase in heroin exports to 186.5 metric tons in 1993.⁴

During 1994 the SLORC began a military offensive against the Mong Tai Army which controls the area of Shan State along the Thai border to the south of what had been the CPB's stronghold.

The Mong Tai Army is led by Khun Sa, internationally known as a "drug lord" who was indicted in the US in 1989 as a drug trafficker. As cease-fire agreements spread, Khun Sa's well-equipped Mong Tai Army, perhaps 15,000 strong, has emerged as the most powerful armed force confronting the SLORC.

Despite continuing allegations that the narcotics trade could not flourish without at least tacit support from the SLORC, SLORC has sought to undermine international condemnation, especially from the US, by presenting itself as prepared to militarily suppress Khun Sa in order to suppress the narcotics trade.

Meanwhile Khun Sa has increasingly represented himself as a Shan nationalist fighting for the independence of the Shan State, leading to speculation about the potential for a military alliance with those ethnic minorities still at war with the SLORC.

The SLORC has repeatedly tried to demonstrate links between Khun Sa and the financially and militarily beleaguered KNU and its leader Bo Mya, traditionally known to be virulently anti-narcotics and free from the taint of involvement in the drug trade.

(IV) ECONOMIC REFORM

4.1. The Economic Reform Process 1988 ---

THE initial economic liberalisation reform was ushered in not by the SLORC, but by the BSPP in its last days. There was no doubt that Ne Win's state-controlled socialist economics had not worked and it was the desperate demonetisation of September 1987 which completed the discrediting of the BSPP regime and led to the popular uprising in 1988.

The beginning of the process of economic liberalisation which coincided with Ne Win's resignation from his BSPP leadership position was an admission of failure of the socialist economy.

Unfortunately it did not lead to an admission of the incapacity of the military to formulate and implement state policy. When the military seized direct power to displace the BSPP in September 1988, it accepted the BSPP's commitment to liberalise the economic system and the commitment made by Dr Maung Maung, to conduct multi-party elections.

It subsequently formally abandoned both the BSPP and the socialist economic system. It also eventually rejected the outcome of the elections, revealing its unwillingness to make way for an elected civilian government but it has proceeded with economic reform.

Politics and economics are not so easily separated however, although the precise relationship between them is problematic. Given the clear reluctance of the Burmese military to allow liberalisation in the political and economic spheres to proceed in tandem, there is emerging debate as to whether cooperation with the SLORC's economic goals is the best means of bringing about political change.

The tentative answer appears to be that it might, but it will not necessarily be so. Authoritarian regimes can oversee economic liberalisation while holding tightly to power.

There is another debate which is relevant to the current stage of economic change in Burma. It concerns how far economic reform can go given restraints reflecting the political nature of the regime and the determination of the military to retain power.

On the one hand, it appears that the SLORC's determination to remain in power will lead it to make only those economic reforms which it sees as in its own interests. On the other hand, given its lack of popular support and international backing, it has a limited range of economic tools available.

It does not have the popular support to enable it to follow the hard option, i.e. to carry out the necessary basic economic stabilisation which requires devaluation of the much over-valued kyat. This has led to a form of economic development which has produced ill-distributed economic growth and required the repressive mobilisation of human resources for infrastructure development.

The continuation of the economic reform process has taken the form of

spasmodic steps designed to encourage the necessary inflow of capital and increase in trade.

These reform steps have been introduced in order to overcome the investor reservations about the viability of dealing with Burma given the essentially unchanged political system with its corruption and bureaucracy and continuing pariah status.

The process of reform has been one of freeing up private enterprise and opening the economy to foreign investors. In 1987 private participation in foreign trade was allowed and in 1988 restrictions on participation in internal and external trade were removed.

In November 1988 the SLORC introduced a foreign investment law and in March 1989 formally announced the abandonment of the socialist economic system and legalised cross-border trade. During 1989 price controls were lifted and in 1990 measures were introduced to open up the tourism industry. In 1989 and 1990 a large number of oil-exploration leases were negotiated with foreign oil companies.

In 1992 the first four private banks were established, four more were licensed in 1993 and in 1994 11 foreign banks were permitted to open branch offices in Burma. In 1992 invitations were called for privatisation of State Economic Enterprises by leasing or joint ventures. In 1994 a new legal framework for domestic private investment was introduced.

There are important political reasons for the nature of the reform package and there are significant political consequences. By 1988 the nationalised and autarchic socialist economy of Burma was in a state of collapse with the exception of a vibrant illegal cross-border trade, especially across the China border.

There was rampant inflation, (hence the drastic demonetisation of 1987), industrial production through the State Enterprises had collapsed, agricultural production was stagnant because of fixed price state procurement of crops, especially rice, there were no foreign exchange reserves.

The SLORC had to distance itself from the policies of the a clearly publicly rejected regime (of which it was the newest incarnation). It needed economic reform in order to legitimise itself and it set out to generate economic growth by mobilising private capital and attracting foreign capital and by turning to advantage the hitherto illegal trade and investment flowing across the borders.

It has been marginally successful in generating growth through private and foreign investment. The legalising of the cross-border flow of trade and investment from China has generated an economic tidal wave.

4.2. The Build Up of Foreign Trade and Investment

The results of the reform process are readily apparent, especially in the building boom in the major cities of Rangoon and Mandalay, but there is still

reluctance in the west, because of Burma's pariah status, to invest in Burma and so the investment has mainly come from within the region, and especially, but not transparently, from China. The investment has also been ill-distributed by sector and by region.

By the end of 1994 approximately US\$ 1.4 billion worth of foreign investment had been approved. In the SLORC's early years, foreign exchange was generated by the sale of natural resources, especially in the form of logging concessions. Timber and foreign investment was heavily concentrated in on-shore oil exploration rights for which the investing companies had to pay substantial "signature fees".

By 1994 most of the companies had pulled out of on-shore exploration due to poor results, but there was strong investor interest in off-shore exploration and, in September, a lucrative foreign exchange-earning agreement was signed for the delivery of natural gas to Thailand to be delivered by a 400km pipeline which would significantly boost investment from outside the region.

For the most part, however, the foreign investment, other than in oil and gas, has come from the ASEAN region, Singapore and Thailand in particular (21 per cent and 19.8 per cent respectively) and has been concentrated in trade and services, (more than a third in hotels and tourism related projects) without much impact on industrial production. (See Table 1). Invitations to invest in the State Enterprises have been not very attractive because they are inefficient, ill-equipped and overstuffed.

According to official figures, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by more than 11 per cent in the tumultuous 1988/89 period, grew by 3.7 per cent in 1989/90 and 2.8 per cent in 1990/91. It fell again (by 0.6 per cent) in 1991/92, was up by 9.3 per cent in 1992/93 and was expected to grow by 6.0 per cent in 1993/94. It must be noted that despite the economic reforms, GDP did not recover to the 1985/86 level until 1993/94. (See Table 2).

Visitors to Rangoon cannot fail to be impressed by the visible evidence of change. The face of the city is being rapidly transformed by high-rise hotels, streets have been widened, there are many new vehicles, plenty of consumer goods and the markets are busy.

The picture is even more dramatic in Mandalay which has become the centre of a Chinese-driven boom in the northern region. It is estimated that Chinese investment, which is not included in the official foreign investment figures, amounted to the equivalent of a further US\$1 billion, while trade across the border was probably running at more than US\$1 billion annually.⁶

Taken together with the 1990 deal through which China is supplying an estimated US\$1.2 billion worth of arms, the reality of Burma's current economic development is substantially determined by the Chinese push into Burma's north.

To facilitate the expansion of the China-Burma trade, Chinese assistance has been provided to renew and extend the long-neglected infrastructure of

the Shan and Kachin states. A network of roads and the necessary bridges have already been built linking the three border districts of China's Yunnan Province with the major towns of Myitkyina and Bhamo in Kachin State and Lashio in Shan State.

Newly completed roads and bridges meant that by January 1993 Chinese arms could be brought to Burma from China by road. China has also become a major supplier of rail and road transport vehicles as well as providing assistance with the reconstruction of sea and air ports.

4.3. Two Variations of Lop-Sided Economic Development

THE form of economic development resulting from Chinese economic activity in northern Burma constitutes one of two patterns currently prevailing in Burma in which the burdens and benefits of economic growth are extremely ill-distributed, with potentially high political costs for the SLORC.

There is undoubtedly a great deal of money being spent but the money is in relatively few hands, mostly Chinese or people with direct ties to the SLORC. Much of the money has been derived from the illegal narcotics trade and is reinvested in real-estate and hotels, which accounts for the dramatic rise in real-estate prices and the hotel-building boom.

The other side of the coin is the high rate of inflation, the burgeoning black-market and the falling purchasing power of ordinary people. Inflation was estimated officially at 28 per cent in late 1994, but unofficial estimates put it at between 60 per cent and 90 per cent.

The earnings of most Burmese urban workers, government and private, have not kept pace with inflation; 65 per cent of the workforce are still engaged in agriculture, where input costs continue to rise but part of the rice crop is still compulsorily acquired by the state at low prices. The kyat is officially valued at approximately 6 kyat to the US dollar, but the black market rate is approximately 120 kyat to the dollar.⁷

The price of land in Mandalay increased tenfold in only five years, putting land-ownership for all but the wealthy elite, mostly Chinese, beyond reach. The effect has been to physically marginalise the Burmese urban population, forcing them, through a combination of official resettlement schemes or through the market-place to re-settle in new, poorly serviced outer urban areas.

Health services are minimal and few have access to proper sanitation. The combination of poverty and the massive expansion of trade and trade routes, together with the narcotics trade, has produced an ugly expansion also of heroin addiction, prostitution and trafficking in women, and HIV/Aids infection.⁸

The second pattern, (elements of which are to be found in this same northern region), which characterise especially those areas beyond the Chinese border boom, reflects the SLORC's lack of success in attracting necessary

investment funds.

After years of civil war and economic mismanagement, despite the natural resources which make Burma attractive for investment in the long term, the current environment continues to make it unattractive in the short term and has prevented its access to official development assistance.

Burma's reputation regarding human rights abuses is certainly one significant factor, especially in the west. The poor state of the country's infrastructure, poor ports, roads and telecommunications is another. The SLORC's approach to remedying the infrastructure has been to mobilise the labour of the ordinary people.

For a popular regime trying to pull a run-down economy up by its bootstraps, this sound like a legitimate policy, but for the SLORC it has meant the massive, forced recruitment of labour under conditions commonly referred to as slavery, very much an extension of the widely reported pattern of forced recruitment of porters for use by the army.

The first of these projects to be widely reported was the building of the Aungban-Loikaw railway during 1993 in the Kayah State. The second, widely reported in 1994, was the building of the Ye-Tavoy railway in the Tenasserim Division, while by the end of 1994 the focus had switched to allegations concerning the use of forced labour in the early stages of construction of the gas pipeline to carry gas from the off-shore Gulf of Martaban production site to Thailand.

These cases have been widely reported because of their proximity to the Thai border, but they reflect a pattern occurring on a wide scale throughout the country wherever infrastructure is being renewed or extended and has been widely condemned as reinforcing the pattern of abuse, harassment and extortion carried out by the SLORC particularly against ethnic minority peoples.

This pattern of abuse reinforces the unwillingness of most governments and the key international agencies to provide official development assistance. There is therefore a vicious circle of repressive development in Burma. The SLORC needs investment, but needs improved infrastructure to attract investment. It uses forced labour to develop the infrastructure and this in turn limits its access to aid and investment.

4.4. Repressive Development and the Year of Tourism

SLORC has shown that it is unwilling to allow political liberalisation to occur which would culminate in a transition to democratic politics and national reconciliation. It has sought instead to institutionalise military power and privilege. It has tried to overcome its legitimacy deficit through policies which will lead to economic growth as a means of weaning the public away from politics and of defusing international condemnation.

Its pariah status, however, has left it dependent on sources of foreign

exchange and investment which are prepared to ignore its political record. It has enjoyed greater success in the region than in the world at large and it remains a question as to whether it can generate sufficient funds despite its human rights record.

To date it has been able to attract enough capital to generate an economic boom amongst the Chinese and those Burmese with direct connections with the military. This is a shallow form of development which heightens tension between the military elite (and the Chinese) and ordinary people.

The next stage of the cycle is already clear. The boom in hotels and elite-related services, requires an increased supply of consumers, and according to the SLORC's plans, these will come in the form of a projected massive influx of tourists to be inaugurated with a 1996 "Year of Tourism".

The SLORC has projected the year of tourism as a means of demonstrating the reality of Burma since, as it sees it, hostile foreign observers have been determined to distort the reality. But the reality is that the SLORC continues to suffer from a chronic foreign exchange problem. It was able to generate foreign exchange for short periods through logging concessions and oil exploration. It has hopes of generating more, after 1998 through the sale of natural gas.

Given the nature of investment so far in hotels and services, tourism is one quick way to generate the needed foreign exchange. Tourists will undoubtedly help to fill the SLORC's coffers and generate profits for those who have invested, although many observers believe the SLORC's projection of 600,000 tourists in 1996 is wishful thinking given that only 21,600 tourists visited Burma in 1993.

There remains the question what effect an influx of foreign visitors may have on the Burmese people, what reality the tourists do perceive and, given the strength of international concern about the human rights situation in Burma, whether the SLORC will benefit from the increased international attention which the year of tourism is bound to generate.

(V) THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

DURING 1993, Thailand's National Security Council secured a pre-eminent role in Thai policy-making in regard to Burma. The NSC adopted a policy of applying pressure to armed ethnic organisations to respond to the SLORC's November 1992 invitations to separate bilateral cease-fire talks.

At the same time, harassment was stepped up against all Burmese opposition organisations working in and from Thailand. In practice then, constructive engagement for Thailand became a policy of fostering close economic ties with Burma while actively supporting the SLORC's strategy of achieving cease-fires without a political settlement.

During 1993, and continuing through 1994, various Thai government agencies demonstrated that Burmese refugees on the Thai-Burma border were

seen as not only subject to the NSC approach to policy, but that with NSC in command, could become the instrument of policy with regard to "persuading" ethnic organisations to enter into cease-fire talks on SLORC's terms.

The July 1994 ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bangkok was a turning point with regard to international policy towards Burma. Thailand's initiative to invite SLORC's foreign minister, Ohn Gyaw, to attend the ASEAN ministerial meeting in Bangkok in July, with the added fact of July 20 being the anniversary of Aung San Suu Kyi's detention, made that forum into a major focus of international policy towards Burma. SLORC's agreement at that time to enter into dialogue with the UN Secretary General gave the meeting added salience.

Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, whose 1992 offer of mediation between the SLORC and the armed rebel movements had been rejected by the SLORC, had concluded in July 1993, after failing to persuade the ASEAN countries to reconsider "constructive engagement", that achieving international support for the Western countries policy of pressuring Burma had failed.

Evans claimed to have been persuaded that behind the bland facade, there was in fact a genuine element of "engagement" regarding change.⁹ In 1994 Evans led the way to a Western move towards a stiffer version of constructive engagement, advocating a dialogue approach and the development of benchmarks through which to reward SLORC for compliance with selected demands for political liberalisation.

His approach won the support of the European Union and Canada, and a measure of support from the US. This was widely (and perhaps by SLORC) interpreted as a softening of what had been the "pressure" position. The US later announced a policy of offering positive incentives as well as threats of punitive action for non-compliance, and made it clear to SLORC that it required progress on democracy and human rights as well as narcotics.¹⁰

Effectively a new international consensus was forged concerning the need for dialogue with the SLORC rather than condemnation and pressure. International aid would be withheld (because effectively under US control) but the emphasis would be on incentives to encourage the SLORC to carry out the necessary political liberalisation. Positive incentives were devised unilaterally by governments supportive of the "critical dialogue" or "benchmarks" approach.

The apparently growing willingness of the SLORC to engage in dialogue, added to the continuing trickle of liberalising concessions from the SLORC, gave the new approach a measure of credibility.

However Burmese opposition organisations and their activist supporters, and indeed much of the international press perceived this as a misguided, economic interest-driven, weakening or softening of the position of western countries towards the SLORC, a barely disguised surrender to the opportunistic constructive engagement approach.

Indeed a number of ASEAN member countries claimed that constructive engagement had won new support.¹¹ On the other hand, the ASEAN foreign ministers meeting, had been mobilised as a forum through which western countries, with at least a measure of ASEAN support, stated clearly that the SLORC must demonstrate through substantive dialogue, its commitment to incremental political change.

Following the ASEAN meeting, with the historic meeting on September 20 between Aung San Suu Kyi and SLORC leaders, Gen Than Shwe and Lt Gen Khin Nyunt, a first visit to Rangoon of representatives of the UN Secretary General to meet with SLORC leaders, then a second SLORC meeting with Suu Kyi on October 28, the SLORC continued to signal that it recognised the need to at least appear to be willing to participate in dialogue as the international community demanded.

The UN General Assembly resolution, however, while acknowledging that some positive steps had been made, was perhaps even stronger in its condemnation of the SLORC and demanded evidence of genuine dialogue with Suu Kyi, democracy leaders and ethnic minorities.

Whether there was ever any possibility that the SLORC was prepared to enter into the substantive dialogue and liberalisation envisaged by the proponents of "critical dialogue" is clearly open to question. Ironically, even during the ASEAN meeting the SLORC's own actions, to extend Aung San Suu Kyi's detention and an attack on the outskirts of a Mon refugee camp just inside Burma, had demonstrated that its position was at best equivocal.

Whatever the case, there was a flurry of delegations to Rangoon in the run-up to the UN General Assembly debate on Burma. US State Department Under Secretary Thomas Hubbard, a representative of the UK Foreign Office, UN Special Rapporteur, Yozo Yakota and the UN Secretary-General's Special representative, Rafeeuddin Ahmed,¹² all went to Rangoon to talk about dialogue but none won permission from the SLORC to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi.

Then, on December 10, taking advantage of internal dissension with the Karen National Union, the SLORC broke its own unilateral cease-fire with the Karen to launch a new military offensive which would lead, in January 1995 to the fall of Manerplaw. By early 1995 it had become clear that the "year of dialogue" had ended.¹³

	No of projects	%share	Investment US\$ millions	%share
Singapore	23	19.8	293.4	21.9
Thailand	23	19.8	254.8	19.8
US	10	8.6	203.2	15.2
Japan	8	4.3	101.1	7.5
Netherlands	2	1.7	82	6.2
Austria	1	0.9	71.5	5.3
Korea	9	7.8	60.6	4.5
Hong kong	15	12.9	62	4.6
Malaysia	7	6	69.6	5.2
UK	10	8.6	55.5	4.2
Australia	2	1.7	27.2	2
Canada	1	0.9	6.7	0.5
France	1	0.9	10	0.8
Philippines	1	0.9	6.7	0.5
Bangladesh	2	1.7	3	0.2
Macao	1	0.9	2.4	0.2
China	3	2.6	3.3	0.2
Total	115	100	1,339	100

Table 1, Source: Bangkok Post, 22-2-95

SELECTED ECONOMIC INDICATORS: MYANMAR									
	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992 ^③	1993*
NATIONAL ACCOUNT (at constant 1985-86 prices)									
	Million Kyat								
Gross domestic product	55,986	55,397	53,178	47,141	48,883	50,260	49,933	54,572	57,825
Private and government consumption	49,532	49,053	47,629	41,065	41,826	42,189	40,315	43,387	46,422
Gross fixed capital formation	8,646	8,272	7,556	5,399	6,453	8,825	9,128	9,221	10,169
STRUCTURE OF PRODUCTION									
	Per Cent								
GDP by industrial origin	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Agriculture and mining	49.1	49.9	49.4	48.6	50.4	50.9	50.2	49.2	49
Industry	12.1	11.5	11.4	11	11.8	11.7	11.5	12.4	12.9
Services	38.7	38.7	39.2	40.5	37.8	37.4	38.3	38.4	38.2
INTERNATIONAL TRANSACTION									
	Million US\$								
	Balance of payments								
Merchandise exports	302.8	288	219	164.4	210.3	321.4	4.19	530.9	585.2
Merchandise imports	566.6	304	268	244	194	604	623.9	631.4	801.7
Current account balance	-205.5	-294	-249	-176	-670	-345	-341	-213	-223
Foreign exchange reserves	33.9	33.1	27.1	77.3	262.8	312	258.2	280.1	308.8
Kyat/US\$									
Exchange rate (end of product)	7,842	7,04	6,11	6,41	6,494	6,08	6,014	6,241	6,051

PRICE INDEX AND MONEY SUPPLY										
Consumer price index(1985=100)	100	109.3	136.4	158.3	210.3	236.8	313.2	381.9	572.9	
Money supply,M2(million kyat)	19,417	22,015	16,276	20,688	28,403	38,406	51,268	69,409	84,872	
INTEREST RATE					Per Cent					
Bank deposit rate	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	9	9	9	9	
EMPLOYMENT					Thousand					
Employment	15.3	15.41	15.4	15.14	15.22	15.75	16.01	16.47	16.91	
* Estimates @ Revised estimates. Sources:Asian Development Bank, Asian Development Outlook (various issues);International Monetary Fund,International Financial Statistics (various issues); IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics, Yearbook (various issues); Union of Myanmar, Review of the Financial, Economic and Social Conditions (various issues); Central Bank of Myanmar,International labour Office, Yearbook of Labour Statistics (various issues)										

Table 2. Source: I Institute of South east Asian Studies, Southeast Asia, 1995-96 (Singapore, 1995))

Trends in Economic Performance: 1988-94 (GDP changes in constant 1985/86 prices)									
		1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94		
Gross Domestic Product	%change	-11.4	3.7	2.8	-0.06	9.3	6		
Agriculture	%change	-13.2	5.2	2	3.9	12.4	5.4		
Industry	%change	-15.9	11.3	0.1	-4	10.5	10.3		
Services	%change	-3.3	-7.5	4.2	5.1	5.4	4.6		
Gross Domestic Investment	%of GDP	9.57	9.49	14.69	15.14	12.5	10.52		
Gross Domestic Saving	%of GDP	11.13	8.78	11.69	14.42	13.07	12.3		
Resource Gap		1.56	-0.71	-3.01	-0.72	-0.57	1.8		
Inflation Rate	%change in CPI	22.5	23.7	21.9	29.12	22.87	31.8		
Merchandise Exports	ks million	2193	2846.5	2961.9	2931.8	3655.4	4071.2		
	%change	10.7	27.7	14.5	2.8	39.9	11.3		
Merchandise Imports	ks million	3443	3395	5522.8	5336.7	5365.3	7218.2		
	%change	-20.8	-8.4	48	-8.7	13.7	34.5		
Trade Balance	ks million	1250	-549	-2561	2405	2460	-3147		
External Debt Service	ks million	738	1186	433	544	763	603		
Debt-Service Ratio	%	25.45	28.92	9.36	12.74	13.2	14.8		
Sources: Ministry of planning and finance, and Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Review of the Financial, Economic and Social Conditions for 1992/93 and 1993/94									

Table 3. Source: Mya Than, *Economic Transformation in Mainland Southeast Asia: The Case of Myanmar*, Paper Presented at the Conference on Myanmar Towards the 21st Century: Dynamics of Continuity and Change, Chiang Rai, 1-2 June 1995.

LIST OF THE ELECTED PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVES UNDER IMPRISONMENT IN DECEMBER 1994

List of Parliamentarians	Constituencies	Date of Arrest	Sentence according to Authorities	Sentence according to other Source	Current Situation	Contact Address
yn/01 Oht Kyang	Mandalay Southeast 2	07/09/90	7 & 10 years		Still in detention	
yn/02 Kyi Maung	Bahan 2	06/09/90	10 & 10 years		Still in detention	Insein Prison
yn/03 Tin Hsu	Binnar 1	23/10/90	7 years		Still in detention	Insein Prison
yn/04 Win Hlaing	Takhsen 2	24/10/90 or 15/5/91	7 years	7 or 10 years	Still in detention	Insein Prison
yn/05 Saw Naing Naing	Parawdang	25/10/90	10 years		Still in detention	Insein Prison
yn/06 Hlaing Ni	Thaketa 1	/10/90 and/or 13/12/91		25 years	Still in detention	Insein Prison
yn/07 Kyaw Thwin	Khayao 1	06/11/90 and/or 18/12/91	25 years	10 years	Still in detention	Insein Prison
yn/08 Hla Tun	Kyrimindon	03-01/91	10 years		Still in detention	
yn/09 Soe Lin	Mandalay Southeast 1	/11/91 24/11/92	25 years	10 years	Still in detention	
yn/10 Tin Aung Aung	Mandalay Northwest 1	/11/91 28/11/91	25 years	10 years	Still in detention	Insein Prison
yn/11 Zaw Win Maung	Amatapura 1	28/12/91	10 years			
yn/12 Myint Naing	Kambhala 1	23/10/90-01/91 3/1/92	25 years		Still in detention	
yn/13 Zaw Myint	Hinhada 2	23/10/90-01/91 02/21/91	25 years		Still in detention	Insein Prison
yn/14 Mya Win	Ingapu	23/10/90-01/91 and/or 13/12/91	25 years	10 years	Still in detention	
yn/15 Wan Maung	Tarlon 1	-	-	3 years	Still in detention	
yn/16 Hla Tun	Coco Island	23/10/90	25 years		Still in detention	
yn/17 Tin Maung Win	Khayao 2	/10/90	3 years		Died in detention (Jan/91)	
yn/18 Naing Thawng Nyunt	Puang 2	not known		3 years	Still in detention	Insein Prison
yn/19 Oht Myint	Thaketa 2		3 years		Still in detention	
yn/20 Maung Maung Aung	Pebodang, Rangoon					
yn/21 Tin Soe	Kyaukseada	18/9/91				
yn/22 Aung Khin Sun	Mingla Thanggyan 1	03/08/93	20 years		Still in detention	Insein Prison
yn/23 Kyaw San	Tam 1	/12/91	7 years		Still in detention	
yn/24 Kyi Myint	Latha	07/08/93	20 years		Still in detention	
yn/25 Saw Win	Hinchar	12/12/93	13 years		Still in detention	
yn/26 Patal Ahsan	Mawnglaun South	/06/92	2 years		Still in detention	
yn/27 Khin Maung Soe	Sangyang	04/08/94		7 years		
yn/28 Sein Hla Oo	Insein 2	04/08/94		7 years		
yn/29 R.P.Thawng	Thandawng 1	/02/91 28/12/91	8 years		Still in detention	
yn/30 Maung Maung Lay	Thant 2	/12/92	8 years		Still in detention	Insein Prison
yn/31 Soe Nyunt	Kyrimindon 2	28/10/90	7 years		Still in detention	

THE SITUATION OF THE ELECTED MPS AFTER THE ELECTIONS (Dec 1994)						
No.	Name	Constituency	State/Div:	Party	Deregistered date	Remark
1.	U Win Ko	Ye-U-2	Sagaing	NLD	26/12/90	(expelled) (assassinated)
2.	U Tun Oo	Kyaik Kyi	Pegu	NLD	26/12/90	(expelled)
3.	Dr. Sein Win	Paik Khauk	Pegu	NLD	26/12/90	(expelled)
4.	U Than Kywe	ShweTaung-1	Pegu	NLD	26/12/90	(expelled)
5.	U Hla Pe	Pyaw Bwe-2	Mandalay	NLD	26/12/90	(expelled) (assassinated)
6.	U Peter Linhim	Pyin U Lwin-2	Mandalay	Ind.	26/12/90	(expelled)
7.	U Bo Hla Tin	Moe Goo-2	Mandalay	NLD	26/12/90	(expelled)
8.	U Thein Oo	Mandalay-SW	Mandalay	NLD	26/12/90	(expelled)
9.	U Than Sein	Pale-1	Sagaing	NLD	21/02/91	(expelled)
10.	Dr. Tin Swe	Pale-2	Sagaing	NLD	21/02/91	(expelled)
11.	U Mg Mg Aye	Mandalay-se 1	Mandalay	NLD	21/02/91	(expelled)
12.	Dr. San Aung	Ingapu-2	Irrawaddy	Ind.	21/02/91	(expelled)
13.	Dr. Zala Htang	Htan Tahun-2	Chin	CNLD	22/02/91	(expelled)
14.	U Hla Oo	Kyaik Takhar-1	Pegu	NLD	30/04/91	(expelled)
15.	U Myint Maung	Ain me-2	Irrawaddy	NLD	30/04/91	(expelled)
16.	U Mg Mg Kyaw	Botataung	Rangoon	NLD	14/08/91	(expelled)
17.	U David Hla Myint	Nga Putaw-1	Irrawaddy	NLD	16/08/91	(expelled)
18.	U Saw Victor Kalak	ThanTaung-2	Karen	NLD	25/11/91	(expelled)
19.	U Mahn Myint Aye	Kawkeyik-1	Karen	NLD	25/11/91	(expelled)
20.	Daw San May	Teik Kyi-2	Rangoon	NLD	25/12/91	(expelled)
21.	U Kyi Maung	Bahan-2	Rangoon	NLD	10/12/91	(expelled)
22.	U Soe Thein	Waw-2	Pegu	NLD	10/12/91	(expelled)
23.	U Myo Aung	Tavoy-2	Tanetsarin	NLD	10/12/91	(expelled)
24.	U Kyaw Min	Bassein-W-2	Irrawaddy	NLD	10/12/91	(expelled)
25.	U Bo Maung	Depeyin-1	Sagaing	NLD	10/12/91	(expelled)
26.	U Saw Win	Hoe Lin	Magwe	NLD	12/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
27.	U Mg Mg Lat	Thaketa-1	Rangoon	NLD	12/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
28.	U Hla Than	Coco Island	Rangoon	NLD	12/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
29.	U Mya Win	Ingapu-1	Irrawaddy	NLD	12/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
30.	U Kyaw Thwin	Khayan-1	Rangoon	NLD	18/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
31.	U Khin Mg Swe	Sangyang	Rangoon	NLD	18/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
32.	U Khin Mg Thein	Khin U-1	Sagaing	NLD	18/12/91	(expelled)
33.	Daw Khin San Hlaing	Wetlee	Sagaing	NLD	18/12/91	(expelled)
34.	U Chit Tin	Min Hla	Magwe	NLD	18/12/91	(expelled)
35.	U Win Hlaing	Tat Gone-2	Mandalay	NLD	20/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
36.	U Chan Aye	Moulmein-2	Mon	NLD	20/12/91	(expelled)
37.	U Soe Nyunt	Kyaik Tan-2	Rangoon	NLD	20/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
38.	U Tin Hnat	Ain Me-1	Irrawaddy	NLD	20/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
39.	U Hlan Oak	Hakhar	Chin	Ind.	20/12/91	(expelled)
40.	U Sein Hla Oo	In Sein-2	Rangoon	NLD	23/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
41.	Daw San San	Seik Kan	Rangoon	NLD	23/12/91	(expelled)
42.	Daw San San Win	Ahlon	Rangoon	NLD	23/12/91	(expelled)
43.	U Saw Hlaing	Indaw	Sagaing	NLD	23/12/91	(expelled)
44.	Dr. Soe Lin	Mandalay-SW1	Mandalay	NLD	23/12/91	(expelled) (custody)

45.	U R. P. Thang	Than Taung-1	Karen	DOKNU	27/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
46.	U Ohn Kyine	Mandalay-SE2	Mandalay	NLD	27/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
47.	U Zaw Myint Maung	Amarapura-1	Mandalay	NLD	27/12/91	(expelled)
48.	U Tin Aung Aung	Mandalay-SW1	Mandalay	NLD	27/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
49.	Dr. Zaw Myint	Hinthada-2	Irrawaddy	NLD	30/12/91	(expelled) (custody)
50.	U Tun Aung	Yetashoo-1	Pegu	NLD	30/12/91	(expelled)
51.	U Ye Hnat	Deik U-1	Pegu	NLD	30/12/91	(expelled)
52.	U Ba Pwar	Amarapura-2	Mandalay	NLD	30/12/91	(expelled)
53.	U Nai Nai	Parandaung	Rangoon	NLD	30/12/91	(expelled)
54.	U Hla Huan	Kyemyinding	Rangoon	NLD	02/01/92	(expelled) (custody)
55.	U Tha Sai	Twente-1	Rangoon	NLD	02/01/92	(expelled)
56.	U Myint Kyi	Katha	Saging	NLD	02/01/92	(expelled)
57.	U Myint Naing	Karbala-2	Saging	NLD	02/01/92	(expelled) (custody)
58.	U Thein Pe	Karbala-1	Saging	Ind.	02/01/92	(expelled)
59.	U Thang Myint	Khin U-2	Saging	NLD	06/01/92	(expelled)
60.	U Thein Huan	Thegon-2	Pegu	NLD	06/01/92	(expelled)
61.	U Aung San Myint	Myaing-1	Magwe	NLD	06/01/92	(expelled)
62.	Daw Ohn Kyi	Myin tha-1	Mandalay	NLD	06/01/92	(expelled)
63.	U Mg Mg Myint	Yamethin-1	Mandalay	NLD	08/01/92	(expelled)
64.	U Aung Kyi Nyunt	Chaung Son-1	Mon	NLD	19/02/92	(expelled)
65.	U Khin Maung Kyi	Paak-1	Magwe	NLD	19/02/92	(expelled)
66.	U Saw Chit Than	Paan-1	Karen	NLD	09/04/92	(expelled)
67.	U Hla Pe	Launglon-1	Tanetsarin	NLD	09/04/92	(expelled)
68.	U Tin Aye	Mandalay-SE-2	Mandalay	NLD	09/04/92	(expelled)
69.	U Khin Mg Tun	Hmawbe	Rangoon	NLD	09/04/92	(expelled)
70.	Col Thha Thura Soe Thein(Refr.)	Sagaing-1	Sagaing	NLD	11/04/92	(expelled)
71.	U Khin Maung Win	Oakwin	Pegu	NLD	11/04/92	(expelled)
72.	U Ohn Maung	Nyaung Shwe-2	Shan	NLD	11/04/92	(expelled)
73.	U Maung Maung	Yekyi-2	Irrawaddy	NLD	11/04/92	(expelled)
74.	U Mah Phan Sin	Khawbude	Kachin	NLD	21/04/92	(expelled)
75.	U Yaw Si	Patao	Kachin	NLD	21/04/92	(expelled)
76.	U N. Nam Gan	Machanbaw	Kachin	NLD	21/04/92	(expelled)
77.	U Kyaw Maung	Moe Hryin-1	Kachin	NLD	21/04/92	(expelled)
78.	U Kyar Mya	Moe Hryin-2	Kachin	NLD	21/04/92	(expelled)
79.	U Myint Aung	Kan Ma	Magwe	NLD	08/02/91	(expelled)
80.	U Tin Maung	Yesagyo-2	Magwe	NLD	04/06/92	Resigned
81.	U Thang Tin	Phapon-1	Irrawaddy	NLD	26/06/92	Resigned
82.	U Khin Mg Kyaw	South Okkalapa-2	Rangoon	NLD	28/08/91	Resigned
83.	U Chit Khine	Taung Tha-1	Mandalay	NLD	01/09/91	Resigned
84.	U Tin Myint	Thayetchaung	Tanetsarin	NLD	27/09/91	Resigned
85.	U Shwe	Hlaing-1	Rangoon	NLD	07/10/91	Resigned
86.	U Ohn Myint	Botpyin	Tanetsarin	NLD	27/11/91	Resigned (custody)
87.	U Zaw Ain	Sunprabon	Kachin	KSNC	05/12/91	Resigned
88.	U Byin Tu	Myitkyina-2	Kachin	KSNC	13/01/92	Resigned
89.	U Than Tun	Shwe Bo-2	Sagaing	NLD	28/02/92	Resigned
90.	U Thang Ngwe	Moe Mout	Kachin	NLD	04/03/92	Resigned
91.	U Tin Mg Win	Khayan-2	Rangoon	NLD	18/01/92	Expired in custody
92.	U Mya Maung	Myitkyina-1	Kachin	NLD	16/06/90	Expired
93.	U Sao Tha Tint	Pinlaung-2	Shan	SNLD	26/09/90	Expired
94.	U Mg Mg Gyi	Kyaukdakar-2	Pegu	NLD	08/02/91	Expired
95.	U Sai Kyaw Sein	Kengpeng	Shan	SNLD	19/04/91	Expired

Trends in Economic Performance: 1988-94 (GDP changes in constant 1985/86 prices)							
	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91	1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	
Gross Domestic Product	%change	-11.4	3.7	2.8	-0.06	9.3	6
Agriculture	%change	-13.2	5.2	2	3.9	12.4	5.4
Industry	%change	-15.9	11.3	0.1	-4	10.5	10.3
Services	%change	-3.3	-7.5	4.2	5.1	5.4	4.6
Gross Domestic Investment	%of GDP	9.57	9.49	14.69	15.14	12.5	10.52
Gross Domestic Saving	%of GDP	11.13	8.78	11.69	14.42	13.07	12.3
Resource Gap		1.56	-0.71	-3.01	-0.72	-0.57	1.8
Inflation Rate	%change in CPI	22.5	23.7	21.9	29.12	22.87	31.8
Merchandise Exports	ks million	2193	2846.5	2961.9	2931.8	3655.4	4071.2
	%change	10.7	27.7	14.5	2.8	39.9	11.3
Merchandise Imports	ks million	3443	3395	5522.8	5336.7	5365.3	7218.2
	%change	-20.8	-8.4	48	-8.7	13.7	34.5
Trade Balance	ks million	1250	-549	-2561	2405	2460	-3147
External Debt Service	ks million	738	1186	433	544	763	603
Debt-Service Ratio	%	25.45	26.92	9.36	12.74	13.2	14.8
Sources: Ministry of planning and finance, and Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Review of the Financial, Economic and Social Conditions for 1992/93 and 1993/94							

Table 3, Source: Mya Than, *Economic Transformation in Mainland Southeast Asia: The Case of Myanmar*, Paper Presented at the Conference on Myanmar Towards the 21st Century: Dynamics of Continuity and Change, Chang Rai, 1-2 June 1995.

[illegible]

Copyright by Gordon Murray Group, 1994.

REFERENCE

1. Weller, M (ed), *Democracy and Politics in Burma*, NCGUB, Manerplaw, 1993, provides a comprehensive set of documents covering both the independence period and developments following the SLORC's seizure of power in 1988. See in particular pp83-92 for Chapters IX and X of the 1947 constitution which deal with the states and secession.
2. Smith, M, *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*, Zed Books, London, 1991, is a detailed account of the ethnic conflict and civil war in Burma.
3. The ethnic organisations, in negotiating with the SLORC have been forced to accept cease-fire which do not constitute political settlements. The SLORC insists that the only appropriate forum is the National Convention and that the negotiations are military agreements and negotiations cannot include any elements of a political settlement. When the rebel groups reluctantly agree to cease-fires only, they find that the SLORC represents the agreements to the Burmese public as "surrender" (the Burmese word used is *Let Hnet Cha*) but presents the agreements to the outside world as "return to the legal fold" which implies reconciliation.
4. Lintner, B, *Drugs, Insurgency and Counter-insurgency in Burma*, paper presented to the conference, *Myanmar Towards the 21st Century: Dynamics of Continuity and Change*, Chiang Rai, 1-3 June 1995; and an unpublished paper by the same author, *Recent Political Developments in Burma*. (1995)
5. Steinberg, D, *The Burmese Political Economy: Opportunities and Tensions*, paper presented to the conference *Myanmar towards the 21st Century*, Chiang Rai, 1-3 June 1995. Steinberg argues (p.4) that "historically, politics has always been in command in Burma".
6. These figures are included in a fascinating account by Mya Maung, "On the Road to Mandalay: A Case Study of the Sinorisation of Upper Burma", *Asian Survey*, Vol. XXXIV, No.5, May 1994. According to official figures, in 1993 imports totalled US\$1,176million and exports US\$663 million. (See table)
7. In 1993 SLORC introduced foreign exchange certificates pegged to the US dollar allowing citizens to hold hard currency. The certificate scheme allows businesses to import and export using the foreign exchange certificates and represents a de-facto, selective devaluation which indicates the SLORC's awareness of the need for devaluation.
8. According to Lintner, (1995), the UN estimates there are 160,000 heroin users in Burma and more than 50 per cent are HIV infected.
9. In May 1993 Khin Nyunt led a 22-man delegation to Singapore and in March 1994 Singapore's PM Goh Chok Tong visited Rangoon. During the visit SLORC chairman Gen Than Shwe referred to "the most constructive vision and pragmatic advice of senior minister Lee Kuan Yew".

10. Under Secretary of State, Hubbard claims to have made the US position absolutely clear to the SLORC when he led a delegation to Rangoon at the end of October.
11. During 1993 and 1994 India also reviewed and amended its policy and began to move closer to the SLORC. Indian army chief Gen Bipin Chandra Joshi went to Rangoon in May 1994 and high level trade delegations were exchanged later in the year.
12. The Secretary General's envoy was in Rangoon from November 20-23. He stressed that his purpose was to engage with leaders rather than to play a fact-finding role. The envoy concluded that the leadership understood this and understood that the Secretary General had international support for his mission.
13. Significantly the last state visitor to Rangoon for 1994 was Chinese Premier Li Peng who was in Rangoon during the last week of the year.

JUSTICE AND LAW IN BURMA

- I Introduction
- II Freedom of Opinion and Expression
- III The State Protection Law
- IV The Provisions in the Code of Criminal Procedure to Detain a Person
- V Analysis of the State Protection Law and its Practice
- VI Aung San Suu Kyi and the State Protection Law
 - 6.1. Immediate Cause to Detain Aung San Suu Kyi
 - 6.2. Background of Aung San Suu Kyi Case
 - 6.3. Extracts from Bo Aung Kyaw Street Declaration no: (1)
 - 6.4. Who Infringed Upon the Security and Sovereignty of the State
 - 6.5. Extension of the Period of Detention by the Amendment Act
- VII Constitution Making Process in Burma
 - 7.1. The Procedural Code of the National Convention
 - 7.2. The Experience at the SLORC-Sponsored National Convention
 - 7.3. The Fundamental Principles of the so- called National Convention

(I) INTRODUCTION

LAW is an indispensable element in the life of nations. It prescribes norms of conduct for individuals and groups in the society, and it defines the structure and composition of the governing institutions. In most democratic countries, the constitution, and the laws based on that constitution, reflect the popular will.

At present, however, there is no popular constitution in Burma, nor any laws to safeguard the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people. In Burma, an unpopular and unelected military government promulgates laws by personal whim and self-interest.

Today, the majority of the global community accepts the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights as customary international law. Nevertheless, the ruling military junta in Burma, the self-proclaimed State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), has not yet expressed any interest in this important document. The SLORC has yet to become a party to the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political rights and, up to now, has not shown any intention to set up a programme for educating the people on human rights.

In establishing a peaceful democratic human society, the government of any country needs to observe the principle of the rule of Law. However, in Burma, from 1962 until now, successive military governments have made Law not a ruler but a personal slave, using the law as an instrument to suppress the popular will, and to prolong their control of political and economic power.

As a result of these thirty-three years of oppression, most people in Burma no longer believe in the concept of rule of law as a shield to protect

their fundamental rights and freedom. This profound loss of faith in the law will create obstacles for the establishment of a democratic Burma in the future. Furthermore, if the concept of rule of law is defeated, then the achievement and protection of human rights are not possible.

(II) FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees the rights to freedom of opinion and expression to all people. The 1962 Press Act, however, nullified these rights for the people of Burma.

Furthermore, on June 27, 1989, the SLORC military junta issued Order No (3/89), stating that in accordance with the 1962 Press Act, all newspapers, journals and bulletins to be published must be submitted to a censorship board, and receive permission to publish from the Ministry of Religious and Internal Affairs. It is obvious that the political parties are no longer free to express and discuss their beliefs under the SLORC law.

As an example, three members of National League for Democracy (NLD), U Hla Win, U Htay Win, Daw Thida Aye, and U Khin Maung Win, an owner of Thein Than Press, were arrested on a charge of violating the 1962 Press Act Section (20), accused of endeavoring to publish the record of the Gandhi Hall meeting, held in July, 1990, without permission.

Since October 1990, the SLORC has forbidden the NLD to use the gestetner, photostat copier, and printing press for the distribution of bulletins, pamphlets and statements. Consequently, the central committee of the NLD has had to use the typewriter for every distribution order. Up to now, anyone who criticizes the SLORC by publishing the papers has had action taken against them in accordance with the 1962 Press Act.

(III) STATE PROTECTION LAW

In 1974, the military junta, then the former Burma Socialist Programme Party, drew up and promulgated a constitution. Based on this constitution, the Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts (hereinafter called the State Protection Law) was enacted.

Under the State Protection Law, if the junta has any reasons to believe that a citizen has done or is doing or is about to do any act which, in the opinion of the government, infringes the sovereignty and security of the State, or of public peace and tranquillity, the Council of Ministers is empowered to restrict fundamental rights. To exercise such power, the junta formed a Central Body, consisting of the Ministry for Home Affairs as Chairman, and the Ministries of Defense and of Foreign Affairs as members.

The following are the extracts from the State Protection Law (Chapter 4): Section (10). The Central Body in passing restriction orders for safeguarding

the state against dangers has the following powers:

- (a) Arresting and detaining a person for a period not exceeding 60 days at a time, up to a total of 180 days.
- (b) Restraining a person up to one year.

Section (11). The Central Body has the following power to restrict a person against whom action is taken in accordance with section (10)(b).

- (a) Restriction not to live in a specific place.
- (b) Restriction to live only in a specific place.
- (c) Restriction on taking a trip by necessity.
- (d) Prohibition of taking specific materials in hand or of using it.

Section (13). The Central Body shall obtain a prior sanction of the Council of Ministers if it is necessary to continue the restraint of a person against whom action is taken for a period longer than contained in the section (10)(b).

Section(14) If it becomes necessary to extend the period of detention or restraint, the Central Body may be authorized by the Council of Ministers to detain or restrain a person for a period not exceeding (160) days at a time, up to a total of three years.

(IV) THE PROVISIONS IN THE CODE OF CRIMINAL PROCEDURE TO DETAIN A PERSON

In 1885, the whole of Burma was under British rule. Since that time, the British legal system has been exercised in Burma. According to it, the Code of Criminal Procedure was enacted to be observed in criminal cases. Under the Code of Criminal procedure, no police officer shall detain in custody a person for a period exceeding 24 hours. Where it is necessary to detain such an accused for more than 24 hours, special order of a Magistrate has to be obtained under Section 167 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Under that code, without a remand from a competent court, no person may be detained exceeding (24) hours. With remand from a competent court, an accused may be detained up to a total of (28) days. After (28) days, if the police can not put up the case with reasonable evidence to the court, the accused must be discharged. This is the ordinary procedure exercising in the criminal cases in Burma in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure.

(V) ANALYSIS OF THE STATE PROTECTION LAW AND ITS PRACTICE

1. In Burma, cases on a charge under the State Protection Law, the Unlawful Association Act, or the 1950 Emergency Provision Act, are called "political cases". The persons against whom action is taken under these acts

are called "political prisoners". In these cases the cause of action arises from the basis of different beliefs, and not from the criminal purpose. Under the Code of Criminal Procedure, even the persons who commit a crime shall not be detained exceeding 28 days without putting up the case to the court. Under the State Protection Act, any victim shall be detained up to three years (now five years) without putting up the case to the court. This procedure is manifestly against the law of justice.

2. There is no clear definition of nor commentary on the phrase "subversive acts" because this law is only for the detention of a person, and not for filing a case in the court on a charge under that law. As a result, up to now, there is no ruling from the highest competent court explaining the definite meaning of the phrases "subversive acts", "subversive acts against the state", and what kind of action of a person causes to "infringe the sovereignty and security of the state" based on a practical case.

In practice, when the ruling military junta suspects a victim may do something against its rule, he or she is put under detention up to three years (now five years). Actually, this nullifies the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 9 (1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 9 (1) mentions that no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention.

3. Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees that everyone is entitled to full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his or her rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him or her. Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights mentions that all persons shall be equal before the court and tribunals. In the determination of any criminal charge against him or her, or of his or her rights and obligations in a suit at law, everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law.

In Burma, a victim against whom action is taken under the State Protection Law has never been entitled to a public hearing by a tribunal. Up to a total of three years (now five years), he is put under detention without hearing by a court.

4. Any person charged with an offence shall have the right to defend himself or herself to the fullest extent in accordance with law or through legal assistance of his or her own choosing. Article 14(d) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights describes "to be tried in his presence, and to defend himself in person or through the legal assistance, of this rights; and to have legal assistance assign to him." Nevertheless, under the State Protection Law, the victim has no right to seek advice from legal practitioner.
5. The Central Body mentioned in the State Protection Law is not a fair tribunal or a competent court. Consequently, putting a victim under detention up to a total of three years (now five years) according to its sanc-

tion is against the principle of law of justice.

6. Under that State Protection Law, any victim can be wrongly put under detention. However, he or she does not have the right to ask for compensation.

(VI) AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND THE STATE PROTECTION LAW

Since 1974, the State Protection Law has been in force in Burma for more than 20 years. Under it, thousands of people were arrested. Many have died in prison, many went mad, and many lost their health. Nevertheless, most common people inside Burma as well as those in the international community did not know much about the State Protection Law. Only when Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Laureate, was detained by the SLORC, did there arise the question on which legal authority or legal basis she was detained.

In a letter dated 5 October 1994, Yozo Yokota, the UN special rapporteur, requested the SLORC to provide specific reasons, including reference to specific legal authority, for keeping Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest. This has provided food for thought. Did Aung San Suu Kyi infringe on the sovereignty and security of the State under the State Protection Law? Did she violate the peace and tranquillity of the country? Is there any legal authority or legal basis to detain her?

6.1. Immediate Cause to Detain Aung San Suu Kyi

The SLORC issued an order that 10 representatives from each political party be permitted to attend the 42nd Martyrs' Day on July 19, 1989. Relating to this, Aung San Suu Kyi objected in a public meeting, stating that the NLD could not accept it; such a restriction was a prohibition against the wish of the people to pay their regards to the late martyrs, and she asked for a situation in which the people could freely pay respect to the martyrs.

Subsequently, she repeated that she could not attend the Martyrs' Day ceremonies as a family member of a martyr, but would do so together with the people.

On July 17, 1989, the SLORC issued a martial law order (1/89) and the commanders of the Central, Rangoon and Western Division commands were bestowed with martial law power. SLORC also increased the number of forces in Rangoon. On July 18, military trucks carrying loudspeakers warned Rangoon residents not to leave their homes the following day, either willingly or otherwise.

The situation became tense. Eventually, aiming to protect the people from being killed by the SLORC, Aung San Suu Kyi requested the populace to stay home and cancelled her plan to march with them. On July 20, 1989, she was arrested on a charge under the Law to Safeguard the State Against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts (State Protection Law).

6.2. Background of Aung San Suu Kyi Case

As a result of the 1988 popular democratic uprising in Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) entered politics. During the uprising, her speech made at the western entrance of the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon won the hearts of the people. ASSK then struggled for democracy and human rights hand-in-hand with students, former political activists, ex-army personnel from the Burmese army, and the common people.

She believes that the students are the future generation of leaders of the country. She worked to solve problems among the students as much as she could. She said that SLORC had no authority over the students who fled to the border areas after the 1988 coup to take up arms against the military, and that SLORC itself was to blame for pushing them in that direction. Most of the students who had been struggling against the SLORC, aboveground as well as underground, supported her.

She challenged the army to choose to follow the principle of Gen Aung San, the national hero of Burma, whereby the Army protects the people, or the principle of Ne Win, the military dictator, who oppressed the people. Gradually, the army personnel joined in the nationwide demonstrations.

Her tour of the country to garner support for her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), was a success, except in the Irrawaddy Division. But even there grassroots soldiers ignored the command issued by Brigadier Myint Aung, a division commander, to shoot ASSK and the people. It is evident that she could even organize the army under the control SLORC. The Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) based at Pe Nwe Gohn in Kauk Taga township unanimously voted for the NLD in the 1990 election. Other army-based areas where the NLD won included Mingaladon, Dagon, Hmawbi, Maymyo and Meikhtila.

On July 15, 1989, she gave a speech during a meeting between the Mon National League for Democracy (MNLD) and the NLD at the United Nationalities League for Democracy office on Bo Aung Gyaw Street in Rangoon. This is what she said:

"There are various forms of 'Federal.' The main question in 'Federal' is how the division of power should be practised among the federal government and the state governments. It must be solved. Moreover, how many powers will be vested in the federal government? How many powers will be vested in the state governments? How will these powers be shared, and used? And then, the significant point is that, between the federal government and the state governments, how will good relations be established."

These ideas attracted the attention of the different ethnic nationalities in Burma. She encouraged the expectation of the ethnic nationalities as to the establishment of a genuine union. On the base of this speech, there came into existence a Bo Aung Gyaw Street Declaration, an agreement between the NLD and the UNLD on August 29, 1990, three months after election.

The NLD won a landslide victory in the election. The UNLD was an

alliance composed of the 21 ethnic nationality political parties from seven states and some divisions registered in the election commission. Sixty-two representatives from the ethnic nationality parties under UNLD were elected. Consequently, we can say that "Bo Aung Gyaw Street Declaration No. (1)", was an significant agreement between the NLD and the UNLD which expressed the genuine will of the people to establish a union and to draw up a constitution.

6.3. Extracts from Bo Aung Gyaw Street Declaration No. (1)

Paragraph 4(b). The NLD and the UNLD unanimously agreed that after the People's Assembly emerged, a government will be formed on the basis of it. At a Conference on National Reconciliation, appropriate organizations and persons will participate under the initiative of the People's Assembly, guidance principles would be laid down, and in accordance with these principles, a new long lasting constitution will be drawn up and approved by the People's Assembly.

Paragraph 4(c). The NLD and the UNLD unanimously agreed that it is essential to together establish a union in which the ethnic nationalities will enjoy self-determination, and equal political and racial rights, as well as democracy and human rights.

As mentioned, Aung San Suu Kyi gained the support of people from all walks of life, including the grassroots army personnel. Under the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma was taking the path of democracy, of human rights and equal rights for all the ethnic nationalities. In the near future, Burma would be a united, peaceful country which would guarantee the fundamental rights of the people and deny the rule of militarism. This was the main cause for the SLORC to detain Aung San Suu Kyi.

6.4. Who infringed upon the security and sovereignty of the State ?

In responding to the question put by the Special Rapporteur, the SLORC mentioned that the specific legal authority for restraining Aung San Suu Kyi is the Law to Safeguard the State against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts. Under this law, if there are reasons to believe that any citizen has done or is doing or is about to do any act which infringes the sovereignty and security of the State or public peace and tranquillity, the Council of Ministers is empowered to pass an order, as may be necessary, restricting any fundamental rights of such person.

The SLORC staged a coup against the will of the people. Therefore, the person who infringed upon the sovereignty and security of the State is not Aung San Suu Kyi but the SLORC. In fact, Aung San Suu Kyi did not do anything against the sovereignty and security of the State.

Actually, she challenged the rule of the militarism and the security of the military clique. Aung San Suu Kyi did not violate public peace and tranquillity. She merely endeavored to establish a genuine peace in Burma for the long run. In spite of this, it brought the anxiety for the SLORC; that is, that

their unchallenged rule of Burma might be destroyed.

Based on this challenge, she has been detained. This is the nature of the case against Aung San Suu Kyi. Nevertheless, it is not the case of herself alone. This is the case of all political prisoners. As a matter of fact, this is the case of the whole oppressed people under unjust military rule in Burma.

6.5. Extension of the period of detention by the Amendment Act

Aung San Suu Kyi was detained on July 20, 1989 and it would be three years on July 20, 1992. In accordance with the State Protection Law, she could not be continued to detain for more than three years. On account of that, aiming to continue the detention period, the SLORC amended the Law to Safeguard the State against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts (the State Protection Law) on August 9, 1991. Article 2 of the Amendment Act mentioned is as follows:

"The phrase 'not exceeding one year at a time, up to a total of five years' must be replaced in lieu of the phrase 'not exceeding 180 days at a time, up to a total of three years' in Article 14 of the Law to Safeguard the State against the Dangers of Those Desiring to Cause Subversive Acts."

When SLORC responded to the question of the Special Rapporteur, it did not describe the Amendment Act. Instead, it mentioned as follows:

"If it becomes necessary to extend the period of detention or restraint, the Central Body may be authorized by the Council of Ministers to detain or restrain a person for a period not exceeding one year at a time up to a total of five years."

So why did the SLORC attempt to cover the Amendment Act? "A person can be tried on charge of the law in force at the time of committing the case. The new law cannot be made retroactive to the past action of a person." This is a fundamental principal of law and it is exercised in Burma in accordance with the General Clause Act. Violating this principle, the SLORC continued to detain Aung San Suu Kyi. She was eventually released on July 10, 1995.

(VII) CONSTITUTION MAKING PROCESS IN BURMA

Article 21 (3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ensures that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government. This will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures. The will of the people in Burma was expressed in the May 1990 election. However, SLORC, the ruling military junta, ignore this expression of the will of the people, and has not yet honoured the result of the election.

On the contrary, in order to avoid the transfer of power, after the election, on July 27, 1990, the SLORC immediately issued declaration No (1/90). Article 20, which states, "... Therefore, the representatives elected by the people have

a duty to frame a constitution for the future democratic state."

Then Article 21 says, *"In order to seize state power by framing a temporary constitution and, accordingly, forming a government, would be by no means acceptable."* The essence of the declaration No 1/90 was that the power would not be transferred to the elected representatives, and their duty was merely to draw up a constitution.

First, these "winning representatives" had been elected by the peoples of Burma for the express purpose of forming a People's Assembly to govern Burma on an interim basis until a constitution was written some time in the future. Not one of these "winning representatives" had been elected by the people for the purpose of writing a constitution. They had been elected to serve in a People's Assembly, a legislature, not serve in a Constituent Assembly, a constitution writing body.

Second, furthermore, the SLORC itself violated its commitment. In accordance with its declaration 1/90, Article 20, the representatives elected by the people have a duty to frame a constitution. Even in reference to that, only the representatives elected by the people have to draw up a constitution.

In spite of that, the SLORC created the so-called "National Convention". The purpose of this new body was to draw up a new constitution. Altogether SLORC allowed 702 delegates categorized into eight groups to attend the National Convention as follows:

(1) Elected representatives' delegates	99
(2) Political parties' delegates	48
(3) Ethnic nationalities delegates	212
(4) Peasants' delegates	93
(5) Workers' delegates	44
(6) Civil Services' delegates	90
(7) Intellegensias' delegates	35
(8) Appropriate persons	81
 Total	 702

Of the 702 delegates in the SLORC-sponsored National Convention, only 99 are representatives who were among the 495 MP's chosen in the May 1990 elections. The remaining 603 are SLORC-chosen delegates.

7.1. The Procedural Code of the National Convention

The SLORC has not declared the procedural code of the National Convention (NC) to the common people inside Burma or the international community; it has been kept a state secret. Needless to say, the entire function of the National Convention has been completely controlled by the procedural code approved by SLORC's National Convention Convening Commission (NCCC).

Article (1) reads as follows: *"In order to lay down the principles on which the drafting of a firm constitution of state is to be based, discussions and derivations are to be made within the context of the aims mentioned below."*

This initial provision means that free debate will not be permitted. According to Article (1), of the six aims of the NC, the most crucial point is "..... the participation of the military in the leading role of national politics in the future state." This is contrary to the principle of civilian supremacy over military that democratic countries practise. The SLORC is well aware of this, and is ensuring that its control over the civilian administration be written into the constitution, in an attempt to legitimise its hold on power.

According to Article (9) there are 45 members of the presidium. The persons from the National Convention Central Working Committee (NCCWC), who are directly appointed by the SLORC, are also the presidium members.

Article (12) and (13) ensure that for every nine members of the presidium, one will be from the NCCWC and that person will always be the chairman of the presidium. This insures that the SLORC directly controls the National Convention through the NCCWC.

Article (9) also states that the presidium consist of 10 delegates from political parties and elected representatives. In fact, it only consists of three elected representatives. They are:

- (1) U Daniel Aung, Lahu National Development Party. (Mongping Township Constituency).
- (2) U Mg Mg Gyi, Union Pa-O National League, (Pinlaung Township Constituency).
- (3) U San Tha Aung, Myo (aka) Khami National United Organization, (Kyauk Taw Township Constituency).

The activities of the three elected representatives out of the 45 presidium members will certainly be restricted. U Daniel Aung has subsequently left for the liberated area to join the democratic forces. Now only two elected representatives remain in the presidium.

Article (8)(j) states: "The delegates shall keep all news relating to the NC as secrets before it is released by the NCCWC, which is responsible for all press releases relevant to the National Convention. This manifestly restricts the freedom of expression of the delegates. Under this Article, the SLORC took action against a delegate, Dr Aung Khin Sint. While attend-

ing the NC he was interested in the Kokang paper, and instructed his staff to distribute the details of this paper to delegates. As a result, Dr Aung Khin Sint and NLD supporters who helped him, U Kyi Myint, Dr Ma Thida, U San Min, U Khin Mg, Ko Thet, U Ko Ko Gyi and Ko Tin Myint, the owner of the Thiri Myaing Press, who published the paper in the form of leaflets, were alleged to have broken the procedural code of the NC. They were arrested and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Article (15)(e) describes one of the duties of the chairman is "to decide whether the matter discussed by a delegate is in order according to the meeting agenda. If it is found to be out of order, to give warning and report to the presidium if he thinks that action should be taken against the delegate."

Actually, the delegates should have the right to debate freely in order to solve the political questions. Instead, if they do so, action will be taken for certain. As an example, SLORC took action against U Khin Mg Cho, a delegate from Demoso Township.

According to Article (37), "Only the delegates who have sent their names and discussion papers through the delegates group presidium shall have permission to participate in discussions."

This represents a serious constraint on the nature of discussion, which was further reflected in the following proceedings. When it was time to lay down the fundamental principles, delegates were expected to read out their papers in the group meeting.

However, before the papers were read out, they were checked by the presidium. If the presidium considered that some points needed to be edited, the respective delegate was called and instructed to "correct" the controversial details. As long as the delegate in question acquiesced, he would have permission to read out the paper in the group meeting. If he refused, the presidium submitted the paper to the NCCWC, who "corrected" it according to its own wishes, and returned it to the respective delegate. In either case delegates were merely expected to read the censored papers, to which further additions were forbidden.

Article (45)(j) says: "In making discussion either in the NC meetings or in the delegate group meetings, the NC delegate shall read and discuss in accordance with the discussion paper he has delivered in advance, and shall not speak about matters not in the discussion paper. If any points contained in the delegate group paper are left unread or new points are discussed, documentation shall be done only according to the (approved) discussion paper."

This Article manifestly describes the serious constraints on the freedom of expression of the NC delegates, against the provision of the Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

7.2. Experience at the SLORC-Sponsored National Convention

U Daniel Aung is a representative elected by the people in May 1990 election from Mongping township constituency. He attended the SLORC sponsored National Convention from January 9, 1993, to April 9, 1994 as a representative of the Lahu National Development Party. In the so-called National Convention, he served as a member of the Presidium of the National Convention. The following is an extract from his speech in the constitutional seminar held in Manerplaw on October 10, 1994.

"I would like to explain a little more about how the principles were adopted. U Aung Toe said 15 chapter headlines were chosen by computer. But 104 basic principles he laid down were based merely on 'alternate chairpersons' on-the-whole consideration".

The "alternate chairpersons' on-the-whole consideration" was none other than the National Convention Convening Work Committee's (NCCWC) well-prepared paper written or prepared long before. When all discussion papers had been read at a mass rally of the National Convention, there usually was a recess of about five days or one week. During this recess, alternate chairpersons were recalled to the NCCWC office to hear their so-called "on the whole consideration" read by NCCWC member.

'When the 104 fundamental principles were laid down by the NCCWC, the so-called "alternate chairpersons' on-the-whole consideration" was read by only one of the nine alternate chairperson, U Aung Than. But for the detailed principles of three chapters the "the alternate chairpersons' on-the-whole consideration" contained 830 pages. So the nine alternate chairpersons had to read it for five days.'

Such a transparently controlled and manipulated constitution drawing process could result in the international community eventually accepting the armed forces as the legal and legitimate government of Burma.

7.3. The Fundamental Principles of the so-called National Convention

SLORC instructed its delegates to lay down the principles on which the drafting of a constitution is to be based, specifically within the context of the goal of "Participation of the military in the leading role of national politics in the future state".

The followings points are the significant principles planned to practically achieve this goal in accordance with the constitution.

1. The army personnel will take seats in the Union Parliament (Pyidaungsu Hluttaw).
 - (a) The Union Parliament is composed of the House of Representatives (Pyi-thu Hluttaw) and the House of Nationalities (Amyotha Hluttaw).
 - (b) The House of Representatives shall be composed of 330 representatives elected from the constituencies specified on the basis of population and 110 representatives nominated by the Army Chief of Staff.

(c) The House of Nationalities shall be composed of 168 representatives, equal number from seven divisional regions and seven states, elected by the people from every divisional region or state, and 56 representatives, equal number from seven divisional regions and seven states, nominated by the Army Chief of Staff.

As mentioned above, the representatives from the Army will take 25 per cent seats in each house, 110 seats in the House of Representatives and 56 seats in the House of Nationalities.

2. The House of Representatives shall form the affair committees on defense and security consisting only of representatives of the Army.
3. The President of the State shall appoint the persons as ministers for Defense, Interior, and Frontier Area nominated by the Army Chief of Staff, with the consent of the House of Representatives.
4. The Houses of Representatives in all divisional regions and states shall be composed of the representatives elected by the peoples from respective townships and the representatives, one third of all, nominated by the Army Chief of Staff.
5. The Houses of the Representatives in all divisional regions and states shall form the affair committees on defense and security merely consisting of representatives of the Army.
6. The President of the State shall be elected by an Electoral College. The Electoral College shall be composed of the three groups of representatives from Union Parliament as follows:
 - (a) The elected members of House of Representatives (330 members).
 - (b) The elected members of House of Nationalities (168 members).
 - (c) The representatives of the Army nominated by the Army Chief of Staff from both Houses (166 members).
 - (d) Each Presidential Electoral College shall elect one Vice President.
 - (e) Union Parliament comprising all members shall elect a President from among three Vice-Presidents.
7. One fourth of the members of the administrative bodies in every self-administered division and self-administered zone shall be the representatives of the Army.
8. The Prime Minister of the divisional region or state shall ask for the names of the appropriate persons from the Army Chief of Staff to serve as the ministers for security and frontier area.

This is the SLORC's ploy to carry out its aim to continue military rule in accordance with a constitution which will be produced by its National Convention. It is a plan to strictly control the civilian administration by the military clique. It is against the principle of the civilian supremacy over military of which the democratic countries are practising.

In future Burma, so long as the military clique rules the country, human rights violations will remain in existence for certain.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND BURMA

1988 marked the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. During a year when the United Nations worked to focus world wide public attention on the promotion and protection of basic human rights, the pro-democracy movement in Burma was brutally crushed. Repression and torture intensified.

The following is the first 21 Articles of the Declaration and an update of Burma's record in observing these rights. The remaining 9 Articles dealing with economic, social and cultural rights are not dealt with in this fact sheet.

Article 1. All Human Beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore no distinction shall be made on the basis of the jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

General Saw Maung: "I tell you if anyone wants to enjoy the human rights they have in the US, England and India, provided the country accepts, I will permit them to leave. But in Myanmar (Burma), I can only grant human rights suitable for Myanmar people."

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

General Saw Maung: "In our military science there is no such thing as dialogue, someone might say 'look friend, please don't shoot', well that is not the way it works."

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.

Asiatwatch, may 1990: "the Burmese army uses thousands of civilians to carry supplies, including food and ammunition. Porters are dragged from their houses in the middle of the night or abducted from the street in broad daylight. They are exposed to a range of hazards, from disease and malnutrition to land mines and guerrilla fire. Porters who become sick or tired are frequently left behind or killed. Many who try to escape are shot."

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.

New York Times, 8.5.90: "In Burma the torture of detainees, the American embassy charged, includes electric shock, sleep deprivation, exposure to cold and cigarette burns. Such torture has continued since the May elections and is

widespread."

Article 6. Everyone has a right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

International Human Rights Law Group, May 1990: "Allegations of extrajudicial killings of civilians, particularly those belonging to ethnic minorities have been reported."

Article 7. All are equal before the law.

Amnesty International: "Most people arrested on political grounds in Myanmar are initially held incommunicado detention for investigation and interrogation. In almost all cases torture or ill-treatment took place during these prolonged periods-incommunicado detention sometimes persisted for 6 months or more."

Article 8. Everyone has the right to judicial remedy for violation of human rights.

SLORC Announcement#1/90 para.19c: "Only Slorc has judicial power."

General Saw Maung: "We are using both the force of law and the force of power."

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Amnesty International, 1988: "People from all walks of life were arrested in thousands following the September coup."

Amnesty International, 1990: "In October (1990) the security forces arrested hundreds of monks and scores of political activists, many of whom are elected members of parliament." Asiawatch, 1991: "Repression in Burma has been intensified with wide-spread arrests."

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by a independent and impartial tribunal.

International Human Rights Law Group, May 1990: "SLORC enacted Martial Law establishing Military Tribunals. The Military Tribunals may conduct trials without the most basic elements of due process necessary to ensure a non-biased and free trial."

Article 11. Everyone charged with a Penal Offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law, and according to the law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

1975 Law to Protect the State from destructive elements: "The government may order up to three years detention or house arrest without charge or trial for anyone the authorities believe will do, or is doing, or has done an act which endangers the peace of most citizens or the security and sovereignty of the State."

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home, or correspondence.

The Military Intelligence Service (MIS) in Burma is the most powerful organi-

sation in the state. Mail is opened, families of known or suspected political activists are harassed and threatened, people are afraid to make the slightest criticism of the SLORC in public for fear of being informed on.

Article 13. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

SLORC is forcibly relocating thousands from cities to satellite towns (see Article 17) and in rural areas ethnic minority villages are razed to the ground and villagers forced to move away from areas where insurgents are active.

Article 14. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

Thailand is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, so although it is a member of the General Assembly it does not feel obligated to protect refugees. As a result Burmese refugees in Thailand are unrecognised by the Thais, though some get stipends from the UN High Commission for refugees. Thailand has repatriated over 5,200 Burmese since September 1988, exposing them to arrest, torture and even death. The arrest and deportation of Burmese asylum seekers is a serious violation of human rights.

Article 15. Everyone has the right to a nationality, no one should be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Burma Alert, June 1991: "In November (1990), 30,000 people were uprooted from coastal villages in the Arakan state and driven out to Bangladesh."

Article 16. Men and women of full age have the right to marry.

Article 17. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

International Human Rights Law Group, May 1990: Reports of massive relocation of urban residents, numbering nearly 500,000, to satellite towns have been confirmed by the Myanmar government...Citizens who have resisted the relocation have been arrested.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Amnesty International: "On the 31.10.1990 (the SLORC) promulgated a new law No.20/90 which provides for imprisonment of up to three years for monks who are members of unofficial monastic organisations or who "organise, incite, speak or write" critically about the officially recognised monastic organisation.

Burma Alert, June 1991: "The All Burma Muslim Union accused SLORC of trying to stamp out Islam in Burma and trying to engineer communal rifts between Muslims and Buddhists. A Thai official in Maesod said that 1,000 Burmese Muslims have fled to the Thai border after harassment by SLORC troops.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.

Military Tribunals use the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act to convict Myanmar citizens for political activities. The act provides penalties for anyone who spread a false news item or a rumour to excite disaffection... (or to encourage anyone to be) disloyal to the State.'

Article 20. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

SLORC Order #2/88: re-established the curfew; banned gatherings on the street of five or more people, including monks; banned the opening of strike centres; prohibited road blocks or demonstrating en masse.

Article 21.

1. Everyone as the right to take part in the government of his country directly or indirectly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be universal and equal suffrage, and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Amnesty International, 1990: "Myanmar's military government, the State Law and Order restoration council, remains in control of the country in spite of the overwhelming victory of the opposition, the National League for Democracy (NLD). Security forces have arrested hundreds of monks and political party activists, many of whom are elected members of the Peoples Assembly, for their peaceful opposition to the SLORC's continued rule."

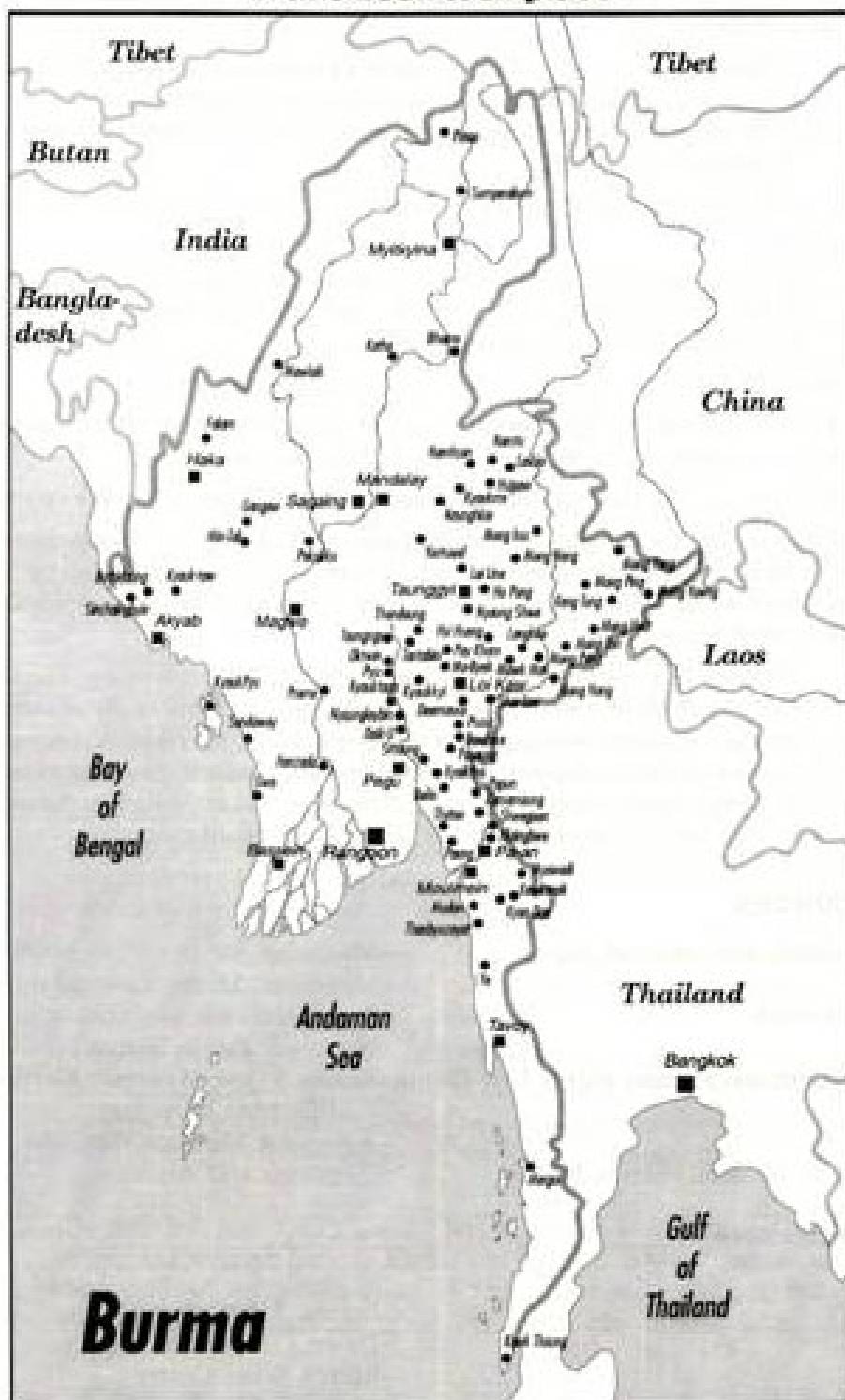
SOURCES:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Amnesty International Report | -Myanmar |
| | -Myanmar, 'in the national interest' |
| Asiawatch | -Burma-time for sanctions |
| | -Human Rights in Burma |
| International Human Rights Law Group | -Report on the Myanmar Election |
| | -Post-Election Myanmar |
| | -A Popular Mandate Withheld |
| United Nations Human Rights: | -Questions and Answers |

Newsletters

- Burma Alert
- Dawn
- Burma Relief Centre

**Townships where Human Rights Violations
in this book took place**



HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WITHIN THE ARMY

"An atmosphere of fear also corrupts the oppressor." - Aung San Suu Kyi

ALTHOUGH it is true that the Burmese army, or Tatmadaw, has played an important role in modern Burma, the military regime overstates the military role in Burma's history in order to legitimise the military's hold on political power. The armed forces of modern Burma were formed under the influence of Imperial Japan to help overthrow British colonialism. Although the military hierarchy of the then Japanese forces tarnished the image of the Burma Independence Army (BIA), and later the Burma Army to some extent, the Tatmadaw was recognised by the people as a group of young idealists who fought and sacrificed everything for the sake of national liberation.

Leading figures of that movement were also among the intellectual elite who had been active in the 1930s. In the highly factionalised political environment of the 1940s, the army built on the respect it had gained as liberator to claim the role of protector of national unity.

However, as independence approached, General Aung San, the national hero and commander in chief, pointedly resigned from the military in order to take office as Burma's political leader. Politics and the military did not mix, he openly believed. His strength arose from the fact that he worked for national unity by political, not military means, with the crowning achievement of his efforts the Panglong Agreement in 1947.

But this image of Burma's national hero was buried by the propaganda machine of the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), led by Gen Ne Win, who, as army commander, in the interest of the national unity, led the military coup that overthrew the elected government of Prime Minister U Nu.

This image of Aung San as a political leader who insisted on separating the military from politics has been distorted and hidden from a Burma which was isolated during the Ne Win era, in an attempt to legitimise the dictatorial military regime which started in 1962 and continues until today.

It was Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's open criticism of military leaders for perverting what her father had stood for, which led her being placed under house arrest in 1989. The BSPP was dominated by the army and always reflected its values, an extension of army values. Their heavily centralised government exploited Burmese society, nurturing its mistrust of foreign influence and values, creating an obsession with national unity and fear of outside interference in Burma's internal affairs.

Burma faced continual insurrections after Aung San's assassination and Burma's subsequent independence from Britain. The people, remembering the heroic contributions of the original BIA were easily deceived into believing Ne Win's claim that anti-army sentiment went against the independence of the state, despite Ne Win's dictatorial and ineffectual socialism. After

1962, to be anti-army was to be against the independence and unity of Burma.

The illusion that whatever the Tatmadaw did, however difficult to understand, must be in the country's best interest was only abandoned by most of the people in 1988, when pro-democracy advocates and peaceful civilians alike were slaughtered in the streets of every city, township and village by the army.

The desperate attempt by the BSPP, and its successor the SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council), to stay in power changed the people's minds as to what had become the real role of the Tatmadaw in Burma.

Also, with the fleeing of students, politicians, and democracy activists to the border areas, where ethnic conflict and warfare had been continuing since the country's foundation, Burmans and non-Burman minorities alike found another side to the military's "national unity", that they were previously not able to witness. Treatment of the ethnic minorities, long hidden from the majority of the people inside Burma, was found to be vicious and immoral.

Increasingly, the role of the military has become clear to all of Burma's citizens, as the atrocities of the Tatmadaw and its authoritarian rule affect the lives of all the people within the country, not just ethnic and border villagers, but city dwellers and Burmans as well.

The army no longer fulfills its old dual roles of protecting and maintaining the country, except for those few who hold power who interpret this as protecting them and their hold on power despite the wishes of the people clearly expressed in the elections of 1990.

Inside the once-professional army, the conditions have deteriorated along with the general situation of the country under BSPP/SLORC policies. Corruption, extortion, violence and personal immorality extends to the highest levels of the Tatmadaw.

After the 1962 military coup the distinction between army and state ceased to exist. The officers of the army came to dominate the civil bureaucracy and at the same time, through their role as controllers of state enterprises and individual entrepreneurs (openly or otherwise) its clientele. In this way the military secured for itself a position as the new privileged class of Burma. The combination of bureaucratic incompetence and vested interests of those in power are the main cause for the gross economic decline suffered by Burma in the post 1962 era and the main obstacle to successful reform. The system's lack of independent regulatory bodies and feedback mechanisms have become more pronounced in the SLORC period, with the effectiveness of government continue to decline.

The Tatmadaw's historic role has been re-interpreted beyond recognition. While the army claims responsibility for the Burmese state in the sense of holding power out of a sense of responsibility, it will not take responsibility for the situation in Burma, since that require self-discipline and surrender of its own power and privilege.

Instead, the military appears intent on maintaining its power and privileges, by securing for itself an appearance of legitimacy for another four decades by way of the SLORC "national convention". However, since the SLORC is undoubtedly aware of its own lack of support from the people, practically it must maintain itself in power through intimidation and oppression.

In order to do this, SLORC requires a large number of soldiers to control the people. Sophisticated military equipment is not enough against the popular displays of dissatisfaction such as occurred in 1988 and 1990. Therefore the Tatmadaw has been rapidly expanding the numbers in the armed forces from 170,000 in 1988 to an estimated 350,000 in 1994, with a target goal of 500,000.

Many soldiers do enlist voluntarily, although economic factors i.e. worsening economic conditions for the ordinary people, play a prominent role in their decision. Most soldiers in the forces are dissatisfied, however, because they receive no respect from the populace at large.

Not all soldiers enlist voluntarily. Boys still in school are frequently kidnapped, coerced or tricked into joining the Tatmadaw, immediately sent to training camps and even, in some cases, sent ill-equipped to frontlines within a few weeks.

Soldiers are routinely beaten by officers and forced to cater to their officers' personal needs. The pay is poor, in some cases is siphoned off by officers, and communication with the outside, even family members, is forbidden. The reality is, however, that once within the army, there is little chance of escape.

Many soldiers do try to escape the terror they have unwittingly become part of and accounts of soldiers defecting or joining the opposition are common. In a recent publication of Mirror of Arakan (MOA), it mentioned:

"... The Western Command of Arakan State issued a directive to Arakan State Law and Order Restoration Council instructing them to issue an urgent order to all Township Law and Order Restoration Councils to arrest some six soldiers who were reportedly on their way to join the insurgency. In this connection, the Arakan State authorities had sent letter No. C 105."

Reports from deserters suggest the conditions for soldiers are in some cases as bad as for the much-reported porters. According to one deserter, Zaw Myint, during a 7 August 1994 KHRG interview,

"Any of our own soldiers who were seriously wounded were killed. If it isn't serious, if they can walk or, if it's easy to take them, then they're taken back. If not, they're killed. The company commander orders this. When I saw things like that happen I felt very sad. It's a terrible fault. Our own soldiers, we must bring them back but we didn't. It's a crime. It's like frog eating frog, fish eating fish."

The story surfaced after 11 men and boys from IB 434 in June 1994 in desperation killed three of their commanding officers before fleeing to the safety of the Liberated Areas. Their stories tell of the brutal conditions faced by SLORC troops and how they came to be in such a situation.



The group of 11 young soldiers from SLORC IB 434, who shot their two lance corporals and a warrant officer at Hill 1653 north of Papun and fled to Karen forces on 6 June 1994. Front L-R: Thein Mya (16), Maung Hla Tint (18), Ye Kyaw (17), Maung Tin Shein (17). Back L-R: Zaw Myint (25) and others. (photo: KHRG)



Ye Kyaw (17), who killed the corporal, with his friend Maung Thein Mya (16). (photo: KHRG)

There are 10 commands and 10 divisions spread throughout the country. Under these there are the Tactical Operations Commands (TOC) which normally provide frontline troops and Military Strategic Commands (MSC) which normally provide troops for "mop up" or behind the lines operations in occupied territory.

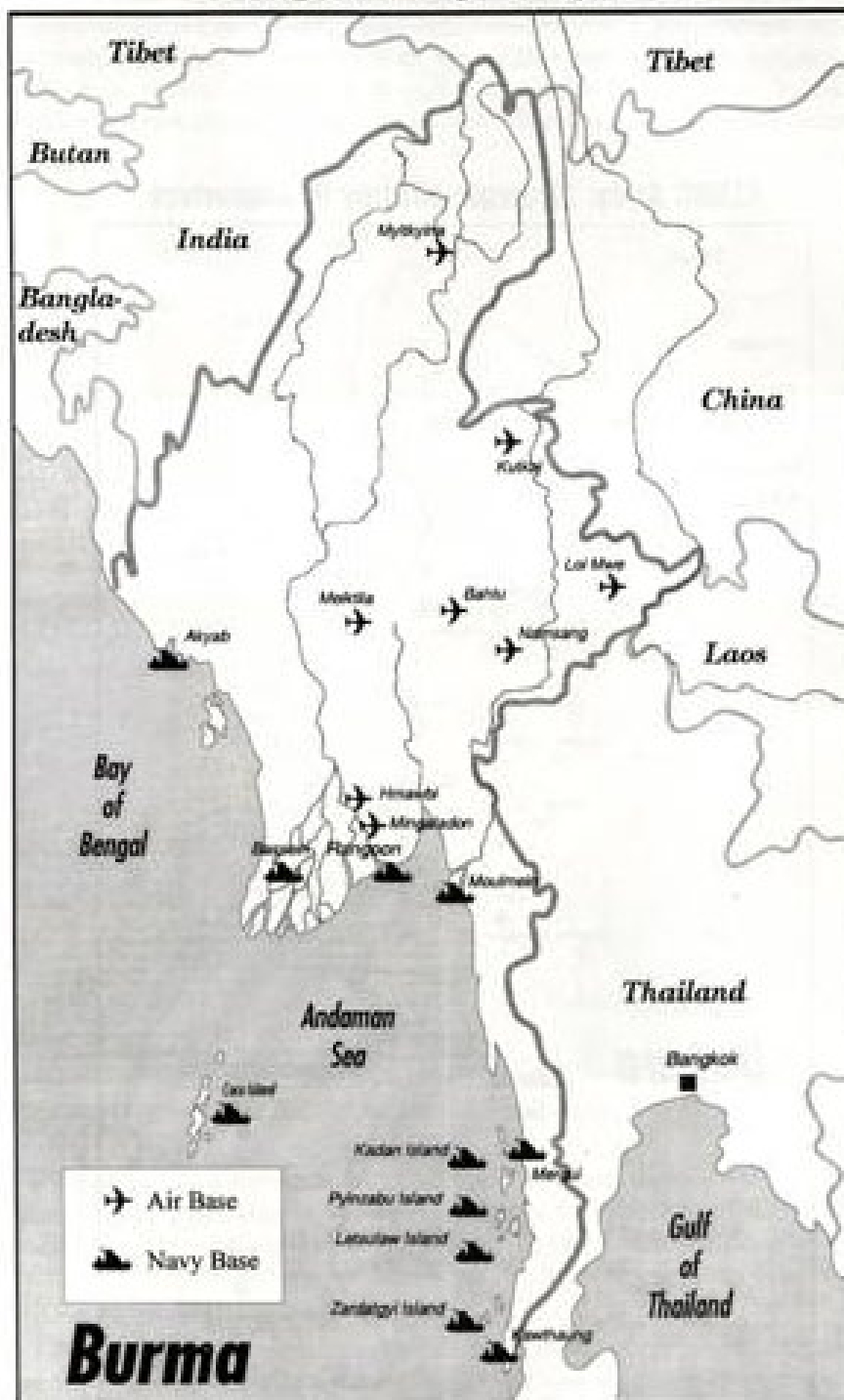
TOCs and MSCs are further divided into battalions, companies, platoons, sections, and so on. But columns, since they are temporarily formed can be

made up of any of these groups drawn from many units for the purpose of a specific operation. For example, the 2nd Column of IB 31 could involve troops from IB 24, 31, 61 and 62, all under the command of IB 31, which in turn is under the command of Northern Command. When that particular operation is concluded, the troops will return to their own units under their usual chain of command. Under this system it is difficult, when allegations of human rights abuses are made, to pinpoint which troops were involved.

SLORC Army: Strategic Military Headquarters



SLORC Navy & Air Force: Strategic Military Headquarters



Graphics by Radio Burma Group 1995

FACTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN BURMA

1994

- I Facts About Human Rights Violations: An Overview
 - 1.1. List of Incidents
 - 1.1.1. Account of a Shan MP
 - 1.1.2. Account of a Kayan MP
- II Extra-judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions
 - 2.1. List of Incidents
 - 2.1.1. The Ultimate Result of SLORC Presence: Torture, Death, Fear and Displacement
 - 2.1.2. Villagers Who Flee Forced Portage are Tortured and Murdered
 - 2.1.3. Death in Custody
 - 2.1.4. Rohingya Muslim Fishermen Executed
- III Arbitrary Detention and Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances
 - 3.1. 96 Still Detained in Notorious Insein Jail
 - 3.2. Profiles of SLORC's Latest Political Detainees
 - 3.3. List of Incidents
- IV Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- V Freedom of Belief: Discrimination Against the Right to Practice Religion
- VI Freedom of Opinion and Expression
 - 6.1. A Brief Background of SLORC Controlled Media
 - 6.2. Profile: The Voices The Regime Tried to Silence
- VII Freedom of Assembly and Association
 - 7.1. What the People Say About the USDA
- VIII Freedom of Movement
 - 8.1. Guests Registration Continues
- IX Discrimination against Women
 - 9.1. The Bullet Trick
 - 9.2. The International Flesh Trade and Burmese Women
 - 9.3. HIV in Magwe and Moulmein
 - 9.4. Slavery
 - 9.5. Profiles: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Ma Thida
 - 9.6. List of Incidents
- X Rights of Children
 - 10.1. Education for the Privileged
- XI Forced Labour and Slavery
 - 11.1. Ye-Tavoy Rail Line Construction
 - 11.2. Pakkoku-Gangaw-Kalay Rail Line Construction
 - 11.3. Chaung U-Pakokku Rail Line Construction
 - 11.4. Rail Line Construction in Myaing
 - 11.5. The Worsening Situation in Sagaing Division and Chin State
 - 11.6. Lavia Hydro-electric Project
 - 11.7. Forced Labour for TV Tower Project in Arakan State

- 11.8. Even Ghosts are Forced to Work in “Myanmar”
- 11.9. SLORC Paddy and Fishponds Project
- 11.10. Development Programmes, or Support for Military?
- 11.11. Special Rapporteur Visits “Worksites” and Talks with SLORC
- 11.12. More Works in Southern Burma
- 11.13. List of Incidents
- 11.14. The Scourge of Forced Porterage
- 11.15. Slaves in Shan State
- XII Rights of Livelihood
 - 12.1. No “Colourful Coat of Paint” for the Majority
 - 12.2. Livelihood Equals Survival
 - 12.3. Everyday Life with SLORC
 - 12.4. SLORC’s Satellite Town Programme
 - 12.5. List of Incidents
 - 12.5.1. Lost land
- XIII Minority Protection
 - 13.1. A Brief Look at the Effects of an Infrastructure Project
- XIV The Refugees Situation
 - 14.1. Look East
 - 14.2. Look West
 - 14.3. 1994’s Darkest Hour: Halockani
- XV Forced Repatriation
 - 15.1. How Long Will They Stay?
 - 15.2. Speedy Repatriation of Refugees Takes Place
 - 15.3. UNHCR Director Held Discussions with SLORC
 - 15.4. Repatriation of Rohingya Refugees Restart
 - 15.5. Whereabouts of Repatriated Refugee Remained Unknown
 - 15.6. India Hands Back Chin Refugees to SLORC
 - 15.7. Shans Forced to Return to Fighting in Burma
 - 15.8. Refugees at Klay Muh Hta
- XVI Internally Displaced People
 - 16.1. Junta Continues Evicting Rohingya from Interior of Arakan
 - 16.2. Fezipara of Maungdaw, Arakan under the Orders of Eviction
 - 16.3. The Results
 - 16.4. List of Incidents
- XVII Forced Relocation
 - 17.1. Kabaw Valley Development Programme
 - 17.2. SLORC’s Forced Relocation/Displacement of Ethnic Illegals in Tenasserim Division since May 1991
 - 17.2.1. Gas Pipeline Area prior to 1994
 - 17.2.2. Oil and Investment Fuels Human Rights Violation
 - 17.3. The Eviction of a Village; the Beginning of Constant Fear
 - 17.4. List of Incidents
- XVIII Miscellaneous
 - 18.1. AIDS out of Control in Burma
 - 18.2. Forced Military Recruitment Intentionally Divides Communities
 - 18.3. Dacoits in and out of Uniform
 - 18.4. SLORC and Germ Warfare in Monland

- 18.5. Karenland Contaminated
- 18.6. Parachutes, Boxes, Diseases
- 18.7. A Description of Death
- 18.8. Other Mysterious Epidemics Following Balloon Drops
- 18.9. Other Cases of Chemical Weapons Used by SLORC
- 18.10. In Conclusion

(I) FACTS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

“I tell you if anyone wants to enjoy the human rights they have in the US, England and India, provided the country accepts, I will permit them to leave. But in Myanmar [Burma], I can only grant human rights suitable for Myanmar [Burmese] people.”

—**Gen Saw Maung, SLORC chairman 1988-1992**

The Index on Human Misery in 1992 ranked Burma as one of the world's most miserable countries, estimating that over 16 million of 42 million inhabitants were under the poverty line, and living under insufferable conditions. 1994 represented no improvements in human rights in Burma, despite official claims; in fact, the situation of the common people is continuing to worsen. Systematic abuses of economic, social and cultural rights by the government and army has been continuing to grow as SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council) consolidates its power base in formerly insurgent-held areas. Ceasefire agreements have not decreased hostilities and suppression has been increasing.

While outright fighting seems to have subsided, that is not actually the case. In the beginning of 1994, SLORC troops launched a lightning offensive against the KNPP; during 1994 heavy military operations against the people occurred in Shan State under the guise of “drug eradication” by attacks on MTA-defended territory; and even at the end of 1994, SLORC troops funnelled into the Liberated Areas around Manerplaw for a massive offensive that would send in some 10,000 refugees fleeing into Thailand by February 1995 and thousands civilians disappearing for military portering and “voluntary” labour on a host of infrastructure projects.

More disturbing still, the ethnic minorities no longer have a monopoly on human rights abuses in Burma. Internal displacement not only affects those in the resource-rich countryside; hundreds of thousands of Rangoon-dwellers have been forced to move into inadequately equipped satellite towns. Poorer Burmans who cannot afford SLORC bribes are being kidnapped outside of theatres in central towns and find themselves as porters on the other side of the country. Mass rallies of the USDA (Union Solidarity and Development Association) and tourism projects involve many more townspeople who must comply with attendance or forced labour in urban settings. Clearly, the systematic abuse of Burma's people covers the entire country, whether ethnic villager or Burman townsfolk.

What follows is only a sampling of incidents. The majority of human rights abuses remain unreported due to poor communication or a prevention of communication,

resulting from an all-pervading climate of fear induced by the SLORC. As noted by United Nations Special Rapporteur Yozo Yokota during his 1994 visit to Burma. He felt similarly when the year before when he noted in February 1994: "The Special Rapporteur continues to be concerned about the serious restrictions imposed upon people in the enjoyment of civil and political rights. The people do not generally enjoy freedoms of thought, opinion, expression, publication and peaceful assembly and association. They seem to be always fearful that whatever they or their family members say or do ... would risk arrest and interrogation by the police or military intelligence."

The following materials have been divided into three sections: (1) lists of individual incidents, (2) eye-witness accounts, and (3) SLORC orders to villagers and photographic evidence. The year of the individual incidents was 1994, unless otherwise noted. While some events occurred in 1993 or earlier, this information was first able to be recorded in 1994 and, in any event, these events have a direct bearing on the overall situation of HRV in 1994, in that identical violations continue to occur regardless of the year and in spite of SLORC claims. Therefore such events prior to 1994 were included.

The names of specific people and places have been withheld or changed, when deemed necessary to protect the victims or information sources; but the names mentioned in the accounts are real. In all cases the information was reliably received or independently confirmed by other sources. Every effort was made to avoid exaggeration or altering the context of the incidents.

Despite the attempt at a comprehensive list of incidents, many reports are lacking some information. This includes translations of local names into the English (see note under "Abbreviations...") because most information was orally transmitted from inside closed and isolated Burma, where even a foreign newspaper can lead to instant imprisonment.

Chapter categories have been made under guidance from various UN organs. However, many incidents could be listed under more than one category, due to the nature of the violations. In most events cited, multiple violations have occurred during the same incident, which can often be spread out over several days or certain areas by one group of troops.

We believe that the sheer volume of abuses alone will give clear voice to the acts of terror perpetrated under Burma's military regime, which is doing its best to hide the facts from the world. We hope that the readers will be moved by these overwhelming reports of gross human rights violations to take such action as necessary to prevent the continuation of these violations in the future.

1.1 List of Incidents

On 22 October, SLORC troops under the command of LIB (Light Infantry Battalion) 403 penetrated Ye Pone Village, Ye Phyu Township, Tenasserim Division, brutally gunned down innocent Karen villagers who were running for their lives in fear of being taken for portering. U Si Aye (63) was hit and died on the spot. 2 other villagers, one of them a 16-year-old who was hit at both sides of his thigh, could no

longer run and were arrested by SLORC troops. Since then they disappeared. According to escapees, SLORC troops also burned down and destroyed the villages.

On 25 October, 25 escapees from 5 households reached at Moe Khao Phaw Karen refugee camp, near Nat-E-Taung in Kanchanaburi Province, and one of them is Naw Than Nu (23, daughter-in-law of the victim U Si Aye). About 450 refugees who escaped SLORC's "Four-Cuts" strategy, are now taking shelter there and provided humanitarian assistance from Burmese Border Consortium. At an interview with Naw Than Nu, she revealed her story as follows:

"On 22 October 1994 as SLORC troops under the command of LIB 403 surprisingly penetrated Ye Pone Village in Ye Phyu Township, all the villagers were in fear and ran for their lives. I, bringing my 3 children, ran for lives with much trouble. Although I saw that U Si Aye, my father-in-law, was hit and fell down, I could not carry him because we were also running for our lives. A young man, about 16 years old, was hit on both sides of his thigh and fell down. According to my neighbours, he was hospitalised in Tavoy. The third victim, who didn't manage to escape, was arrested by SLORC troops. Since then he disappeared. SLORC troops also burned down and destroyed the villages. As one of the victims of such a killing, I was very sorrowful and miserable... homeless and not able to bury my father-in-law." (Source: CPPSM)

On 25 December, while villagers in the Karen village of Bee Cha in Mergui/Tavoy District, were preparing their Christmas celebration, SLORC troops of IB 17 commanded by Maj Kyaw Kyaw approached the village. Most of the villagers managed to flee before the troops arrived. The soldiers entered the village and opened fire on the first house they saw, which still had people in it. The entire house was riddled with automatic rifle fire and M-79 rifle-fired grenades. Naw Weh Ber (50) and her son Saw Ko Poh (27) were killed, while Naw Weh Ber's daughter Naw Mu Sghee (12) was severely wounded along with her friend who was visiting the house. The villagers later took the two girls to Tavoy Hospital, but Naw Mu Sghee died on the way. Her friend survived the trip, but her condition was very serious and there have been no reports whether she is still alive. Soon after the killings, the SLORC troops captured the village pastor and forced him to bury the bodies at gunpoint. Three military trucks were then brought in from the army camp to loot the village. The soldiers ransacked every house, took everything and loaded it on the trucks. Before they left, they scratched in charcoal on the sign in front of the church, "Be careful – next time we'll burn down the village." The attack on Bee Cha was retaliation for an attack on SLORC troops by Karen soldiers not far away the previous day. On the same day, the same troops went to Beyo Po Kyi Village, stole some belongings and shot dead Naw Say Heh (female, Karen) and Maung Shwe Win (male, Karen) [source: KNU]

1.1.1 Account of a Shan MP

SAI SAN LOI, a Shan Buddhist aged 50, was elected as a Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) Member of Parliament in the 1990 general election. He is from southern Shan State which is close to Mog Kwwat where SLORC and MTA were fighting:

"I'm still living in my home town. The soldiers are everywhere and the Shan people dare not stay there anymore, so many people have left. They're running away because they're afraid of the SLORC, because the SLORC have confiscated their land, they make them contributing labour without payment, take them as porters, loot and rape everywhere – so the people dared not live there anymore. Many are running into Thailand, but they have to get in secretly. If you are caught by the Thai border police or immigration, they'll be arrested and deported.

In March this year, local SLORC soldiers had a fight among themselves and one of them shot and killed another. Then he took 4 guns and left the military post, so the SLORC grabbed all the villagers around there and ordered them to tell where the man had gone. They were beaten, but they didn't know anything because the man had handed over 4 guns to MTA and gone into hiding. SLORC detained all the people in 4 or 5 villages, several hundred people altogether, and beat them at the military camp. The soldiers ordered them to buy 4 new guns to replace the 4 that were lost, and ordered them to go and search for the man. They said if those people didn't get the man then they'd kill them all. When the MTA heard about this they went and negotiated with the local SLORC and returned 4 guns. Only then the people were released.

All the villagers are used by SLORC as porters, hard labourers, to work in the fields and to work at the army camp washing clothes, fetching water and so on. The MTA too sometimes use the people as porters and demand food from villagers, but the SLORC is worse – they even force the women to go as porters. When there's fighting, the villagers feel a little bit hopeful, because if SLORC men die then there are fewer of them to make trouble for the villagers, and if MTA men die then there might be less trouble for them as well. The people have to do things for both sides, so they don't see much difference.

As an elected MP, I can go about more freely than most people and they don't usually make trouble for me. But I dared not go back to my home town anymore. When they're arresting porters, they might know I'm an MP but they wouldn't spare me because of that. They even take pregnant women, so they'll certainly take me.

Now the world doesn't know that the Shans and other people in Burma are suffering so much, and the world doesn't understand that the people will continue to suffer like this until we can get rid of SLORC. Now the people have an elected government but SLORC won't transfer power to those who were elected – they're robbing the people. If the world thinks the SLORC is okay despite that, we can't help it. It's quite obvious that the SLORC has robbed power from the people, but still they say they are legal. So what can the people do? The people have suffered so much and sacrificed so much.

I haven't been invited to the SLORC's National Convention, and I haven't decided whether I would go if I were. I'm not satisfied with the SLORC. The country is not prosperous, but the people in power are prosperous, and getting richer every day. All the companies, even the companies going overseas like the shipping line, they're all owned by the military. The military buys everything the people have produced and pays almost nothing for it, so the people are only getting poorer.

If every government in the world acted like SLORC, what would happen to the world? I'm worried. In Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi has been under house arrest for 6 years. We don't know what to do with a government like this. So if the world still thinks the SLORC is legal and the people aren't good enough to form the government, then that's up to the world. But I want to ask the world to accept the people.” [source: KHRG]

1.1.2 Account of a Karenni MP

The following account describing the situation in northern Karenni (Kayah) State and the southern tip of Shan State northwest of Loikaw was given by Khon Mar Ko Pan, who is Kayan and was elected as a Member of Parliament in the 1990 elections representing the DOKNU (Democratic Organisation for Kayan National Unity) Party.

He was a delegate to SLORC's National Convention when it began in January 1993, but after one month he decided that the National Convention was just “a fraud which has been arranged by SLORC only to perpetuate their inhuman, illegal and dictatorial rule in Burma”, and left for the Revolutionary Areas.

He has now just returned from three-and-a-half months in areas west of Loikaw, the capital of Karenni State, in Karenni and Shan states, and describes some of the ongoing political problems and human rights abuses happening there.

Note that SLORC “regional development projects” which involve slavery and land confiscation to generate income for the military are the kinds of projects which the UN Development Programme is currently funding as “income-generation” projects under SLORC's BAD programme.

The foreign NGOs now considering entering Burma are also looking at funding projects like these, which SLORC can easily display to project monitors as “community income-generation” while SLORC takes all the profits and the enslaved villagers stand there too terrified to speak.

Note that there are three revolutionary groups fighting SLORC in Karenni State: the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP), Kayan New Land Party (KNLP), and Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front (KNPLF). SLORC has recently offered ceasefire talks to each separately, but the talks generally consist of SLORC officers demanding surrender and refusing to even discuss any political or human rights issues.

SLORC recently made an offer to the Karenni to come to peace talks to make a ceasefire. The Karenni knew that these would not be real peace talks, but the KNPP went to talk anyway because the Karenni people want peace.

The first talks were at Tee Paw Klo Village, and the second time at Loikaw. Both times the talks were the same – no progress was made. At the talks, the main thing the Karenni representatives asked was for SLORC to withdraw its army from the Karenni area, but SLORC refused and after that fighting broke out one or two times.

As far as I know, that's why the Karenni aren't going to the peace talks again. The talks were suspended, and now they've been broken off. The KNPLF also went to talk to SLORC, and SLORC's offer was, "Just surrender your arms for now, and we'll give them back to you later. In the meantime we'll supply all your living needs." The KNPLF didn't believe that so they quit the negotiations.

There's no fighting for now as SLORC appears to be preparing for a new offensive, but I'm not exactly sure. SLORC also says they want to restart the peace talks, but the Karenni are just waiting to see if SLORC is going to attack or not. After the talks broke down last time, there were two skirmishes and SLORC burned down two villages. Both times the fighting occurred outside of a village, so afterwards SLORC went and burned down the whole village.

All the villagers came to the refugee camps in the border area. For now, most of the time the SLORC troops aren't going very far from their camps, but sometimes they still patrol around.

All the villagers are living in fear because the SLORC army constantly comes to get slave labour for their military outposts, slave labour for roads, slave labour for digging ponds or for guarding the railway line. They always make the villagers work for them.

They always come and collect money from the villagers and say it's for porter fees (this is just an excuse for extortion – none of the money is spent on porters), they take porters, and they take fees people must pay to avoid going for slave labour. The people are never allowed to just stay peacefully in their villages, even in Loikaw Town itself and the villages around there.

Four or five miles west of Loikaw, near Kayeh Ni Village between Loikaw and Mo Byeh, SLORC has a plan to dig fishponds covering 600 acres. All of this land belongs to the villagers around there, although some of it isn't suitable for crops because of annual flooding. SLORC has taken all the land.

They plan to make each pond about 200 feet long, covering about one acre. They plan to stock them with fish during the rainy season, and grow paddy during the other seasons. They just started this project about one month or more ago. They're digging the ponds now.

There are so many villagers there, and even people from Loikaw Town are forced to do labour there. There are over 10,000 people altogether, being forced to work in turns. I was in the villages in the area and we heard that the soldiers had ordered that anyone who won't go to dig the ponds will be arrested, so I had to keep running from village to village.

One person from each family has to go, and anyone who can't go has to pay 100 kyats per day. This order comes directly from the State Level SLORC itself [the SLORC

administration for Karenni/Kayah State]. The people have to work all day long, they don't even get a chance to rest. I can't say how many days at a time they have to go. None of these orders come from the local military, they all come from the Kayah State SLORC, and this whole project is just for their own purposes and profit.

All the villagers are also being forced to guard the Loikaw-Aungban railway line [this 100-mile railway between Karenni and Shan states was built entirely by slave labour from 1991 to 1993. SLORC says over 800,000 people "contributed labour"; many of these were Pa-O and Shan, and the project also involved driving 20,000 Karenni villagers out of their villages and into concentration camps and then using them on the railway, where hundreds, possibly thousands, died of starvation, disease and SLORC beatings, including women and children as young as 12.

SLORC admitted that "people are dying every day". When the railway was finished it was merrily opened by foreign diplomats, including the German ambassador and British representatives.

The KNLP stays in the area around the railway. So SLORC laid a mine around the railway, then they found it and told everyone, "We found KNLP mines on the railway line", and so now with that excuse they force all the villagers to guard the railway line 24 hours a day.

The KNLP denied laying any mines. It was the train driver who "found" the landmine. SLORC says he saw it, stopped the train in time, got out and picked it up. This is impossible, so we're sure SLORC mined the railway themselves. Now everyone has to take turns guarding the railway for 24 hours at a time. Anyone who can't go has to pay 100 kyats per night.

Most people have to go at most twice per month. It depends on the village – if the village is big, you don't have to take your turn so often, but if it is small then your turn comes quickly.

[Other reliable sources add: "Watch huts" have been placed about every 400 yards along the railway line. Four villagers at a time must stay in these watch huts day and night. This makes a total of about 400 watch huts along the entire railway, and 1,600 villagers doing forced labour as "guards" every moment of every day.]

There are so many human rights abuses that trying to list them would be endless. Every SLORC battalion and regiment in every area takes money and land for themselves, then forces the villagers to work the land for them. I will only tell you a few examples. I know three battalions, Battalions 421 and 336 based around Pay Khon and 422 in Mo Byeh, which have each confiscated 1,000 acres of land from the local villagers, for a total of 3,000 acres.

On this land the villagers are forced to do everything for them – plough the land, plant the seed rice, pull up and transplant the seedlings into the paddies, everything right up until reaping time, when the villagers have to harvest it for them. For all this work the villagers aren't even given 5 pyas, but they have to do everything for the soldiers on the land, cut wood, build fences, everything.

As far as we know, the soldiers send the profits to their headquarters to invest it in a company. SLORC sends orders to every battalion and division telling how much profit money they have to send in to buy shares in this company – if you want to find out how much exactly, only SLORC centre of operations can tell you that.

SLORC has created this to be a very big company, and then they make sure that no other businesses or people get any bigger than them. [Another source indicates that this company is called “Myanmar Holding Company Ltd”, set up by SLORC as a front company to launder their profits from the seizure of land and other assets from civilians by the military.]

On these SLORC farms, whenever the soldiers see one cow or buffalo footprint, they go and fine the owner 500 kyats, and if they catch a cow or buffalo on the land they charge the owner 3,000 kyats to get it back. I know of at least 10 villagers who have had to pay just for their cow’s footprint, and over 10 villagers who had to pay to get back their cattle.

The soldiers also shot dead over 20 cattle, for no reason at all. Now whether they find the cattle on the SLORC farm or elsewhere, they take them and charge the owner 3,000 kyats.

In Deemawso Township [south of Loikaw], Battalion 102 takes all the best land. In one area there is about 1,000 acres of very good land where the villagers grow corn, and Battalion 102 took about 300 acres for themselves right in the middle of it. Now they force the villagers to grow corn for them, so some of the villagers who lost their land joined revolutionary groups.

Then when the SLORC soldiers were inspecting their corn one time, KNPP soldiers came and shot at them, and three SLORC soldiers died. So SLORC called all the villagers, assembled over 1,000 of them, and forced them to cut down all of their own corn, everything except SLORC corn.

It was nearly ready to harvest, so some of the villagers asked to take some of their corn with them to feed their horses, cattle, and other animals, but SLORC wouldn’t allow them to take any for themselves or their animals. They just made them cut it all down and leave it laying there, like clearing an area of forest.

SLORC has just started a new road between Lu Pa Ko and Ko Pra, two villages on the way between Loikaw and Taungoo. The road is about seven miles long. People from three small villages around area are being forced to do all the labour. They’re doing it right now – they’re not even to the halfway point yet.

They’re also making a slave labour road from Mo Byeh to Pee Kim [in the far south of Shan State] which isn’t finished yet, but they’ve stopped work on it for the moment. It’s 20 miles long. SLORC and Aung Kham Hti’s group are working together in this area. [Aung Kham Hti took his faction of the Pa-O National Organisation and signed one of the first ceasefires with SLORC in early 1991. SLORC has made a great deal of propaganda from this ceasefire since then]. Aung Kharn Hti only has 500 or 600 people.

All the villages around Pay Khon Township were ordered by SLORC to go to the USDA mass meetings in Loikaw. There were many people in all the villages

around there who didn't want to go because they thought the rally was meaningless so they just ignored the order and planned to stay in their villages.

X Village [name omitted by request] is bigger than most other villages, so the SLORC major himself came from Battalion 422 in Mo Bye, while other groups of soldiers went to other villages. The major threatened the village head that he'd be arrested, so then the village head had to arrange two tractors with trailers to take people to the meeting. The major gathered all the villagers in a nearby field, scolded them and the village elders and threatened to arrest them and put them in jail if they didn't go.

The owners of the tractors had to collect money from the villagers, just enough so that they could buy petrol for the journey, and then had to take everyone to Loikaw at their own expense. When everyone got to Loikaw, they had to find a place to stay themselves.

The SLORC army also called a meeting in one village and said to the villagers, "You can say everything you want openly, and we won't act against you no matter what you say", so the villagers told them everything. They said, "You forced us all to go to the USDA rally against our will, and your soldiers always come and steal all our livestock. Most of your soldiers are very bad", and things like that. SLORC didn't respond, but it was only a few days later that SLORC planted a mine on the railway and forced everyone to start doing guard duty.

Everything SLORC does, like these mass meetings and all their slave labour projects and other things, they pretend to do for the people, but the people will never follow them or trust them. As for whether a ceasefire would improve anything, the answer is no way.

The only thing that might improve is that SLORC might take a few less porters, but all the stealing will only get worse under a ceasefire, and the forced labour will continue from bad to worse. All SLORC is doing is just make believe to fool the people, but the people will never believe them. The situation between the military and the people could explode at any time. [source: KHRG]

[Editor's note: The Karenni and the SLORC finally agreed to a ceasefire in March 1995. However, in June 1995 the SLORC sent several thousand troops into Karenni territory under the pretext of a threat from Thailand. The Karenni forces resisted the invasion, and the fighting continues along the border areas. Thousands of Karenni refugees have joined the flood into Thai camps since the recent fighting began.]

(II) EXTRA-JUDICIAL, SUMMARY OR ARBITRARY EXECUTIONS

“ If we captured Karen soldiers we never kept them alive. We killed them. The NCOs didn't even interrogate them, they just said, 'Pray to your God' and killed them with a bayonet, then beheaded them. Then sometimes they fried their heart and liver and ate it. I saw Corporal Aung Myint do this.

This was done often by the sergeants, warrant officers and sometimes company commanders. The company commander gave the order to kill the prisoners, and got the officers or NCOs under him to do it. Once we found a wounded Karen soldier and they stepped on his throat to kill him. Other times they killed wounded Karen soldiers with a bayonet.

I saw several Karen soldiers executed like this, and also villagers with connections to the KNLA. If they suspected any villagers of being in contact with the KNLA they summoned them, and they never used a gun just a bayonet. Usually the lance corporals and corporals did it, sometimes the sergeants.

They had no real evidence if they didn't like the look of a civilian they'd just accuse him of being connected to the KNLA and kill him.”

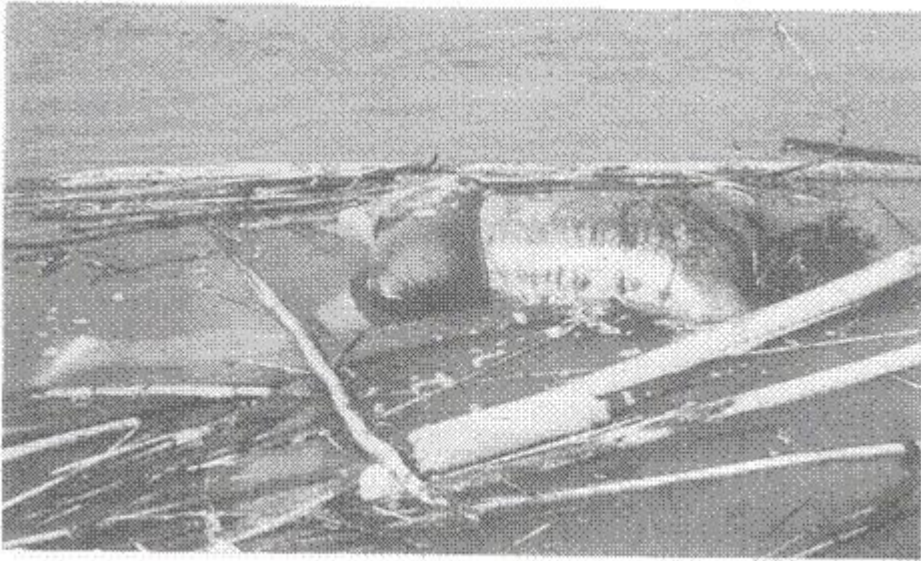
— **Zaw Myint, Burma Army deserter, KHRG interview, 7 August 1994**

While military tribunals are no longer handing out death sentences on civilians, the number of executions in Burma has not decreased. Most incidents show a tendency for executions through forced portering which involved human mine-sweeping and acting as human shields in combat zones. Porters also have been severely beaten and not fed enough food, being left along the wayside to die.

Victims of summary executions are in many cases villagers who are accused of being involved with insurgency groups despite the lack of evidence. Women are commonly killed by soldiers after being raped, for fear that the victims of these double crimes will report the sexual assaults.

Arbitrary executions take place anywhere and at any time, by military leaders as well as rank and file. People who run from the military even in cities out of fear of being forced into portering, are routinely shot at without regard for their lives. This reckless and undisciplined behaviour by soldiers and commanders lends credence to claims that thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators were murdered by army troops during the demonstrations of 1988.

Recent arbitrary executions also include prisoners being tortured to death while in custody, beatings, denial of adequate food and medical care, and subhuman conditions in prisons. Executions of all kinds have focused particularly on ethnic peoples, in most cases only because of their ethnic backgrounds.



Tortured porter found in the Salween River near Thee Mu Tha Village near the Confluence of the Moei and Salween rivers on March 1993. (photo: NBC)



Backbound Shan porter, Salween River near Thee Mu Tha Village near the Confluence of the Moei and Salween rivers on March 1993. Over 200 corpses have been found downstream of the Salween River.

For instance, as many as 300 Muslims have been killed by SLORC since January while another 3,000 were imprisoned and subjected to those life-threatening conditions. True numbers of deaths may never be known, but one fact remains clear; civilian death by execution is commonplace throughout Burma by the military. (Source: NLD)

[See also under "Eye-witness Accounts", interview 33-34, 44-45, 47-48, 55, 59-62, 85, 92-97, 100, 106-113, 117-119, 130]



Maneng Tin Shwe (27 and father of two children) killed instantly by heavy shelling of IB 84 in the morning on 8 March 1993 into Kyon Sein Village, Pa-an Township, Karen State. (photo: NLD-LA)

2.1 List of Incidents

On 31 December 1993, in Paw Autaw Village, Kyauk Kyi Township, Pegu Division, IB 60 commanded by Capt Nyi Soe under Southern Command, arrested Saw Ther Toe (son of Saw Tin Shwe) and accused him of being a KNU sympathiser. The soldiers tied him up, stabbed his arms and legs with knives, burned out both his eyes and dragged him through the streets of the village. They kept him alive until 6 January 1994, when they executed him. [Source: KNU]

On 5 January, SLORC troops from IB 57 executed 2 villagers from Phar Paung Village at Ohn Pin Chanung, Nyaunglebin District. [Source: KNU]

On 16 January, a company of SLORC troops led by Hla Tun of IB 506 and a faction of the Shan State Army, which defected to SLORC and was led by Sai Norng, arrived in Norng Sien Village, arrested Sai Su (male, 38), headman of Torng Teik Parish, Hsipaw Township in northern Shan State. The victim was accused of sending information to the rebels in that area. After conducting an interrogation with torture, he was killed by Ai Thun (Kha Tong) of the SSA. Soldiers then ransacked the victim's house, took 25,000 Ks in cash and other property and destroyed one image of Lord Buddha by chopping the statue into pieces. [Source: SHRF]

On 12 January, SLORC troops from IB 246 shot to death Sai Seng Harn (male, 24) from No. 1 Quarter of Kun Hein Township in southern Shan State without warrant. This occurred in the southern part of the town while the troops were patrolling the area. [Source: SHRF]

On 24 January, 40 soldiers of IB 39, commanded by Capt Mya Shwe, opened fire on a group of cattle traders driving their herds near Kyautager and Maw Khee villages in Taungoo District. One of the traders was killed while 26 cattle were ransacked by SLORC troops. [Source: KNU]

On 13 February, Bn Comdr Lt Col Yin Soe Min and Coy Comdr Capt Soe Naing from IB 84, under the command of LID 99, executed Saw Thar Kyi (41) and Saw Tun Phwa (27, son of Phwa Gaw Yar from Talai Kayin Village, Thaton District) and took 30,000 Ks in cash belonging to the victims. [Source: ABSDF/KNU]

On 19 February, Sai Be (30, son of U Lon Ann and Daw Mai) from Ma Khae Kham Village in Lwe Paw Parish, Hpe Khon Township, was arrested by IB 336 led by Dep Bn Comdr Chit Than with the accusation of possessing of illegal firearms. The victim was beaten at Hpe Khon military outpost and on 22 February he was brought by the military column to Lwe Paw. On that day, Maung Pa Loke (25, son of U Ho Lwa and Daw Mu Larong, from Upper Karen Tike Village, Hpe Khon Township) was also arrested with the same allegation. On 24 February, both of them were tied up under Lwe Paw Monastery, punched, beaten with rifle butts, jumped up and down on abdomen and stroked with rocks at the back. Both of them were beaten to death on the hill-top located in the eastern part of the village and buried together. (Source: ABSDF)

On 2 March, Pvt Soe Moe Naing from SLORC military 1st Column led by Warrant Officer Ngwe Maung of LIB 341, shot Ma Mi Nge (16, daughter of U Ba Pe and Daw Nu from Kyun Pin Village, Papun Township, Karen State) with his BA-63 rifle, hitting her on the left side of the chest which caused death. This occurred when the perpetrator tried to rape the victim at gunpoint and, when the victim refused and attempted to defend herself, the perpetrator killed her. When Coy Comdr Capt Tu Lun and his troops reached the village, they reported that this was a case of an accidental shooting that resulted while Soe Moe Naing was hunting wild poultry. The captain threatened the villagers that those who attempted to degrade the dignity of the armed forces will be shot to death. In fear of their safety, the parents of the victim and other villagers dared not raise the case. [Source: ABSDF]

2.1.1 The Ultimate Result Of Slorc Presence: Torture, Death, Fear And Displacement

Paw Mu Der Village has 24 houses, 143 people. It is only a one-hour walk from the Say Day Camp of SLORC IB 59 based in Kyauk Kyi. On 3 March, 2nd Column of that IB 59 led by Column Comdr Maj Aung San Oo came to the village. As soon as the villagers knew they were there they tried to escape to the jungle, unable to take any belongings with them.

SLORC troops captured 20 people who did not know how to escape, particularly women and children, including Saw Ghay (male, 35) and his 3-year old daughter. Saw Ghay's wife was very sick but still managed to escape with their another child, an 18-month old son.

Saw Ghay's sister-in-law was hiding in another house, and saw the soldiers drag Saw Ghay away from the others. In addition, there were arrested a total of 19 villagers – 2 men, 7 women, and 10 children. Then the soldiers took all the villagers' belongings from every house. They stayed there for 2 days and then released everyone except Saw Ghay.

They found a photo in Saw Gay's house showing a man in a Karen uniform, so they accused Saw Gay of having a relative in the Karen army and ordered him to explain. Afterwards they took him cut off his arms and legs. They left him bleeding on the ground for 2 hours, but he was still not quite dead so they cut off his penis, then cut open his belly and ripped out his internal organs. Saw Gay's brother is in the Karen army, but Saw Gay himself was just an innocent villager.

Naw Lay Swai, age 75, was reportedly kept tied naked to a tree. When the troops left the village, they took with them 40 pigs, 38 goats and all the villagers' chickens and ducks; whatever the soldiers couldn't carry away with them were destroyed. Since then many of the people in the village have fled to Karen-controlled areas closer to the Thai border.

The troops stayed in the village for three days. Afterwards they returned to their camp and reported to their higher authorities that they had taken a Karen position in battle, captured and executed a Karen soldier, and that the property they'd collected was from the Karen base. [This was reported to the villagers by one of the soldiers; also note that Saw Ghay was not a Karen soldier].

Now the villagers dare not stay in Paw Muh Der Village anymore, so they've moved to another place where there is not fertile enough for growing crops. [Source: KNU]

On 10 March, 2nd Column of LIB 59 Comdr Aung San Oo came to Thay Baw Village and shot and killed villager Saw Soe Ghay Htoo (35, son of Saw K'Bweh). After shooting him, they stabbed his body all over with a knife and then left it behind. Then on 18 March the same troops went to Thu Day Village and shot dead villager Saw Ko Pa Moo (30, son of Saw Plah Heh); just as they had done in Thay Baw Village, they then stabbed his body all over with a knife before leaving the corpse lying there. [Source: KNU]

On 17 March, Column Comdr Ah Tin and Coy Comdr Myat Soe of SLORC IB 37 opened fire on the villagers from Ko Kyaw Kaw Soo Village, Nyaunglebin District, while they were collecting firewood. Five villagers were gunned down with the result that one person died. [Source: KNU]

On 30 March, SLORC troops from IB 73 abducted 2 village headmen from Lay Ti and Nat Ywa villages of Taungoo District, and the victims were beaten to death.

On 28 April, SLORC troops from IB 96 came to Paw Ghee Khee Village, Thaton District, and shot Pa Kloh (26, son of Thaw Pee) to death. They also shot Saw Ger Ker (20) who was wounded in the arm and also suffered a broken leg.

On 10 May, troops from SLORC LIB 76 came to Kaw Kyer Ther Village, Thaton District, arrested villagers Kyaw Soe Pyu (32) and Saw Ganoo (35) and Pvt Maung Lay killed them both. [Source: KNU]

On 12 May, SLORC troops from LID 55 plundered and murdered in Wornmai Koong-tee Village, Worn Norng Parish, Mong Nai Township, southern Shan State. Financial losses suffered were cattle, pigs and chickens owned by Por Keik (20,130 Ks stolen), Mae Sala (16,500 Ks) and Pi Seng (200 Ks). Por Sala (male, 56) and Por Ni-ong (male, 41) were both shot to death without explanation by soldiers who then tried to hide their corpses in the east of Koong Na-long. [Source: SHRF]

On 23 May at 5:00 p.m., SLORC troops from Coy 1 of IB 22, led by Coy Comdr Capt Khin Soe, arrested Sai Aung Mong (25, son of Lung Tsam Pa and Pa Nang Pin), of Shan nationality, living in Worn Pung Laing Village, Hsipaw Township, while the victim was working on Ye Yoke Farm. He was interrogated, tortured and beaten to death. [Source: SHRF]

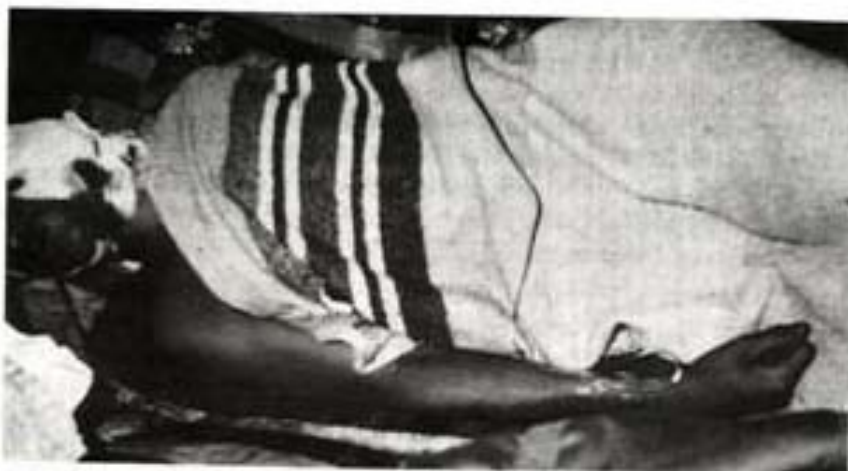
On 30 May, Thai police in Thom Papum, Kanchanaburi Province, stopped a bus coming from Kanchanaburi at Kyan Daw, near Thom Papum, Thailand, arresting any and all Tavoyans on the bus and detaining them at the station there. Police seized all the valuables of the detainees, who were on their way back to Burma after working in Thailand. On 1 June at 8:00 a.m., one of the detainees, namely Soe Win (24), gave a 100-baht banknote to one policeman at the station and asked him to buy cheroots for him. While the victim was smoking, another policeman came in and beat Soe Win to death with a baton. [Source: ABSDF]

In June 1994, SLORC troops commanded by Maj Soe Hlaing from IB 73 came to Say Pa Let Village, captured U Aw Htoo (55) and asked him where his son was. U Aw Htoo said his son had gone trading, but they didn't believe him so Maj Soe Hlaing took U Aw Htoo and detained him for 1 month in the military barracks. When his son had still not appeared after that time, U Aw Htoo was executed.

In mid-June 1994, Laydoo (30, son of Jalal Ahmed), Mohammed Siddique (35, son of Fazal Ahmed), Mohammed Tayub (30, son of Shafif) and Abdul Jabbar (45), from Barigya-bil in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, were tortured to death in the river by the SLORC troops. [Source: MOA]

On 20 June, combined troops from IB 32 led by Maj Tun Yee, under the command of LID 33, and IB 36 led by Column Comdr Thein Zaw, went into Papun area, razed Phoe Tha Nge's house to the ground and shot Than Aung, Phoe Htaw and Saw Win to death. [Source: KNU]

On 10 July, four Pilatus PC-7s flew out of Kengtung, Shan State, and intentionally attacked a defenceless Ban Akha Village of Akha people in Tachilek. The planes dropped eight 80-lb bombs on the village, fired rockets and strafed the village with 30mm guns. In Ban Akhu two boys (ages 7 and 14) were killed while they were playing outside and 5 others were wounded. The back of one child's head was blown off while the other boy was mortally wounded. Several other villages also had to abandon because of SLORC air raids. [Source: SHRF]



Villagers wounded by second air attack on 3 June 1994 to villages nearby the camps of Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army. (photo: VDS)

On 5 August, AIG (Kyi Shwe, Anti-Insurgent Group of the SLORC Army) soldiers and troops from IB 96 came to Shwe Yaw Pya Village, Thaton District, and called out Saw Ko Myint (37, son of Thaung Shwe). They asked him where the KNLA troops are and also ordered him to find them some guns. Saw Ko Myint didn't know where to find any guns for them, so the troops demanded money from him. He had no money, so they killed him. [Source: KYO]

On 17 August at 4 pm, AIG soldier Saw Cha Htoo came to K'dee Pu Village and shot and killed Saw Koo Rah (40). He also shot Nyunt Khin (50), severely wounding him, without cause or explanation. [Source: KYO]

On 18 August, Tsai Hla-thay, a Shan farmer, was executed by IB 246. He was among several people captured to carry ammunition and supplies for SLORC columns moving between Laikha and Kun Hing. Unable to carry the heavy loads any more, he was shot to death by an unnamed soldier. Another porter in the same group, Tsai Tsaam Mya, attempted to escape but was caught and beaten severely with sticks. [Source: SHRF]

On 22 August, SLORC troops from LIB 408 arrested U Shay (56), a bus comptroller from Ah Lae Sa Khan Village, Ye Phyu Township, at his home and brought him to the headquarters of LIB 408 in Paukpinkwin Village. He was accused of having contacts with the rebels and passing information to them. The victim's ears were cut off, nails were driven through his hands and legs, and then his tongue was cut out. He was finally killed by driving nails into the crown of his head. (Source: NMSP, NLD-LA, DPNS)

Sometime during the first week of September 1994, Noor Mohammed (about 45, son of Fakir Bakker), hailing from Myothugyi Village, 3 miles east of Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, was carrying some food items from Buthidaung Township. His bicycle was stopped for a routine check at a 3-mile outpost by Na Sa Ka forces. After searching, the official not only seized a small rice bag he was carrying but he was also beaten up for carrying objectionable

goods. At this Noor Mohammed lost control of his temper and resisted the in-charge, reportedly called Thet Naing and belonging to MIS Unit 10. Under the circumstances, the in-charge became furious and went for his pistol. Perceiving the danger, Noor Mohammed ran for his life and took refuge in an under construction building of the UNHCR but the 15 security forces of the 3-mile outpost who were after him finally caught their intended, only to be punished with summary death. His dead body was later handed over to his family members for burial. [Source: MOA]

On 7 September, the camp commander of SLORC's Ba Nwe Kla Camp ordered 2 villagers from Naw Htoo Day Village to deliver a letter to the commanders of Coy 4 of IB 24 at Kwi Lay Doh Camp. When they arrived there, soldiers shot one of them dead and the other villager was ordered to enter the camp. The camp commander told him that his friend had been shot for not showing the commander "proper respect". The villager who was shot dead was Saw Pa Kwee (57) from Naw Htoo Day Village. (Source: KYO)

2.1.2 Villagers Who Flee Forced Porterage Are Tortured And Murdered



The bodies of the three young men, prepared for cremation – Moo Ko, Ko Naing, and Thein Win (left, 18). The soldiers had broken all of Thein Win's teeth and his left arm before apparently stabbing him with a knife in his right ear. His ear was still pouring blood on the pillow when this photo was taken. (photo: KHRG)



Moo Ko (21), a Karen farmer who was captured by the SLORC troops from IB 27 when they entered Kru See Village, Thaton Township, Mon State, on 11 September. They cut his throat at 4 a.m. the next morning. Villagers later discovered his body. The bruises and broken bones all over his body indicate that he was probably very severely tortured before being executed. Moo Ko's father, the village headman, went to plead for the lives of his son and the two other men being held, but the soldiers beat him up and sent him away. (photo: KHRG)



A relative of one of the young men watches over their bodies. A human rights monitor recorded an "interview" with one of the men's mother – which only consists of several minutes of uncontrolled crying, interspersed with cries that her youngest son is dead. (photo: KHRG)

On 11 September at 8 p.m., Coy 1 of IB 27 under LID 33, Bn Comdr Chit Thaung, Second-in-Command Zaw Myint, Coy 1 Comdr Capt Win Tint, entered Kru See Village (Burmese: Kyaun Sein Village). All the villagers ran away because they were afraid to be taken as porters. The company opened fire.

Tee Toh Po, a 38-year-old Karen Buddhist farmer of Kru See Village, was hit in the leg by a bullet. The bone of his left lower leg was broken, but he managed to escape even though wounded. Maung Than Oo (26, son of Tee Der Day, married with 2 children) was hit in the jaw by a bullet during the shooting and died on the evening of 11 September.

Three other men were captured by the SLORC soldiers, and all of them were executed at 4 a.m. on 12 September. The victims were Moo Ko (21, son of Maung San Win, unmarried), Ko Naing (23, son of U Than Ngwe, unmarried) and Thein Win (18, son of U Aung Shwe, unmarried). All of these men were Karen Buddhist farmers from Kru See Village.

The villagers never recovered Maung Than Oo's body, but the other three were found. Moo Ko had been stabbed with a knife in his throat. His entire body had been broken all over – it was black, and the villagers could barely recognise him. Ko Naing's nose had been cut off and he had been stabbed in the eyes and in both of his ears. His body had also been broken all over and it was black. Thein Win had had all his teeth broken and his left arm was broken. The left side of his face had been cut with a knife, and his body had also been broken all over.

While the soldiers were in the village, they also looted all of the villagers' belonging from their homes: clothes, rice, pots, etc. They also took and ate all the chickens, fruit and vegetables they wanted. The village headman begged the company commander, Capt Win Tint, to release the four villagers, but he was beaten up and couldn't dare ask again.

One of the four killed, Moo Ko, was the village headman's son. On 12 September at noon, the villagers returned and found the bodies, then prepared them for cremation. After the bodies were found the human rights monitor attempted to interview the mother of one of the four killed, but she could only cry and say repeatedly "On my misfortune... my youngest son is dead... misfortune... my son is dead...". [Source: KHRG]



The body of Day Wah (27), the primary school teacher at Noh Pa Doh refugee village, Thailand. He was shot by SLORC soldiers when he crossed the Moei River to the Burma side to go fishing on 29 October 1994. As 4 villagers tried to escape back across the river into Thailand, he jumped into a small boat in order to rescue a woman who couldn't swim, and the soldiers shot him in the chest. (photo: KHRG)

On 12 September, soldiers from IB 27 (Bn Comdr Maj Aung Myint, deputy commanders Myint Zaw and Capt Win Tun) killed three villagers; Saw Ko Nee (23, son of U Thein Nwe), Saw Mkoe Ko (21, son of U Kya Thay) and Saw Thay Win (12, son of U Aung Shwe) in Thaton District. (Source: KYO)

On 18 September, the SLORC troops patrolling south of Buthidaung Township entered Saubrang Village and took away Moulvi Dil Monammed (25), alleging that he had been associated with anti-state elements. He was later shot dead without any trial. [Source: MOA]

On 20 September, the same group of SLORC troops who patrol south of Buthidaung Township, again entered Saubrang Village and arrested one Mohammed Ayub (23, son of Mohammed) and Mohammed Anwar (22, son of Moulvi Abu Bakker) without assigning any reason. Later, the two youths were inhumanely tortured and subsequently shot dead. [Source: MOA]

On 31 October, four army personnel including one sergeant belonging to the 525th Burma Regiment, stationed at Aung Mingala outpost entered the house of Ma Nu Begum (25, wife of Qarim) at Headmanpara Village and attempted to rape her. She resisted and the soldiers retreated. Having exasperated at their failed mission, the soldiers on their return to camp met Jalal Ahmed (about 12, son of Haffiz Ahmed) hailing from Chowdurya and the boy was beaten to death. Not satisfied with this, they killed Mahammed Hussain (60, son of Fetan Ali) from Rwanmagone Village, Buthidaung Township. The man was firstly tortured and later his head was disfigured due to severe strikes with a wooden bar. Mohammed Hussain was killed while he was working in his farmland for growing vegetables. [Source: MOA]

On 20 November, about 100 SLORC troops from Shwe Kyin-based IB 351 led by Deputy Bn Comdr Lt Col Kyaw Kyaw, penetrated into villages located north of Shwe Kyin and committed torture and killings of innocent villagers. That military column arrested U Saw Bi (58) from Shwe Kyin Township, Pegu Division, while he was working on his farm in Pade Gaw Parish, near a church in Swe Dein Village.

He was on his way to church for worship services, when SLORC troops accused him of having contact with the rebels. Although U Saw Bi said that he was only an innocent farmer and had not known anything about their question, the Deputy Bn Comdr brought U Saw Bi, who was tied up at that time, to a nearby monastery in Shan Su Village and forced the victim to dig an earthen pit.

Then the deputy commander bayoneted both sides of the victim's neck and fired into his abdomen with a 9mm pistol. Then buried the victim in the newly-dug pit at approximately 8:30 p.m. on 21 November. He left behind his wife Daw Naw Khu Hae and six children. [Source: NLD-LA]

On 18 December, companies from SLORC LIB 351 patrolled the area in Shwe Kyin Township, Pegu Division. At 11:45 a.m., when they arrived old Tai Pin Village, located north of Shwe Kyin Township, without asking anything, they opened fire on the villagers from Shan Su Village who were on their way to cut bamboo for their household use. Ko Hla Myint (35, husband of Ma Pu) was hit by three G-3 bullets and killed. SLORC troops took away a sarong and a bag in which was carried money. Other villagers escaped. [Source: NLD-LA]

On 22 December, SLORC troops from LIB 351 shot Maung Zaw Naing Oo (son of U Kyaw Hlaing) and other 5 people from Ma Bee Lay Village near Kaw Htaw Kaloe River, Shwe Kyin Township. Maung Zaw Naing Oo was hit 2 shot at the chest and found dead the following morning at a place 3 furlongs from where the incident occurred. [Source: NLD-LA]

On 29 December at 11:00 p.m., SLORC troops from IB 73 threw a grenade into a crowd while they were holding a religious ceremony in In Gyin Koe Village, Htantabin Township, Pegu Division, causing the deaths of 10 villagers and wounding 24 others. [PDC]

On 31 December, Saw Lar Noe (20, son of Tee Kyaw Moe) from Tar Baw Khee Village, Thaton Township, Mon State, was shot dead without any reason by SLORC troops from IB 119. [PDC]



The body of a civilian porter murdered by SLORC troops, seen floating in the Salween in late February 1995 just downriver from SLORC's new army camp at Kyauk Nyat. He was most likely tied up and then stabbed to death or had his throat cut. (photo: Burmese Relief Centre.)



The body of a civilian porter murdered by SLORC troops, seen floating in the Salween in late February 1995 just downriver from SLORC's new army camp at Kyauk Nyat. He was most likely tied up and then stabbed to death or had his throat cut. (photo: Burmese Relief Centre.)

2.1.3 Death In Custody

Twenty-nine-year old Yan Gyi Aung from No. 4, Zee Taw Quarter, Pa-an Township, Karen State, had fled to the KNU headquarters soon after the coup in 1988. The following year he decided to return to Burma, or the “legal fold”, as SLORC puts it. Yan Gyi Aung was promptly arrested and sentenced to the death penalty by a military tribunal before the 1990 election. Buddhist monks in Karen State appealed to the court and his sentence was reduced to life imprisonment. In March 1994, the victim died of cholera after receiving no medical treatment while in prison. (Source: BIG)

2.1.4 Rohingya Muslim Fishermen Executed

On 24 March, members of the Burmese military's Western Military Command patrolling the Naf River found a group of Rohingya Muslims fishing from a small country boat. The soldiers tried to extort money from the fishermen, but when they were unable to do so, tied them up with rope and brought them to Balu Khali Village in Maungdaw Township.

Eight of the Rohingya fishermen were interrogated and tortured for five days; although it is not known what statements the arrested Muslims had given to their torturers, the Na Sa Ka in-charge ordered to shoot all the arrested persons and accordingly, on 31 March at about 4:30 p.m., all of them were brought out of the camp with their hands tied behind their backs and they were made to stand in a row. Subsequently, they were all shot by firing squad.

Persons who were killed without any trial and at the order of Na Sa Ka in-charge, Balukhali are:

- 1) Roostum Ali (35, son of Feran Ali) from Shwezapara, Maungdaw
- 2) Mohammed Shafi (27, son of Feta Ali) from Shwezapara, Maungdaw
- 3) Zafar Ahmed (22, son of Kala Meah) from Shwezapara, Maungdaw
- 4) Abu Jamil (35, son of Feran Ali) from Shwezapara, Maungdaw
- 5) Rahimullah (35, son of Abul Kasim) from Alaythangyaw, Maungdaw
- 6) Rashid Ahmed (22, son of Syed Akbar) from Alaythangyaw, Maungdaw
- 7) Abu Taher (27, son of Mohammed Hossain) from Alaythangyaw, Maungdaw
- 8) Mohammed Rafi (17, son of Aboo) from Akyab

It is to be reported further that the Muslim villagers of nearby villages who have contact with the Na Sa Ka concerned had earlier approached the officials with a request that the arrested persons were poor fishermen and did not have any bad record in their villages and should be released. However, the in-charge reportedly warned the villagers not to make any further request and went ahead with his decision to execute the fishermen.

The people of north Arakan have long been targets of whimsical killing by military officers. If villagers report the crime to higher officers, no charges of arrests are made. This particular incident, carried out despite the presence of UNHCR officials in Maungdaw, indicates that SLORC will not easily stop these types of persecution against the Muslims of Arakan. [Source: MOA]

(III) ARBITRARY DETENTION AND ENFORCED OR INVOLUNTARY DISAPPEARANCES

On the one hand, military tribunals are no longer mass-sentencing civilians. However, the other hand doesn't seem to be any fairer when looked at in detail. The military has been given de facto summary powers. Judges are hand-picked by SLORC and the judicial system on the whole lacks any distance from the regime, but an obvious outgrowth of SLORC. This lack of impartiality and independence means that many trials are unfair, and thus the sentences are illicit, making many detentions arbitrary.

While the military junta has claimed that it set free to 1,700 political prisoners, names were not released who these people were. Therefore, no independent verification that these people were indeed arrested on political charges could be made. What criteria were used to decide who should be released, or were these releases unconditional, no one could confirm. The releases seemed as arbitrary as the original arrests themselves.

SLORC itself publicly commented in 1992 that those political detainees released were people who no longer posed a threat to the State, and that follows for those recently released from custody. However, a number of key leaders remain victims of arbitrary detention, and new political prisoners are receiving harsher sentencing, as well as the fact that virtually no one charged with a political offence has been acquitted. Trials appear to have predetermined outcomes, trial procedures being only summary and not accountable to any legal authority or principles.

Meanwhile, disappearances continue to be difficult to record because of strict censorship imposed by SLORC on communications both within the country and abroad, and the fact that disappearances can rarely be traced. People are taken from their beds in the middle of the night, or picked up on the street by police and military, but seldom charged or publicly acknowledged to be in custody. Porters remained the largest uncountable numbers of disappeared people under these circumstances.

3.1. 96 Still Detained In Notorious Insein Jail

Insein prison is situated near downtown Rangoon. It has been the site for political detention since British colonial rule. The prison is still being used by Burma's totalitarian regime; both the BSPP and the present SLORC have kept and continue to keep their critics there.

Since 1992 SLORC has released over 2,000 political prisoners, including some prominent inmates. However, according to certain international human rights organisations and inside sources, there are over 500 political prisoners still being detained. But no one can really confirm these figures, as SLORC is very secretive in these matters.

[Editor's note: the International Red Cross claimed its office in Rangoon in early 1995 after being repeatedly refused permission to contact and interview prisoners.]

A recent report from Rangoon revealed that 96 students who had been arrested in the 1989 and 1991 protests in Rangoon are still being held in Insein's separate jails. They are not in the main jail; nobody knows how many students are still detained in the main gaol. The students in the separate jail were sentenced to between 10 to 20 years' imprisonment. Some are as young as 18 years of age; some are high school students.

A source in Rangoon said that they will not be released in the near future but will continue to be detained. This is despite SLORC's recent amnesty program. [Source: "Burma Issues" and Burmese contacts]

3.2. Profiles of SLORC'S Latest Political Detainees

U Khin Zaw Win (44, dental surgeon) was a graduate student who worked for the UNICEF in Rangoon from 1991 to 1993. He was the first victim on the recent series of arrests and was arrested on 2 July at Mingaladon International Airport in Rangoon as he was about to board a plane to Singapore.

He was studying in Singapore for a master's degree on a Singaporean scholarship. He returned to Burma in order to prepare an academic paper on the current situation in Burma, for a thesis he was working on for his post-graduate studies at Singapore University.

He was arrested as anti-SLORC pamphlets were allegedly found in his luggage. He was brought to an MIS office on Kaba Aye Road and later on transferred to Insein Prison where, when he was allowed to meet with his wife, she was blindfolded during the entire meeting.

U Sein Hla Oo (56, journalist and an elected MP of NLD) is a graduate of Rangoon University, former film critic, and editor of the "Botathaung" newspaper where he wrote under the pen name Maung Nwe Oo.

While he was in the university, he worked as the university correspondent for both the "Botataung" and "Tun Daily" newspapers, and was also a member of Rangoon University Student Union. He participated in the 7 July Uprising in 1962 against the military coup staged by the Ne Win regime.

In 1988 he won the D.J. Jefferson Award from the East-West Centre in Honolulu. He played an active role in the 1988 democracy protests and was head for Strike Committee of the Journals and Magazines Group. Sacked following the SLORC coup, he joined the NLD and became a member of the Central Information and Press Department.

Briefly arrested in February 1990, he won the seat for Insein constituency (2) in the May 1990 election but was subsequently arrested for the second time on 23 October 1990 and sentenced to 10 years' hard labour under section 124 of the Penal Code for "withholding information relating to High Treason".

He was sentenced in 1991 to 10 years in prison in connection with the establishment of the NCGUB and was freed in 1992 under SLORC's amnesty programme. He was re-arrested on 4 August 1994 with the allegation of having links with democratic opposition groups and giving anti-SLORC information to foreign media and diplomats.

Khin Maung Swe (aka Maung Ye Kyaw) was born on 20 July 1942. He is the son of U Maung Aye and Daw Tin Kyi in Ngathai Chaung, Irrawaddy Division. He matriculated from ABM Mission School in 1960, and graduated from Rangoon University in 1966 with a Bachelor of Science (Geology).

In the same year he worked as geologist on the official staff of the Myanmar Corporation, being promoted to second official in 1974 and senior official in 1982.

He further studied Oil Development and Oil Exploration and Drilling training in the USA in 1968 and a training for the prevention of explosion of oil wells in Singapore in 1978.

During the uprising, he was secretary of Labour Union at Myanmar Oil Corporation (Head Office). Later, he became an active member of the Central Executive Committee of the NLD, as well as Chairman of the Central Information and Press Department.

In May 1990, he was elected representative for Sanchaung constituency, Rangoon Division. He lived with his wife Daw Win Win Aye, a bank accountant, on 18 Pyarpon Street, Sanchaung Township.

Daw San San Nwe, writer, member of NLD Central Committee, was a well-known journalist and known under the pen name San San Nwe Tharrawaddy. She was arrested in 1989 with the allegation of insisting unrest and released in 1990.

She and her daughter, Myat Mo Mo Tun, were re-arrested on 4 August 1994 with the allegation of having links with Democratic opposition groups and giving anti-SLORC information to foreign media and diplomats.

Myat Mo Mo Tun was a computer science student at Rangoon University and also part time compositor at a printing press.

Thierry Grandidier and Nick Nostiz arrived on May 19 and May 23 respectively, with the intention of holding a "one-man" protest of Aung San Suu Kyi's detention. On 27 May 1994 at 4 pm in front of the City Hall near Sule Pagoda, Grandidier stood with a banner which read, "Release Aung San Suu Kyi".

Although no police or soldiers stopped him, his presence started to draw a number of passers-by, estimated at around 100 Burmese. Nostiz urged onlookers, without success, to disperse for fear of their arrests. "He [Grandidier] told them to 'Go away. Don't stop.' But people just stayed on and some even clapped their hands," Nostiz reported.

"We planned it [the protest] as a symbolic gesture. We did not want any Burmese to be arrested or involved, because nobody cares when they are arrested or

tortured." After 15 minutes, a civilian approached Grandider, snatched the banner and ran into City Hall where government officials and soldiers were stationed.

Nostiz then left for a local hotel while Grandider started to walk towards the nearby US embassy, where he had left his passport for safe-keeping. A now larger crowd of people followed him. Several people were then arrested, handcuffed and taken away in a military truck from in front of the US embassy by some "civilians and officers in olive uniforms". The fate of these people, reported by Amnesty International to be seven people, is unknown. [Source: AI, KHRG, "The Nation"]

[See also under "Eye-witness Accounts", interview 1, 7, 13, 24-26, 28-29, 38, 41, 57, 65, 67-68, 70, 73, 79-81, 86-88, 93, 97, 106-107, 109-112, 114, 117-118, 127, 129, 134-135, 137, 139-143]

3.3. List of Incidents

In 1994 there was a festival in Ma Sein Village in Mawleik and the SLORC troops there authorised gambling. During the festival, it was reported that innocent villagers were arbitrarily beaten by SLORC troops. Over 20 people were confined and fettered in stocks. Each detainee was forced to pay a fine of 250 Ks before detention and another 250 Ks for their release. A porter fee in Mawleik ranges around 80 Ks per household. [Source: ABSDF]

On 7 January, Bn Comdr Myat Soe of IB 60 arrested village headman Tee Phar Nyo of Nyaung Tan Village, Kyauk Kyi Township, Pegu Division. On 14 January, another village headman Saw Poe Poe was captured with his bullock cart and sent to Kyauk Kyi. In fear of SLORC troops' further arrests and torture, on 15 January, the villagers moved to Tha Ye Silaw, Kha Keh Kho, Poe Loe No Phoe and Natha Kwin villages.

On 12 January at about 7 p.m. during the Karen New Year celebrations, SLORC troops from IB 60 came to Po Lo No Po Village [Burmese: Kyun Gone Village] in Kyauk Kyi Township, Pegu Division, and surrounded N's house. They tied up her father and her at gunpoint and dragged them outside, where she was tied to a mango tree and surrounded by 5 armed soldiers. They interrogated her about her husband and threatened her all night.

[Her husband S was a cattle trader and had run his business in the area controlled by the KNU since November 1993. Because of his business in that area, SLORC troops accused him of having contact with KNU and tried to arrest him since then.

Officer Win Oo from IB 60 sent an order via the village headman calling Naw Ray Say to come to his outpost. When she arrived, she was interrogated about the whereabouts of her husband and forced to give him Ks 1,500 and two ducks. He then released her on her sworn bond not to run away.]

The next day they released her father but took her to In Net Village, and then brought to MIS office in Kyauk Kyi. They detained her there and forced to cook for them for 2 days. They asked her about her husband and she explained them she didn't know where he was and that the accusation on her husband was not true.

After two days they took her to IB 60 headquarters and put her under guard. She said that while there, she saw about 30 other villagers from nearby villages who were held. The next day she was released after signing a bond.

On arriving home, she learned that her relatives had to pay Ks 6,600 and three bags of rice for her release. She also found that while she had been gone the soldiers destroyed her house and driven her relatives out of the village. She took her children and lived in a hut in the forest for temporary shelter, and then moved to a safer place to escape from further ill-treatment by SLORC. Most of her relatives moved to other villages as well. [Source: KHRG]

The following civilians from Naw Yu Village in Kyauk Kyi Township were arrested and imprisoned by Capt Khin Maung Oo of IB 60 in January 1994. All of these villagers are now imprisoned in Kyauk Kyi Township. SLORC troops were threatened with execution if their families could not pay Ks 20,000 for each of them:

Name	Sex	Age	Name of Father	Date of Arrest
1) Saw Soe Win	Male	20	Saw Hla Maung	12/1/94
2) Saw Maung Ni	Male	46	Saw Aye Maung	13/1/94
3) Naw Sher Ma Ma	Female	20	Saw Maung Ni	16/1/94
4) Naw Myit	Female	50	Saw Pai	16/1/94
5) Naw Mi Thein	Female	25	Saw Koe Toe	16/1/94
6) Saw Lar Set	Male	30	San Min	16/1/94
7) Saw Toe Dee	Male	35	Saw Aung Htoo	16/1/94
8) Saw Maung Thauung	Male	40	Saw Maung Shwe	16/1/94
9) Saw Win Maung	Male	24	Saw Maung Karr	16/1/94
10) Saw Ber Lar	Male	22	Saw Maung Karr	16/1/94

[Source: KNU]

On 22 January, 2nd Column led by Maj Thu Soe and Maj Soe Win from LIB 120, under the command of LID 33 forced, the villagers from Htaw Kalaw Khee Village in Thaton District to cook for the porters at gunpoint.

On 2 February, IB 60 commanded by Capt Nyi Soe arrested Saw Cho Cho (son of Saw Chit Ngwe of Tor Por Village, Kyauk Kyi Township). The victim was accused of being an informer for the KNU and was severely beaten and kicked with military boots. The SLORC troops tried to force him to confess to being a Karen informer, but Saw Cho Cho refused. He was taken to Kyauk Kyi Town and thrown in prison. His parents were then informed that their son would be released if they paid Ks 20,000, but his parents are poor farmers and cannot raise the money. Saw Cho Cho is still detained in Kyauk Kyi Prison. [Source: KNU]

On 10 February, Maj Thauung Sein, commander of 2nd Column of IB 55, arrested local people in Klaw Mee Deh Village, Taungoo District. The villagers were tied up and detained in a small room of a house before being press-ganged into portorage.

On 20 February, IB 24 troops commanded by Capt Thein Zan arrested Saw Po Khin (male), Saw Pah Bu (male), Saw Win Kyaing (male), Maung Shwe Win (male) and Naw Kha Ri (female), all from Koh Kyah Tai Village. The soldiers accused them of being insurgents and laying landmines. They were all severely beaten, and were only released when the village headman vouched for them and they had paid ransom of Ks 4,500 each. [Source: KNU]

On 7 March, 2nd Column of IB 99 arrested 24 traders and captured 48 cows at Htee Khee in Taungoo District.

On 8 April, four villagers from Nat Ywa Village, Taungoo District – U Tun, Than Lwin, Win Sein and Poe Lon – were accused of not fulfilling demands and were arrested by the police officer in charge and his policemen from Htan Ta Bin Police Station. They were detained for 4 days and were forced to pay a ransom for their release set by the police officer in this case, not a court of law. Moreover, on 9 April, Maung Aye and another villager from Nat Ywa Village, Taungoo District were charged with the same case, detained for 24 hours and forced to pay Ks 2,500 ransom. [Source: KYO]

Ko Ba Tun (aka Noor Mohammed, 32) was a graduate from Mandalay University and a well-known social worker in Maungdaw proper. He was the son of Ali Hussein, an ex-police officer; his father-in-law was Hajee Abul Khair, also an ex-police officer and MP. Despite Ko Ba Tun's background, this prominent citizen and father of four children was arrested by MIS in May 1994 and since his fate has not been known along with those 170 Rohingya intellectuals still under detention by SLORC. Until today, the authorities have not sent them before the court with any specific charges nor their relatives have been allowed to see them. Sources presume that all these persons were tortured to death while in custody. [Source: MOA]

On 21 June, SLORC troops from IB 263, led by Maj Htay Aung under the command of Southern Command, arrested traders at Lae Say Naw Pass located between Khu Mee Deh and Leh Kalar Deh in Taungoo Township. Each trader was forced by the SLORC soldiers to pay Ks 200,000 for their release. [Source: KYO]

On 6 August, Thay Sa Paut Thanminee (clearly an alias which means "Treacherous Steel") and SLORC soldiers based at Ka Ma San Village came together to Mee Chaung Aye Village and captured Maw Ta Lay, Saw Kla Hla and village headman Saw Naing Naing and demanded money from them. Saw Kla Hla gave them Ks 6,000 and was released. The other two men were tortured brutally. [Source: KYO]

On 7 August at night, in Monywa six people who were former leaders of the strike committee and were earlier detained, found themselves arbitrarily re-arrested by SLORC troops. Two detainees came from Aung Chan Thar Quarter of Monywa. [Source: ABSDF]

Maung Kyaw Thein, Chief of the News and Information Committee of SNDSA in Thingankyune Township, found it necessary to flee to the Thai-Burmese border after IB 3 placed him under arrest at his home on the night of 9 August. When he had been released from arrest he immediately fled under threat of his life. [Source: ABSU]

On 11 August, in Papun District, SLORC troops from LIB— arrested 21 villagers from 3 different villages including men, women, and even 2 boys only 3 years old. They were taken and held prisoner at the battalion's camp and interrogated by an intelligence captain. The captain and battalion leaders demanded two guns and one walkie-talkie, and said that if the other villager didn't get these for them then they would kill all 21 who were held hostage at their camp. The other villagers were afraid they would be killed, so they pooled their resources and effort and went searching for guns and a walkie-talkie. They finally managed to obtain them and gave the purchased goods to the soldiers on 27 August. Only then were the villagers released. The following 21 people were arrested and held:

No.	Name	Age	Sex
1)	Naw A	41	Female
2)	Naw B	16	Female
3)	Saw C	35	Male
4)	Pu D	52	Male
5)	Pa E	29	Male
6)	Naw F	30	Female
7)	Pa G	36	Male
8)	Naw H	28	Female
9)	Saw I	29	Male
10)	Pa J	48	Male
11)	Naw K	40	Female
12)	Naw L	42	Female
13)	Naw M	48	Female
14)	Naw N	38	Female
15)	Saw O	3	Male
16)	Pa P	52	Male
17)	Saw Q	30	Male
18)	Naw R	42	Female
19)	Pa S	3	Male
20)	Saw T	32	Male
21)	Saw U	40	Male

One of the prisoners who escaped (most of the others were still being detained) told the following story on 26 August:

“SLORC soldiers from 1st Column of LIB came to V Village and captured me together with six other villagers, including two women. They took us outside the village, tied us all up with the same rope and covered our faces. They kept the two women together. They took all of us to W Army Camp and beat us up, asking us to tell them where the gun and the walkie-talkie were. We told them we didn't know anything. The soldier who interrogated us was X. Everybody was tortured. Later they released the headman and sent an order with him for all our wives to bring rice for us. When my wife brought rice for me, they captured her as well. Anything the women brought other than rice was taken and eaten by the soldiers themselves. They

ordered the headman to go find a gun and a walkie-talkie, but he didn't dare go so they told two of us to go along with him. The three of us went back to our village and then we ran away, and then I met you gathering information. My wife is still on their camp. I don't know what will happen to all the people there." [see also below "Selected SLORC Orders"] [Source: KHRG]

On 9 September, Bn Comdr Thay Soe of IB 63 went to Pe Le Naw Village and captured two villagers; Aung Tha Nyunt (47) and Saw Aye Kyaw (46). Thay Soe took the two men to his camp and detained them there. On 13 September, the soldiers took them from the camp to kill them. Aung Tha Nyunt managed to escape and survived. It is not yet known whether the soldiers killed Saw Aye Kyaw or not. (Source: KYO)

On 17 September, SLORC troops from IB 62 led by Deputy Bn Comdr Maj Ohn Myint took a young monk, who was approximately 25 years old, from the monastery in Kaw Bain Village, Kawkaeik Township, Mon State, and accused him of having contact with Mon rebels, forced him to disrobe and then arrested him. There has been no news about him since then. According to the villagers there, the victim was ordained one year ago after being arrested by Thai police, when he was charged with illegal working in Thailand and thereafter sent to the notorious IDC in Bangkok, to be later repatriated by Thai authorities to Halockhani refugee camp. He stayed at the refugee camp for some time and then went back to his native village, Kaw Bain. Local people strongly believed that he was under suspicion by the SLORC troops of having contact with NMSP, forced to disrobe and arrested on the basis of staying at Halockhani Mon refugee camp for some time. [Source: CPPSM]

On 17 September, SLORC troops from IB 62 led by Bn Comdr Ohn Myint, arrested the secretary of Nai Phu Village and his wife, and tortured them without questioning. The troops also took away the property of the secretary and smashed a video machine. Nai Chit Pale from Kaw Pauk Village, Nai Yu from Kaw Tun Village and Nai Hla Sein and Nai Hlaing from Kha Byaw Village were also subjected to torture by IB 62 without any reason. [Source: DPNS/NLD-LA]

On 2 October, Kyaw Pu and his brother-in-law Lar Khao from Htee Mu Htan Village were arrested between Mae Ta Neh and Htee Mu by a SLORC military column from LIB 355 while the villagers were searching for their lost elephant. They were asked whether they knew someone called Ki Gay. When the villagers said they knew him, the troops continued to ask them whether Ki Gay has a walkie-talkie and the type of his weapon. When the victims said they did not know, they were accused of being spies sent by Ki Gay and subjected to various forms of torture for 2 days. Since the victims were poor, they could not afford for proper treatment as there is no clinic in the area, and they suffered continual pain for many days. [Source: Bar Zi Tan]

On 26 November, over 100 SLORC troops from LIB 410 led by Capt Min Nyo and Coy Comdr Capt Than Wai arrived at Kaw Zar Village in Ye Township, arrested the villagers without any reason and took away their property. The victims were Nai Nyan Thein, Nai Shi, Nai Pra and their families. SLORC troops took away 10,000 Ks in cash and valuable property from Nai Nyan Thein's house, 15,000 Ks in cash, furniture and other property from Nai Shi's house and 5,000 Ks in cash and

other valuable things from Nai Pra's house. Nai Nyan Thein and Nai Shi were forced into portering by SLORC troops. [Source: CPPM/DPNS/NLD-LA/NMSP]

Starting on 27 November until 1 December, SLORC troops from IB 62 led by Deputy Bn Comdr Maj Ohn Myint went into Kyaik Ga Bin, Kyauk Ye Twin, Kaw Kha Lein and Mon Hlaing villages, Kawkareik Township, Karen State, arrested 12 innocent Mon civilians, accused them of being sympathisers of the Mon rebels and committed torture while conducting interrogations. SLORC troops raided Kyaik Ga Bin village on 27 September, Kyauk Ye Twin village on 28 November, Mon Hlaing village on 29 November and Kaw Kha Lein village on 1 December.

Those were Nai Naung, Nai Kyi and and Nai Dauk Bu from Mon Hlaing Village, Nai Kha Lae (village headman), Nai Kane (Secretary) and Nai Kyaing from Kyaik Ga Bin Village; Nai Mon Kyi, Nai Ye Kyaw (Chairman), Nai Kun Jit and Nai Nyunt Win (Secretary) from Kyauk Ye Twin Village; and Nai Hta Lon (Chairman) and Nai Meit (Secretary) from Kaw Kha Lein village. According to reliable sources, all the victims were subjected to fatal beatings and torture by the SLORC troops. They were beaten with rifle butts, kicked with combat boots and punched. In addition, the victims' heads were covered with a plastic bag and water was poured on them, their whole bodies except their heads were buried, while interrogated and beaten. The soldiers then threatened to kill the victims when they did not confess what the troops accused them of. The victims were released only after being subjected to fatal beatings and torture by the troops. (Source: NMSP/CPPSM)

On the evening on 1 January 1995, LIB 410 troops led by Bn Comdr Ye Myint penetrated Kaw Zar Village and took 12 young females with them to Paukpinkwin Village, Yebyu Township. The victims were Mi Mu (15), Mi Khaing (17), Mi Mee (13), Mi Kyi Htay (16), Mi Thu (18), Mi Cho Lay (18), Mi Aye Khaing (18), Mi Mar Lwin (13), Mi Hnaung (20), Mi Kha Baik Klu (20) and Mi Kun Shi (38). [Source: DPNS/NLD-LA/NMSP]

(IV) TORTURE AND OTHER CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

Lt Khin Maung Win of Regt 436 has become notorious in the area. He has issued orders that whenever he passes through a village, all villagers must crouch to the ground before him with heads bowed. If he encounters people in the fields, they must also drop their work and crouch, head bowed, before him. Any villager who dares to raise their head receives 3 or 4 violent blows from the cane which he always carries with him. Villagers in the area have nicknamed him "Bo Chay Lone", which means "Lieutenant Cane". While doing slave labour for the military, villagers in the area are also now taunted by a popular joke among the soldiers, who say to them, "You want democracy? This is it, enjoy it." (Source: NLD-DA)

Reports from all over the country show that brutality of the military is rising. Routinely in rural areas forms of torture or other ill treatment are meted out to villagers who have done nothing to deserve this.

On 7 April 1993, Maung Pe (27, son of U Pa Yaw) from Pha Lan Taung Village, Pa-an Township, Karen State, was accused by IB 84 troops of having contact with rebels (KNU) and he was subsequently tortured with slashes to his neck, hand and leg, in addition to slicing off one inch of his penis. Miraculously, he survived. (photo: NLD)



For example, the barbaric treatment of Rohingya in Buthidaung Township has been continuing with more intensity, and there have been unconfirmed reports of rape, torture and killings of more than 50 Rohingya Muslims including young women in the area by the Burmese military positioned in the region.

But this treatment is not confined only to ethnic areas. Individual and mass forms of brutality are also occurring in large numbers in urban settings. Burmans, pregnant women, elderly and even children are victims of SLORC, while even within the Tatmadaw, there exists inhumane treatment by military leaders.

[See also under “Eye-witness Accounts”, interview 2-4, 6, 8-11, 13-15, 17-18, 20-24, 26-27, 32, 35-38, 41, 44-45, 47-51, 54-56, 58-61, 63-67, 70-73, 75-77, 79-80, 83-94, 97-98, 100-102, 104, 109-112, 114, 117-118, 122, 125-127, 130-138, 140-144]

4.1. List of Incidents

On 15 January, Coy 5 of IB 69, commanded by Maj Myint Kyi, raided Na Moop Village, Mong Young Parish, Hsenwi Township, northern Shan State and took prisoner the headman, Khing Kyarn. He was tied up by soldiers and suspended from the ceiling. Not only was he beaten but also burnt during an interrogation. On the same day, Ai La, a villager, was arrested and tortured by cutting the skin on his chest in various places. The victim had to be later hospitalised. [Source: SHRF]

On 16 January Coy 5 of IB 69, commanded by Maj Myint Kyi ransacked Mong Young Parish, Hsenwi Township. Sarng Kham Luan, a resident of Worn Parng Yarp Village in the same parish was arrested. During an interrogation, he was severely tortured by cutting the skin on his chest. [Source: SHRF]

On 18 January, Maj Myint Kyi's troops of Coy 5 of IB 69, while travelling to Na Moop Village, pillaged Worn Parng Yarp Village, Mong Young Parish, Hsenwi Township, and Sarng Kham Luen, Nai Poo, Sarng Khe and the entire household of Pu Loi Sarng Sue were beaten by soldiers. [Source: SHRF]

On 20 January, after setting fire to property in Norng Sarng Village, the troops from Coy 3 of IB 240 raided and ransacked Na Moop Village and arrested the village headman, Sarng Swe. They covered the local leader's head with a plastic bag and started questioning him, beating him for most of the time. Then the SLORC arrested Mong Ngwe, the youth leader in the same village, and administered a vicious beating that caused a severe injury to his head. [Source: SHRF]

On 24 January, Coy 3 of IB 240 returned to Na Moop Village. After arriving in the village, the following 10 local women were arrested and beaten without any apparent reason; Awk Loi Kya, Awk Loi Luen, Ea Lu, Awk Loi Pu, Ea Tsing Nyunt, Awk Loi Nang, Awk Loi Tun, Ea Shwe, Ea L and Awk Loi Parng. [Source: SHRF]

On 27 January, Coy 2 Comdr Soe Win of IB 24, under the command of TOC 331 of LID 33, entered Lay Kay Village, Thaton Township, Mon State, and shot Po Li Kee (20), causing him serious wounds. [Source: ABSDF/KNU]

On 3 February, Maung Myint Soe of Win Ta Pan Village, Thaton Township, was beaten without any reason by Lt Man Son from SLORC IB 84. The victim's fate is unknown. (Source: ABSDF/KNU)

On 3 February, five villagers – Maung Chit, Maung Shwe Lher, Saw Thay Ler, Saw Per Klai and Por Ker Ra – from Kyu Kyi Village, Thaton District, who

returned from a funeral service were arrested and severely beaten by SLORC troops from IB 84 of LID 99. [Source: ABSDF/KNU]

On 23 February, SLORC IB 39 went to Tee Lo Village (aka Daw Moo Deh Village) in Taungoo District, and arrested one man and three women. All four were beaten severely and then left to die. (Source: KHRG)

On 25 February, SLORC troops from IB 26 arrived at Koe Nee Village, Taungoo District, and severely beat Maung Kan Soe. (Source: KNU)

On 17 March, SLORC Coy Comdr Aung Myat Kyaw from IB 73 tortured 18 villagers from Ko Nee Village in Nyaunglebin District. (Source: KNU)

On 21 April, SLORC troops from IB 425 and 426 conducted a raid while they on patrol in Thung Pung Parish, Mong Morn Township, southern Shan State. Arrests were made of Sai Sarng (41) from Worn Mai Village, Lung Khin (55) from Ye Won Village and Sarn Pya (30) from Worn Fai Lin Village. SLORC troops accused the villagers of having contact with the rebels. During the interrogation, the villagers were forced to confess to the above-mentioned accusation although there was a lack of corroborating evidence. They were again tortured while being repeatedly questioned, resulting in their premature deaths by torture and severe beatings. [Source: SHRF]

On 24 April, Comdr Aung Kyaing arrested and tortured Saw Kho Lar (40) living New Village, Kyauk Kyi Township, Nyaung Lebin District. The victim was beaten with a G-13 rifle butt in the head and his face was tread on with combat boots. Then he was taken to Hteik Htu outpost. [Source: KYO]

On 24 April, Saw Kho Deh (35) of New Village, Kyauk Kyi Township, Nyaung Lebin District, was arrested and beaten by Comdr Aung Kyaing from IB 351. The victim was threatened by pushing a pistol in and out of his mouth. The victim managed to escape while he was asked to bring his headman to the troops. [Source: KYO]

On 25 April, Maung Pyone Cho (35) of Ma Taw Koo Village, Kyauk Kyi Township, Nyaung Lebin District, was accused of being a member of the KNU by Lt Tun Tun of IB 35. The victim was beaten, his face was covered with a plastic bag and repeatedly punched. Then, he was brought to Hteik Htu outpost and detained there. [Source: KYO]

On 25 April, SLORC troops from IBs 425 and 426 entered Parnng Luen Village, Thung Pong Parish in Hse Seng Township, southern Shan State, and arrested Paw Sarng Vee (male, 35). SLORC troops accused him of having contact with the rebels. His watch was taken by the soldiers during the interrogation. Soldiers not only beat and kicked him, but also dripped hot melted wax on his stomach. His shin bones were rolled with a gun magazine. He managed to escape while the soldiers were planning to kill him after the interrogation. [Source: SHRF]

On 31 May SLORC troops from 2nd Column of IB 39 came to Ta Pah Kee Village in Taungoo District and looted Ks 250,000 in cash from Saw Potha Dah, headman of Mah Lah Ko Village, and his friend. They took Potha Dah, his wife, a church deacon, and Ta Pah Kee Village headman Saw Pa Aye along with them as

captives to their camp, where Saw Pa Aye was tortured seriously while the troops demanded another Ks 250,000 for their release. (Source: KNU)

On 8 June SLORC troops commanded by Lt Aung Tun from Coy 4 of IB 34 came to Naw K'Toh Village, Thaton District, and shot Dee Pa Leh's cow and took it for their rations. They beat the owner once and his son three times with a stick without any reason, and then they scathed his son with a gunshot. (Source: KNU)

On 3 July, commanding officer Saw Win Naing from IB 73 arrested innocent villagers Maung Htwe and Ko Thein from Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District. The victims were subjected to a severe beating without cause.



Here, a photograph of Maung Pe's healed leg. The wound was inflicted by SLORC troops from IB 84 during torture involving a knife. (photo: NLD-LA)

On 15 August, local SLORC troops in Sakhan Gyi Village, Win Yan Township, tortured Maung Tun Kyi, Toe Phaw, Phar Tha, Daw Mu Dah, Daw Pi and Dae Di about robbery and tortured them when they said they did not know what the soldiers were talking about. Of them, Maung Tun Kyi was again tortured on 1 October and sought treatment because of injuries by soldiers. [Source: Bar Zi Tan]

On 13 September, SLORC soldiers from IB 63 came to Saw Law Kloh Village, Thaton District, and seized three villagers; Saw Ko Nyeh (43), Saw Ku Nu (43) and Saw Pa Naw Si (37). The soldiers tied up the three men and took them to the soldiers' camp, where they beat the men, poked them with a knife until they were bleeding, and beat their heads so hard that they defecated. (Source: KYO)

On 27 September, SLORC troops from LIB 355 led by a certain Coy Comdr kicked Kyaw Pay and Phar Sar Mi, villagers from Htee Mu Kalay (aka Ah Pyin Kwin Ka Lay) Village in Myawaddy Township, with combat boots. The victims were also punched with the barrels of rifles and underwent a forced interrogation asking whether they knew Ki Kay from the KNU. When the victims replied by saying "No", they were beaten more. They were blindfold with a sarong and threatened with death. While they were waiting for their last breath, they were told

that villagers from their village suffered only beatings, and that for villagers from No Phone, another village, anybody found even outside the village will be shot dead on sight. When the troops left, the victims tried very hard to loosen their ropes. U Ku Lu and Kyaw Haw Maw from Htee Mu Ka Village were also forced to lie down on the ground by the troops from LIB 357. Both victims were beaten with the butt and flat of a knife which belonged to U Ku Lu and they were tread on and kick by the whole column except those who had already passed them before. [Source: “Bar Zi Tan”]

On 27 September, Naw Khu Tel, mother of a 5-month-old baby, and Naw Mi Taw Wah were also beaten by SLORC troops from LIB 355. [Source: “Bar Zi Tan”]

On 29 September, Dah Naw Htoo and Phar Yoe were beaten and asked whether they saw a stranger in the area. When the victims replied truthfully by saying “No”, they were forcibly interrogated and continually beaten. As they could no longer bear the beatings, they said “Yes” according to the will of SLORC troops, who only then stopped the incessant beatings. [Source: “Bar Zi Tan”]

On 28 October, SLORC troops from IB 62, led by Deputy Bn Comdr Than Win, Capt Aung Lwin and Coy Comdr Capt Aye Min, aimed mortars on porters from Kaw Kha Taw, Kyaw Tan and Kaw Goe villages in Kyaikmaraw Township, Mon State, who managed to escape, causing U Nyein (56), Maung Hla Tin (14) and Maung Kun Kaw (13) from Kaw Goe Village, Mon State, to be hit with splinters and severely wounded. [Source: DPNS/NLD-LA/NMSP]

On 25 November, a military column from LIB 410 entered Paukpinkwin Village, Ye Phyu Township, and arrested the women as they did not find any males in the village at that time. Women, both young and old, some in their 40’s – were given one bullet each to hold onto, with the meaning that “this bullet is for you”. Ma Mi Ngwe, the wife of Village Chairman U Sher, Secretary Nai Phyu Ngwe were forced to balance a bullet on their heads from 8:00 a.m. to sunset. None of them were allowed to eat nor drink anything. Mi Tut (female, 50) lost consciousness because of heatstroke and anaemia.

They were spared only when their spouses came back and replaced them. Chairman U Sher, Secretary U Nai Ngwe Phyu and Nai Nyan Aung, a former school teacher, were subjected to severe beatings. All the males were arrested and forced to build barracks for the soldiers for one day and one night. (Source: DPNS/NLD-LA/NMSP)

On 26 November, SLORC troops from LIB 410 led by Capt Than Wai forced 30 females – including those are at the age of 75 – to stand under the scorching sun all day long. These victims were Ma Tin Nyan (19), Ma Thein (21), Mat Tut (27), Ma Hla Kyi (32), Ma In (32), Daw Ya (42), Daw Kayin (50), Daw Kun (55), Daw Ngwe Khin (56), Daw Hla Tin (64), Daw Hla Kyaing (68), Daw Ngwe (75), Daw Mi, Mi Tut (50), Ma Tin Hla, Ma Kyi, Ngwe In, Daw Lae, Ma Kyin, Ma Ngwe, the elderly Daw Lwe, Daw Phu Akae, Daw Phyu, Daw Si and Mi Nge. [Source: DPNS/NLD-LA/NMSP]

About two hundred soldiers of IB 94 took porters from Won Kung-kaad Village, Lailha Township. One of the porters, Tsai Kyaw Aye was unable to carry the loads which the soldiers forced on him. He was tied to a horse and then drug at a run through the forest. He was seriously wounded. Tsai Kyaw Aye was only 25 year old. [Source: SHRF]

A former teacher and two of his sons from “B” Quarter of Yin Mar Pin Township had their hands tied to the backs, were put under the scorching sun and subjected to incessant beatings. Each household was assigned to send two family members and contribute labour four times. Those who came were fed with the poorest quality of watery rice with eggplant. As the labourers were forced to work under the scorching sun from early in the morning to 10:00 p.m., most of them became sick, and the resources of local doctors became over-burdened as a result. [Source: ABSDF]

(V) FREEDOM OF BELIEF: DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE RIGHT TO PRACTICE RELIGION

The population of Burma is predominantly Buddhist, the religion which is practised by the Burman majority as well as some other ethnic groups. Therefore, the military regime has historically associated itself with Buddhism, seeking to control it and to use it for its own political purposes. However, this has not always been possible.

In the popular uprisings of 1988, radical monks played an important part in publicly supporting the students demonstrations early on. Consequently, numerous monks were forcibly disrobed, jailed, or killed by the troops. During 1990-91, the SLORC dissolved many Buddhist orders, such as the All Burma Young Monks Union, leaving only the nine official Buddhist sects which are tightly controlled by the SLORC.

The other religious groups in Burma have long suffered harassment at the hands of the military, who believe that non-Buddhist groups support the ethnic insurgency movements. The military's tradition of vicious and cynical treatment of Muslims, Christians, and other groups continues in today; the SLORC has only recently applied the same methods to Buddhists.

In Rangoon, the authorities recently issued an order to the Muslim community there that the government needed the burial grounds of Muslims in Rangoon for the development of a city project. Therefore, three main cemeteries belonging to the Islamic faith, namely Tamwe, Kandawgale and Hanthwaddy graveyards, which are located within the area of downtown Rangoon, will be closed for burial and the Muslim community.

The Tamwe cemetery is more than a century old and there is a mosque and a madarasa within the compound. ***Besides, the mortal remains of U Razak, one of the national martyrs, and Yebaw Ko Htwe, who were assassinated along with national hero Gen Aung San, are buried in this cemetery.***

The Burmese military junta had earlier confiscated Muslim graveyards, orphanages, residential building for aged Muslims, including a mosque, in Mandalay. Leading members of the Muslim community who were managing the trust properties were jailed when they protested.

Other means of religious discrimination and oppression, besides the expropriation of property, are popular with the military. Muslim girls in Arakan State were summoned by SLORC Border Supervising Committee and forced to attend compulsory vocational training programmes in nursing and tailoring, at their own expenses, which are run by SLORC. After the training, they were sent to different SLORC outposts and forced to sew uniforms for the troops. Some of them were forced to marry the soldiers under the patronage of the Supervising Committee.

Christians have also been heavily affected by the government's "buddhification" of the whole of Burma. Military officers have forced villagers mainly in Falam and

Tedim townships in Chin State to build pagodas on hill-tops, after removing crosses on churches. Most of the Chin villagers in these areas are Christian. This started about three years ago and is still going on. SLORC IB 89 is reportedly involved in this project.

The reason many villagers are fleeing the area is to escape the forced labour, as well as to keep their faith and customs despite the SLORC pressure to “buddhify”. In all non-Buddhist, non-Burman areas, the military continues to define what is “Myanmar”, by destroying places of religious worship, of religious burial grounds (Buddhists usually burn the bodies of their dead), and forbidding or obstructing worship ceremonies.

Examples also show that religious activities, however, whether Buddhist or not, are always secondary to SLORC rules and needs. Forced labour is demanded on even Buddhist religious holidays; monks are forcibly disrobed and shown disrespect by troops.

Recent tensions within the KNU (Karen National Union) were exploited by SLORC, in order to create divisions within the leadership of a major ethnic resistance group. They successfully turned a karen army leadership problem into an “internal religious conflict”, setting the Buddhist Karen soldiers against their Christian brothers, a strategy which led to the fall of the Manerpaw headquarters of the democratic resistance movement in Burma.

The SLORC was clearly in charge of this so-called “mutiny” by the Buddhists. Even Buddhist monks trying to mediate the situation were taken hostage by the SLORC-sponsored DKBA (Democratic Karen Buddhist Army), and the Buddhist monk who preached agitation against Christians became the organiser and leader of military actions in the Manerplaw and Kawmooora regions. Clearly SLORC has little respect for any religion, and manipulates or abuses the beliefs of all peoples to insure their own goal of keeping all Burmese people under their omnipotent and omniscient control.

[See also under “Eye-witness Accounts”, interview 25, 27, 109, 113]

5.1. List of Incidents

Labourers estimate that in January, about 1500 local people living in five quarters and over 150 villages in Kalay township were forced to work. Local people in Kalay were very disappointed with the SLORC regime because they cannot celebrate their religious ceremonies, and instead are facing high prices of basic commodities, frequent demands for labour and various kinds of “fees”. (Source: ABSF/NLD-LA)

On 16 March, tombs from Muslim cemetery in Kawthaung were destroyed by SLORC. Muslim leaders there were summoned by SLORC and faced harassment for transmitting the information to the international community that tombs from Muslim cemetery were uprooted by SLORC. [Source: FTUB]

On the morning of 29 April, SLORC troops arrested a Buddhist novice who was on his way from Won Na Lao village, Ho Loi Parish, Mawksmai Township, southern

Shan State, to Pang Torng Monastery. His "crime" was carrying a knife and paying no respect to the soldiers, despite that the novice was in a religious order and deserves respect as such. (Source: SHRF)

On 5 June, SLORC soldiers armed with automatic rifles supervised the demolition of a mosque in Thingan Nyi Naung, about 19 kilometres west of Myawaddy, Karen State, to make way for expansion of a road despite Muslim community pleas to save the building. This destruction raised fears in the Muslim community that other mosques along the road would be pulled down. Although Muslims in Thingan Nyi Naung appealed to both local and national authorities in a futile attempt to save the 70-year-old mosque, they were totally ignored by SLORC.

On 29 June, SLORC Strategic Command in Buthidaung Township sent about 150 troops to the southern part of the town. These troops based at an Islamic school and committed harassing the local people. Shafi Rahman (25, son of Noor Ahmed) and Mohammed Ayas (28, son of Ali Hossein) from Pon Nyo lake village were arrested, killed and buried in a mass grave near Nyaunchaung Village. 300 Muslims have been killed in Arakan State by SLORC since January 1994 while another 3,000 were imprisoned. In June alone at least 150 civilians were shot dead in cold blood by SLORC forces. [Source: MOA]

On 6 July, MIS 18 visited Kazirbil Village, 36 km north of Maungdaw and arrested Habiullah (son of Bahadoor), Abu Bakker (son of Abdul Habi), Hasibullah (son of Syedur Rahman, ex-village chairman), Moulvi Abdul Ali (son of Abdul Rahim), Moulvi Abul Kalam, and Hossein – for alleged contact with anti-SLORC forces. Their fates are unknown. [Source: MOA]

On 14 September, at 2:00 pm., SLORC troops from IB 62 led by Bn Comdr Ohn Myint arrived at Kaw Pa Lai Village, Kyaikmaraw Township, arrested the abbot there without any reason, forced him to disrobe and beat him until he lost consciousness. [Source: DPNS/NLD-LA/NMSP]

On 20 December, a platoon from the Homelin-based IB 222 reached Kon Kai Lon Village, Lae Shi Township, Sagaing Division. They put a gun to Pastor Maung Hlaing's temple and demanded he convert to Buddhism. Whenever the platoon commander harassed the victim, the victim responded that he could not convert his religion to another one. The pastor responded that he believes in Christ with all his heart and soul and he will be a Christian for the rest of his life. U Maung Hlaing was a pastor who graduated Bachelor of Divinity at Insein.

The victim was also ordered to destroy the church and build a pagoda instead. Moreover, the pastor was told that the whole village will gain privileges if they become Buddhists. The platoon commander further threatened him that if the whole village does not worship Buddhism, all the villagers will be in trouble. Such events of religious persecution occur at every village in Naga areas. [Source: NLD-LA]

(VI) FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION

Everybody knows that the Burmese still can not enjoy freedom of expression, although a free press existed before Ne Win's coup in 1962. SLORC censors the critical statements of poets, novelists and short-story writers. SLORC, however, on occasions, allows criticism of corrupt civil servants and rising prices.

Recently, Transportation Minister Win Sein offered freedom of expression to Burmese magazine journalists when he was in Kachin State's capital, Myitkyina, on an official visit to inspect a new train. He told them that they were free to write whatever they wanted to write about the train.

There is a new saying on the streets of Rangoon, "If you want to write or criticise freely you can only discuss the 'train'." [Burmese magazines]

Five years after the introduction of martial law by SLORC, the military junta is still holds absolute control over all means of expression and thought. Only the official media are authorised to read, listen to, or watch any outside publications; people caught reading underground newspapers are severely punished. Censorship laws require all publications, including movie scripts and song lyrics, to be reviewed by the government.

Minority languages are systematically blocked from print or media by these SLORC boards. Political thought is also suppressed. Those political parties which have not been "deregistered" by SLORC must have permission from the military to hold meetings, even in private. Public gatherings of more than four people are still prohibited.

Representatives attending the "National Convention" may not use any words that may 'damage' loyalty to the state, or 'disrupt' ethnic peoples. In addition, delegates can only discuss SLORC-devised agenda and principals for the National Convention (547 out of 702 delegates were hand-picked by SLORC). Those challenging these restrictions have become officially "ill", have disappeared or have unexpectedly resigned their MP-elect posts. When Aung Khin Sint and Tin Tun Aung distributed leaflets about the national convention to delegates, they were arrested and imprisoned by SLORC.

6.1. A Brief Background of SLORC-Controlled Media

State radio and television and the Working People's Daily, official organ of the SLORC, have an effective monopoly on information in Myanmar. Only one cosmetic change occurred in 1993: in April the "Working People's Daily" acquired a new look and was renamed "Myanmar Alin" (The New Light of Myanmar).

The original "Myanmar Alin", founded in 1914, was closed down by the junta in 1988 along with the rest of the country's newspapers except the "Working People's Daily". By reviving the old name the authorities hope to give the daily a politically-neutral image, but in fact its editorial policy is still directly under SLORC management. Myanmar also has 20 or so non-government literary magazines which publish poems, drawings and many short stories recounting the details and problems of daily life; these magazines have no freedom to publish

what they choose. Officials of the state-run Press Scrutiny Board go through every item with a fine-tooth comb, especially the short stories.

Certain subjects cannot be mentioned, such as democracy, human rights, the events of 1988 and comments about the SLORC leaders, and there is a blacklist of authors whose materials must not be used. Pressure is so strong that the magazine editors actually use self-censorship, rather than attract the attention of the government censorship workers.

Since mid-1991 another sort of publication has appeared in the country and has proven extremely popular. Magazines such as “Guide to Prosperity”, of poor technical quality but containing precious information from the outside world, offer a selection of carefully censored features from “Newsweek” and “Time” magazines, alongside reports by local journalists.

“Myet-hkin-thit” publishes stories discrediting the opposition movements which operate in foreign countries and gives vividly detailed accounts of crimes committed in countries that have criticised the SLORC’s behavior.

Reporteurs Sans Frontieres reported that at least six journalists were still being held in Myanmar jails on 1 January 1994. At least five of journalists are being held in Insein Prison, where 14,000 people are kept 200 to a cell. One former inmate said political prisoners were guarded by common law prisoners with whips. Beatings and torture are said to be commonplace.

6.2. Profile: The Voices The Regime Tried To Silence

The following are some of the people who have been imprisoned for no reason other than the peaceful expression of their views. The list is not comprehensive, and was originally compiled by PEN.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is a children's book author and General Secretary of the NLD. She has been held under house arrest in Rangoon since 20 July 1989. She has written three children's books on Burma, Nepal and Bhutan and a biography of her father, and a scholarly book entitled *Burma and India: Some Aspects of Intellectual Life Under Colonialism*. She has also written numerous papers on intellectual and political life in Burma, a collection of which was published in English by Penguin in December 1991 under the title *Freedom from Fear*. [Editor’s note: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Laureate, was released by the SLORC, in response to intense international pressure, on 10 July 1995.]

Tin Moe is a well-known poet, essayist, and editor of the banned literary magazine, “Palm Leaf Manuscript”, which was closed down by the government one month after he became editor. He was a National Literature Award winner, a literary consultant to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and was active in the NLD. He was arrested in December 1991 and, seven months later, was sentenced, on charges that are unclear, to four years in prison. [Editor’s note; He was released on 7 February 1995]

U Win Tin, a former editor of “Hanthawati” newspaper, served as secretary of the executive council of the NLD, and vice-chairman of Sarpay Thamagga (the

writers' association). He was active in the pro-democracy demonstrations in 1988, and a key advisor to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. He was arrested on 4 July 1989, and sentenced in October 1989, to three years' imprisonment with hard labour on charges of harbouring a woman who had had an abortion (abortion is illegal in Burma). However, his colleagues believe that the true reason for his arrest lies in his opposition activities. In September 1992, he reportedly was in poor health and denied medical attention. His sentence was reduced from eleven to ten years in a 1993 amnesty.

U Ohn Kyaing, also known as Aung Wint, was editor of "Bohtataung Daily", he also worked with U Win Tin on "Hanthawati" before retiring in 1988 to become a member of the NLD's Central Committee and a Member of Parliament for Mandalay South East. He was arrested on 6 September 1990, and, a month later, was sentenced to seven years' hard labour because of his participation in demonstrations in Mandalay in August 1990.

Nyi Pu Lay is a satirical writer and artist. He was arrested with six others on 25 December 1990, and was later sentenced to ten years' imprisonment on charges of being in contact with illegal organisations. The sole evidence brought against him was the authorities' allegation that, in 1984, he had once sold a ring that originally belonged to a member of the Burmese Communist Party. He was initially held in Insein Prison in Rangoon, but, in December 1991, he was moved to Thayet-Prison in Central Burma.

Myo Myint Nyein is the publisher and editor of the banned cultural magazine "What's Happening?" which was critical of SLORC. He and his colleague Sein Hlaing were both arrested on 24 September 1990, and both were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment because of their publishing activities. "What's Happening?" featured articles about culture and short stories, and contained a poem by a well-known writer, Min Lu, which lamented the killing of innocent civilians and deplored the brutality of the military (Min Lu was also arrested but has subsequently been released).

Aung Khin Sint is a doctor, a writer on health issues, and a member of the NLD. On 15 October 1993, he was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment on charges of distributing "threatening literature". The charges reportedly stem from letters he is thought to have written to other members of the NLD which were distributed at Burma's January 1993 National Convention and which advocated no collaboration with the military government in drafting a new constitution. [Editor's note: He was released on 5 February 1995]

Ma Thida is a doctor and a short-story writer. She was arrested with ten other opposition activists on 7 August 1993. After a closed trial the following October, she was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment for "contact with illegal organisations, endangering public peace, and distributing banned literature to foreign-based opposition groups."

San San Nweh, her daughter, and a journalist name U Sein Hla Oo, were arrested around 5 August 1994. San San Nweh is the author of over five hundred short stories, twelve novels, and over a hundred poems. She has also worked as a journalist on several national newspapers. She was a member of the NLD's Central Executive Committee and was previously detained between July 1989 and April 1990.

On 8 July, the Solidarity for National Democratic Students' Alliance (SNDSA) distributed the leaflets and posters to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, 1991 Noble Peace Laureate in Rangoon. Because of this, Chit Shwe Press in Mayangone Township, Rangoon, was closed down by force under orders of SLORC on 11 July 1994. On 18 July, six students, youth leaders of SNDSA, were arrested at their homes by MIS. The list of the arrested students are the following:

Name	Education	Address
1. Myint Oo	1st year, Burmese Major	Dagon Township
2. Lin Aung	1st year, Burmese Major	Botataung Township
3. Aung Naing	1st year, Burmese Major	Hlaing Township
4. Cho Oo	1st year, Economics Major	Mayangone Township
5. Khin Win	1st year, Burmese Major	Kamarynot Township
6. Than Lwin	1st year, Burmese Major	Thingankyun Township

Twelve Burmese students also were arrested on 8 August 1988 when they went to Pyitharyarkawe in Thingankyune Township to salute students who were killed during the pro-democracy 8-8-88 Uprising. The following three students were arrested on this occasion:

Name	Education	Address
1. Saw Shwe	2nd year, Burmese Major	Dagon Township
2. Htoo Ko	2nd year, Economic Major	Tamwe Township
3. Aung Htwe	1st year, Burmese Major	Tamwe Township

These students were arrested in their homes at night by MIS on 8 August 1994. They were members of the SNDSA, which is not a political party but primarily an underground students' organisation against the military regime. [Source: ABSU]

[See also under "Eye-witness Accounts", interview 141]

(VII) FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

"There are those who echo foreign claims about a lack of democracy and human rights violations in Myanmar [Burma] ... the USDA was formed specifically with the objective to fill the role of strengthening national unity ... acts of anarchy prevailed during the events of 1988 and that the USDA was formed to prevent similar events in the future and to promote the observance of law and order among the general public."

— **Gen Than Swe, Myanmar TV, 7 March 1994**

The Union Solidarity Development Association (USDA) is a new "social organisation" formed on 15 September 1993 by SLORC to gain legitimacy and mass support. The reasons for this country-wide organisation, run locally by many

former BSPP (Burma Socialist Programme Party) leaders, and for the SLORC's haste in building up the USDA, have not become completely clear, although it is assumed that it will function as the government's 'political support group', and will probably be used to control any future referendum on the new SLORC constitution.

The regime has already stated that all USDA members automatically and unanimously support the new constitution, with USDA speakers repeatedly speaking in praise of the national convention. SLORC may also be planning to use the USDA as a way of winning a rigged election and, in fact, the first three of USDA's aims are identical to "Our Three Main Aims", as published by SLORC. Eventually a political party might be formed out of the USDA along the line of Indonesia's Golkar Party.

Townpeople are rousted out of their homes by soldiers and forced to attend USDA rallies, and villagers are bussed in from surrounding areas. Attendance is not spontaneous. Students and civil servants are told to march to USDA rallies or face consequences, such as being dismissed from university or state jobs.

Villagers and townpeople are also threatened or fined if at least one member of the household does not show up. Often, people are forcibly kept at rally sites by armed soldiers, leading to subhuman conditions and even violent incidents.

Some examples:

Every household in Yedashe Township was forced to contribute Ks 100 toward the 22 January 1994 rally of the USDA held in Taungoo, Pegu Division. Villagers were ordered that only one person in each household could stay behind to watch the house, while everyone else had to go to the rally. Any households which failed to comply were fined Ks 200. Villagers from the surrounding townships of Yedashe, Ok Twin, Taungoo, Pyu, and Kyauk Kyi were forced to march to the rally. Soldiers in the area began inducing and threatening the villagers to go to the rally 3 to 4 months before the rally to attend it. When the time for the rally came, people from far-flung areas had to leave home the day or night before the rally in order to make it there on time. The fee to join the USDA is Ks 25 a person. SLORC officials are now forcing former NLD members in the area to join the USDA. [Source: ABSDF/KNU/NLD-LA]

In Prome, the villagers were forced to gather one night in advance to attend the USDA rally in the next morning. They were forced to wait in the field guarded by armed soldiers. As the ground was very hot, they could no longer sit there anymore. They were not given any water or allowed to go to toilets. When they tried to get outside, they were beaten by the soldiers and when the crowd rushed to leave the rally in panic, many were injured as they were trampled upon by the crowd. Two of the injured taken to the hospital later died of their injuries. [Source: ABSDF]

SLORC officials fined people who could not or did not attend USDA mass rally in Moulmein, Kyeikhto and Thaton area. Three people died while they were going to attend the rally; one drowned, another one fell from a car, and the last one died from exhaustion. [Source: ABSDF/Inside sources]

On 23 January, a USDA mass rally was held in Monywa, Sagaing Division. For that mass rally, at least 2,000 people from each township in Monywa District were forced to show up at gunpoint. Those who could not attend had to pay a fine of 50 Ks per person, and households which failed to send someone from outside the household were also threatened with the shutting off of water and electricity. Other restrictions imposed on that day included prohibition of wearing Pin Ni (cloth woven from fawn-coloured cotton), or a traditional Burmese coat, and the Kachin sarong (longyi) and of shopping at nearby shops. Some households were also forced to send two family members, and those who attempted to stay at home on that day were forced out at gunpoint to the rally. The rally was held in the football field of Monywa, with all the entrances locked during the entire rally. Those who tried to go out were beaten with belts, while those children were subjected to beatings with bamboo sticks by SLORC troops.

SLORC announced from the loud speakers that for any person who was absent, effective actions would be taken. As the people were herded like animals and locked into the stadium in Monywa, some people lost consciousness because of the crowded conditions, unable to receive fresh air to breathe and had injuries because they were stepped on by other people. Most of them run for their lives, leaving even their slippers. On the following day, many slippers were found in the stadium. All the students at the high school or college/university level were forced to join the USDA while local people were subjected to do so on a compulsory basis. At least one household member each was forced to join the USDA. [Source: ABSDF]

7.1. What the People Say about USDA

The following are the translations of several letters sent to the BBC Radio Burmese language service from people living in various parts of the country, expressing their real views about the USDA and the rallies. These letters were transcribed from BBC Radio broadcasts. (The BBC, together with the Voice of America Burmese Service, forms the only source of real news to people inside Burma.)

Letter #1 (broadcast on 21 February 1994)

In our town of Prome, people were all brought into a sandy compound at 9 p.m. on the night before the rally. After sitting for several hours on the sandy ground, which had been sprayed with water, some people began to ask permission to go outside the compound to answer nature's call. The security forces, the guards around the compound, refused to allow them to go out, and a conflict broke out. Many people began to climb up the fences to try to get out. The guards began to beat them with pieces of bamboo and sticks.

In the middle of the resulting rush, many men, women and children fell down on the ground. **Two men were trampled to death.** Twenty people were wounded, one of them lost an eye. Two women had their backs broken. But this information was never reported on Radio Myanmar. Why? To let everyone know the true story of the Union Solidarity Development Association, I must write this letter to the BBC. A Civil Servant, Prome Town, Pegu Division.

[Note: Outside sources indicate that there were probably several thousand people in the compound. The rally was held as planned the following day, on 7 February.]

Letter #2 (broadcast on 21 February 1994)

In our Mandalay city, the SLORC announced on loudspeakers that anyone who did not participate in the rally meeting would have their water and electricity cut off, and would be fined 100 Kyats each. So 90 percent of the people dared not disobey their command. It is just like the Burmese proverb about lovers, which says, "Even though she dares not participate, she is forced to play the game from beneath. He forces her to receive his kiss against her will, and she is forced to follow behind him like a wife."

Ko Myint Aung, Mandalay [Note: The proverb relates to the "woman" (the people) being forced to have sex with the "man" (SLORC), and walk behind him even though she hates him, as the wife must walk behind the husband as Burmese custom dictates.]

Letter #3 (broadcast on 21 February 1994)

The reports on the BBC Burmese program of 13 February regarding the rallies of the Union Solidarity Development Association were correct.

In our northern Shan State the USDA public rally was held on Friday January, Twenty-first. The number of people participating in the rally did not exceed 10,000, but Radio Myanmar announced that 210,000 people attended the same rally.

As for the students, their teachers warned them that each and every one of them must attend the rally and take along a package of food, and that if they failed to act accordingly they would be caned 15 times each. Government workers were threatened that if they failed to attend the rally, they should know what the consequences would be.

The entire population of Burma is against this sort of rotten tactic by SLORC. SLORC may be able to gather people, but they can never obtain their respect or their sympathy.

U Sai Lone, Northern Shan State [Note: The "consequence" to government workers not attending clearly means the loss of their jobs.]

Letter #4 (broadcast on 6 March 1994)

I want to tell you how the SLORC is bluffing the people about the Union Solidarity Development Association. They announced that over one hundred thousand people came to the USDA mass meetings from many townships, divisions and states.

This is a lie. For over 30 years now the military junta has been oppressing the civilians like this, forcing them to join mass meetings. They always force everyone, young or old, and students and workers too.

Ko Than Lwin, Htan Ta Bin Town, Pegu Division, January 30, 1994 [Note: The past mass meetings he refers to were for Ne Win's Burma Socialist Programme Party.]

[see also under "Eye-witness Accounts", interview 112]

(VIII) FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Burmese citizens have lived with restrictions of movement since Ne Win's dictatorship began in 1962. SLORC (State Law and order restoration Council) continues this practice, despite claims of a "break with the past".

In order to keep control over villagers, daily permits are issued by some local military authorities so that villagers can gather food, or go about their business.

Sometimes, villagers are forced to relocate, because SLORC claims threats of "insurgent groups" or the need to build an infrastructure project on that land. People are then allowed to work in their fields with "movement papers" issued by the local military commander.

Along the on-going Ye-Tavoy railway lines construction, there are 10 Light Infantry Battalions (401-410) and all of them were ordered by Southeastern Command to issue local ultimatums including a curfew. Such an order was issued by LIB 410 on 12 November.

It has also been reported that, due to severe restriction of movement, victims of soldiers' rape and torture could not reach hospitals or private doctors in Buthidaung, Arakan State, for treatment. These incidents are occurring all throughout SLORC-occupied areas.

Also, ID cards are often required when travelling by SLORC, but such ID cards are denied to ethnic peoples under citizenship laws and other forms of discrimination, depriving them of civil liberties.

8.1. Guest Registration Continues

During the interview, the interviewee described how he was conscripted as a porter this way:

"Some soldiers of IB 61 came to my house in Ye on 1 July in the middle of the night along with some town headmen [appointed by SLORC, not elected by the people of the town], pretending it was responsibility of the town headmen to check any unregistered guests staying overnight in my house."

"As I thought it as usual and I opened the door of my house for them to come in. Then the soldiers suddenly grabbed me and took me to their encampment. When I reached their encampment, I met with many other civilian men like me detained there. I was told by the soldiers that I must serve as a porter along with their troops to Three Pagodas Pass."

The practice of checking unregistered guests has traditionally been in place in Burma under the military dictatorship of Ne Win. Despite claims of the changes within the Burmese government the rule of the SLORC military regime maintains all restrictions on personal liberties and has, in fact, made them stricter.

It is common place in all parts of Burma, in all villages or towns and even Rangoon, when the people receive guests in their houses, they are required to inform in advance the local SLORC administrators about their guests.

The names, addresses, jobs, etc., of the guests must at the same time be provided to the local SLORC administrators. If any unregistered guest is found staying overnight in one's house, both the host family and the guest are subject to fine or short-term imprisonment – or even as an “excuse” to conscript people.

And the local SLORC administrators conduct surprise checks, especially at the night time, in any houses which they suspect of having any unregistered guests. [Source: MOA]

On 2 February, IB 84 of LID 99, commanded by Lt Col Aung Kyaw Min and Maj Nyo Min Thein, ordered each of the following villages to send them 1,000 viss (1,600 kg) of jaggery; No Lor Plaw, No Aw Ler, Pyor Gor, Kyu Kyi, Pyo, Her Ter Rai, Met Thai, Met Ker Ner and Tee Kyor Khee villages (9 villages altogether, all in Thaton District). Villages which could not produce the required amount of jaggery were ordered to pay Ks 2,700. The battalion also put strict restrictions on the movements of the villagers. All villagers who work in the surrounding forests had to register at the regimental headquarters and pay Ks 500 for a permit. [Source: KNU]

[See also “Forced Relocation” and “Eye-witness Accounts”, interview 13, 56, 95]

(IX) ABUSE OF WOMEN

"If I beat you it might hurt my hands. If I kill you, it will only cost me 35 baht to have you buried."

—Thai pimp threatening a Burmese woman who was forced into prostitution.

Burmese women have never had equal rights with men. Society and culture tend to denigrate the role of women, as is also the case throughout much of the world. Under these circumstances, women have become one of the biggest targets for abuse by the SLORC.

Women face continual harassment if their husbands are suspected by the SLORC. They must work the same forced labour as men, especially since it is the men who often run away from the SLORC, leaving behind only women (even women who are pregnant or have children to care for) to face the soldiers' guns. All this in addition to the army's sexual violence.

Villagers have reported that when women come back from SLORC huts, "the married women openly tell if they've been raped, but the unmarried ones don't say anything. They don't dare, because they're too shy to admit it. But we know they've been raped." In traditional Burmese society, a woman who has been raped is not desired by men for marriage.

Furthermore, women are now sometimes forced to marry soldiers, either by order of the commanders, or to hide a pregnancy. The needs and wishes of the women are given no value by the military.

At Da Gela Village there's a widow named Ma Win Sein, she has 2 sons. Her husband was a Burmese soldier. She was raped, and when the villagers found her in the forest 4 days later she couldn't even walk. They did that to her even though she was the widow of one of them.

SLORC soldiers then rape the women and/or conscript them to carry weapons and supplies to the front lines, serving as human mine detectors and shields for the troops.

Young girls are routinely raped as well as elderly, and, in order to silence the victim about what soldiers have done to her, women are in many instances murdered afterwards.

9.1. The Bullet Trick

Around Kyauk Kyi area, young women often go into town by bicycle to buy things, then bring them back in the bicycle's carrier. SLORC soldiers in the area now use what they call the "bullet trick".

At the first SLORC checkpoint coming out of town, a SLORC soldier searches the bicycle carriers of young women, and in the process slips a few bullets into it.

Then at the second checkpoint, a soldier "finds" the bullets, interrogates the girl on where she got them, and when she can't answer she is detained for several days, during which time she is repeatedly raped by soldiers. She is then released with no questions asked.

This has been done repeatedly by soldiers from IB 73 and 351, particularly at Ye O Zin Village in Kyauk Kyi Township. At Kyaun Zut Village in February 1994, troops from IB 351 used a similar trick.

They keep a pot of drinking water for travellers in front of their checkpoint, and they hid some bullets at the base of it. Then when a pretty girl came past and stopped, the soldiers went out, "found" the bullets, and detained and raped her for three days. [Source: KNU/MOA]



A 16-year old girl from Papan District, hit by the landmine explosion on her way home from being a forced porter in SLORC's Salween offensive. This girl is now blind. (photo: KHRG)

9.2. The International Flesh Trade and Burmese Women

Many women and girls have fled the repressive rule in Burma under the widespread belief that there are good employment opportunities in Thailand, only to be forced into prostitution in a new country where they have neither legal nor cultural identity. Not surprisingly, most of these women are from small villages, tricked by the promise of employment from local agents who represent procurers; few of these women would have the sophistication necessary to consider a life of prostitution as an option.

Non-governmental organisations working with women's rights in Thailand report on the circumstances and plight of these victims:

The agents who recruit young women for the brothel gangs in urban centres such as Kawthaung and Ranong are ordinary people, often known by the women. Trusted villagers and townspeople, or even friends and relatives, have been known to lure unsuspecting women into leaving their homes with offers of employment.

The gangs, however, often work in a more systematic and brutal manner than do the local agents. They often hang around dock areas and bus and train stations in both Thailand and Burma looking for women who appear lost or for women who have arrived to the town in search of work. They may offer the woman a job as a waitress or factory worker and if she agrees, takes her to a local "employment agency". There arrangements are made without the woman's knowledge, to sell her to a procurer usually in Thailand, but occasionally in Burma.

Increasingly, agents forego the usual attempt to deceive the women and simply kidnap them. Burmese women who come across the border to visit relatives in Thailand, especially in Ranong, routinely run the risk of being kidnapped and forced into prostitution.

Once in Thailand, a large percentage of women will end up in brothels in Ranong province, which are usually owned by Thai businessmen and "employ" both Thai and Burmese women. In many cases, the women, especially those from Burma are forced to work in conditions which amount to slavery. One brothel from which prostitutes were recently freed was surrounded by barbed wire and an electric fence.

On 10 June 1994, Thai police raided a brothel in Ranong and found 33 Burmese women, who had been virtual prisoners comparable to slaves for periods of up to three years.

Three of the women were suffering from a brutal beating they had received for a recent attempt to escape. They had been whipped with a coat hanger wire until they fainted.

The main centre for trafficking in Northern Burma's Kengtung, in Shan State, northern Burma. Here thousands of Burmese women of Akha, Lisu, Wa, Shan and Burman ethnic origin are brought and recruited before being sent on to northern Thailand. However, the trafficking of women has now spread to every corner of Burma and some agents travel widely in search of women to lure into prostitution.

Regardless of the final destination, trafficking is a highly profitable business for everyone but the victim. Burmese guides who take women through Burmese territory are paid Ks 30,000 (7,500 baht), while transport in a van from Mae Sai to Bangkok costs 20,000 baht, which includes the bribes at up to five check points. Drivers will still receive a profit of 5,000 baht.

From Bangkok many women are sent overseas through an international network. The Crime Suppression Division Police in Thailand have conducted many raids on brothels throughout Thailand in which many Burmese women have

been "freed" from the brothel only to be charged with illegal entry and prostitution by the authorities. Until April 1994, most women found guilty entering Thailand illegally were deported back to Burma and their fate left to the hands of the Burmese authorities.

When women return to Burma, they face either recapture by their procurers or arrest by the authorities for "unlawfully leaving Myanmar". One woman who returned to Burma in mid-1992, after being forced to work as a prostitute in Ranong was arrested and tortured at the notorious Insein Prison because she was suspected of having contact with the armed opposition forces on the border.

For the past two years, there has also been a widespread rumour that the military authorities in Burma have been injecting these women with cyanide if they are found to be HIV-positive. While present conditions inside Burma make it impossible to verify this, Burmese women are routinely repatriated, despite opposition from NGO groups over the danger they face there.

At present, trafficking of Burmese women (ethnic Burman, Chinese, Shan and Akha) is rampant. Unless there is coordinated and firm action taken in the near future, the scourge of trafficking will continue to grow, as will the terrible spread of AIDS.

[Source: "Seeds of Peace", v. 10, no. 1]

9.3. HIV In Magwe And Moulmein

Hotels, motels and inns have become popular in Burma since SLORC's "open-market" economy was introduced. Recently, in Magwe City at least six inns/hotels were raided by the local police. One of Burma's magazines had revealed that prostitutes worked in these inns.

After the arrest women were taken to jail and were tested for the HIV virus. According to a source, three women were found to be HIV-positive.

In Moulmein, Mon State, many prostitutes work in the expanding hotel industry. Although some inns and hotels are situated near local SLORC offices and police stations there have been no arrests. A resident in Moulmein said, "The local authorities are bribed by owners of the inns so they are not to going to bother raiding these places." [Source: Burmese magazines]

9.4. Slavery

Slavery is flourishing in Southeast Asia. Burmese women and girls have become a valuable "disposable" commodity in Thailand's ruthless sex industry. This is the reality revealed by *A Modern Form of Slavery: Trafficking of Burmese Women and Girls into Brothels in Thailand*, a scathing new study published by Asia Watch and the Women's Rights Project.

One example is the case of a teenage Akha girl, code-named "Par". One day two women came to the village while "Par" was on her way to the fields. They talked to her about how much better it would be to live in the city and work... Her father

wanted to go along as well as he was afraid of her being sold, but the two women said it was not necessary and would be a waste of his time. The agent told her that the daughter would be...taking care of children and would get to go to school. She gave [Per's] father 800 baht (US\$32).

The agents prey on the poverty and naivety of Burma's rural families. In almost all cases, agents transfer money to the girls' friends, families or companions, in the dubious form of a loan or wage advance.

Whatever the pretext, the women soon lose touch with their homes, and are told that the initial payment is the basis of a debt to which they are bonded, and which they must now begin to repay by working in a brothel. Though a few are introduced to servitude by short stints as dishwashers or maids, inevitably the pressure to clear the debt--which they have no way to verify or challenge--forces them into brothels.

Who can claim to truly understand the degradation that awaits these victims of the Thailand's predatory sex trade? All euphemism aside, once they enter Thai brothels Burmese women are jailed and then raped several times a day for months or years on end, stripped of the right to refusal or self-defence.

The debt bondage is also an act of rape:

"Tin Tin" was held responsible for paying back the 5,000 baht that the owner of the Sanae brothel in Klong Yai had given an agent... She had no idea when she left for Thailand that she had effectively been sold into prostitution until she arrived at the brothel... When she tried to refuse, the owner... told her that with interest, she now owed 10,000 baht and said, "If you want to go home, then you've got to work, or you'll never pay back your debt."

Life inside the brothels is brutal. Beatings, death threats and other forms of torture are common. Sanitation is poor and health care all but unavailable. Escape is almost always an impossibility: lone women, illegal aliens, unable to speak Thai, often unable to point the direction home, have little realistic chance of survival. "The owner doesn't have to lock us up," explains one woman whose attempted escape was abandoned.

Indeed, one of the most discouraging findings is that many women, resigned to their temporary slavery but determined to get home, opt for the quickest way out, embracing the only hope they have within the brothel system: clearing their debt through having sex with as many customers as possible.

For most, one day they will be informed that their debt has been cleared, and they are free to leave, no richer and undeniably poorer than when they began. Many women die or disappear before their debt is ever "repaid".

What about the law? After all, prostitution is illegal in Thailand, as are abduction, rape and unlawful confinement. The authors conclude that "Despite clear national and international prohibitions on procurement and trafficking, such practices are not only widespread in Thailand, but in many instances occur with the direct involvement of Thai police or border guards".

"Pyone Pyone" spent three days in Mae Sai...before a uniformed policeman...drove her and twelve other Burmese girls...to a brothel in Bangkok. Their van was not stopped at any of the police checkpoints along the way. When she got to the brothel, Pyone Pyone was told she could not leave. She said she knew there was no way to escape anyway, because all the police in the area knew the policeman who had brought her there.

Some Thai police are also reported to frequent the brothels, apparently using their influence to help themselves to the women. In some cases, these police return to the brothel for a "raid," arresting the same women who served them (but not arresting the brothel owners).

Local jails and the Immigration Detention Centre are rife with abuse and neglect. Even deportation, perhaps the best hope for Burmese women determined to see their homes again, is fraught with danger and uncertainty. There is no guarantee that the cycle of abuse will be broken. Merely being dropped off at a desolate border offers no security and, predictably, often waiting are more "agents" with their promises of transportation home or better jobs in Thailand.

Does Burma seek to rescue its stolen children from bondage in Thailand? Apparently not, its response to officially repatriated victims of prostitution is generally punitive. In truth, there is no simple homecoming for most of these women, who bear the physical and psychological scars of their oppression, and who quite likely carry the HIV virus. For those who do carry HIV, the debt that was arranged to hold them in servitude also incurs a death sentence. [source: Burma Issues]

9.5. Profiles: Daw San San And Ma Thida

Daw San San was born in Ahlon Village in Monywa Township on 10 January 1930. She passed the 10th standard examination from Monywa Township Mula-tan-lun School in 1948, obtaining the B.Sc (Biology) degree from Rangoon University in 1954. She served as a teacher with the Central High School in 1954 and as a demonstrator at Rangoon University in 1955.

Daw San San won the State Scholarship award and attended the training course on oceanography in Yugoslavia from 1955 to 1956. She also served as a demonstrator to the Assistant Director of the Labor Department from 1959 to 1988.

During the pro-democracy movement in 1988, Daw San San chaired the Labor Directorate Worker's Thamaga. As a result of her involvement in the demonstrations, she was forced to resign from her workplace. A member of the NLD, she successfully contested the General Election in 1990, being elected as the Hluttaw representative for Seikkan Township Constituency.

The authorities alleged that Daw San San attended a clandestine meeting on the formation of a temporary government in 1990. She also held discussions at her house with other elected NLD members. She was reportedly sentenced to twenty-five years imprisonment.

[Editor's note: Daw San San was released at the end of 1994]

A medical doctor and short story writer aged in her late twenties, Ma Thida worked in a philanthropic Muslim Hospital before being arrested with ten other political activists on 7 August 1993. All of them were held without either legal representation or contact with close associates until their trial started on 27 September 1993. SLORC was forced to adjourn the hearing after a large crowd turned up at the court.

[See also under "Eye-witness Accounts", interview 12, 28, 32-33, 35-36, 38, 44, 49, 79, 92, 105, 109-112, 118, 120, 130, 132, 137, 141]

9.6. List of Incidents

On 16 January at 6 p.m., 10 soldiers from Coy 5 of IB 69 commanded by Maj Myint Kyi, ransacked Mong Young Parish, Hsenwi Township, and committed a gang-rape of which the following four local women were victims; Aye Ong (27, daughter of Pu Loi La), Pa Nang Sar (35, daughter of Pu Loi Tun), Ea Kham (32, daughter of Pu Loi Ywat Saam) and Ea Noan (28, daughter of Pu Loi Sarn Lu). [Source: SHRF]



Ma Ye Thu, mother of one child, from Pha Lan Taung Village, Pa-an Town-ship, was raped by soldiers from IB 84 at 8 p.m. on 8 February 1993. This caused her husband to join the armed ethnic resistance in defence of his family. (photo: NLD)

On 18 January, Maj Myint Kyi's troops of Coy 5 of IB 69, raid and ransacked Worn Parng Yarp Village, Mong Young Parish, Hsenwi Township. Awk Loi Sar, Ea Ong and Ea Noon were brutally raped by soldiers. [Source: SHRF]

On 18 January at about 2:30 p.m., four SLORC soldiers from Coy 5 of IB 69 were killed and two others wounded because of a booby-trap left by the rebels. Due to their losses, the soldiers were furious and in vengeance captured one Akha woman, named Ar-way Am. Her body was soaked with gasoline and she was mercilessly burnt alive until dead. Besides committing this act, an unknown woman of the same village was not only raped by the vengeful soldiers but her two children were reportedly taken into the middle of the village and their heads were lopped off by the SLORC soldiers. [Source: SHRF]

On 27 January, Coy 2 Comdr Maj Soe Win of IB24, under the command penetrated Lay Kay Village, Thaton District, Mon State, and seized two sisters, Naw Psaw Po and Naw Hser Chit (daughters of Ti Per Kyaw), tied them up and blindfolded them, and then they were gang-raped by the soldiers the whole night. [Source: KNU]

On 1 March 1994 the border administrative body known as “Na Sa Ka” of Area No.4 belonging to Leik-ra Village and its adjoining area under Maungdaw Township had ordered the Muslim villagers to send 32 young women to undertake nurse training and learning other vocational trainings like tailoring, etc., at the local military base for the “benefit” of Muslim girls. The order was issued by the Na Sa Ka in-charge of Area No.4. Accordingly, the Muslim villagers, who had earlier been threatened with dire consequences if opposed, are now compelled to obey the government order.

On 22 March, the guardians along with their daughters went to the Na Sa Ka office where their teenagers are to stay in the dormitory till their training period was over. It is reported that presently four Muslim girls from Kumirkhali, one from Shilkhali, two from Kwarbil, three from Ayubchar, four from Dombeik, fifteen from Bawlibazar and three from Zibongkhali are now participating in the training camp and the villages fallen under the jurisdiction of Area No.4 are now ordered to arrange maintenance cost for this training programme. In this connection, the villagers of Zibaungkhali had already collected a sum of Ks 25,000 and other villages are also doing the same. [Source: MOA]

On 25 September, joint military column of LIB 206/208 robbed Ks 17,500 worth of property from the villagers in Mi Ka Tit village in Myawaddy township, Karen State. During that evening, the commander summoned Naw Bwe, leader of ten households in Mi Ka Village, talked rudely and forced her to strip off her sarong and reveal her private parts. As she was afraid of death, she could not refuse anymore. [Source: ABSDF]

On 31 October, four army personnel including one sergeant belonging to the IB 525, stationed at Aung Mingala outpost, entered the house of one Ma Nu Begum (25, wife of Qarim) at Headmanpara Village while she was breast-feeding milk to her baby. Finding her in a state of helplessness, the four soldiers tried to assault her sexually but could not do so as she violently refused and raised a cry. At this the four had struck her with a wooden plank as a result of which her arm was broken and her child's head was severely injured. [Source: MOA]

On 1 January 1995, SLORC troops from LIB 410 entered Ta Yoke Taung Village, Ye Township, committing robbery and raped 5 women, including a pregnant woman. [Source: NMSP]

(X) RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

“It is very significant that the Convention [on the Rights of the Child] recognises that the practice of democracy has to start early in childhood in order to become part of the fabric of the political and social life of the society. On the other hand, a child can practice such right only in a free society. The implementation of the Convention must therefore be integrated into an overall approach that promotes human rights in general and the rights of the child in particular.” —

Hoda Mohamed Badran, Chairperson, Committee on the Rights of the Child, and Secretary-General, National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, Cairo. Second East Asia and Pacific Regional Consultation on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Beijing, 4-6 August 1992

What are the “Rights of the Child” in relation to Human Rights? This takes on many meanings: education, health care, family, identity, ethnic background, cultural heritage, language among others.

The SLORC regime directly and indirectly denies all children of Burma their inherent rights as both children and people. The only children who are exempt from unfair treatment are those belonging to the military clique, who receive privilege after privilege, at the expense of the country.

Other children face economic and sexual exploitation, loss of their families, institutionalisation and some are even jailed. Indeed, children are the most vulnerable segment of society, being affected by a number of factors, from childhood experiences to destruction of Burma’s natural resources, because these things directly affect the future of children as adults. When children’s rights are guaranteed, so is the future of the nation.

Consider this evidence as violations against the rights of the child:

Children are forbidden receive an education in their own language. Schools run by ethnic minorities are routinely shut down by SLORC, as were universities and higher institutions of learning.

Now schools are being restricted in Rangoon in an effort to keep students separated. Attempts to control students can also be seen in the recent push by SLORC to have regional schools, making sure students do not collect together in one place. The Burmese military has always been antagonistic to students, because the uprisings in 1962 and 1988 were started by students, who were quickly joined by others in the society.

Drug usage is also said to be encouraged by SLORC, making cheap opium available to youths, in thinly disguised aim to distract those who the regime sees as a clear threat in any future uprising.

Muslim girls are forced into “educational” courses on military bases. Not only is this against the wishes of the girls’ parents and insensitive to their religious beliefs, but girls experience sexual harassment and worse by soldiers.

The sex industry, meanwhile, both inside Burma and in neighbouring countries continues to grow. As men fear receiving AIDS more and more, younger and younger girls are sought to be sure of their "purity". Many children are unsuspectingly sold into prostitution by families who need money due to the economic situation and extortion by SLORC troops. Forced labour projects also takes children, regardless of age.

Children are often the first to suffer in poor economic conditions, and malnutrition is recorded as affecting 10% of Burma's children. In Thailand's IDC, children are not given any food, and their mothers must share their normal portions with any children.

Children face horrific experiences as refugees and running from SLORC; children must hide when SLORC soldiers come to villages. The mental shock they undergo will last them a lifetime of pain. Also because communities are ripped apart, traumatically forced to relocate or flee, the basic right that every child has to a stable upbringing is destroyed for a lifetime. These events will continue to disrupt and affect their entire lives. (Source: KHRG)



Karen refugees who flooded across the border after the Manerplaw area fell to SLORC. (photo: KHRG)



Karen refugees who flooded across the border after the Manerplaw area fell to SLORC's Offensive (Photo: KHRG)



A sick and malnourished baby Karen girl in Thaton District. Infant mortality in these areas is often over 50 % thank to SLORC offensives, looting, extroction, and the SLORC blockade against any medicines entering this "rebel"-area. (photo: KHRG)

10.1. Education For The Privileged

"If you want to pass the matriculation exam in Burma you need only pay 10,000 Ks for a subject/major. Moreover, if you want to get a high mark or distinction you will have to pay an extra 20,000 Ks per subject. With these marks you can go to medical or engineering school."

Many poverty-stricken people have complained about Burma's corrupt education system. "It is the worst thing that has happened since SLORC seized power," an inside source said. [Source: In-country/BBC]

During the first week of January 1995, the local SLORC military commander issued an ultimatum to close down over 90 Mon language schools in 63 Mon villages in Kawkaik Township, Karen State, and Kyaikmaraw Township, Mon State. As a result more than 3,000 Mon children are to be deprived of education.

According to one local Mon teacher, those schools were open in 1989 under the sponsorship of elders and parents of the children and by the help of Mon communities there and taught by voluntary teachers in the area.

Later on those schools were provided with a teaching curriculum and stationery by the Mon National Education Committee. Local military authorities in the area suspected the voluntary Mon teachers as sympathisers to the NMSP by their one-sided judgement, harassed, arrested and at last issued an ultimatum to close down all these schools.

[See also under "Eye-witness Accounts", interview 10, 28, 30-31, 34, 38, 44, 46, 49, 67, 92, 109, 111-112, 120, 138-141]

(XI) FORCED LABOUR AND SLAVERY

"I would categorically like to state that there is no element of coercion or force involved concerning the use of civilian labourers. In fact, the development projects are for the benefit of the local populace and the government has spent a substantial amount of money on these projects. The daily wages for the labourers, contrary to the allegations, are found to be commensurate with those prevailing in the areas concerned".

"A point worthy of mention is that donating labour is a tradition deeply rooted in Myanmar's culture. There is a belief that donating labour in the building of pagodas, monasteries, roads and bridges gives mental and physical well-being. It is widely accepted in my country that voluntary work for the good of the community is not tantamount to forced labour or violation of human rights."

— **U Win Mra, Permanent Representative of the Delegation of the Union of Myanmar to the Fourth-Ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, December 1994**



Passengers pack into the train which takes a circular route around the Burmese capital recently. The high price of gasoline due to recent political upheavals, has forced almost all Burmese to use public transport. (photo: Bangkok Post)

All forms of forced labour are continuing to increase in Burma under SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council), whose leaders have admitted that what is considered slavery in the West, is actually considered "traditional voluntary labour" and "noble deeds" in Buddhist tradition.

Forced prostitution aside, the two major forms of SLORC slavery in Burma are (1) forced labour on infrastructure projects, to serve military goals such as road-building to provide access to war zones, or economic goals, such as increasing tourism and supporting military-owned businesses (such as the Unocal-Total-PTT gas pipeline); and (2) forced portering, where non-combatants are obliged to carry weapons and supplies for the troops. Forced portering has resulted in uncounted numbers of deaths due to the appalling circumstances that the porters are forced to endure.

Forced labour on infrastructure projects extends from one end of the country to the other; including the cities and Burman areas, as well as areas populated by other ethnic groups. People are taken for portering from public areas, such as cinemas (a traditional form of entertainment for the poorer people), cafes, and railway stations, and transported to work sites sometimes half-way across the country. People are arrested on questionable charges by police and find themselves in chains the next morning as economic slaves.

Many people have died on these construction sites, because of the poor health conditions, or due to accidents such as earthen collapses and falling tools. There is no implementation of standard safety practices, as the SLORC does not need to take responsibility for the workers' well-being; new workers are quickly recruited when necessary, and contrary to SLORC claims, these labourers are not paid for their work. Furthermore, they must supply their own food and work tools. There is no compensation for the confiscation of any village farmland taken for the construction of government projects.

It is SLORC's local battalions who are responsible for providing the labour needed in the construction sites. Through pressure on the village headmen, the army enlists villagers by conscripting at least one person from each house. The treatment by the soldiers is so inhumane and cruel that forced labour has become a significant source of the recent increase of refugees into neighbouring countries such as Thailand.

No one safe from forced labour without "connections" to the SLORC or money to bribe officials or to hire members from poor families to work in their place. Increasingly, forced labour is encompassing people from the urban areas as well as rural, as the junta prepares hotels, roads and ports for "Visit Myanmar 1996", in a bizarre attempt to turn a poverty-stricken country into a Potemkin Village capable of receiving rich tourists from abroad.

11.1. Ye-Tavoy Rail Line Construction



Local People contributing labour at gun point. (photo: ABSDF)



Local People contributing labour at gun point. (photo: ABSDF)



SLORC soldiers guarding forced labourers while they are working. (photo: CPPSM)



Forced labourers, both men and women, are forced to build an earthen embankment for the Ye-Tavoy Railway. (photo: CPPSM)



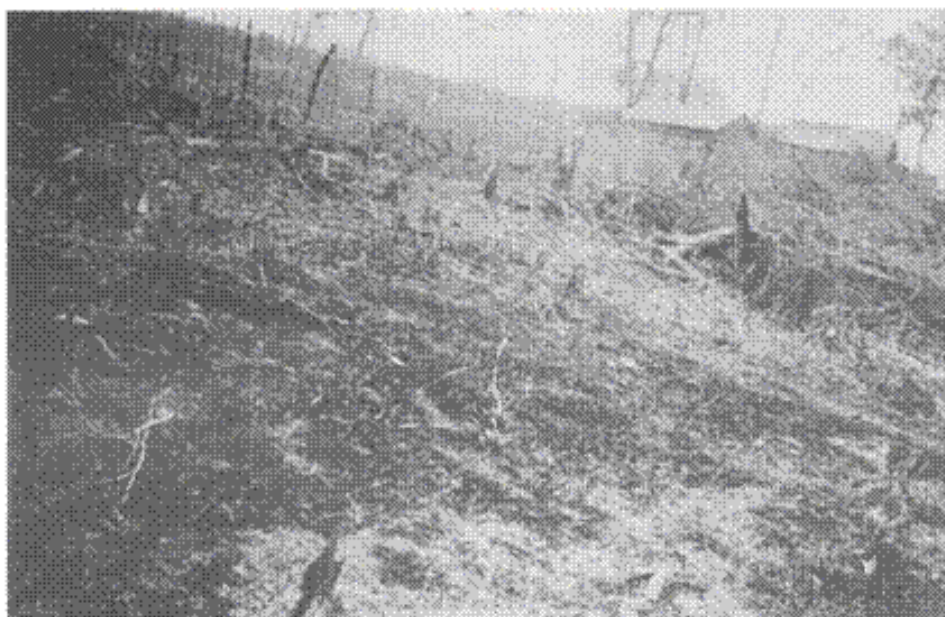
Forced labourers working on the construction of SLORC's local encampments along the rail route. (photo: CPPSM)



Forced labourers, both men and women, are forced to build an earthen embankment for the Ye-Tavoy Railway. (photo: CPPSM)



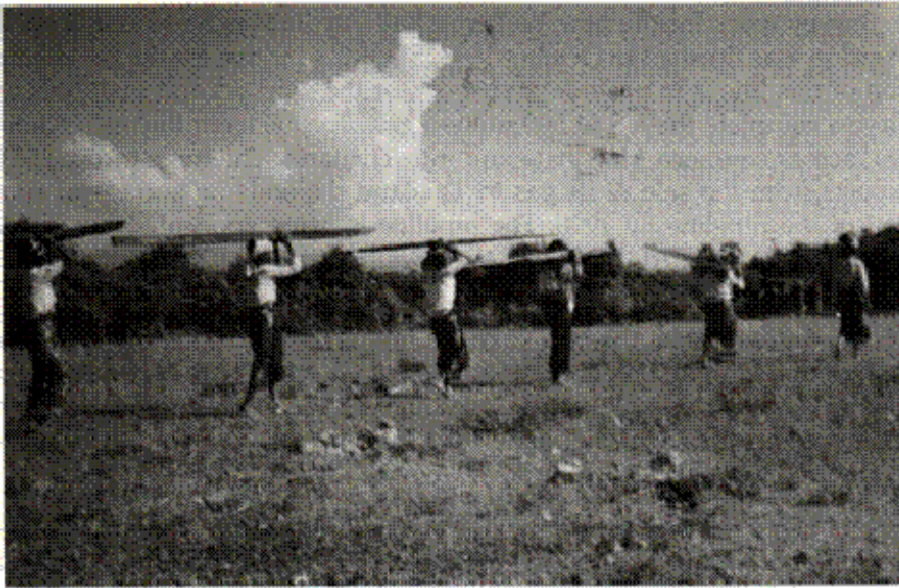
Forced labourers, both men and women, are forced to build an earthen embankment for the Ye-Tavoy Railway. (photo: CPPSM)



Many encampments along the rail route, like this one, are constructed by forced labour. (photo: CPPSM)



Forced labour on the 110-mile "Second Death Railway" between Ye and Tavoy. The construction is reported to have involved hundreds of thousands. (photo: CFPSM)



Forced labourers working on the construction of SLORC's local encampments along the rail route. (photo: CPPSM)

Survey work for the new Ye Tavoy Railway in Mon State and Tenasserim Division was completed in October 1993. SLORC's motive for the rapid completion of this line is to provide transport for the workers and materials necessary to complete the US \$1,500 million gas pipeline from Burma's Andaman Sea, across southern Mon state and into Thailand. The huge income SLORC expects from the sales of its gas to Thailand depends on successful completion of the pipeline by 1998. The pipeline is being sponsored by TOTAL of France and UNOCAL of the USA, as well as Thailand's PTT and SLORC's MOGE.

The railroad links the two garrison towns of Ye in Mon State and Tavoy in the Tenasserim Division. Maj Gen Maung Hla, commander of SLORC's Southeastern Military command, is in charge of this area. When the railroad is completed, SLORC will be ready to carry out extensive counter-insurgency operations throughout the area.

The army is nervous about security for the proposed gas pipeline, which will cross an area of mountainous rainforest that is home to various resistance forces. [Editor's note: a camp of pipeline workers was attacked by rebel forces in 1995, resulting in 5 deaths, two of which were rumoured to be European advisors.] The risk of sabotage is always present and SLORC may have to clear the forest canopy around the pipeline route, perhaps with Agent Orange, the defoliant used by US forces during their campaign in Vietnam and Cambodia.

People from four townships along the route of the railroad are regularly conscripted to work as "voluntary" labourers on the project. The majority of the people in the area are farmers and fishermen. According to the testimonies of local people, the total number of conscripted village labourers is between 20,000-30,000. The age of most conscripted labourers is between 16 to 60 and includes both male and female.

Example: regional SLORC authorities have now informed all villagers in Thayetchaung township, Launglon township and Ye Pyu Township that every family will have to contribute at least two months of forced labour on the new railway without payment, and they will have to bring their own food.

Each family has also been ordered to supply 20 railway sleepers; they will have to cut the trees in the forest and make these sleepers themselves. Each villager who owns an elephant has been ordered to convey 10 tons of logs to the railway. The orders specified that any family which fails to meet the demands will be punished. Villagers in the whole area are now doing their forced labour assignments on the railway.

Five labour camps have been established along the rail line, each housing at least 1,000 people at a time. Village headmen are responsible for delivering the required number of workers to the worksite where about 800 heavily armed soldiers patrol to protect the rail line from sabotage by the guerrillas. The army has threatened that if any faults in the work are discovered, the head of the village responsible will be punished. [Source: KNU]

Traditional farming methods rely on the men in the family who can better carry out the physically demanding tasks of tilling the soil and harvesting the crops.

Conscription for these work details, therefore, has an especially negative effect on small families or families who have only one male member. When the men are at the worksite, the remaining family members find it extremely difficult to work the farms and grow the necessary food.

When the men return, the women are expected to replace them at the worksite unless they have children over 16 years of age who can do the work. The one threat constantly hanging over the villagers' heads is the army's clear order that one person from each family must always be at the worksite until the task is finally completed. The villagers are unaware what the target date for completion of the railroad is.

The army prohibits journalists from visiting the area except for military correspondents. When the military correspondents take pictures, the people are required to smile. Moreover, the people are ordered to sing national songs at the end of the day as they return to camp. The military correspondents record all these concocted scenes to show on the public media.

The health care system is very poor – there is no water, no sanitation, and inadequate medicine. Some villagers have reported that each villager must also pay 3,000 Ks for health insurance and medical fees. The very poor farmers who do not have extra cash, must sell their lands or their livestock in order to get the necessary money.

The army sometimes sends several civilian and military doctors to the worksite to take care of the people. Whoever is sick must first see the civilian doctor. If the civilian doctor suggests that the patient should be given sick leave, the patient must then go to the military doctor. The army doctor will double check the person's condition before giving the villager the right to break several days from work. To get sick leave, villagers must be extremely sick and weak.

One farmer who escaped said, "We are farmers and are used to hard work almost every single day on the farm, but this is the hardest work ever in our lives". The average work day is 11 hours.

Ethnic Mon guerrillas claim that already about 200 families have fled from villages in the area and arrived in the refugees camps. An ethnic Karen eye-witness said groups of Karen are fleeing from the area and are seeking refuge in the Karen-controlled area.

Foreign investors always insist that their investments will improve the living conditions of the people, and help bring democracy to Burma. In reality thousands of people are suffering at worksites designed to provide infrastructure support for these investment projects. Hundreds more have become refugees in neighbouring countries or displace persons in the jungle. An improvement in life is no longer a part of their reality. (Source: NMSP / KNU / CPPSM / KHRG / ABSDF and Various Inside Sources)

11.2. Pokukku-Gagaw-Kalay Rail Line Construction

Peasants in these areas shed many tears as many acres of their farms were confiscated without any compensation by SLORC for the construction of the Pokukku-Gagaw-Kalay rail line.



Kalay-Gangaw Railway (photo: ABSDF)



Corvee labourers from different villages in Kalay Township contributing labour for the construction of Kalay-Gangaw Railway. (photo: ABSDF)



Corvee labourers from different villages in Kalay Township contributing one-month labour in March 1994 for the construction of Kalay-Gangaw Railway. (photo: ABSDF)

Townspeople in Kalay were upset with the railway line construction because each household was forced to send one family member, excluding the blind and paralysed, to contribute one week's labour. Each household which failed to send someone had to pay a fine of 1500 kyats to local SLORC authorities, or to hire somebody else. The cost of hiring ranged from 800 to 1500 kyats.

The worst event was when local people living in Khan Myo quarter and quarter A to E of Thar Han were forced to go to Zin Kalee area to contribute labour. Each quarter or area was divided and required to send a group of 25-30 people. They had to bring 24 tins of rice, 100-150 kyats in cash, baskets, knives, pickaxes, mattocks, chopping hoes, grab hoes, axes. The poor had to collect these tools by selling their pans, clothing and other property.

Each group was assigned to complete an earthen embankment 30 ft wide (the base), 11-15 ft high, 15 ft wide (the top surface) and 100 ft long. Many people died when logs fell on them, and some were drowned in the Myit Thar River, as they did not know how to swim. SLORC troops did not provide any medicine or medical treatment for those who got sick. The assignment could be completed within one week only if the labourers worked very hard.

When the local people finished their work, USDA (Union Solidarity and Development Association), the SLORC's "volunteer" political association, forced high school students to hold up ready-made signboards, took documentary video footage to be used as propaganda directed at the international community and people in Burma.

Then, one SLORC official ordered the people to continue their work for 4-5 days. The people were very upset with the activities of SLORC. When one of the labourers said, "We are poor and odd job employees. We therefore want you to reconsider on further work. It is not possible for us to work any longer." SLORC responded, "You are not the only person to work; all the people here must work."

Labourers estimate that in January, about 1,500 local people living in five quarters and over 150 villages in Kalay Township were forced to work. Local people in Kalay were very disappointed, as they could not celebrate their religious ceremonies due to frequent demands for labour, the high price of basic commodities, and the various kinds of assessments required by the SLORC. [Source: ABSDF/NLD-LA]

And from reports later in the year:

This 207-mile-long railway line has been under construction since February 3 1994. Maj Thura Sein Win of IB 89 is in control of the Kalay section of the railway line. Each household in 28 parishes of Kalay Township were ordered to send one family member to contribute corvee labour. Each household had already contributed labour at gunpoint four times previously. During the first two times, the forced labour lasted for one week on each occasion while the labour carried on for over one month each for the last two times.

In each group, there were 25-30 labourers and they were assigned to finish 20-50 feet of earthen embankment. The base is 15 feet, the surface is 10 feet and the height is 4-20 feet. Villagers had to bring their own construction tools, food and medicine, or spend their own money to get these things. Anyone who wanted to be spared from the contribution of labour must pay a fine-cum-ransom of 1,500 kyats to those SLORC authorities. Charges for a hired hand are 700-2,000 kyats. Private traffic in the area was conscripted to function as unpaid transport.

Before summoning the labourers in January 1994, Maj Thura Sein Win said that SLORC will help provide security, health care, and industrial machinery in the areas which are difficult for the labourers to work. But he did not keep his word. Rental charges for bulldozers run at 2,000 kyats per hour, which coerced labourers must pay SLORC to use. The so-called volunteers were divided into two shifts. The first to work from 6 a.m. to 4 p.m. while the second from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Those who were responsible for night assignment had to find ways to get electricity on their own resources. Four labourers from Nat Chaung Village were beaten for an entire night as they could not afford the needed electricity.

Heavy rain, floods and landslides altered the flow of the Htee stream in the direction of the railway line, submerging a section of it. The new stream is 15-20 feet deep and 500 yards long. Because of a landslide, labourers from Tar Han Ward and Nat Chaung Village were sent to hospital. But the victims must use their own money to buy medicine. There were a number of deaths because of incidents at the worksite.

To contribute labour, local people in the area have to sell or pawn what they have. The elderly, children and women heavy with child are not spared from contributing corvee labour. Because of landslides, falling trees, drowning,

malnutrition and anaemia, illnesses brought on by conditions, and beatings by SLORC troops, about 50 people have already died. Much land and farmers' fields where the railway line will pass through were confiscated by SLORC.

Those who complained were arrested and tortured. Local people in Kalay Township were forced to collect stones to cover an area 10 feet long, 4 feet wide and 1 foot high. If this number of stones is purchased the cost is 1,600 kyats. The labourers have to collect stones not only for the construction of the railway line but also for the buildings of the military officials from IB 228.

On 8 August 1994, Win Sein, Minister for Rail Transport, announced on television that SLORC has already provided 5,700,000 kyats for the social welfare, education and health care for the labourers. In reality, however, no labourers have received a pya. In addition, some local authorities confirmed that none of the allocated sum of money would be forthcoming. [Source: ABSDF]

11.3. Chaung U- Pakokku Railway Line

Construction started in the beginning of 1994. Local people in Chaung U, Pakokku, Myaing, Ye Sagyo were forced to contribute corvee labour, covering their own expenses. Although every household has been assigned to contribute labour four times, work for building of the earthen embankment has not finished yet. For one term, it lasted seven days to one month. Some labourers died of diseases, beatings and torture. People who earned for a living by harvesting toddy fruits had to abandon their work forcing the price of jaggery to shoot up.

The steel rails, engines, and wagons were carried from Chaung U to Pa Rein Ma Jetty across the Chindwin River, Mahuyar Jetty to Simikhon Jetty across the Irrawaddy River, then to Pakokku. Over 80,000 sleepers were also carried along that route by the labourers.

The poor peasants from Kyauk Kar, Myaing Si, Kyauk Kwe, Kha Tet Tan, Taung Ma Taw, Tit Nyo Pin and Se Kyi Taw parishes were forced into hard labour like breaking stones without any pay. Poverty-stricken people living in the parishes of Pale, Yin Mar Bin and Sar Lin Gyi were also forced to dig wells for an entire day without any compensation for their time and work. Moreover, each household had to send one to two family members on two occasions. Beatings were common while the people were at work. Several labourers who suffered from anaemia had to pay from their pockets to undergo treatment at a local hospital.

The worst case is local people living along the construction site of Chaung U-Pakokku-Kalay railway lines who were forced to contribute corvee labour. As SLORC ordered the villagers to contribute labour on a compulsory basis, those household which had only children and those who were not able to go to the worksite were forced to hire a substitute worker at a cost ranging from 800 to 1,200 kyats. Some had to sell their property to cover this amount. So far these villages have contributed labour three times, but more is expected as the construction of the railway has not yet been completed.

Some odd-jobs workers and daily employees were in trouble because they could not afford to pay a replacement. All the labourers there had to use their own money for food and transportation. To cover their expenses, they had to sell their personal possessions like gold earrings and clothing. Even the peasants who were used to hard work could not bear the hardship. A peasant from Kalay Township was allowed to be taken home when he was dying. After he died, his family received no compensation from SLORC who had worked him to death. [Source: ABSDF/NLD-LA]

11.4. Railway Line Construction In Myaing

Since September 1993 local people from over 300 villages in 84 parishes in Myaing have been forced to contribute corvee labour for the construction of the Pakokku-Myaing-Gagaw-Kalay Railway Line. For the construction, each family was forced to send one family member aged between 14 and 60.

The labourers had to bring their own baskets, mattocks, grubbing hoes, chopping hoes, pick axes, as well as eight-pound-weight hammers. As the labourers do not have such kind of hammers, they are forced to purchase the equipment from outside the village. The labourers must also arrange for transportation to the worksite, at their own expense. This involves going by bus up to the end of the line, then they have to walk further to reach the worksite. Daily bus fare per person costs 50 kyats.

Those who cannot afford to contribute labour have to give contribute about 3,000 kyats to the SLORC. Any person who fails to meet either of these, faces with various forms of harassment from the army, police and local SLORC authorities. The Myaing construction phase has not yet been completed. In the meantime, all the people in the area, regardless of their age, are under undue hardships.

Since the construction started, owners of cars, motorcycles, and bicycles have also been forced to give their vehicles to the SLORC. Even video cassettes owners were forced by the soldiers to handover their sets. Furthermore, there is no time limit for this "contribution" of labour, and SLORC provides no shelter for labourers nor does it treat the sick or the injured at the construction site.

Moreover, SLORC does not provide enough drinking water at the worksite. The labourers are denied the right to respond to anything that the SLORC orders. SLORC wants them to follow orders and don't ask questions. SLORC does not expect to be disobeyed or defied. When somebody responds, he/she is slapped and force to dig trenches.

Most of the female labourers were gang-raped by the troops. As they are ashamed of revealing their cases, many cases remained unexposed. [Source: ABSDF/NLD-LA]

Civil servants were also levied with a number of taxes. They are each taxed 500 kyats for breaking stones, 150 kyats for it to the truck and another 800 kyats for digging earth to construct the railway line. No civil servant is spared from this taxation.

From September 1993 to February 1994, during the half-way phase of the construction, 21 people died and many others were injured. Their hands and/or legs were broken due to a severe landslide.

In the first week of February 1994, SLORC Secretary-1 Lt Gen Khin Nyunt inspected the process of the railway line construction. At that time, the labourers were forced to say, "We are satisfied with contributing this kind of labour and enjoy to do so."

Many peasants in Myaing Township are now at a loss as they do not know where to escape to, and have no money to pay the SLORC "dues". Moreover, those who failed to attend the USDA mass rally were faced with various forms of harassment - a fine of 500 kyats per person, confiscation of household list (known as Form No. 10) and ID cards, arrest and imprisonment, overtime forced labour at the construction site plus a 30 kyat fine as a punishment, in addition to a multitude of indignities and violations of their person or private property.

Villagers were not only compelled to contribute corvee labour at the railway construction site, they were also subjected to other forms of enforced labour. For example, SLORC demanded from the labourers to supply 20 pieces of firewood per household, five branches of toddy-palm leaf, jute, groundnut and cooking oil and fees for the trip of Lt Gen Khin Nyunt. The villagers were not in any position to deny the SLORC demands. [Source: ABSDF/NLD-LA]

11.5. The Worsening Situation in Sagaing Division and Chin State

SLORC decided to repair roads in Monywa, and so each local household was assigned to complete the portion of road in front of their house. In addition, each household had to spend 500-1,000 kyats to the project. For their living, common people have to conduct their daily livelihood in accordance with SLORC rules and regulations.

For example, if residents fail to abide by SLORC-imposed "decrees", SLORC authorities may punish them by checking their household list at 1 or 2 a.m., and forcing them to clean the road or to contribute corvee labour.

Railroad construction is now going on between Monywa-Pakoku-Kankaw-Kalemmyo (Kalay) to link it with Tamu on the Indian border. The work started in 1993 and the Pakokku to Kalemmyo stretch. The next stage will be teak for sleepers and iron tracks. For this project thousands of Chins are being forced to work without receiving any money or food. As a result, many people are suffering from malnutrition and sickness.

The army personnel who supervise this project mistreat the forced labours to such extent that several people died. In addition, in order to strengthen their stronghold in East Chinland, the Burmese army forced the villagers to work on their military bases, roads and bridges. Fully occupied by this forced labour, the people do not have time to earn their living.

Local people in Chaung U, Myaung, Ye Sagyo, Pakokku, Myaing, Htee Lin, Gangaw, Pa Le, Yin Mar Pin and Kalay townships, Sagaing Division, were forced

to contributed corvee labour for the construction of the Chaung U-Pakokku-Gangaw-Kalay railway line. In December 1994, civilians in Myaing, Htee Lin and Pa Le townships were conscripted by LORC and forced to sign up under three different categories.

The first one was to agree to contribute labour by him/herself while the second one was to agree to give compensation for their absence and the last was failure to abide by the law. Those who were put under the third category were waiting for punishment in the fear imposed by SLORC. Compensation were paid at the rate fixed by SLORC; 2,000 kyats to every 15,000 kyats.

Those who agreed to contribute labour by themselves had to sign a list and inform the military about their presence as soon as they arrived at the worksite. They were not given enough food and there was no timeframe for the contribution of labour. They had to spend their own money to get treatment if they became ill or were injured. Some labourers had to sell their cows, carts and land to cover the expenses for their treatment. Those who had nothing to sell lost their lives.

While they were contributing labour, they were verbally abused, beaten and tortured by the SLORC troops. Those who made jokes were also subjected to beatings. Although SLORC said that each labourer would be given 30 kyats for one 10 sq foot-wide, one-foot-deep earthen pit, in reality they received nothing, and instead of due payment the labourers were forced to sign that they had contributed their pay as a donation to SLORC funds.

Many people died because of floods since they have been forced to dig the streams in Kan Gyi, Tha Pyay Taw and Ye Oh Sin villages, located north of Monywa Township. Local people in Tharzi, Kyaung Gone, Kan Pyar Gyi and Kyauk Sit Pong parishes have been forced to contribute corvee labour for the construction of Tharzi dam in Monywa township. The construction period will be lasted for two months, causing the villagers there into trouble as most of them were odd-jobs labourers. Local people in Monywa, Ayardaw, Chaung U, Myaung, Myin Mu and Sagaing were forced to grow trees by the side of motorways in their townships.

As a preparation for Visit Myanmar 1996, many people have been forced to contribute corvee labour for the repair and construction of roads and markets and growing of trees, causing them to be faced with many troubles. They have been forced to contribute corvee labour, to pay their own money as "fees", relocate from their home community after their lands where they lived for generations were confiscated without any compensation. In the cities, people who live along the motorways have been forced to build brick houses and fence them with brick, and ordered to move if they did not do as they were ordered. [Source: ABSDF / NLD-LA]

SLORC is also planning to build a major trade route to India. There is an existing road from Kalembo via Falam to Rih Lake on the border and this needs to be greatly upgraded. A "border security" agreement was signed in 1993 between SLORC and India.

11.6. Lavia Hydro-electric Project

The “Laiva Hydroelectric Project” has started two years ago on the Laiva River near Falam, Chin State. It is quite a big dam and is requiring a lot of forced labour. SLORC is saying that this is a development project for the good of the people. However, this project will adversely affect many villages, and the indigenous people will be displaced when the dam is completed, most likely without compensation as has occurred in previous circumstances.

11.7. Forced Labour for TV Tower Project in Arakan State

The Burmese military junta has decided to establish a television-receiving centre at the 10-mile milestone outside Maungdaw. This tower has been under construction on top of the Tunnel Hill for the last several months. To facilitate smooth transport to the top of the hill, the officials have taken initiative to construct an all season metal road from the bottom to the top of the hill.

It is understood that the technology for TV and satellite centre has been provided by China, and eight Chinese engineers are supervising the installation machinery and construction of buildings, which are nearing completion.

The border administration has issued a standing order to the villagers to supply about 4,000 labourers routinely for work on the project from different villages. However, the local Muslim villagers are not provided any food, nor are they given any wages. [Source: MOA]

11.8. Even Ghosts are Forced to Work in "Myanmar"



Chained political prisoners working on the road to Kengtung in April 1993. The road is a potential UN project. The gate at the prison camp nearby bears the following slogan reminiscent of Auschwitz: WE PAY FOR THE OUR MISTAKES WITH OUR SWEAT. (photo: NBC)

"Get another truck. The ghosts won't all fit in this one."

The message in Burmese was loud and clear. We were sitting in a house in the northern Thai border town of Mae Sai listening to a friend's radio, which could pick up conversations between SLORC troops across the border in Tachilek.

SLORC were rounding up Shan villagers to work as porters in their new offensive against Khun Sa, known internationally as the "opium king" of the "Golden Triangle".

The word "thayae" (ghost) is a term used by SLORC troops to refer to porters. Given that these people are regularly abused and that many never return, the word is chillingly apt.

Since the offensive started in December 1993, the SLORC has been press-ganging thousands of villagers in Shan State to be used as porters. Those who have managed to escape to the Thai border report that many have died, some from illness and malnutrition, others from injuries suffered at the front line, or from being shot as they tried to escape.

As well as villagers, the SLORC has also been using prisoners from central Burma. Five Burmese porters who escaped to the Thai border related that they

were prisoners from Insein Jail. They said that over three hundred prisoners are currently being used as porters.

It is not only the porters who are suffering from this offensive. The fighting has driven several thousand Shan, Palaung, Pa-O, Lahu and Lisu villagers from their homes, and they are now scattered in the jungle along the Thai border. Last month SLORC began bombing villages around Mong Kyawd, a former Khun Sa base. As a result, many more have fled.

This pattern of abuse of civilians by the SLORC is all too familiar, and has been seen in recent offensives in other ethnic states.

The difference now is that the SLORC is clearly hoping to gain international credibility by appearing to be cracking down on Khun Sa. SLORC claims that this offensive is an anti-narcotics operation and expects the international community to ignore the atrocities being committed in the name of drug eradication.

Given that the SLORC is letting other well-known drug traffickers in the Shan State operate with impunity, and that the start of the current offensive coincided with Khun Sa's declaration of independence for the Shan State, there is cause to doubt the SLORC's sincerity in posturing as drug enforcers. [Source: KHRG]

11.9. SLORC Paddy and Fishpond Project

Preparing for tourism year: Prisoners in chains are put to work to clean the moat surrounding Mandalay Palace, background, as Burma prepares for Visit Myanmar 1996. The famous Mandalay Hill is seen on the right. (photo: Faith Doherty)



The following information was provided by villagers from Yedashe Township, Taunggoo District, Pegu Division, and was gathered by the National League for

Democracy-Liberated Area (NLD-LA) Information and Research Department. This testimony is from the report of an NLD representative who has just returned from the area.

Since 1992, SLORC has been implementing a "paddy and fishpond" project in Yedashe Township, Taungoo District. The project is between Yedashe and Myo Hla villages, covering an area about six miles in length and one-and-a-half miles in breadth. It involves digging thousands of shallow fish ponds, which are also to be used as rice paddies in rainy season. Each pond is 10 square feet, and four feet deep.

The entire civilian population of the township is being forced to dig these ponds. This township consists of five towns and 58 villages tracts [a village tract is an area including four to six villages].

About 20,000 people have been forced to work digging these ponds each dry season since 1992. It takes families over two weeks to dig two ponds because according to villagers, 1 man can dig 100 cubic feet in two full days, and two ponds constitute 800 cubic feet. The ground in the area is not rocky, but in dry season it is hard as rock, so hard that a long iron crowbar is often the only way to break it up. Villagers must provide all their own tools, and not all of them have such tools. The plots assigned to some villagers also have trees on them which must be uprooted.

Each family is assigned two ponds, and must also use the excavated earth to build smooth terraces around their ponds, on which they must plant banana trees. This takes an average of 15 to 20 days of hard work for every family. Farmers, workers merchants, technicians, and people from all civilian classes have to do the work. Any household which cannot supply the required labour has to pay 1,000 to 1,200 kyats to hire people to do their assignment for them. Villagers who are SLORC officials are excluded from the labour.

None are paid for their labour. SLORC has given the name "volunteer labour" to all such forms of enforced slavery. The fishpond project is still going on now, this dry season. All ponds are not yet finished. All of the ponds are officially owned by Southern Command of the Burma army, commanded by Maj-Gen Soe Myint. People in the area have named the project the "Death Ponds", because more than 100 people have already died of sickness and exhaustion made worse by sunstroke while working on the project. All of the subsistence farmers who used to own this land have been driven out by officers of the Southern Command.

In 1992 Lt-Gen Aye Thaung, then commander of Southern Command, seized all agricultural land between Mahn Si, Kyin Ywa, Kun Gyi, and Swa Min Lan villages, about 1,000 acres altogether, without paying any compensation to the farmers who owned the land. Their not-yet-ripe crops were bulldozed by army tractors at the time. This 1,000 acres is now being used to grow sugarcane for the profit of military officers. The project is named the "Aye Thaung Sugarcane Field Project". [Aye Thaung is now SLORC's Minister of Border Area Development, and administers the SLORC's BAD programme, which is partly funded by the UNDP, UNICEF, and other UN Agencies.]

All labour sowing, growing, harvesting, cutting, and carrying the sugar- cane to the mills is done by civilian slaves from the village tracts of Shwe Ka Saung, Tha Phan Sin, Swa Taung Kan, Swa Wah Pauk and Kha Nan Lei. This occurs every growing season, 1994 being the third year. Every house has also recently been forced to build roads 24 feet wide and four feet high through the fields. Several roads go through each field, and are used to transport the cane out of the fields and as a dry season firebreak. SLORC officials of the Township Council and the Township Police are allowed to reap the profit from the sugarcane crop, with each being allocated five acres. The rest officially belongs to Burma Army Southern Command.

In Shwe Ka Saung, Tha Phan Sin, Swa Taung Kan, Swa Wah Pauk, and Kha Nan Lei village tracts [the same as above], there are about 400 bullock carts altogether. In 1992, every house which owned a cart was ordered to go to the forest and bring one piece of timber 18 feet long, at least 3 feet 8 inches in diameter, of solid hardwood other than teak, to be used to build the barracks and other buildings for Southern Command headquarters. The villagers had to cart the timber to the sawmill, where the SLORC officers had it sawn and then sold off [the camp headquarters had already been built].

This order was repeated in 1993, and again in 1994. Now the SLORC says the wood is for the construction of Aye Tha Ya and Shwe Pi Tha, two new villages being built to house army veterans. The villages are being built right beside the sugar cane fields so the veterans can keep watch on the fields but none of the wood is being used there – the veterans must find their own building materials.

The Rangoon-Mandalay rail line passes through Yedashe Township. Along the rail line, there is a watch point every 200 metres. Villagers in the area have to supply four persons to man each watch point, day and night. They must also provide people to stand guard along the east bank of the Sittang River every night to prevent any members of opposition groups from crossing to the west side.

11.10. Development Programs, or Support for Military?

The Military Strategic Command is also constructing a hospital in Bawgali Village, Tantaung Township, as a "development project". However, the villagers are being forced to contribute money for all the costs of the project. The funding originally allocated for the project is all being pocketed by the SLORC military officers.

The villagers are also being forced to construct a road between Bawgali and Pa Lay Wa villages. They have to work without pay and bring all their own food while working on the road. The funds originally provided for this "development project" have also been pocketed by the military officers, who then force the villagers to build the road.

Note that the roads which the villagers are being forced to build are all being done to upgrade military supply routes to SLORC frontline positions and to geographically cut off the KNU headquarters region around Manerplaw. The road to Meh Tha Wah will come quite close to Klay Muh Hta.

The villagers also talk about several kinds of forced portering. SLORC sends orders to villages for short-time porters (people ordered to come for a few days on an ad hoc basis) and permanent porters (people who must be replaced by the village every so many days ad infinitum). The villagers can often hire other to go in their place in these cases. SLORC also takes "emergency porters" [when they take people for ad hoc portering duty] and "operations porters" [when they capture people in villages and towns to go on offensive operations until the operation is over or until they escape or die]. In these cases there is no way out.

11.11. Special Rapporteur Visits "Worksite" and Talks with SLORC

On the evening of 9 November, Professor Yozo Yokota, UN Special Rapporteur for Burma, arrived at Worksite Two of the Ye-Tavoy Railway construction, known as Kalaw Worksite, which was assigned to the local people in Yan Myoe Aung Ward and Ah Zin Village in Ye Township.

On that day, the Special Rapporteur met with U Har Shin, a veteran and chairman of Yan Myoe Aung Ward, and U Maung Myint, chairman of Ah Zin Village and asked about forced labour for the railway line construction. The Special Rapporteur held a two-hour long meeting with them. According to an interview made with one of the chairmen and reporters from NMSP, NLD-LA and DPNS soon afterwards, Yozo Yokota was apparently provided with disinformation by SLORC, instead of the situation's true reality in that place.

Before the Special Rapporteur arrived at Worksite Two, SLORC local people from Han Gan, Kalaw Gyi and Maokanin villages, who have been assigned to work for the construction of the railway since it is started, were replaced by SLORC cronies U Har Shin and U Maung Myint on 7 November. Because of that replacement, local people in those villages were not able to meet the Special Rapporteur.

One LORC chairman told that on 6 November Col Myo Myint, battalion commander of LIB 343 summoned all members of LORC to come to Kalaw Gyi Village. The commander instructed them that as Prof Yozo Yokota would visit the railway construction site on 9 November, they should not bring the aged persons and children to the worksite and if the professor asked anything about the labour, everybody should answer that they were doing it voluntarily and it was not forced labour and that any aged persons and children were not used to contribute labour.

On 7 November, as the chairman of Ye township LORC changed the worksites for the villagers from Han Gan, Kalaw Gyi, Maokanin, who had nearly completed their assignment, to another worksite, they became infuriated and quarrels broke out among the labourers. When Yozo Yokota went back, Ye township LORC reassigned them to their former worksite in order to avoid tension among the villages in time.

The reality at the railway construction site which was not allowed to be expressed to the Special Rapporteur remains a whisper at different worksites along

the on-going railway line. Until 31 December, many local people were forced to contribute corvee labour for the worksite from Natkyizin to Tavoy. [Source: DPNS/NLD-LA/NMSP]

11.12. More Forced Labour in Southern Burma

LIB 406, stationed near Paukpinkwin Village, Ye Phyu Township, forced the villagers to saw the timber for the troops' own benefit. Each group consisted of ten villagers were assigned to saw timber every two days and then were forced to carry the timber to Natkyizin Village. Villagers were also demanded by the military to pay 300 kyats for monthly "porter fees". [Source: NMSP]

SLORC is now having a road built between Bo Pyin and Lay Nya in Mergui-Tavoy District, a distance of over 30 kilometres. Since early December 1993, SLORC LIB 358 under Maj Chit Maung has forced five villages to labour on the road; Taung Din, Taung Yai, Chao Mun, Bong Kun and Lay Oo Thaung. Every family is assigned 10 feet of road to complete by themselves; most of the work involves breaking and carrying rocks, and it takes most families 15 to 20 days to complete their assignment.

They come the three or four kilometres from their villages to the project site and live on the roadside in shelters. They are given no pay or rations, and must bring their own food. Families are threatened with a fine of 7,000 kyats if they do not go to do the work, and some families have hired others to go in their place for 3,000 kyats if they can afford it.

Recently SLORC also ordered the people of Monora Village to come and work on the road, but this village has strong connections with the KNU and they did not go or pay the fine. As a result, the SLORC fired five mortar shells into the village, killing one villager and wounding three others. The villagers then saw no alternative, and went to work on the road. Work on this road is still going on now; to complete 30 kilometres with each family building a stretch of 10 feet will require the enslavement of about 10,000 families. [Source: ABSDF/KNU]

Throughout all Karen areas, everyone in villages near military supply roads is now regularly forced to work maintaining the road and sweeping it for mines, often several days a week. All villages within reach of SLORC army camps are forced to send slaves on a rotating basis to do all manual labour at the camp, such as digging trenches and bunkers, building fences and barracks, chopping firewood, carrying water, cleaning, and serving as messengers. The villagers are also forced to send all required building materials to the army camps, as well as meat, vegetables, and rice. [Source: KNU]

[See also under "Eye-witness Accounts" for forced labour, interview 8, 10-12, 21, 24, 29-32, 34-35, 37, 39, 42-57, 59-62, 65-74, 79-94, 99-102, 108-109, 114-116, 119, 121-129, 137, for slavery, interview 1-4, 6-9, 17-20, 32-33, 36-39, 58, 64-65, 102, 104, 108-111, 113, 115, 130-143]

11.13. List of Incidents

Since January, villagers in Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District, have been forced to dig an irrigation canal at Tha Htay Gone Village for 150 troops of SLORC IB 73 led by Capt Ha Shin, and company commanders Lt Aung Nai and Tun Tun Oo. All the villagers in that area have to take turns doing three-day rotating shifts of hard labour on the canal.

Each village have to send 200 people, taking their food along for the three-day work shift. They receive no pay or compensation. The villagers were also press-ganged into backbreaking forced labour in the construction of a road that links Boggle and Pa Lay Wa villages. They had to work not only as corvee labourers but also bring their own food covering their own expenses. The funds originally provided for this "development projects" have already flowed into the pockets of the SLORC military officers who forced the local people to contribute labour at gunpoint. [Source: KNU]

On January 21, local SLORC authorities and IB 26 stationed in Mone Township, Pegu Division, demanded the local people in Tha Htay Gone and Nga Lauk Tet villages to send 20 villagers in order to harvest crops in the Tha Htay Gone area. [Source: ABSDF]

On March 10 alone, more than 100 Burmese were deported to Kawthaung (Victoria Point) by six boats. When they arrived Burma, they were taken to the worksite for the construction of Boke Pyin-Kawthaung Highway and the Ye-Tavoy railway line and forced to work there at gunpoint by SLORC. [Source: FTUB]

On May 21, SLORC troops from IB 39, Southern Command, demanded four porters from Lay Kay Village, Taungoo District (two of them being for long journeys and the other two for short journeys). The former had to pay 3,000 kyats per person and the latter 700 kyats each for their eventual release. [Source: KYO]

Since October 1994, all citizens from every household in Tavoy, Tenasserim Division, have paid SLORC a monthly ransom of 500 kyats to local LORC to spare them from contributing labour for the construction of the railway line. SLORC fixed the rate at 500 kyats with the reason that they have to pay kyats 100 to each hired hand every day. Aside from that ransom for the construction of railway line, inhabitants in Tavoy have also been forced to pay monthly "porter fees". Each household has to pay 50-100 kyats.

But local people living in Tavoy Township were forced into portering. Each household was ordered to send one family member. He/she had to contribute labour for 15 days. All the households in the villages were forced to send somebody else under rotating basis to contribute labour. Local people living in Ye, Thanbyuzayat, Mudon in Mon State and Ye Phyu, Thayetchaung, Laung Lon and Tavoy townships in Tenasserim Division.

On 6 November, the Ye township LORC issued a secret order to the villages in the township demanding for compulsory contribution of labour from local people in order to dig a pit and build an earthen embankment for the railway line. That secret order set a November 7 deadline for 11,850 labourers from 29 wards/villages in Ye township to be ready at the construction site. It also said that all the labourers must bring required construction tools, cooking materials and food

for one week.

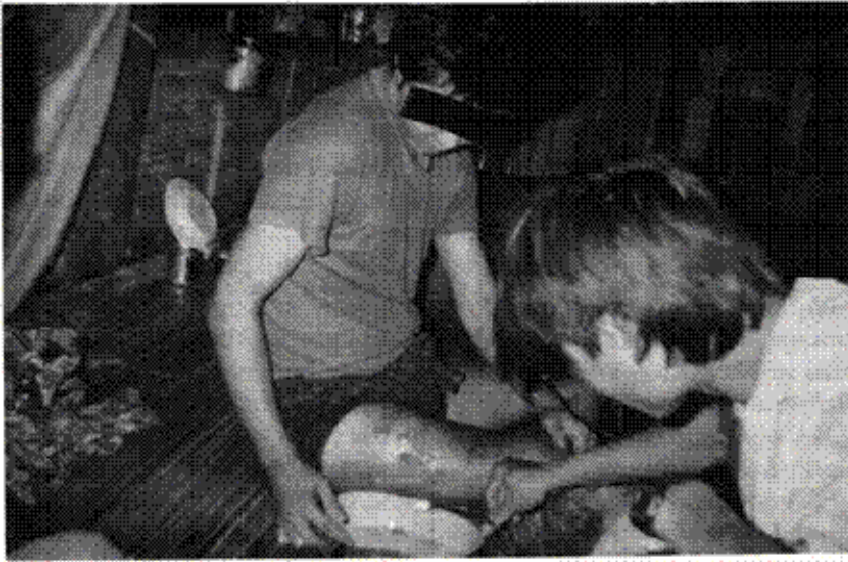
Worksite One in Chaung Taung Village was assigned 2,000 labourers, Worksite Two in Ka Lawk Village was assigned 3,700 labourers, Worksite Three in Nine-Mile Village was assigned 6,150 labourers from respective villages. All these areas were regarded by SLORC as “White Areas” (purely a SLORC-controlled area). Other areas in Ye Phyu Township were regarded as “Black Areas” (not controlled by SLORC troops but ethnic/democratic forces) and every household was ordered to send one family member to contribute unpaid labour. In November alone 30 households of local Mon and Karen villagers from Ye Phyu Township escaped to Pa Yaw refugee camp, situated along the Thai-Burmese border. [Source: CPPSM/NMSP]

On November 12, IB 349 arrested men and women from the villages of Thamain, Setsu, Anyar Su, Weinbet in Wall Township and Donzayit, Kwin Seith, Nyaung Che Tauk, Zalote Kyi from Shwe Kyin Township and taken as porters by force to Thein Za Yat. (Source: NLD-LA)

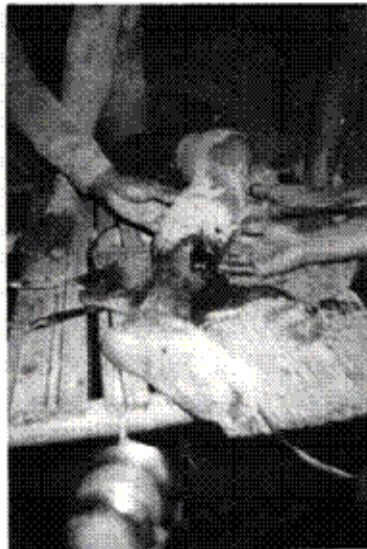
On November 15, the soldiers from IB 57, 59, 349 and 350 came and took the villagers from Donzayit Village including Htay Min (28) and Soe Nai (30). There are about 600 people taken as porters for the offensive to Bike Kyi The Ma (Pregnant Woman Hill). Due to maltreatment of troops, reportedly some porters died in the way. Two of the victims escaped on 2 December 1994. They were Ko Htay Min (son of U Tun and Daw Khin and husband of Ma Htay Win) of Donzayit Village, Shwe Kyin township, Pegu Division; and Ko Soe Naing (30, unmarried, son of U Tut and Daw Hli) of Donzayit Village, Shwe Kyin township, Pegu Division. (Source: NLD-LA)

On November 17, about 200 SLORC troops from IB 350 led by Column Comdr Maj Tin Oo Lwin arrested about 60 males and females from villages in Kyauk Kyi, Kyauktaga, Shwe Kyin townships in Pegu Division and press-ganged them into portering, forcing them to carry heavy loads of ammunition and rations to the troops' operational zone in the eastern mountain range. Porters were fed a small meal and those who could no longer carry their loads were kicked into a ravine. (Source: NLD-LA)

On November 17, 300 SLORC troops from IB 151 led by Lt Col Kyaw Kyaw conscripted about 90 men and women from Tan Bo Village and Kyauk Kyi Town at gunpoint and forced them to carry ammunition and rations for the army to Baw Ga Dar outpost in Shwe Kyin. Each porter who could pay a ransom of 1,000-2,000 kyats was released. (Source: NLD-LA)



A villager in Papun District who was shot from behind by a SLORC patrol because he was fleeing to avoid being taken as a porter. The bullet entry wound is in the back of his right thigh, and the larger exit wound on the front of his thigh. (photo: KHRG)



Tee Toh Po, a 38-year-old Karen farmer from Krua See Village, Thathon Township, Karen State, showing the bullet wound he got when SLORC troops opened fire on him because he was running to escape from being taken as porter. (photo: KHRG)

On November 19, residents in Shwe Kyin Town were arrested by a military column from IB 350 led by Lt Col Khin Maung Kyi. Among the victims was 34-year-old Ko Soe Win (son of U Aye and Daw Aye Chit) who is married to Ma Khin Mar Win and has one daughter. He was arrested in a teashop while visiting Shwe Kyin (he lived at No 222, Pyi Daw Thar Street, Pegu, where he did odd-

jobs). Arrested by the military, he experienced fighting on the way and was given only a small meal. When he suffered from malaria, he was not given proper treatment. He escaped on 2 December 1994 from Bike Gyi The Ma Taung although he had malaria at that time. (Source: NLD-LA)

From December 7-9, in order to attack the 7th Bn of the KNLA, under the command of 3rd Brigade, SLORC troops arrested local people in Pegu Division and forced them into portering. As the Shwe Kyin-based IB 57 undertook the same method on 9 December at 11:00 a.m., in which a student, namely, Maung Saung Tin (aka Phoe Saung), was gunned down, being hit in right upper arm and at the chest. The victim was shot by warrant officer Kan Myint (aka Kan Pu) near Myat Mon Clinic and Pattamya Bookstore, located in the Kye Nan Tan Quarter in Shwe Kyin.

While the victim was taken for treatment at Myat Mon Clinic, officers from IB 57 took him by saying that they would transfer him to Mingaladon Military hospital in Rangoon. Until the last week of December 1994, the bullet lodged in the lung of the patient has not been taken out and the condition of the victim has become fatal. The victim was a 10th standard student and also a trishaw driver living at Zee Taw-Hpwe Gone Quarter in Shwe Kyin. The above-mentioned arrests and forced portering was committed by SLORC troops in Shwe Kyin, Thein Zayat, Kyauk Kyi, Mone and Nyaunglebin townships in Pegu Division in the second and third weeks of December 1994. [Source: NLD-LA]

Local people in Waw and Shwe Kyin townships in Pegu Division have been conscripted and forced into portering for military operations. On November 12, not only men but also women living in Ye Tha Mein, Set Su, Ah Nyar Su and Wine Bat villages in Waw Township, Pegu Division, and Donzayit, Kwin Seik, Nyaung Che Dauk and Sa Loke Gyi villages in Shwe Kyin Township, Pegu Division, were press-ganged into portering at gunpoint by IB 349. The people were loaded into a boat on the following day and taken to Thein Zayat. [source: NLD-LA]

On December 17, in an interview with a DVB reporter, a victim who fled from a porter "concentration camp" revealed that about 600 porters were forced to live at Bike Gyi The Ma Taung along with 3 companies from IB 350. Since they were arrested, they were not fed sufficient food with enough nutrition to survive along the way, and those who suffered from malaria were not given any treatment. This led to many porters' untimely deaths. 3 victims escaped from that concentration camp while fighting took place on December 2, as they were unable to bear the insufficient food, lack of necessary medical treatment, beatings and forced labour. They are still suffering from malaria.

On 9 December, the following escaped to the revolutionary area: Maung Win (45, son of U Aye and Daw Aye Kyi) from Ta Yoke Tan, living in Nyaung Wine, Shwe Kyin; Maung Tin Aye (25, son of U Hla Maung and Daw Boke Sone, living at Ta Yoke Tan, living in Nyaung Wine, Shwe Kyin; Maung Than Moe, younger brother of Maung Than Naing who died of malaria on December 3.

Maung Win and Maung Tin Aye were arrested by Coy 3 of IB 350 led by Coy Comdr Capt Htein Lin at 5 a.m. on November 11 on their way to the farm. They

were forced to crush paddy from the field on their way to Bike Gyi The Ma Taung. Extra paddy was burnt down by SLORC troops. The captives were not fed enough, only to keep alive. No treatment was administered or offered whenever one of the victims suffered from malaria, but instead received beatings when they asked for medicine.

Than Naing and Than Moe were arrested by IB 350 at 5:00 a.m. on 11 November on their way to Shwe Kyin. They were forced to carry artillery shells. While there was fighting on November 29, the four of them escaped from the military column. On December 3, Maung Than Moe died of malaria and of bruises which he received because of carrying overly heavy loads. [Source: NLD-LA]

Coy Comdr Win Zaw from Coy 4 of IB 73, stationed at Kyun Pin Seik outpost, Htantabin Township, Pegu Division, summoned local people living in nearby villages at gunpoint and forced them to build paddy stores. Then the villages were also forced to store their own paddy at these stores. Moreover, on 23 December, Comdr Win Zaw summoned LORC in nearby villages to come to Nikaw Ta Plaw Village. Without specific reason, they were demanded to give money by Win Zaw. The rate was 2,000 Ks for Nikaw Ta Plaw, 1,000 Ks for Warko Klar, 1,000 kyats for Mi Phle and 3,000 kyats from Don Nyar Lar villages.

Kyun Pin Seik outpost is headed by Win Zaw and Josef on a rotational basis. During this term Josef was the responsible person for the outpost and he forced the villagers to build more sentry posts. Every 10 villagers were assigned sentry duty at one post. More sentry posts were also forced to be built along the way from Kyun Pin Seik and Ok Lok Khi villages. If one post was less than the number as fixed by Josef, each one of the villagers in that sentry post was forced to pay 25,000 kyats. [Source: PDC]

In January 1995 there was a cultural show in Hkamti Township, Sagaing Division. As members of SLORC in Rangoon came and observed the entertainment, the township LORC ordered the people in each township to perform at that show. On 3 January 1995 while the villagers in Kon Kai Lon Village, Lae Shi Township, Sagaing Division, were rehearsing for this entertainment, SLORC troops arrived at the village and opened fire on them. Although there was no casualty, this event barred the villagers to perform as ordered. The villagers are in fear of punishment which is beyond their speculation. [source: NLD-LA]

11.13. The Scourge of Forced Portering

On March 2, Col Sein Tun of military column 2 of SLORC IB 55 forced the local people in Klaw Mhee Deh, Leh Khair Deh and Hu Mu Deh villages in Taungoo District to carry their rations and equipment from Palet Wa to Klaw Mhee Deh at gunpoint. On the same day, Col Win Maung, tactical commander of SLORC Central Command, forced the villages in Bawgali Village, Thandaung Township, at gunpoint to carry rice for the troops. (Source: KNU)

Since April 18, military columns from SLORC IB 263 under the command of 1st MSC (Western), arrested five villagers from every village in Taungoo District and

forced them into portering. This column also harassed local people in Kyauk Kyi township while the 1st and 2nd columns of IB 26 under the command of Southern Command had been asking money from traders in Kaseldo, Ye Wai, Taw Ku, Soe Phyu Gone and Chat Gyi districts at gunpoint. [Source: KYO]

On 26 June, SLORC 2nd Column of IB 263 led by Maj Htay Aung, under the command of 1st TOC of Western Command, arrested traders from Tu Mae Daw and Leh Kalar De villages in Taungoo District, Pegu District, taking away 200,000 kyats in cash and press-ganging the victims into portering. [Source: KYO]

In October, SLORC troops from IN 62, led by Deputy Bn Comdr Than Win, Capt Aung Lwin and Coy Comdr Capt Aye Win entered Kaw Kha Taw, Kyaw Tan and Kaw Goe villages in Kyaikmaraw Township, arrested the people on sight and forced them into portering regardless of their age. As the victims could no longer bear the burden of carrying heavy loads and exhaust, fled for their lives. [Source: DPNS/NLD-LA/NMSP]

11.14. Slaves in Shan State

In Naung-leng Village of Haipaw Township, soldiers of Coy 1 of IB 243 staged a raid to capture villagers for use as porters. Some of the villagers tried to escape and were shot at by one of the officers. Tsai Panti was seriously wounded. The soldiers made no effort to take care of him, and when it was safe the villagers were finally able to take him to the hospital. [Source: SHRF]

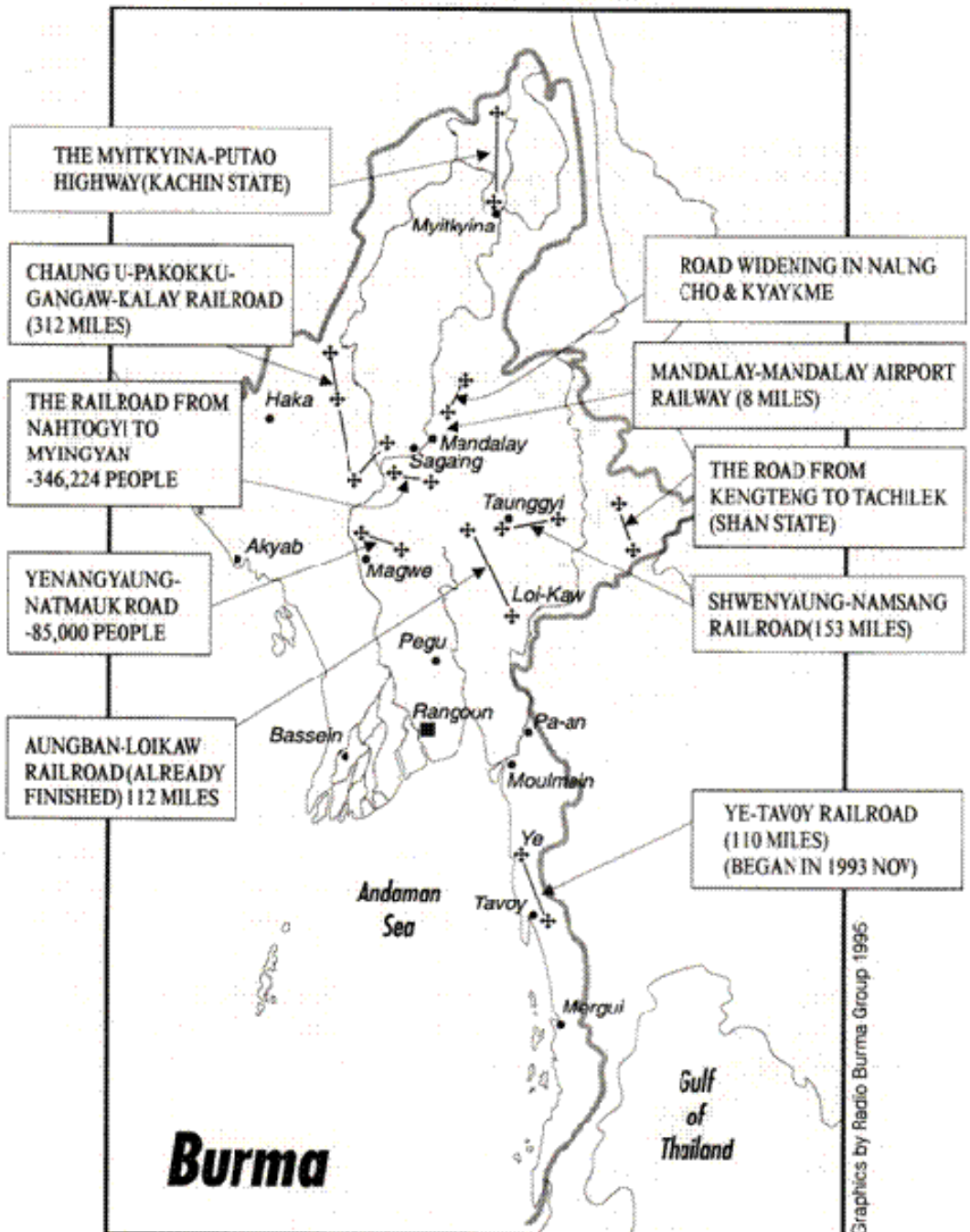


Porters who escaped from their SLORC captures during the Tatmadaw's offensives against Khun Sa's troops in April-June 1994. (photo: VDS)

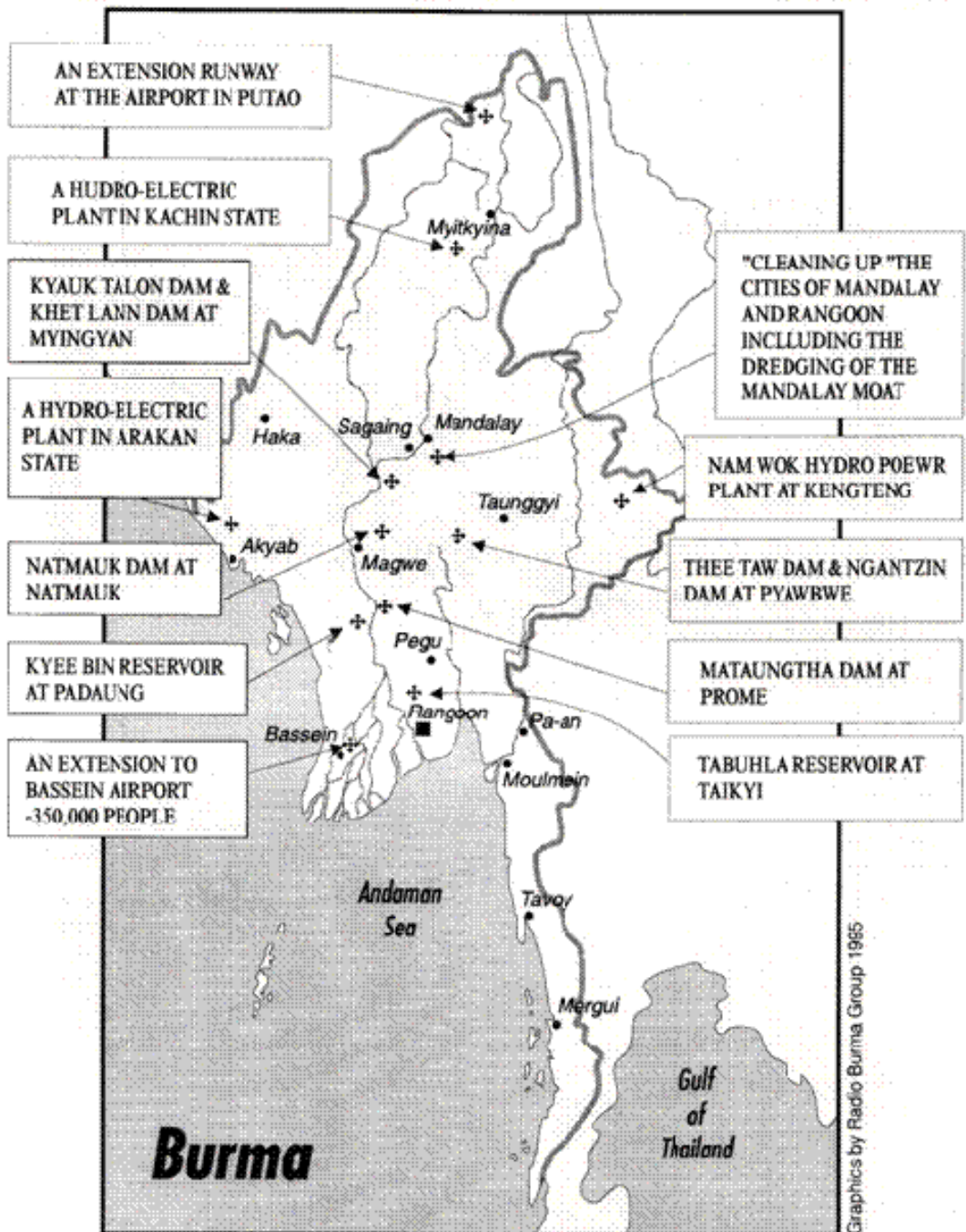


Escaped civilians/porters and SLORC soldiers in Shan State in June 1994. (photo: VDS)

Rail and road Constructions (Areas of Forced Labour & Forced Relocation)



Some of the Forced Labour Project Sites in Burma(1994)



(XII) RIGHTS OF LIVELIHOOD

12.1. No "Colourful Coat of Paint" for the Majority

The following report was smuggled out from in Rangoon. It suggests that the majority of the people in Burma are not benefiting from any of the "economic improvements" presented by SLORC, and that most of them still live in a state of fear and discontent.

"The policy of the SLORC for the urban areas so to make them appear peaceful and orderly. This is done to impress the growing number of foreigners visiting Rangoon and Mandalay as tourists and investors. However, the remote rural regions do not receive such guests and so they receive no "colourful coat of paint" by the military regime. The people of Burma can now be divided into three major groups.

1) The government employees are the most important force for the SLORC. So long as the government offices function, the SLORC can control the whole nation at gun-point. There are few jobs for people other than as government workers, so people have to depend only on the military regime for their living. For this reason, few of them want to criticise the regime as they fear their livelihood will be cut off. This gives little freedom to government employees. There can be no strikes anywhere in the country, no protest posters, and no news articles criticising the rulers. All are strictly prohibited.

Government workers receive little pay, but since there are very few other jobs available, they have to quietly accept their meagre pay cheque each month. A teacher will receive 700 to 1,000 kyats pay per month (US\$7-10). Often, on pay-day, the local officials will take as much as 50% of the paycheque as donations for special projects in the area, such as for the building of a new pagoda, or for a Buddhist festival.

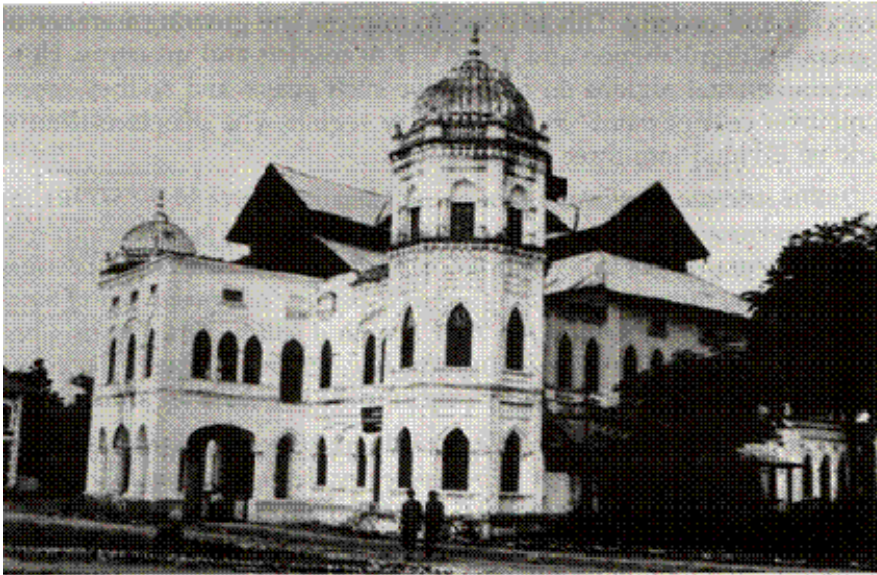
2) The farmers make up the largest group in Burma. Although they are the vast majority, they lack good education, and have few true leaders. They suffer immeasurably under the SLORC policies. As an example, in the dry zone regions near Mandalay, the average rice production is now about 25 baskets per acre. It costs farmers at least 5,000 kyats to produce one acre of paddy rice. If the farmers can sell the rice on the open market, they only receive 5,000 kyats for the 25 baskets. They make no profit at all.

However, they must sell six baskets per acre to the government at one-half the market price as a form of taxation. Consequently the farmers must often borrow 1,200 kyats per acre at very high interest rates, simply to continue farming. They fall deeper in debt and will be imprisoned if they can not sell the amount demanded by the government.

3) The business people are not affected much by the government's policies. They adjust their living to the inflation rate so, like the lotus flower, they rise as the water level rises. There are very few people in Burma who can work in private business.

SLORC plans to build at least 90 hotels in Rangoon for the tourists they hope to lure here in 1996 (Burma's Year of Tourism). Since these hotels must be guaranteed a regular supply of water and electricity for the comfort of these foreign guests, most of the people living in the city are already facing daily shortages of these necessities. As more and more hotels are completed and occupied, the problem for the city people will also increase.

Students in the universities are still very angry at the military regime. They do not like the situation, but there are so many military inside the campuses that the students cannot move. If they move even a little bit, the guns are immediately pointed at them. [Source: Burma Issues]



The Kengtung Palace very much adorned by Shan people; destroyed in November 1991 to provide the space for construction of a Hotel. (photo: BRC-Chiang Mai)

12.2. Livelihood Equals Survival

Under the dictatorial military regime, peasants are subjected to various forms of oppression. In Kalay Township, Sagaing Division, peasants living near the Myit Thar River were forced to send 1000 bullock carts for summer paddy planting of SLORC's rice fields. Local people were very upset when they found that their labour was absolutely spoiled by the summer weather, and SLORC's plan for summer rice became fruitless.

In Min Kin Township, Sagaing Division, every peasant was required to sell 10 baskets of paddy per acre to SLORC at a price of 70-75 kyats while the going price at the time was 250 kyats per basket. Since the weather was not good enough, peasants got only a little crop production during the last harvest. As they had to return the money which they had borrowed from the rich in order to facilitate their household living, most of the peasants were not able to sell the amount of paddy

required by SLORC. With no paddy and no money to buy it from other sources, many of these peasants were arrested for not obeying SLORC's directives.

In Kalay Township, peasants were forced to contribute corvee labour, bringing their own food and covering their own expenses. In Min Kin Township, at least 10 people from every village were ordered to relocate and contribute labour for a minimum of one month. Although SLORC promised that it would provide travelling expenses, peasants had to arrange their way home by themselves. Many people returned from Tamu to Kalay without eating a meal.

In Depeyin Township, Sagaing Division, SLORC troops issued an order requiring each peasant to sell 12 baskets of paddy per acre at a price of 70 kyats per basket. In 1993, peasants were had to give three baskets of paddy per acre to local SLORC authorities without any pay. In order to meet the demands for 700,000 baskets as claimed in the order, SLORC troops prohibited peasants by force from selling rice and arrested those who tried to do so.

SLORC troops confiscated 50 acres of rice farms along Monywa-Ye U motorway to be used as a military base. In February 1993, all the people in Depeyin, aged 16-60, regardless of gender, were forced to contribute labour for Payan Patar Stream. Each labourer was assigned to complete digging of five 10-foot square earthen pitches. U Kyaw Win from Le Ti Village was beaten by SLORC soldiers when he dug the wrong pitch.

In 1993, peasants in Ye U Township were required to give one basket of paddy per acre to local SLORC authorities. In addition to that they were forced to sell 6 baskets per acre to SLORC at the price of 35 kyats per basket.

In Yinmar Pin Township, peasants were forced to sell 4-12 baskets of paddy per acre at the price of 70 kyats per basket. They were also forced to sell three baskets of wheat per acre at the price of 250 kyats per basket. Peasants who failed to sign product sales contracts with SLORC were detained for one month without due process of law.

Police demand payment from pubs, saw mills, timber rafts and logging carts. Official pubs there were forced to pay over 200,000 kyats. There were about 20 official pubs. Each illegal pub was forced to pay 5,000 kyats. Moreover, owners of pubs were also forced to pay SLORC for the Regatta Festival, horse racing ceremony, golf courses and other festivals. They had to pay five kyats per person for Shwebo College.

SLORC's demands for "compensation" from villagers are ever increasing. Every time they lose a truck because of a landmine, they demand that the villagers in each of 10-12 surrounding villages give 50,000 kyats while the nearest village is forced to pay 100,000 kyats for compensation.

A written order from IB 42 states, "If a truck is exploded in the future, the troops will demand one million kyats from the villagers, and it must be paid within seven days. If the villagers cannot afford to pay, all surrounding villages will be burned down, and villagers will be forced to accompany SLORC troops in the army trucks". (Source: ABSDF)

12.3. Everyday Life with SLORC

In addition to the existing burdens of heavy "porter fees" and looting, villagers are now forcibly levied "taxes" on every farm or field and on many of their working tools such as saws. In many villages, whenever the villagers produce jaggery, SLORC troops confiscate the product or "buy" it at an absurdly low price from the villagers. Then the troops force the villagers at gun point to "buy" the product back at a higher price. SLORC soldiers also force the villagers to buy army rations at inflated prices, and loot them back from the villagers.

Southwestern Command has issued orders to villagers in the area that they are not allowed to cut, carry, saw, buy, sell or own wood or timber any more. At the same time, the same office sent new orders to the same villages demanding 75 tons of hardwood from each village. The villagers were also forced to cut and transport the hardwoods to a specified site, located on the river bank. (Source: KNU)

In Tang Yan Township, northern Shan State, the commander of IB 33 forced the villagers of Na-huk Village to cultivate 180 acres of corn without payment. This corn was used solely by SLORC. The villagers were further forced to pay SLORC a total of 25,000 kyats. This is an incredible amount of money for a village to collect when they are barely able to earn enough for their own survival.

In the same village it was reported that the commander of IB 240 took ten head of cattle belonging to the villagers. No compensation was paid to the villagers who depend on their livestock for food and labour. (Source: SHRF)

Many acres of land in Tamardan Village in Yesagyo Township were confiscated by SLORC without compensation in order to build military headquarters for IB 256, 257 and 258. All the households in Khawekyin Village in Monywa Township were forced to relocate from their home community by the orders of SLORC in order to build an airport. [Source: ABSDF/NLD-LA]

12.4 SLORC'S Satellite Town Programme

In Monywa District, Sagaing Division, in the name of building Tha Lar satellite town, SLORC authorities have received special privileges for buying and selling of land which was given to them for their own living. Peasants whose farmland was confiscated following the project for building a satellite town, have had to become odd-jobs workers. [Source: ABSDF/NLD-LA]

Although SLORC supplied electricity for houses in the satellite town, only the families which received a letter of approval from SLORC could get electricity and a plot of land. To receive that letter, each person had to bribe thousands of kyats to SLORC authorities. One aged person said that there is no law that protects the people nor is there anyone who takes responsibility for their social welfare. Everybody has to strive for their own living, education, social welfare programmes and sanitation. (Source: ABSDF)

[See also under "Eye-witness Accounts", interview 1, 3-7, 9-11, 16, 19-20, 25, 29, 32-34, 36-37, 39-41, 45-47, 49-57, 59-62, 65-72, 74-82, 92-99, 101-102, 104-105, 108-109, 111-113, 115-119, 121-125, 127-128, 134-135, 137]

12.5 List of Incidents

On November 19, 1993, regional SLORC authorities circulated an order in Ye Pyu Township of Tenasserim Division that each family will now have to pay "porter fees" of 100 kyats per family 4 times per month. The villagers now have to pay this, even though the average monthly income of a family in this area is only 100 kyats. "Porter fees" are supposed to be used to pay wages to military porters, but porters are never paid. The penalty for an unpaid "porter fee" is to be taken as a porter yourself. Several hundred villagers from the area have already fled to the Thai border to escape this new tax. [Source: KNU]

In Kyauk Kyi area, during this year's harvest (December 1993-January 1994), four SLORC battalions – IB 26, 35, 73 and 351 – ordered every peasant to give them three sacks of rice per acre (100 kg sacks). The troops said they would sell the rice elsewhere and pay the farmers a reasonable price. Although it has been four months already, the farmers are still waiting for the money. In Mu Per Hta Village, the troops burned the villagers' entire crop and stole all the animals in the village during the harvest time. (Source: KHRG)

SLORC regional commanders summoned all the headmen of the villages in Thaton District to attend a meeting, and told them that "In the future, if one of our soldiers is killed, we will execute five of your villagers". (Source: KNU)

On 24 December 1993, SLORC troops from IB 30 under Southern Command, ordered the village headmen of Kyo Waing and Noh Kaneh villages in Thaton District to take responsibility for "security" in their village tract areas. They were forced to sign papers guaranteeing that if one shell explodes in their entire village tract area, they will pay 50,000 kyats compensation to SLORC, and if one truck is damaged by a landmine they will pay 100,000 kyats as compensation. [Source: KNU]

On 4 January, SLORC troops from LIB 116 of LID 33 took away four baskets of rice, 3,000 viss of fish paste, 400 coconuts, 3,000 viss of jaggery from the villagers in Paw Si Village, Thaton Township, Mon State. (Source: KNU)

On 4 January, LIB 116 of LID 33, commanded by Maj Soe Win, came to Per Khee Village, Thaton District, where they slaughtered and ate 30 chickens, one pig, and four goats, and stole four baskets of rice. [Source: KNU]

On 6 January, 1st and 2nd Column from LIB 120 forced the people in Htaw Kalaw Khee Village in Thaton district to give 24 tins of rice (condensed milk tins) per household. (Source: KNU)

On 9 January, IB 4 of SLORC LID 33 commanded by Maj Thauung Win, came to Lay Kay Village, Thaton District. The troops burned down the houses of villagers Toe Par Thwe, Kyaw Bu, Kor Ler, Por Ther Khin, Maung Nyunt Tin, Ti Kyaw Ko, Tee Ler Ner, Maung Win and Naw Muh. They slaughtered an ox

belonging to villager Ma Chaw, two oxen belonging to Tha Du Mo, an ox belonging to Maw Kwai, a cow belonging to Mor Than, one cow belonging to Maung Kyi Kot, and a buffalo belonging to Maung Nyunt Tin. [Source: KNU]

On 10 January, 2nd Column Commander of IB 17 issued an order to Kywe Khan Village to send its representative to Trade Corporation in Palaw Township, Tenasserim Division, bringing cash which was equivalent to the baskets of rice as demanded. Each villager was forced to give 8 baskets of rice per acre and was threatened that action would be taken against him/her if he/she failed to donate this. (Source: KNU/NMSP)

In addition to arresting villagers and holding them for ransom in Naw Yu Village, Kyauk Kyi Township, Capt Khin Maung Oo of IB 60 stole 14 cattle from the village on 16 January. [Source: KNU]

On 18 January, Maj Myint Kyi's troops of Coy 5 of IB 69, while travelling to Na Moop Village, shot a cow for their food belonging to villager Sarng Par. The soldiers continued their raid and ransacked Worn Parng Yarp Village, Mong Young Parish, Hsenwi Township, and robbed a large amount of personal property. Items taken from 21 villagers included quantities of rice, chicken, a pig, cooking oil, soy bean, cooking equipment, spoons, knives, blankets, sarongs and other clothing/cloth, torches, cassette tapes and money. Sarng Kham Luen, Nai Poo, Sarng Khe and the entire household of Pu Loi Sarng Sue were beaten by soldiers. [Source: SHRF]

On 21 January, IB 39 under Southern Command, came to Shah Lo Village, Taungoo Township, and stole property worth 700,000 kyats from Mehn Sun. They then burned down his house. [Source: KNU]

On 24 January, about 40 SLORC troops commanded by Coy Comdr Myint Swe of IB 39 raided Kyi Taung Village, Kyauktagah Township, Pegu Division, and opened fire on the villagers which caused trader Phoe Win Nyo to be wounded. SLORC troops captured the villagers and 26 cows. (Source: KNU)

On 24 January, SLORC troops from IB 84 led by Bn Commander Aung Kyaw Moe took away 15 baskets of rice, five ducks, one goat and 10 chickens from the local people in No Law Palaw Village in Taungoo district. (Source: KNU)

On 24 January, Column Commander Win Myint of IB 26 forced local people in Nga Nwa Seik, Thay Gay Lu, Kayin Yeleh, Htwa Ni Gone, Ohn Ship Gone and Thmar Kaw villages to send 15 porters and "porter fees" from each village. When the village headmen sent porters, the SLORC commander denied them and forced them to pay 35,000 kyats in cash per village. Moreover, the villagers were also forced to pay rice as taxation to SLORC troops. Each village which failed to levy tax were forced to pay 100,000 kyats. Local people in Yeleh and Ohn Ship Gone villages were forced to pay 200,000 kyats.

On 25 January, Capt Aye Myint and his troops from LIB 119, under the command of LID 33, took 7 baskets of paddy, 1 basket of hulled rice and 32 kg of jaggers from villagers in Tar U Ni Village in Thaton Township. [Source: KNU]

On 27 January, SLORC troops from LIB 119 led by Bn Commander Aye Myint took 6 baskets of paddy from the villagers in Tar U Ni Village in Thaton Township. (Source: KNU)

On 28 January, SLORC troops from IB 84 took a cow and 29 baskets of sesame from the villagers in Tar Paw Village in Thaton Township. (Source: KNU)

On 29 January, a SLORC truck hit a landmine and was destroyed. In retaliation the two nearest villages, Tor Klor Khee and Tor Klor Po Khee, were fined 300,000 kyats by LIB 120, under the command of LID 33. [Source: KNU]

On 2 February, IB 84 of 99 LID commanded by Lt Col Aung Kyaw Min and Maj Nyo Min Thein, issued orders to 9 villages – No Lor Plaw, No Aw Ler, Pyor Gor, Kyu Kyi, Pyo, Her Ter Rai, Met Thai, Met Ker Ner and Tee Kyor Khee villages – in Thaton District that each village must send them 1,000 viss (1,600 kg) of jaggery. Villages which could not produce the required amount of jaggery were ordered to pay a fine of 2,700 kyats in cash. The battalion also imposed severe restrictions on the movements of the villagers. All villagers who worked in the surrounding forests had to register at the battalion headquarters and pay 500 kyats for a permit. (Source: KNU)

On 3 February, IB 101 led by Maj Kyaw Kyaw, forced local people in Kywe Din Gone Village, Tha Kyet Parish, Tenasserim Township, Tenasserim Division, into a lack of livelihood. As SLORC has been constructing the highway from Tenasserim to Moe Taung, all the gardens, vegetable plantations, buildings and houses along the way were destroyed by SLORC troops.

A company led by Maj San Myint and Khaing Soe were responsible for the security and Maj Kyaw Kyaw was in control of the project while all local people in Kywe Din Gone Village were forced to carry out their assignments within the period fixed by SLORC troops. Those who did not finish their assignment faced fines fixed at a rate by the troops, subject to arrest, and forced to serve long-term portorage. Aside from these atrocities, their houses were destroyed and reduced to ashes as a punishment. [Source: ABSDF]

On 7 February, SLORC troops from Company 3 of IB 84 led by Coy Comdr Myat Than Lay and Maj Than Htay took 100 chickens, 20 ducks, one pig, seven baskets of rice, 100 viss of jaggery, five blankets, six sarongs, clothing and 800 kyats in cash from local people in No La Aw Village of Thaton Township. Moreover, they demanded 50,000 kyats in cash as a compensation for their ruined car. (Source: KNU)

On 9 February, a group of soldiers from IB 39 commanded by Sgt Mo Hlaing, went to Zee Pyu Taung Village, Toungoo District, to confiscate the villagers' rice. Those who were not able to give rice supplies to the soldiers were beaten. Khin Maung and U Thaung almost died from the beatings. [Source: KNU]

On 10 February, IB 84 of LID 99 commanded by Lt Col Aung Kyaw Min, forced the villagers in Hadareh Parish, Pa-an Township, Karen State, to gather in a certain place. SLORC troops forced the villagers from Talai Kayin, Kyon Sein,

Nolo Pla, No Aw Htar Hpwa Gaw, Deh Thu Khee, Mae Kana Khee, Mae Thae, Htee Kyoe Khee villages to pay 50,000 kyats per village. (Source: KNU)

On 10 February, Col Win Maung, tactical commander of SLORC Central Command, ordered the local people in Klaw Mee Deh Village to make ID cards in Palet Wa Village. On their way to home, the villagers were forced at gun point to carry rice for 2nd Column of IB 55. (Source: KNU)

On 10 February, Col Khin Maung Win, commander of 2nd Column of IB 55, confiscated 40 sacks of rice in Kaw Thay Deh Village, Taungoo District, in order to use for military purpose. (Source: KNU)

On 12 February, a military column of IB 39 captured 100 bullock carts between Bone Ma Gyi and Htee Lon Village of Taungoo District, and forced to pay taxes in cash. (Source: KNU)

On 12 February, IB 39 took 100 bullock carts which belonged to village woodcutters from Tone Ma Ti and Yay Win villages in Taungoo District. The owners were severely beaten and had to pay ransom money to the soldiers before being released. [Source: KNU]

On 16 February, Burmese Army Central Command stationed its 2nd MSC, under the command of Operation Comdr Lt Col Win Maung, at Bawgali Village, Thandaung Township, Taungoo District. This MSC is now demanding monthly "porter fees" from the surrounding villages in the following amounts:

1) Bawgali Village, Ks 64,000; 2) Ler Ko Village, Ks 8,000; 3) Wah Tho Kho Village, Ks 12,000; 4) Kaw So Kho Village, Ks 12,000; 5) Saw Thay Der Village, Ks 8,000; 6) Klay So Khee Village, Ks 8,000; 7) Gah Mu Der Village, Ks 8,000; 8) Der Doh Village, Ks 8,000; 9) Pai Koh Der Village, Ks 8,000; 10) Maw Ko Der Village, Ks 8,000; 11) Ku Ler Der Village, Ks 8,000; 12) Maw Per Der Village, Ks 8,000; 13) Klaw Mi Der Village, Ks 8,000; 14) Hu Mu Der Village, Ks 8,000; 15) Ler Kler Der Village, Ks 8,000

Other villages in the area were ordered to pay monthly "porter fees" of 6,000-8,000 kyats for each porter, depending on village size. None of this money is ever used to pay or feed porters, who are only kept alive on a handful of rice a day and never paid.

The Strategic Command is also constructing a hospital in Bawgali Village as a "development project". However, the Villagers are being forced to contribute money for all the costs of the project. The funding originally allocated for the project is all being pocketed by the SLORC military officers.

The villagers are also being forced to construct a road between Bawgali and Pa Lay Wa villages. They have to work without pay and bring all their own food while working on the road. The funds originally provided for this "development project" have also been pocketed by the military officers, who then force the villagers to build the road. [Source: KNU]

On 19 February, SLORC troops from IB 42, under the command of LID 99, led by Bn Comdr Maj Kyaw Win and Maung Maung Kyaw killed two cows belong to local people in Myit Kyoe Village in Thaton District.

On 19 February, troops of IB 84 under LID 99, commanded by Capt Soe Maung, set fire to the home of San Myint and his sugar cane grinding machine in Thaton District. They also killed and ate a buffalo belonging to Maung Than Nyunt. [Source: KNU]

On 20 February, Coy Comdr Thein Zan of IB 24 forced the villagers from Thaw Kaw Kya Village, Thaton District, to pay 450 kyats per person who were on their way to sell roofing thatch.

On 21 February, Capt Myo Lwin Thet Lwin led Coy 5 of LIB 32 to Taree Hta Gaun Village, Kya In Seik Gyi Township, Doooplaya District, and burned down and destroyed the house of four villagers: Moo Pu Kyaw, who lost his rice barn, 120 tins of paddy, his betelnut crop, and cash and belongings worth an estimated 300,000 kyats; U Talay Heh, who lost his rice barn, 160 tins of paddy, his stored betelnut and pepper, 15,000 kyats in cash and 200,000 kyats worth of belongings, and whose two pepper plantations were also burned; Ah Pu, who lost 80 tins of paddy and belongings worth over 37,000 kyats; and Naw Paw Ser, who lost her rice barn, 260 tins of paddy, her betelnut crop and over 500,000 kyats worth of belongings. (Source: KNU)

On 21 February, IB 73 demanded 6,000 kyats from Shah Shi Bo Village, Taungoo District, as monthly "porter fees". The officers claim that this money is to pay munitions and supply porters, but porters are never paid. [Source: KNU]

On 23 February, IB 346, under the command of Western Command, robbed the properties of local people in Shan Le Pyin Village, Taungoo District. (Source: KNU)

On February 24, IB 39 penetrated Htee Lon, Kasel Do, Chaung Ma Gyi, Tha Phan Chaung, Bo Mo Khee and Htee Khee area in Taungoo district and extorted money from saw mill labourers. SLORC troops also took five viss of betelnuts and 3,500 kyats in cash at gunpoint from Naw Khae May of Lay Tee Village. (Source: KNU)

On 28 February, police from Balaw Kyoe, Kawkareik Township, Karen State, penetrated Noe Bo Chaung and killed two buffaloes belong to the villagers. (Source: KNU)

In March 1994, Northwestern Command confiscated 250 acres of prime farmland near Eik Sut Village, located southwest of Kalay Township, Chin State, in order to extend their military headquarters. Over 500 acres of similar farmland near Hto Mar Village in Kalay Township were confiscated for the construction of airfield. [Source: ABSDF]

On 2 March, Maj Win Maung, 1st Column of IB 39, demanded 4,500 kyats "porter fees" and two baskets of rice from Shah Shi Bo Village, Taungoo District. He also confiscated all bullock carts in the village to transport military rice supplies without payment. [Source: ABSDF/KNU]

On 3 March, SLORC troops from IB 35 and 59 rounded up 14 households in Phoe Moo Deh Village and took all the properties belong to the villagers. Loss estimated 390,122 kyats in cash at current prices. (Source: KNU)

On 3 March, a military column of IB 97 led by Thein Dan killed two cows belong to Naw Ka Leh in No Boe Chaung, Kawkareik Township, Karen State. On 6 March, Cpl Tun Aung of the same outfit killed another cow from that village.[Source: ABSDF]

On 5 March, SLORC troops from LIB 119 led by Aye Myint, under the command of LID 33 robbed five baskets of rice, 11 pans, two flasks, nine longyi (Burmese sarong), 50 viss of fishpaste, 47 chickens, six plates, seven steel spoons and five blankets from the villagers in Loh Khee Village in Thaton District. [Source: KNU]

12.5.1. Lost Land



More than 500 acre of farmland near Htomar Village, Kalay Township, confiscated to build an air field. Farmers received no compensation. (photo: ABSDF)

From the first week of April 1994 the army has started confiscating the paddy fields and farms from farmers without compensation around Kyawk Sit Pong Village situated in the township of Monywa. It was reportedly said that the army is preparing to build an artillery regiment in the confiscated site. In fact, the plan to build the regiment began in the month of December 1993. The area of confiscated farms from the subsistence farmers is reported to be about 2,500 acres.

The most affected areas were Kyawk Sit Pong Village and Myawik Village. But farmers from 20 villages were forced to volunteer in the construction of the regiment at the site. Forced labour was compulsory for two months and for three persons from each family. The kinds of work to be done by the farmers were to dig ditches of 2 x 2 x 15 for the road, clean rubbish from both sides of it, to clear the snags, bushes and so on. The affected villagers were from Egg Taw, Kan Tha, Kyawk Sit Pong of South and North, Soe Than, Kan Phya, Taung Pa Luu, Tha Man Dar, Min Gla Gaung, Taung Gaung, Myin Myee Laung, O Si Gaung villages.

Similarly the army has confiscated more than 2,000 acres from the farmers of Kyawk Kar and Tha Naung Win Ywa villages situated along the road from Mon Ywa to Kyauk Kar village without compensation. It is believed that the army is planning to build an air force base. It is the area irrespective of whether the crops which were premature and young in the confiscated farm were getting destroyed with the construction of the military base, farmers were allowed to cultivate at the same site.

It was estimated that more than 5,000 acres were confiscated for the construction of the North West Military base division in the north of the Mon Ywa's road to Ye Oo in the past three years. It was said that it takes more than one hour to pass through the confiscated farms by vehicle. Most of the villages around the Mon Ywa Town were affected by this arbitrary army action.

The entire Kha Wea Kyin Village was forced to shift by this arbitrary army action for the construction of a military camp. The affected villagers were not given any compensation. Therefore all of them became homeless and mentally disturbed as they faced various difficulties for survival.

In fact the region of the Monywa is known to be the largest producer of wheat, bean, maize, etc., in the whole country. But it is now being turned into a totally deserted land under the military strengthening program in Burma. [Source: ABSL]

On 16 April, about 60 of Capt Kyaw Thein's IB 520 troops, on their way back to Worn Hart Village, Ho Loi Parish, Mauk Mai Township, northern Shan State accused Sai Lurng, brother of Sarn Eung, of being a rebel while these villagers were on their way to send their sick brother to Worn Hart Hospital. Soldiers threatened Sarn Eung to pay them 30,000 kyats for his brother's release and ordered them to go back to their village. As there was no choice for them, the victims had to accept SLORC's ultimatum. [Source: SHRF]

On 17 April, 1st Column of IB 20 led by 1st TOC Comdr Col Thein Htun, Western Command, collected 950 kyats, equivalent to the price for sack of rice, from each party travelling around Kha Lela, Kaw Thay Ah and Ka Lay Soe Khee area in Taungoo District. [Source: KYO]

On 18 April, 1st column of IB 20 entered Kaw Thay Ah Village and took 15 viss of pork without compensation. [Source: KYO]

On 29 April, SLORC has given orders to all villages in Tavoy District, Tenasserim Division, that each village must send 2 recruits for SLORC troops. Villages which cannot provide the required recruits are forced to hire itinerant workers or others to go in their place at a price of 15,000 kyats each. Any family which sends their son to be a SLORC soldier must be provided with 30 tins of rice and 300 kyats per year by other people in the village. These families will also be free from all forms of slave labour and forced portage required by SLORC troops of others. [Source: ABSDF/KNU]

In early May ferocious battles broke out between the rebels in Shan state and SLORC LIB 221, 316, 331, 334 and 526 in the area of Loi Tor Kham, Mong Seng-Mong Inn Parish. The SLORC army, after losing the battle, retreated to Worn

Mark O (Upper) Village of the Akha people, near Tachilek Township in eastern Shan State and next to the Thai border. On 28 May, the local headman was arrested and accused by the SLORC soldiers of joining hands and cooperating with the rebels. The soldiers demanded 100,000 baht (US\$4,000) as a ransom for the release of the headman. [Source: SHRF]



House burnt house by SLORC troops. (Photo: VDS)

On 22 May, 1st Column of IB 39, Southern Command, led by Capt Khin Soe, entered Sher Si Bo Village, Taungoo District, and took away chickens, rice and other food without any compensation. [Source: KYO]

On 8 June SLORC troops commanded by Aung Tun from Coy 4 of LIB 34 came to Naw K'Toh Village, Thaton District, shot and killed Dee Pa Leh's cow and ate all of it. They then beat the owner once and his son 3 times with a stick, and then they scathed his son with a gunshot. (Source: KNU)

On 18 June, SLORC troops from IB 3, under the command of Southern Command, demanded 45,000 kyats in cash from the villagers in Zayat Gyi and Moe Koung Parish in Htantabin Township, Pegu Division. (Source: ABSDF)

In July 1994, farmland near Taung Piyar Monastery was forcibly confiscated by SLORC in order to build a highway belt-line as part of the programme to expand the city area in Kalay. [Source: ABSDF]

On 5 July, troops from SLORC LIB 73 and 26 burned down the farm hut of Saw Baw from Da Kaw Bwa Village, Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District, and stole everything they found there. (Source: KNU)

On 17 July, SLORC's military column from IB 230 and Maj Tun Aung summoned all the headmen from the villages located nearby Na Bu outpost in Kawkareik Township, Karen State. The headmen were told that if any porter is recaptured in his own village where he started to serve as a porter, he must pay 10,000 kyats to the troops. In addition, the military columns will eat every breeding

animals in the villages where they change runners, and those who try to escape will be shot dead, and each village must compensate the troops at the rate of 100,000 kyats in case a soldier is injured by any kind of mines planted along their way. [Source: ABSDF]

The “Anti-Insurgent Group” (Kyi Shwe) is a special group of the SLORC Army which operates in the Thaton Area. It is not under any battalion, and appears to specialise in terrorist tactics. On 1 August, the SLORC AIG soldiers demanded 5,000 kyats from Hla Aung Ker Village. They said if the village didn’t provide the money, they would order the villagers to move out of the village and kill them. (Source: KYO)

On 3 August, SLORC troops from LIB 408 led by Maj Khin Maung Zaw entered Mi Htaw Hla Village, Ye Phyu Township, and forcibly took 1000 kyats in cash from the headman of the village. Then, the troops reached Kyon Ka Nyar Village and robbed rice from every household. They did not spare even the monastery in the village, taking 5,500 kyats in cash from the villagers. After that they went into Khaw Zar Village, Ye Township, and harassed the villagers there at gunpoint to give another 5,500 kyats in cash. [Source: DPNS/NLD-LA/NMSP]

At 8:30 a.m. on 13 August, Col Ne Win Oo of 1st MSC ordered Column 2 of IB 18 (Column Comdr Maj Saw Win) to go to Htee Mu Kee Village to cut down all the paddy in the fields of Saw Htoo Rah and Saw Naw Naw. (Note: the paddy is nowhere near ready for harvest in August.) (Source: KYO)

On 15 August, an AIG soldier named Saw Hta Ghay demanded 5,000 kyats from Saw Mu Shay's mother in Ta Raw Village. [Source: KYO]

On 22 August, SLORC AIG soldiers Maung Lay, Maung Kyi Win and Aung Moe came to Htee Nya Po Village together with troops from IB 24. They ate two ducks belonging to Taw Sein and demanded 7,000 kyats from the village headman. Then they went on to Mee Chaung Aye Village, where they ate one goat belonging to Saw Mya Maung and demanded 4,000 kyats from the village headman. 5,000 kyats from Maung Kya Lay and 9,000 kyats from Maw Sein. [Source: KYO]

On 25 September, a joint military column of LIB 206 and 208 led by Nyi Nyi Aung entered Mi Ka Village, summoned village head Phar Ka and Yu Lar, violently kicked them with heavy combat boots, throttled their necks and continued to beat and torture their victims. The troops complained that whenever they reached the village, they did not see any male. They warned, the next time if that happens again, every house must host three soldiers and provide shelter for them [this is a common practice or intrusion on people’s lives by SLORC troops, who cannot be refused food and shelter in private homes for any length of time].

On 25 November, Maj Kyaw Shwe from IB 23 issued an ultimatum to Mon people from every village in Kawkareik Township that if SLORC soldiers are killed or if their weapons are captured, local people living in nearby villages are responsible for compensating the SLORC troops. [Source: NMSP]

Maj Ohn Myint, who torched Hlockhani refugee camp in July 1994, from SLORC IB 62 confiscated two portable saw mills and two portable rice mills from

Kaw Kha Moo Village, Kyaikmaraw Township, with the reason that villagers are sympathisers to the NMSP. [Source: NMSP]

On 2 December, IB 62 troops of Halockhani fame, while apparently drunk, shelled artillery into Dhammathat Village, Kyaikmaraw Township. Mi Pan Hla (wife of Nai Nar) was hit with splinters and hospitalised at a hospital in Moulmein as an emergency patient with the couple's own money. [Source: NMSP]

In Ye Phyu Township, SLORC's backbone Trade and Agriculture Department forced the villagers to sell their paddy at bottom price. On 12 December that department sent an order and receipts to the peasants in Kywe Thone Nyi Ma Village, forcing them to sell the paddy for the 1994-95 fiscal year. The order threatened the villagers to fulfil their compulsory assignment. The price fixed by the department is lower than the normal price.

For example, SLORC pays between 7,000-8,500 kyats against the market price of 25,000 kyats for 100 baskets of rice. SLORC pays 7,000 kyats for the Nga Sein rice strain, 7,500 kyats for Emahta, 8,500 kyats for Me Don and Kauk Gyi. [Source: DPNS/NLD-LA/NMSP]

On 17 December, SLORC troops from LIB 410 led by Maj Aung Soe Win arrived at Kaw Zar Village and forced the villagers to give them a cow, as the troops were faced with a shortage of food. Although the village headmen begged for a pardon as they were not able to meet the demand, the troops were ordered to take two cows belonging to U Wu Tin and Mi Hla. [Source: DPNS/NLD-LA/NMSP]

On 30 December, SLORC troops from LID 410 led by Bn Comdr Ye Myint penetrated Khan Gyi Village, Ye Township, and committed a robbery by taking away 76,400 kyats in cash from the villagers. [Source: DPNS/NLD-LA/NMSP]

On 30 December, Coy Comdr Ko Gyi from Coy 5 of IB 203, under the command of LID 22, and Saw Kalar Pe from Wae Gyi Village forced the villagers in Tar U Ni, Leh Ka Tel, Kyoe Wine, Don Ka Ne and Pa Yar Yaw villages in Thaton Township to give three baskets of rice and two viss of chicken for every village. (Source: PDC)

(XIII) MINORITY PROTECTION

There are an estimated between 100 and 135 ethnic groups in Burma today, but SLORC highlights the Burman aspects of culture. Ancient symbols of Mon culture are being eroded and claimed as Burman. Ethnic languages are not allowed in SLORC-run schools, in which the curriculum is determined by central authorities. Information, laws and officials do not speak indigenous languages, and people are often abused simply because they cannot speak Burmese.

Movement is restricted for ethnic, and ID cards go so far as to distinguish between Burman, Ethnic or Mixed. Discrimination is easy when all major transactions require an ID card. Harassment is wide-spread by soldiers and the citizenship law disqualifies many Burmese citizens of the rights because their ancestors were not born in Burma.

In another incident, one Abu Talib son of Kabur Ahmed, 21 years hailing from Rwamagone, Buthidaung Township was severely beaten by two army personnel of IB 262 on 25 October 1994. The youth was left unconscious and the local people sent him to the township hospital for treatment. As the state policy is against the Muslims of Arakan, the Muslims could do nothing to redress their grievances, Fear is looming among the Muslims day by day.

A Chin student has to study in Burmese once he or she is admitted to school. The 90 percent Christians are victims of severe religious intolerance by the Buddhist state of Burma. For example, Chins alone are highly discriminated against in career and employment unless they fully embrace Buddhism. Now, Buddhist shrines called pagodas are being built on every prominent hill and mountain tops of Chinland against the expressed wishes of the Chin people. In certain cases, the crosses built on hill-tops are forcibly removed and replaced by Pagodas.

Moreover, to turn Chinland into a Buddhist state, the Burmese government is insidiously trying to proselytise the Chins by first cutting off all kinds of foreign churches and organisations' assistance to the poor Chin Christian children and then offers money, food etc., to those children who will then be finally confined to Buddhist monasteries. Now Christian literature is restricted and reaching and teaching of Christianity are censored.

13.1 A Brief Look at the Effects of an Infrastructure Project

TOTAL Co of France and Unocal Corp of the US, in the name of their economic interests in Burma, have intentionally neglected the obvious fact that the Tatmadaw-SLORC campaigns for strengthening its military control in ethnic territories have always directly hurt the rural ethnic populations.

Both Total Co and Unocal Corp, through their agreement with SLORC for the gas pipeline project, have automatically already demanded and required SLORC to ensure security of the project area, which is an integral part of the

ethnic guerrilla war zones in Burma. The fact that SLORC is a human rights violator on its own cannot be used as a camouflage by Total Co and Unocal Corp to hide their social and moral irresponsibility over the innocent ethnic populations, who are affected directly or indirectly by their gas pipeline project.

Both Total Co and Unocal Corp are partly responsible for all human rights violations committed by SLORC in terms of securing their gas pipeline project for they have hired the SLORC, paying several hundred million dollars to secure the gas pipeline project. Both Total Co and Unocal Corp must therefore be brought to account for their virtual collusion with the well-known human rights violators SLORC and the resultant massive suffering and hardship having been faced by the hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings on the construction of the Ye-Tavoy Railway, which is the most obvious cause and reason of the urgently required security for the Total-Unocal gas pipeline project.

“[See also under “Freedom of Belief” and “Rights of the Child” and “Eye-witness Accounts”, interview 20, 25, 31, 39-40, 109]”.

(XIV) THE REFUGEE SITUATION

“Asked how the [Halockhani] refugees would get enough drinking water, which has had to be trucked in regularly, the Sangkhlaburi [Thailand] District Officer, Kamol Rangsiyanun replied: “They can drink rain water”.

(The Nation: Bangkok newspaper 19 August 1994, reporting on the situation of Burmese refugees after Thai authorities cut off all food and aid to their make-shift camp in Thailand.)

The Refugee situation in Thailand, India, China and Bangladesh – and spread throughout the world through Burmese diaspora – is not a short-term problem. It will not be simply solved “when the fighting stops”. As long as the overall socio-political crisis is not solved inside Burma, refugees of all nationalities will continue to stream across the borders in search of freedom and stability.

This is evidenced not only in the case of a quarter of a million Rohingya along the Bangladeshi border, but also can be witnessed in the current SLORC offensives against Karen-controlled areas along the Thai border. Especially, the vast abuses by the Tatmadaw could be seen in the attack on Halockhani refugee camp, which sent 6,000 refugees back across the Thai border. What Halockhani also clearly showed, is how refugees are treated by neighbouring countries.

The plight of refugees, then, does not only rest with Burma, and no longer can this said to be an “internal affair”. No matter when the refugees will be sent back, Burmese citizens will be abused under the SLORC regime and continue to cross the Burma’s borders in pursuit of peace and their inherent rights as human beings.

14.1. Look East

The Thai government is not a signatory on the UN protocols on Refugees and does not recognise Burmese asylum seekers in Thailand. Due to the constraints

imposed upon it, The United Nations High Commission on Refugees can grant financial assistance and protection to only a very small fraction of those claiming political asylum.

However, this too was recently suspended to help force Burmese students and other political dissidents into the "Safe Camp" where they are reportedly awaiting resettlement offers. What follows below is a short summary of the sequence of events for Burmese asylum seekers following their arrest in Thailand:

Asylum seekers are arrested by police, immigration police, soldiers or other officers belonging to the Thai security network at checkpoints, students' homes, work and public places under the immigration act for being illegal immigrants. Asylum seekers are often released at this point if they are able to pay a bribe (sometimes as low as 100 baht in Mae Sod and as high as several thousand baht in Bangkok). If unable to pay their way out, asylum seekers are detained at the local police station or prison (if arrested by police), or taken directly to the Immigration Detention Centre (IDC).

Asylum seekers who are arrested in Bangkok or Kanchanaburi, are often transferred to the IDCs in these cities after several days of detention in local police stations or prisons. After up to 10 days in detention, asylum seekers are sent to the court that is nearest to the place of their arrest.

Those who carry no documents are simply tried on the charge of illegal immigration and are fined 2,800 baht in lieu of 40 days detention at the IDC by some courts or 4,900 baht in lieu of 70 days detention at the IDC by other courts.

The sentence depends on the court they attend (some courts automatically give 40 day sentences while others automatically give 70 day sentences) and whether or not this was the first time they have been charged.

When over-loaded with people, the Bangkok IDC holds over 1,000 people in six tiny rooms. At times there is not enough space for all of the detainees to sleep so sleeping times are rostered and people who are not sleeping may be required to stand. Detainees must pay exorbitant fees for such privileges as using the phone or spending brief periods away from the overcrowded conditions. There have been reports of women being lured or ordered out of their cells by prison guards in both Bangkok and Kanchanaburi and raped. There have also been reports that the Bangkok IDC is a place from which women are being trafficked for prostitution, both in Thailand and abroad.

Males are often beaten at these detention centres. Any money and valuables owned by the detainees on their arrival is usually taken from them by either prison officers or by room leaders – other detainees who are placed in charge of cells so that the prison officers don't have to directly involve themselves in the extortion and beatings which take place.

Since the first week of March, Thai police and immigration officers have hunted illegal Burmese in Ranong, and 30-40 Burmese were arrested daily. At 7 a.m., nobody dared to go shopping Ranong as immigration and police in civilian dress raid and arrest the illegal Burmese. Most of the women who are on the way

and selling groceries were also arrested. Immigration and police arrested Burmese, jerked their hair, beat them and put into detention. Some got injuries due to beatings.

Burmese asylum seekers are deported to the border if they have no legal passport or to Rangoon if they do, (i.e. if they were arrested for overstaying their visas or having false visas). They must pay 200 baht for travel from the Bangkok IDC to Kanchanaburi IDC, or to other border deportation sites.

Many students are forced to stay in detention for periods beyond their sentences because they cannot pay their transport costs. Deportees are sent to one of the following border towns depending on which is closest to their home in Burma-Mae Sai (Chiang Rai province), Mae Sod (Tak province), Sangkhlaburi (Kanchanaburi province) or Ranong.

If sent to Sangkhlaburi, deportees are required to stay an extra one to two weeks in detention at the Kanchanaburi IDC, except if they pay 6,000 baht on their arrival, in which case they are immediately released and part of that money is used to provide transport for their return to Bangkok.

For asylum seekers sent to Kanchanaburi, the period spent at the local IDC is often more traumatic than the time spent at the Bangkok IDC. Rape, beatings and extortion at the Kanchanaburi IDC are reported to be more prevalent than at the Bangkok IDC.

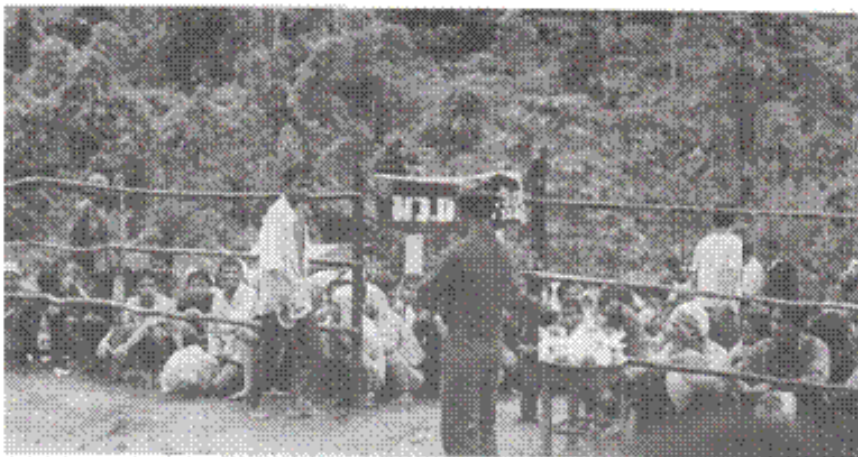
Although it is the responsibility of the central IDC office in Bangkok to notify the IDC office at Kanchanaburi as to when and where to deport the detainees, it is the Kanchanaburi IDC office that decides when it is the right time (i.e. when there are enough people to fill the truck) to deport the asylum seekers to the border. Thus, the period of detention at Kanchanaburi; like Bangkok, is uncertain but is usually between one to two weeks.

Deportees can be deported to the Thai-Burmese border in a variety of ways. Sometimes they are handed over directly to the SLORC. This is the method used in deportations from Mae Sai to Tachilek, Mae Sod to Myawaddy, Ranong to Kawthaung and at Three Pagodas Pass (which straddles the border). Deportees, especially students or people who are suspected of having contact with opposition groups face rape, beatings, detention, and extrajudicial execution in this situation.

Sometimes they have simply been dumped at the border, which occurred on numerous occasion during the past year at Bongti and Lawlo (both in the Sangkhlaburi area). There is usually no supervision and people are often left on the road and told to walk. In this situation, women are in extreme danger of being raped and/or being tricked or coerced into prostitution by brothel agents who come to the border for that purpose. Many of the women sent to Sangkhlaburi are from Shan state and countries other than Burma and are thus particularly vulnerable.

In other instances, some of the deportees, especially the Karen are conscripted by local officials at Sangkhlaburi, when they arrive from Kanchanaburi IDC. They are used as unpaid labour on local public works projects. Rape and other forms of physical abuse have been repeatedly reported in such situations. More rarely, they are handed

over to refugee and relief officials from the opposition groups (more often the case in the Sangkhlaburi area).



A Thai soldier stands guard over the newest batch of deportees from Thailand's notorious Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) prisons, dumped in Halockhanti for forced repatriation to Burma. Thai authorities were dumping 400 to 500 IDC prisoners in Halockhanti every week, many of whom were in appalling physical condition and suffering severe mental trauma after robbery, rape, and other serious abuses by their Thai guards. They were left to be cared for by the refugees themselves, and the Thais continued dumping hundreds there every week even after the Thai army impounded the camp's food storehouse, right up until all the refugees returned into the Burma side of the border from 7 to 9 September. The group in the picture has just been unloaded from the open cattle trucks that brought them, put behind the fence and ordered to squat in the mud by their Thai guards. (photo: KHRG)



Abandoned by the Thai Army...Abused by the Burmese Army...A group of IDC detainees who could pay found themselves in Halockhanti...without any supplies...only with the hope of returning to Thailand to escape the Tatmadaw. (photo: ABSDF)



Some children who the Thais had been holding in an immigration prison and are now deporting through Halockhani. They are not the youngest. There are also toddlers and infants who have been imprisoned by the Thais. (photo: KHRG)

Those who want to return to Bangkok from Kanchanaburi can do so for a fee of 2,500 baht. Local and Bangkok businessmen have taken the opportunity to make some money, and have been taking students and other asylum seekers back to pre-arranged jobs in the capitol. These businessmen are sometimes looking for people who will accept low paid and/or dangerous work or prostitutes to feed the domestic and international sex trade.

While Thailand has several categories for refugees; they do not recognise any refugees as refugees per se since 1984. This restriction has caused undue hardship to thousands of people who have escaped the military regime. Whether any of them are “economic refugees” does not play a major part; what does this mean? A refugee who comes to Bangkok, is not allowed to be accepted as a refugee and therefore receive UNHCR protection and funding, who must then work in order to survive – is this an “economic refugee”?

No screening process of refugees is made by Thai authorities. In most cases, refugees who put up complaints receive longer “holding” sentences in IDC under unbearable conditions. Therefore, refugees are more inclined to state whatever is necessary to remove themselves from this environment, so that they might begin the journey back into Thailand.

The idea that refugees are “costing” Thailand money has been proven false by their own government, which has legalised work permits for Burmese along the Thai provinces adjoining to Burma, not to mention the millions of dollars annually contributed by international aid organisations to feed and supply refugees, the amounts being spent locally for local Thai economic benefits.

This includes such locally made products as rice and mosquitos nets, etc. The idea that the Burmese only came “to Thailand to eat our rice” is not only

erroneous, but the contribution of Burmese has been appreciated by the Government of Thailand.

14.2. A Look West

Before 1988, no refugees from the Chin State were reported. Following the 1988 popular uprising in the urban centres of Burma, a small number of refugees crossed into India. However, after 1993, the number of refugees began to increase. At present, it is estimated that there are 50,000 Chin refugees in India, mostly in Mizoram State and some in Manipur State. Some Chin refugees are found in the Mizo area of northeast Bangladesh.



Chin refugees in Bangladesh after SLORC threatened to kill everyone in their village because some relatives of local police officials had gone missing. (photo: KHRG)

The refugees situation in India is not as bad as in Thailand. Mizo people and Chins are the same ethnic group and Chin refugees from Burma seem to integrate reasonably well with the local population. Mizoram authorities are quite sympathetic and do not restrict their movements neither within the state nor across the Indo-Burma border.

It seems that two camps have been established but most of the refugees don't settle in camps. Despite this, the Indian government in an apparent appeasement move rounded up approximately 1,000 Chin refugees and deposited them directly into the hands of SLORC, proving the danger for all refugees anywhere. China and SLORC signed an agreement in 1994 to begin repatriating the official refugees in 1995 – without any form of international monitoring.

14.3. 1994's Darkest Hour: Halockhani

On 21 July 1994 SLORC troops from IB 62 shocked the worked by attacking a Mon refugee camp at Halockhani. Worst of all for SLORC, it happened just as its representatives were going to attend the annual Foreign Ministers' meeting of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) in Bangkok for the first time. This report attempts to describe the attack through the eyes of some of its victims under "Eye-witness Accounts". What follows is a brief overview of what happened.

In 1989-90 Burmese troops attacked and overran Three Pagodas Pass, the main area held by the NMSP along the Thai border. According to MNRC figures, over 12,000 civilians then fled to Thailand to escape the Burmese military. Several Mon refugee camps were set up in Thailand's Sangkhlaburi District.

Starting in 1992, as part of its 'constructive engagement' deal with SLORC, the Thai government began a program to intimidate the Mon refugees back into SLORC territory of Burma. They ordered all Mon refugees to move to one site at Loh Loe west of Sangkhlaburi. However, this camp was only allowed to exist for about another year.

Then at the beginning of 1994 the Thai authorities ordered the refugees to move to a new site at Halockhani just across on the Burma side of the border northwest of Sangkhlaburi. Although this site is within striking distance of SLORC troops in Three Pagodas Pass, the Thais forced the MNRC to agree to it and the refugees moved.

In all, 4,000-6,000 refugees established a camp with two parts: the main Halockhani camp, on the Burma side just 20 minutes' walk from the last Thai Border Patrol Police checkpoint over a hill that forms the border, and another small section of 120 houses and 500 people called Plat Hon Pai (sometimes also written Blad Don Pai, Baleh Donephai, Palai Tum Pai, or called Kwan Sayal, which is more spacious 45 minutes walk further into Burma).

On 20 June 1994 at about midnight, one or two armed SLORC soldiers reportedly approached a rice field hut outside Plat Hon Pai. In fear, the farmer fired a hunting rifle at them, and the next day the body of one soldier was found in the uniform of SLORC IB 62 based at Three Pagodas Pass.

A month later on the morning of 21 July, an estimated more than 100 heavily-armed troops from IB 62 arrived without warning in Plat Hon Pai, led by Deputy Bn Comdr Lt Col Ohn Myint. They grabbed almost all the men in the camp and gathered them at the school. Several men, including the section leader, were beaten and tortured while the soldiers demanded the gun of the soldier who was killed a month earlier.

At the same time, a contingent of troops took about 50 refugees as a human shield and set off for the main part of Halockhani camp. When they were almost there, they were fired on by Mon soldiers who had rushed to the scene on hearing of the Burmese troops' presence. A short battle followed, during which one

SLORC soldier was wounded and many of the refugees managed to escape. The troops then retreated to Plat Hon Pai.

They took six men as prisoners or hostages, carrying loads and in handcuffs, and took at least 10 other refugees as porters to add to the 100 or more porters from Burma they had initially brought with them. Before they left Plat Hon Pai, soldiers ordered all the women and children out of their houses, went inside to loot the valuables, then burned the houses. Most of the houses in the camp were either totally or partly burned down, and the soldiers deliberately prevented the women from saving any of their belongings.



A Mon villager tries to extinguish the smoldering remains at one of 120 houses torched by Burmese troops in a raid on the Haleckan Camp on 20 July 1994. (photo: Bangkok Post)



Houses in Bleh Dunpaik burned down by SLORC troops on 21 July 1994. (photo: CPPSM)

As they left the village, they said they would come back in three days and shoot anyone they saw. The troops then set off with the porters and prisoners for several days' march across the mountains to Ye near the Andaman Coast. Along the way several of the refugee porters escaped and others, such as the Plat Hon Pai section leader, were let go in Ye. (IB 61 had left Ye in early July to replace IB 62 at Three Pagodas Pass. When they arrived there, IB 62 took their porters and set off to go back to Ye, attacking Halockhani on the way.)



The section leader of Plat Hon Pai section of Halockhani refugee camp showing the scars on his upper leg from being tortured with a burning cheroot (Burmese cigar) by SLORC troops. They had arrested him because he was a camp leader and were interrogating him. They also kicked, punched, and slapped him, scratched his eye with their fingernails and beat him with rifle butts, then took him as their prisoner and porter to Ye. (photo: KHRG)

After the attack all the refugees in Plat Hon Pai and the main part of Halockhani fled across the Thai border and camped around the Thai Border Patrol Police checkpoint, a total of some 6,000 people. There they suffered from the constant rains in little overcrowded bamboo shelters covered with plastic sheets supplied by foreign NGOs. The Thais immediately said the fighting was over and that the refugees must go back, but the refugees heard more fighting in the distance and refused because they were afraid of more attacks.



Mon refugees at Halockhani Camp left their shelters with meagre belongings after the raid on a section of the camp. (photo: Bangkok Post)

On 25 July the MNRC met with five Thai officials including the District Chairman of Sangkhlaburi District and were told that all refugees must return across the border immediately, that Col Tin Kyaing, the commander of SLORC IB 61 based at 3 Pagodas Pass, had promised the Thai authorities not to make any more trouble for the Mon refugees if they returned; and that the Thai government will not allow any Mon refugees to stay on Thai soil. The refugees still refused to go back, but the Thais set a deadline of 10 August for them all to be gone.



Mon refugees arriving at the Thai side of border after SLORC troops' attack Halockhani. (photo: Bangkok Post)



*After arriving in Thailand, the Mon refugees take a bath near their temporary shelter.
(photo: Bangkok Post)*



A monk talks to some of the 6,000 Mon refugees at a refugee camp in Kanchanaburi's Sangkhlaburi District. The refugees fled across the border from Burma into Thailand on 21 July after their settlement at Halockhani Camp was raided and torched by Burmese troops. The refugees have been told to return to Burma but have insisted on remaining on the Thai side of the border because their former camp is too dangerous. They were last given a 1-week deadline on Aug 16 to move back across border. (photo: Bangkok Post)



Some of Mon refugees who will be forcefully repatriated back to Burma. (photo: Bangkok Post)



Mi Mee Ong (57) shows the only belongings she managed to save when the soldiers burned down her house in Plat Hon Pai. "When they left I went to my house while it was still burning and managed to save a couple of plates and one basin. That's all I could save." They also took away her son as a porter and threatened to beat her sick husband. (photo: KHRG)



"The Mon were not refugees but in fact illegal immigrants who had come to Thailand for economic reasons." (photo: ABSDF)



Refugees from Halockani staying in temporary camps on the Thai side of the border after SLORC troops attacked on 21 July 1994, the day before SLORC Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw claimed there were no human rights violations in Burma. (photo: CPPSM)



A view of part of "New Halockhani" on the Thai side of the border. Four to six thousand Mon refugees fled here and set up camp around a Thai Border Patrol Police post after SLORC troops attacked their camp at Halockhani. They were sheltering under plastic sheets provided by foreign NGOs until the Thais forced them back across the border into Burma in early September by impounding their food supply with armed guards. (photo: KHRG)



On 18 August a Thai border policeman watches New Halockhani Camp from outside his bunker where about 6,000 Mon minority people took shelter in Thailand's Kanchanaburi Province just across the Burmese border. (photo: Bangkok Post)

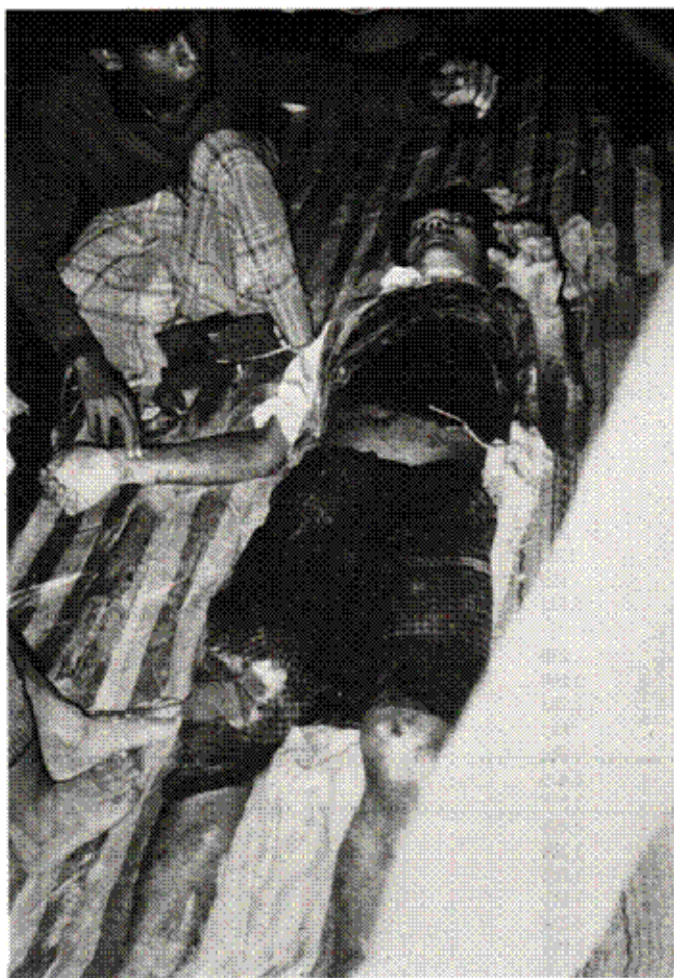
When that deadline passed the camp gate was closed and no further supplies were allowed in, including doctors from *Medicins Sans Frontieres*, MNRC representatives, journalists, or visitors of any kind. Representatives of UNHCR, Thai and US delegations of politicians had also been denied entry. A 35-year-old Mon mother with five reportedly died of cerebral malaria because the Thai BPP stopped her en route to the River Kwai Hospital. Malnutrition of children raised especially high, despite refugees' attempts to keep latrines far away and boil water.

Fortunately, the refugees had a stockpile of rice to last most of the rainy season because the camp is almost inaccessible during the rains; however, Thai authorities then began dumping several hundred deportees at the camp every week who must also be fed and treated from the camp supply. These are IDC inmates; illegal immigrants, economic migrants, Burmese student dissidents, refugees and other people from Burma, and occasionally even Nepalese, Vietnamese, Chinese, Malaysians and others. They have been arrested in Thailand, imprisoned, often robbed or raped, and are being "deported" to the refugee camp at Halockhani". It was only then the Thais seized the rice storehouse, claiming it was on Thai soil.

At this rate, the refugees' situation became more desperate every day, without outside aid. Some people argued that the refugees' health situation would be much better if they went back. On the other hand, medical workers who had been in the camp stated that the site on the Thai side would actually be much healthier, if only the Thais would allow the people to set up proper houses, latrines and a good water supply. The health crisis at the camp occurred mainly because this is not being allowed.

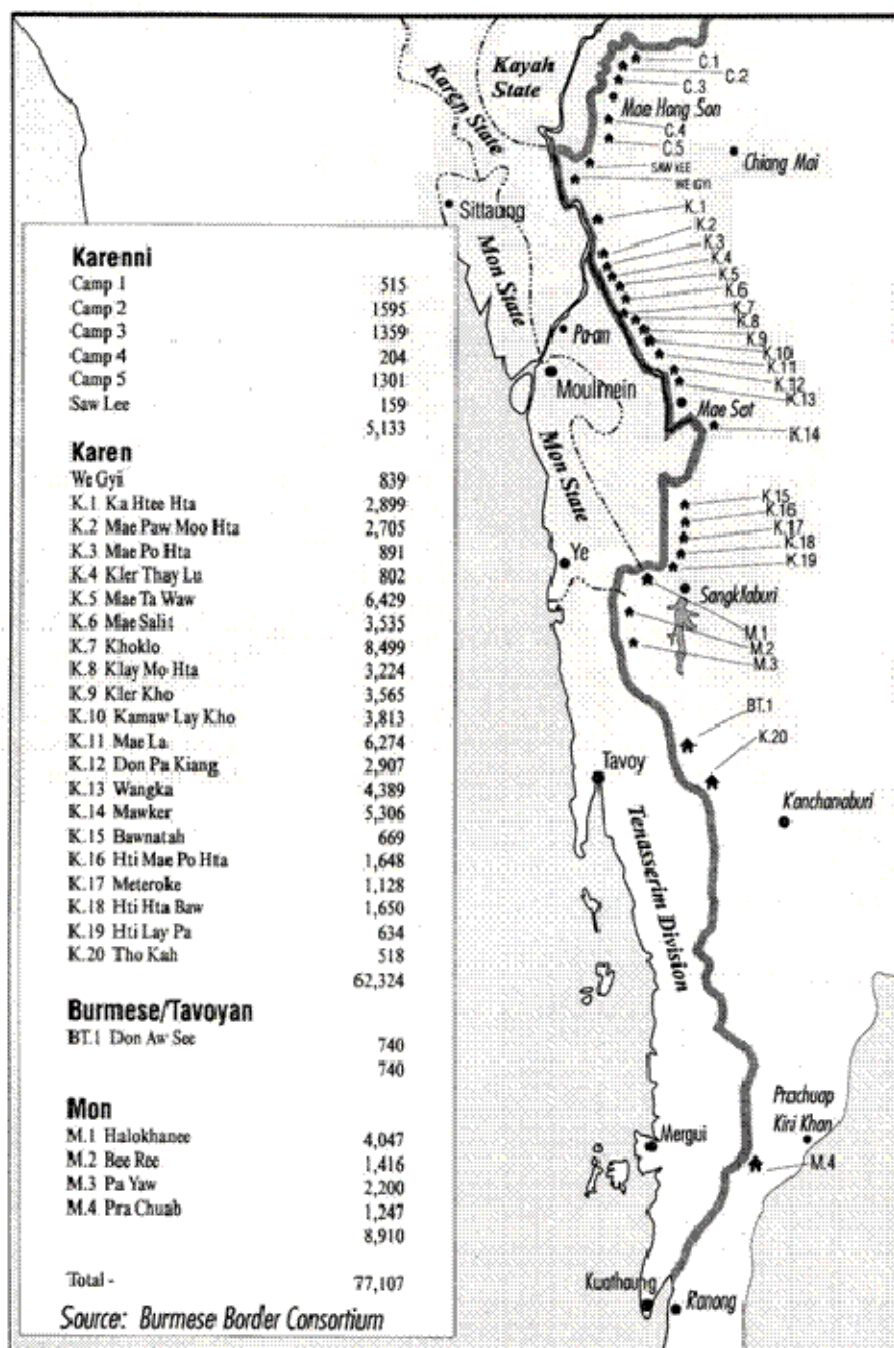
There are various theories on why the SLORC attacked Halockhani; as revenge for the soldier killed in June, to remind the refugees 'who is master' on the Burma side of the border, to pressure the NMSP into surrendering to a SLORC "ceasefire" or any combination of these. The end result was that all the refugees returned to their burnt villages, while many of the "deportees" have already found their way back inside of Thailand as a better life confronts them. Truly, Halockhani could be defined by the phrase, "A human rights nightmare turned into a major humanitarian disaster." (Source: CPPSM)

[See also under "Forced Repatriation" and "Eye-witness Accounts", interview 1-2, 4-6, 8-12, 24, 28-29, 32-33, 35-36, 102]

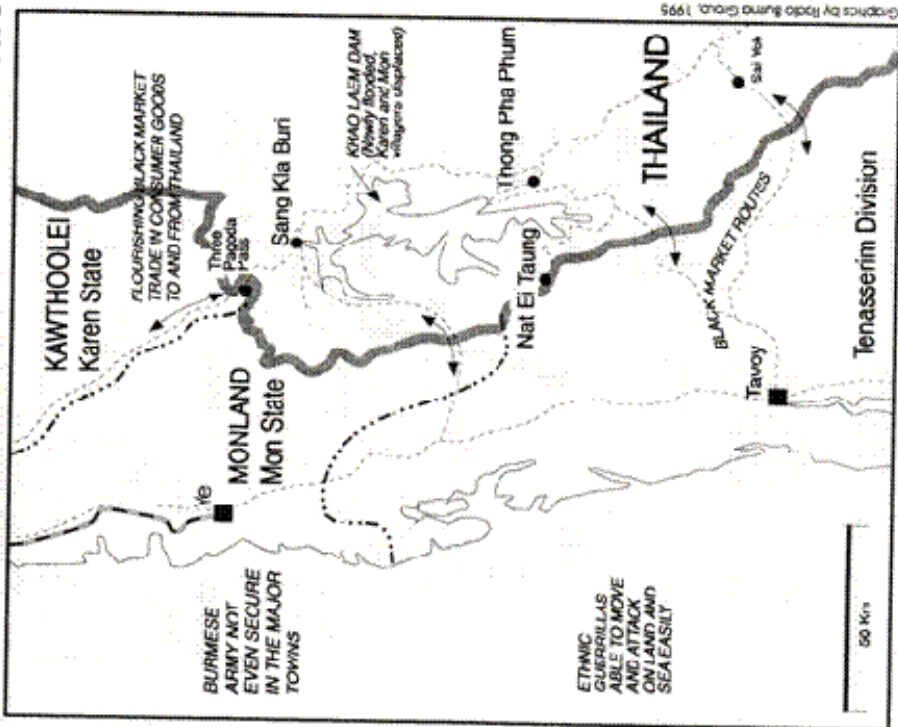


Nai Kyi Aung (28) after being shot by a drunken Thai policeman who tried to rape refugee girls on 13 August 1994 at Halockani. (photo: Bangkok Post)

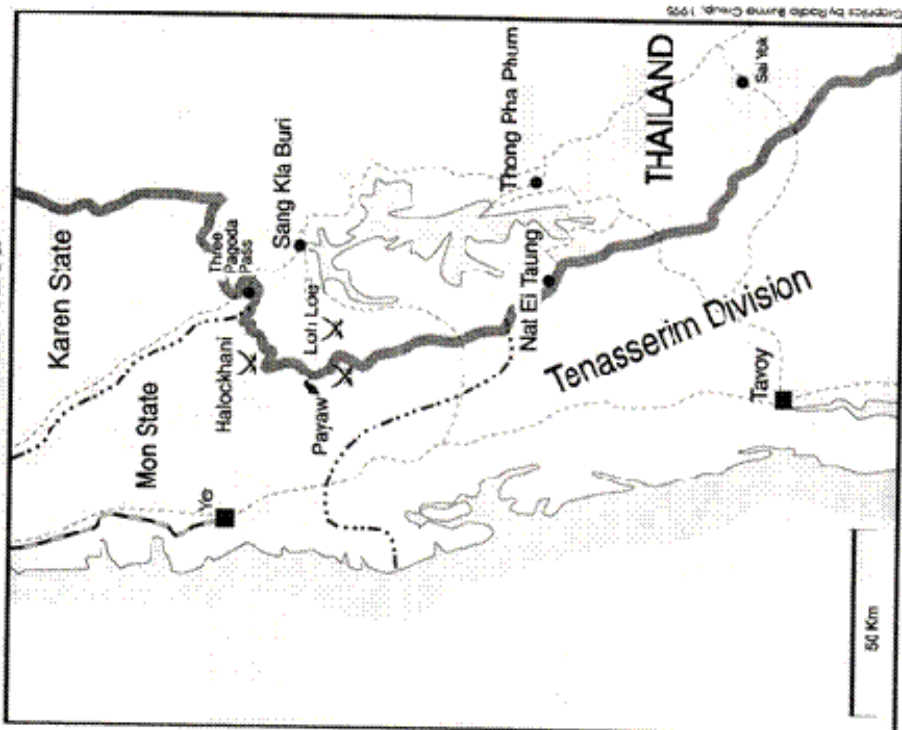
Burmese Border Camp Locations with Population Figures December 1994



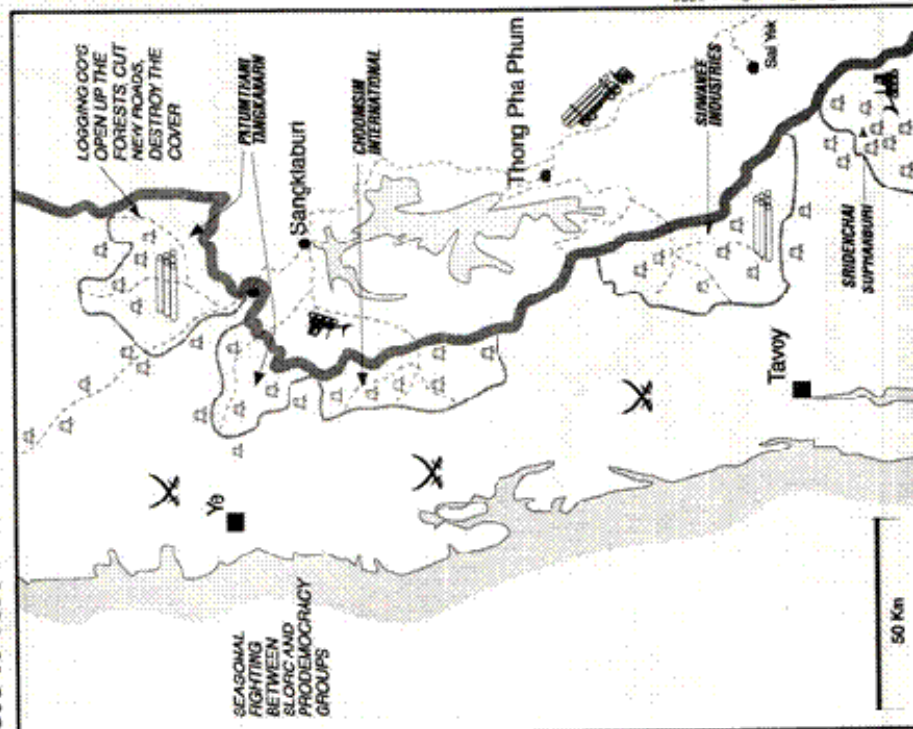
PRIOR TO 1986 : BORDER CONTROLLED BY ETHNIC GROUPS



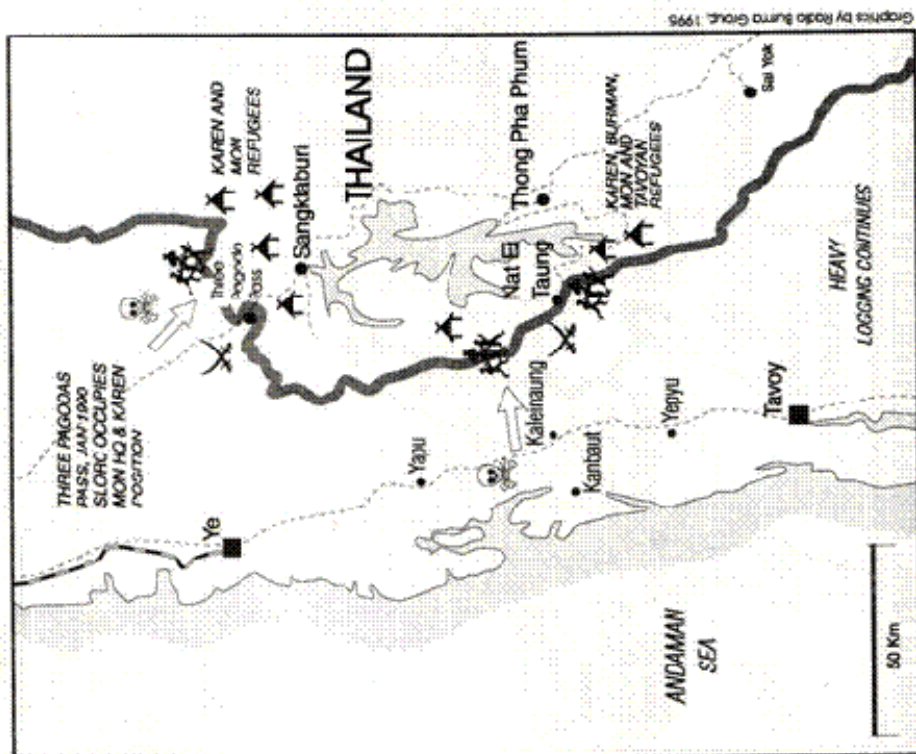
Mon Border Area



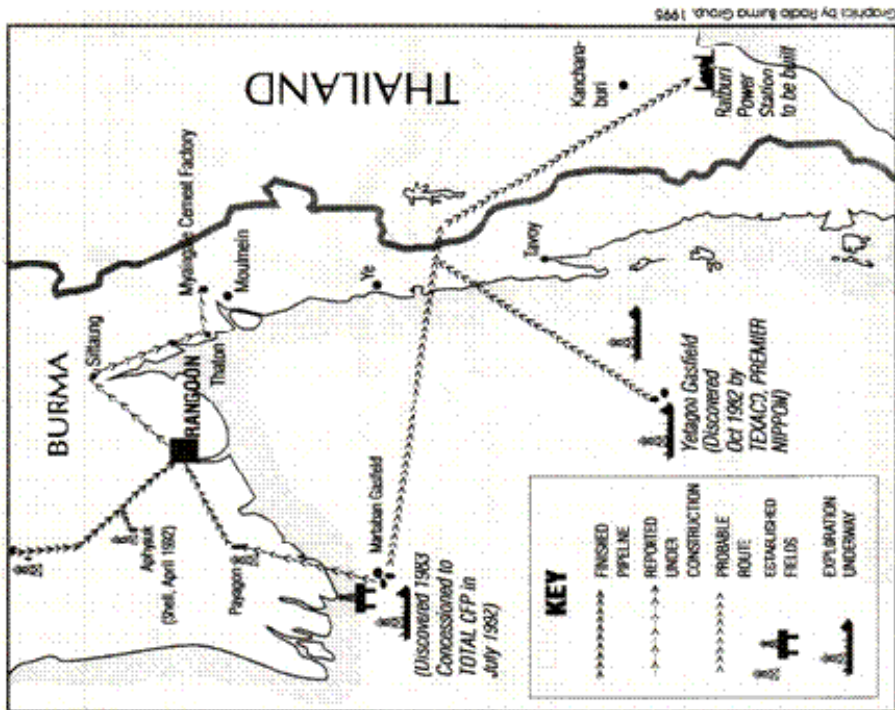
1988 TO 1989 : LOGGING CONCESSIONS GRANTED BY SLORC



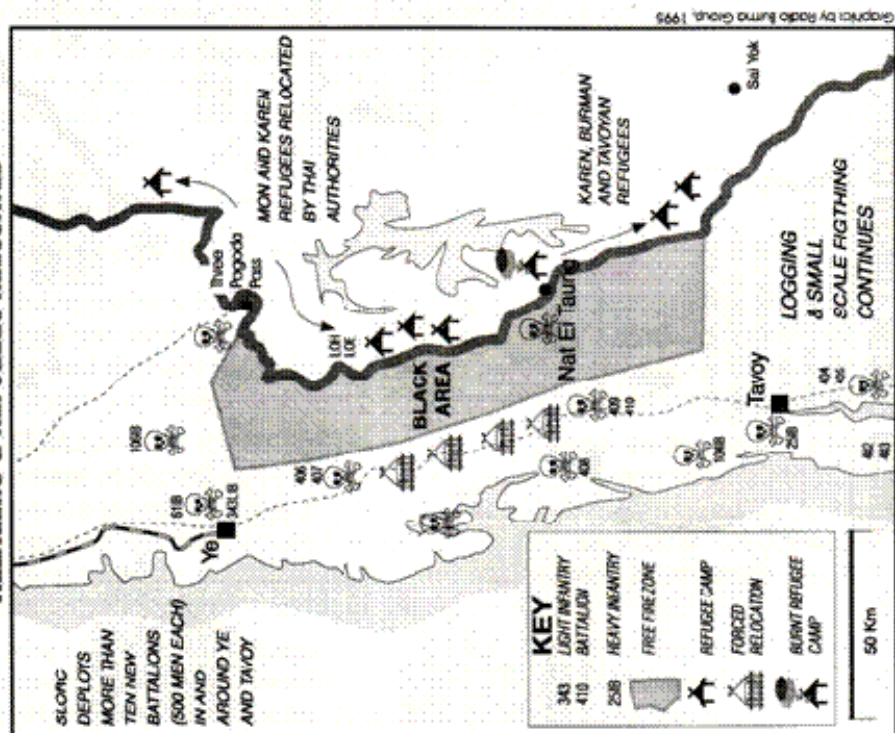
1990-91 : SLORC OFFENSIVES, NEW REFUGEES



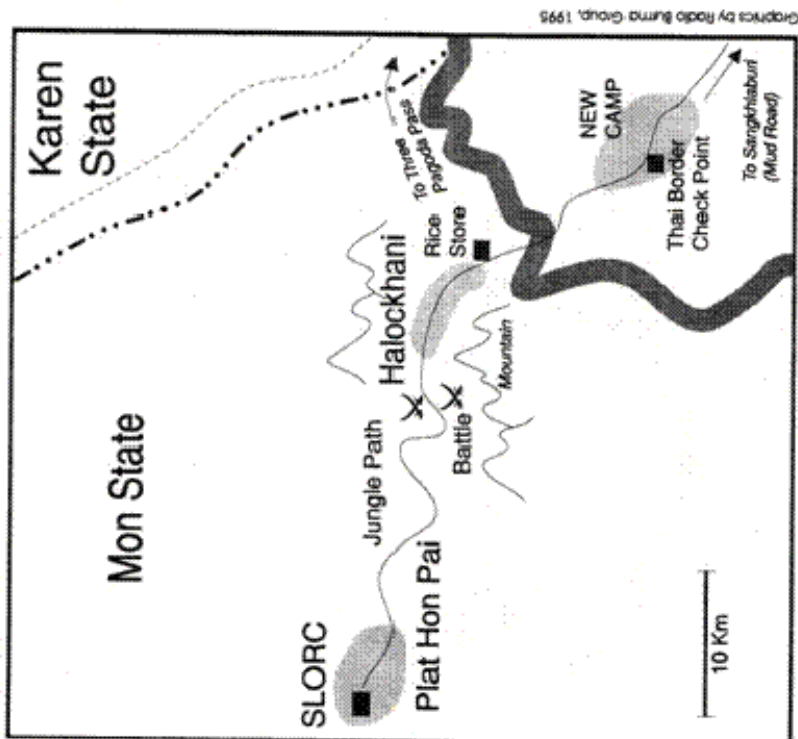
1992-1994 : GASFIELD CONCESSIONS, DISCOVERIES, DEVELOPMENTS AND PLANNED PIPELINES



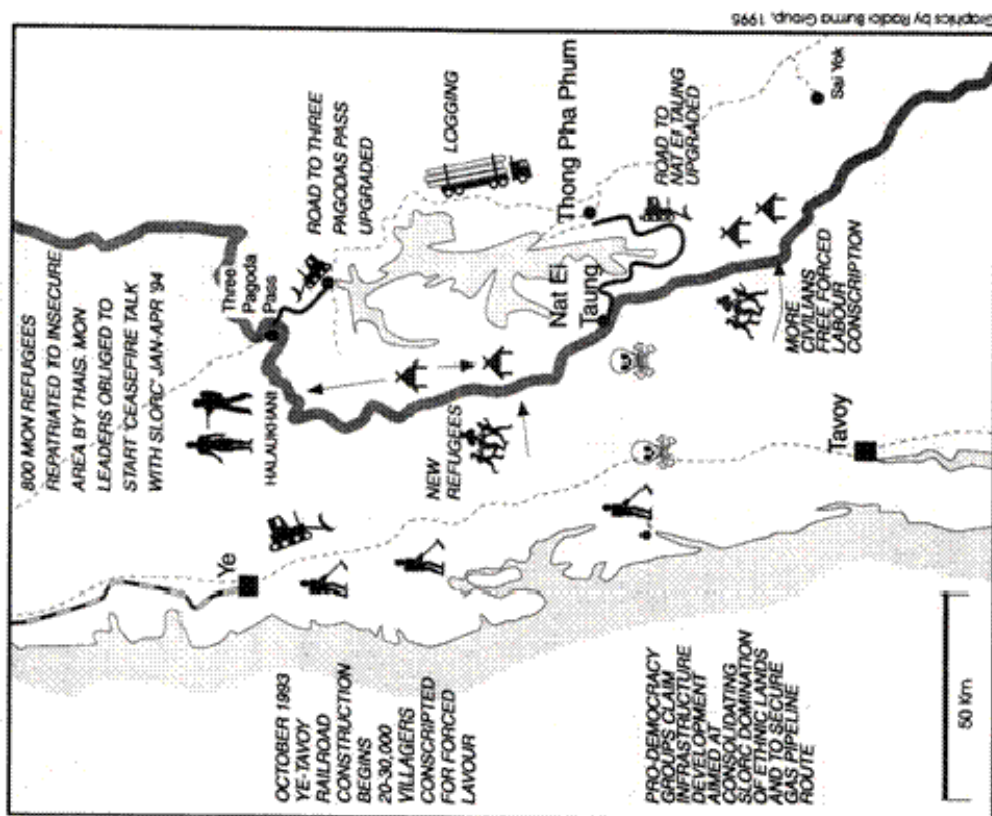
1991-1993 : INCREASED TROOP NUMBERS, VILLAGERS & REFUGEES RELOCATED



Halockhani Refugee Camp



1993-1994 : FORCED LABOUR, FORCED CEASEFIRES



(XV) FORCED REPATRIATION

"In the backdrop of the situation, the Rohingya Muslims of Arakan, who once did not volunteer to die or suffer at the hand of the beastly military forces of the ruling junta and took shelter in an alien land, are now seemed to volunteer to join the repatriation only to become human cattle, who are now being sporadically and secretly slaughtered in northern Arakan, in addition to those forced labour economic hardships and various restrictions imposed."

[Source: Newsletter of Rohingya Solidarity Organisation, 15 August 1994]

The number of refugees on Burma's borders continues to rise uncontrollably, at over three-quarters of a million people who fled from SLORC.

There are more than 77,000 refugees in Thai refugee camps alone, showing an increase of over 5,000 from the previous year, and this despite the absence of a dry season offensive for the second year in a row. Reports from refugees continued to tell of forced labour, harassment and extortion by SLORC troops even while ceasefire talks aims at peace continued. In January 1995, an exodus of another 6,000-9,000 refugees in the Manerplaw area have already made their way into Thailand.

Meanwhile, China and SLORC agreed to begin repatriating Kachins refugees starting in February 1995. These refugees were taken care of by the KIO. The repatriation will have no international monitoring. Already, 1,000 Chin refugees were handed over to SLORC by Indian authorities. And in Bangladesh, forced repatriation of Muslim Rohingyas continues.

As the flow of refugees doesn't even begin to slow, the cause is clearly HRV by SLORC, and the effects are wide-ranging, involving Burma's neighbours and destabilising the region, making Burma's refugees – and the cause which brought them out of the country – into an international affair.

15.1. How Long Will They Stay?

Rohingya have been driven into exodus five times since 1942. Muslim and Bengali-speaking, they suffer religious discrimination, denied citizenship, education and the right to livelihood. The UN has pulled out of repatriation once, due to the way Bangladesh and SLORC have carried out their procedures.

Now, however, the UNHCR seems to have found a limited presence better than none at all, and suddenly the agency is claiming over 90 per cent of refugees want to return. This is in part due to camp officials, who coerce refugees to return to Burma, through harassment, threats, subhuman conditions and physical violence. Any dissent, or "anti-repatriation" activities, is met with arrest and torture by Bangladeshi officials.

The UNHCR admits conditions are below standard and cramped in the camps, with little real monitoring possible and SLORC restrictions on UN monitoring across the border. And although the UN and Bangladesh agree all repatriations

should be conducted with “complete transparency”, this does not occur. Camps are closed off to outside visitors; and when one interviewer did get at last permission, interviews could only be held with refugees in the presence of camp officials who are accused of the human rights violations.

Therefore, interviews are not held in an atmosphere of “transparency” and many Rohingya admit to being afraid to talk to outsiders, especially when a camp official was not punished after beating refugees and continually threatening others to return to Burma. Many refugees are giving up hope, and fear Bangladeshi violence more than SLORC, all under the eyes of the UNHCR.

The plight of nearly 200,000 Rohingya Refugees who fled from Burma to Bangladesh since SLORC took power remains serious. A recent visitor to the camps says that, even with what UNHCR presence does exist, refugees are being forced back to Burma against their will in any event. The visitor went on to say that the situation in the camps is terrible, and that local authorities are trying to prevent any outsiders from visiting, thus the present blackout on any news concerning these refugees.

Efforts need to be made to pressure the UNHCR to make public the true situation of the Rohingyas, and to assist out side visits to the camps to make certain the people's true needs are being met, the visitor said.

15.2. Speedy Repatriation Of Refugees Taking Place

The Rohingya refugees, who have been languishing in the refugee camps in Bangladesh following persecution by Burmese security forces, have now been repatriated to their homeland in phases as per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in April 1992.

The authorities dealing with the refugee problem from both sides have recently agreed to start a larger-scale repatriation of the remaining nearly 200,000 Rohingya refugees and since the first week of September 1994 the Bangladeshi authorities have been making hectic preparations to repatriate the refugees.

Refugees sheltered in different camps have been asked to surrender their ration cards to respective camp officials so that they could be removed to transit camps. Ten to fifteen truckloads of refugees, estimated to be twelve hundred, have been transported to transit camp daily where their willingness to return back to Burma has been screened by the UNHCR officials. Earlier, a superficial survey was also made at their respective camp by some staff members of the UNHCR with the co-operation of the camp officials.

It is understood that the removal of hundreds of Rohingya refugees from the camps has created a psychological impact on those who have remained in the camps. Although the refugees know well that the situation in Arakan has not improved despite the presence of the UNHCR there, they are also thinking of their uncertain camp life in Bangladesh where indirect pressure has reportedly been applied to upgrade the scale of repatriation.

According to improved conditions in the MOU, the refugees are supposed to be repatriated purely on voluntary basis. However, it now appears that the willingness to volunteer in the repatriation has gone up as soon as both Bangladesh and Burma have decided to start a mass repatriation which naturally raises the eyebrows of refugee watchers.

The refugee watchers believe that there may be coercion in handling the repatriation but due to restrictions imposed by the local authorities, no outsider could visit the refugees in camps for which the real situation in the campus and the nature of repatriation could not be reported at length. [Source: MOA]

15.3. UNHCR Director Held Discussion with SLORC Leaders

A senior official for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees met leaders of the SLORC on 30 August, 1994.

Werner Baltter, the director for the Asia-Oceania desk in the UNHCR, who visited Rangoon recently to discuss the Rohingya refugee problem, held talks with Lt Gen Khin Nyunt, secretary-1 of the SLORC in the Defence Ministry. Also present were minister for foreign affairs, U Ohn Gyaw, and Director General of Immigration and Manpower U Maung Aung and other senior officials.

People trying to keep in touch with the UN officials are either subjected to harassment or detained on false grounds by the Na Sa Ka officials. Besides, the UNHCR officials are routinely watched as a result of which the local Muslims could not develop closer relations with the UNHCR thereby creating disadvantages for the UN officials in monitoring the ongoing persecution there.

Rumour also has it that one female UNHCR official who was travelling between Maungdaw and Buthidaung was stopped by some dacoits and looted of her personal belongings and cash being carried reportedly for distribution to the returning Rohingya refugees. It was on 13 July 1994 and the incident had taken place in-between the two tunnels on the Maungdaw-Buthidaung Road where a number of security offices and army barracks have been located. People of the area believe that no outsider could do such dacoity in that area and it might be committed by the Na Sa Ka, who could roam there freely.

It is understood that the meeting between the senior UNHCR official and the SLORC would review the ongoing repatriation programme and achieve confidence-building between the two parties. More than 1,500 Rohingya refugees returned to Burma during the first week of November, under the supervision of local Bangladeshi officials and-representatives of the UNHCR. This brings the number of returned Muslim-refugees to over 100,00 since September 1992, with 150,000 more still in Bangladesh refugee camps.

15.4. Repatriation of Rohingya Refugees Restarts

The repatriation of Rohingya refugees, given shelter in Bangladesh, has begun following a talk for resumption of stalled repatriation on October 19, 1994, due to

unilateral closure of the border by the Burmese junta on grounds of a plague prevention measure.

Although previously only a few hundred refugees were repatriated in each batch, the number of repatriated refugees swelled to over a thousand in each batch since it resumed on 20 October 1994. Earlier, some 81,292 refugees were repatriated to Burma by the authorities in Bangladesh with the co-operation of the UNHCR which usually see them off at the time of repatriation.

The repatriation of Rohingya refugees was in turmoil following opposition from the refugees as there was no UNHCR in Arakan and many refugees were put behind bars on allegation that they were terrorists and involved in an "anti-repatriation" movement. However, the repatriation and resettlement process have been geared up following the arrival of UNHCR in Arakan.

Some 265,000 refugees come to Bangladesh since late 1991 and about 24,000 babies were born in Bangladesh out of whom some 6,200 died.

The speedy repatriation of Rohingya refugees is possible only because the Burmese have agreed to handle an increased number of refugees in each batch.

15.5. Whereabouts of Repatriated Refugee Remained Unknown

The Bangladesh government has since been repatriating Muslims refugees from its soil to Burma following an understanding between two governments and so far about 82,000 (approx) Muslims have already been repatriated to their homeland.

One Abdur Rahaman son of Mrs Amina Khatun, who was also included in the list of repatriated refugees from Bangladesh on 10 September, 1994, which was received at Maungdaw jetty refugee reception centre, was interrogated by the police on duty at the reception centre. He hailed from Ponyiolake Village, south of Buthidaung Township, Arakan State, and stayed in a camp at Gundum of Bangladesh.

Afterward Abdur Rahaman was about to be sent to 10-mile Military Intelligence Office by the police when the matter was reported to the UNHCR by someone. At this the UNHCR reportedly intervened and the refugee in question was, instead, sent to Maungdaw police lock-up.

It is understood that Abdur Rahaman was kept there for about three days on the ground that he might be associated with anti-state forces operating along Bangladesh Burma border while he was in refugee camp. When contacted by his mother about his condition, she was told by the police that Abdur Brahman was no more in their custody and they refused to disclose his whereabouts.

People of the area presumed that the repatriated refugee might have taken away by the Burmese military intelligence unit and was probably shot dead.

Although the repatriation has been steadily taking a new phase, the Burmese authorities has not yet improved. There are allegations that the authorities preferred to conscript forced labour from among the refugees and some were either detained or tortured to death on assumed charges.

15.6. India Hands Back Chin Refugees to SLORC

In late September, a large number of refugees from Burma, mostly of Chin ethnicity, were rounded up in India and forcibly handed over to Burma's ruling SLORC at the border.

Reportedly, most of this took place in and around Aizawl, capitol of India's Mizoram State, which borders Burma's Chin State. A fax about the round-up, translated from the Chin language, described the events:

"Not less than 1,000 persons who were believed to be citizens of Burma were arrested by the Indian authorities in the border areas of North Eastern India and repatriated to the military authorities in Burma.

"Around 40,000 Burma's citizens had fled to Northeastern states of India to escape persecution of the successive governments and military regimes of Burma. They have lived there, some over 40 years, with the knowledge of the authorities of the various states and the central government.

"The arrests were launched without prior warning. The people were not allowed to take any of their belongings. Women and children were seen crying and screaming as they were handed over to the Burmese authorities. It was learned that the Burmese authorities jailed them immediately."

The fax was transmitted on 29 September. Apparently the round-up was shown on television news in India. However, Mizoram denies access to outside journalists or human rights investigators, so further details may be slow in emerging.

It is worth noting that an election campaign is going on there, and there are questions as to whether the round-up was brought on by Mizoram State government or by Indian federal government, or some combination of the two.

The Mizo people are a Zo ethnic group, as are the Chins, but there is a great deal of intra-ethnic conflict within these peoples in that region.

On the Burma side of the border, large forced relocation projects have been taking place in Chin State, and a railway extension line there has been under construction it is all too probable that the SLORC has demanded more slaves to be handed over to them by sympathetic, corrupted, or misled elements in government on the Indian side of the border.

It is particularly tragic that these captive people have no chance of another escape, as can happen in other repatriations – they were delivered directly into the hands of a regime which constantly practices "ethnic cleansing".

The Chin people, a largely Christian indigenous culture, are endangered by a SLORC campaign to claim their lands for resettlement programs and their forests and other resources for exploitation. Chin rebels (the Chin National Front) have staged small-scale but daring raids in recent months, and engaged in underground political organising, but the SLORC's army now has a large presence throughout the area.

The Hon Lian Uk, an elected member of parliament from Chin State, who fled Burma under a SLORC arrest threat, has protested the forced repatriation of Chins by India, eloquently comparing it to “fishing for sharks with the life of the helpless indigenous people”.

Dr. Vum Son, author of “Zo History”, has expressed concern that this repatriation could continue, and spread to other areas of India's Northeast border with Burma. Please protest against this shocking, inhumane action, by writing to India's Prime Minister. Ask him to ensure safe haven for refugees from Burma's anti-democratic regime and to make sure that such roundups and handovers of refugees never happen again.

15.7. Shan Forced to Return to Fighting in Burma

On 22-23 May hundreds of Shan and other ethnic populations fled across the border because SLORC troops rounded up hundreds of porters around Tachilek. The refugees were held at Wat Wieng Hom (a Buddhist temple) and then forcibly set back across by Thai authorities on 24 May. SLORC greeted these deportees by loading them into trucks and brought them to a porter holding centre at Loi Hsa Htong military camp.

About 100 of the villagers from Akha Village of Wan Ya Aye near Tachilek who were driven out by SLORC troops on 1 August crossed into Thailand on the following day but were immediately prevented from entering by the Thai authorities and forcibly handed back to SLORC authorities the next afternoon by order of the governor of Chiang Rai Province, Kamron Booncherd. While they were in Thailand everyone was denied access to speak, even to Shan refugee officials.

The Thais have now sealed the entire Shan border off in this fashion, particularly where they are forcibly repatriating Palaung, Lahu and Lisu refugees opposite the Mong Kyot area, where outsiders are no longer allowed anywhere near the border.



Refugees from Shan State fleeing away from SLORC offensive, seen at the border inside Burma in July 1994. (photo: VDS)

At the same time, a Lahu villager from the Mong Kyot area reported that starting from 1 August, SLORC began forcing villagers to make secure the entire

length of the road from Thailand (known as the Chieng Dao logging route to Chiang Mai) from the Thai border north to Mong Tung and from there to Mong Hsat in the east and the Salween River in the west, a total road length of about 100 miles.

A group of four villagers have to rotate standing sentry 24 hours a day at outposts spaced less than a mile apart. If they see anyone they must bang on a stick, then the next group has to pass the signal up the line all the way to the nearest army post. The villagers say they have never been forced to do this before.

15.8. Refugees At Klay Muh Hta

Since the beginning of 1994, it has been no secret that Thai authorities want to repatriate all Karen refugees as soon as possible as part of their "constructive engagement" deal with SLORC.

From Shan State in the north to Ranong in the far south, the Thai Government and army have been actively involved in handing refugees of several nationalities back to SLORC or intimidating them back across the border.

Last year, Thai officials visited the leaders of all Karen refugee camps in Thailand and informed them that they are not allowed to accept any new arrivals. Technically, no new refugees are allowed to cross the border anywhere.

However, thousands of new refugees continue to arrive at the Thai border, proving that the SLORC's gross human rights abuses inside Karen areas of Burma have not abated in the slightest, and in many areas are only getting worse.

When they find that they are no longer allowed across to the safety of Thailand, many sneak in illegally and join the flood of economic refugees from Burmese towns heading for Thai cities, where meet and up as virtual slaves in sweatshops or brothels, underpaid labour on construction sites or prisoners in Thai immigration prisons.

To help alleviate this problem, a new refugee camp has been set up at Klay Muh Hta, in territory controlled by the KNU on the Burmese side of the border. The camp has existed less than 3 months and already over 5,000 people have flooded into it, most coming from the Hlaing Bwe Area of Pa-an District. These are not economic refugees, but villagers fleeing the terror of SLORC oppression. More of them are now arriving every day at Klay Muh Hta, and more such camps will probably have to be set up soon.

In Klay Muh Hta they are extremely vulnerable in two ways; many foreign aid donors refuse to send aid across to them without SLORC approval (which is impossible), and they are only a few hours' walk from the nearest SLORC camp.

SLORC calls refugees "insurgents in disguise", and if the numbers in the camp continue to grow the SLORC may consider launching a military offensive to wipe it out as an example to all those who would dare escape them. As one man commented, "If there were Burmese soldiers around here, we would not have dared to come".

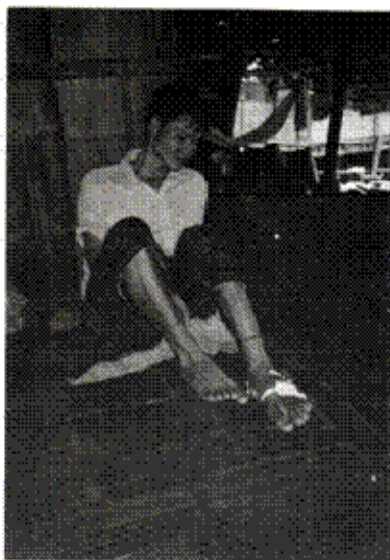
[See also “Abuse against Women”, “Refugees”, “Internally Displaced Persons” and “Eye-witness Accounts”, interview 5, 28, 39]



Karen refugees who flooded across the border after the Manerplaw area fell to SLORC. (photo: KHRG)



Karen refugees who flooded across the border after the Manerplaw area fell to SLORC. (photo: KHRG)



Saw Ler Thu (30), a refugee at Don Pa Kiang, Thailand. He crossed the Moei River with 5 others to find bamboo shoots on 3 Sept 1994. SLORC soldiers opened fire on them, wounding him at the foot but he escaped. Saw Kwe Tha, 39, was hit in the leg and captured, then executed with a knife. (photo: KHRG)

(XVI) INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Damaging social change is going on in Burma due to the break-up of the village; families often send young males Rangoon in order to avoid military, forced labour, etc.

SLORC's policy of social and political control over the people has forced many people to flee. This is nothing new and has been going on since the Ne Win Era, affecting millions of Burma's citizens, **with 2 million** being displaced in the past six years alone.

Sometimes they can find other villages or towns to hide in, where SLORC troops do not abuse the people as much; other times they find peace and sanctuary in the Liberated Areas among ethnic resistance groups.

Still others are mercilessly dumped in other villages and told to survive there. The choice of becoming a refugee in one's own country or abroad has little difference.

Most of the oppressed people do not want to leave Burma, but are forced to by constant harassment of ethnics, by the deprivation of any human rights, by the inability to sustain a livelihood due to the extortion of troops, by the destruction of their homes by SLORC for "infrastructure" projects or merely to drive the villagers away.

The military aims to isolate and to ensure that insurgency groups do not have any support among the people. This lack of stability, for homes and welfare of

common people, aims at strengthening SLORC to maintain control over the people and to consolidate power in the ethnic areas.



Villagers fleeing for their lives at 7 o'clock in the morning on 8 March 1993 when IB 84 shelled Kyone Sein Village, Pa-an Township, Karen State, with 60mm mortars because SLORC suspected that KNU troops were in the village. (photo: NLD-LA)



Villagers fleeing for their lives at 7 o'clock in the morning on 8 March 1993 when IB 84 shelled Kyone Sein Village, Pa-an Township, Karen State, with 60mm mortars because SLORC suspected that KNU troops were in the village. (photo: NLD-LA)

16.1. Junta Continues Evicting Rohingya From Interior of Arakan

The SLORC apparatus in Arakan State is continuing their master plan of exterminating the Muslim community.

On 11th November 1994, the authorities assisted by police and army encircled some Muslim villages under Mrohaung Township and called the heads of family to a place to inform them that the government had decided to acquire the landed properties and as such the villagers were required to pack their belongings within a short time.

Not knowing what to do at the sudden short notice, the Muslim villagers started crying and packing whatever they could while their paddy and other cultivated land full of vegetables as well as cattle heads had remained where they were.

in 1993, the local authorities brought some small country boats and ordered the villagers to board the boats. Ultimately, all such people from different villages were gathered at a certain place from where the Muslim villagers including women and children have been brought to Maungdaw via Buthidaung.

An elderly blind woman from Wai-Pyan Village, Pa-an Township, Karen State who was forced by SLORC troops to move away and stay at Kyone-Sein Village in February 1993. (photo: NLD-LA)



Within a few hours, the local authorities brought some small country boats and ordered the villagers to board the boats. Ultimately, all such people from different villages were gathered at a certain place from where the Muslim villagers including women and children have been brought to Maungdaw via Buthidaung.

The villages recently evicted were from Kawalong village-tract inside Mrohaung Township which is a large ancient village-tract consisting of five villages with as many as 5,000 Rohingyas. Another village known as Mahamyatmuni Village, Kyauktaw Township, has reportedly 160 Muslim household families who were also brought down to Maungdaw Township.

With a view not to draw the attention of passers-by and those staff members of the UN agencies operating in Arakan, the transportation of evicted people has usually been done at odd hours and upon arrival the evicted people were hurriedly distributed to different Muslim villages. In some cases, the authorities separated the children from their parents and sent them to distant villages as per their distribution plan creating pathetic situation there.

Since the start of eviction in November 1994 as many as 34 truck-loads of Muslim villagers from interior Arakan have been brought down to Maungdaw Township through different routes and they have since been distributed to Muslim villages in north Maungdaw with instructions to manage food and shelter for the internal refugees.

It is estimated that about 3,400 Rohingyas were brought so far and there is no arrangement from the government side for their relief and rehabilitation.

Although there has been growing discontent among the Muslim of Maungdaw and Buthidaung over the heinous acts of the ruling SLORC, they have been watching the event silently because of helplessness and for fear of brutal wrath from the “Na Sa Ka” (Frontier Administration).

16.2. Fezipara of Maungdaw, Arakan Under the Orders of Eviction

A Muslim village by the name of Fezipara which is located in the heart of Maungdaw Township with a population of approximately 3,000 has been under orders of eviction. The order was served verbally in the second week of October 1994 by the local administrative officials saying that the land was necessary for the development of the town.

It may be noted that the local authorities have since long used some tactics to harass the Muslims and at times squeezed money to undo concocted traps laid against the Muslim. In this particular case, it seems that the government is trying to evict the Muslims only because it is a part of a de-Muslimisation plan by the government and not solely because the authorities desperately need the land for the development of the town.

16.3. The Results...

Because of SLORC troops' arbitrary accusation, arbitrary arrests and extra-judicial execution, more than 100 villagers, including women and children, from 30 villages in Kyauk Tagar, Shwe Kyin and Kyauk Kyi townships dare not live in their villages anymore and are taking refuge in the jungle, creating more of Burma's internally displaced persons.

As they are in the jungles, many of the former villagers suffer from malaria and all faced with a constant shortage of food since their crops and traditional methods of gathering food have been disrupted.

[See also under “Forced Labour”, “Refugees”, “Forced Relocation” and “Eye-witness Accounts”, interview 1,7, 10, 33, 37-38, 41, 44-456, 58-59, 61, 66-67, 73, 79, 93, 100-105, 108-111, 114-115, 128].

16.4. List of Incidents

From 7 to 10 January, a villager from Sa Daw Kho Village, Taungoo District, was shot which caused him wounds. 8 cows, 3 pigs, 10 hens belong to the villagers in Si Daw Khao, Bu Sar Khee, Tha Kwee Soe, Saw Mu Dae, Thway Baw Dae villages were killed and 72 tins of rice was looted. Loss estimated at current prices is 464,000 kyats in cash. 15 huts located at different places were also reduced to ashes. [Source: KNU]

On 9 January, IB 24 under the command of TOC 331 of LID 33, commanded by Maj Thaung Win entered Lay Kay Village, Thaton District. The troops burnt down houses belong to Toe Par Thwe, Kyaw Bu, Kor Ler, Por Ther Khin, Maung Nyunt Tin, Ti Kyaw Ko, Tee Ler Ner, Maung Kim and Naw Muh. They slaughtered an ox belonging to Ma Chaw, two oxen belonging to Tha Du Mo, an ox belonging to Maw Kwai, a cow belonging to Mor Than, one cow belonging to Maung Kyi Kot, and a buffalo belonging to Maung Nyunt Tin. [Source: ABSDF/KNU]

On 11 January, SLORC troops from IB 73 and 234 looted various belongings from the local people in Pa Lay Sar Village, Taungoo District. Loss of the villagers estimated at 47,670 kyats in cash at current prices. (Source: KNU)

On 15 January, SLORC troops from IB 24 killed one goat, four pigs and looted rice from every house in Talai Kayin Village, Thaton District. (Source: KNU)

On 20 January, SLORC troops from Coy 3 of IB 240 raided Norng Sarng Village in Mong Young Parish in Hsenwi Township, and burnt about 300 four-gallon tins of paddy owned by Ai Kham Lu. Damages are estimated at 63,000 kyats. Moreover, soldiers also sequestered a buffalo of the victim, worth 13,500 kyats. [Source: SHRF]

On 20 January, Coy 5 of IB 69 led by Maj Myint Kyi returned to Na Moop Village, Mong Young Parish, Hsenwi Township, northern Shan State. They opened fire in an attempt to make the villagers afraid of them and when the villagers fled the SLORC troops robbed the people. The following losses were suffered for a total of 150,850 kyats; Pu Loi Sarng Yern (126,500), Awk Tsarng Kham (19,000), Ea Luen (2,050) and Sarng Yee (3,300). [Source: SHRF]

On 21 January, SLORC IB 39 reached Shah Lo Village, Taungoo Township, and stole property of Mahn Sun worth 700,000 kyats. SLORC troops then burned down his house. (Source: KNU)

On 23 January, IB 73, under Southern Command, came to Kyauk Tan and Hsaw Wah Der villages in Nyaunglebin Township and ordered the villagers to leave the village immediately. The soldiers then burned down all their homes, and they were not allowed to return to their fields to harvest their rice. [Source: ABSDF/KNU]

On 23 January, a military column from SLORC IB 39 stole all the property and gold belonging to a trader named Mhan Son from Shar Lo Village in Taungoo District and burned down his house. The loss is estimated at 700,000 kyats in cash at current prices. [Source: ABSDF/KNU]

At Mat La Daw Village in Kyauk Kyi Township of Pegu Division, there was a market for trading goods between the plains and hill regions, where the traders came to sell rice and take back betel nut and other products. In the latter half of January, SLORC troops forced all 34 shops in this market to close down and drove the shopkeepers to the plains.

On 2 February, 1st Column of IB 30, led by Maj Yee Aye, burned down 10 farms of the villagers in Blar Poe Htar Village, Shwe Kyin Township, Pegu Division. [Source: KNU]

On 19 February, SLORC troops from IB 84 led by Coy Comdr Nyo Soe Moe, under the command of LID 99, shot a buffalo belong to Saw Than Nyunt of Talai Kayin Village in Thaton District. SLORC troops also razed the victim's sugarcane mill and another house belong to San Myint Par. [Source: KNU]

On 21 February, No 5th Column of IB 32 led by Capt My Lwin Theta Lwin entered Taree Hta Gaun Village, Kya In Seik Gyi Township, Karen State, and razed houses of 4 villagers: Moo Pu Kyaw lost his rice barn, 120 tins of paddy, betel nut crop, and cash and belongings worth an estimated 300,000 kyats; U Talay Heh lost his rice barn, 160 tins of paddy, stored betel nut and pepper, 15,000 kyats cash and 200,000 kyats worth of belongings, and two pepper plantations were also burned; Ah Pu lost 80 tins of paddy and belongings worth over 37,000 kyats; and Naw Paw Ser lost her rice barn, 260 tins of paddy, betel nut crop and over 500,000 kyats worth of belongings. [Source: KNU]

On 26 February, military column 1 & 2 from SLORC IB 61 burned down one house in Ma U Yar Village in Ye township, Mon State and robbed properties estimated at 1,000,000 kyats at current prices, including 400,000 kyats in cash and seven tickles of gold. (Source: NMSP)

SLORC troops from IB 26, 39, 48 and 73, under the Southern Command, forcibly confiscated land and farms of local peasants and branded them as an area belonging to the military. In 1992, an estimated 200 acres of farming land of the peasants in Chan Si, Lan Khwe, Zee Phyu Gone, Pyin Kan of Nyaunglebin District, Pegu Division, were confiscated. In 1994, SLORC intends to extend the area to 700 acres.

Peasants were forced to plough in that this confiscated land and then were demanded to pay taxes for working the land. Moreover, peasants were also forced to collect timber and bamboo for the troops. Each household in Shar Si Bo Parish was levied two sack of rice by SLORC troops. [Source: KNU]

On 28 February, Lt Sein Win of SLORC IB 79 ordered the people of Thayaw Mae Village, Thaton District, to vacate the village immediately. Their houses were then destroyed by the soldiers. On 3 March, all people in Kyat Chay Kat Village were also ordered to vacate their village immediately and had their houses destroyed by soldiers of IB 79. [Source: KNU]

On 24 March, a military column led by Capt Tin Maung Nyunt from SLORC IB 101 reached Kyauk Leik Village in Palaw Township of Tenasserim Division. There were about 40 households in this Karen village. Then 10 minutes of fighting broke out between SLORC troops and KNU forces. When the fighting subsided, two houses belong to U Aung Myat and U Kyar Aye, both Karens, located nearby the battlefield, were razed to the ground by SLORC troops.

U Aung Myat and his wife were in the field when their house was on fire. All property inside their house, including 31 baskets of rice in the storeroom, were

destroyed. U Kyar Aye, a widower, who lives with his four sons and a daughter, lost all their property inside the house and an amount of paper money. While the house was on fire, his youngest daughter, 23, was found and arrested by troops.

She was released two days later only when the village headman gave a certain amount of bribe and a guarantee for her. As the victims were very poor, they cannot afford to reconstruct their houses. The victims had to stay with their relatives in other villagers as SLORC troops threatened and prohibited them from reconstructing their houses. [Source: ABSDF]

On 6 April, in Saam San Village, Hsa Nein Parish of Parng Long Township, the combined forces of IB 246, 513 and 515 carried out a pillage and plunder action. Thirty-one households were burned down after troops looted private property, including cattle, resulting in approximately 205,000 kyats worth of damage to personal property, homes and livestock caused by these soldiers. [Source: SHRF]

In April the SLORC army confiscated paddy fields without compensation around the Kyawk Sit Pong village, Monywa township, Sagaing Division to set up an artillery corps. Villagers from 20 nearby villages were forced to provide labour for that new military base. Two thousand acres were confiscated from farmers of Kyawk Kar and Tha Naung Win villages along the road from Monywa to Kyauk Kar village without compensation for a planned air force base. Five thousand acres were confiscated for the construction of the North Western Military Command in the north of the Monywa's road to Ye Oo in the past three years. The entire Kha Wea Kyin Village was wiped out for this camp. [Source: ABSDF/ABSL/NLD-LA]

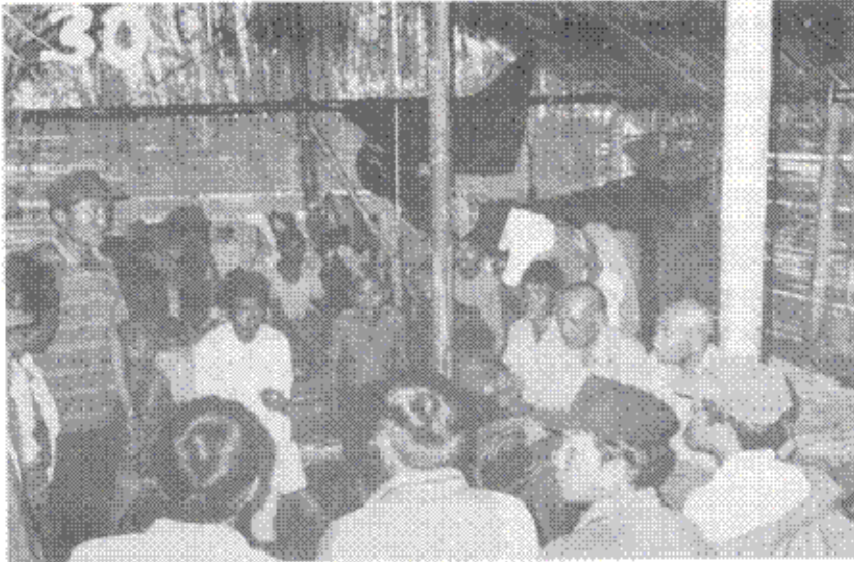
On 13 May, at 3 p.m., SLORC troops from IB 516 under the command of LID 99 burnt down Kung Mong Village, Nam Sam Township, southern Shan State. Twelve houses, which had belonged to Lung Tsing-da, Lung Laing, Lung Eung, Sai Fiya, Lung Sarn Pe, Lung Kung-na, Htun Nyunt, Sai Nyo, Nang Yee, Lung Yong, Sai Marng and Viling, and one hydro-powered rice mill were razed to the ground with detrimental effects to livelihood and well-being of the entire community. [Source: SHRF]

On 13 May, a combined military column of SLORC troops from LID 55, LIBs 247 & 248 and IB 518 raided Worng Koong Nue Village, Wong Norng parish, Mong Nai Township, and torched houses and belongings owned by Thein Ngwe (losses of about 262,000 kyats), Loong Yoong (35,000), Sai Long (12,450), Nang Yung (19,300), Loong Tsitda (178,200), Pi Kann (82,650), Loong Eung (10,300), Pi Teeya (31,700), Nang Ing (8,390) and Nai Yung (5,450). [Source: SHRF]

On the same day the same troops invaded Worn Yon village in the same parish and took away property from Loong Saling (10,950 kyats), Sitda Nu (5,030), Loong Khe (6,280), Pi Ling Nya (4,560), Loong Thak Swe (900), Pi Ti (1,175), Daw Swe (870), Pa Hkam Ong (3,260), Pa Hurng (690), Headman Loong Vi (425), Daw Kya (6,000), Pa Tun (2,400), Nang Swe (1,130), Korliya (600), Pa Lu (6,000) and Sorliya (6,000). [Source: SHRF]

On 5 July, SLORC troops from IB 26 and 73 burned down the hut belonged to Saw Baw from Da Kaw Bwa Village, Mone Township and took everything they found there. (Source: ABSDF/KNU)

On 1 August, SLORC troops burned down the Akha Village of Wan Ya Aye (near Tachilek) and drove out 50-60 families living there after accusing them of supporting the rebels. [Source: SHRF]



Internal refugees at Mang Na area of Shan State in June 1994. (photo: VDS)

On 1 August, SLORC Anti-Insurgent Group (AIG) soldiers demanded 5,000 kyats from Hla Aung Ker Village, Thaton District. They said if the village didn't provide the money, they would order the villagers to move out of the village and kill some of them. [Source: KYO]

A total of 170 households of Muslims were evicted at gunpoint from Minbya Township, Arakan State, on 25 July. They were ordered to pack their belongings and to board six engine-boats. They were taken to Maungdaw Township where they were dumped on the local population with no food, financial assistance or shelter.

On 2 November, more than 60 SLORC troops from IB 62 led by Capt Aye Min reached Kaw Pauk Village, Kyaikmaraw Township, and forced the villagers to abandon the village. Nai Lun (25) was shot in abdomen and seriously wounded as a result. (Source: NMSP/NLD-LA/DPNS)

(XVII) FORCED RELOCATION

While massive relocation is going on in the countryside, even urbanites are not exempt from such upheavals. In connection with tourism, the whole community of Pegu was forcibly relocated hundreds of kilometres north.

SLORC has forced 500,000 inhabitants of Rangoon to relocate to “satellite towns”, which are little more than shanty towns without running water or electricity, so that the centre of Rangoon can be sold off to foreign developers for hotel facilities and other projects. Thereby, electricity is drained from outlying areas and other neighbourhoods.

The new towns are also easier to control should a repeat of 1988 ever occur, with the people spread out over geography that is easily manageable for the military to quell dissent.

Orders are given without adequate notice by military commanders that villagers must leave their homes, carrying what possessions they can. The Gas Pipeline and related Ye-Tavoy Railway been the reason for massive upheavals of whole areas by SLORC.

Often villagers are forced to relocate near a military base or into towns, where concentrations of population are less difficult to control than in the jungle. Also, SLORC creates a “resource pool” to be more readily tapped for forced labour this way.

Some relocation places are more appropriately “concentration camps” with barbed wire fencing, much like “strategic hamlets” than villages. SLORC does not provide new building materials or fields for relocated victims; villagers must fend for themselves in their new environment, no matter how suitable the soil and surroundings are to habitation.

These tactics aid the SLORC idea of consolidation of captured territory from ethnic rebel groups, and once again proves that human rights violations were actually increasing and affecting more and more people in Burma than previously.

In the Kalemmyo area, villages have been forcibly relocated to build a large military base. There used to be only one battalion in that area but recently SLORC have moved three more battalions around Kalemmyo.

17.1. Kabaw Valley Development Programme

The base of the Kabaw Valley Development Programme is Mintha Village, where a number of SLORC troops are stationed. Aung Zay Ya Village was founded near former Thanan Village in 1991. Aung Zay Ya Village is located 40 miles north of Tamu and there are at least 200 households in the area.

These houses were built by the local people in Kalay District, by covering their own expenses. For the construction of Sayar San and Aung Zay Ya villages, each person in Kalay District was forced to pay 5 kyats. Many people in Kalay District were forced to relocate to Aung Zay Ya Village.



Newly-set up Sayar village or Concentration Camp (photo: ABSDF)

Although SLORC announced that each household would be provided with a house, 5-acre wide plot of land, cattle and farming tools without charges, no one wants to live there because there is no electricity nor running water.

Local people living in six townships of Kalay District were not only forced to pay tax in the name of the Kabaw Valley Development Programme, but also driven to provide cattle according to numbers fixed by SLORC.

Businessmen were also forced to pay 200 kyats per person. Convict labourers were forced to dig earthen pitches and uproot trees. In ploughing farms, SLORC replaced cattle with convict labourers and forced them to work as cattle.

Another village, Sayar San, was founded in 1993. It is 20 miles from Tamu and the programmes will be similar to Aung Zay Ya Village. A police station was built by villagers at a place 13 miles from Tamu. Furthermore, another village will also be founded in Kabaw Valley. Local people there have been forced to provide for the new settlers. [Source: ABSDF]

17.2. SLORC's Forced Relocation/Displacement of Ethnic Villages in Tenasserim Division Since May 1991

Ye Phyu Township: Conducted by SLORC's IB 104 and LIB 408 during first quarter of 1993. Affected villages are: 1. Barine (Mayan), 2. Yapu, 3. Kywethalin, 4. Kyauk Gadin, 5. Ale Sakhan, 6. Kyauktayan. Estimated Total Population: 2,500

Tavoy Township: Conducted by SLORC's LIB 403 and other local units during the 1992/1993 dry season. Affected villages are: 1. Taung Zin, 2. Badat Chaung, 3. Kyaukbyu, 4. Laung Minba, 5. Hti Ywar, 6. Ka Hti Wa, 7. Inn Ywar, 8. I'einbin Aing, 9. Oat Tu, 10. Kado Twin. Total Households: 732. Estimated Total Population: approximately 4,000.

Thayet Chaung Township: Conducted by SLORC's local infantry battalions during their "Than Lyet Sit Hsin Yay" military operation, April 1992. Affected villages are: 1. Thayet Hna Khwa, 2. Ye Byat, 3. Me Ke, 4. Kyauk Aing, 5. Winkapaw, 6. Kywe Cyan, 7. Alezu, 8. Byat Wi, 9. Taung Byauk, 10. Yapu, 11. Thabyu Chaung, 12. The Lan, 13. Gonnyin Zeit, 14. Yegyo Chaung, 15. Thayetpin Aing, 16. Si Dat, 17. Pyinbyuthar, 18. Sone Zin, 19. Si Taw. Total Households: 2404. Estimated Total Population: over 13,000.

[Source: CPPSM]

17.2.1. Gas Pipeline Area Prior to 1994

As the planned gas pipeline will necessarily be laid across the Mon and Karen territories, Thai authorities in a move to help ensure security of the gas pipeline project have put increasing pressure on the Mon and Karen guerrilla groups to enter into ceasefire deals with the SLORC regime.

In so doing, Thai military and civil authorities have driven the Mon and Karen refugees seeking shelters on the Thai border from pillar to post.

The forcible relocation of 7,400 Mon refugees at Loh Loe Camp began this year. Out of these 7,400 refugees, the majority were repatriated to Burmese side of the border at Halockhani which was located at an only 5 kilometre's distance from SLORC's local army stationed at Three Pagodas Pass. The rest of the refugees at Loh Loe were at the same time removed about 30 kilometres to the west to Pa Yaw, another Mon refugee camp which was situated nearby the Thai-Burmese border line.

Thai authorities have forcibly relocated several other Mon refugee camps and villages on the Thai border since 1991. 2,500 Mon refugees at Day Bung refugee camp were forcibly relocated by local Thai authorities to Hlabrad refugee camp (in the Loh Loe area) in the middle of the Monsoon Season in June 1991.

In all, 1,000 Mon villagers at Ban Mai were forcibly vacated from the site by local Thai militiamen in March 1992. A total of 5,000 Mon refugees from three other refugee camps – namely Krone Kung, Panung Htaw and Day Bung – were at the same time forcibly relocated to Loh Loe in April 1992.

Some 500 Mon villagers at Halockhani (which was situated in Thai territory at that time) were forced back to the Burmese side of the border in April 1993 by local Thai authorities. (The new settlement, though inside Burmese territory, still retained the name 'Halockhani'. But this village was not under the administration of the Mon National Relief Committee until the refugees from Loh Loe camp were repatriated to the area and combined with the 500 or so old villagers of Halockhani.)

Two Karen villages on the Thai border near Nat Ein Taung were also burned down by the Thai army in April 1993 in a move to secure the gas pipeline route.

17.2.2. Oil and Investment Fuels Human Rights Violations

Total Co of France and Unocal Corp of the US are the concession holders of the 26,140 kilometre surface area in the Martaban Gulf, including the Yadana gas field which contains estimated total 5.8 trillion cubic feet of untapped natural gas.

Total Co is the operator of the Martaban Gulf gas project and holds 52.5 percent interest, Unocal Corp having a minority interest of 47.5%. The Total-Unocal consortium is to deliver the natural gas from the Martaban Gulf of Burma to Thailand via a pipeline, which will necessarily be laid across the ethnic Mon and Karen territories, where SLORC so far has little or no control. To ensure the SLORC's military control over these guerrilla-war zones is the very first and foremost stage of the materialisation of the gas pipeline project.

Territorial security for the gas pipeline project is completely indispensable to the Total-Unocal consortium as well as all other parties involved in it. So Total Co and Unocal Corp must also be brought to account for all human rights violations committed by SLORC in terms of securing and facilitating the Total-Unocal gas pipeline project.

In terms of securing the foreign business projects in Mon State and Tenasserim Division, SLORC has already created enormous social disaster in the rural ethnic communities in the regions, which is tantamount to hell.

For the recent years, SLORC has conducted a series of violent forced relocation and inhumane forced labour in Mon State and Tenasserim Division. Tens of thousands of ethnic Mon, Karen and Tavoyan populations have been subjected to forced relocation or displacement by SLORC since 1992.

More than 120,000 of local ethnic communities – male and female including the old, the under-aged and the pregnant – have been subjected to unpaid forced labour for the construction of the 110-mile-long Ye-Tavoy railway since last dry season already resulting in hundreds of deaths, thousands of sicknesses and tens of thousands of displaced persons and refugees.

Having been in recess for four months of the monsoon season, tens of thousands of the local inhabitants are again being forced by the SLORC military into unpaid labour on the Ye-Tavoy railway construction. SLORC needs an urgent completion of this strategic railway to better secure the billion-dollar gas pipeline project of the Total-Unocal consortium.

Foreign investments in Burma only support SLORC's longer stay in power to further oppress the peoples of Burma and suppress democratic movements in the country, and do not benefit the Burmese peoples in general.

International human rights and environmentalist activists at large, seriously concerned about the gas project-related human rights violations and environmental degradation in Burma, have been pressuring and demanding Total Co and Unocal Corp to withdraw from Burma.

However, both Total Co and Unocal Corp have persisted in furthering their economic deals with the SLORC military dictatorship, respectively arguing that

any cases of the forced labour and forced displacement in Burma are not related to the natural gas project in which they are involved.

In its 25 March, 1994 letter to Investor Responsibility Research Centre (IRRC), Total Co stated: Since April 1993 our engineers have conducted several surveys along the whole length of the Burmese pipeline route on foot by car and by helicopter. The area is very sparsely populated. There are few villages and the region is perfectly calm. No population displacement should occur anywhere along the pipeline route.

Under such these circumstances, hatred and fear to the SLORC army have naturally increased and been deeply ingrained within these ethnic communities. As a result, these ethnic communities have lacked any trust and confidence in the SLORC army. They run away when Burmese troops come into their villages and only dare to go back to their villages when the Burmese troops have returned. Those villagers who cannot escape are normally subjected to any of the human rights abuses by the Burmese troops.

Since 1984, the Tatmadaw has launched a major strategic campaign, which is notoriously known as the "Four-Cuts Campaign for Annihilation of Insurgency Movements" in the country: To cut any communication and support between the ethnic guerrilla groups and ethnic populations.

Under the rhetoric of the Four-Cuts Campaign, forced relocation-displacement of ethnic villages by the Tatmadaw has been common in the ethnic territories of the country. The military has normally forced the ethnic villages which it cannot fully control to relocate in "strategic hamlets" or "concentration camps" as a traditional tactic to weaken the ethnic rebel groups and strengthen SLORC's military control.

The SLORC regime has further intensified this strategic Four-Cuts Campaign to secure the foreign business activities in the areas where it has had only loose control. It is transparent that the foreign business operations in the ethnic territories where SLORC has not had full control are obvious reasons for SLORC's increase of the forced relocation-displacement.

In trying to secure the oil-gas exploration and developing activities of the foreign companies in Tenasserim – such as Total Co of France, Unocal Corp of the US, Premier of the U K, Texaco of the US and Nippon Oil of Japan, SLORC has increasingly conducted forced relocation of the ethnic villages in the regions. For this, all these foreign oil companies must share with SLORC any international blame and punishment.

The gas pipeline area, which the Total Co said its representatives have thoroughly surveyed, means just the pipeline route per se and is far smaller than the actual size of the area and population affected by the ruthless inhumane measures taken by SLORC in terms of securing their gas projects.

Total Co and Unocal Corp must not be allowed to hide the real amount and seriousness of social disaster and ecological concern causing in the regions where their gas projects are located.

Both Total Co and Unocal Corp should be honest enough and must fully expose the actual human miseries and environmental problems having been caused due mainly to their gas pipeline project.

The area for the gas pipeline route, as Total Co says, may be truly sparsely populated and no population displacement should occur due to the laying of the pipeline itself. But hundreds of thousands of innocent ethnic peoples in Mon State and Tenasserim Division have already suffered the effects of the long-terms unpaid forced labour on the Ye-Tavoy Railway construction imposed by SLORC in the name of the urgently required security for the Total-Unocal gas pipeline.

"SLORC is greedy enough to kill off every Karen and Mon in the area, so that the pipeline might seem safe," said the opposition Democratic Alliance of Burma in its 27 September 1993 statement.

17.3. The End of a Village; the Beginning of Constant Fear

No Phoe Village is in Kawkareik Township with 200 households and a population of 1,150. Villagers live there peacefully. Once Tactical Comdr Tint Lwin from LID 44 forced the villagers to relocate. The village was then destroyed and the villagers were forced to move to a new site, about 3 miles from their old village, by the order of Tint Lwin.

As the villagers did not want to abandon their land farm, monastery, houses, where they lived for generation, they temporarily hid in the jungle and then settled in the old village again.

The villagers were again ordered to move on 23 June by SLORC 3rd Tactical Command. 31 August was given as the deadline. If the villagers did not abide by the order they would be shot as the area was declared a war zone under section 118 of SLORC law.

Unable to abandon the village where they have lived for generations, and as they did not have thatch roofing and other materials for construction, the villagers were afraid of losing their farms and did not wish to bear any hardship in the jungle. So they continued living in their own village, as they experienced earlier.

Then, on 10 September, a joint military column of troops from LIB 355, led by Bn Comdr Myo Kyin, troops from LIB 375, led by Bn Comdr Than Soe and troops from LIB 356 reached No Phoe Village and fired four 81mm mortar shells into the village when they found villagers were still residing there.

Because of artillery shells a house belong to Kyaw Ti Hoe was destroyed and villagers fled into the jungle as they dared not to live in their homes anymore. They have had to abandon No Phone Village and their traditional community, their children being deprived of education and stability.

Although, the villagers were faced with difficulties for their living and also with bad sanitation, they dared not return to their old village because they were afraid of being shot to death by SLORC troops under the "law" of Section 188.

The terror in No Phoe Village caused the villagers to flee away, including finally U Oaktanza, a Buddhist monk in that village, because there was no one to provide him alms [Buddhist tradition is that monks must receive food and drink from followers].

Since U Oaktanza could no longer bear the situation, and the devote monk did not want to break his vows, he went to Myawaddy and asked U Wimala, secretary of Sangha Association in Myawaddy Township, who was also abbot of Phaya Gyi Monastery, for help in order that his monastery not to be removed.

U Wimala showed him SLORC's invitation letter and order issued for Section 188 and explained that he himself could not ignore SLORC's order and told U Oaktanza it was not proper to live in the village anymore.

Thus the monk abandoned his will and stayed in a house in Htee Mu Hta Village temporarily and asked the villagers from No Phoe Village to build a temporary shelter for him. Six villagers who built the shelter were arrested by SLORC military column. Although the monk asked for their release, he was told that they will be released "when the time is ripe".

On 26 September, the monks went to office of 3rd Tactical Command in Thingannyinaung and asked the operation commander and intelligence chief to allow a religious ceremony to be held at the monastery in No Phoe Village. The proposal was turned down by the intelligence officer without deliberation. (Source: Bar Zi Tan)

[See also under "Eye-witness Accounts", interview 1, 4, 33-34, 98-99, 109, 119].

17.4. List of Incidents

Sakham Gyi Payaw Hae and Wae Htaw villages in Win Yaw Township were forced to relocate to a new site, located 1-3 miles from their old villagers.

A total of 32 farmers in Sakham Gyi Village become ruined as there was no one else to look after them. Although SLORC allowed for farming, spending the night on the farm is not prohibited. The farmers had to return on the same day. The monastery in the village was also destroyed.

Payaw Hae Village is 16 miles from Thanbyuzayat and the new sit is about three miles from the old village. As in Sakhan Gyi Village, SLORC allowed farming but prohibited residents from spending the night there.

Eight farms were ruined as there was no one to look after them. Wel Htaw and Kyon Khani villages were forced to relocate and both of them were combined and renamed as Wel Htaw Village. More than 20 farms were destroyed. A farm belonging to U Kya and another farm belong to U Maung Than were totally forbidden by SLORC from farming. [Source: Bar Zi Tan]

Many acres of land in Tamardan Village in Yesagyo township were confiscated by SLORC without compensation in order to build military headquarters for IB 256, 257 and 258. All the households in Khawekyin Village in

Monywa Township were forced to relocate from their home community by the orders of SLORC in order to build an airport. (Source: NLD-LA/ABSDF)

Dependents in the religious compounds – those who had problems with their landlords, those who became homeless because of fire, those whose houses were in the way of road extensions, those whose houses were destroyed for the extension of the roads – were all forced to relocate to Nandawun satellite town, to be set up from Kyaik Kar Lan Village to Sar Kyin Village, located in southeast of Monywa.

The new satellite town was on the peasants' farms which were forcibly bulldozed by SLORC in order to parcel out the land for those who were under eviction. Although the peasants have lost their land for more than one year, until now they have not received a proper price for their land nor any other sort of compensation.

Each household there was forced by SLORC authorities to dig three earthen pits by the side of a 100-foot-long highway to grow trees. Somebody else who cannot dig the earthen pit had to pay 50 kyats to SLORC authorities and was forced to pay a maximum of 300 kyats each in case of absence. They were also threatened from loudspeakers with promises of "effective actions" being taken for failure. [Source: ABSDF]

On 15 December SLORC LIB 406 from Nat Kyi Zin Village, Ye Phyu Township, summoned village headmen from Kyauk Hta Yan and Dhani Kyar villages, ordered them to relocate their villages in order to break any possible contact with the revolutionary forces.

In Dhani Kyar Village, there were about 120 households and when they asked SLORC troops to give them more time, as it coincided with the season for the collection of betel nuts, SLORC troops demanded from them a ransom of 120,000 kyats. Because of harassment, on 15 December the villagers had to pay the ransom as fixed by SLORC troops. [Source: CPPSM/DPNS/NLD-LA]

The following Karen villages in Mergui-Tavoy District were forcibly relocated in December 1993; villages around B'Saw Law were forced to move to Kalaing Aung, villages around Shwetapi were forced to move to Huan Gyi, and villages in the Baw Law Gyi area were forced to move to Yabu.

The villages which were forced to move are all near the expected route of a planned gas pipeline from the Gulf of Martaban to Thailand, while the relocation sites are along the SLORC controlled road near the coast. SLORC has moved several new infantry battalions into the area. [Source: KNU]

Teh Mu Plaw Village is situated where the Sittang River plains meet the eastern hills, and features a market for trading goods between the plains and hill areas. SLORC didn't want such trade to continue because the Karen army are in the hills, so in the last week of December 1993, SLORC troops burned down the whole market and the village and ordered the villagers to move into SLORC-controlled area on the plains, which the villagers did.

Mat La Daw Village had a very similar market, where Burman traders would come to sell rice and take back betelnut and other produce. In the latter half of January 1994 SLORC troops forced all 34 shops in this market to close and drove the shopkeepers to the plains. This incident illustrates not only the HRV against ethnic people, but also indiscriminately against Burmans. (Source: KNU)

(XVIII) MISCELLANEOUS

18.1. Aids Out of Control in Burma

According to experts, the AIDS situation in Burma is out of control. In July 1993, a Harvard AIDS specialist estimated that 300-400,000 people in Burma are HIV-positive.

In June 1994, SLORC's health minister Vice-Admiral Than Nyunt admitted that Burma has 261 full-blown AIDS cases and 200,000 people infected by the HIV virus. HIV infections rates among Burmese intravenous drug addicts are the highest in the world.

A recent UN International Drug Control Programme report confirmed that 74.3 per cent of all tested drug users, 9 per cent of prostitutes, 0.5 per cent of blood donors and 1.4 per cent of pregnant women in Burma are HIV-positive.

Dr Myo Thet Htoon, Director of the Ministry of Health's AIDS Prevention and Control Programme said, "We are seeing infection rates of 7 per cent to 8 per cent among patients with sexually transmitted diseases, so it shows that it is moving to the general population."

Pre-natal testing in Tachilek, in Shan State on the Thai border revealed rates as high as 12 per cent. "We are getting a lot of sex workers returning from Thailand who are HIV-positive," said the health official. Burma's AIDS problem is affecting its neighbours.

Manipur, which borders Burma, has the highest rate of AIDS in India. Over 50 per cent of heroin addicts in this exit point for Burmese opium are HIV-positive.

Yunnan, bordering the infamous Golden Triangle, also has the highest incidence of AIDS and HIV in China. According to officials, 85 per cent of HIV-positive cases among intravenous drug users and two-thirds of all HIV cases in China are from Yunnan.

Similarly, Chaing Rai has the highest rate of HIV infection and AIDS in Thailand. More than 40 per cent of all AIDS-related deaths in Thailand occur in Chiang Rai and Phayao.

Although Burmese doctors and nurses are well-qualified, Burma suffers from a long-neglected health care system where money is being taken away and used for the military government.

The AIDS programme in Burma (US\$1.2 million) is funded solely by the UN. SLORC claims that it cannot afford an AIDS programme, but yet it purchased

US\$1.2 billion worth of arms from China and continues to expand the Tatmadaw to 350,000 men under arms.

The UN cites the absence of independent NGOs in Burma as a major problem in coping with the mounting crisis. The only officially recognised “NGOs” are the Myanmar Red Cross Society, Myanmar Medical Association and Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, which are under SLORC control.

Cases where women forced into prostitution in Thailand have been tested for AIDS upon returning to Burma and are not told the test results, or are reportedly fed cyanide. Even the HIV tests themselves are impossible for average people to take, at 1,500 kyats a test. Clearly, the right to life and health is being denied by the military regime as it prioritises military matters and marginalises the welfare of the people.

This not only affects drug users but their spouses, unborn children, unsuspecting blood receivers and so on, even spilling over from and into neighbouring countries that will leave its impact for generations of Burmese to come. [Source: Burma Alert]

18.2. Forced Military Recruitment Intentionally Divides Communities

SLORC has given orders to all villages in Tavoy District that each village must send two recruits to become SLORC soldiers. Villages which cannot provide the required recruits are forced to hire itinerant workers or others to go in their place for 15,000 kyats each.

Any family which sends their son to be a SLORC soldier must thenceforth be given 30 tins of rice and 300 kyat every year by the other villagers. These families will also henceforth be free from all slave labour and forced porter assignments by SLORC troops which apply to the other villagers.

Note: There are hundreds of villages in Tavoy District. This is an increasingly widespread practice throughout Burma; villages in several states and divisions have already reported being forced to provide one recruit per month per village or per village tract for the SLORC army. This is in line with the SLORC’s continued program of expanding its army to half a million men. The fact that this expansion is continuing despite all the SLORC’s “peace talk” propaganda provides a good measure of the SLORC’s sincerity in seeking “peace” and transition to civilian government.

In every ceasefire to date, the SLORC has followed the agreement by immediately launching a massive increase in troop concentrations in the ceasefire areas in order to massively out-gun the opposition.

SLORC then proceeds to progressively break the terms of the “ceasefire” agreement, knowing that retaliation is almost impossible, until the opposition group is divided and crushed. Even should the opposition group shoot back, the SLORC can say, “They broke the ceasefire.”

This appears to be their strategy in Tenasserim Division. By forcing Karen villages to provide SLORC recruits, they also achieve their aim of dividing villages and turning people against each other.

On 23 June, troops from SLORC IB 73 went through villages in Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District, demanding eight people from each village as forced conscripts for the army. Villages which were unable or unwilling to provide the conscripts were forced to pay 3,000 kyats for each conscript they did not provide.

18.3. Dacoits in and out of Uniform

In November 1993, Captain Soe Naing and some of his troops from IB 73 came to a small shop in Kyaun Gone Village, Kyauk Kyi Township, out of uniform and dressed as highway robbers, each carrying a carbine rifle. They stole money from the shop at gunpoint. Then some other soldiers from IB 73 arrived in uniform and pretended to attack the "bandits", opening fire into the air above the heads of Capt Soe Naing and the others.

The villagers were frightened by the automatic rifle fire and all of them fled the village, after which the two groups of soldiers proceeded to go through the village looting everything valuable they could find.

18.4. SLORC And Germ Warfare In Monland

On 28 January, SLORC planes passed over the headquarters area of the NMSP and sprayed a yellow powder which spread over the entire area. The NMSP said this has happened before but the effects are not clear as no proper analysis has ever been carried out, and no one knows exactly what SLORC is spraying.

In the last eight months of 1993, a few days after SLORC planes flew over Karen territory and dropped mysterious "radiosonde", a disease like cholera suddenly broke out in two different areas causing the deaths of hundreds of people.

One of the affected areas is Thaton District where SLORC's notorious LID 99 unsuccessfully used terror two years ago to herd the entire population into camps or drive them out of the area. The disease is now helping that to happen.

18.5. Karenland Contaminated

Baroness Caroline Cox, Deputy Speaker of Britain's House of Lords, led a team including tropical disease expert Dr Martin Panter into Karen-held territory in Burma in November to investigate allegations of germ warfare. A device suspected to have been used to deliver the substance, which caused cholera-like symptoms, was taken to London for analysis.

An eight-page report by the Baroness, a board member of Christian Solidarity, stated that there is "very strong circumstantial evidence" that SLORC used germ warfare.

“Villagers gave consistent, detailed accounts of direct association between the dropping of these devices and the onset of the epidemics.”

Baroness Cox also noted that immediately after the boxes were dropped, SLORC troops stopped going into the areas and barred traders from entering the areas, an indication that they knew what had been dropped.

Dr Panter, a member of Christian Solidarity Australia, said that SLORC personnel were in Germany last year for germ warfare training. He said that the devices which are manufactured in Philadelphia and are normally used in meteorological work could be modified. Once dropped from an aircraft, small detonations could be programmed to burst the balloons attached to the device, showering the area below with the germs.

Canada also tested one of the devices but the results were “inconclusive”. The Canadians say that the cholera-like symptoms reported by the villagers seem to indicate a new strain of cholera not previously known in Burma. [Source: Burma Alert]

18.6. Parachutes, Boxes, Disease

On August 12, 1993 in the middle of the night, villagers in a large part of the Donthami and Yunzalin river watersheds (between the Bilin and Salween Rivers, in Thaton and Mudraw [Papun] districts) heard SLORC planes fly low over their areas.

The planes dropped dozens, maybe scores (the number is unknown) of strange devices consisting of a 2-metre parachute with a "white box" and one or two balloons hanging underneath. The next morning the villagers started finding the devices in forests and fields. SLORC troops in the area never tried to recover the devices.

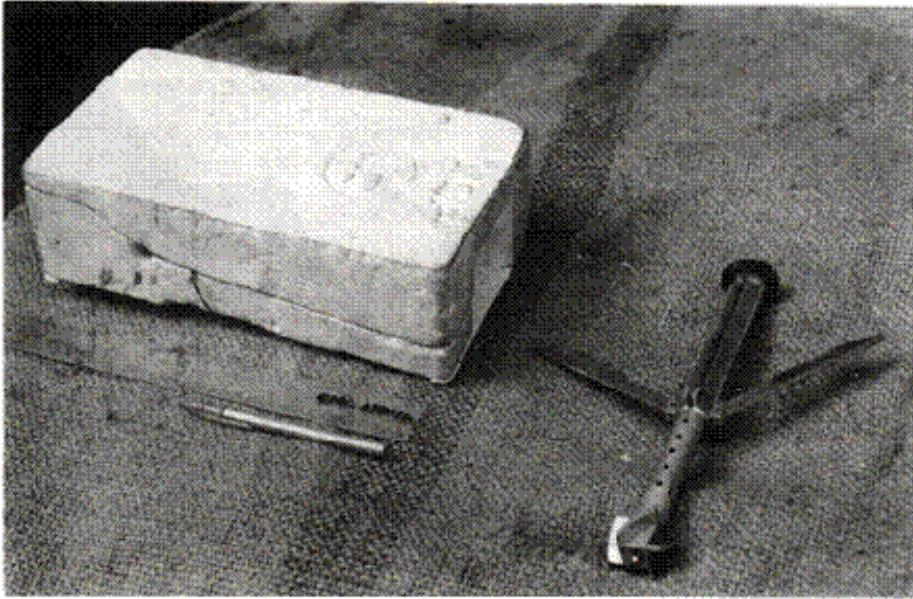
Between three days and two weeks later, villagers in the drop area and some areas downriver started getting sick with a disease resembling cholera or shigella. The symptoms were very serious diarrhoea with faeces "like rice water", in some cases combined with watery vomiting, bringing death by severe dehydration within one to two days; as a Karen medic described it, "You go to the toilet three times, then you're dead."

Other symptoms reported include nausea, dizziness, in some cases head and body aches, and some found that if they pinched their skin and released it, the flesh stayed pinched out.

The disease was very communicable and spread very rapidly until it covered most of Bilin Township, made worse by the fact that villages in the area have no sanitation and villagers generally just use the forest instead of a toilet or latrine.

Generally it only attacked adults over 15 – many families were entirely wiped out except for one or two of the youngest children. Up to this time, the entire area involved had reported a few deaths per month from dysentery.

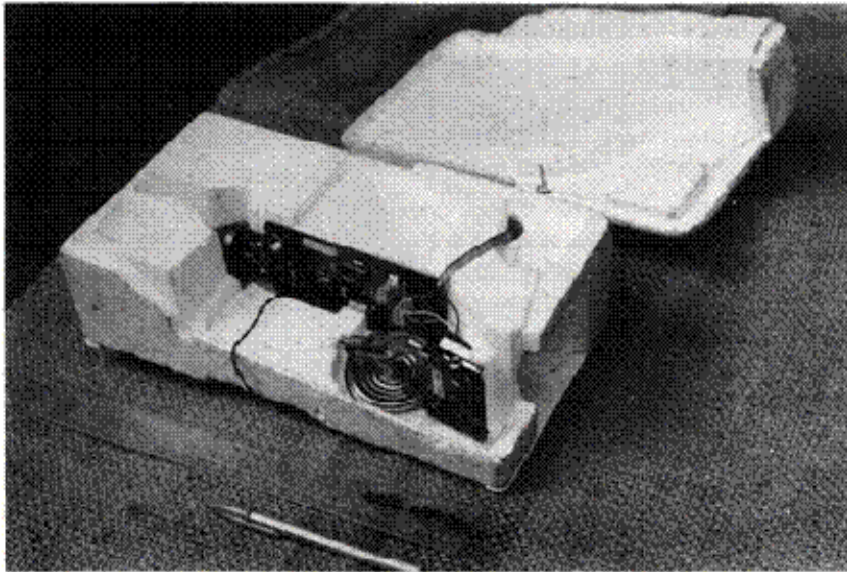
Suddenly in September 1993, village leaders in the area reported 185 deaths



*"White box" which was dropped and RPG-7 tail assembly which was found attached.
(photo: KHRG)*



Parachute. (photo: KHRG)



Box with lid removed. (photo: KHRG)

in one month from this disease. The KNU responded by sending medical teams into the area several times. They managed to save many using dextrose-saline intravenous drips combined with tetracycline (in at least one case they saved a woman from the brink of death with 11 successive 500ml drips), but the death toll is now over 300.

By December it appeared that the disease had abated in most areas, although a few cases are still being reported. Deaths have now been reported far from the original disease area in the major village of Ka Ma Maung on the Salween River, under SLORC control. SLORC authorities have quarantined several villages in the area.

A few cases have also been reported closer to the Thai border, and with the regular movement of Karen civilians it could easily spread across the border into Thailand. A new outbreak of diarrhoea, possibly the same disease, has just occurred in March just west of the Salween River where it forms the Thai border east of Papun.

Since the start of 1994, an epidemic of a very similar or identical disease has broken out about 100 km further south in Dta Greh (Burmese: Pain Kyone) Township, between Hlaing Bwe Town and the Dawna Range in Pa-an District. This area is very close to Thailand but is isolated by the Dawna Range at the border.

Statistics on this outbreak are not available yet. A trader from the area recently reported that "SLORC planes came two or three times, flying not too high at night. They dropped things by parachute, one was near Pwe Taw Village.

In the morning the villagers found it. It had four strings, a very good sheet of material, a foam box and a broken balloon. In the foam box there was something like a bell, some wire and pieces like radio parts.

One villager took off the sheet and kept it. After that, many of the villagers got diarrhoea, and they couldn't cure it because medicines and IV drips are very expensive and hard to get, so many people died of diarrhoea.

An average of six or seven people died in each village, and over 10 people died in my village. More middle-aged people died than children.

"The planes dropped six or seven parachutes around Tha Mo and Pay Hta, which are big villages, but I only saw two parachutes myself.", said a villager.

The area where he claims the drop occurred is exactly where the disease was then occurring. There could also have been human transmission of the disease from the original area to the north.

The disease is curable with basic medicines, but the villagers in the target area have no access to such medicines; since 1992, the SLORC has sent LID 99 into the Donthami-Yunzalin area with specific orders to drive all villagers in this area into camps or out of the area.

Villagers now affected further south in Pa'an District have suffered similar tactics. In the process they have been terrorised, stripped of all money and belongings, and thousands have been displaced or have fled to refugee camps in Thailand.

Furthermore, a Karen medic who operates in the area reports that the SLORC actively blocks any medicine reaching the area from towns in Burma as part of their program to make sure no supplies can reach opposition forces. Some villagers in the area have been executed when caught with supplies of basic medicines.

Villagers in the Donthami-Yunzalin area say they have never heard of such an epidemic, not even in their grandparents' time. They also say that as soon as the first people began getting sick, SLORC troops stopped entering all villages in the area and in most cases didn't even leave their camps, which is also unprecedented.

This is a Brown Area, where both SLORC and Karen troops operate, and the SLORC has always entered these villages regularly to capture porters and loot food and belongings.

Villagers who were used to having to rotate weekly shifts of slave labour maintaining SLORC army camps were suddenly forbidden from entering those camps. One group of SLORC troops came near a village, but stayed in the monastery outside the village. While all the villagers were getting the disease, only the SLORC troops and the monks remained healthy.

In Laykay, a large village with a large SLORC army camp, villagers were forbidden from entering the camp and soldiers were forbidden to leave. However, the villagers learned that the soldiers in the camp had been "vaccinated" (to use their word) against the disease.

In Yo Klah, where there is also a SLORC camp right in the village, villagers were forbidden to enter the camp but soldiers came into the village to order villagers to keep their food clean and boil all drinking water, and they forced the

villagers to dig latrines for themselves at gunpoint. However, they did not go to any other villages to do this. (Source: KHRG)

18.7. A Description Of Death

Villagers have found many of the air-dropped devices in the Donthami-Yunzalin area. The KNU has obtained a number of them, the Karen Human Rights Group has obtained three, and others have obtained several more.

They consist of a clear plastic parachute two metres in diameter with four nylon suspension lines holding a "white box" and one or two balloons. Unfortunately, none of the balloons have been recovered – villagers report that in every case, the balloons have been broken when found.

The "white box" consists of a thick white styrofoam box 31.5 cm x 17 cm x 10 cm deep complete with formed styrofoam lid. Inside, in specially moulded slots, are a 6.2-cm-diameter pressure-sensing anode connected to a swinging arm on a gauge, a 13 x 6 cm circuit board, and a small microwave transmitter.

The unit is powered by small battery which fits in a slot in the bottom, and there are also one or two slots which are empty on the units we have recovered. The entire units, as indicated by printing on the swinging-arm gauge, a logo on the outside of the styrofoam box, and the battery unit, were made by "Viz Manufacturing Co., 335 East Price St., Philadelphia Pennsylvania 19144-5782, USA – Phone 215-844-2626, Telex 710-670-2626, Fax 215-844-4410".

The devices appear to be typical commercially available "radiosondes", manufactured to be sent up under weather balloons. This is supported by the plastic wrapping for the battery, which is labelled "Activation Instructions for Radiosonde Battery".

The battery itself is a disposable chemical unit 6cm x 6cm x 4cm thick, made up of clear plastic tightly wrapped around layers of wax, chemical, and something like cardboard, all packaged in a white plastic bag with printed instructions.

It is activated by removing the plastic bag, immersing it in water, shaking off the excess, then connecting the power connector, putting it back in the plastic bag and inserting it in the slot in the radiosonde box.

The battery we have recovered is printed with the date January 2, 1992, and other information including "BATTERY, RADIOSONDE. NSN-6135-01-054-2098. VIZ 3500-100".

On one unit, the swinging-arm device has serial number 503-2288 stuck on it, and the circuit board has serial number 0728868. Another unit has serial number 617-1014 on the swinging-arm device, and 0728904 on the circuit board.

The units also bear a small stick-on computer-printed label on the box bottom including printing such as "1392-521, CT 6/2535", which would imply that they passed through Thailand, as the year 1992 was the year 2535 on the Thai calendar.

Radiosondes are meant to be sent up under weather balloons, not dropped out of planes with parachutes. Unlike all the radiosonde equipment, which is clearly marked with the VIZ name and logo, the parachutes have no markings and appear to have been rigged up by SLORC for this special purpose.

They consist of a circular sheet of clear "crinkly" plastic, similar to that used to make ordinary plastic bags. The sheet has been cut to a diameter of 2 metres, and at least part of the cutting appears to have been done roughly with hand scissors. The lines were held on with ordinary office-type staples. There are also some other features which may have been added by SLORC. One unit was recovered with a 27-cm-long metal device with four radial folding fins attached to it, which fold out to a diameter of 28cm – this appears to be the tail assembly from an RPG-7 rocket-propelled grenade shell, and was probably attached to make the unit descend vertically and at a proper rate; it would not work as an antenna for microwave transmission.

Each pressure-sensing device has a spot of paint on it which appears to have been hastily hand-applied; some units are marked with blue paint, some with red. Each unit also has a three-wired cable attached to the circuit board which goes to a slot in the bottom of the box, where there is a plastic connector. Here the cable is soldered to a piece of apparently standard two-wired household power cord about 20-cm-long.

In every case, at the other end of this cord about half a centimetre of the wires have been stripped and soldered, but they are just hanging free outside the box, not connected to anything. This may have something to do with the balloons, none of which were recovered because the villagers said in every case that the balloons were broken and destroyed when found.

Villagers who found one unit hanging from a tree said that the broken balloon was hanging down and a foul-smelling "black-yellow-green" liquid was dripping from it. Other villagers who took devices home said they later destroyed them because they were giving off a "foul smell".

A Karen military column which went to villages to retrieve the devices reported that in several cases, they were told that the villager who had retrieved the device had later died of the disease, so the villagers had destroyed it.

While these devices appear to have been originally manufactured for use under weather balloons, knowledgeable sources indicate that throwing them out of low-flying aeroplanes would be virtually useless for weather applications. Also, the short length of the microwave transmitter antenna indicates a very high frequency transmission, possibly in the gigahertz range, which would only be receivable along a straight "line of sight".

This would make sense for a weather balloon, which sends signals down to earth from heights up to **100,000** feet, but would be useless for transmitting from the ground where there are some hills and ground cover as in the drop area.

The transmission also appears to be quite low powered because the transistor on the circuit board does not even have a heat sink. These limitations would imply

that the signals may only be receivable from the planes which dropped the devices, or that the SLORC was not particularly interested in the signal anyway.

Several possibilities are under consideration. Firstly, there may be no relationship between the SLORC air-drops and the epidemic. However, if this is the case, why did SLORC troops stop entering the area so quickly, which they have never done before, and what was the purpose of the air drops?

Dropping such devices from low-flying planes by night would have very limited usefulness for meteorology, and the SLORC has no reason to be studying the weather in the drop area anyway. The weather there is very stable and predictable, generally not varying for months at a time.

Perhaps the devices are sensitive enough to pick up and transmit vibrations which would indicate Karen troop movements, similar to devices used by American forces in Vietnam; however, on first inspection the devices do not appear to have this capability, they could probably not transmit for very long on their batteries, and many more of them would have to be dropped to be very effective for this purpose.

The devices could act as beacons which are dropped on targets, then transmit a signal which guides in a guided weapon, but no weapons were fired on the area. Another possibility is that the barometric pressure readings could be used to help calibrate the SLORC's Carl Gustav Swedish rockets and other air-exploding shells to function properly in local areas.

However, much of the drop area is only seldom penetrated by Karen troops, and in the areas where Karen troops do operate, they use guerrilla tactics, based on ambush and quick retreat. There are very few head-on battles which would involve the heavy use of such shells.

Another possibility is that the barometric readings could help the SLORC predict the effectiveness of future strikes with chemical or bacteriological agents, chemical defoliants, or napalm. Advice from military experts is needed to properly assess these possibilities.

In any case, an unexplained SLORC air-drop just days before the outbreak of a once-in-a-century epidemic in the same area would seem to be quite an incredible coincidence.

The other possibility is that there is a connection between the SLORC air-drop and the epidemic. If so, how did the mysterious devices cause the disease? The balloons (which have not been recovered and tested) could have contained the bacteriological agent, or some other device could have been attached, which would ideally have dispersed the agent while the device was still in the air.

The microwave transmission could be used as a "homing signal" so that Strategic Headquarters could map the dispersal of the agent. The barometric pressure readings might be useful as well in estimating its dispersal, or the SLORC may not have been interested in the barometric information, only using meteorological devices because they can be bought without suspicion and if found people will assume they have been used for meteorological applications.

Unfortunately, toxicologists say that it is very unlikely that they could recover any trace of the disease off the devices themselves this long after the fact. Another possibility is that the devices did not deliver the agent, but were only used to map its dispersal while the agent itself was sprayed from the planes by some other means. There has been no such epidemic in generations, and the drop area corresponds to the disease area.

18.8. Other Mysterious Epidemics Following Balloon Drops

In 1985 in the Baw Kloh area of southern Burma's Tenasserim Division, at least one balloon attached to a packet of "powder" was dropped by a Burmese military plane.

Just afterward, a cholera epidemic began in the area which lasted through the entire rainy season. Almost all villagers got sick, though only 10 to 20 reportedly died. Only one balloon was retrieved, and no proper analysis was done.

In mid-1993 an identical device was recovered in forest less than 10 kilometres west of Manerplaw, across the Salween river from the Meh Bpa area, where the heaviest fighting occurred in the SLORC's 1992 offensive against Manerplaw.

During that offensive SLORC bomber aircraft were over the area every day, but they have not been back since. It is not known when this device was dropped. The serial number on the gauge is 607-1019, and on the circuit board 0762537. A UPC code sticker on the bottom reads "Prod-Seq # 012907C". The device is code-marked with blue paint.

18.9. Other Cases Of Chemical Weapons Used By SLORC

In the 1992 offensive against Manerplaw, several Karen soldiers were wounded on different occasions by air attacks at frontline positions with suspected chemical weapons. They suffered burns and rashes which were still spreading over their bodies months later, and partial or complete loss of mobility in various parts of the body with no apparent cause.

In Kachin State the same year, the Kachin Independence Organisation claimed that chemical shells were being used against them, and that they had intercepted messages telling SLORC frontline commanders to withdraw several hundred metres because SLORC planes were about to drop "chemical weapon shells".

Well-placed and reliable sources indicate that the SLORC has its own facilities for manufacturing mustard gas and possibly other chemical warfare agents, built with the assistance of a west German firm.

In the Bundestag (German parliament) on 24 September 1991, the German government admitted that between 1978 and 1989, a total of 15 Burma Army officers received "ABC Protection" training from the Bundeswehr (German Army) at Sonthofen Military Academy in west Germany. ABC stands for Atomic/Bacteriological/Chemical)

When asked if similar training also occurred in East Germany, the government answered, "The Federal Government does not have any knowledge about Burmese citizens also being trained in handling ABC warfare agents by the former NVA [Nationale Volksarmee, the East German armed forces]".

It is interesting that the Burma Army, with no external enemies, would be interested in "protecting" themselves against these types of warfare. The German government claimed that this was part of a program offered to many Third World countries; the list of countries which benefited includes several which have close ties with German arms manufacturer Fritz Werner, such as Sudan, where Fritz Werner built a military plant.

In Burma, Fritz Werner established the entire arms and munitions manufacturing industry under the Ne Win regime, which has since been nationalised by SLORC.

Fritz Werner has also built "fertiliser" and "bottling" factories in Burma for the SLORC, all of which are highly secure locations. In the year 1984 West Germany exported 16.1 million marks worth of chemical pre-products to Burma, and 7.5 million marks worth of chemical end products. We are now seeking further information on all of these points.

18.10 In Conclusion

Right now, while the SLORC is trying to convince the world that it wants to negotiate "peace", and while it sends delegations worldwide and hires public relations firms in a desperate attempt to improve its international image, why would it engage in an act of bacteriological warfare which would bring it unprecedented international condemnation and probably even force the UN Security Council into action? This is a difficult question to answer, but not so difficult if one understands the SLORC mentality.

If the SLORC really wants to improve its international image, why doesn't it simply decrease the grotesque level of human rights abuses it perpetrates in ethnic areas? This would also have the effect of making villagers less supportive of opposition groups.

However, the SLORC is now actually stepping up its human rights abuses, possibly as a form of threat to opposition groups that they had better agree to negotiate. The SLORC is now so confident of its power and of the support of its neighbouring allies that it feels it can do anything it likes within the country, as long as it makes the right statements overseas.

With the news blackout it maintains over most of the country, it is confident that none of its activities in remote areas, like the area in question, can be proven. Even when they are proven, the SLORC simply claims that the



Karen soldiers showing white phosphorus burns from SLORC's final assault on Kawmoora on 21 Feb 1995. SLORC used siege mortars, white phosphorus shells and chemical gas shells that drove the Karen from their positions.



Karen soldiers showing white phosphorus burns from SLORC's final assault on Kawmoora on 21 Feb 1995. SLORC used siege mortars, white phosphorus shells and chemical gas shells that drove the Karen from their positions.

information is "propaganda by terrorist groups" and flatly denies any human rights abuses exist at all, confident that no foreign governments will take action against them.

They probably would not even realise that to use bacteriological warfare is to step across the line, putting themselves in the spotlight and forcing foreign countries to respond.

The epidemic area is the same area where the SLORC has sent fresh combat troops since 1992, particularly the notorious LID 99, to attempt to drive all villagers into controlled camps or out of the area so that Karen troops cannot operate.

Much of the region has already been declared a free-fire zone where any villagers seen are shot on sight. Many have fled the area, but many more remain, hidden in the forests or in villages, and the Karen Army continues to operate. SLORC may therefore be using disease as a last resort to clear out the area's population by killing some and forcing the rest to flee the spreading disease. This could also be an experimental operation in preparation for more widespread use of bacteriological agents, possibly against other remote areas or the Manerplaw area.

Although other diseases such as anthrax tend to be generally preferred for bacteriological warfare, there are also reasons for the SLORC to choose a disease approximating cholera or severe dysentery instead. An outbreak of a non-native disease like anthrax would immediately be extremely suspicious, and much easier to trace back to the SLORC, whereas diseases like cholera and dysentery already exist in the region.

By using a disease which is fairly easy to treat, they can protect their own soldiers against it quite easily, at the same time knowing that the villagers will suffer severely because they have no access to the required medicines. The disease does not have to kill them all, only force them out of the area from fear of it.

However, by forcing villagers to move the SLORC is causing itself problems now, as evidenced by the fact that the disease has now spread to other areas well under their control like Ka Ma Maung, and could spread further into Burma. It is also spreading toward the Thai border, and given the general flow of Karen refugees and others across the borders, it could easily spread to rural areas of Thailand.

Diseases and bacteriological warfare have no respect for borders, and if the SLORC is responsible for this epidemic then this strategy of theirs has the potential to pose a major regional threat. It is imperative that foreign governments and the UN see that such a threat is not realised. [Source: KHRG]

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Note: Names of people and places have, in some cases, been withheld or changed when deemed necessary to protect the victims, their families or our information sources; however, the original source documentation contains complete information. While some events presented here may have occurred in 1993 or earlier, they were first able to be recorded in 1994 and, if not included in this first annual report on human rights violations in Burma, would remain unknown to the general public. Therefore we have included some data from previous years.

The following keywords describing human rights violations (HRV) have been used for indexing and cross-referencing the reports, and can be found at the beginning of each interview.

Assembly	-	Freedom of assembly and association
Child	-	Rights of the child
Detention	-	Arbitrary detention and enforced or involuntary disappearances
Displacement	-	Internally displaced persons
Execution	-	Extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions
Forced Labour	-	Forced labour and slavery
Livelihood	-	Rights of livelihood (i.e. pillaging, extortion)
Minorities	-	Protection of minorities
Misc	-	Miscellaneous
Movement	-	Freedom of movement
Opinion	-	Freedom of opinion and expression
Refugees	-	Situation of refugees
Religion	-	Freedom of belief
Relocation	-	Forced relocation
Repatriation	-	Forced repatriation
Slavery	-	Forced labour and slavery (i.e. portering)
Torture	-	Torture and other cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment
Women	-	Discrimination and violations against women

Interview: 1 - HRV: Detention, Displacement, Livelihood, Refugees, Relocation, Slavery

Name: Nai Win Nai
 Sex: Male
 Age: 42
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with 7 children (age 3 to 20)
 Address: Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State
 Interviewed: 5-7 August 1994

[Nai Win Nai was taken as a human shield by the troops on the way from Plat Hon Pai to Halockhani.]

I left my village almost 20 years ago because I couldn't stand the oppression of the government. They took porters. My father was making tobacco pipes for a living. When they came to take porters he tried to run away, they shot him and he died. That's why we left – we didn't want to stay there anymore. We went to Three Pagodas Pass. On the Mon side of the border [Three Pagodas Pass marks the border with Thailand; it was controlled by the Mon and Karen governments until SLORC occupied it in 1989-90]. Then 6 years ago the Burmese troops were coming often and attacking there, so we crossed to Thailand.

At first we didn't go to a refugee camp, but then the Thais were arresting many people and we were afraid, so we went to Loh Loe [refugee camp]. We were there for one-and-a-half years, then last year we moved to Halockhani. First we lived on the Thai side of Halockhani. Then we had to move to the Burmese side when the Thai authorities told the refugees to move to the Burmese side of the border, so we went to stay in Plat Hon Pai.

On 21 July we were preparing the Buddhist celebration for the full moon so we were making various kinds of cakes to offer to the monks in the monastery. Then the Burmese troops came. At first we weren't afraid – we thought they wouldn't make any trouble so we stayed quiet. At first they stayed all around just outside the village, but then they came in and went house to house arresting the men. They arrested 47 men but no women.

The troops ordered the men to go to Halockhani with them. It was 7:30 a.m. and there were about 300 troops. They told us we would have to show them the houses of the medics and the school teacher in Halockhani. We didn't want to do that because we were afraid they'd make trouble for the medics and the school teacher. Before we left I saw soldiers beating the headman of Plat Hon Pai.

On the way through the village we had to walk with one of us on the left and one on the right of each soldier [not all the soldiers went to Halockhani. Plat Hon Pai is narrow and about 1 km. long along a wide pathway]. After that the path becomes narrow and we had to walk in single file. They put eight refugees ahead of them as a cover, and these eight men ran away. The soldiers were ordered to shoot them but they weren't hit because they could hide behind the trees and rocks. The soldiers tried to run after them but they got away to warn the people in Halockhani [the path runs through thick jungle].

I don't know where the Burmese soldiers met the Mon soldiers, I only heard some shootings, then the Burmese soldiers shot back. I don't know who shot first. When we heard the shootings we ran away. We ran through the forest to a hill close to Plat Hon Pai, and we could see the village. We saw the soldiers coming back to Plat Hon Pai. Some soldiers made the women leave the village and didn't allow them to take anything from their houses. Then they burned the houses. I saw it.

First they looked inside and if they saw anything good they took it, then they set all the houses in the whole village on fire. Some houses only got partly burnt,

and some burned until only the wooden posts were left. [Actually some houses set apart from the rest of the village were not set on fire.] We were afraid to go back so we slept on the hill. Then the next morning we went to the monastery and found most of the women and children there. The monastery was the only building the soldiers didn't burn. My wife and children had slept there together with most of the women, some old men and one monk.

The soldiers left a half hour after they had burned the houses. With them there were some people whose hands tied up behind their backs with rope, and they had to carry the soldiers' things walking in the middle of the column, one soldier after each villager. Before they left, the Burmese soldiers told the women, "Within three days, everybody has to leave this village." They said if they see anyone there after that, they would kill us. We fled and came here. Sometimes we go back to our old village just to pick up some vegetables and then come back. Our house was totally burned. We lost everything. The soldiers stopped my wife from bringing anything with her.

When we got here we had to make a shelter for the family, but we didn't finish the first day so we just put some bamboo on the ground to sleep on. We only had blankets for shelter, and it was raining. Five of our children were with us. Two days later we got some shelter. Other people cared for us because we'd lost everything. I hope we can stay here because we're afraid to go back to Plat Hon Pai or Halockhani, but I don't know if we'll be allowed to stay here.

We're afraid because the Burmese soldiers said they would come back after three days and kill anyone they see, and I think they might do it. If we go back we'll have problems. I think they attacked because they think Mon soldiers might pass through the camp sometimes. I didn't see any Mon soldiers, but it's possible, so they don't want this camp to be set up. In Plat Hon Pai they said, "All of you can go stay at Three Pagodas Pass. We don't want to see you here anymore. " I think maybe they don't like it that we're in a refugee camp. They want us to stay under their control.

Interview: 2 - HRV: Refugees, Slavery, Torture

Name: Nai Tin Shwe
 Sex: Male
 Age: 18
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single; Father, Nai Win Nai (see related interview 1)
 Address: Thanbyuzayat, Township, Mon State
 Interviewed: 5-7 August 1994

[Nai Tin Shwe was taken as a human shield along with his father (see above).]

I was born in Thanbyuzayat Township, in the village of my father. When we were living in Three Pagodas Pass I tried to go to school. But we had to run away. I began but we had to run, then began again, had to run again, and so on, so I never

got any education. Then when we got to a refugee camp [Loh Loe] I didn't go to school. I was too ashamed because I was much older than the other children.

When the Burmese soldiers arrived at Plat Hon Pai they went to see the section leader and he said to the villagers, "The Burmese troops have come but there shouldn't be any problem, so don't run", so all the people stayed quietly. The troops surrounded the village because they didn't want anyone to run away, then they went to the houses one by one. They didn't beat me but they beat and kicked some people because they didn't come out quickly enough.

I was in the street when the soldiers arrested me. A soldier grabbed my hand and took me to the school. I saw my father there – he'd been arrested at home. The soldiers took us with them towards Halockhani. On the way they kicked me because I wasn't walking fast enough and I fell and hurt my knee. I was near my father, and when we heard the shooting I ran away together with him, but other people further back in the line didn't escape. They were forced to return to Plat Hon Pai with the soldiers.

Interview: 3 - HRV: Livelihood, Slavery, Torture

Name: Nai San Lin
 Sex: Male
 Age: 20
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single; eldest son of Nai Win Nai (see related interview 1)
 Address: Thanzyuzayat Township, Mon State
 Interviewed: 5-7 August 1994

[Nai Son Lin was conscripted as a porter, first to Halockhani and then on the subsequent trip to Ye.]

The soldiers arrived at Plat Hon Pai on 21 July at about 7:30 a.m. Burmese time. I was at home. When they arrived at our house. 10 soldiers stayed there. They cooked and ate inside our house. They ate all our rice and curry, and all the cakes we had prepared to send to the monastery for the Buddhist festival. Then another group of soldiers arrived and arrested my father and my uncle. They also took away my brother from the house while he was on the way to see his friend. About five minutes after they took away my father and uncle, the same group came back to arrest me. They didn't say anything. First they pointed their guns at me and then kicked me twice to frighten me. I was sitting down so they kicked me in the back with their big boots and it hurt afterwards. Then they told me to go with them so I went. My mother and some of my younger brothers and sisters were there, but they didn't dare say anything because they were afraid.

They took me to the school and on the way one soldier kicked me, put a gun in my back and asked me about weapons in the village. I saw my father and brother at the school just for a short time, then they took me with them to walk across the village and then on towards Halockhani. The soldiers had forced more than 100 people from Burma into portering. I think about a third of the soldiers and half of

the porters were walking toward Halockhani. The porters had to carry bullets for the troops. The soldiers put many refugees in front of them. I was behind. I had to carry about 30 kg of bullets. None of the other refugees had to carry loads, only me, because one of the porters from Burma couldn't carry his load so they left him in Plat Hon Pai and gave it to me.

Some of the refugees in the front could escape but I couldn't because there were always soldiers in front of me and behind me. The line was very long. I think there must have been about 60 refugees with them. When some of the people in front escaped, the soldiers asked the commander for authorisation to shoot, and the commander authorised it. After that, people stopped escaping. They tried to shoot at some of the people who escaped at first but they all got away. Along the way they kicked me in my thighs at four different times. If I walked too fast they kicked me, and if I walked too slow they kicked me too.

Then there was fighting. There were three or four shots from the other side – I think it was Mon soldiers. The Burmese troops started shooting back with 60mm mortars, then with their guns [G-3/G-4 assault rifles]. They told us to squat down on the path. The fighting lasted five or 10 minutes. I saw one Burmese soldier was hit at the hip and wounded. He was about 15 metres in front of me. They put a dressing on his wound right there, then they carried him back with them. After the fighting we went back to Plat Hon Pai.

When we got to the village they ordered me keep carrying the ammunition instead of the porter from Burma. Then the soldiers behind us burned down the houses. The first house they burnt was our house. They burned all our 200 tins of paddy, and all our belongings. They went to each house and told all the people to get out, then put kerosene on the house and burned it. They said to the people, "If you build a new house, we'll burn it again", and they said they would come back. They burned all the houses except some which are far from the road. Some were burned and completely, some only partly.

I saw six refugees handcuffed together in three pairs. They also arrested other people along the road and tied them up with rope, maybe because some had escaped. Some other people had to carry loads too and I heard that some people were tied with rope around their necks, but I couldn't see it because there were so many people around. Even the people in handcuffs had to carry big bags. I saw the section leader there and some others I didn't know because they might have been new people from Loh Loe. After we left the village I didn't see them anymore because I was among the porters from Burma.

We left Plat Hon Pai about 1 p.m. We got to Chaung Zone at about 6 p.m. and slept there. Then next day the soldiers put a rope across the [Krain Thauung] river and we had to swim across holding onto the rope, carrying our loads. I sank with my load, and some villagers from Chaung Zone saved me. When I finally got to the riverbank, the soldiers were pointing their guns at me and said, "If you lose your load, I'll shoot you".

Then when I tried to stand up, my load almost fell in the river. Along the way every one of us was beaten because the soldiers were in a hurry. Sometimes they

kicked me, sometimes they beat me with their guns. About 7 p.m. on the day we crossed the river there was fighting with the soldiers way in front [this was at Blad Kapow]. When it started, the soldiers ordered us to run to get to the battle. It took us about 20 minutes because our line was so long, and when we got there the fighting was already finished.

We stopped there and slept on the path. I was only wearing a thin T-shirt and shorts and it was raining continuously, so I asked the soldiers for a plastic sheet to cover myself at night but they didn't give me anything. We couldn't sleep, so we sat all night long. There were a lot of mosquitoes and other insects. But I wasn't alone; many of us were all sitting together.

The day we left Plat Hon Pai we weren't given any food – not until the day after at 1 p.m. After that we were given a small amount of rice once a day and nothing else. The soldiers were going to Ye Town. The next day after the first battle, there was more fighting [near Kyat Thaing]. I was at the back of the group and when the soldiers heard the fighting, they ran to get there quickly. They left us alone, so we dropped our loads and ran away. I think all the porters got away at the same time.

After I escaped, I tried to find the way back but I was alone and I didn't know the way. One Burmese porter was with me, but he went back to Burma and I was alone. I didn't eat for four days, I couldn't find anyone and I had nothing with me. I survived on banana flowers. I met one Burmese man who was going back to Burma. He couldn't walk very well and I was too afraid to talk to him. Later I met one IDC person who [had been deported from Thailand and] was going back to Burma. Then I met two hunters. They gave me some food and I walked with them until I found my way. Then it took me one more day to walk here. I don't know why the Burmese attacked Plat Hon Pai. I'm afraid to go back.

Interview: 4 - HRV: Livelihood, Refugees, Relocation, Slavery, Torture

Name: Nai Chan
Sex: Male
Age: 38
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 1 child (age 5)
Address: Mon State
Interviewed: 5-7 August 1994

[Nai Chan is the section leader of Plat Hon Pai section of Halockhani Camp.]

I used to live at Loh Loe. I'd lived on the Thai side of the border for 20 years. Now I've been section leader of Plat Hon Pai for four months. On 20 June at midnight, two men came to make trouble at a hut in a rice field at Plat Hon Pai. It was dark so nobody knew they were soldiers. The farmer in the hut shot at them. We don't know who shot first, but I think the farmer shot first because he thought

they were robbers. The farmer was wounded but not seriously, and he went straight to hospital.

The next day we found the dead body of one soldier about 60 feet from the hut. Some of the farmer's friends said there were two soldiers who came, but I don't know for sure because the hut was away from the village. Then SLORC troops came to attack Halockhani. They didn't send any message or warning. It was only when they arrived on 21 July that they asked us for guns.

They arrived at about 8 am and asked some refugees, "Where is the headman of the village?" The people came to inform me that the Burmese troops wanted to see me. They were afraid of the troops and I was worried for my villagers. So I followed immediately. I met them 15 minutes after they arrived. There were about 300 of them from IB 62. They asked me if I was the chairman of the village and I said yes. Then they put me in handcuffs. Just after me, they arrested three others and handcuffed us together in pairs, then took photos of the four of us.

After that they said to me, "In this village you have a gun." I told them we only had some hunting guns to protect us. They said, "We don't believe you. One month ago one of our soldiers was killed in this village. Where is his gun?" I said I didn't know and I said, "What if I say 'Yes' but I really don't know, what will happen to me?" Then they started beating me and kept asking for the gun. They kicked me, punched me, slapped me, beat me with a gun on my chest and knees, and burnt me with a burning cheroot. I still have the scars of the cheroot burns [Nai Chan has 6 very visible burn scars]. They beat me on the chest and all over my body, but I told them I didn't know. They slapped and hurt my eye with their fingernails, and it didn't swell much but even now I can't see clearly.

The other three men were beaten more seriously than me. They put a green plastic sheet over their heads and tied it around their necks so they couldn't breathe, then they interrogated them again. They asked them, "Are you Mon soldiers?" They said, "No, we're only villagers", and the soldiers stabbed with a knife into their eyes. After they beat us, they kept us in a house and guarded us. Then they brought in another person they'd arrested.

It was another group of soldiers who took the refugees to Halockhani. We were still in that same house when they came back. I saw them carving one wounded soldier. Then the soldiers guarding us told us to leave the house. Two of us had to go handcuffed in front of them, and we were also tied with a rope. There were soldiers behind us, then three more men with handcuffs also tied with rope, then one man who wasn't tied up nor handcuffed and then more soldiers. Six of us were taken together. I couldn't see who else was taken behind us. When we got to the end of the village we saw a lot of smoke, and I understood that they were burning the village.

We were all forced to carry loads. I had to carry a bag that weighed more than 10 kg, a soldier's bag that probably had their clothes and things inside. After the first day they made me carry two bags instead of one. The day after we left Plat Hon Pai we met another group of porters. One porter was a man from our village. When he came to get water for cooking we talked to him and he said there were

four Plat Hon Pai villagers in his group. Then the soldiers started shouting at us because they didn't want us to speak to each other in Mon, and he had to go back to his group.

The next day at 1 p.m. we met more troops and there were six Plat Hon Pai villagers with them. Their group stopped to eat with our group, so we spoke to them [the villagers from Plat Hon Pai]. They complained that they didn't have enough to eat, and we said it was the same in our group. Then their group went ahead of us. After that there was fighting, but only with a group ahead of us. They moved back and slept with us. One soldier was wounded in the hand.

We walked for four days, handcuffed all the time, even at night. We couldn't sleep at night because it was always raining and we had no plastic sheet. We always sat up all night, and we tried to sleep like that but we couldn't. We were guarded all night. When we went to the toilet a soldier went with us, and we were still handcuffed together. On the way we weren't beaten because our loads weren't too heavy so we could walk easily. But when the porters with heavy loads fell down, they were kicked and beaten. All the porters were from Burma except one boy from Plat Hon Pai, a young school teacher only 20 years old. The soldiers didn't allow us to talk to the porters, so I couldn't speak to him.

There was more fighting. The second time was in a Karen village called Kyat Thaing, but like the first time it was ahead of our group. After the fighting, the soldiers entered the village and burned two houses. The soldiers didn't say anything, just set them on fire. I saw them throwing a child out of a house like you would throw your things, and then burning the house. We were with IB 62. They were on their way to Thanbyuzayat. We had to walk with them all the way to IB 61 Headquarters in Ye Town, then we slept there one night and they took the train back to Thanbyuzayat.

The soldiers took our handcuffs off, went to get on a truck and left us in the camp. While the soldiers were busy, we walked away. I don't know if they were releasing us or not, we just walked away. Six of us left the camp together and started walking. Two people went other places, then on the second day the other three people went another way, and I finally arrived back on my own two days ago. It was three days' walk, but I got stuck at Chaung Zone for ten days because I couldn't cross the river. I built a bamboo bridge together with the villagers there.

I think the Burmese attacked Plat Hon Pai because they wanted their gun back. The soldiers also told me that people couldn't stay there any longer. They said, "If they want to stay they have to go the Three Pagodas Pass. We don't want to see any buildings here." I don't know why they also wanted to go to the main Halockhani Camp. Maybe because it's part of the same camp. They wanted to frighten the people. Now our situation is very difficult. We're very afraid that the Thai authorities will push us back to Plat Hon Pai, but it's not safe. We hope we can stay here.

Interview: 5 - HRV: Livelihood, Refugees, Repatriation

Name: Nai Thein Dar

Sex: Male
Age: 41
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 4 children (age 8 months to 12 yrs)
Address: Mon State
Interviewed: 5-7 August 1994

[Nai Thein Daris camp secretary of Halockhani refugee camp, which includes Plat Hon Pai.]

When the troops came on 21 July, I was in Halockhani main camp. After 8 a.m., some villagers ran away from Plat Hon Pai and came to inform us that Burmese troops had entered the village. One said that there were 20 or 30 soldiers in the village and others outside, and another said there were about 300 soldiers and they were arresting the people. This was before the fighting. I spread the news to other refugees, and some people started leaving the camp. I stayed and prepared to send three men to find out about it, but they were afraid to go. At 11 a.m., when they heard the fighting, all the refugees fled and ran away to here. I worried because the Plat Hon Pai section leader didn't come.

Then one of the monks and some people came to tell us that the Burmese troops had left. In the afternoon it was too rainy and cloudy to see, but in the evening some of the camp leaders climbed the hill near the office. From the top they saw the smoke so they knew the soldiers had burned the houses. Thai soldiers from the [Thai] 9th Army changed clothes and went to Plat Hon Pai to take photos, and after they saw it they believed us that the Burmese soldiers had attacked the village. They went back to Halockhani and told the refugees that the Burmese troops had now left. They said, "There are no more soldiers there, so you can go back to your houses" [Note: the Thai authorities already knew first-handedly there were no houses to return to].

Most of the villagers went back but that day they heard about fighting nearby at Blad Ka Pow. For a long time they heard the sound of guns, so then they ran away again to here. The Thai BPP let them stay here, but later they said the attack was over and told the refugees to go back. The camp leaders talked to the villagers but they were afraid to go back. They refused.

On 25 July there was a meeting between the Thai authorities and the MNRC. The Thai officials said that the refugees were not allowed to stay, so the MNRC talked to the refugees to tell them. But the people refused to go back and asked to stay on the Thai side. They said, "Even if they try to kill us we will stay." They want to go back only when there will be peace in Burma, and then they'll want to go back to their villages, not to Old Halockhani.

After the meeting there were many Thai soldiers here, and the Thais said everyone had to go back on 27 July [1994]. The Thai police said it is impossible for us to stay here because the situation here is difficult as there is no clean water and diseases are spreading. They also said that SLORC IB 61 at Three Pagodas Pass had promised not to make any more trouble, but the MNRC doesn't believe

this. We called a meeting with the villagers and they said they didn't want to go back. After that, the 9th Army said that we would have to go back to Halockhani by 10 August. But still the villagers said that they will not go back, that they want to stay on this side.

Here the people have to stay in the rain with no proper roof, and they get malaria more easily. The old people and children are having problems of malnutrition because we're not allowed to grow vegetables and things here, and we have a problem with diarrhoea because the water isn't clean. Some rice at Plat Hon Pai was burned with the village, and we don't have enough fish paste and salt. The rice supply is still at Old Halockhani, and the chairman slept there every night to look after it. The refugees had to go back to get their rations there every 15 days.

[The site where the refugees now was at the time of the interview, was extremely muddy, and they are all living through the constant rains in small overcrowded shelters under plastic sheeting provided by foreign NGOs. Disease and malnutrition are a serious problem; NGO workers at the site say they have four times as many patients as before, but that it is actually a healthier site than Old Halockhani on the Burma side if the Thais would allow the refugees to make proper houses, dig proper latrines and set up a proper water supply system. The Thais refused to allow this and have officially blocked any further food or medical supplies, apparently hoping to "starve" the refugees back to the other side.]

We have no place to keep the sick. If it's not serious we can treat them here at the dispensary and send them home. If it's serious we send them to the River Kwai Hospital. If there's a truck and the road is okay, they can go by truck. If not, they have to be carried on foot all the way [the road is very muddy and always collapsing in the rain. It is a 6 hour walk]. The Thais allow this if the patient is really sick as long as we guarantee that they will come back when they get better. One person is allowed to go along with the sick person.

Some of the people from Plat Hon Pai recovered a few of their belongings but most of them lost everything. Here we've got plastic sheeting, food, blankets, pots, plates and mosquito nets from NGOs, but 40 families don't have enough. For example, we could only give two plates and one pot to each family. If the Thai authorities let us stay here it is a good place. Old Halockhani is in a valley between mountains which is too narrow, the water is bad and it is too close to SLORC, only 2½ hours to Three Pagodas Pass. Here it is very good, more open and flat and we can get good water.

As for new arrivals three or four families just arrived from the Ye-Tavoy Railway and 6 or seven families who fled from being taken as porters. Now there are 6,063 people in this camp, all on the Thai side. Some people went back to Old Halockhani during the day time to get vegetables from their garden, but they came back here at night. Every Wednesday and Friday, the Thais bring 300 to 400 people from IDC and leave them here. Every 25 IDC deportees chooses a group leader and they get their rice and fish paste from the camp supply. Some stay in a shelter here or with other families, some go back to Burma and some try to get back into Thailand.

Interview: 6- HRV: Livelihood, Refugees, Slavery, Torture

Name: Nai Aung Nai
Sex: Male
Age: 55
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 4 children (age 21 to 27)
Address: Ye Township, Mon State
Interviewed: 5-7 August 1994

[Nai Aung Nai was taken as a prisoner porter when the troops left Plat Hon Pai to go to Ye.]

I was a farmer in my village, and we tried to work for ourselves. But it was never for ourselves – we always had to give everything to the government. We could only keep 25 per cent of anything we grew or earned, and we often had to pay porter fees or go as porters. So I left my village six years ago and went to Ba Leh Ngo, near Three Pagodas Pass. Then I crossed into Thailand when the Burmese troops attacked. First I stayed in a village, then I went to Loh Loe Camp, then I came here. I was in Loh Loe for two years and in Halockhani for three months, then when the rainy season began I moved to Plat Hon Pai because there was more land to grow vegetables there. I was there for one or two months.

Then the troops came and arrested me. They came to my house and looked around to take things, then they called me out and tied me up with a rope. They pointed a gun at me, told me to go in front of them and took me to their commander. He was in a house close to the school. There were already five other people there who they'd arrested, including the section leader. I saw the soldiers beating others, but not me. They kicked, kneed and punched them. They asked the people for a gun but they had no gun. I had to stay in that house for two or three hours before we left the village. I was just sitting down, tied up with a rope to other people. There were five others – I was the last one to arrive. The others all had bruises on their bodies and their faces were swollen.

When we left the village there were soldiers in front and behind us. We were in the middle, carrying the packs of the soldiers. I was only tied with rope, but the other five from the house were in front of me in handcuffs. There were 6 of us in that group. As soon as we left the village, I saw the soldiers of the last group burning the houses.

I walked with the soldiers for four day and five nights. I think they were going to Ye. After one day they changed my pack for a heavier load. It didn't fit and I couldn't carry it but the soldiers said "Go! Go!" and kicked me. My load weighed about 30 kg. It was food, pots, plates and clothes for the soldiers. We had to climb up many muddy mountains. I fell with my load and they kicked me. Once I lost my shoe and they kicked me. I couldn't get it back. We got three mouthfuls of rice with fish paste to eat twice a day. At night if there was no rain we put some banana leaves on the ground and slept. If it was raining, the soldiers gave one plastic sheet

for all 6 of us to sit under [these sheets are only big enough for one]. It was raining a lot. I got a cold and later it got worse. I think I have a chest infection. [Nai Aung Nai was coughing badly throughout the interview.]

There was fighting two times, but it was at the front and I was in the middle so I couldn't see. After the second fighting, the soldiers burned two houses. They also burned a house in another small village. In every village we passed they were taking more people as porters. I escaped on the evening of the fifth day. During the day while we were walking they untied us, then every evening they tied up again. That night just before they tied us up, while they were busy I ran away. I'm from Ye Township so I knew the area a bit. That night I slept in the forest, then the next day I found a village and came back with three of the villagers. It took me four or five days to get back because I had no tools with me and I couldn't get across the river. Along the way I didn't meet any soldiers, but I found three dead bodies lying along the path. I don't know who they were, but they were most likely porters.

I arrived here about three days ago and met my family. We went back to try to salvage things from our house in Plat Hon Pai, but it had been totally burned. My wife was left alone and so was my daughter. The soldiers took away my son-in-law and he hasn't come back yet. I don't know why they attacked Plat Hon Pai. I'm only a villager. I helped at the monastery there. It's not so bad here, and we're too afraid to go back there. The soldiers said they'll come back and shoot anyone on sight.

Interview: 7- HRV: Detention, Displacement, Livelihood, Slavery

Name: Mi Mee Ong
Sex: Female
Age: 57
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Address: Kya In Seik Gyi Township, Karen State
Family: Married with 7 children (age 16 to 37)
Interviewed: 5-7 August 1994

[Mi Mee Ong watched the soldiers take away her son and burn down her house.]

I left my village 15 years ago. First we went to Azin Village, near Chaung Zone, then to Ba Leh Ngo. Then when the Burmese attacked Three Pagodas Pass six years ago, we came to Thailand. We spent four years in Loh Loe Camp, then five months ago we were moved to Plat Hon Pai. But I was often at the hospital in Old Halockhani, because my husband is always sick.

On 21 July, I was in Plat Hon Pai. I saw the [Burmese] troops when they arrived at my house. They came inside, they cooked inside my house and they ate. They arrested my son. Two of my sons were there, one ran away and they arrested the other. They also wanted to arrest my husband but he was sick with fever and he couldn't go. One soldier was going to beat him but another soldier said, "He's sick. Don't beat him. Don't take him." So they didn't beat him. One of our neighbours was eating in our house, and when he got up to go they arrested him too.

The soldiers fired a gun and ordered everyone to come out of their houses. Then they grabbed the villagers by their hands, took them to the road and made them walk in front of them, firing their guns. They arrested many people. They had villagers walk two-by-two, and behind every three or four people there was a soldier, and they fired their guns. First they went to the school. After they gathered many people, they left for Halockhani. There was still a soldier in my house who stayed to cook and eat. He told me to stay inside the house and not go outside.

I stayed in the front of the house but I couldn't see much. I saw porters underneath the houses of some people with soldiers around them. The soldiers cooked the rice with the porters, then they gave them only a little rice to eat while all of the soldiers ate together. The soldier stayed around my house for more than two hours. I didn't hear the Halockhani fighting because I'm a bit deaf. I just saw people running back from the fighting, so I went to hide underneath another house.

When the soldiers got back, they ordered the people to leave and burnt our houses. First they searched the houses, then they put kerosene on everything which burns – the leaves, the roof, the walls – everywhere. They got the kerosene from our lamps. Then if they couldn't get the house to burn, they opened fire into the house to make sure that it set them on fire. There were many soldiers in groups of four or six all burning houses. When they finished one, they'd go to the next. First they forced us to leave the houses, then they went inside and then they didn't leave until the house was burnt, so I don't know what they stole when they went inside. I cried and pleaded with them, "Please don't burn down my house!" but the soldier said, "I have to do it. It is the order of our commander".

When they left, I went to my house while it was still burning and with a long bamboo I managed to save a couple of plates and one basin. That's all I could save. Afterwards I stayed near my house and I sat down. That night I slept close to my house on the ground. Some people went to the monastery but others slept like me, on the ground near their houses. I was so angry at the soldiers, and so depressed. It's horrible, because they took my son and I also lost everything I had. I gathered utensils and house equipment for many years and now I've lost it all. My husband stayed by the house with me. He wasn't well. We got a plastic sheet for cover. I hadn't eaten since that morning. I didn't think about coming to Halockhani at the time, I just felt lost. I couldn't sleep that night, only sit there.

I didn't feel safe. I was afraid the soldiers would come back. They said they would come back in three days and that "If we see anyone around, next time we'll bury you in fire." The next morning my daughter came and called me to come here. My husband walked very slowly with the help of a stick, and our youngest son came with us too. Now it's very hard to build another house, because my son is gone and my husband is always sick.

When we got here we stayed in this shelter with four other families. Now, we are only two families in this shelter. Two of the men built it. [Her shelter is about 3 x 6 m, 6 feet high with a bamboo floor, plastic sheet roofing and no walls.] My son came back, but now he's left again to make charcoal, get bamboo shoots, etc. He's always working. They took him as a porter. He told me he has wounds, and even now he still has pain in his chest. They only fed him a bit of rice with some beans

sometimes, and it smelled rotten. He escaped. He didn't tell me if they beat him, but he said they threatened him with a knife. He probably didn't want to tell me if they beat him, because he's worried his mother will be sad.

I don't know why the Burmese attacked Plat Hon Pai. I feel safer here. I'm afraid to go back, because the Burmese troops might come back. I don't know if this place is really safe or not, but it's safer than there.

Interview: 8 - HRV: Forced Labour, Refugees, Slavery, Torture

Name: U Mya Aung
Sex: Male
Age: 47
Ethnicity: Mon-Indian
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Divorced with 2 daughters (age 10 to 15)
Occupation: Day labourer
Address: Ye Township, Mon State
Interviewed: 5-7 August 1994

[U Mya Aung was taken as a porter in Ye, and was a porter with the troops who attacked Halockhani.]

I am a mixed blood between Mon and Indian. My grandfather was an Indian and my grandmother was a Mon. When I was young, I was a Muslim, but now I don't have any more religion. I'm Buddhist for now, because sometimes I go to the monastery. I'm a daily labourer. Sometimes I sell things, like fish or clothing. Sometimes I clean the compound for people who hire me, or go with a fishing boat, or work making salt.

Lately I was working clearing bushes and grass for a rubber plantation owner. I was paid 50 kyats a day, and they fed us and gave us cheroots. I gave as much of the money as I could for my elder daughter's clothing and schooling. She's staying with other people. I was staying at my friend's house. I usually ate at my workplace. One night over a month ago when I came back to my friend's place he told me the soldiers were looking for porters to go to Three Pagodas Pass. At midnight, soldiers came to his house to check his household registration list. He hadn't reported me in his guest register, so they arrested me and took me to their office. The ward chief arrested me. I reported to him when I first came to stay at my friend's house, but I hadn't bothered to report in quite a while. That's my crime.

After a few minutes at the office the soldiers' truck came over and they put us on it, so we knew they were taking us as porters. They took us to IB 61 headquarters at the edge of Ye Town. They gathered porters from Ye and Azin there. They kept us in the barracks for five days under guard. Even when we went to the toilets they followed us with guns. They gave us rice and beans, but never enough. Sometimes the soldiers' wives came around selling egg curry for 30 kyats. Then they took us to IB 106 at Mao Ka Nin near La Mine, first by train and then by

truck. There were porters from La Mine, Po Taw and Taung Bo. We got to La Mine at 9 or 10 p.m., and then an hour or two later they took us to Mao Ka Nin.

We rested for a couple of hours and they loaded the truck with many things, then we took the truck for half an hour to a bridge. We started climbing the mountain from there. I had to carry five mortar shells, which weighed about 32 kg. The others were carrying supplies, rice, cooking pots, but mostly ammunition. There were about 80 or 100 porters. The youngest were 16 or 17 and the oldest were 50. There were two porters for every soldier around me. Once we heard shooting behind us and we knew there was fighting. We climbed up and down for days. Then we heard gunshots again far away, then behind us then in the middle. The soldiers shouted at us to lie down or else we'd be killed.

We walked nine days on the way. The soldiers always said it wasn't much farther, but we just kept on climbing up and down mountains and never saw any road. We cooked and slept along the path. They just gave us rice with salt, sometimes with a fingertip of fish paste. It was terrible, always undercooked or overcooked. They guarded us all the time. One night we stayed in some abandoned houses, but every other night we had to cut banana leaves to sleep on, and sleep on the ground just covered by plastic sheets that we'd bought along the way. If someone didn't have a plastic sheet we shared with him.

It was raining all the time, and the path was very muddy. We had to pull ourselves up to the mountains, and walk backwards going down. I fell with my load at least 10 times a day, and more than that when it was raining. They swore at me, and sometimes they kicked, beat or punched me. Two porters in front of me were kicked all the way because they fell down all the time. They looked so weak. Whether you were sick or not, you had to carry and follow. We walked from 5 a.m. until 7 or 8 at night, and only then we got to eat. To cross the flooded rivers, sometimes they just put one rope across and we had to hold onto it.

After we reached Apa Lone Village, we talked to each other and I heard that five porters had escaped. Finally after nine days we got to Chaung Zone. We had to cross a river by boat, and then there was a road and ten trucks waiting for us. They put all our loads on the truck, then they told us to wait. They took 35 of us back across the river and put us in a lock-up at the checkpoint, 20 in one room and 15 in the other.

They kept us there for two days, and we found out we'd been handed over to IB 62. Up until then we'd been with IB 61. Then they took us across the river again, put us on a truck and drove us to Three Pagodas Pass. I saw a sign that said it was Three Pagodas Pass Army Camp. We saw a great many other porters there, and we were put with them. They checked the names of all other porters but didn't call our names, so we were very happy because we thought they were going to release us.

A soldier came into our cell, and we pleaded with him to free us because of our bad condition. He said, "Don't worry. We won't make you carry a heavy load. " Then they locked us up in an unfinished building together with all the other porters. At 9 or 10 p.m. they ordered us to pick up the loads and start walking. I had to carry the baseplate of a mortar tube. It weighed the same as the mortar shells

I'd carried before, but it was much more awkward to carry. We had to carry very heavy loads the whole night, then the next morning we arrived at Plat Hon Pai.

First some soldiers went into the village to look, while we waited outside the village for a long time. Finally they ordered us to go into the village and stay underneath the houses, and they stayed all around us. There were 27 of us under one house. They told us to cook, so we cooked. Then we heard gunshots. One of the soldiers yelled, "Don't try to escape or I'll shoot you dead!" After the gunshots we ate, then we fell asleep for a few minutes. They woke us up and we had to carry again. [This was when the troops left Plat Hon Pai to go to Ye.] When we were leaving we looked around and saw a lot of smoke. We started talking to each other and the soldiers yelled at us: "Don't worry, they're not your fathers-in-law's houses. Just keep carrying!"

We followed the path to a river and slept the night there. The next morning they made a bridge and we crossed. A soldier took my load across because he was afraid I'd drop it in the river. We had to cross one-by-one. Then we started climbing every steep mountain. It was very hard, and my shoulders were badly wounded. I have so many scars all over my body. We didn't even notice when we got a wound because they always yelled at us to hurry. We only had flip-flops [loose, backless foam or rubber sandals] for our feet and we couldn't wear them because it was always too slippery. Whenever a porter fell they kicked him and beat him with their guns, and sometimes punched him. I fell once, and they kicked me and swore at me. Whenever porters were going too slowly, they pushed them and said, "Go, go go!"

I started looking for a way to escape. I got a bit ahead of the soldiers and when I looked back I couldn't see them, so I dropped my load and ran a few yards into the forest. Then I saw a hole and hid. I hid there for one hour and I was very afraid, then it was very quiet so I looked out and didn't see anybody. I didn't know which way to go. I dared not go back to Plat Hon Pai because I didn't know if it was safe. My legs were in such pain and I couldn't move fast. I found a hut where a couple were tending their cows. Then I met two men and went with them to Plat Hon Pai. It was almost dark and we saw the monastery and asked permission to sleep there.

In the morning, they woke me and told me that I'd better leave because the soldiers might come back. They gave me directions to Halockhani. On the way I saw that all the houses were burnt, even the house I'd stayed underneath. Then I met two men who saw my wounds and told me I should go to hospital in New Halockhani to get treatment and some food. Finally I arrived here.

Now I have scars all over my body, and my shoulders are badly bruised. After I escaped I couldn't even lift my arms. When we were being held at Chaung Zone the others told me about three porters who'd been left behind; two of them couldn't carry and one had twisted his knee. They probably died, because there were no villages around. One of them was from Rangoon, one from La Mine, and another, named Kaung Lay, from Ye. We were with IB 61 from Mao Ka Nin to Chaung Zone, and IB 62 after that. IB 61 is based in Ye and IB 62 in Three Pagodas Pass [Note: now IB 61 is at Three Pagodas Pass, while IB 62 has returned to base in

Thanbyuzayat]. We were the weakest when we were with IB 62, and they abused us the worst. I was a porter for 19 days, and I got here about 10 days ago.

When we came here with the soldiers we didn't know anything, we only knew we had to face the fighting. When we left Three Pagodas Pass on our way here, we thought they were taking us back to Burma. Now I dared not go back, I escaped and if they figured out, they can make me get into trouble. They'd arrest me. One soldier told me he had an order from the commander to shoot dead any porters who tried to escape. So I've decided to stay here. I've told you everything in detail so you can spread it outside, and then maybe they won't treat the porters so badly anymore.

Interview: 9 - HRV: Livelihood, Refugees, Slavery, Torture

Name: Nai Win Tint
 Sex: Male
 Age: 31
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with 4 children (age 8 months to 12 yrs)
 Address: Mon State
 Interviewed: 5-7 August 1994

[Nai Win Tint was taken as a prisoner/porter when the troops left Plat Hon Pai to Ye.]

I arrived in Thailand about eight years ago. First I stayed on the Burmese side of Three Pagodas Pass, then when the Burmese troops attacked five years ago I crossed into Thailand. I stayed in refugee camps, first in Loh Loe before it was a big camp, then to Halockhani on the Thai side, then back to Loh Loe when the big camp was set up there. When Loh Loe had to move, I came back here. After three months here we went to settle in Plat Hon Pai. When the soldiers came, I didn't see at first because my house is at the end of the village. They came to my house and said, "There is a meeting in the village. We're not making any trouble." When I came out of the house, they aimed their guns at me and said, "Don't run anywhere. Come with us." They made us to walk in front of them and pointed their guns at us.

They took us to the school, and when we arrived they sent us two-by-two to see their commander. They handcuffed four of us and called us to have our photo taken. One of the four was the section leader. Then they started beating us. They asked me if I had a gun. I told them I only had one that uses gunpowder [a primitive flintlock used by hunters]. Then they said I was lying and beat me. I told them, "I'm not lying. I don't have a gun. If you don't believe me, ask the other. If I had one I'd give it to you. If I'm lying, you can kill me." Then they kicked and beat us one by one. They put a knife on my throat and pointed their guns. They asked, beat, then asked and beat. Five soldiers were beating me. When they stopped, they put me in another room so I couldn't talk to other villagers, then they started beating up the next person. After he was beaten up they put him in the room where I was, one after another. There were four of us. Afterwards, another three people

arrived, and they beat them as well. Other than the section leader, we were all just villagers.

I was in the school when I heard the fighting near Halockhani. The soldiers asked me if I was afraid, and I said yes because I was handcuffed. When the other soldiers arrived back from Halockhani, they told us to come out of the school. They prepared loads for us to carry, then we left. At the beginning, two of us were attached to one pair of handcuffs. Then after we left the school each person had their own handcuffs. Three of us in handcuffs were also tied with a rope attached to the handcuffs, and the other three people were tied up with rope. My load was a pack weighing about 15 kg. I don't know what was in it. Just after we left the village, we saw the houses were burning. They started by burning the houses at my end of the village.

I think the soldiers were going to Ye. After two days I was separated from the other Plat Hon Pai villagers and put with another group that needed one more porter. Then I had to carry a heavy load of three bags. I told the soldiers it was too heavy and I couldn't walk with handcuffs, so they took the handcuffs off. They told me not to run away or they'd shoot me. I was the only one from Plat Hon Pai in that group and the others were behind us. We were only given a little rice and fish paste to eat, and I had to sleep under the rain because I had no plastic sheet. Along the way I saw them taking more porters. There was fighting two days after we left Plat Hon Pai, and then again on the fifth day. That's when I escaped.

The soldiers all rushed to the front and left the porters behind, so I ran away. I slept one night in the forest, then I came back. I arrived in a village where they'd heard that Plat Hon Pai had been burnt, and I told them it was true. The headman said the troops had also taken one porter from their village and he hadn't come back yet. They fed me and I slept there for one night, then I walked here with two women. On the way we met a porter who'd been left behind. His foot was badly wounded and he couldn't walk anymore. He asked me to send him back to Burma, but I couldn't carry him so I told him to wait for someone from the village. Later we saw another porter who was already dead. It looked as if he had died the day before, like he had been sitting against a rock and fell over when he died. I didn't look closely to see how he died, but I can understand it because I saw myself how the soldiers treated us while I was a porter.

If the porters can't carry as they like they beat them, kick them and shoved them with their guns. Very often they kicked or beat me when I was a bit slow, and I am still painful for it. The day after we found the dead porter, we met another porter who couldn't walk. Then we arrived in Chaung Zone, and the next day we made a small bridge across the river and arrived back in Plat Hon Pai. It took me three nights to get back.

In Plat Hon Pai I saw that all the houses were burnt down. Some were partly burnt, but my house was completely reduced to ashes. I found two or three people in the monastery and they said everybody else had come here, so I came here. I arrived four days ago. My wife managed to grab some of our children's clothes while the house was already burning, but other than that we've lost everything. I don't know why the Burmese attacked Plat Hon Pai.

Interview: 10 - HRV: Child, Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Refugees, Torture

Name: Nai Kror
Sex: Male
Age: 29
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Address: Ye Pyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Family: Married with 2 children (age 2 and 5)
Interviewed: 5-7 August 1994

[Nai Kror arrived in Halockhani recently after fleeing slave labour on the Ye-Tavoy Railway.]

I arrived in Halockhani from Ye-Tavoy Railway about three months ago. Before I escaped I had to work there for two months non-stop. Once I started, I never stopped. There were no rest days. I had to work every day, and if I couldn't go for one day I had to pay 200 kyats. First we had to cut down trees, clear the forest and scrub, then dig the ground to level it, and we had to build shelters for ourselves to stay in. At first it was close to my village, but then later it was farther away, close to other villages. We couldn't go home at night. If I felt sick. I had to ask authorisation to go home from the soldiers on guard, and then I had to send another person to replace me. Once I was sick for seven days I wanted to hire someone to go in my place, but I had no money so I had to send my younger sister to replace me. I think I had malaria. I had to buy medicine with my own money.

At night we slept in small shelters of banana leaves that we made ourselves. They didn't give us any food. I had to bring rice and fish paste from home. I brought enough for one month, then when my food was nearly finished I asked permission from the soldiers to go back to my village to bring more food. When we first went to the railway they told us we'd have to work until it's finished. They didn't tell us how long that would be. We had to work on three sections, from our village to three other villages [there is a fork in the railway at his village, with one line coming into the village and two lines going out in different direction].

While we were digging the ground on the third section, there was a landslide and three men from my village died. Their names were Soe Win, Chan Soi, and Hsa Aung. On the same section, a pregnant woman got diarrhoea or dysentery and they didn't give her any medicine so she died. She looked about 28 or 29 years old. She wasn't from my village. When these people died the soldiers made the villagers to take the bodies away.

There are also children working on this railway – some are 10 or 15 years old. They have to work the a man but they couldn't. Some children got very serious sickness. One nearly died. His village was too far away so he couldn't go home. Some of his relative tried to treat him right there. Sometimes the children didn't bring enough rice, and the soldiers wouldn't give them any. Sometimes people who

had money bought rice from the soldiers when they ran out of food. The soldiers sell rice.

We had to start work at 6 a.m. If someone was two or three minutes late, the soldiers beat them, then at noon they forced them to take off their shirts and sit down in the scorching sun. They beat people with bamboo canes in the back, the thighs, on the feet, etc., until the skin breaks.

Sometimes they hit at the head, and I saw one man with a large infected wound on his head. They beat people when they didn't work so well or if they tried to rest, or sometimes if they tried to smoke. There's no time to smoke or rest all day long. If you try, the soldiers beat you. We had to work from 6 am until noon then we ate, then worked again from 1 p.m. until 5:30 without a rest. When they wanted us to finish something, we had to work later, till 7 p.m. There were old people working there too, 50 or 55 years old. We had to bring our own tools. The soldiers were always just walking around to guard and watch the people. If they saw anything they didn't like, they beat us. During the night, the soldiers went back and left us.

There are 550 houses in our village, divided into nine sections. At first, each section had [to take] one [shift] and one person from every house [had to come work] all the time. Then after 1 month, they divided each section into half and the halves had to rotate. After 15 days of that, I escaped. I just went back to my village. First we sent our children to another village, then my wife and I went to join them. That was in May. It was already raining. Just for awhile they stopped the work to let the people go and plant rice because they're all farmers, but now they're back to work. Some sections of the embankment are collapsing because of the rains and the people have to go to repair it. In some places it's completely collapsed and they need a lot of wood to repair it, so they demanded money for the wood from the villagers. The poorest families have to pay 1,500 kyats, and others have to pay 2,000 to 5,000 kyats. I had to pay 1,400 kyats and my father had to pay 5,000 for that. They're not laying any railway sleepers around there yet.

Before the railway. I had to go as a porter, and I had to clear the compound at their camp, sometimes once a month, sometimes twice. We had to pay them taxes for our own land, fields and gardens. When the troops came to the village we had to give them rice and money for them to buy their food. Sometimes they also took our pigs and chickens and ate whatever they wanted. We also had to pay 4 tins of rice per year and 100 kyats per family for their militia. SLORC set up their militia but didn't give them any training. They made a draw and chose people from our village to be militia. No one can refuse. They have to report to the SLORC headman everything that happens.

When I left my village I went to Pa Yaw refugee camp, but it was not so far from my village and I was afraid of the Burmese troops, so I went to Loh Loe, but the Thais were already destroying the houses there so I went to a Thai village and then finally to Halockhani. We only brought one cooking pot with us. With the children, it was too difficult to bring anything else. It took us four days' walk to Pa Yaw Camp from the village, but the Burmese troops could do it much faster. I didn't know Halockhani was on the Burmese side of the border until after I got

there, but by then I'd already built my house. I wasn't in Halockhani when the fighting happened because I'd gone to cut bamboo shoots.

When I arrived back the people were already fleeing, and my wife had already left. Now that we're here on the Thai side it's not so bad but not so good either. I'm very afraid to go back. Even here. I'm afraid. Even if the Burmese troops don't come, they can fire artillery from Three Pagodas Pass to Halockhani. A mortar shell could hit the camp, so I'm really afraid to go back. I don't think the Thais will let us stay here though. I'm afraid of that too!

Interview: 11 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood, Refugees, Torture

Name: Nai Win Aung
Sex: Male
Age: 27
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Christian
Family: Married with 1 child (age 2)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: late March 1994

I came here one month ago with my family and six other families. We came because of our problems with the railway. We were forced to work on the railway, we weren't paid and they didn't give us any food so we couldn't provide for our family. Then if we couldn't go for work we had to hire someone to go in our place. We also had to pay porter fees all the time. Even when we were working at the railway our families had to pay porter fees as well. It was very hard – we had to sell all the rice we had saved and use the money we had saved to pay them. When this wasn't enough we had to borrow money from someone and pay it back little by little. We had to work for SLORC and pay porter fees to them until we nothing left to eat. Now it is worse than ever before.

This year we had a very bad harvest because the dam broke and flooded our fields. Then SLORC took part of our crop, and we didn't have enough. We must sell 14 baskets of paddy per acre to them at government price – if market price is 250 kyats for one basket, then the government price is only 170 kyats. This year, we couldn't even sell them the full quota they demanded. We had finished harvesting in December and were preparing to plant other crops when SLORC came to get people for the railway. I had to go three times, sometimes for one week and sometimes for 15 days. While I was working there, my wife and child had to provide for themselves as much as they could. It was very hard for us to solve this problem. The families just had to help each other.

Our village is small. Sometimes 27 people had to go to the railway, including women, children and old people. Sometimes 15 people had to go, all men. The village head came around collecting people every one or two weeks because he got orders from SLORC. He tried to treat everyone equally, but 15 people went the first time, and then the second time there weren't enough people so he had to choose some people who already went the first time. The same happened the time after that. The usual rule was one person from each family, but everything depends on the situation. Some families have two or three men and the village head must plead for all of them to go, but some pregnant women had to go as well. Some women even gave birth at the railway.

At the work place we had to cut trees and clear the bushes. It was forest with a few big trees and the rest were bushes. We had to dig out the roots of big trees, and we had to cut through a small hill. We had to clear two to three furlongs (440 to 660 yards) every day with a width of about 100 yards – it was very wide. There

were about 1,000 or 2,000 people from different villages working for this. The majority of the workers are men, but I can't guess the number of women. The youngest was about 15, the oldest over 40. We had to bring our tools from home, as well as our rice.

There were always soldiers around us. Some just guarded us, and some ordered us what to do. They didn't do any work, they just walked around and ordered us. We couldn't rest except at mealtime. They were always yelling at us and telling us to hurry. If someone stopped to rest they beat him up or kicked him. Sometimes the person fell down because they were kicking him. Some people were beaten severely, but not so hard as to prevent them working. I was never beaten. Nobody in my group got sick. People who got sick could tell their village head, and if he vouched for them with the soldiers they could go home, but only if the village head could get a replacement for them. Our village head was there sometimes, but when he wasn't there we had to talk directly to the soldiers.

We worked from 7 till 11 a.m., then we ate, then we worked from 12:30 till 5 p.m. In the evening we cooked and rested. We slept along the side of the railway without any shelter, but it never rained because it was dry season. We laid big leaves on the ground to sleep on. The soldiers guarded us all the time at night, but they never spoke to us. Sometimes someone escaped, so the soldiers reported it to the village head and he had to send a replacement. Usually SLORC didn't know exactly who had escaped, but if they did know then they made that villager getting into trouble.

I don't know what they are planning to do with this railway, but it will take at least three years to finish. Even when it is finished, we won't be able to live peacefully in our village, because we'll still have to pay porter fees until they make peace with the revolutionary groups. We were working for SLORC again and again and paying porter fees until we had nothing left to eat. So we tried to escape from the village one night and we got away. We had to cross the railway line and a car road, so we had to wait until no soldiers were around.

It took us 10 days to get here. When I got here I worked very hard, earned 50 baht (US\$2) for one day and bought some rice. Then we got some rice from the refugee camp, so we are okay. Here it is better – at least if you work and get 50 baht you can use it for your family, but there if you get 50 kyats you have to give it all to SLORC. I want to go back when it becomes peaceful in my village, but if we still have to pay porter fees and work for SLORC, we won't go back.

Interview: 12 - HRV: Forced Labour, Refugees, Women

Name:	Mi Pan
Sex:	Female
Age:	36
Ethnicity:	Mon
Religion:	Buddhist
Family:	Married with 4 sons (age 5, 9, 11 and 14)
Occupation:	Farmer

Address: Ye Township, Mon State
Interviewed: late March 1994

My father arrived here one month ago, but I just arrived four days ago. I came with my whole family. I came here because I couldn't let them force me to work on the railway. It's too hard. While we were there I didn't have to work on the railway, but both my husband and my father had to. They had to start this work in October [1993]. The work is still going on, but they ran away from it and came here. They had to go so many times, and each time they had to work for 15 days. After they finished, sometimes they only came home for three or four days and then they had to go back and work again. Each time when they went to work, they had to take their own food. Those who refused to go had to pay 700 kyats.

From each house one person had to go to build the railway. My father stays in a different house, so he had to go too. My husband had to go about six times, and my father eight times. SLORC gives authority to someone in the village to order who has to go and when, and that person orders you to go. While my husband was away, I had to borrow money to live, and afterwards I couldn't pay it back. Two tins of rice costs 400 kyats, and I also had to pay "porter fees" – 700 kyats each time, and I had to pay three times.

To go from the village to the railway it takes six hours on foot. SLORC doesn't come, the workers just have to go on foot by themselves. Then they have to carry the rails for making the railway, dig the ground, carry dirt, cut wood, and many other jobs. The most recent work is carrying logs. All the workers cut them, and then they have to carry them to the railway or SLORC brings them on trucks. My husband and my father had to do this, as well as all the other steps in building the railway.

They had to work all day long – they never had free time. They start at 7 am, then at noon they're allowed to eat breakfast, then they stop working at 6 p.m. There were altogether over 1,000 people working along with my husband and my father. They had to clear a path wider than a car road along flat land. Not only clearing, but they also had to carry dirt and smooth it, and carry stones both big and small. The workers, including my father and husband, had to break the stones. Then they had to carry them a long way by themselves. They had to dig with hoes, and SLORC provided some tools.

There were very many women included in the work. They have to work together with the men. There were also old people and children. The children were as young as 8 years old, up to 14 and 15 years old.

SLORC never gives food, they all have to bring their own. My husband and father just took rice, salt, and fish paste. Each time they went they had to take half of the food in the house, and then if they aren't allowed to come home and they run out of food and they have to borrow or buy food from others. [Note: the reason she says they took "half the food in the house" instead of 15 days' food is that they probably never even had 15 days' food in the house. Due to SLORC looting and forced labour, these people are already living from hand-to-mouth, close to starvation.] Those who go to work knowing they don't have enough food and who

can't ask for any from relatives or friends will face starvation, so they just have to open their arms and beg food from other people.

At the railway construction site they have to sleep under the trees, in the bushes. They have no mats, so they must sleep on the ground, and SLORC patrols around. To go to the toilet they had to ask permission from the SLORC troops, and then the soldiers followed them. The soldiers also guarded the area all the time while they worked. You can't rest, even when you're tired you have to keep working. Some soldiers forced the people to work by scolding or beating them, and some of them don't. My husband and my father weren't beaten, but they saw others getting beatings. Those who were beaten were working together with them, and when they were beaten they were very close. They were beaten all over their bodies, until they bled.

When people got sick the soldiers didn't heal them, they just left them. The sick weren't allowed to go home. They just had to stay where they were until they got better. If they couldn't work, then they weren't forced to work but they had to stay until they could work again. The soldiers give them nothing.

I don't know why they're making this railway, but it's not good. I don't want to go back. People will have to work on it until it's finished. I came out here with five families altogether – my own family and my relatives. It was difficult and it took a long time because we had to avoid the SLORC troops, so it took at least 8 or 10 days. We didn't bring any belongings, just some personal things. Now my husband and my father have gone back to the village to help other families find their way here.

Interview: 13 - HRV: Detention, Movement, Torture

Name: Maung A—
Sex: Male
Age: 29
Ethnicity: Burman-Indian Buddhist
Occupation: Trader
Address: Bilin Township, Mon State
Interviewed: May 1994

I was arrested by IB 36 on 21 April 1994. I don't know why. I was just on my way home from trading and they arrested me. They stopped me on the outskirts of a village. After they grabbed me, they tied me up. The soldiers took (brought) me to one of the officers and said "He is a Ringworm," I said, "I am not; I am from A". But they just said, "Shut up" and took me away. They didn't even look at my movement paper from the village head. They took it from me, as well as 310 kyats I was carrying. They went and talked with the officer again, but I don't know what they said. They took me to the village and after the evening meal they interrogated me again. I told them again that I'm not a Ringworm, just a trader. They said, "Do you know anyone in this village?" so I answered, "I know B's parents." They untied me while they called them, then they tied me up again.

At about 9 or 10 p.m., they started beating me up. They made me kneel down and then lie down with my legs bent back. [The position he describes is lying on his back on the ground with his knees bent back tight and his feet touching his hips, a painful and humiliating form of torture.] Then they stomped on my thighs, sat on my chest and poured water up my nose. They poured three or four buckets full of water up my nose. They also punched and kicked me. I told them I can prove I'm from A , because their column stopped and cooked right in front of my house on its way here. They just said, "Just answer my questions. Don't lie."

After two days I was transferred to another column because the villagers had vouched for me, and the officer there was good to me. He said, "We recognise you, you're not a Karen soldier." Then they released me. After I was released I saw the woman who had vouched for me. She had been tortured and still had wounds. I couldn't even recognise her, and she couldn't even talk to me. Her eyes were closed and she was lying on her bed.

Interview: 14 - HRV: Torture

Name: Pi Say Wah
Sex: Female
Age: 60
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State
Interviewed: May 1994

I was beaten by IB 36 on 22 April 1994 because I vouched for Maung A— [see related interview 13]. The soldiers asked me, "Are you sure you know him? Is he a relative of yours?" I said, "He is a friend of mine. We have been to each other's houses many times." If didn't vouch for him, they said they would kill him. Then after I vouched for him, They said, "Now that you've vouched for him, you should know that we already shot him dead. Now we'll have to kill you as well." Then they punched me in the face three times, then once on my ear and once in the neck. My nose was bleeding. You can still see my wounds. Then they stomped on my throat. I said, "Don't do that – I'm about to die!" They said, "You vouched for a rebel. You have to die." Then they poked me with a knife.

All this happened in my house. Then they left me there, and when they left they took the steps from my house and put them over against the fence. [Karen houses are built raised above the ground with a bamboo ladder to enter. They took the ladder away to make it impossible to leave until others came.]

Interview: 15 - HRV: Torture

Name: Maung Than
Sex: Male
Age: 24
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State
Interviewed: Spring 1994

I was tortured by Myint Way Oo. He is a platoon commander from Coy 4, IB 84, LID 99. The commander of his company is Maung Myint. Myint Way Oo arrested me outside of the village, while I was working on my farm. It was 22 February 1994. First they told me that I'm a Ringworm. They asked my name and I told them, then they tied me up. Myint Way Oo started to slice the flesh on my foot with his knife. Then he hit me on my head with his gun. Then he started to burn my leg with fire, and then they all kicked me and punched me. Myint Way Oo poked my head with a knife and then hit me in the head with the shaft of the knife. Then he untied me and started rolling his gun barrel up and down of my shins. Then he closed my nose. He sliced my belly and burned my navel, sliced the flesh on my arm and burned it, and the same on my thigh. He hacked at my shins with a knife like you would chop up a fish. Then I lost consciousness.

They didn't give me any medicine for my wounds, they just rubbed sand and dust on them. I still have scars on my legs, thighs, belly, my shoulders and my head from the cuts and burns. This scar on my shoulder is where they put a burning cheroot on it.

They didn't release me – they just left me there after that because they thought I was dead. The next morning, the monks and villagers came and picked me up. I was still unconscious. The monks took me to the monastery, and after a few minutes there I regained consciousness.

Interview: 16 - HRV: Livelihood

Name: Saw C
Sex: Male
Age: 53
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

They shot me on 27 December 1993 while I was on my farm. There was a small boy whose basket was broken, and he was going to the forest to get vines to fix it. As soon as he entered the forest I heard a gunshot. I thought they shot at the boy, but the bullet came and hit me. Then the boy ran away and escaped. I was hit in the back of my knee. At the same time they hit two cows of mine as well, and

one of them was killed [the "shot" was probably a burst of several rounds of automatic rifle fire]. I think the soldiers were just looking around, and after that they didn't see anyone so they just left. My farm hut is beside the stream and there are one or two trees, so they couldn't see me and they left. The troops were from IB 84 of LID 99.

Interview: 17 - HRV: Slavery, Torture

Name: Maung Hla
 Sex: Male
 Age: 20
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Bilin Township, Mon State

Name: Saw Mu Deh
 Sex: Male
 Age: 20
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Bilin Township, Mon State

Maung Hla:

The soldiers who captured us were from IB 119 of LID 33 – their company commanders are Win Tay from Coy 1 and Min Than from Coy 2. We were captured on 22 March 1994 and released on 27 March.

Saw Mu Deh:

Before asking any questions, they punched us. Then they asked us, "Have you ever been a Karen soldier?" Then they kicked me in the lower back over 10 times and punched me in the face about 10 times. I lost half a tooth, and my nose and mouth were bleeding. Then they kept on accusing me of being a Karen soldier but I told them I wasn't. They said, "You must be!" and they carried on punching me and asking questions again and again. Then they tied our hands behind us, tied us up to trees and left us there. It was until the next morning that they untied us. Then they didn't release us, they made us carry things for them. We had to carry most of their supplies and some supplies that Karen soldiers had hidden in a field and they'd found. We had to carry things to their camp for four days, then they released us at their camp. While we were carrying, sometimes they fed us twice a day but sometimes only once, and it was never enough.

Interview: 18 - HRV: Slavery, Torture

Name: Saw Win Htun
 Sex: Male
 Age: 38
 Ethnicity: Karen

Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

I was captured in the village during a funeral, on 6 February 1994. They arrested eight of us. They tied all of us to trees except one. SLORC soldiers asked me, "Did you join with Maung Thein?" [Maung Thein is a Karen officer famous in the area] and I told them "No." Then they pointed a knife at my throat, and burned my leg, belly, nipples and face with a burning cheroot. I still have scars on my belly, my chest and on both of my sides. I kept denying that I ever joined Maung Thein, and then they demanded two chickens from me. Once my wife send them two chickens, they untied me from the tree. Then they forced me into portering for two weeks. I had to carry baskets weighing 20 viss [32 kg] to their camp. I escaped from them on 19 February 1994. The soldiers were from IB 84, LID 99. Their commander was Nyo Soe Min from Coy 1.

Interview: 19 - HRV: Livelihood, Slavery

Name: Maung D
 Sex: Male
 Age: 37
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

I was arrested with the others on 6 February. They were from LID 99, IB 84, commanded by Nyo Soe Min. They arrested us and asked, "How many of you are Karen soldiers? Three of you are Karen soldiers, isn't that right?" When I said no, they punched me in the face and once in the chest. They asked me for 250 kyats and eight bottles of alcohol, and then I was forced to carry rice for them to their army camp for two weeks. Each time I had to carry one and a half big tins full. After two weeks, I escaped.

Interview: 20 - HRV: Livelihood, Minority, Slavery, Torture

Name: Saw E
 Sex: Male
 Age: 23
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

On 6 February 1994 there was a funeral in our village. The soldiers arrested eight of us while we were going to the funeral service. Then they asked me some questions, but I don't speak Burmese, so they punched me twice in the face. They burned me on the legs, and I still have the scars. After they untied me from the tree, they forced me to give them a package of cheroots and a bottle of alcohol. Then I

had to carry 1,500 bullets at a time to the army camp for two weeks. Then three of us escaped; Saw C, Maung D and myself [see related interviews 16 and 19]. The troops were from LID 99, IB 84. The battalion commander is Aung Kyaw Min, and second commander is Zaw Min Oo.

Interview: 21 - HRV: Forced Labour, Torture

Name: Tha Ghay Mo
Sex: Female
Age: 50
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

It was a militia unit that tortured me. Their leader is Pa Lu Kyaw and second leader is Pa Noe. It was Pa Mo Roe, the third leader, who hit me. They are Karen [SLORC often conscripts villagers and townspeople to be "militia" units, gives them some training and captured weapons, then orders them to find and kill any Karen "soldiers". They operate in small groups of 8 to 10 men. Many immediately surrender their weapons to the Karen army and flee into hiding, but this particular group, whose three leaders are Karen, obviously relished their new-found power].

On 3 April 1994 they asked me if any Kaw Thoo Lei had entered the village, I said no. And then they just started beating me with a bamboo pole as thick as your wrist. They beat me three or four times on my ribs. I don't know, but I was told two of them are broken. It hurt a lot. I couldn't even breathe. After that I couldn't stand up, and I couldn't lay down either. Even now, people have to help me stand up or lay down. There is no hospital here, so I put special water and saffron on it. These men just accuse us, so we have to deny it and then they beat us.

In our area usually only the militia patrols around. I hear that they're paid a salary but I don't know who pays it. Sometimes they are together with the army from IB 24, whose commander is Maj Kyi Myint [aka Kyaw Kyaw Htay]. Every time IB 24 wants to come to the village they call the village head first, and the village head has to lead them here. Maj Kyi Myint usually asks the village head, "Are there any Karen soldiers around?" If the village head says no, he says, "Come along with me. If Karen soldiers shoot at me, I'll have your village burned down and I'll kill you as well."

When they are making a road they forced us dig, clear the scrub, build the road, and they also force us to do so many other things. The village head has to divide the village into parts, and each part must send its quota of people. They assign a certain length of road to each part of the village and you have to work until it's finished. Otherwise we have to pack our food. If part of the road goes near your village then you have to build that part. They started this road at Kler Khay, and so far it's got to Thu Kaw Bo.

Interview: 22 - HRV: Torture

Name: Naw Thaw Thi Mo
Sex: Female
Age: 50
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

I was beaten by a militia group led by Pa Noe, who is under Pa Lu Kyaw. This was on 16 January. They hit me three times with a stick as thick as my wrist, then they kicked me in the face once. They also beat me on the back with a stick. In hurt a lot, and when they kicked my face I fell down and hurt my arm. I couldn't move my arm for two months after that. Now it's getting better. They beat me because there was a Karen boxing tournament in our village and they said some Karen soldiers had come and joined in. I don't know if they did or not. At the time I was taking my turn as village head for 15 days, and when I told them I didn't know about it they beat me. I told the militia, "You are Karen, we are Karen, we tell you the truth and you do this. It's unbearable".

Interview: 23 - HRV: Torture

Name: Pu Klo Wah
Sex: Male
Age: 58
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

The troops came from IB 36, LID 33. Their battalion commander is Thein Zaw, and second-in-command is Kyaw Htoo. They arrested me on 21 April, and ordered me to tell them who in the village are the families of Kaw Thoo Lei. They said they already knew who they were but that if I didn't tell them I would suffer. I said there are no families of Kaw Thoo Lei here. I said the truth.

Then they tied me up so tightly that my blood couldn't flow, and the officer drubbed the back edge of his knife back and forth across my throat. They didn't give me food or water for the whole day. They kept me tied up for two day after my arrest, then on the third day they released me. They kept asking me where the Karen soldiers stay and where they meet, and I told them I don't know anything, and finally they released me.

Interview: 24 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Refugees, Torture

Name: Sai Lone
Sex: Male
Age: 29
Ethnicity: Shan
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Divorced with 1 daughter (age 3) who stays with her mother
Occupation: Day labourer
Address: Tachilek Township, eastern Shan state

[Sai Lone fled to Thailand after spending a year in a SLORC prison.]

I lived in a village, near Tachilek. In the winter of 1992/93, some of my friends said I should go with them to Ho Mong [headquarters of the MTA] and help them play music at the closing ceremonies of the military training there. So I went there as a drum leader with a team of girl dancers from my village, and they paid money. When I was practicing with my team in Ho Mong, I got message that the local SLORC authorities at home were calling me back.

A Burmese man in my village had told them I'd gone to Ho Mong. The message said if I didn't return my parents would be arrested, so we had to go back. When I got home, they called me in every day for a week to answer their questions. I knew they were going to arrest me, so I ran away to Chiang Mai [in northern Thailand]. I worked there for awhile and saved some money, so I went back to my village to give it to my parents and then SLORC arrested me. One of the commanders from 359 Infantry Battalion came in a car with his men and arrested me on 15 April 1993. After I was arrested they accused me of being a member of MTA, and of leading a band to Ho Mong to play.

They put me in the main prison at Tachilek and interrogated for one week. They kept me sitting in a chair with my hands tied to the chair, tied high up behind my head, and my legs tied to another chair in front. They slapped me in the face, and they hit me in the face with the butt of a revolver, hit, hit, hit, hit! I was going "Aw! Aw!", and I went dizzy. They hit me in the temple, and it was cut open and bleeding. They were army men, four of them; one interpreter [Shan to Burmese], two officers and one NCO [Non-Commissioned Officer, such as corporal or sergeant]. They asked me if I was a member of MTA and they said I must answer "yes", when I didn't say "yes" they beat me. They told me, "If you say 'yes' you'll get a lighter sentence, but if you say 'no' you'll be dead." They wanted me to answer "yes", but I never answered "yes".

After one month and 10 days in the prison I was called into the court by an NCO. There was nobody in the court except him and the judge. The judge was a civilian named U Tay Aung. Before that I had seen a lawyer, but he wanted too much money and I couldn't afford to hire him. In court they let me talk, so I said I wasn't a member MTA. But then they asked me if I thought the young girls who went with me should all be arrested and imprisoned like me, so I said "no", I would take the responsibility for all of them. So I was sentenced to one year in prison.

After that I had to stay another 24 days in Tachilek Prison, then I was sent to Kengtung Prison. I had to stay over five months there. In Kengtung Prison I saw many kinds of people; bandits, addicts, Chinese, Shans, all sorts of people. Some people died in prison because there wasn't proper food and we were undernourished. We didn't even have salt, just plain rice. People got sick. I saw many people die who were from near the Chinese border. They were in jail for being illegally in Burma. Most of them were from China, they went through Shan State to Thailand, then the Thai authorities arrested them and sent them back to Burma, so they were put in prison.

There were usually about 200 people in Kengtung Prison, but there's no limit. I was in a cell about 7 or 8 feet wide and about 100 feet long, with about 70 people. Our only job was fetching water for the families of the prison authorities. We weren't given any blankets for sleeping. The floor was wooden planks and we had to sleep on that. For a toilet there were a couple of oil drums sawed in half with two planks on top [to squat on] and we had to use these. Some prisoners were given the duty of cleaning out those drums once a day. We had to go to the toilet right there, and eat in the same cell.

At 8 a.m. they gave us a bowl of rice and yellow-bean soup. In the evening we were given some rice and rotten vegetables, rotten papaya or something inedible like that, and some green leaves. Every day people got sick because of malnutrition. People died of malaria, diarrhoea and other diseases. There's a hospital in the compound but they don't look after the prisoners, and there's no medicine there. People are only sent to the hospital when they're about to die. Every two or three days someone died.

After more than five months there I was sent to work on the hydro-electric project at Mong Kwan. They took us on trucks, 50 of us at a time. It took from 8 am to 1 p.m. to get there because it was still the end of rainy season, so the truck kept getting stuck in the mud and we had to push it. At Mong Kwan we were given some more food than in the prison, but it still wasn't enough. We had to stay in thatch huts, but the roofs were very leaky and it was very draughty. We had to work in chains. We had to carry rocks, and whenever we weren't quick enough or if the rocks were too heavy for us to carry, we were hit with a bamboo stick.

They beat me so hard with it sometimes that I just wanted to die. We also had to carry bags of cement, and when we couldn't carry them we were beaten. Some men were beaten until they lost consciousness, then they were left laying there the whole day like that. In front of me, I saw two old men beaten to death. One of them was 52 and the other was 57. I knew the 52-year-old man because he was my friend in prison – his name was Loon Ye, he was Palaung. He had been sentenced as a drug smuggler. I don't know if he was guilty, because we didn't talk about it. All I know about the other man is that he had an 8-year sentence, but it had been reduced to three years. I was working at Mong Kwan from 11 November 1993 until 26 February 1994, then I was sent back to Kengtung Prison, and on 1 March I was released because I'd served my time.

I was released a little bit early for good behaviour. Six of the Burman prisoners were released with me. While I was in prison my parents had come across into

Thailand, so I followed them, and I won't be going back. If the Thais try to send me back I'll run away somewhere. I feel bitter and I want revenge for what SLORC did to me. I've thought of joining the MTA because of it, but I don't think I will.

Interview: 25 - HRV: Detention, Livelihood, Minorities, Religion

Name: Sao Pala Dhamma
Sex: Male
Age: 53
Ethnicity: Shan
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Monk
Address: Mong Nawng, southern Shan State, now living in Thailand

[Sao Pala Dhamma has been living in Thailand for 28 years, but has just returned from a trip to his native southern Shan State and central Burma.]

I've been a monk since I was 12 years old, now I'm 53. That's 41 years. I've been in Thailand for 28 years. On 15 June I left here. At that time there was fighting at Tachilek. I went by plane from Bangkok to Rangoon. From there I went to Taunggyi, capital of Shan State for four days, then to Laikha [just over 100 km northeast of Taunggyi], then back to Taunggyi and flew back to Rangoon. Then I led the pilgrims north to Prome, Pagan and Mandalay, then to Taunggyi again. Then we went back to Rangoon, and south to Kyaikto in Mon State. Then I flew back to Thailand from Rangoon. The first half of the trip I was on my own, and the rest was a pilgrimage.

I was very discouraged by what I saw in Shan State. I saw the people suffering too much. If anyone could help them to liberate Shan State within the next few years, then there is hope. If not, within 10 years there will be little left that is Shan. All the Shan will either leave or be slaves. I've seen and heard that the people there now have to serve SLORC as porters and for all kinds of labour. As porters they are taken to the frontline, and when they get there they are forced to put on uniforms and sent in front of the troops to be killed. If there are 100 soldiers they'll take 200 porters, and put them around the soldiers so they'll be killed. The Shans are being wiped out in ways like this. At night soldiers keep them tied up to a long bamboo, and if one person has to go to the toilet they all have to go along. They treat the people just like animals.

When SLORC needs land they confiscate it from the people. On the whole trip I heard this news and saw with my own eyes. They're doing it everywhere. They confiscate the people's land and then use part of it to set up a military camp. They don't build the camp themselves – they make the people bring all the bamboo and wood and build it. They make military farms to grow rations for the Army, and they make the people work on this land without payment. They tell the owner, "This land is owned by SLORC", so if he wants to get it back he has to buy it from SLORC.

You can go and see the people suffering like that in Tachilek too. In Tachilek SLORC confiscates the paddy fields, divides them into blocks and then sells them

back to the people or to their own officers. For a block as small as 40 by 60 feet they charge 200,000 or 300,000 or 400,000 kyats, etc. The people can't afford to buy their land back, so they have to move away somewhere and make or buy a new plot for themselves. I don't know where to people go or how they survive. They have to send their children to work in Thailand to survive [this is how many young girls and women from Shan State end up trapped as brothel slaves in Thailand].

I didn't see any direct repression of religion, but they build pagodas in some places, and they force the people to contribute money to build them and all the materials they need. They look at how much money each family has and say "You, 3,000 [kyats]", and so on. This is how they take part in religion. They are also trying to wipe out Shan language and culture – they don't let people learn it in the schools. They only let the students learn Burmese literature, Burmese history, etc. If there were no monasteries then, by now the Shan language and culture would have already been wiped out.

The SLORC soldiers are also forcing Shan women to marry them. The people of the world should take pity on the Shan people and come to help us, or else all the Shan people will be wiped out. When there's fighting, the people feel a little bit encouraged because they think that could finally make them free from SLORC. But now there's fighting and both sides are drafting people into their armies, so the people are in more trouble.

In central Burma in some areas, the army is confiscating the farmland and forcing the people to grow corn or soybeans. Then the army just sells it as they like, and the people get nothing for their own. Not only that, but if the crop in the field is futile then the people have to bear the burden of that too – they have to pay the money for the crop to the army. If they don't have it, they have to sell whatever they have. It is a must. That's why people have to run away to other places.

In Shan State, there are places people can run to [the revolutionary areas or Thailand]. But in Burma, I don't know where the people to escape to. The army is just making its own business. They have plenty of soldiers who could work. If they didn't want to trouble the people they could do it by themselves. But they don't. They won't let the people do any business either. All the companies, shops and department stores are owned by their people.

Now they're building and repairing roads, and they force people to build platforms along the roadsides. If a platform goes in front of your house, you're forced to pay the army for that segment. If you can't, you're driven out of your house. You have to pay taxes for electricity and water even if you don't have electricity or water. The state electric department says that even if you don't have your own lights, you see lights on the street or in other places so you have to pay for that. They also make money by running the power very low, then suddenly jacking it up so everyone's fuses and things blow, and then they have to pay the state electric department to fix or replace them.

SLORC is also still stealing a lot of money from people's bank accounts for their projects in faraway areas. They just take the money out and then you get a

statement that the money was taken as your obligation toward such-and-such project. That way they're robbing both the people and the banks.

Most of the people have no faith in SLORC and want it to be replaced. But they dared not rise up again like in 1988. At present if there's even a slight suspicion, SLORC will shoot them. Now in the schools SLORC says the teachers must take responsibility for their students and the parents for their children, and if any students try to demonstrate then both their parents and teachers will be arrested. If you try to demonstrate they'll kill you on the spot. The people are desperate, and that's why they feel encouraged when they hear the fighting. If they all had arms and ammunition, even the Burmese would rise up and overthrow SLORC.

When the SLORC leaders are on television bowing and making offerings to monks, those are only token gestures. The reality is very different than what they show on TV. They look very humble on TV, but if any monk opposes them they'll arrest him. A lot of monks have been arrested and are still in prison. Many monks have died after being arrested, but they just disappear and nobody knows what happened to them. On this trip, the monks at the monastery at Po Pa in central Burma told me about one of their monks who died. His name was U Parama Won Na Di Ki. He died not because they imprisoned him, but because they forced him to leave the monkhood. It was during Saw Maung's regime. He was forced to disrobe but he couldn't bear to leave the monastery, so he stayed but he could only be like a holy layman. This mental torture killed him. He died of melancholy. He was about 50 years old.

If there is no outside help for the people, SLORC will remain as it is. The religion will continue, it won't vanish. But as for the SLORC leaders, they should remember that in return for oppressing the people and treating the monks like that, Saw Maung went mad. They will all go that way. I think this is why Khin Nyunt is now trying to be seen paying respect to the monks. On television we see them acting so humble and respectful to the religion, going to holy places and making donations, but actually they're still behaving the same as ever. You'll only see these things on television. They don't act like that except in front of the camera.

Interview: 26 - HRV: Detention, Torture

Name: Maung F
Sex: Male
Age: 39
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with children
Occupation: Small goods peddler
Address: Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District, Pegu Division

[The following account was given by a Karen political prisoner who was released from Bassein Prison in the Irrawaddy Delta in June 1994. He was not arrested in the Delta and it is unclear why they sent him there, but most of the political prisoners in that prison are Karen church and community leaders who were arrested after an abortive armed Karen uprising in the Delta in October 1991. Since then, SLORC has maintained a reign of absolute terror over Karen villages in the Delta, completely out of sight of the world community. Many of the prisoners he was with are probably presumed dead by their own families after disappearing two or three years ago in the hands of SLORC troops. This man's name has been changed and some other details omitted to protect him and his family.]

They arrested me on January 29, 1992. I went to a village where there was a family whose son wanted to join the Revolution, and his mother thought I had come from the KNLA to encourage the village youth to join, so she reported this to the authorities mistakenly, and the police came and arrested me.

They took me to Chaung Gone lock-up. I remember that they started to torture me on February 14, and they kept torturing me until 5 March. They tortured and interrogated me for long periods of time. They asked, "How many KNLA soldiers went to join the Karen soldiers in Delta?" I told them I don't know anything about that, because I don't. They asked me about General Bo Mya and 101 Battalion [KNLA] at Kawmoorah. I said I don't know anything about that because it's so far from Mone Township and I've never even been there. They slapped both my ears at the same time very hard with their hands. It made my ears ring and I went completely deaf for five minutes.

They punched me and kicked me, and they dragged me to the river and held my head underwater while they stabbed the back of my neck. They held my head underwater for over a minute at a time. The worst thing they did was electric shock. They put metal caps on two of my fingers and turned on the electricity, and they can control how much voltage they stab you with. They turned up the power higher and higher until it was unbearable. I felt paralysed for an hour afterwards, and it was so terrible that I couldn't do anything, I couldn't even eat.

I was interrogated by two police and an army intelligence. During my interrogation they didn't feed me any food for five days. One of the soldiers came and gave me some food secretly. The interrogators beat, punched and kicked me countless times and I got internal injuries, and you can see that my hand looks abnormal [Maung F's left arm is visibly deformed and shorter than his right arm

with a distorted swelling of the bone just below the elbow and a partly disabled hand, the result of a broken arm during the beatings which was never treated].

Some of the political prisoners from the pro-democracy uprisings had lots of money and they felt sorry for me, so they said things to cheer me up like "It's okay, you are going against SLORC, so don't feel small. We're going to help you as much as we can." They gave me some food and money and took care of me like their brother. I was at Chaung Gone for four months and 18 days, then they sent me to Ye Gyi for 71 days. Then finally on August 7, 1992 SLORC sentenced me to three years.

After the sentence, they sent me to Bassein Jail on August 15. In the jail there were so many people from different places, from Myaungmya, Ma U Bin, Bogale, Nga Pu Taw, Henzada, Inkapu and other places. There were 2200 people altogether, male and female. While I was there over 300 people died of diseases. When people got sick they weren't given any medical treatment – only when they were about to die they were sent to the prison hospital. Most of the patients died the next day after being sent. Most of them were over 60. A lot were KNU veterans or people who deserted from the KNU. After the Delta uprising SLORC had arrested them all again.

When I arrived at the prison they put me alone in a cell as a political prisoner. They didn't force the political prisoners to do labour. They put us each in a small cell. Early in the morning they let us go out to go to the toilet, then they made us go back in at about 7:30 am. At 12 noon we could go out again for a bath, and then back again at 3 p.m. After that they locked us up until the next morning. They fed us twice a day with enough rice, but the bean soup was very bad. They just put a few beans in much water, and they gave us bad prawn paste that was half paste and half sand. They just deliberately treated us badly. In the evening they gave us rice with boiled greens, just boiled in water without any salt or seasoning. Whether we liked it or not we had to eat it.

My cell was about 3 yards by 4 yards with a toilet pot in it. Sometimes three of us had to stay in there, and sometimes I was alone. I lived in that cell for over a year, and in an ordinary big cell with many others for over a year. After sentencing they never beat or interrogated us. We were never allowed to talk to each other, only to the guards, so I don't know much about the other prisoners. Even while we were taking a bath we weren't allowed to talk to each other.

Criminal prisoners, who were charged with rape or something, had to carry away the toilet pots. These are oil drums cut in half, and two of them have to carry them away on a pole. If they were too weak to carry them they were beaten like cattle. As for the old people, they made them catch or kill 1,300 flies every day. They said to them, "In jail all the people must work." The prisoners with sentences under five years were just made to work in the jail. Those who had sentences over five years were sent to work camps outside the prison for convicts. [this means labour on government projects such as roads and railways]. Those people had to work very hard.

They never allowed us to get pens, books, newspapers, magazines or letters, but it was easy to get them anyway if you could bribe them. Some prisoners had money

so they paid the guards 450 kyats every month, and the guards would get all those things for them. If they trusted a prisoner and liked him they'd let him act pretty freely. As for me, I was sentenced to three years but I was only in jail for just over two years.

After I was released I tried to go back to my family, but I couldn't even find my village. My village had been relocated. I only saw the pillars of the houses, and I had no way to stay there. Now I'm still looking for my wife. I'm trying to find them in the refugee camps. I don't know how to get revenge against SLORC. I'm afraid to fight them, and we've been oppressed since we were young, so all I want is to find my family. I miss my family, and I have no money and not even any clothes. I don't even want to stay alive anymore.

Interview: 27 - HRV: Religion, Torture

Name: U Ye Wa Ra Sara
Sex: Male
Age: 29
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Monk
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

[Note. U Ye Wa Ra Sara is a fully robed monk and stays in a monastery. When the soldiers beat him they were fully aware of this.]

I have been a monk for nine years. I was beaten by Than Htut. He is second in command of Coy 4, IB 36, LID 33. On 20 April, he accused me of spreading rumours that he is an alcoholic. He asked me if this was true, and I said no. Then later when he was drunk, he sent his soldiers to grab me, but I would not go to their camp so he came to me. He asked me the same question as before, then he took a carbine rifle from one of his soldiers and hit me on the mouth with the butt. It was painful, and blood started shedding from my mouth. My lip and tongue were split.

I tried to run but they followed me and shouted, "You are a rebel's monk!" Than Htut was very, very drunk. He took a big knife and asked me, "Do you like Kya Ni Gan's speeches?" [Kya Ni Gun is a famous monk in Burma whose discourses are distributed on tape.] I said "Yes", and then he pointed the knife at me. Just then his commander, Aung Kyaw Htoo, came and dragged him away. [Aung Kyaw Htoo is Second-in-Command of IB 36.] These same soldiers always come to the monastery to take our durian [a prized fruit] without even asking permission.

Interview: 28 - HRV: Child, Detention, Refugees, Repatriation, Women

Name: G
Sex: Female
Age: 14
Ethnicity: Burmese Indian
Religion: Muslim
Family: Single; 12 brothers and sisters, mother dead
Address: Pa-an Town, Karen State
Interviewed: September 1994

Thailand's Immigration Detention Centres (IDC) have become internationally notorious for squalid conditions and robbery, rape, and beatings by Thai police guards. They are built like high-security prisons; concrete cells, heavy bars, and armed guards. But the people in these cells are not dangerous criminals – they are mostly economic and political refugees from neighbouring countries and, as the following account shows, young children.

Any refugee at any age who is caught outside of a refugee camp can end up here, whether a Karen farmer who fled being taken as a SLORC porter, a pro-democracy Burmese student who fled to Thailand after the 1988 massacres, a Shan girl who was lured into Thailand by a brothel procurer's promise of a good job only to end up a brothel slave, or a labourer who fled Burma's ruined economy seeking a better chance in Thailand's "economic miracle". Thai police put all such people in IDC cells until they can be deported back into the hands of SLORC. If SLORC gets them, they are usually put in another cell until they either pay a heavy bribe or are sent to be frontline porters and human minesweepers for the military.

Fortunately, the Thais generally used to take the deportees to within a kilometre or two of the border and drop them there, which made it possible for many to sneak back into Thailand to be arrested again later. However, now Thailand has clamped down on refugees, and they have recently been deporting hundreds of IDC inmates every week to the remote border site of Halockhani, where they have been in the process of forcibly repatriating several thousand Mon refugees [see other related interviews]. They have also discussed with SLORC military officials at places like Three Pagodas Pass and Myawaddy. If this happens, it is horrifying to think of what SLORC will do with these people.

Even now, when they arrive in Halockhani many of them are extremely thin, weak, and suffering from severe mental and emotional trauma from their treatment by the Thai authorities. If this is the effect of the IDC on hardened adults, imagine its effect on children of 13, or 10, or 8 years of age. The 14-year-old who gave the following testimony speaks surprisingly maturely for her age, but never forget that underneath it all she is still 14 years old.

She was interviewed in early August as she was being deported through Halockhani. She had already fled back to the Thai side of the border together with the Mon refugees who had sheltered her, when the Burmese army attacked their camp on July 21. Since then the Mon refugees have been forcibly starved back across the border into SLORC territory once again by the Thai Army, and she has probably

been driven across together with them. If not, she may be back in Bangkok, in another IDC cell.]

My parents had a small shop in the market in Pa-an. Then my mother died, and my father was alone to take care of us. So I left more than five years ago [no more than 9 years old] with some of my brothers and sisters, and our father stayed in Burma. My eldest sister went to Thailand first. Once she was okay there, she came back to take me and two other brothers and sisters with her to live in Thailand. We went by truck from Pa-an to Kawkareik, then to Mae Sot [in Thailand] and from Mae Sot to Bangkok, step by step. We went in a group [in bribes].

In Bangkok I stayed in my sister's house. My sister had a small stand selling fruits, and I had to take care of the children in her house. Eleven people from our group of 21 stayed in her house, and the other 10 people stayed in another house. Her house only had two rooms. Another brother and sister of mine were working with cement on a building site. I learned to speak just a little bit of Thai, but I couldn't go to school.

A bit more than one year ago I was arrested for the first time. I was arrested together with a boy from my family. He was 8 years old. They put us in jail [IDC], and I was in jail for two or three months. In the evenings, a policeman came to the cell to ask some women to go with him. The women didn't want to go, but the policeman said, "You have to go. We will give you some money and we will feed you." After that, although the women didn't want to go he forced them. He grabbed their hands and took them with him. The police took five or six girls each time. Then in the morning, they sent the girls back to the cell. We asked the girls what the police did. They said the police told them to sit down near them. The men fed the girl with his spoon, the same one that he used, and then he made the girl feed him. Afterwards, they asked the girls to drink with them and after that, they told them to dance for them.

[Interviewer's question: What if the girls refused?] How could they refuse to do what the police ordered them to do?! They gave the girls some money afterwards. As for the rest of us, they wouldn't give us anything even if we begged them. [Note: it is quite clear that the girls she talks about were raped before being sent back in the morning, but G is very young and clearly didn't want to talk about that.] Once when the police called five or six girls from the cell they called me too, but I told them I didn't want to go. The policeman then said that he would feed me and give me some money, but I told him I had already eaten. He said "And was it enough for you?" I said, "Yes, it was enough", and then he didn't take me.

After two or three months they were deporting people to Three Pagodas Pass [a SLORC army post just across the border north of Sangkhlaburi, which is in Thailand's Kanchanaburi Province]. At the IDC in Bangkok, they asked us for 100 baht each for transportation. When we got to Kanchanaburi, they asked us for 50 baht to sleep there [there is another IDC in Kanchanaburi], and they also asked us for 100 baht more again. I only had 50 baht so I couldn't pay, but a man paid for me. After that, they took us by truck to Three Pagodas Pass, and when we got there some people from a foreign organisation gave us some rice.

Then I stayed for two months in a village between Three Pagodas Pass and Sangkhlaburi [in those days, the deportation trucks usually unloaded the deportees a short distance before reaching the border itself, and it was easy for them to double back into Thailand]. While I was there I did some of the washing, cooking and helping to take care of the person who was looking after me. My elder sister's husband knew I was there, and after two months he came and took me back to Bangkok.

When I got back to Bangkok I did the same as before, just stayed in my sister's house and looked after the children. Then I was arrested again. I went out with my nephew to buy some water. While he was buying it, I sat down outside and the Thai police caught me in the street. They took me to the IDC. When I got to the lock-up, a Thai policeman was whipping some women with a wire cable and a belt because they were drug addicts and prostitutes, and they had been taking drugs. This time they kept me in the jail for 20 days. I met some of my cousins who arrived in the jail seven days after me – they are a family with four children.

Now we've met again here at Halockhani. This time in the police had 10 girls who they took every time, nine Thais, or maybe they were Shans, and one Burmese girl. [Note: Shans are closely related to Thais.] The police called them at about 6 p.m. and sent them back at 5 am. They did the same to them as to the other girls. They give them food and they have to drink, sometimes alcohol and sometimes other things. Sometimes the police give them money. Those girls were already in the jail when I arrived, and now they're still there. The police are using them, and I think that's why they don't want to release them yet.

The police called me too, but I didn't go. There were two or three men who were guarding us, standing by the door. They were black men. [The word used means racially black African – these men may be African IDC prisoner/ wardens.] They said me, "Don't go with those other girls. If you go you'll get into troubles." They also said, "If the Thai police give you any food, don't eat it. You can get problems." The black men guards said that. I had four or five girl friends in the IDC, some girls are a little older than me and some are younger than me. Sometimes the police gave them some extra food to try to get them to go with them, but most of the time when the Thai police fed them they wouldn't eat it. They said they already had enough food with their rice.

In the IDC there were men who were beaten up, but not the women. The men were beaten up because they talked to the women, or sometimes because they had lost their papers or because they couldn't pay money to be transported. There were two full rooms of women and three full rooms of men. I don't know how many were in each room because I never went to the other rooms. In our room there were about 90 people. For one room, there was only one latrine and one place to shower, so it was very difficult. We had to take our baths during the night. The place was so narrow that it was difficult to sleep. We had to sleep on the floor with no mat or anything. There were many children who arrived together with their parents. The small children slept with their mothers.

In the IDC there were people from Burma, Laos, China, Cambodia and other countries, and I think even from Thailand. There were drug addicts there. We only got boiled rice to eat without anything else, no salt and no spices.

After 20 days I was deported. This time I didn't have to pay for transportation from Bangkok to Kanchanaburi, but from Kanchanaburi I had to pay. I only had 50 baht. I gave them 50 baht and I had to stay two weeks longer in Kanchanaburi IDC. Then they sent me here. I arrived here about 50 days ago, nearly two months. First I stayed with a family in Halockhani Camp. When the Burmese troops attacked we just followed the other people, and when we got here I had to stay in this IDC shelter [in "New Halockhani" on the Thai side of the border, many of the IDC deportees were staying all together in one narrow bamboo and plastic sheet shelter]. Between 20 and 30 people sleep in here, men and women all together. I stay beside my relative's family.

I want to go back to Burma and stay with my father. I haven't heard from him since I left. I don't know if my sister is still in Bangkok or not. My relatives here want to go back to Thailand, so I think I will try to go back to Bangkok with them and then go back to Burma through Mae Sot. [She will probably find that this is now impossible because of the Thai clampdown on refugees.]

Interview: 29 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Refugees

Name: U Tun Nyunt
 Sex: Male
 Age: 55
 Family: Married with 5 children
 Address: Tavoy Township, Tenasserim Division

[The following story is told by U Tun Nyunt, who was forced to work as a labourer for the construction of the Ye-Tavoy Railway and is now detained at IDC in Kanchanaburi Province of Thailand. This story was written in Burmese by the victim himself in a letter forwarded to ABSDF.]

I am now detained at IDC in Kanchanaburi Province and when I was in Burma, I earned my living as a tin miner. Last summer [March-May 1994], when SLORC troops forced local people to contribute labour for the construction of the Ye-Tavoy Railway, each household was forced to send one labourer. It was compulsory; therefore, I had to go.

Along with about 100 villagers from Myit Te, Myitta, Wah Gone, Nyaung Tone and Har Myin Gyi, I had to contribute labour, arranging by myself for the expenses – travelling charges, medicines and construction tools including baskets, pickaxes, mattocks, chopping hoes, grab hoes, and axes. All SLORC gave us was just ORDERS!

We were forced to work at gunpoint near Nat Kyi Zin and Paukpinkwin villages, bordering Mon State and Tenasserim Division. The construction site was about 100 miles from my village. We had to sell our possessions or borrow money

from somebody else in order to cover our own expenses because most of the labourers are as poor as I am.

Under the guise of collecting food for the labourers, SLORC troops forced the fishermen in that area to give fish paste, dried fish and money. But nothing was given to us. Because of malnutrition and back-breaking hard work, we suffered from malaria attacks which resulted in the deaths of over 30 labourers. LIB 406, 407, 408, 409 and 410 are in control of that part of the rail line. Despite their tight security, two of my friends and I fled to the Thai-Burmese border because we could no longer bear these hardships.

I earned my living as a day labourer at a Thai corn farm in Kanchanaburi after I fled into Thailand at Nat Ei Taung. In May, I managed the escape of my wife and children who I had left in Burma. At the border, the Thai BPP arrested us and sent us to IDC in Kanchanaburi where over 50 other Burmese were detained. Since then, my family and I have not been able to meet each other. We are detained in separate cells. I am in one cell, my wife and three children are in another cell, while my 16-year-old eldest daughter is in another. We were sent to the court for trial and charged with illegal entry and sentenced to pay fines. When we were not able to pay, we were sentenced to imprisonment.

It is known that, when the prison term is finished, we will be handed over to the SLORC troops in Three Pagodas Pass. We have no money to pay and nowhere to escape to. There has been a rumour that my eldest daughter was released when somebody paid for her fines. I am very much concerned about her. I am writing this letter to appeal to you to immediately save both my family and other refugees from IDC in Thailand as well as to save the people of Burma who are suffering under the rule of the military regime.

Interview: 30 - HRV: Child, Forced Labour

Name: Saw Htoo Wah
Sex: Male
Age: 13
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Thaton District, Karen State

My age is 13. At Nataw Full Moon [on 28 December 1993] I was guarding the road. Three of my friends, all girls, came to bring rice for their relatives who were guarding the road and they stopped where I was. They were afraid to go further because of the soldiers. At the same time the SLORC lance corporal arrived and asked me who these girls were that he didn't recognise. Then he looked at another boy who was there and said, "He must be Kaw Thoo Lei", but I told him that the boy is just a civilian from my village.

Then he pointed at me and asked one woman "Is she Kaw Thoo Lei?" She said I'm just a villager, but he didn't believe her so he pointed at me and asked one of the

girls, "Is this a boy or a girl?" The girl said that I am gay. [Note: he is not gay, but this was probably just an effort by the girl to make the lance corporal go away, hoping that he would believe that no one who is gay could be a Karen soldier.] Then the lance corporal stopped asking her about me. The girls were very afraid to walk further to see their relatives, and they decided to go home. As they were leaving the lance corporal pointed his gun at them. They started running and lost their food. Then the lance corporal left.

Later it was time for me to go back home to eat. It was going to get dark. The lance corporal stopped me on the way and asked me to go with him to catch birds in the forest. I refused because I was hungry. He said he hadn't eaten either but that he wasn't hungry, and asked me to go just for a while. Then he said I had to go with him, so I started following him. When we got in the forest he stopped and asked me, "How many brothers and sisters do you have?" and I said, "Just two." He said, "Are any of your brothers Karen soldiers?" I said no, and he said "Don't lie", so I said, "If you don't believe me, go and ask the village headmen. He will tell you."

Then the lance corporal told me to lie down face down. I thought he was going to shoot and kill me and I was going to die. But he started to rape me. He did it, and it hurt very much. After that, he let me go but told me not to say anything to the major or the headman about what he had done to me. He said, "If you tell anyone, I'll shoot you dead right away."

On the way back, I met soldiers who asked me who I was talking to, so I said, "The lance corporal." Then further on I was stopped by the major, who asked me the same question. I told him I was talking to his lance corporal, but he didn't believe me so I said he should ask the lance corporal. The major called the lance corporal and the lance corporal said it was true, so he let me go.

Then I went home to eat. After that I didn't dare go back to guard the road, so I asked one of my uncles to go in my place and I had to pay him 30 kyats. Later I met the lance corporal again, and he said he won't kill me because I didn't say anything to the major about what he did to me. The lance corporal is from Coy 1. I don't know his name, but the company commander is Lt Tin Hla Win. They are in IB 13, LID 33. The major's name is Hla Win.

Interview: 31 - HRV: Child, Forced Labour, Minority

Name: Nai H
 Sex: Male
 Age: 17
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Single; eldest son of Mi Ong Son (see interview 7)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: late March 1994

I'm 17 years old. I never went to school. When I was a child I went to school once. But then all the schools closed because of the 1988 Uprising. The schools were never open regularly. The teachers are from our village, and they just teach the children whenever they are free. [Other villagers present at the interview explained that given the difficulty of the struggle to survive, the comings and goings of SLORC troops, forced labour, etc., it is impossible to keep a school running properly in the village. Before SLORC, teachers were on occasion sent from Burma, but many villagers (usually with the influence of the NMSP) refuse to send their children to these teachers because they teach a nationalist Burman, anti-Mon curriculum where students are forbidden to speak anything but Burmese and learn the Burmese Army's version of history and other subjects.]

I had to go work at the railway line after harvest time in December because the soldiers ordered it. I only went once, then I ran away. It took one day's walk to get there, and I was there for 10 days. I worked with a group of 15 other young people, cutting down and carrying bamboo and vines and building shelters for the soldiers. The youngest person was 10 years old. We worked every morning until 11 am, then we rested and ate, then we worked from 12 noon until 4 p.m. Some of the huts we built were big, some were small. Most of them were big enough for two or three soldiers to sleep, with a raised bamboo floor and a roof of leaves.

We built 6 or 7 huts Within 10 days for SLORC. We also built some shelters for villagers, just a leaf roof without a floor. Some villagers had shelters to sleep under, and others didn't. We built our shelter bigger than the others because so many of us had to sleep under it. Then we put leaves on the ground and slept on them. We had to bring tools from our house, and our food as well. I took four small baskets of rice. There were many people at the railway. In our group no one was beaten, but one or two of us got sick. The sick people could go home if they got permission.

Interview: 32 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood, Refugees, Slavery, Torture, Women

Name: Naw Mu Mu Paw
 Sex: Female
 Age: 30
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist

Family: Married with 1 small child (2 other children have died of illnesses)
Address: Naw Pon Hta Village, Thaton District
Interviewed: early February 1994

I arrived here about a month ago [early January 1994]. All of our family came together, directly from our village. It took us 10 days on the way, because we had to be careful of the Burmese. There was no way we could stay around our village anymore, because when we were there we had to do so much slave labour. My husband was forced to go and work for SLORC all the time, so often that he couldn't provide for our family anymore. It became almost impossible to provide food for ourselves, so we came here.

When we were there we had to do so many things for the Burmese we had to guard the road, do labour and sentry duty at the military outpost, and other things too. Our village had to send people for camp labour five times a month, for five days each time. We had to rotate going, and every family had to take turns to guard the road. We also had to send 15 people at a time, for 15 days and nights each time. We had to sleep and eat there. We had to take our own food. If we wanted to sleep, we had to take turns – some had to guard while the others slept.

The soldiers told us, "You must guard carefully and watch out all the time for any Karen soldiers, and if you see any come and report it to us at once, or else we'll shoot you dead". Sometimes we saw some Karen soldiers, and we reported them right away. Sometimes this happened once or twice a month, and sometimes it was very rare. It depended on the situation.

The road was just about one kilometre from our village, and so was from the SLORC camp. While we were there guarding the road, sometimes they also forced us to carry rice for their camp, and we had to go do it day or night. If we tried to refuse they kicked us, beat us and yelled at us, so we had to go. They made us carry very heavy rice sacks [probably standard 100 kg sacks], only two of us to each sack. Most often, they forced us to guide their soldiers to wherever they wanted to go, day or night. They gave us no chance to refuse. Even when they were just going back to their camp or our village, they forced us to go as guides [this is probably to prevent Karen soldiers from shooting at them]. The forced labour situation is gradually going from bad to worse now.

When the Burmese troops come to the village it is unspeakable. If they see any men, they take them all away as porters, so many of them. If someone runs from them they shoot that person. They try to steal whatever they want in the village. They take our livestock like it was their own, and no one dares to stop them. They arrest villagers for absolutely no reason. They come to capture you, and if you run then they shoot you to death. I've seen them do this many times, to at least five or six people.

Just before we left, SLORC kept coming to our village again and again, whenever they heard news that Karen soldiers were in the area. Whenever we heard SLORC were coming we dared not stay in our village. Their camp was only one kilometre away. It's called Ku Lay Camp, and they are IB 24, but I don't know the

officers' names. Now they're in the village almost every day of the month. They take porters all the time, including the village girls, and send them to their frontline operations here in the border area.

They summoned us to send porters for them so many times that the villagers were all too tired to go any more, so they came to the village themselves to get porters. One time a man was sent orders by an officer to go to their camp to be a porter but he didn't go, so they came and got him themselves. They blindfolded him, beat him and poured hot water into his mouth. The man's name is Pa Moh Roh. It took him a very long time to get better after that.

One time when we were forced to go as sentries, we were there with 12 soldiers spaced out on either side of us. At one sentry post there were three girls aged 16 or 17 and an old woman together. In the night a group of Burmese soldiers came to them wearing Karen soldiers' camouflage uniforms and carrying a big knife. They called, "Don't shout, we're Karen soldiers", but they were SLORC. There were five of them and only three girls, and they tried to rape the girls. The old woman tried to stop them, but there was nothing she could do and a soldier said, "Don't move or I'm going to kill you".

One of the girls tried to stop them by yelling, "Go and rape my Grandmother!" [i.e. the old woman; a sarcastic remark aimed at embarrassing the soldiers] so they strangled her and raped her – afterwards her neck hurt so much that she couldn't eat for three days. Another girl climbed a tree to escape, but the soldiers pulled her down out of the tree and then raped her. Later she ran back to the village and told the village headman, "We can't go back there – they raped us" – and described what had happened. The next day the village headman reported it to the SLORC officer, and he took action by beating those soldiers. The girls' names are Naw Mee Mee, Aye Mya Kyi and Ma Kyi Ket.

Interview: 33 - HRV: Displacement, Execution, Livelihood, Refugees, Relocation, Slavery, Women

Name: Daw Mya Thein
 Sex: Female
 Age: 39
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with 5 children
 Address: Papun District
 Interviewed: early February 1994

My village is located southwest of Papun. It is a Burman village and there are about 50 houses. There are many Burman villages in the area, and many Karen villages. Two of my sons are in Burmese army, but I don't know where they're posted. [Note: like the majority of people in the area, the boys are probably illiterate and cannot write letters, or they may be prevented from writing letters by their officers, a common practice in the Tatmadaw.]

We came six days' walk to the refugee camp about 15 days ago [late January 1994] because at home it was very hard to survive anymore. SLORC made us do slave labour and pay tax for "porter fees". For porter fees each family had to pay 320 kyats every month [SLORC claims that this money is to pay salaries to conscripted military porters, but porters are never paid]. We had to do so much slave labour that we had no time left to work. If my husband couldn't go I had to go in his place.

Mostly we had to carry the soldiers' rice and supplies from the village to Nat Kyi Military Camp. As a woman, they made me carry 16 kg at a time. We also had to go for a week or 15 days at a time to do labour at the military camp. We had to clean the military camp compound, clear all the scrub from both sides of the road, dig trenches and make fences for the soldiers, cut down trees and bamboo, and make leaf roofing shingles for them. If you don't go you have to pay money.

Sometimes even while we were carrying for them they also forced us to give them chickens, goats and pigs in addition. Between each 15-day shift of labour we were left with only 10 days to provide for our families. While we were working at the camp they only gave us some food. They beat people and sometimes even killed them. I saw them beat men from my village – their names were Nga Tin, Nga Soe, Aung Khin, Maung Aye, and Ta Yot Pyu. I don't know why the soldiers beat them – maybe they didn't like the way they were working. SLORC soldiers have also beaten my relatives and others in Bilin Town and Mi Kyan Win, Shan Ywa, Tha Yet Pin Kyaun, and Meh Pu villages. They beat my relatives Maung Tin Than [male] and Ma Khin Nyunt [female], because they were too afraid and didn't answer properly when the soldiers asked them some questions.

The people they killed were mostly from Karen villages. They suspected them, accused them of being Kaw Thoo Lei and killed them, but these people were just civilians. I saw five of them. Three of their names were Aung Thin, Ngy Soe, and Aung Pu, but I don't know the names of two others, and I don't know where they were killed. We just saw the SLORC soldiers beat them with a very big stick, drag them out of their houses and then out of the village. The soldiers killed them just on account of "suspicion".

The soldiers force all the men to guard the road, and sometimes the men have to go in front of the troops on operations just to clear the landmines. One man from every village or group of houses has to go, sometimes 200 or 300 men altogether because there are so many little groups of houses around. They have to walk in front along with one cart pulled by a cow, then the soldiers follow behind. No landmines exploded near my village, but it happens sometimes in other places. The villager steps on the landmine and the soldiers just ignore and leave him there. They never help those men. In our area they don't force us to clear the road when a truck is coming, but when they come on foot they always drive people in front of them.

Last November [1993] SLORC were on operation, and they came and raped Mi Cho, Aye Ma, and Mi Nwe. The soldiers just went into their houses and raped them. They didn't get pregnant, but they reported it to the SLORC officer. He punished the soldiers by making them run around the village with heavy packs on.

Sometimes the villagers are so afraid that they run away from the soldiers, and then the soldiers try to catch them and beat them. Whenever SLORC goes on operations they come and take women porters from our village. When they can't catch the men they force the women to carry supplies to Nat Kyi Camp for them. Two months ago they came and took 50 porters from our village, including pregnant women. They forced them to carry supplies to Noh Kaw Hta and Noh Kaw Kee. They don't care about age. If a girl is big enough to carry two big tins (one tin holds about 15-18 litres) then the soldiers force her to carry for a one or two night trip, including old women and pregnant women.

They also force villages to move. They forced villagers from Tha Yet Pin and Shan Ywa villages to move to Mi Kyaun Win, and Tha Yet Pin Seit had to move to Kyaik Maw Win. At the new places the villagers had to clear the bush to build houses by themselves, and there were landmines close all around. They have to go very far just to get water, at least 500 metres down the hill. Now they just have to survive day by day, doing day labour for money cutting bamboo, cutting sugarcane or cutting wood.

About 400 families from my area have already fled. Everyone from small villages has to flee to big villages, the forest, or the refugee camps. My village has 50 houses, but when I left there were already 200 houses there from all the smaller villages around. Over the last three months very many villagers have been sick. At least five or six adults have died of sickness in my village, and at least 10 children.

Now around my village everyone is getting poorer and poorer, especially every time SLORC starts an operation. There are so many ways they abuse us, and I feel great pain about them. If I were a man I would arm myself and fight to avenge all of their horrible treatment of villagers. But as for going back, absolutely not. I'll end my life here.

Interview: 34 - HRV: Child, Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Relocation

Name: Maung I
 Sex: Male
 Age: 42
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with 2 children
 Occupation: Trader
 Address: Hlaing Bwe Township, Kaen State
 Interviewed: 16 March 1994

[The following account of some of SLORC's severe mistreatment of villagers in the Hlaing Bwe Township area of Pa-an District in Karen State was given by an ethnic Burman trader who travels the area buying and selling goods. As such, he gets a very good view of the systematic human rights abuses being conducted in the whole area by SLORC troops.]

I'm Burman myself, but I want to tell you about all the many kinds of abuse SLORC does to all the villagers around there, about forced labour, slave labour, torture, collecting porters, and murder. They do such horrible things. Starting from last November and December 1993, it was time for them to build roads up to their operations areas [the "frontline"]. There are very many villages in Pain Kyone Township [east of Hlaing Bwe] - like Tha Mo, Pah Gyi, Pah Ka, Leh Ghay, Leh Gyi, Nya Mayaw, Pa Nah Gyi, and Eh Thay Gone. The SLORC troops collect at least 20, or sometimes 30 or 40 villagers from each village to do slave labour building the road, and the villagers have to bring their own food. Mostly what the villagers have to do is clear the bushes on both sides of the road.

SLORC hopes that if there are mines there the villagers will step on them, so by clearing the bushes they are really clearing mines for SLORC. Also, before the army trucks come along the road they force the villagers to go along the road first in their cattle carts. SLORC wants to get rid of landmines, so they use the people to sweep for them. All the villagers who live near the road have to suffer like this.

SLORC is building a road from Hlaing Bwe Town to their Operations Camp of 928 Military Strategic Command, at Ler Bu. They are building the road right now. I've heard many times of villagers being beaten while working on the road, but I haven't seen it myself. The village heads are all getting orders demanding slave labour. I think they could use their soldiers to do the work, but they just oppress the villagers instead. The Karen villages have to suffer the most. The villagers have no time to work for their families, because most of the time they have to work for SLORC. They have nothing to eat. They have already given all their livestock to SLORC soldiers.

There are also many kinds of slave labour cleaning the compound in the army camp, finding firewood for the soldiers, cutting bamboo for them, and sometimes we have to carry water for them. It is hard labour so the villagers don't want to go. Sometimes the villagers don't go, so the soldiers send an order to the village head saying, "You're responsible for the village, so collect the villagers and bring them to work or else we will come arrest all of you and take severe action."

Once when Tha Mo Village refused to go for slave labour they sent a package to the village head with a message that said, "You figure out what this means." When the village head opened it he saw one red chilli, one bullet, and one piece of charcoal. At first no one understood it, but then people guessed; the chilli is very hot, so it means we have to suffer a hot situation and a great deal of trouble, the bullet means they will shoot us and kill us, and the charcoal means they will burn down our village. After that the villagers were very afraid to refuse again. SLORC was threatening them.

They kill porters - they use old porters and if they can't carry anymore or get sick, the soldiers kill them or leave them behind. We see their dead bodies in the forest. They also killed a friend of mine named U Soe Thein from Ka Ma Ko Village. They just beat him to death with a very big stick. No one knows why they killed him. This happened in November 1993. In every village which is anywhere near a military camp, SLORC orders the village head that no lights can be used in

the village, no one is allowed to use a flashlight, and no one can go out before 6 a.m. The order says anyone who breaks the rule will be shot on sight.

In Ter Pa Ket Village in March 1993, one night at about 9 o'clock there were many villagers at one house for a funeral. The villagers were drinking. SLORC IB 28 came into the village and went straight to that house. When the villagers saw the SLORC troops they were very afraid, so one began to run so they grabbed him and shot him, but he was still alive so they beat him to death with a very big pounding stick. The villagers' names were Bo Dot and Saw Heh. Both of their wives had already died. Saw Heh took very good care of his three children, but now his three children are orphans. It's a horrible crime.

The soldiers are trying to drive Pain Kyone Village out, but the village has not moved yet. The people there say they won't leave their village and their farms, so for now they are still living there. SLORC came with a bulldozer and bulldozed Gaw Ler Village without even warning them first. It was a small Karen village, with about 10 houses. The villagers had to run away, and they couldn't even carry their belongings. Then SLORC built a camp for IB 338 and 39 there. They had a budget from the army to build the camp, but they didn't use it. They used slave labour of villagers from Ta Maw, Pa Gyi, Wah Kyi, Pah Ka, Da Maw Kah Kee, Nat Kyi, Tha Yet Taw, and Leh Ker Day villages. Most of the people there are Pwo Karen.

My village is Burman, so they don't do too much there, but they abuse the Karen villages much more. There are IB 338, 39 and 28, and they belong to 928 Operations based at Ler Bu. I only know Lt Kyaw Kyaw from IB 28. IB 28 is the worst, but the others are also bad. Whenever they enter villages they steal as much of the villagers' livestock as they can catch, and loot the villagers' property. Most of the Burman villages are closer to the town, so they are more careful about human rights and they treat the people better. But sometimes if they need porters, they surround the cinemas even in the downtown area, grab the people and use them as porters.

The "porter fees" we have to pay are indescribable. We have to pay them several times a month. One old woman complained that, "We are very poor already, but to make it worse we must pay porter fees many times. Sometimes there's no money to pay with. I had to sell my daughter's new sarong just to get money to pay porter fees." The amount depends on the situation – sometimes we have to pay twice a month, sometimes three times. Each time we pay 200, 300 or 400 kyats – the minimum is 200. Most people are now just living from hand-to-mouth. Some are traders, like me, but we have to cross so many high mountains just to get our living. It's a very hard road, and rocky. No one wants to earn their living the hard way, but they have no other way to earn it, so they must in order to survive.

Some villages are quite big, so the villages collect money and build a school for their children, but then SLORC doesn't allow it. They come to the village and give the villagers big problems. So the villagers have to teach their children secretly. SLORC has a school close to the town, and they say that any villager who wants their children to go to school must send them to this school and no other. But the villagers can't because it's too far. To get there takes a 7-hour walk, from early morning till noon.

[With all SLORC's looting and porter fees, the parents could never afford to pay boarding fees in town for their children, and they also need them at home at least part of the day to work for the family's survival]. Now SLORC has called all the heads of villages to a meeting to pay donations for education. Each village must pay 1,000 kyats, and SLORC says this money is to pay for education everywhere, including Rangoon. But I think they're just taking the money for themselves.

Interview: 35 - HRV: Forced Labour, Refugees, Torture, Women

Name: Pa Li Kloh
Sex: Female
Age: 25
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Single
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Hlaing Bwe Township, Karen State

I arrived here a few weeks ago. In my village, the SLORC troops always came and grabbed people to do forced labour. Because of that, we don't have any time to do our own work. Even when we go to our fields the soldiers come and grab us. One day the soldiers suddenly arrived at my hut. My older brother and sister escaped, and I was left alone with just my two younger sisters. They started crying loudly, and then two of the soldiers came up to me, pointed their guns at me and told me to follow them. They took me to their camp. When we got there I saw our village headman and asked him to vouch for me so I could escape. Some of my girl friends were also there.

The soldiers didn't give us any food, and at night we were very hungry. I told my friends I didn't want to sleep there, but it was raining heavily and my friends said, "Don't try to escape. We will sleep close together tonight for safety." Later I found that there was a soldier there who speaks Karen who already wanted me and had already told his officer that he wanted to sleep with me, but at the time I didn't know, so I went to sleep close to my two girl friends. When I fell asleep, the soldier came over and grabbed me. I told him, "I don't like you. You are not of my people," but he said, "I'll take you and you'll have to be my wife." I kept refusing.

The next day they let us go, but he followed me to my house. Along the way I tried to look very angry and didn't smile, because I hated him and wanted him to know it. Then he stayed for three days at my house with my family [SLORC soldiers often intrude on families this way, and there is nothing the family can do]. After three days he asked me to go back with him. My mother was very worried because she said he would just take me and keep me in the jungle, but I dared not refuse so I had to go. He kept me at the camp for three days and raped me in the daytime.

I told him, "I don't like you and I won't marry you," but he kept saying, "I will marry you and look after you." Then he took me back to my house and forced my parents to marry him. They had to because they couldn't do anything else. Then he

said he would take me home with him. He took my earrings and my clothes and sold them. Then he took me to Rangoon. He asked me to go watch videos with him, but when we arrived at the movie house he slapped me in the face so hard I got dizzy. He dragged me back to his house, started beating me up and told me he would sell me in Myawaddy [meaning across the border into a Thai brothel. Myawaddy is at the Thai border].

After that I escaped when he wasn't there and went back to my village, but every time I did this he followed me, caught me and beat me again. He told me to give him all my belongings, and he kept beating me up all the time. One day when I was in my village he came back to my house very drunk. I told him to eat something, but he told me he didn't want to eat and slapped me in the face. I got very angry and told myself, "I hate this man. I didn't want to marry him, and now I have to retaliate even though I am a woman." So I kicked him right out of my house. He fell under the house, then tried to climb the ladder to get in again but every time I kicked him down again.

He got very angry and said, "You don't respect me – you're trying to humiliate me. You're a woman but you keep kicking me". Suddenly he managed to grab me and tried to strangle me. One of my cousins came to help me and I escaped and ran away. The soldiers went to my father and told him, "Tonight I'll kill her and burn your rice barn". He ordered my father and sister to look for me, and they found me in a small hut where I was hiding and took me home. I washed my feet and went in, and the soldier asked me stupid questions like, "Do you have brothers and sisters? Are your parents still alive?" I said yes. He asked, "Do you have your own family?" I said no.

Then he told me, "Make your bed. Tonight you will be killed, and I'll drink your blood. I won't leave this house until I've drunk your blood. Here is the knife. Wait and see, you are worthless. When I kill you, I'll also kill your parents, brothers and sisters. But the most important thing is that I must drink your blood before I leave. Then I'll burn your body until only ashes remain, and I'll put all the villagers on a skewer and burn them all. And I'll kill all the monks!"

I got up and escaped. I went to another house, and the people told me, "He's taken his gun and he's looking to kill you, and he's going to burn the rice barn at your house." I dared not stay in the village anymore, so I ran to J Village and talked to the headman. He said, "If you want to go, then go. He might try to follow you. Just go." So I came here together with my father and we built this house. We arrived a few weeks ago. I was married to a soldier for about three months ago. His name is Soe Soe, and he is from IB 358. If he ever finds me, he'll kill me at once. The battalion commander is Maj Aung Khine.

I got pregnant, but when the soldier was beating me he always kicked me in the belly, and it hurt the baby inside. When I was two months pregnant I lost the baby because he beat me. Even now, I still don't feel completely well. It hurts inside, and I can't do heavy work or carry anything heavy anymore. I feel dizzy all the time.

We are all suffering because of them, and we can't suffer any longer. If people had enough food they could survive in my village, but they don't. We had a religious

ceremony in our village and many people came, so SLORC came to get people for forced labour. We asked them to wait two or three days for the ceremony to finish, but they didn't listen. They came in and tied up the headman they'd appointed for the village [in each village SLORC appoints a villager as headman and others as a "committee" usually against their will.

The villagers also have their own real headman]. They told him, "You said your villagers are good, but when we need them they are lazy." Then they started beating him up, kicking him, and slapping him in the face, and then they took people away without even letting them get a change of clothes or their slippers [when entering a Buddhist temple compound people must leave their footwear outside].

Once when my younger sister had to go do labour and guard the road, the soldiers said to them, "We asked for 20 people for labour and you only send 10. Why? Do you feel strong enough to do the work of 20 people?" Then they forced two women to carry one sack of rice [this is a job for four people] and they didn't even give anyone any food. When they got home they were sick. I've been a porter many times and they never gave us food. When we got weak and couldn't carry anymore they yelled at us: "Go!"

They beat up the men but not the women. Whenever they caught a man, they tied him up and beat him up right away. They come to the village to grab porters every month, in every season. We have to for two or three days at a time. Then sometimes we have to go home to get some food and go straight back to work. As for my brother, he was arrested last year. They tied him up, beat him and tortured him. We asked the soldiers for permission to see him but they refused. Then this year, they beat him up again. They kicked him, hit him with a bamboo rod and slapped him.

It took us two days' walk to come here. We dared not go back. We wanted to go across and stay on the Thai side [of the border] but we were told to stay here.

Interview: 36 - HRV: Livelihood, Refugees, Slavery, Torture, Women

Name: Naw Paw Ther
Sex: Female
Age: 32
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Widow with 2 children (age 5 and 11)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Hlaing Bwe Township, Karen State

I arrived here two weeks ago. Last month when I had to go for slave labour, I was raped by a soldier. We went to work at their army camp for five days, and when we got there they refused to give us any food. Everyone had to work without food, so the next morning my friends and I had to go back to the village to get some food. After we brought it back to their camp, two men escaped from the slave labour at night, so the soldiers went to try to catch them and made things harder for the rest of us. That's why they wouldn't let us go back to the village after that. Altogether there were 19 of us, 11 men and 8 women.

That night a soldier came, grabbed my shoulders and pushed me down. Then he covered my mouth so I couldn't yell. Then he kissed me and he raped me. I felt so terrible. The soldier said, "Don't tell anyone about this", but I said, "I will tell because I fell so terrible about it." I went to his commander Myint Shwe Htoo to report it and told him how terrible I felt, and he told me I could go do whatever I liked, so I left. He made the soldier carry a log around the camp just once as punishment. I don't know the soldier's name. This happened a month ago at K Camp of IB 28. It is close to our village.

The labour we have to do at the army camp is cutting trees and bamboo. We haven't been beaten at this army camp, but when we have to go for work at other army camps I've seen the soldiers beat people on the head with a big stick. Then when they've beaten them enough, they start kicking them, and then they make them keep working. The soldiers never give them medical treatment, just beat them and make them work. I've also had to go as a porter to carry ammunitions and rice – sometimes only 3 viss [5 kg] but sometimes 10 or 20 viss [16 to 32 kg]. We had to go two days' walk in one direction, and sleep on the ground, in open places in the mountains. I saw them beating the porters who got weak and couldn't carry.

They beat them with a bamboo rod on the back, the hips, the arms and legs, and yell "Go! Go!" One time they didn't give us any food, just let us starve for two or three days. My aunt L— was crying because she was hungry. We cried and we asked permission to go home and get food but they refused. Even though we were crying they refused. My aunt L— is 48 years old and has four children. People got stomach-aches from starvation. All of our food we'd brought from the village was

finished because they told us we were going for just one day, then they kept us for several days.

The soldiers also make us give porter fees of 45 kyats from each person every month, and when we can't afford to pay them, they come to our village and arrest people [the soldiers claim that "porter fees" is money to pay munitions porters, but the money is never used for anything like this – all porters are taken on a slave basis].

When I have to go as a porter, my children have to stay with relatives. My husband died last year. He was taken as a porter, he was sick when he got home, and then he died. My father is also dead. Only my mother is still alive. We didn't want to stay there anymore, so I came here with my children. I don't want to go back.

Interview: 37 - HRV: Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Slavery, Torture

Name: Nan Thein Thein
Sex: Female
Age: 35
Ethnicity: Pwo Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 4 children (age 6 to 13)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Hlaing Bwe Township, Karen State

I arrived here yesterday. I came because we had no more money to pay porter fees, so I dared not stay in the village any longer. Most of the men have already run away so the soldiers tried to catch the women, and I was afraid to stay. My husband doesn't know I came here because when I came he had already fled from them. I don't know where he is. I hope to find him here. I just arrived so I don't even have a house to stay in yet. If I find my husband he could build a house for us.

Two years ago the soldiers came one night and asked me to go with them. I dared not go so they beat me with their guns. I was pregnant, and I fell down on my belly and it was hurt, and my baby was hurt inside. Two days later I had a miscarriage and lost my baby. I was so sick from it that I had to go to the hospital, and they had to make an operation to cut my womb. Now I can't have children anymore.

Now the soldiers come to the village and ask for money. Every month they demand 200 or 300 kyats. Sometimes they also make us go for forced labour, and every month we have to pay 1,000 kyats as labour fees [SLORC says this is to hire labourers] and to pay the SLORC militia. We don't know how they really use the money. They say that if we can't pay it, we won't be allowed to stay in our village anymore. They come and steal everything, and they come to take porters to their camp.

We are very afraid but we have to go. Sometimes we had to go for one month. I wanted to hire someone to go in my place but I had no money. If you borrow money from others, you have to pay interest. I faced that problem.

There used to be over 100 houses in my village, but many people have run away and now there are only 10 houses left. The soldiers often ask for 10 or 20 porters every month. Each household was ordered to send one family member, sometimes including many women. SLORC also grabbed people to be porters whenever they came to ask for money and when we couldn't pay. Sometimes I've been a porter for one or two days, sometimes for over a month. We had to carry rice, ammunition, salt, chillies and sugar, and we also have to carry the soldiers' clothes. I was very afraid of them all the time. They scolded and cursed me. Sometimes the women had to carry two 81mm mortar shells each. We had to go to Lu Pleh and to other places. The soldiers are from IB 331 and 339. I know of Capt Than Shwe and Capt Than Win from IB 331, and Capt Soe Teh from IB 339. I've see many men brought back from being porters with broken legs.

Interview: 38 - HRV: Child, Detention, Displacement, Slavery, Torture, Women

Name: Naw K'Ser Paw
 Sex: Female
 Age: 38
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with 6 children (age 2 to 16)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Nyaunglebin District, Pegu Division

[Naw K'Ser Paw's husband is a Karen soldier. She fled her village and arrived in Karen-controlled territory in June 1994.]

I was arrested at the start of this year. The SLORC soldiers surrounded the house, called us to come out and said, "If you don't come out we'll drag you out!" Then they started to punch me.

They tried to punch me in the face but they missed, then they tried to punch me in my back but instead of me they hit my baby son in the head. I thought he was going to die. He wasn't even breathing. There was also a man staying at our house to protect us, and they hit him with a gun about 10 times. There were about 200 soldiers – that's a lot! Their commander was Maj Myo Tint.

They tied us up and took us to the headman's house in the village. At the same time they took all our cattle. They kept us there one night, then the next day they took us to Tat Tu Camp. Along the way they made me and my baby son sit under a hut for about four hours. They didn't give us any food. At Noh Po they took our photo twice. First they made me stand under a tamarind tree, put on my bamboo hat and hold my son, and the second time I had to sit cross-legged with one of the bags I'd brought along and my son in my lap. When we arrived at Tat Tu they asked me a

lot of questions about my husband and then put us in the jail. The next morning they took us to a bigger jail in Tat Tu, where they kept us for eight days.

We were locked up together with Naw Ta Blu Htoo and her son, just the four of us. They just kept us in the cell. My son had diarrhoea and they wouldn't let us go out to the toilet. I thought, "This time, he's going to die. Even if he doesn't die here, he'll die in the next place for sure." But luckily he could eat a little bit, and one of the sentries gave him two tablets to stop the diarrhoea and it stopped. The soldiers interrogated me about my husband.

They said: "Ask your husband to come and surrender to us. We won't kill him, and then you can all go and live in Ler Doh." I told them that my husband doesn't do anything for me and that I never even see him. I'm left alone with only my baby son, just the two of us. They said, "You're lying. We arrested you because you're a liar," and they kept telling me to call my husband to come and surrender.

While we were there they called out some other people in the jail and killed them. They accused those people of being spies. We saw them digging the ground beside the jail to bury themselves. Then one evening they called us so we thought they were going to kill us because we were the only two left, each of us with our child. I said to Naw Ta Blu Htoo, "This time I am going to die." I couldn't carry my son with me because they'd beaten me on my back and it was too painful, so Naw Ta Blu Htoo and I went to them alone. They told us, "We won't kill you, but we want the truth." Then they asked us questions.

Then Maj Nyo Aye took us to Thu K'Bee. On the way they tied two of us together and we couldn't even walk along the paddy dikes in the rice fields. Sometimes we had to cross rivers where water was up to our waists, and I also had to carry my son. When we got to Thu K'Bee they took us apart and tied us up separately, then we went on to Seik Gyi, then by truck to Nat Than Gwin and eventually to Tham Bo Camp.

At Tham Bo we had to work starting at 6 a.m., clearing the bushes and cleaning around the senior officers' houses. We had to make fences around their houses, cut wood and carry water. There were many others being held prisoner like us, not only Karen but Burman too. There was one group of 24 people they arrested all together. Then 20 of them were released and only four of them were left. Everybody had to work, Burman, Karen, everybody. The soldiers hit me on my back and kicked me in the head. The only food we had was sent to us from our village, it wasn't SLORC's food. Sometimes we only had rice, not even any fish paste or salt.

They sent messages to our children and relatives back home to bring us food but when they came they wouldn't let us see them. If they brought salt, rice and chillies for us then often the soldiers took it all. If they brought money for us to buy medicines, the soldiers just took it all and never gave it to us. We couldn't do anything about it because we were in prison. When the people from our village couldn't come, we were only fed once a day until they brought more food.

After three months at Tham Bo they took us to the police camp at Ler Doh for one night and one day without food. Then they took us to the court [she probably means the township LORC office]. At the court they told us: "We arrested you

because of your husbands, not because of yourselves. Because your husbands are very bad men. We need to kill them, though in a way I don't want to kill them." Then I had to pay 16,000 kyats to Ye Soe. He is the superior of Maj Myo Tint, who arrested me. I also had to pay 2,400 kyats when we were at the police station. They told us if we didn't give them the money they asked for they'd put us back in prison, so we had to give them everything because we couldn't bear to stay there anymore.

Then they released us, but even after I was back at home they still came once a week to interrogate me. They asked me questions and said, "Your husband didn't surrender to us. You're a liar", and they beat me up. I told them, "Since you released me I haven't seen my husband. I know nothing about him. Just ask the village headman." The headman confirmed that my husband hadn't been around, but SLORC said if anyone saw my husband around there, they'd kill our whole family. They said they'll be watching and come back again. I got so sick I was paralysed for two days. People thought I was going to die, and they gave me 14 or 15 IV drips before I got better. I don't know what it was. Just after that Major Ye Soe came and ordered me to get out of the village.

I moved to my aunt's house in another village, but I couldn't stay there because she was afraid to get into trouble because of me. The SLORC people there called her in and told her they didn't want me there. They told me to go and report to the police and the army, but I didn't want to do that after what they did to me last time. So I ran away from that place and came here.

SLORC had done other things to me before too. One time my father asked me to go and buy 30 packets of cheroots for him. I went alone, and when I passed an army outpost the sergeant stopped me and said: "Give me a light. I want to smoke." When I tried to give him a light he grabbed my hand and said, "Last night, 15 people slept in your house. Do you know who they are?" I told him I hadn't seen anyone and he said, "How can you say that? I saw the people in your house from here."

Then he punched me. I kept telling the truth, and he slapped me in the face. Then I stopped talking and started crying. One of my sons and my nephew were with me. My nephew said, "Aunt, SLORC is going to beat us until we die." Then the sergeant punched him too and his jaw swelled up. My nephew is an orphan, and he is not strong. Then the sergeant hit me with his rifle butt, but then he saw his commander coming so he released us. This sergeant's name was Wah Ko.

Another time we were just delivering a letter to Thu K'Bee Village for my father, but SLORC troops arrived and asked what we were doing there. We told them we were there to buy chickens but they didn't believe us, punched us and then made us hold our ears and squat and stand up 15 times [a child punishment, very degrading for adults].

Back there we always had to keep running from SLORC. Only two of my children went to school, one girl and one boy. They just started school for two days, then we had to move. Since we've arrived here we've been sick all the time, so we can't do anything. The mother has to care for her sick children, and the children have to care for their sick mother. We can't get any food so we have to buy it, and now we've run out of money.

Interview: 39 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood, Minorities, Repatriation, Slavery

Name: Sai On
Sex: Male
Age: 50
Ethnicity: Shan
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Gem trader
Address: Tachilek, eastern Shan State

[As a gem trader, Sai On constantly travels around southern Shan State and talks to the people of many areas.]

SLORC is commandeering porters every day. Lately they've been doing it even in Tachilek, and in Mong Pyak 60 miles to the north, Mong Yawng 90 miles to the north, in San Sai, Hong Luk, Huay Kai, Mae Hoke, Mong Yang, and in the parishes around them. Also, if you go about 60 miles east of Tachilek you'll find Mong Pone Parish, and Tah Ler Parish 30 miles to the north, they're taking porters there too. At night the troops surround the village and take everybody. None of the men are spared, they take them all.

In Mong Pone the monk pitied the villagers so he pleaded to SLORC authorities not to take them as porters. They told him he has to buy 10 mules or else they will take the people, so he bought them the mules and now they've promised not to take the people there. They use everything for military purpose; people, mules, private cars. The people are so afraid that they'll have to serve as porters that they're running away to Thailand although the Thai authorities did not accept them.

The next day the Thai authorities drive them back into Tachilek, and then they're all taken as porters by SLORC. The Thais drove out more than 200 people for one time, and as SLORC knew of the repatriation they were waiting on the Burmese side of the border. The people did not reach their homes. They were arrested and herded to Loi Hsa Htong, where they were kept until SLORC needs them as porters. They're still there now. The Thais drove them back on June 6.

Loi Hsa Htong is a local SLORC military headquarters. They've put the people inside a barbed wire fence and they're not allowed to see any of their relatives. It's impossible to say how many people are being kept there, because every day people are taken out as porters, others come back from being porters and new people are brought in. I can't be sure, but I think there are about two to three hundred people being held there. People who have fled being taken have told me about this, and many people in Tachilek know about it.

Porters at Loi Hsa Htong were sent to Mong Ker in northern Shan State [near Hsipaw] as there was heavy fighting and SLORC troops need porters. That's why the ruby miners at Mong Hsu can't do business now. Some of them came to sell rubies and told me about it. Fighting started at Mong Ker 10 days ago and it's still going on now, so the ruby business has stopped. The people being taken as porters around here and held at Loi Hsa Htong are now being sent up there. They're taken by truck to Nam Sang and kept roped tightly together on the truck. The trip takes two nights and three days at this time of year. They let them get off the trucks to go to the toilet, but they're still tied together with rope and under guard. They can have no shame.

Some have even been taken by aeroplane to Nam Sang [because it is now rainy season and the muddy roads are almost impassable]. From there they have to go on foot. It's 20 days' walk. None of them have arrived up there yet, they're still on the way and more are being sent now. SLORC is also sending reinforcements to the area from Lashio now.

In Tachilek, SLORC troops captured people who were on their way to their fields or to work and sent them to the frontline or to Loi Hsa Htong. Then when people were afraid to go out anymore, they started raided houses in the evening, then at dawn they took whoever was in the house. For 20 days they even rounded people up in the market, so people from Thailand dared not go across to Tachilek because they were afraid they might be taken as porters. Some Thais from Chonburi came to Tachilek to buy rubies and 10 of them were taken as porters. Their friends from Thailand had to buy them back. Whoever is taken, he has to pay if he wants to go free no matter who he is.

If the Thais hadn't paid, they would have had to go to the frontline as porters. First SLORC demanded 100,000 baht for each of them, but they gave them 2,000 or 3,000 each and the soldiers let them go back. When they got back to Thailand they went to the Thai provincial authorities and said Thailand should protest about it, but the Thai Government did not say anything.

SLORC soldiers take everyone they on sight, even in the marketplace and in teashops, even the women. The youngest are 12 or 13 and as for the oldest, even some people over 60 have to go as porters. Some have been used as portering for two months already and have not been released yet. Some who are lucky could return home in 10 days.

Sometimes they get sardines with their rice, but usually they just get plain rice. It's very rare, and often it's not enough. Many get exhausted and die along the way. As for me, I have to pay bribes. If I couldn't pay them I'd probably have to go. All the people just look on SLORC as a bunch of bandits, not a government. Their army too, people say they're not an army, they're just bandits.

Now they're not going around to take porters as much, instead they give orders to the headmen in both the villages and the towns to have 20 people each ready every day to serve porters. When SLORC asks for them they have to be sent. They started this programme three months ago, and since then they've called for those people all the time, so many times you can't even count it. Every village and section of town has to keep money ready as well. The amount depends on the size of the village – every household has to pay 40 to 200 kyats regularly. In very small villages where there is not enough people to send as porters, they have to send cash instead. Whether there's fighting or not the people have to accomplish all these assignments.

Even before when there was no fighting in Shan State, they took people from here to serve as porters in Karenni or Karen states. Shan and Palaung are taken the most often, but people from every ethnic group are also forced to go.

Every day the villagers also have to rotate going to fence the military camps, to cook, fetch water and farm for the troops as unpaid labourers. The villagers aren't even fed. They even have to wash the soldiers' clothes. The villagers' farms have been confiscated, and then the owners are forced to go back and farm the land but all the profits go to the military. The farmers who have their land taken are in trouble because they have no way to earn their living, so they have to sell everything they own to survive, then when that's exhausted they have to do something like run away to Thailand. But the Thais never allow them to stay, and drive them back.

Those who are lucky have some relatives on the Thai side of the border, so they can go one by one and stay very secretly. Now SLORC is also bombing the villages. Maybe they want to bomb the soldiers, but they dared not come down low enough so they usually bomb the civilian villages instead. The planes are from China.

In every 10 households there's now at least one informer for Military Intelligence. They're forced to do it, they have to report everything that happens in those 10 households every day, every hour. If anybody comes visiting, they have to report that such-and-such person came to such-and-such house, what time he came and what time he left. If they don't obey they'll be arrested, taken away and tortured.

SLORC only wants the riches in Shan State and enough people to serve them as porters. The rest of the people they don't want, just the land.

Interview: 40 - HRV: Livelihood, Minorities

Name: Sai Shwe
Sex: Male
Age: over 60
Ethnicity: Shan
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Divorced with 1 daughter (age 3) who stays with her mother
Occupation: Trader
Address: Kengtung, eastern Shan State

[Sai Shwe is a businessman who constantly travels in southern Shan State.]

The fighting is affecting trade indirectly, because whenever there's fighting all the civilians, even merchants and old people, have to flee in fear of being taken as porters by SLORC. So of course this affects trade. SLORC want the Shan people to leave the land so that they can take it. Whenever new SLORC troops come to set-up camp in the Kengtung-Tachilek area, they force the civilians to build a camp and buildings for about 2,000 soldiers, but then only 100 or so might come. They use the rest of the buildings for pigs and chickens. The people have to contribute labour for the buildings and at their own expense. Then if the soldiers have no pigs, the people have to buy for them. Then if there's no food for those pigs, the people have to provide again. They take men, women, even pregnant women, and sometimes they go into labour and deliver their babies along the way. So people can't stay in their homes anymore, and they have to run away and go to Thailand.

As a businessman I have to pay money whenever they demand it – we have to bargain over it. Unless I pay then I can't do business. If you run a shop you'll have to pay. Whatever you want to do you have to pay. Even if you want to cross the border you have to pay. I can't say how much because it's always up to them.

If anyone wants to be a merchant, trader or shop owner he has to have a permit. Depending on how much capital he's going to invest he has to pay a certain percentage to them. There's a limit on investment. When they practised socialism, they confiscated if you invested more than 2,000 kyats. Until now, if you invest too much it will be confiscated. It's still a Socialist State. It's all just talk and stories in the paper that they're making it an open market for business. Now is just like the old days.

When soldiers buy things, it depends on the individual soldier but usually they won't pay the cost. For example, some Thai people used to go to Tachilek to sell petrol or diesel fuel, but all the soldiers come and fill their cars or motorbikes. They don't pay, they just go away when their tank is full. So those Thais couldn't make any money and they had to give up and go back to Thailand. Here in Mae Sai you can buy 100 kyats for 20 Thai baht [official SLORC exchange rate is 1 Ks equals 4 baht].

If you go across the border bridge into Shan State, even the SLORC soldiers won't take Burmese kyats. It's 5 baht to cross the bridge, and if you give them 5 kyats they won't accept it. In Kengtung, merchants accept either baht or kyats. They ask you whether you'll pay in baht or kyats, and the price differs. Thai baht is used

as far up as Xishuangbanna, which is inside China. In the hills the villagers trade with rupees [Indian silver rupee coins, left over from British colonial days]. The big businessmen also use Chinese currency, but the local people can't afford to do that. And if you're dealing with somebody else who's a civil servant, and you use anything but kyats, you can be arrested.

If they arrest you and you give them enough money to make them happy, then you'll be released. If not, it's up to them. They can do to you whatever they like.

You can't do business openly or legally unless your capital is very small. If you want to invest a significant amount then you have to do business secretly. I've heard about this Economic Quadrangle, about how they're building these roads [the Economic Quadrangle is a Sino-Thai concept involving building roads and opening up borders to strengthen trade between Thailand, China, Burma and Laos]. First the Thais negotiated with the SLORC commander and they made agreements that a road would be built from there to there and how wide it would be and so on, but when the time came to build it SLORC had changed commanders and the new one said, "Oh, no, not like this, you must do it like that".

So the plans keep changing and being cancelled, and most of the Thai contractors have given up and gone home. For example, the previous military commander in Tachilek made construction agreements with a Thai contractor named Kay Lian, so he sent some of his trucks and bulldozers across but the new commander said, "No, you can't do that", and he had to bring all his equipment back. The new commander also cancelled all the plans for the new bridge across the border that had already been agreed. To make friends with SLORC is very difficult.

They have a policy in Shan State: any SLORC soldier who marries a Shan lady gets a 500 kyats reward. If he marries the daughter of a village tract headman or someone like that, he gets 1,000. If he can marry the daughter of a Pra [petty prince] he gets 2,000, and for the relative of a prince he gets 5,000 to 10,000. I don't know if the amounts are still the same, but that's what they used to be. Twenty years ago my younger sister was forced to marry a SLORC soldier at gunpoint. He was just an NCO. His men surrounded the house and drove away any man who wasn't related to her. For about a year no man was allowed into the house and soldiers went with her if she went out. Then he married her.

Even if she's not happy in her marriage, she has to pretend to be happy. She has three children with this sergeant. All are girls. The government policy is that all their children must be considered Burmans. Now all her daughters are married to Burmans. They still have this policy, so the SLORC soldiers are always trying to marry Shan women any way they can. I think SLORC are trying to commit genocide against the Shans.

Interview: 41 - HRV: Detention, Displacement, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Naw Ta Blu Htoo
Sex: Female
Age: 28
Ethnicity: Karen

Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 1 son (age 8)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Nyaunglebin District, Pegu Division

[Naw Ta Blu Htoo's husband is a Karen soldier. She fled her village and arrived in Karen-controlled territory in June 1994.]

Brother, I'll tell you how SLORC captured me on January 16 at 8 o'clock in the evening. SLORC came and surrounded my house. My husband wasn't at home, just me and my son. There were about 100 soldiers. Tay Aye was there, and Soe Moe Khine, Aung Thu, and Maj Nyo Aye the battalion commander of IB 60. SLORC came into my house and asked my name.

I answered them, and then they told me to come down out of the house. Then they tied me up with rope with my hands behind my back. One of them hit me in the head with a gun, while the others beat me, slapped me in the face and punched me in the back with their fists. They asked me if my husband carries a gun and I told them, "No, because he's not a soldier", but they didn't believe me.

They started wrapping something around my head, and after they wrapped it around two or three times I couldn't bear it so I said, "Yes, my husband carries a gun", because there was nothing else I could do. They stole everything from my house, even my clothes, spoons, pots and plates, parturient pig and took to their camp. After that they took me to the village head's house. They tied me up under his house and kept me there for half an hour.

Then they took me up into the house and tied me up around the neck and all over my body. They kept me like that all night long and they didn't give me anything to eat until noon the next day, when they untied me and took me to Tat Tu. We had to cross a river and as we crossed they started tying me up again. One of the soldiers put my son on his shoulders to cross the river. Then Maj Nyo Aye himself from 60 Infantry Battalion took a photo of us. Later we arrived at Taw Lu Ko Village, then at Noh Po. While we stopped there they arrested another woman and they got very upset and angry, and then they took our photo again. Then we arrived at Tat Tu at about 4 in the afternoon.

When we arrived there they made a special place to keep us like a prison, and at about 7 p.m. they took me out and interrogated. They said, "If you ask your husband to come here do you think he'll come?" and I said no. They said, "If your husband doesn't come we'll do bad things to you", and I said, "You can do whatever you want, because I'm in your hands now and there's nothing else I can do." They kept telling me to write a letter to my husband but I told them I couldn't write, so they told one of the villagers there to write a letter for me and then they ordered another man to send it.

The next morning they put me back in the lock-up, and they said, "We asked your husband to come here but he wouldn't, so you'll be the one to suffer." I said, "Go ahead, there's nothing I can do", and they said, "We can wait. If he doesn't come here then we'll never let you out." The place they kept us was an underground cell

and very dark. They kept us there all day and night and gave a little food and only let us out twice during the day and once at night to go to the toilet.

When they let us out into the light we couldn't walk properly and it was so bright we couldn't see after being in the darkness. They kept us there for seven days and nights. Then they marched us to Tah Pu, Thu K'Bee, the Burman village at Kyo Gone and onto Theh Gone, where we had to get on a truck to Nat Than Gwin, then to Ler Doh Military Camp. We thought they were going to keep us there but then they took us to Chit Than Gwin and finally to Tham Bo [where IB 60 headquarters is located]. Maj Nyo Aye went with us all the way. When we got to their camp at Tham Bo they made us sign a paper, then they locked us up. On that day alone they'd arrested about 30 people along the way from different places.

They ordered the SLORC soldiers there who'd lost their legs to guard us, so those men ordered us to do everything for them and we had to do it. They made us plant trees and cut all the grass, not even one blade of grass was to be left. We also had to make fences and tend their ducks and animals, find firewood and carry water for them. We had to cook and eat very early in the morning before they came to call us for work, and if we weren't ready we'd be in trouble. Some days we weren't well enough to work but they said, "You're just lying." While we worked they just sat and watched us, like a boy tending his goats. They also made my son work by cutting the weeds around the barracks, and he didn't want to do it so he began crying.

They sent a message to the people in my village to come once a week to bring food for us, and when they came my son went back with them. But I had to stay there and work every day, all day and at night too, so I was getting very tired. The soldiers told me, "We won't let you out until your husband surrenders to us". They said they'd keep me there forever.

At night I had to sleep in the prison. At midnight they came to wake me up and asked whether my husband was coming to surrender, and when I said "no" they started beating me on my back. My back got all swollen up until I couldn't even wear a brassiere anymore. One day we heard gunfire outside the camp so the soldiers went out to check, then they brought back one man with them. He was a trader, and he had a hand grenade so they put him in together with us. They tied up his whole body and didn't give him any food. Later tears were falling from his eyes, and we felt very sorry for him.

At night they wouldn't let him sleep. One of the soldiers came to ask him a lot of questions and beat him, then as soon as he went back another came, and so on. The man wanted to rest but they'd never let him. The next morning they took him out of the prison and asked him questions. The soldiers cut off one of his ears, then they cut out his tongue. Then they put him back in the cell with us. His blood was all pouring down. The next day they came and took him away and we never saw him again. I don't know what they did to him.

We were kept at Thambo like that for three months, then we were sent to the police lock-up at Ler Doh. They kept us there like pigs – we had to eat and go to the toilet in the cell.

Inside there were a few pots to defecate for everyone there. Before putting us in there, the police forced each woman to give them 100 kyats. They kept us there for one day and night, then they sent us to the village LORC camp, then to the township LORC camp. They sent us to Strategic Command Headquarters to sign a paper, then back to the police station again. Then we had to sign again to be released, but the police demanded money before they'd let us sign. They demanded 12,400 kyats from me. I had to give them the money and then they let me go.

When I arrived back in my village there were SLORC soldiers in all the houses. They told me, "You have to go and see our officer." The officer asked me, "Do you want to stay here or somewhere else?" so I told him I wanted to stay there. He said, "I don't want you to stay here because I don't want you to meet your husband. Go and stay in another village." I told him I'd go and stay wherever he ordered, but then after the soldiers had left I went back and stayed in my own village.

Later my husband came back, and we moved here because I know if I stay there the soldiers will come for me again. I've been sick the whole time since I was released because of beatings. I am still painful inside. The druggist has given me injections but they don't work, so I don't know what kind of medicine I need. My son is also sick and it's very hard for us. We're from the plains but here it is mountainous region, so we have to cut down the forest and plant on the hills. It's very hard and I don't know how I can do it with my sickness, and my husband also isn't used to it, but I'm afraid to go back to my village so there's nothing I can do.

Interview: 42 - HRV: Forced Labour

Name: Nai M—
 Sex: Male
 Age: 52
 Address: Paungdaw, Yebyu Township
 Interviewed: April 1994

[Nai M— fled from the village on 26 February 1994 to escape the forced labour for the Ye-Tavoy railway construction.]

Q. What did you do to earn a living when you were in Paungdaw Village?

A. I lived by fishing.

Q. Why did you have to go and work on the railway construction?

A. The local Burmese military authorities required each household of the village to contribute one labourer for the railway construction: We dare not refuse the orders of the military authorities and I had to go and work there for my family.

Q. Who came to tell you to go and work there?

A. Our village headmen. They were ordered by the local commanders to urge the villagers to go and work there.

Q. Are the villagers paid for their labour?

A. They are not paid. They have to work for free.

Q. Where did you get food to eat during working there?

A. We had to take our own food and work there. The labourers are not provided with any food by the authorities.

Q. How many people from your village have to go to work there a day?

A. All the households of the village have to contribute one labourer a day. Our village [Paungdaw] has 120 households, therefore a total of 120 people from our village have to work there.

Q. How did you go to reach your worksite in the railway construction?

A. From our village [Paungdaw] we walked to Kanbawk Village [about 5 miles]; from Kanbawk we went by car to Kaleinaung [about 8 miles]; and from Kaleinaung we went by car again to reach our worksite near Natkyizin Village [some 30 miles].

Q. Who paid for your transportation to go to the worksite?

A. We had to go to the worksite at our own expense.

Q. What were you given to do there?

A. The 120 people from our village, including myself, were given to clear away all the trees and bushes for 100 x 100 square feet, to remove all the tree-stumps and smooth the ground, to break some hills, and etc. We, the 120 people from Paungdaw, were required by the authorities to complete the work within 15 days.

Q. How did you share duty between yourselves? Were all of you required to work at the worksite? Then who did the cooking for you all? Was there any instruction from the authorities for this?

A. When we reached the worksite, we were instructed by the soldiers there to make five persons a group –one person was to do the cooking for the group, while four other persons were to work for the railway.

Q. How many hours a day did you have to work?

A. We had to start working at 7 a.m. and work until 11 a.m., from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. was time for lunch and a rest, and we had to work again from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Therefore, we had to work altogether eight hours a day.

Q. When you got tired during the working hours, could you take a rest for a while? When the soldiers saw that you were resting, what did they say to you? Did they press you to work on?

A. When we wanted to rest during the working hours, we could. The soldiers didn't say anything to us. The only instruction of the authorities was that we must complete the given work in the given 15 days' time, not later than that time. Since the work required much hard labour to be completed by the deadline, we did not have much time to take rests during working.

Q. Were there any villager who fled from the worksites to escape the hard labour? When a villager has fled from the worksite, what the military authorities then do to

his/her family in the village? Now you yourself have fled from your village, do you think that your family in the village is fined or punished by the military authorities because of your fleeing?

A. Many villagers have fled from the worksites to escape the hard labour. According to the orders of the military authorities, if a villager flees away during working at the worksite, his/her family in the village must pay a fine of 3,000 kyats. Now I am still worried for my family in the village. I know that my family have no money. So I am not sure if any member of my family is arrested and detained by the military authorities, for they can not afford to pay the fine.

Interview: 43 - HRV: Forced Labour

Name: Mi N
Sex: Female
Age: 19
Family: Married, five months pregnant when she fled
Address: Yebyu Township

Q. What did you do to earn your living when you were at Paungdaw Village?

A. Like most people in the village, my family lived by fishing.

Q. You are five months pregnant; why did you have to go to work in the railway construction?

A. I worked for my family because at the same time my husband had to go and work for his elder sister's family, for her husband was then ill and not able to go and work for his own family.

Q. What did you have to do at the railway worksite? Did you have to do the same work with the men?

A. Yes, normally the women had to do the same work with the men. Since five persons had to form a group and work together in one place, if the group had only one woman, the woman did the cooking for the group and the rest four men went to work for the railway. But if the group had more than one women, one of the women did the cooking and all the rest four persons had to go and work for the railway. But this is only our own way of sharing the work between men and women; there was no instruction from the authorities to share the work in this way, what they told us was that we must complete the work within 15 days.

Q. How many people from Paungdaw Village had to go and work at the railway worksites, how many of them were women, including yourself?

A. There were 120 households in Paungpaw and 120 people had to go and work for the railway construction, each household had to contribute one labourer. Among the 120 people working in the railway construction, there were about 40 women, including some young girls aged between 14 and 15.

Q. How many days had you worked there before you fled the village?

A. I had worked for 11 days before I fled from the village.

Q. What did you have to do during the 11 days you were working there? Did you do the cooking or work with the men?

A. I did cooking for some days and had to work for the railway construction for the other days. During the days I worked for the railway, I had to clear the bushes, remove the tree-stumps, clean the ground by sweeping and burning off the leaves, carry the earth and fill in the low places, and so on.

Q. Why did you decide to flee?

A. We were continuously required to work for the railway construction and we didn't even have time to do our own jobs to survive. Again, we had to work very tiredly for the railway. We couldn't afford to work on for the unpaid hard job and so decided to flee away.

Interview: 44 - HRV: Child, Displacement, Execution, Forced Labour, Torture, Women

Name: Maung O
 Sex: Male
 Age: 28
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Married with 2 children (age 4 months and 7 yrs)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Michaung Laun Village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: late March 1994

[The following interviews were conducted by the KHRG in these refugee camps at the end of March 1994. The villagers came from several areas, and have worked on various different stretches of the railway and at different times. This explains the differences in their stories relating to the type of labour, the treatment by the troops, and the width of the path being cleared. Note that the width of the path is very wide for a railway, because it is usual for SLORC to clear a wide "killing ground" along roads and railways in order to make it hard for civilians and opposition forces to cross without detection. Villagers often mention "porter fees"; this is a name given by SLORC troops to protection money they extort from villagers. It is theoretically to be used to hire munitions and supply porters, but such porters, as evidence shows, do not receive pay.]

I arrived here a couple months ago. I came because the soldiers are shooting at people around my village. I can't bear to live there now. When I was there I had to work on the railway for 15 days at a time and they fed us nothing. We had already run out of food, so we asked to go home but they wouldn't let us. When we asked them for food, they refused to give us any, instead shot at us. Twenty-six people were shot after stealing goods from the soldiers. They were shot on the railway around Natkyizin Village in Ye Township. Then I escaped from them. They shot at me and the bullets went through my shirt, here [Maung O showed bullet holes in the side of his loose button-down shirt, which is the only shirt he now has].

Then when we got back to our village, the soldiers came and called us to go back to work again, but we dared not go back, so the soldiers beat many villagers. No one wanted to go back to the worksite because they can't get any food there. The soldiers took many people to the worksite by force and they fed them nothing. When the soldiers were around the village that time, I was hiding in the bushes. Then when they were going to return to their outpost, I ran away and came here. I just kept running, because I knew the way. My family just had to suffer. They could do nothing, because they couldn't follow me.

Then the soldiers came to my house and poked my wife in the side with a rifle butt. They kicked her hard in the stomach and she vomited blood. Then they kicked my baby son down into the fire, and all the hair on his head was burnt. They slapped my 7-year old son in the face and he cried out. They beat them because I had escaped. Along the way here I stopped to wait for my wife and children. Then I brought them with me. My wife is still sick because of beating, and my baby son is still sick. If you touch his head it is still painful. [Maung O's son still has a bad burn scar and no hair on the crown of his head.]

I worked at the railway three times. It was the third time that I escaped. Each time was 15 days, with no time off. After 15 days on the railway, I had only three days back in the village before going again. At the railway we had to leave the ground, clear the scrub and the grass. Sometimes we had to clear the forest. The area was bamboo jungle, and there were some hills and mountains. Sometimes it was farmland, with coconut plants and betelnut plants. If there were trees or plants we had to cut them down. They destroyed the farmland if they needed to. We had to clear the jungle along a path 200 feet wide. We had to break rocks and carry them about half a kilometre in bamboo baskets. We had to bring our own tools.

I saw over 4,000 people working altogether, including so many women, and also pregnant women and a few children. They youngest was 14, and there were old people over 50 and up to 60 years old. We all had to do the same work together. We worked from 7 o'clock in the morning, then we could rest for a few minutes at 1 p.m. and then we had to keep working on. They didn't feed us. Even at night we had to work sometimes, cutting firewood. They had a generator for light. We had to work until 11:30 p.m. At night we slept on the ground. There were always soldiers around. When someone had to go to toilet, they were followed by soldiers.

Some people got sick. Even if they were sick, they were forced to work. If they stopped, the soldiers beat them up with a piece of bamboo stick. Some nearly died, and some vomiting blood. They didn't get any medical attention. Some people died of sickness and starvation. I also saw some labourers who were very tired, and tried to rest under a tree. They were beaten up. The soldiers just beat them while they were sitting there, and hurt them badly. They couldn't even walk after the beating. Then the soldiers just forced them back to work. The soldiers usually beat the labourers with bamboo sticks and metal pipes.

There were soldiers all around, so nobody could escape. If some people tried to escape, the soldiers shot at them. The soldiers shot 26 people to death after they took away the soldiers' food. The soldiers brought food for themselves and there were

also labourers who brought a lot of food for them. We didn't have any food, so we tried to take away some from the soldiers belonged to IB 409. I only know one officer's name – Lt Htun Myint. He used to walk around checking us while we were working, and the other is Lt Myo That.

Some women were raped, including a woman named Ma Thein Myint from our village. When the officer raped her she was screaming, and they shot her to death. She was 21 years old, and she was my cousin. She was raped by a lieutenant colonel named Thauung Myint. My father tried to report it, but the officer he had to report was the same one who raped her, so it was just ignored and no action was taken. I also heard that they raped two women from another village, then stabbed them to death with a knife. They gave the bodies back to their families and said that they had killed each other in a fight.

Our village is four or five miles from the railway. There are 78 households, and one person from each family has to go work on the railway. The soldiers loaded us onto the trucks like they take people to jail, because they're afraid that people will escape. The soldiers also collect porter fees, 300 kyats from each family for five days. To get the money people had to use many different ways, like selling their belongings or finding work to get money. Anyone who couldn't pay or refused was taken to work on the construction side and not allowed to come back. They just have to keep working there.

Some people escaped together with me, but later when the soldiers came to the village they arrested them and put them in jail. I was the only person who made it here. Before I escaped I worked on three different parts of the railway. We never knew which part we were going to work on – we just had to go where they took us. They are building three railway lines parallel to each other, about four miles apart. We knew nothing about why they are building this railway. I think they only want to keep us working. I don't think this railway can do any good for us.

Interview: 45 - HRV: Displacement, Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Nai Q
 Sex: Male
 Age: 25
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with 2 children (age 1 and 4)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: late March 1994

I arrived here about 20 days ago. I left because I couldn't bear the oppression of the Burmese troops anymore. I had to go work on the railways three times, for three weeks altogether. Each time 14 people from our village had to go, and there are only 15 families in our village. Our group of 14 had to go for seven days, then seven days at home, back to the railway for seven days, and so on.

Since we have only 15 families, in some houses where there is only one man, then he/she himself/herself has to go. If there are two or three men, SLORC calls them all. If there are no men in the house then a girl, a woman, or even a pregnant woman has to go. About five or 6 women had to go from our village. While the men are gone working, there is not much problem for families who have money, but it is a very big problem for families who don't have anything. They can even die.

The railway is two hours' walk from our village. When we arrive, the soldiers check us. We have to choose one leader for every 10 people. If somebody is missing, we have to pay 10,000 kyats. Labourers are not only from my village. There were a lot of people, and I couldn't count them. Altogether I think there must have been 20,000 people, but not all in one area. In each area there were probably 4,000 or 5,000 people.

At the railway, we had to dig the ground. We had to clear a way 300 feet wide through the forest, and if there was a big tree, we had to uproot it. If there was a mountain, we had to cut through it. We had to use our own tools. We had to work on hills and flat land, deep forest and thin forest. Sometimes we had to cross rivers. Once one place was finished, we had to move on. We started work at 7:00 in the morning, stopped for lunch at noon and then we had to work again. The work finished at 4:30 p.m., and we took a bath and ate. Then at 7 p.m. We had to start again.

We had to bring our own food. People who had some money could buy some vegetables. The rest of us just had fish paste and rice. At night we slept on the ground on some leaves – we had no mats or plastic. Soldiers were around us 24 hours a day. There were two different groups of soldiers; one for the security of railway and another for frontline offensives. So when those troops needed porters to go to the frontline, they asked the troops guarding the railway and people were forced to go. Many people were forced into portering, but I don't know how many. Whenever those troops came they could take as many people as they wanted.

The soldiers on the railway just controlled and checked us. If they saw someone who stopped working, they beat them. Sometimes, they talked to the leader of that village, and ordered that person to pay 10,000 kyats. If the person couldn't pay, there would be a big problem. The soldiers don't care about the people, they care only about their railway.

I saw people being beaten very often. There was one man, and when the soldiers got drunk they ordered him to do a lot of things that he couldn't do. The man spoke back to the soldiers, then he was beaten. They beat him with a stick at his head and on his back, and he fell down and started bleeding. He lost a lot of blood but the soldiers just left him there as it was. None of them helped him, only some of his friends came and cared for him. His head was cracked a little and he lost consciousness for about five minutes. He couldn't work for half a day because he couldn't move. But as soon as he could get up the soldiers called him to work again. I saw many people being beaten up, but this man suffered the most serious. After beating them, the soldiers look at their condition and as soon as they look getting better they are forced to go back to work. The soldiers are from IB 410.

Some women were also beaten, but not so hard. The soldiers just make the women afraid. They also took some women away as porters. I saw one woman who gave birth at the railway. There was also a single girl who was crushed to death when a tree fell on her. She was only 16 or 17 years old. The soldiers did nothing – some of her friends dragged her out and buried her.

I saw people from aged 12 to 50 years old working there. I don't know about other parts of the railway – maybe there are people even older. When people got sick, nobody took care of them or gave them medicine. If they couldn't work but weren't terribly sick, they were ordered to work anyway or else they would be beaten, so they had to force themselves to work. The sick weren't allowed to go home.

The soldiers also came to our village and asked for porter fees. The poor had to give 500 kyats each time, and the rich had to give more. If the soldiers come, all our animals, rice and money must be given to them. They catch the livestock by themselves, and you can't protest or they'll curse and scold you. And however much rice they ask for, you have to give them. Sometimes the soldiers come every 10 or 15 days, sometimes they come every three or four days. It takes two hours to walk to the village from their outpost.

I came out here with just my family and my brother's family from another village. Many more people want to come but they are afraid of the trip right now.

One or two days ago a SLORC soldier shot a Burman villager along the way, so most people dared not come yet. When we came out we slept three nights on the way and walked for four days. I knew the way because I've been here once before. We didn't bring anything with us except clothes on our backs because we were afraid the soldiers might interrogate us on the way. We saw some soldiers, and they stopped us and asked, "Where are you going?" We told them that we were going to our aunt's house because our uncle was sick, and they let us go. I will not go back. There are too many problems there.

Interview: 46 - HRV: Child, Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Ma R
Sex: Female
Age: 19
Ethnicity: Burman
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Single
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Thayetchaung Village, Thayetchaung Township, Tenasserim
Division
Interviewed: late March 1994

I have been here just two days. I came because of the heavy labour. We had to work for SLORC all the time. I had to work on the railway for half a month in February. After I finished my turn, I came out here and another group replaced us. About one hundred people from my village went to work with me. Our village is quite big, more like a town. We received an order to go to work, and then we knew we had to go. One person per family had to go.

I am the eldest child. I have only younger sisters and brothers, and they are still primary school students, so I had to go instead of my mother and father. My father can't do anything for the time being because he is suffering from a disease. If I was not there, my parents would have had to hire someone to go for us.

I don't know exactly how many women had to go. In our group there were about 15 women. It was quite far. We had to go to Tavoy Town, and then we had to go to the area north of Tavoy. We had to collect money and hire a truck to take us. It cost us 100 kyats per person.

At the railway the men dug the ground, and we had to carry the dirt. We had to take our own tools. It was in the hills and in the jungle. We had to work from 7 a.m. until noon, then we got one hour rest and we kept working until 4 p.m. We had to eat our own food – we brought it from home, and added food from the jungle. I didn't see what the soldiers ate, so I don't know.

The soldiers guarded us with guns. They didn't do any work, they were only watching to make sure that nobody tried to run away. If people felt very tired, they could rest for a couple of minutes. I took rests on the way when I was carrying dirt. I just walked and worked as slowly as I could. I had to carry the dirt about 20 feet and make an embankment about 20 feet wide. They didn't say how much we had to do, they just told us to hurry and finish it.

At night we had a small shelter to sleep in. Each village had built a shelter for themselves, and we had to fix the shelter when we arrived for our turn of work. We brought sleeping mats from home. There were no soldiers around at night, only in the daytime.

There were young people working, 13 years old. Most of the aged persons were around 40. The children were doing the same work together with us – the old people, too. Some sick labourers were working. If they looked really sick, they didn't have to work and they could stay in the shelter. The soldiers let some of them go back to the village, but the villagers had to replace the sick labourer. I saw pregnant women working too. The soldiers didn't pay us anything.

After a half month working for them, I came out here by myself, together with my cousin. The rest of my family stayed in the village with our relatives. It took three days for me to come here, and I could bring only three small bags of my belongings. There were 12 of us altogether. We came with someone who knew the way, and just followed him.

Interview: 47 - HRV: Displacement, Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Saw S
 Sex: Male
 Age: 19
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Family: Single
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: late March 1994

I came here because SLORC kept forcing us to work for them. They also came and took as much of our livestock as they could catch, and they took our plants our vegetables and whatever else they could take. They tried to take it all by force, and nobody dared to stop them. We don't know why they do this – it's just their will, they just oppress us. We also had to pay 3,000 kyats of porter fees each time we couldn't go to contribute labour for them, which means once a month. We have to work very hard to earn this money any way we can – sometimes we have to sell our pigs and livestock to pay them.

I've worked on the railway twice, for 15 days each time. The first time was a few months ago on the railway to Three Pagodas Pass. The second time was one

month later on the Ye-Tavoy Railway. They are building three different railway lines, the main one from Ye to Tavoy, one near Ye Pone [i.e. one along each side of the north-south Tavoy River], and the Three Pagodas Pass Line. Our village has 70 houses, and over 20 people had to go at a time. The head of the village chose us to go by turns. When your turn comes, if there are five people in your family then all five have to go. The women had to go as well. Everyone over 16 years old had to go.

To get to the Three Pagodas Pass Railway we had to go by public truck to Yebyu, and it costs 150 kyats each [Saw S has probably mistaken another line running north-south further inland for a railway to Three Pagodas Pass – according to other information IB 405 is based further south, close to the Ye-Tavoy Railway and the proposed gas pipeline route to Nat Ei Taung]. Then we had to walk two days to the work place. The Ye-Tavoy Railway is only two miles from the village. They destroyed our orchards to build it. I myself lost some land. On the Ye-Tavoy Railway, we had to dig the ground and carry the dirt to the railway. We had to bring our own tools and food. If we ran out of food, we had to send a message to our village to send us some rice. We were forced to work in the forest and hills. We worked from 7 a.m. to 12 noon, then we had a break for lunch, then we worked from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

I saw over 3,000 people working there under the control of SLORC IB 409. We were working together with women too. The oldest man was about 80, and the youngest was 16, all working together. Some people were sick, some suffered from diarrhoea, but they got no medicine. The soldiers beat people who couldn't work. They beat them with a big stick. I saw people bleeding, and they beat an old man to death right in front of me.

They beat me too – I tried to cover myself with my hands and they beat on my hand with a big stick [Saw S then showed a large bump on his hand from a badly-healed bone]. Over 10 people were killed from beatings. The soldiers beat them up and then they just got worse and worse and died. Then the soldiers had us drag them to the forest and left them there. They didn't even bury them, and they wouldn't let us bury them. There was a very bad smell from that and we had to breathe it. Quite a lot of people tried to run away, and some were caught on the way. The soldiers just beat some of them to death in front of everyone, and the rest were forced to pay 3,000 kyats.

The work is the same on the Three Pagodas Pass Railway, except that there they are using bulldozers on the flat land and we only have to work on the hills. IB 405 is in control of the area. The working conditions are the same as the Ye-Tavoy Railway. I saw about 3,000 people there, and people were beaten like on the Ye-Tavoy Railway. I didn't see anyone killed on the Three Pagodas Pass Railway. Many people ran away, but I didn't see anyone who was caught. I heard that some women were raped but I didn't see.

Asked what good this railway will be for us, I suppose when it's finished it will look nice. Beyond that it's not good for me nor anyone. I lost some farmland. Now I've come here alone, and my parents have stayed behind. We are all looking for a safer place. Some come here, and some hide in the forest.

Interview: 48 - HRV: Displacement, Execution, Forced Labour, Torture

Name: Pu T
Sex: Male
Age: 55
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Christian
Family: Married with 8 children (age 8 to 31)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Michaunglaung Village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: late March 1994

I've been here about a month, because I can't bear working for SLORC. Before my village was torn apart there were 90 houses. Now almost the villagers from whole village has run away. They ran separately in different directions. The soldiers are breaking up the villages because they want to cut the connections between the villagers and the KNU.

They used to torture a lot of people in my village, and last year they killed two young men in front of us after accusing them of having connection with the KNU. After the killing, they tied them and dragged them into the forest. The soldiers also stole our livestock and the vegetables we grow – they took as much as they wanted. I don't know why, and we dared not stop them. They took 1,000 kyats from us for porter fees each time they came. To get the money, sometimes we could give them our savings, and sometimes we had to sell our livestock.

I had to go work on the railway once, for seven days. Over 30 of us went from my village. The head of the village chooses who has to go by turns. The railways goes just by the outskirts of our village, so some people lost their land. At the railway we had to dig the ground, and there were some big trees along the way, so we had to uproot and carry them away. We had to clear a path about 100 feet wide, and we had to take our own tools. I saw over 1,000 people, including a lot of women and a few pregnant women who were also digging the ground and carrying the dirt. We had to carry the dirt about 30 feet.

We also had to break and carry rocks. There were also some men who were about 80 years old, and the youngest were 16 years old. People got sick, but no one died of sickness. If the labourers were seriously sick, the soldiers let them go back home or to the hospital, but the villagers had to replace the sick person.

We worked from 7 a.m. until noon, then from 1 p.m. until 5 or 5:30 p.m. At night we slept on the ground, and there were followed by soldiers all the time. While we were working, the soldiers were checking us, guarding us, and watching us. If someone stopped working or rested, they beat them a lot with sticks, or sometimes

with rifle butts. I myself wasn't beaten, but some were wounded. They were beaten until they were bleeding from the head. Then the soldiers just left them behind and didn't care about them. They didn't get any medicine or medical care. Some could go back to work, but some couldn't. I didn't see anyone die. The soldiers were from IB 409 and 410.

I don't know why they are building this railway, and I don't think it will do any good. I came here with my family – it took us five days on foot. We only brought a few of our belongings. Now almost our whole village has run away.

Interview: 49 - HRV: Child, Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture, Women

Name: Nai U
Sex: Male
Age: 20
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Single
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Kun Nyaw Village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: late March 1994

I've been here for nine days. I had to work on the railway twice for 15 days each time. I finished working the second time just before I left for here. 60 people had to go from my village – first 30 people had to go, then the other 30 had to replace them, and the two groups took turns. There are 60 houses in the village, so it was one person from each house. Sometimes the women have to go, and some families would have nothing to eat if the man went to the railway construction site, so he hides and the woman goes instead. They called the whole village together, the village head divided us into two groups and then they sent one group at a time.

The railway is two hours' walk from the village. At the construction site we had to down the trees, uproots and stumps, clear the scrub and sometimes cut into the mountains. All this work is being done not by machines, instead by people. If the path was too low, we had to dig dirt and carry it to make it higher. If the ground was too high we had to dig out the dirt and carry it about 25 feet away. We had to make the way flat and equally level all along. We had to break the rocks and whatever else was along the path. We also had to carry rocks and dirt from 50 or 60 feet away to fill in trenches. We had to work in very dense forest, in the hills but also on the flatland and in the valleys. We had to bring our own tools.

There were thousands and thousands of people. There were thousands of women, and a lot of aged persons too. They were 50 or 60 years old, and there were children age 12 and above. Everyone had to do the same work. Every morning at 3 a.m. the soldiers blew a whistle, and we had to get up and start cooking and having breakfast. Then at 7 a.m. they blew another whistle, and everyone had to get into single file and the soldiers counted us. If any people were missing, those people were ordered to pay them 10,000 kyats. Then we had to begin the work. At noon we

got a rest and we wanted to eat but it was just a rest break, not an eating break. Then we had to work from 1:00 until 4:30 p.m. At night everyone had slept at 8 p.m. We got to eat twice a day, early in the morning and in the evening. We had to bring our own food. We brought rice and some oil, chillies and salt. Some people ran out of food, but then their friends from their village gave them some more.

The soldiers watched us all day, because they were afraid people might run away. If a person stopped working, the soldiers shouted at them, ordering them to work. If a person had tried to run away they put him in stocks [SLORC often uses mediaeval-European style wooden leg stocks to confine villagers]. I saw them beating so many people, including three from my village and many from other villages. I saw three people beaten by the soldiers because they had fever, were very tired and couldn't keep working when the soldiers ordered them to. The soldiers were often drunk, and if you couldn't work or if you talked back to them, then they beat you. They beat people very severely, with a piece of wood. They bashed them in the heads until they were bleeding, but they did not lose consciousness. Then they just left them lying there, and we had to take care of them.

There were pregnant women on the railway, and there was a woman who gave birth there. She couldn't go home so she had to give birth and sleep on the ground in the forest. No one could take care of her because everyone was busy doing forced labour, so her baby died. And I heard there were two girls who were raped by soldiers while they were walking from one part of the railway to another. The soldiers called them over to rest, and the girls were afraid of the soldiers so they obeyed and sat down with the soldiers. Then all four soldiers raped them. Those two girls are from Pah Chaut Village in Tavoy Township. I don't know their names.

I saw about 10 or 15 people who got sick from sleeping on the ground under the trees at night and because we had to drink water from streams that weren't clean. They got fever and diarrhoea. If they got really sick and the village head asked the soldiers, they could get some medicine. If the village head dared to go to the officer and when he could prove they were ill, the really sick people could go home. Otherwise they couldn't. I saw one person who died of sickness at the railway, and one young girl died when a tree fell on her.

Some people tried to run away because they couldn't bear to work for the soldiers anymore. The soldiers went to catch them, and if they were caught then they beat them badly. Then the soldiers ordered them to pay 10,000 kyats and forced them to work for an extra 15 days. They had to get the money to pay or borrow it somehow. Some people couldn't pay so the soldiers grabbed them and took them away, but we don't know what happened to them. The soldiers were from IB 410.

I don't know why they are building this railway. I think they will use it to transport their soldiers and ammunition. Even while we were working at the railway, the soldiers entered our village and took whatever they wanted. Every month they take 1,500 kyats from our village for porter fees. My family was already here, so I came by myself on foot. I didn't bring anything.

Interview: 50 - HRV: Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Hla V
Sex: Male
Age: 52
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Christian
Family: Married with 3 children (age 12 to 15)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: late March 1994

At home we were working for SLORC all the time. We didn't even have time to provide for our own families. We had to pay them 210 kyats every month too – they said it was "emergency porter fees" for their operations at Nat E Taung, but they just collect the money for their own sake. We had to serve them constantly, and we had nothing to eat. That's why we came here. We arrived 45 days ago, and people are still coming every day.

They started the railway project this year, about five month ago. Our village had to go to work there, and so did the other villages. The last time I went, there were 27 of us from our village of 100 houses. There must have been 4,000 or 5,000 people altogether, from hundreds of villages. We had to go 15 miles to reach the railway. Some villages are closer, and some people had to come much farther, like those from Tavoy, which is 100 miles away from the worksite. SLORC told the village headman how many people he had to send, and he looked at the household register and made a list of people age between 13 and 60. One person per family had to go, regardless of the number of people in the family.

We had to go for 15 days, then when we got home we could stay in our village only for four weeks and then our group had to go again. Before we could go home, we had to wait for the next group from the village to replace us, and it had to be exactly the same number of people. Women had to go if their husbands were sick or couldn't go.

People came by private truck which brought them and then took back the people they were replacing. We didn't have to pay for the truck – SLORC forced the owners of private trucks to bring people to the railway, and the owners had to pay for the petrol themselves.

The soldiers divided us into small groups and we had to work separately. For example, if one group could clear two miles in a day then the next group started two miles further on. We worked from 6 a.m. till 11 a.m., then we ate, then more work from noon until 5 p.m. We were working in a forest with a lot of bamboo. There were two parts of the route where we had to clear the path. Along one part we had to clear it roughly, and along the other part we had to clear it very carefully and make it smooth – we even had to sweep it. We had to bring our own tools so we divided them among our village – some of us brought hoes, others brought knives, and others brought baskets.

There were some soldiers who were watching close to us, and some other soldiers stayed further away watching the whole group. They guarded us carefully

because they were worried that someone might escape. Sometimes people tried to escape and were caught, and the soldiers beat them up severely. Sometimes they beat them with wood, sometimes they kicked, sometimes they punched, until the people were bleeding from the head, and some of them were bleeding seriously.

Sometimes the soldiers kicked us in the side, punched us in the face or beat us on the head. Sometimes people were beaten until the lost consciousness. After beating, they just sent the people back to their group, and forced them to keep working. No one was beaten to death, but one or two men died from sickness and exhaustion. The soldiers never gave any medical care. The sick had to finish their time like the rest of us. If somebody couldn't work they let him stay by the side of working place, and after he finished his 15 days they let him go home. There was no way we could try to stop working, because the soldiers guarded us closely and forced us to hurry all the time. If someone stopped, they beat him. I saw this happen in our group and in other groups.

They fed us nothing. We had to bring our own food. We ate rice with oil, salt and whatever vegetables we could find in the forest. When we ran out of food, we borrowed from each other. If we finished it all, we had to send a message and get more from home. At night we just made a fire and slept on the ground. We couldn't build a shelter because we didn't have time, and we were in a different place every night. We had no mats to sleep on, just the bare ground. The soldiers were always around the whole night, guarding us closely. We had to ask permission to go to toilet. They didn't follow us, but we dared not try to escape because there were other groups of soldiers nearby.

It will take at least two years to finish this railway, and the villagers will have to do all the work for sure. The railway won't change things for my family, except that hopefully when it's finished we can live in peace and provide for ourselves again. I can't see what good the railway will do for us – maybe we can breed chickens and sell the eggs to the passengers on the train. It won't improve things for rural people in the countryside – we know that. All we get is trouble when SLORC makes a project.

Now, even though we've fled the village, other people have to continue working on the railway project, and they have to continue paying all the porter fees. The poor families don't have any money to hire someone to go in their place, so they have to keep on going to work on the railway. Five or six families came out here with us, and 10 or 11 families had already run away from the village before us.

It was dangerous to come here, because if any soldiers caught us they would have beaten us and sent us back to the railway. Our group of families had to hire a person for 3,000 kyats who knew how to avoid the troops and get here. After we decided to run away, we sold all our livestock and property to get the money. We left our land and our farm, and we brought two pots for cooking and some blankets to use along the way. We hope when they finish this railway we can go home, but we're not sure.

Interview: 51 - HRV: Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Nai X
Sex: Male
Age: 58
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 4 children (age 9 months and 5, 14 and 16 yrs)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Yay Nyan Gyi Village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: late March 1994

I came here because I can't bear to work for SLORC anymore. We had to work on the railway, and we had to build a camp for the troops. The railway work started in November. I had to work for them two times, for about one month each time. They gave us nothing. We had to bring our own food, and when we ran out of food we sent a message to home and they sent us more food. I couldn't go home. After I got home from the first month at the railway, it was seven days before I had to go back again to work at the army camp.

Every family had to work in turns. If there is no man in the family, then they call the women. They called all of us to work regardless of age. The village head has to make a list each time and choose who goes. We are just farmers and small gardeners, and while I was gone working, my family had to sell things [such as noodles and snacks] as hawkers in order to get money for food and clothes].

The railway is about three miles from the village, and we went on foot. We had to work in the forest and on some hills, cutting down the trees and clearing the forest. The path we had to clear was 100 feet wide. We had to bring our own tools; hoes, shovels and iron crowbars. I saw about 500 or 600 people working there, about half of them were women. One of the women gave birth at the worksite, and some others were pregnant. The youngest people were 15 or 16 and the oldest were 60 or 70 years old. We were all doing the same work together.

Some people were sick with physical pain, but there were even some nurses working on the railway with us. The soldiers gave some medicine to the sick people. I didn't see any of them die. Those who recovered had to keep on working. We worked from 7:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., with a half-hour rest around 11 a.m. They gave us nothing – we get no presents from SLORC. The soldiers cooked for themselves – sometimes they ate pork, beef, and good meat curries, because they have money. We only ate vegetables that we collected while working in the forest. Some people tried to escape, and they weren't caught.

The soldiers were always there, just sitting down and watching us. They told us to hurry and not to waste time. They beat people who stopped working, sometimes with bamboo sticks and sometimes with a cane. Some got no marks from the beatings, but some got wounds that left scars, and some were bleeding. They beat people on the lower part of the body below the waist. I didn't see anyone seriously hurt or dead from beatings.

At night the soldiers surrounded us and we had to sleep in the middle of them on the ground, with nothing underneath. We just had to sleep along the railroad without any shelter. To go to toilet we had to ask their permission and they followed us with their guns. The soldiers were from IB 104 and 108.

We also had to build Kleinaung Camp for IB 108. The railway line is going to pass right by this camp. We had to clear a compound, build all the buildings and cut bamboo to make fences. We had to work for one month at the camp after I was at the railway.

The soldiers also forced us to pay "porter fees" of 100 kyats per month. Anyone who couldn't go to work on the railway also had to pay 300 kyats more. We had to pay it to the army camp at Michaung Ain. Every family had to pay, even while you were working on the railway your family has to pay porter fees. We had to save up this money in various ways. Sometimes we had some rice, betelnut, coconuts or some other vegetables and we sold them. SLORC doesn't say what the money is for, they just send an order paper to the village head who has to collect the money and give it to the army camp. They just collect these porter fees for themselves. The fees are a big problem for every family, but there's no way to refuse the soldiers' order.

How can I know if this railway will do us any good in the future? If SLORC would give us some money for our labour, it would be okay for us. I don't know if it will be for the good of the people, but we are surely in a lot of trouble right now. I think the railway will take at least three years to finish – we didn't even finish building the embankment. I don't know what they're building this railway for. At least 15 or 20 families have left from our village. My family and I came here on foot together with another family. It took us five days to walk here, and along the way we couldn't sleep peacefully at night because we were too afraid of SLORC soldiers. We only brought a pot for cooking and some clothes.

Interview: 52 - HRV: Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Mi Y
Sex: Female

Age: 45
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Christian
Marital status: Married with 3 children (age 13 to 17)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Seingoo Village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: late March 1994

I came here about a month ago with my whole family, because we had to work for SLORC all the time. My 17-year-old son had to go work on the railway because my husband had to stay at home or we couldn't have provided for ourselves. My youngest son is too young to work. This year our dam broke and most of our paddy was damaged, but SLORC forced us to sell them eight baskets per acre anyway.

We also had to pay them 210 kyats every month for porter fees. It was very hard for us to get this money. If we couldn't get enough then we had to borrow from others, and return them back later. Sometimes we had to sell our rice to get the money to pay them. It was very hard to pay them so regularly because we have to concentrate for the survival of the family. We couldn't bear it anymore so we came here. 15 other families had already left the village ahead of us.

SLORC said the money was for porter fees – if we can't pay, then we have to go as porters. We used to send five people from our village as porters every month, but if we pay the money then we don't have to go. For the last two years we have paid instead of going. The poor families in the village have to pay at least 100 kyats, and the richer families have to pay more, up to 400 or even 500 kyats. Our family is "middle class" so we had to pay 210 kyats. It depends on what the soldiers demand from the village. If they demand 10,000 kyats, then the villagers have to collect money until they have 10,000. If they demand 20,000 kyats, then we have to collect until it meets their demands. We have to pay every month.

There are three SLORC battalions around – IB 108, 109 and 110, from Kleinaung Army Camp about 15 miles away. They come to our village, but not very often as long as we pay – no more than once or twice a month. When they come they talk to the village head, eat and then go back. When they demand money, they tell the village head who organises a meeting, as only my husband always goes to those meetings, I don't know exactly what they say.

Interview: 53 - HRV: Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Ma Chit
Sex: Female
Age: 30
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

We were ordered to contribute labour for building the road on 26 January. The village head divided the village into sections. In each section, every family had to send one person. Each family had to build a section of road 7 plah [about 12 feet] long by 4 plah [about 7 feet] wide. A group of militia attached to SLORC made us do this, led by Pa Noe. His commander is Pa Lu Kyaw. This militia made us pay their salaries – we had to give each of them 1,000 kyats and two big tins of rice. IB 24 also patrols around – their commander is Maj Kyaw Kyaw Htay [aka Kyi Myint]. When they want things they ask the headman and give him some money. They also ask for two porters, but instead of going we have to pay them 190 kyats per family, regularly.

Interview: 54 - HRV: Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Naw Thalay Paw
Sex: Female
Age: 28
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Christian
Family: Married with 3 children (age 3 to 9)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Hlaing Bwe Township, Karen State

I arrived here over 10 days ago, on Thursday. In my village we had to build a road and plant trees for them [SLORC]. They also tax everything, and try to grab people to work for them so we don't have any time to look after our family and our children. We always have to work for SLORC without any break. To build the road, we had to work in the jungle in the heat of the day clearing 25 feet along each side of the road. We had to dig out stumps and carry stones 1½ feet long. Each rock weighs 3 or 4 viss [5 to 7 kg]. We had to go and get them at the river side not too far away. We had to break these stones with an axe by ourselves and lay them down on the road, then we had to carry gravel and pour it on top, and later we had to plant trees along the road sides.

Then after planting trees we have to guard the road, because if Karen soldiers destroy any of it SLORC will arrest us and put us in jail. This road is going from Lu Pleh to Pa-an. It is two hours' walk from the village. We had to keep building it until it reached the main road. It is not finished yet.

There were many people there, one from each family, men and women including the widows. There are over 300 families in our village. Whenever the soldiers grab the men, they usually send them to the frontline as porters, so it is mostly women who are working on the road, young girls and women up to age 40 or 50. When I left we had been working on it for months, and it still wasn't finished. We had two days' rest each week because some of us are Baptist and some are Seventh-Day Adventist [Baptist Sabbath is Sunday, while Seventh-Day Adventist Sabbath is Saturday].

Every farmer has to leave his field to go and work for SLORC. No one has time to provide for their families. Every farmer also has to give SLORC part of his rice harvest, and everyone who owns a bullock cart has to take it the road to carry rocks.

We always had to take our own food. If you don't go, they arrest you and put you in the cave at Z and they make you give them chicken. If you give it to them they release you, but if not they keep you there, and they beat you up. If you're late for planting trees, they take you and put you in the cave and keep you there for two or three days with no food or water. Then they hit you two or three times, they say, "You are very naughty", and they send you back to work.

Even me, one time I couldn't go for labour because my children were sick so they captured me, put me in the cave and beat me three times on my hips and legs with a very thick and wide stick. I was eight months pregnant. It hurt terribly. I was dizzy, and I got so angry that I just grabbed the soldier by his penis and pulled. He fell down, and then he came and tried to kill me. But the village headman stopped him and said, "Don't kill her. She has many problems. Her children are ill." The soldier asked, "Are they going to die from the illness?" and I said, "Maybe they will die." After that he let me go. I went back home, and when I got there I lost my baby [miscarriage]. This happened two months ago, on 22 March.

On the road, the men especially got beaten whenever they got tired. Some men didn't come to work because their children were sick and they were beaten badly. I saw some men who were beaten so badly they couldn't work anymore, they had to stay in bed. Their friends walk them home and then had to pay the soldiers 300 kyats to replace them. The soldiers would never give any medicine, even if you were dying.

We also had to plant rubber trees at Lu Pleh. We don't know why – they just ordered us to plant and we planted. We had to do that this month, on about 10 or 20 acres of land near the road. We had to do this for the soldiers, not for us. The soldiers ordered us. It's near their army camp. One person from each family had to go and each person had to plant 30 trees. Villagers from AA, BB, CC, DD and EE villages also had to go. Some of us had to plant trees while others had to clear and dig out stumps. I worked there for three days, then I left to come here. The soldiers said we would have to work there for one month [they are probably planning to expand the field – SLORC has been recorded confiscating hundreds of acres for such military money-spinning projects]. We weren't paid, and we received no food. Not even water – we had to bring our own water from home. We went home each night.

Before we built the road, I had to go as a porter one time for 15 days. I had to carry rice and sugar. The men had to carry bullets, shells, salt, oil, and fish paste. The soldiers beat people up, including one man who couldn't urinate because of the beatings. They hit him right on the bladder with a rifle butt. After that he always laid down moaning. He is my uncle FF. He is 56 years old, and he also came here with us. Now he still isn't cured. He still urinates with blood.

The soldiers come to our village asking for livestock, and if we don't give it to them they kill it themselves and take whatever they want. Whenever they find men around they grab them, beat them and torture them. If they see a farmer with his livestock, they shoot at the livestock. But we're too afraid to do anything. We had to pay 200 or 300 kyats each every month in porter fees, and taxes on every rice field according to its size.

For a one-acre field we have to give them five baskets of rice, and for a large field like 18 acres it's over 30 baskets. They pay us 35 kyats per basket [market value is eight to 10 times this, and even the official SLORC price is five to six times more]. People who have a very small harvest and can't afford to pay these taxes are arrested, beaten up and the soldiers take their personal belongings.

I came here because the situation is so bad. The village headman said it was alright for us to leave, because the headmen also suffer under SLORC so they understand. I came with my family, and it was three days' walk climbing up and down the mountains. Now I want to stay here. If we go back we'll just have to be porters again.

Interview: 55 - HRV: Displacement, Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Naw May Hla
 Sex: Female
 Age: 25
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with 3 children (age 2,4, and 6)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

We came here in February. My husband came first, because while he was working in our field with his friends the soldiers came and killed his friends. So he didn't dare stay there anymore and came here, and we followed later. They killed his friends last December just two hours' walk from our village. Their names were Pa Kay (24), Maung Par Baw (28) and Mya Zin (28). There was no reason to kill them at all, because they were just civilian farmers. They met the SLORC soldiers when they were riding on a bullock cart, and the soldiers grabbed them and took them away. Later the village head went to vouch for their freedom, but they had already been killed. The soldiers accused them of collaborating with Karen soldiers, beat them up a lot and then killed them. They didn't even shoot them dead – they

blindfolded them and then cut their bellies open. There was absolutely no reason – they were just farmers carrying their rice.

Then the soldiers took the bodies to the forest and buried them, because they didn't want people to know about it. Later they came to the village, killed a goat and ate it. I was told they did this to hide the fact that they had taken the three men's heart out and eaten them [there are many reports of SLORC soldiers cutting out and eating the heart and/or liver of fallen Karen soldiers if they capture the body, believing that they get great strength by eating these organs of a fallen enemy].

I heard this because the men's fathers all went to the army camp and found out. My cousin was with them. His name is Maung GG, and he is 25 years old. They released him, but first they tied him up very tightly and beat him brutally all over his body. They beat him with a gun butt and a big pole. He lost some of his teeth, some parts of his body were bleeding and other parts were badly bruised. Then the soldiers said to him, "Don't tell anybody anything or we will kill you". It was the same group of soldiers who killed the three men.

Whenever that battalion of soldiers sees people they torture them. The soldiers murder and torture so many villagers. There is also another battalion of soldiers, and they ask for porter fees and take porters. Sometimes they ask for five porters, sometimes six or seven [they ask by written order sent to the village]. The village head has to decide who will go, and we have to take turns going. But if the soldiers need more porters, they just come and grab them.

I've had to go two or three times myself. I had to carry 1 big tin of rice, and sometimes the soldiers' packs. The youngest girl I saw was about 15 and the oldest man about 40 or 50, and sometimes they even call very old men for some reason. There were both men and women porters – they get the men porters by demanding them from the village head, but as for the women, they just come and get us. Then the village head has to send replacements every five days.

Whenever the soldiers came to our village they made trouble for us. They always asked for money – each family had to pay them 40 or 50 kyats every month. They also demanded wood, bamboo, and roofing leaves. Each family had to send them four or five logs, with circumference of at least 2 feet 3 inches and the length has to be 7 feet. The officer sent a letter to the village head with a bullet inside as a threat to make sure we'd do it. We had to go far from the village to cut these logs, and then we had to carry them with our bullock carts to the place where the soldiers told us at the Salween River. There the soldiers put the logs on people's boats, sent them to Pa-an and sold them. Every family in the village has to send these logs, and sometimes three bamboos per family as well.

They also sent orders to the village head to send firewood, and the villagers have to do it or they'll make trouble for the village head [meaning arrest and torture]. Each time they asked for at least 100 bundles of firewood, sometimes 200 bundles. We have to send it on two or three carts. They ask for the most when it gets close to rainy season and they want to stockpile firewood. We have to send it to HH Army Camp. We don't know exactly what they do with all of it, but I think they use some and sell some. We have to do this and also go for slave labour and portering, so we

have to work for them most of the time and we don't have any time to provide for our own families. If we can't go for labour we have to hire someone to go in our place.

So far only five or four families from our village have come to this place, but many more families want to come and are ready to leave. They are just waiting for the opportunity. If they all come now, when the soldiers find out they will make trouble for the village head. We come here on foot and slept two nights on the way. We had to take risks to come here, because we are very afraid of the soldiers. If we had met them on the way, we would have been in trouble because they don't like us to come here. If they knew, they would stop us and kill us for sure.

Interview: 56 - HRV: Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Movement, Torture

Name: Naw Paw Paw Htoo
Sex: Female
Age: 25
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 1 child (age 2) and she is pregnant
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Hlaing Bwe Township, Karen State

I came here in March because we've suffered so much for so long that we just can't suffer it anymore. The worst thing was all the slave labour. We had to work for SLORC all the time and we had no time to rest or provide for ourselves. It was too tiring, but if we don't obey their orders they come to make trouble for us and take our things. They tied up my father one time.

Sometimes we had to send four or five porters at a time and sometimes 15 porters, depending on what the soldiers were doing. We tried to hire people to go in our places. For long-time porters it costs us 1,000 kyats, for medium-time porters 500 kyats, and for short-time porters 100 or 200 kyats. The soldiers also collect "porter fees" as often as four or five times a month. I don't know what they use that money for. Sometimes when they enter the village they also catch people and take them away, and we have to pay a ransom of 500 or 1,000 kyats before they'll release them. When they're in our village, the soldiers also try to get our livestock all the time; if they see a goat, they eat it. If they see a chicken, They eat it.

The porters usually have to go for 10 or 20 days, occasionally for one or two months. When they go for months, some die. Sometimes they only have to carry things close to our village, but sometimes it's very far. I was a long-time porter myself last rainy season. There were about 500 men porters and 500 women. We had to carry ammunition, rice, chillies, sugar and tinned milk for the soldiers. I had to carry about 16 kg. There was one soldier following each three porters. The men porters were beaten up a lot, but the women were treated better.

There were also some porters among us who had one amputated leg. The soldiers didn't make them carry anything but just forced them to climb the mountains together with us. The soldiers said to them, "We won't make you carry anything, we just want to kill you by making you climb mountains" [the soldiers may suspect that any man with one leg is a disabled former Karen soldier].

The soldiers collected 20 or 30 people from every village for their operation. The oldest was over 50 and the youngest was 15. On the way we had to sleep on the ground and it was terrible, because it was rainy season and there were leeches everywhere. Some people had brought a plastic sheet, a blanket and a change of clothes, but the porters who were captured along the way by the soldiers couldn't bring anything at all with them. They only gave us a very small amount of rice and salt to eat, and sometimes we got yellow beans that were going rotten, only one spoonful per person. Rain or shine, we just had to keep going with very little food. We had no choice.

We carried bamboo cups with us that we could fill whenever we crossed a stream to drink, but we were never allowed to bathe. We had to carry all the way to II [a distant SLORC operations camp]. We had to walk all day until sunset, and sometimes at night too. Sometimes they let us rest, but only standing up. If the women wanted to rest an extra minute or two they let us, but if the men wanted to rest the soldiers kicked them. When they wanted to beat up men porters they told the women to walk ahead, then they beat the men. They punched and kicked them and hurt them badly. They beat people up all the time.

When some people couldn't carry anymore, they made other porters carry them to a place where there's a cave like a big hole with a stream flowing into it. I saw some rice packs left there, so I think they killed the porters and threw them in the hole. I think porters who couldn't walk were killed, but we never saw their bodies. It was rainy season so many people got sick. I was sick all the time, so I went and asked for medicine. The soldiers gave me a cup of tea, then they gave me an injection and yelled at me, and I was sick for two days after that [the needle was almost certainly not sterilised]. The troops were from LID 33 and 44. They wouldn't let us go home when we got sick. five or six people tried to escape, and when they got caught the soldiers cut their legs with knives.

Sometimes the soldiers patrol near our village, and come to steal our livestock, clothes, cooking pots and other things. Even if the owner knows he can't dare stop them. Whenever they see a cow or buffalo, they catch it and kill it. The soldiers also make us cut bamboo and wood, and make shingles of roofing leaves for their houses. They make us clear the compound in their camp, and they make us clear all the scrub on both sides of the car road at least four or five times a month. The road is two hours' walk from the village. We have to build and maintain the road for them, and provide road security too.

Each family has to send one person, and if you can't then you have to pay one viss [1.6 kg] of chicken. They made us cut down big trees and build a bridge, then one or two days later Karen soldiers came and blew it up, so SLORC made us pay compensation money for the wood and the logs that we'd cut to begin with. Now we're in debt. That bridge is between Noh Kler and Ta Gho.

They make us go and work repairing the road constantly. We try to grow our rice but we have to leave it to go work for them. Whenever we want to go to our fields, we have to get a pass and pay 10 or 15 kyats for it. If the soldiers catch us without a pass. Our village had 100 houses, but now so many families have left the village to go to different places. Only my family came here. It was a hard walk, because my child kept asking to be carried all the time.

Interview: 57 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Sai Khorn Mong
Sex: Male
Age: 34
Ethnicity: Shan
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 2 daughters (6 and 8)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Kengtung, southeastern Shan State

[Sai Khorn Mong lives in Kengtung and has often been called to do slave labour for SLORC.]

I left Kengtung the day before yesterday, and arrived Tachilek on the same day. In Kengtung now, people are miserable because IB 244 forces people to cut down all the trees in the nearby forest. They also use porters from other places to cut down the trees. Everyone has to go, cut them down and take them to the army base, and then they send them some other place. Not only the trees in the forest, but also trees which were planted by the villagers for their own use – but when the villagers protest, the soldiers won't listen. So all the mountains are becoming barren. Now IB 244 has moved to another place and IB 245 has come to replace them, and they too are ordering all the forest cut down.

This work started three months ago. Everyone in the town and the area has to go in rotating shifts. Each village and section of town has had to send people on 60 of the last 90 days. Each day my section of town has to send two or seven or 10 or 20 people, depending on how many the soldiers demand. There are 60 houses in my section.

I've had to go twice to cut the trees, for one day each time. We had to take all our own tools, machetes and saws. They have a list of types of trees for firewood, and if we see any of these we have to cut them down and send them to the army camp. They make us cut everything down, even the bamboo plants. Then we have to dig out the stumps too, and give them to the army. It's all taken away by army trucks. When the trucks are full, the people have to transport the remaining trees to the army camp at their own expenses, on carts, pulled by buffaloes, or whatever they can.

The best wood is taken away somewhere else, and we have to split all the rest into firewood. They take away the myo sang, ha kong, gaw long, mak mong, lo haw, sak mong and other valuable trees. Some of them are very big, because the villagers have always preserved this forest for various uses. There are also shrines to the spirits that guard each village so the villagers preserved the trees around the shrines, and even those have been cut down.

They'll never stop cutting down the trees. Now the land for five or six miles around Kengtung is all barren. It was jungle before. All the trees around the water ponds were cut down so the ponds have all dried up, and so have most of the streams and wells, so now there's a water shortage problem. We can't understand why they're doing it. There are no rebels there. The soldiers told us the land will all be confiscated and they'll plant a butter bean plantation.

The labor will have to be provided by the people, and all the produce will be owned by the army. They haven't planted anything yet though. The land is just cleared and lying there barren. They've already cut down about five miles in every direction, and we don't know when they'll stop. For example, Nong Pan Village still has forest around it, but they've got a plan to cut that down too. From Kengtung up to Mong La on the border of China [about 70 km northeast of Kengtung] all the big trees have been cut down, and there's only a small bit of forest left.

SLORC is also taking people's tea farms. They order people to cut down all the tea trees and take the land to grow something else. As for the paddy fields and hill-side rice farms, they wait until the villagers have harvested the crop, then they come and take all the rice away. The farmers grow two rice crops a year.

The first crop is confiscated, and then they have to sell half of their second crop to the army. Market price is 450 kyats for 4 baskets [of unmilled rice], but the army only pays 60 kyats for 4 baskets. Then the farmer has to survive on the rice that's left. I live in a suburb of Kengtung. I have a land where I plant about 20 baskets of seed, and they confiscate my crops like that.

If I talk about SLORC, there are just too many things to tell. We have to provide porters, some of them die along the way and some are gone almost two months before they come home. We have to provide labour for their farms, we work our own farms only to have them take our crop, we have to provide labour to cut down all the trees, and we have no time to work for ourselves. When they take people as porters they won't let them go home unless the person pays them money. They get the money and as soon as the person gets home the troops come for more porters and

take him again. This year I was drafted to go twice, but I gave money to somebody to go in my place. I had to pay 15,000 kyats each time.

I also had to provide labour on the Mong Kwan electric power plant project. It's about 10 miles south of Kengtung. It started three years ago. I had to work for it four times a year, including this year. Each time I had to go for 15 days and take my own food.

We weren't paid anything. There were about 80 to 100 people working all the time, and there were two or three hundred prisoners working there too. They had to work in chains. It was all slave labour. If you refused, you'd have to run away.

Some people ran away from the labour. The soldiers didn't beat us, but sometimes they made us work in the night as well as the day. The dam was very long, about 12 feet broad, and the height of three or four people. We had to level the ground, carry dirt for the dam, and build the roads too. There were soldiers working too, about the same number as the civilians. The project was just finished on 24 July 1994, and now it's sending electricity to the town.

They've asked for applications, and the people who apply have to pay in advance. It's not for everybody. It's only for street lighting, all the army offices and selected people in the town. They promised everyone would get electricity, but we don't expect to. I know I won't, because I live in a suburb.

Now people in Kengtung are living in fear because SLORC is arresting people at random and forcing some young people into the army. I saw two or three people arrested because SLORC suspected them of having contact with rebels. Now SLORC Intelligence are everywhere, so we all have to stay in fear. We can't even trust each other, because some of the Shan are working for SLORC. They're forced to, they have no choice.

As long as SLORC is still there, it can't be good. If we could prosper under them, then we must be very prosperous right now because we've been under them for 30 years already. But we're still miserable and in trouble, so it would be better if SLORC just left the country. Now I'd like to leave the country if I could.

Interview: 58 - HRV: Displacement, Slavery, Torture

Name:	Saw Kyaw Hla
Sex:	Male
Age:	37
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Christian
Family:	Married with 3 children
Address:	Hlaing Bwe Township, Karen State

I've been here just over a month. It took us four days to walk here. We came because we were forced to work for SLORC all the time, and we didn't even have time to provide for our own family. They abused us in so many ways, and they had so many different kinds of slave labour and unpaid labour that we had to do. I can

honestly say that we had to do some kind of work for them every single day. Mostly we had to carry things, dig, and make fences. We had to go to the forest, cut bamboo, and bring it back to the army camp to build their fences for them.

It took such a long time just to finish even one fence, because we had to make them very strong and firm or else the soldiers forced us to dismantle them and start again to build it strong enough. They made us build three rows of fences, and between the rows we had to sharpen bamboo sticks and plant them in the ground with the points up, like a trap. Sometimes we also had to sliver bamboo to make ties [these are used to hold things together where nails are not available] for them. We also had to go and cut hardwood for them, which they used in several ways; some for building, and sometimes in their trenches. Everything was done with our manual labour.

We had to carry very heavy and difficult loads for them, and it was very hard work. We had to dig trenches all around the camp and inside the camp, and sometimes it was very hard to dig them because the ground was very rocky. We had to build their roads, clean their compound, and carry their rice, sometimes from the village to their camp and sometimes from their camp to another army camp. If men couldn't go to do all this then the women had to go instead.

When we worked they yelled and cursed at us and ordered us to hurry. People who tried to take a rest and those who couldn't walk were beaten – not very hard, but the soldiers kicked them and ordered them to get moving. It was horrible.

We also had to guard the road. About 20 or 30 people had to go and guard it for one night. I've also been a porter, three times as an operations porter and many, many times as a regular porter. Operations porter means at least one month at a time, and regular porter means when they take you for one week, or sometimes just two or three days. They always made me carry ammunition or rice, about 32 kilograms altogether. Only four months ago was the last time I was taken, and that was for over one month. Sometimes they beat people while they were carrying, and the worst part is being under-fed – they never even gave us enough water, just very little at a time, and they didn't let us bathe, not even once a day.

I didn't get sick, but so many others did. They couldn't carry anymore. If they asked for medicine sometimes the soldiers gave them some, but sometimes they didn't. If they couldn't carry some soldiers kicked them, then if they looked seriously hurt and sick the soldiers just left them behind. But if their condition didn't look too serious the soldiers beat them and kicked them down the side of the mountain. Anyone who they caught trying to escape was killed, and they said to the rest of us, "If you try to escape you'll go the same way as him, so just go ahead and try it if you dare. It's no big deal to us. We mean what we say." I'm sure that the people they left behind must be dead, because they left them in such a terrible state.

Sometimes when they arrived at our village they already had 60 or 70 men and women porters from other villages, mostly from Tat Lu Village. Usually those porters were being used for a one-day trip. They were always every size – women from the age of children right up to old women 60 or 65 years old, and pregnant women too. They were forced to carry beans, rice, tinned milk and other supplies.

Whenever the soldiers come into the village they all have slingshots, and whenever they see chickens or ducks they shoot and take them. They catch as many as they can and take them, so all our livestock are slowly disappearing. They also demand things, like from some people they demand a pig and eat it, and they also order one villager to go collect money from everyone, they charge 1,000 kyats every time they come. We had to pay at least three or four times every month. We also have to pay porter fees every month – every family has to pay 100 kyats, sometimes 200 or 250, depending on the situation. They also stole our rice, every family has to give them two big tins of rice every month.

Before I came they beat a man from Htee La Nay Village to death – his name was Maung Khin Tin. He was at his farm field. The Karen soldiers had shot at them somewhere, and after a half hour the SLORC troops went into the forest to try to follow them. On the way they saw Maung Khin Tin at his farm, so they accused him of being a Karen soldier and beat him to death. But I'm sure he was just an innocent civilian.

Once one of their army trucks was damaged by a landmine somewhere, so they came to the village headman, interrogated him and beat him severely, and he was seriously wounded. His name is Ba Htay. Now they force women and children to go along among the soldiers to protect them from attack by Karen soldiers, because the Karen soldiers never attack them when they are mixed with civilians. The SLORC soldiers don't treat us like human beings, they just treat us like slaves. It was horrible, so for our security we came to stay here. All the villagers there are facing very serious problems now. Their lives have become empty.

Interview: 59 - HRV: Displacement, Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Saw Thay Ler
 Sex: Male
 Age: over 50
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with 3 children
 Address: Lay Po Hla Village, Ka Ma Maung Parish, Hlaing Bwe Township,
 Karen State

I've been here about 15 days [since late January], I slept two nights on the way here. In the village we couldn't even rest because we always had to sweep the road and guard it for the soldiers. We had to pretend to sweep it for landmines, and we had to build shelters to stay and guard the road day and night for them. We all had to take turns going for three days at a time. They also came to the village and took as much of our livestock as they wanted, without permission, and they captured us to go as porters. I've had to go as a porter several times, at least once a year.

The last time I went was when they attacked out here [the 1992 Manerplaw offensive]. They made me carry 32 kg of ammunition or rice, day and night. Even though they fed us a bit twice a day it was never enough. They beat the porters countless times, and if they caught anyone escaping they shot him dead. They beat

me in the head so many times, it was uncountable. Whether you can carry or not, you have to keep carrying – you have no choice. When you're a porter you can't count the days – you must either escape or you have no way home. I escaped.

Before I came here SLORC didn't kill any of my relatives, but they killed some others in our village, like Saw Dah. They accused him of being Kaw Thoo Lei and killed him. But they were wrong, because we all knew him very well and he was a civilian. He was even older than me.

They also force us to go for five days at a time for slave labour at the army camp. They make us clean the compound, make fences and leaf roofing for them, and whatever else they ask us to do. If people from the village don't go to do the labour, then the soldiers come to the village themselves and take people to do it, even including small boys, girls and women.

The soldiers don't come to our village very often, as long as we go for slave labour, but when they want even more slave labour they come. This happens once or twice a month, depending on the situation. Whenever they come we all have to run from them to escape, because if they get you have to be a porter and carry a heavy load. As for taking women, sure, they don't care. When they had their operation out here, they took everyone, even pregnant women. There were so many young girls taken we couldn't count them all, and they came from many different places. At least they don't beat the girls quite as the men – the men get worse beatings.

SLORC soldiers always kept telling us that things would get better, but it's still terrible. We still have to run all the time when they come to catch us as porters.

Interview: 60 - HRV: Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Naw Say Wah
Sex: Female
Age: over 50
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 1 child
Address: Thaton District

Before I came, oh! They were taking so many porters. Even me, I had to go as a porter. So many villagers were porters, men and women. I was taken several months ago, for 10 or 20 days. They didn't beat the women, but they beat the men, and they didn't give any of us enough to eat. They also arrested two villagers in Tee Pa Doh Hta and accused them of being Kaw Thoo Lei. Then they made them put on Karen uniforms and killed them. I don't know their names. They also beat a village man named Pa Kah, he ran away and came here.

The soldiers also abuse people who have done anything at all against them – like if a porter runs then they shoot him or her dead. They beat anyone whom they suspect. If any villager fails to report for slave labour then the soldiers fine them, sometimes 8 kg of beef, 5 chickens, or whatever they want. It's indescribable, the way they take our things as if it were their own. Sometimes if the Karen soldiers

shoot at them anywhere then they come and shoot all our cattle and buffaloes and eat them. They say, "Your Karen soldiers shot at us, so we have to eat your cattle for compensation," and we can do nothing. And if any porters escape from them, they come to the village head and demand chicken, pork or beef as compensation.

Interview: 61 - HRV: Displacement, Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Htoo Htoo Mo
Sex: Female
Age: 53
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 4 children (2 were killed by SLORC troops)
Address: Thaton District

I don't even want to talk about SLORC. I hate talking about them, but I will tell you how they killed my two nephews from Htee See Baw Village. They were studying in town, and they had just come home to visit their mother in May 1993. Their names were Kyaw Bwe and Kyaw Aye. One day the two boys were just outside the village near the forest. The Karen soldiers had attacked the Burmese and disappeared into the forest, so the Burmese soldiers came and fired their guns all around the village, and shot the two boys dead. Kyaw Bwe and Kyaw Aye didn't know anything, they didn't even know how to run away. But SLORC couldn't catch any Karen soldiers, so instead they just shot dead two innocent boys.

After they killed the boys they came into the village, went directly to the village head and beat him brutally. They interrogated him, "Why didn't you come and tell us there were Kaw Thoo Lei in the village?" The village headman said, "I didn't even know they were in the village. It's a big village, so how could I know everything?"

SLORC also drove everyone out of Htee See Baw Kee Village to the main Htee See Baw Village. They didn't even give the villagers enough time to bring all their property, so the villagers left some of their food and other things hidden in the forest. They planned to come back once a week to get things, but they lost it all because the SLORC soldiers found everything, took what they wanted and destroyed the rest. Whether you keep your belongings in you house or not, if SLORC finds them then they'll destroy them. Some villagers didn't even have time to catch all their livestock when they were driven out, so they just left it and hoped to come back later to get it, but it was all eaten by SLORC troops before they could come back.

Three of my other nephews from Htee See Baw Kee Village were also killed brutally by the SLORC troops. They had run away into the forest when the soldiers had come to catch porters, and they were hiding in the forest for two weeks. They didn't even know the villagers had been driven out. When they returned to the village without knowing, the soldiers grabbed them right away, forced them to put on Karen army uniforms and shot them dead. They told everyone, "These three men were Karen soldiers."

Even if they really suspected them, couldn't they just take them as porters and then release them later? But they killed them. We know for sure that they weren't Karen soldiers, just innocent civilians. They were my nephews, and their names were Pa Thu, Thaung Ngwe, and Htun Thaung. They thought it was safe to go back to their village, but they were killed.

What kind of life is this for villagers, in the area where the Burmese control? If you don't escape when they come for porters, then you are taken as a porter. If you escape being taken as a porter and then they catch you, you are killed. No one can save you, and no excuses.

When the Htee See Baw Kee villagers went back to get their food and belongings, they saw that most of their things had been taken, and food and rice was just spread around on the ground. SLORC took as much as they wanted and destroyed all the rest. Now all the villagers around there are malnourished. In Htee See Baw, the villagers from Htee See Baw Kee are in serious trouble just trying to survive, because the majority of the Htee See Baw villagers themselves are barely able to survive as it is. They can't take good care of all the new villagers, because they don't even have enough rice for themselves. The villagers from Htee See Baw Kee have absolutely nothing, they're just barely surviving from hand to mouth each day. They can't suffer it, and they're desperate to find security. Some of them want to commit suicide.

They take so many people as porters I can't count. I myself have been a porter twice, for about one month each time. The soldiers pay me a bit of respect because I'm over 50 years old, so most of the time I have to carry cooking equipment and my duty is to cook for them. I have to cook rice and yellow beans mixed together. I only get enough food because I'm the cook. They never feed the male porters enough, but it's a little better for the women porters. The soldiers yell and curse, they beat the porters who can't carry and they beat brutally those who try to escape and get caught.

The worst times are when the Karen soldiers shoot at the SLORC soldiers, and they can't get revenge against the Karen soldiers so they just oppress and abuse the civilians. They always come and fire their guns around all over the place. My son Maung Win Myint was at the farm tending our cattle and buffaloes and they shot him dead. He was 17 years old. My daughter Ma Chit Htoo was killed by a gunshot when she was sleeping in her room. She didn't even have time to hide or take cover. The gunshot hit her chest and she couldn't talk to us – she just survived for a couple of minutes and then she passed away. She was 18 years old.

That happened two years ago. It was [SLORC] 99 [Light Infantry] Division. I went to their officer and asked for compensation for the murder of my children, but I got nothing. I almost went mad. I was suffering indescribably, and I can never forget it. Then two months later, there were two girls who went out to go to the toilet at about 1 o'clock at night with a candle for light. SLORC were patrolling, and when they saw the candlelight they fired their guns and shot both girls dead. Their names were Ma Thaung and Ma Peh. Their mother was so miserable and lonely that she didn't even want to live anymore. She had only two daughters and SLORC killed them both. She was hysterical for several days. Innocent people like this kept being killed, so we decided we just couldn't stay anymore and we came here for our security.

Interview: 62 - HRV: Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Naw kyat Paw Ghay
 Sex: Female
 Age: 47
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

We have to do five types of labour for them; guarding the road, portering, slave labour, standing sentry between their soldiers' positions, and as couriers. Every day we have to send 44 people altogether; 26 for guarding the road, five as porters, six for slave labour, five as sentries, and two as couriers. When guarding the road, we have to clear the bushes alongside the road [to eliminate cover and step on any mines], sweep the road [for mines], carry away all the dust, collect firewood, make fires, and guard the road. We have to sleep in groups of two – one has to guard while the other sleeps and keeps the fire. We never get enough sleep. If they call and we don't answer, the next morning they charge us 1 viss of chicken and 1 bottle of alcohol. They never feed us, we have to bring food from home.

For slave labour we have to start work at 6 am, carrying rocks and laying them so it's level. They let us stop at 12, then we have to work again from 1:00 until 5:30. Then we go take a bath, and by then it's almost dark. Then we have to sleep together with the sentry duty group, because the village is too far away to go back. They give us some rice and beans, but we must bring cooking utensils from home. We have to replace them every five days, so every porter has to take food for five days – otherwise no one will feed them. The two couriers have to go every

morning to report any news of Karen soldiers. Then if SLORC has any orders to send they make the couriers deliver them. They come back home in the evening, but they have to go every day. The soldiers never give money to the villagers for labour they just make us work like cattle or buffaloes. It's very hard for us.

Now they demand firewood from us. They order us to cut wood and bamboo so many times, and then they just sell it for money. They make the villagers go cut and carry it from JJ to KK, then the soldiers sell it at the market at KK which is close to the city so people buy the firewood. Each time the soldiers order 40 bamboos and five tons of wood from us. We have to cut the wood 1 plah long [about 2 feet] and then tie it in bundles. Last time we had to send 306 bundles, and we dare not refuse. The people from the town buy it from the soldiers.

Nyo Soe Min from IB 84 ordered us to pay 50,000 kyats because a landmine blew up their truck. They demanded that from every village, except LL Village had to pay 100,000 because they were the closest to the landmine. SLORC also asks jaggery tax, 30 viss of jaggery from every village. The officers make us give them this secretly, then they say, "If anyone asks you, say you didn't give this to me. If you tell anyone and I find out, I'll kill you." So we give it to them secretly, and we had to sign a paper as well saying that we won't tell anyone. Last time they came for this was 19 March. Sometimes they ask for rice, but never for livestock – they just take the livestock like it was their own. They only send orders asking for a little bit of rice, but they take a lot more than that every time they come to the village.

They get their rations, but they never eat them – they just sell them for money. They force us to buy their ration rice for 545 kyats per sack. Not only that, but there are supposed to be 24 bowls in a sack, and when we got to the village and measured it there were only 19 bowls. The Karen army fights them, but every time there's any fighting SLORC comes and kills villagers. If the fighting is close to MM, if it's close to NN, they kill villagers from NN, and so on.

Interview: 63 - HRV: Torture

Name: Maw Lay
 Sex: Male
 Age: 36
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

The troops who beat me were from IB 24. The battalion commander is Maj Kyaw Kyaw Htay [aka Kyi Myint], and the second in command is Myint Kyeh. On 19 March, we went to hire video equipment from OO Village for our pagoda festival. We met the soldiers on the way home. They said, "Where are you coming back from?" so we said, "From OO, we went to hire a video machine." Myint Kyeh, the battalion second-in-command, asked which way we had come, and I

explained it to him. Then he asked, "What did you see along the way?" I answered, "I didn't see anything or anyone," and then Myint Kyeh started beating me.

He hit my head three times with his pistol butt. It split my scalp in two places and I was bleeding a lot. He also hit the village head three times in the head, although he didn't bleed as much as me. Then the soldiers tied us up, but one of the soldiers knew the village head and vouched for us, so later they untied us. Then they released us the next morning. They didn't say anything to us. This happened near PP village.

Interview: 64 - HRV: Slavery, Torture

Name: U Thein
 Sex: Male
 Age: 41
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

Myint Kyeh beat me on 19 March. He is second-in-command of IB 24 and he was acting for the commander. We were coming back from hiring video equipment, and we met them along the way. They accused us of carrying supplies to Karen soldiers. I told them we were just carrying video equipment to our village, but they still accused us. As soon as he saw me there, Myint Kyeh started hitting me without asking any questions. He hit my head with his pistol three times. It hurt very much, and I have one cut on my head. Then one of their soldiers came over and vouched for me as a good man so they stopped hitting me. After that, they made me carry their supplies for one day and then released me.

Interview: 65 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Slavery, Torture

Name: Daw Nyi Nyi Soe
 Sex: Female
 Age: 50
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

Lately the soldiers have been making us provide road-security and porters, but no other slave labour because they were already making us rebuild the pagoda in our village. It was a very old pagoda and they made us rebuild it. We had to go get sand and cement, build shelters, make cement and cover it all. We had to pay some of the cost, and they paid some. We had to send carts to get the sand about 10 miles away at the Salween River, sometimes two or three, sometimes five or six carts. Now the pagoda is finished.

We have to send two people all the time as porters, and eight for guarding the road. When we guard the road we have to sweep the road, carry away the dust, pick up every bit of leaf litter, etc. At night we have to sleep in groups of two and make a fire. While one person guards the other can sleep. If both people sleep and they find out, they charge us 1 viss of chicken and 1 bottle of alcohol. We're never paid for this work, and we have to take everything we need from home.

The porters have to go for five days to carry ammunition and supplies and take their own food from home. Then every five days, others must come to replace them. The troops around us are IB 84 of LID 99, especially Coy 1 commanded by Nyo Soe Min. IB 51 is in charge of the road – their commander is Tay Aung, and their second commander is Aung Myint.

Last time a truck exploded we had to pay 50,000 kyats compensation. The soldiers also come to the village, and when they come they don't even ask for anything – they just try to catch things themselves and take them. Sometimes they ask for our rice and we have to send it because we're afraid of them. If we don't they say they'll shell our village with mortars. They get rations, but they just sell them for money.

None of us dares to face them, especially the young men – they always avoid them because whenever the soldiers want money or anything else they cause trouble for the villagers. Sometimes they tie people up and beat them, and sometimes they demand things and villagers who try to refuse are threatened. On 6 February, there was a funeral in the village, and when the villagers were going to bury the corpse the troops came and arrested eight men, tied them up and tortured them.

The villagers had to vouch for them and pay ransom. They had to give at least one or two bottles of alcohol, one or two chickens, one or two packets of Thukita cheroots, one or two bowls of rice, and one or two packs of Duya cigarettes for each man. Now all those men have been released, but five or 6 days ago the soldiers arrested another man outside the village, and they haven't released him yet. The village head hasn't gone to vouch for him yet, but he'll have to go for sure, and the villagers will have to pay ransom for him. If you don't pay them anything, they'll never release anyone. I'm sure of that.

We're afraid of them, because we have no guns so we have to be afraid of them. Before, the Karen army used to shoot them all the time. Then the SLORC soldiers said, "If the Ringworms shoot at us, we'll burn down your village." So if the Karen army shoots at them now, we'll just have to die. SLORC called all the village heads to a meeting and said, "If one truck is destroyed, each village must pay 50,000 kyats compensation. If one of my soldiers is killed, five of your villagers will be killed." So we pleaded with the Karen soldiers not to shoot at them near our village, so they don't anymore, because they care about the villagers.

Interview: 66 - HRV: Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Naw Eh Ghay

Sex: Female
Age: 25
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

On 9 February 1994 soldiers from IB 84 came to ask compensation for their truck. We had to pay 30,000 kyats. It's very hard for us to solve this problem, and they said, "If you can't pay, we'll burn down your village and drive you out." So we collected the money and paid them on 10 February. There are only 30 houses in our village, that's why it's so hard for us to find so much money.

Another group of soldiers came into our village and all the villagers tried to run away because we were afraid of them. They shot their guns all around, and then afterwards they gathered all the villagers and demanded compensation for the bullets they used. We didn't have money to pay them compensation, so they asked for two pigs weighing over 30 viss [48 kg] each. We could only give them one pig, so they went looking around the village, shot another pig and took it. They were from IB 51. Their commander is Maj Tay Aung, but he didn't shoot at us – that was Coy 1, whose commander is Nay Lin.

The soldiers take as much of our livestock as they can get. They take so many of our belongings, including our clothes and cooking pots. They demanded forced labour again and again – we had to work so many times at QQ army camp. They ordered us to send six people from our village, but we could only send five because we have to guard the road for them as well. For slave labour, we mostly had to carry rocks and build a road. They fed us but it was never enough, only rice and salt. At night we could go back and sleep in our village.

When we guard the road we have to sweep the road and clear the bushes – they use us as minesweepers. They said to us, "If any landmine explodes and destroys our truck, we will put you in jail and your village will have to pay compensation." To guard the road we have to take all our own food from home. At night, they make two of us guard at each position. We have to make a fire for the whole night, and they always check on us. Their commander said, "If any one of my soldiers is killed, I will kill five villagers".

Interview: 67 - HRV: Child, Detention, Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Pi Thu Meh
Sex: Female
Age: 60
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

The soldiers have come to our village so many times I can't even count it. Whenever they enter the village they oppress us and force us to work.

There are three kinds of labour – porters, road security and slave labour. Four people at a time from our village have to go guard the road, two for slave labour and one as a porter. There are only seven families in our village, because most families have already run away to find safer places to stay.

To guard the road, we have to sweep the road, carry away all the dust, drag branches, and collect firewood. At night we have to make a fire, because the soldiers say, "If you make a fire you can see people coming and crossing the road." We have to guard in pairs – while one sleeps the other has to guard. Sometimes they come to check us, and if they see us both sleeping they charge us one bottle of alcohol and 1 viss [1.6 kg] of chicken. We have to grind our own food from home, including our cooking utensils.

For slave labour, we have to carry dirt, rocks and sand, and build the road. They give us some rice and a little bit of yellow beans. Any other food we have to bring from home. We sleep in the village at night, then we have to start work early in the morning, from 6:30 until 12. Then we start again at 1 p.m. and work until 5:30. The porters usually have to carry ammunition and supplies. They have to go for five days at a time and take their own food with them.

While we were guarding the road there was a landmine that exploded. They didn't ask us for compensation because our village is so small and poor, but they asked every other village. As far as I know, some villages had to pay 100,000 kyats, and other 50,000. When SLORC comes to our village they take some of our livestock, coconuts and sometimes our rice. Sometimes we don't have any husked rice to give them, and they make us pound our paddy [unhusked rice in storage] and give it to them. We can't refuse, because we're very afraid. Most people don't dare face the soldiers and run away as soon as they get close to the village.

One time, my youngest son was tending the goats right in front of my house. He is so young that I don't let him go far away, but even so he has been taken as a porter before so the SLORC soldiers knew him. They grabbed him, tied him up and beat him up. He was crying. Then they took him away to the military outpost and demanded four big bowls of rice and two chickens to release him. After I gave it to them, they made him carry their supplies for three days and then released him. His name is RR.

Interview: 68 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Pi Mo Loh
 Sex: Female
 Age: 62
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

The army company that asks us for money is commanded by Nyo Soe Min, from IB 84. They also make us pay for their destroyed trucks, go and guard the road, sweep and clean it [for mines] and report to them everything that happens. When we go to guard the road, we have to take our own food. At night time we have to make a fire, and we can't even let the fire go out – they check us all the time. They say, "If any landmines explode this will be your responsibility, so you'll have to pay us compensation – and we will charge you more than ever before."

Once before, a landmine exploded and destroyed their truck. We and every other village close to the explosion had to pay 50,000 kyat each. They gathered all the village heads and demanded compensation. When we paid that time, the SLORC soldiers said, "Don't tell anybody you paid us this compensation, especially not the Karen soldiers." Now the soldiers tell us that last time a landmine exploded, two of their soldiers were killed. They say if this happens again, they will kill five villagers for every soldier killed.

Just one or two days after we paid compensation last time, the soldiers went to Po Village looking for Htun Win [a villager]. They arrested him, took him to the military outpost and now he's disappeared. When the villagers went looking for him at the military outpost the soldiers said he had escaped, but we're sure that they killed him.

Interview: 69 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Daw Mi Mi Than
 Sex: Female
 Age: 40
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Bilin Township, Thaton district in Mon State

Capt Mahn Zaw ordered us to pay compensation for their truck. He is commander of Coy 2 of IB 84, LID 99. He asked for 100,000 kyats. Our village has over 90 houses. The worst part is that because the landmine exploded close to our village they charged us much more than the other villages. They accused us of collaborating with Karen soldiers. There were so many other villages too, and they all had to pay 50,000 kyats each.

They order us to do so many things, it is unimaginable. We don't even have time to provide for our own families. There are two types of abuses; one is guarding the road all the time, and the other is having to go for slave labour. They also demand porters – that makes three kinds of forced labour. When they order porters we have to send 23 people. For slave labour and guarding the road, it's one person from every house.

When we guard the road, most of the time we have to sweep the road and just walk around on the road. We have to drag branches to erase our footprints. Then the next morning we have to check the whole road and if we see any footprints or anything, we have to report it right away. At night we just have to sleep on the road. If people go back to the village without permission they are fined 10 viss [16 kg] of pork. Two of us have to guard at each place along the road. At night we can only sleep by turns – if one sleeps, the other has to guard. When the soldiers call you, if you don't answer right away they demand one bottle of alcohol and one chicken, so nobody dares to fall asleep. They never feed us – we have to take our own food.

For slave labour, we have to carry sand and rocks to build the road almost all day long. We have to get there at 6:30 a.m. and we must start work straight away. We can rest between noon and 1 p.m., then we work until 5:30 p.m. and go home. They give us rice and a little bit of yellow beans to eat. They also make us send three bullock carts from our village to carry the sand to build the road, and they make us pay taxes for our sugar cane fields; 1,000 kyats for every big field, and 500 kyats for every small one. We also have 15 jaggery factories [huts used to boil sugar cane juice down to hard brown jaggery], and they make us pay 1,000 kyats tax for each of the larger ones and 500 kyats for each of the smaller ones.

Interview: 70 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Saw SS
Sex: Male
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

SLORC came to my village on 6 February 1994. It was Coy 1 of IB 84, under LID 99. Their battalion commander is Aung Kyaw Min, and the second-in-command is Zaw Min Oo. The soldiers gathered all the men of the village, then asked us if any members of Kaw Thoo Lei had come to our village, and how many days ago. We told them, "They came two or three days ago." The soldiers didn't like that answer so they tied up each man to a tree. Then the soldiers told us that they were going to kill five men from our village. They said they had an order from above to kill five men here, and that they have to follow their orders. Then they kicked us and beat us on the head with rifle butts. They hit me twice in my side with a gun and on my chest with a bayonet. Then the village headman came and vouched for us and they untied us.

They drove all of us together to one house and then told us what they wanted before they would release us. From me they demanded four bottles of alcohol, 32 small tins of rice, and five packages of cheroots. To buy one bottle of alcohol costs 40 kyats, one pack of cheroots costs 70 Ks and eight small tins of rice costs 35 Ks. That was only from me – there were eight of us altogether. They also demanded one chicken from each of us.

Then even though we gave them what they wanted they didn't release us. At first they only released me, but then they demanded 50,000 kyats because a landmine had exploded and destroyed their truck near their camp. We could only put together 20,000 kyats, and after we gave this to them they demanded the rest and said they would only release the other seven men when they got it. They held the seven men from 6 February until 18 February, and used them as porters.

Interview: 71 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Naw Muh Muh
 Sex: Female
 Age: 40
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

Nyo Soe Min, the company commander from IB 84, and Thet Naing Oo ordered our village to pay 50,000 kyats on 9 January. Every village had to pay. We collected the money and paid on 11 January. We also have to pay jaggery tax. The officers told us to sell them jaggery and they would pay 1,800 kyats for every 100 viss [160 kg]. They ordered us to sell them 1,000 packets [1 packet = 1 viss, so this is 1,600 kg].

They said if we couldn't provide it all then we would have to pay 600 kyats taxes for every 100 viss we didn't provide. By then we had already sold all our jaggery, so we had none to give them and we had to pay them 6,000 kyats tax. [Note: other villages got the same order, and after buying their jaggery for 18 kyats per viss the soldiers turned around and forced them to buy it back for 24 kyats per viss. So whether they can provide the jaggery or not this is just an extortion scheme for money.]

We also have to do forced labour, go as couriers and porters, and guard the road. We have to send 10 people to guard the road, 10 for forced labour, and five for porters. When we guard the road we have to sweep and carry away the dust and leaf litter, then in the afternoon we collect firewood and at night we have to stay in pairs near the fire. One can sleep while the other watches the road. They check, and if we fall asleep they make us pay at least one bottle of alcohol and one viss of chicken.

We had to take our own food from home, too. At forced labour we have to carry stones and dirt, clear the bushes and build the road. They only give us rice to

eat, and we have to bring salt and fishpaste from home. The porters have to go for five days at a time, then we have to replace them. They have to take all their own food and carry bullets, shells, and the soldiers' food and supplies.

When the soldiers come to the village they never ask, they just steal; chickens, pigs, goats, coconuts, even eggs. They take everything. Last time they left the village some Karen soldiers shot at them from far away. They didn't see any people, just a buffalo, so they shot it. Then they came back to the village, gathered the four headmen and asked if any Karen soldiers are around. The headmen said no. Then the soldiers made the headmen and some other villagers sleep in the same house with them. I myself had to take my children and stay there for two nights with the soldiers [the soldiers were probably using the villagers as a human shield against attack].

Then they left. At that time, their officer asked us, "Did my soldiers steal anything from you?" and we said no because we were very afraid of him. He even asked about jaggery tax and truck compensation, but we had to keep saying "No" because we were afraid, and then they made us sign a paper saying this.

Interview: 72 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Saw Hla Kyaw
 Sex: Male
 Age: 40
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Thaton Township, Mon State

The soldiers order us to guard the road and do forced labour; six people for forced labour and one from each family to guard the road. The people guarding the road have to carry the dust away, water the road and guard it. We have to guard the whole night, two in each group. While one guards the other can sleep, but if we both sleep find us 1 viss of chicken and one bottle of alcohol. For forced labour, there are two roads we have to build. We have to carry dirt and lay the stones, and bring our own food from home.

Ah Ka Kyaw's group from IB 51 comes to the village and demands things very often. He himself demanded one goat, one pig, six chickens and countless bottles of alcohol from the village head. They never pay – the village head has to collect money from all the villagers and pay back the owners of the things. Ah Ka Kyaw himself also beat the headman. He punched him, kicked and booted him, and hit him with a rifle butt.

Interview: 73 - HRV: Detention, Displacement, Forced Labour, Torture

Name: Maung Khin Myint
 Sex: Male
 Age: 40
 Ethnicity: Karen

Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Thaton Township, Mon State

I was beaten by the second-in-command of IB 51. His name is Ah Ka Kyaw, and he is also called Mo Myint Kyaw. He beat me on 10 February 1994. He accused me of collaborating with Kaw Thoo Lei, but I hadn't. I can't even count how many times they hit me. They kept beating me until they'd had enough. They punched me, kicked me and they shot me twice with a slingshot. It was extremely painful. Then they just released me.

They called me again on February 20. I went to them and they ordered me to make a path for carrying water from the stream to their camp. It just took one day but I had to work very hard. Then the next day they ordered me to go again and to bring a big stick with me but I didn't go because I was afraid. I ran from them and came here. I came with my whole family because I don't dare face them anymore. Now I heard that Ah Ka Kyaw is gone.

Interview: 74 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Pi Tee Ker
 Sex: Female
 Age: 50
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

The soldiers in our area are IB 51. The battalion commander is Maj Tat Aung and the second-in-command is Myint Aung. Myint Aung is in charge of the labour. We have to go as porters, slave labour, to guard the road and to carry things on our bullock carts. They sent a note telling us to send them 30 people, but we didn't send anyone because we couldn't. So they came to the village and beat and hurt us, then they grabbed 24 people and took them away for road labour.

We couldn't pay instead of going because they wanted so many people, and every one has had to pay so much already that we can't pay anymore. Later all those people just had to escape by themselves. The troops sent an order to the village head to send replacements but nobody could go, so they came and tried to capture people again. They never release people until the work is finished. They also demand five people for guarding the road, five porters and two bullock carts. We have to go and clean, sweep and water the road, drag branches over it and step around on it. At night they gather us and we sleep together in a group; they wanted us to sleep apart in pairs, but we argued with them so they let us stay together.

For slave labour we have to carry dirt and stones and load them on their truck. The truck takes it to TT, and we have to follow. Then we have to unload the truck and sleep at TT. They're still building this road. As for the porters, if the soldiers go anywhere then they have to carry all their supplies. If not they have to carry

rocks and build fences. We also have to take our carts and carry stones, wood, earth, and bamboo from UU Village to TT. It's a trip of over 10 miles.

They come to our village and demand food, and we always have to give them whatever they ask. When the Karen army came and shot at them they lost two guns and some of their soldiers, so they demanded 30,000 kyats from us to pay for the two guns. Now Maj Kyaw Kyaw Htay from IB 24 is asking for porter fees. He asked 6,000 kyats for four months. They used to ask for porter fees every month, but for the last three months we've had to work very hard for them so we thought that's why they weren't asking. But then they suddenly asked for fees for the past four months together. They ask for porters every month, but they won't even accept people – only money. Usually they ask for two porters each month at 1,500 kyats each.

Interview: 75 - HRV: Livelihood, Torture

Name: Saw Ka Pa Mu
Sex: Male
Age: 35
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

The soldiers told us we were not allowed to go out at night or sleep at our farms. On 15 January, I was on my way home from my farm and it was a little bit dark, so they stopped me and started beating me. It was a militia group whose leader is Pa Lu Kyaw. Their second-in-command is Pa Noe, and the one who beat me is named Mu Ya Gone. He kicked me three or four times and then beat me with his gun. I suffered terribly from that. Then they asked for a chicken. I said I had no chickens, so they asked for money. I gave them 100 kyats. They asked for 150, but I only had 100 so I paid them and then they released me.

Interview: 76 - HRV: Livelihood, Torture

Name: Maung Than Htun
Sex: Male
Age: 38
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

I was beaten up by Mu Yah Gone, from the militia group led by Pa Lu Kyaw. They ordered 10 people for slave labour to build the car road. At that time I was village head, but I'm not anymore. I couldn't send 10 people because I couldn't find anyone who would go. All the villagers refused to go because they said, "We have to go every day already, can't go anymore", so I couldn't send anyone. So the militia called me to them and started cutting me with a knife. They cut me on the

head, and the cut was as deep as the width of your finger. My Yah Gone did that. Then they asked me for one goat, and I couldn't refuse.

The militia get their salary from the villagers. We have to pay them 1,000 kyats and two big tins of rice every month [it appears that the militia demands this "tribute" from every village where they operate, then pools the total and divides it among themselves (only eight or 10 per group) to form a salary].

IB 24 asks us for porters too. Their commander is Kyaw Kyaw Htay [aka Kyi Myint]. They order two people every month, but they don't even want the people, they only take money. So we have to pay 3,800 kyats every month instead of the two porters. Our village has 20 houses, so that's 190 kyats per house every month. They're still asking that now. [Note: the burden of this amount can be put into perspective by noting that even in the Burma Army, a private soldier's monthly salary is only 450 kyats before deductions for equipment, etc.]

Interview: 77 - HRV: Livelihood, Torture

Name: Naw Paw Kee
 Sex: Female
 Age: 25
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

I was beaten by the SLORC militia. Their commanders are Pa Lu Kyaw and Pa Noe. The one who beat me is Pa Mo Roe, one of their soldiers. They came on 16 March and said Thara Maung Myint had come to our village [Thara Maung Myint is a Karen army officer in the area]. I said no, and then he said I'm a liar and he started to beat me.

At the time I was a village head, and I had to do everything they asked me to. I was telling the truth that Thara Maung Myint hadn't been there, but they wouldn't believe me. They kept saying I was lying, that Thara Maung Myint is a relative of mine and that his mother-in-law lives next door to me. They said I must know when he comes and I shouldn't lie, and then they beat me some more. They said another villager had told them that Thara Maung Myint had come with his soldiers, but I'm sure they just made up the story.

We also have to give them two big tins of rice every month, and we have to pay them taxes of 100 kyats for every woodcutting saw in the village, 100 kyats for every bullock cart, 500 kyats for every 2-man saw [Karen villagers use long 2-man saws to saw logs into planks for their use. The log is propped up, one man stands on the log while the other stands on the ground underneath] and 500 shingles of leaf roofing.

Interview: 78 - HRV: Livelihood

Name: Naw Htoo

Sex: Male
 Age: 26
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

The SLORC militia came to the village one 15 April. They asked why our pigs weren't tied up and we said, "It's dry season, they can't do any harm" [no crops are in]. But they claimed our pigs go and eat their crops, and then Mu Ya Gone shot twice at our pigs but missed. Then he shot and killed my pig. I begged him not to but they just do whatever they want. They refused to pay – they just told me to get the money from the other villagers. But I can't do that because it had nothing to do with the other villagers, and besides they have no money either. We're all facing the same problems.

Interview: 79 - HRV: Detention, Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture, Women

Name: Maung VV
 Sex: Male
 Age: 28
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with 1 daughter (age 11 months)
 Occupation: Hawker
 Address: Bilin Town, Mon State

In Bilin Town I'm a hawker and day labourer, but SLORC ordered me to pay "porter fees" so often that I couldn't pay all the time, so the leader of our section of the town put me on a list and the police arrested me to be porter. At night on 15 April I was going out with my friends and the police stopped us, told us they had to discuss something with us and then took us straight to jail. They put us in the police lock-up and we didn't know why at first, but if anyone asked why they were punched so we didn't ask. Then when the army asked for porters for their operations the police transferred us to the army. We slept in the lock-up one night, then the army came on 16 April and got us with a truck, so we had no chance to escape. They take porters away like this every month.

They drove us to Pa-an picking up more porters along the way in Bilin and Myaingalay towns. Then in Pa-an they put us in the lock-up for two nights. The police there asked us for money but we didn't have any, so they wouldn't even give us water to drink. After two nights, the army took us away in another truck to Ka Mo Ka Chu Village, and from there they made us carry ammunition to Ka La Ma Mountain. I had to carry eight 81mm mortar shells, which weighed at least 25 viss [40 kg]. It was so heavy I could barely even carry it 50 yards, but whether we could or not we just had to keep going. I still have calluses on my shoulders.

Some of the others had to carry other things, like alcohol, different kinds of bullets, rice, salt, chillies, beans, etc. We started climbing and didn't stop until it

was almost dark. Then the soldiers cooked for themselves and ate but they didn't give us any food, and we kept going. We slept one night in the forest and they still didn't give us any food, then we kept going the next morning. On the way the soldiers beat many porters badly because they couldn't carry anymore, they were too tired from starvation.

We reached Ka La Ma Mountain and kept going. This mountain is very high and steep so it is hard to climb with a heavy load. When porters couldn't climb anymore the soldiers kicked, punched and beat them up badly. They hit them with rifle butts and kicked them in the sides. I saw one porter killed because he couldn't carry anymore and fell down, and the soldiers kept kicking him until he was dead. They killed another porter by kicking him down the mountainside. we never saw him again. His name was Aung Than Oo.

We slept one night at Tah Li, then we left early in the morning and reached their camp at Hill 850. We were carrying for five days, and the first three nights we got no food. They only cooked for themselves. Then after that, we got one meal a day, just rice and salt and never enough. If we even tried to smoke, they yelled at us and beat us. If we asked a friend for a light they accused us of trying to escape and beat us.

There were also about 20 women porters who had to carry the soldiers' packs, but they let them go after we reached the top of Naw Ta Wah Mountain. They didn't beat the women because they wanted favours from them. At night while they were guarding us, they made the women sleep beside them.

Some people already got sick when we were still in the lock-up, and they were still forced to be porters. Then 10 more became sick on the way, so the soldiers did them a favour by making them carry less. If we had to carry eight mortar shells then they only had to carry six.

They wouldn't give medicine to anyone until we reached our destination, and even then it wasn't real medicine and had no effect. If you wanted real medicine you had to buy it from them. The soldiers are from IB 2 from Thein Zayat [near Thaton]. They have many soldiers, some based at Ka La Ma Mountain, some at Noh Da Ya, some at Tah Li and at Hill 850.

Everywhere they are, they have porters. At Hill 850 there were 16 of us, until four of us escaped. One of their commander's names is Tin Hla, and I remember soldiers Kyaw Htay, Tin Way, Aye Myint, and Sgt Kyaw Win Htay. After we got to Hill 850 we stayed there. When we were there they forced us to dig trenches, cut bamboo, find leaves for roofing, build huts and make fences. They only fed us a mess tin lid full of rice and salt. Once I asked for chillies and they said, "They're not yours. If you want to eat, go back home and eat." They only gave us dirty water to drink.

At night they guarded us. We built ourselves shelters, but they leaked when it rained. They we had to wake up early in the morning and start working. We had to make fences, fences and more fences. We had to cut logs and carry dirt to raise the ground level. We had to carry water, and even then they followed us.

Many porters wanted to escape and some died along the way, but I don't know what happened to them. The soldiers said, "If you escape you will be shot." They never released any of us. They wanted us to be porters forever and stay with them as long as they're at the camp. even if it's a year or more. When we realised that we tried to escape. We'd already been with them nearly a month.

Then on the evening of 13 May at about 5 p.m. We were carrying sacks of rice from Tah Li back to Hill 850 and we got ahead of the soldiers, so four of us just dropped our rice sacks and ran away. It was jungle and we didn't know where to go, so we just went through the jungle and the mountains and slept in the jungle one night. Then we found a village and they sent us here on 14 May.

Here nobody forces us to do anything and our lives are okay, but we're worried about our families. My family is very poor, and they survive day by day. I'm sure that without me it's very hard for them to provide for themselves. I want to go back as soon as possible because I have to make a new roof for our house. We all want to go home. When I escaped I didn't know the way home, and I knew if we went back the same way we came the soldiers would catch us for sure because there are so many of them. I'm afraid of them, but I think once we arrive at our homes we'll be okay because the soldiers in our town are a different battalion and they won't do anything.

Interview: 80 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Win Myint
Sex: Male
Age: 32
Ethnicity: Burman
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 2 children (age 3 and 10)
Occupation: Day labourer
Address: Myaingalay, Pa-an Township, Karen State

I was arrested because SLORC asked for porter fees so many times that I couldn't pay anymore, so the SLORC head of our section of the town told the police. At night when I was asleep, the police came together with the section head and they put handcuffs on me. The police put me in the lock-up for five days and then handed me over to the army. In the lock-ups, the police made us pay 5 kyats just to get one plastic bag of water. The army took me to Pa-an lock-up where I met Maung VV [see related interview 79] and the others, then we left together the next day.

The soldiers forced me to carry a heavy load. It was too heavy, and when we started climbing the mountains I was too tired, I got cramps in my legs and I couldn't walk anymore, so I asked permission to rest. But they wouldn't allow it, and instead they forced me to go faster. Then they kicked me two or three times and hit my head with a rifle butt. I didn't bleed but at first I was winded and I couldn't breathe, and then it was really painful when I breathed.

It's still painful here, in my side on the ribs. You can still see the mark here. Yesterday I had a fever and it was really painful. After they beat me, they lightened my load a little bit and then I had to keep carrying. Later when they gave us rice, I was so badly hurt I couldn't even chew it, so I had to mix it with water to swallow it.

When we got to their camp [at Hill 850] they forced us to do many kinds of work. We had to carry water up the hill twice every morning, and it was very steep and took a long time. We couldn't sleep at night because all the insects were biting us. We could only sleep two or three hours at night and then we had to go to carry water at 4 or 5 a.m. every morning.

Then we had to cut at least 15 big bamboos about 9 feet long each, and then they gave us some food. But as soon as we finished eating, we had to start work again. We started before sunrise and finished after the sun went down. Then we ate, massaged each other and tried to sleep. The soldiers made us massage them too, and only let us go to sleep when they'd had enough. At night they drank alcohol, smoked and had a good time, but as for us, it was just work all the time. Now I'm afraid we can never go home.

Interview: 81 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Maung Thein Zaw
Sex: Male
Age: 33
Ethnicity: Burman
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 2 children (age 5 to 10)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Bilin town, Mon State

We had to pay porter fees of 50 kyats two or three times every month. We couldn't pay every time, so put us on the list to be porters. The local SLORC head made a list of people to be arrested by the police. Then when I went to watch a video, the SLORC head said, "I want to talk to you about something", and he took me to the police and they locked me up. When the army wanted porters, they just came to the lock-up and got us. I was with Maung VV [see related interview 79] and the others.

We face so many problems because we are poor and living on a day-to-day basis. People who have money can pay the porter fees, but the rest of us are just put on the list. The local SLORC head collects the fees for the military, but this money is just for their personal use. Then whenever they want porters they come and arrest as many people as they can from the list.

Interview: 82 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Maung Tin Aung
Sex: Male
Age: 21

Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single
 Occupation: Hawker
 Address: Thaton Town, Mon State

I was a hawker, and I like to sell things on the trains because we can make more money that way. But the police don't allow us to sell on the trains, so in April many policemen came to Thaton Train Station to arrest all the hawkers and they fined us each 100 kyats. Some could pay that much but I couldn't because I only had very little money. So they put me and the others in jail at Thaton Police Station for one night, then the next day the military came and we were given to them to be porters. The police gave at least 25 men to the army to be porters. The soldiers took us to Pa-an and locked us up for two nights. Then I had to go as a porter and carry six 81mm mortar shells.

Interview: 83 HRV: Forced Labour, Torture

Name: U XX
 Sex: Male
 Age: 62
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with 3 children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kyaik Mayaw Township, Mon State

U XX was at the movies with his son when he was forcibly taken along with 18 others. SLORC troops took them from the village on Full Moon Day in October 1993 and sent them to Martaban, where they were put on a train to Pegu. They were kept there for two nights, then sent to Kyauk Kyi by truck. They slept there one night, then set out for the hills with 100 porters and 100 SLORC soldiers. two days later they reached the frontline area at Kyo Tadah Camp, where they were kept for one month. 100 porters were given 10 small army cook pots of rice per day.

They were always hungry. They had to work carrying rocks every day, and while working they were tied together with rope in groups of four. They also had to carry 2 tins of rice at a time as porters, and any who couldn't carry it were beaten with sticks or gun butts, kicked in the stomach with army boots and punched in the head. Some died and some escaped, and after one month there were only 50 porters left. Then the guards on duty one day allowed U XX and five others to escape, each going their own way. He was alone in the forest on the run for two days before meeting two Karen soldiers who took him to their camp.

Interview: 84 - HRV: Forced Labour, Torture

Name: U YY
 Sex: Male

Age: 54
 Family: Married with 4 children
 Occupation: Labourer
 Address: Yi Da Shi town, Pegu Division
 Name: U ZZ
 Sex: Male
 Age: 42
 Family: Single
 Occupation: Labourer
 Address: Pyu town, Pegu Division
 Name: U AAA
 Sex: Male
 Age: 45
 Family: Married with 7 children
 Occupation: Labourer
 Address: Htan Ta Bin town, Pegu Division

[Three escaped porters arrived at a Karen military camp east of Kyauk Kyi on 16 December 1993. U AAA said he was conscripted as a porter by LIB 26. During his time as a porter Cpl Than Tun beat him on the head with a rifle butt. After two months as a porter the wound had still not healed.]

U BBB was planting rice in the fields when he was arrested by LIB 59. They tied his hands, put him on a truck and sent him to Kyauk Kyi Town [a distance of 180 km on the map; much farther by truck over the rough roads of the Pegu Hills]. There he was handed to LIB 60 and sent to the frontline, where he was a porter for a month before being sent to LIB 30 under Maj Win Naing, where he continued as a porter.

The porters were only given one little milk tin of rice per day between two people [an average villager eats 3 milk tins of rice per day himself]. While carrying heavy loads he fainted and collapsed, and a private from LIB 30 kicked him in the face with his army boot and broke three of his front teeth. He was a porter for 56 days, and says the loads he had to carry were unbearable.

U CCC was walking with his child when he was captured as a porter by LIB 59. He was handed to LIB 60 and was sent to the frontline in Mu Theh-Byat Kaw area. Later he was handed to Maj Win Naing of LIB 30. He was a porter for 57 days, during which he says he was forced to work like a bullock, treated brutally in many ways and given almost nothing to eat. The usual load given to these men was 2 big tins of rice at a time. Eventually they couldn't bear it anymore, ran away and found some Karen soldiers.

Interview: 85 - HRV: Execution, Forced Labour, Torture

Name: Maung DDD
 Sex: Male
 Age: 20
 Occupation: Shopkeeper

Address: Bogalip township, Pegu Division

I went to my sister's small town which is along the way between Rangoon and Mandalay. When I arrived at the railway station to come back I was broke. A man camp up to me and offered me work at the sawmill for 60 kyats per day, so I agreed but I told him I would just work two or three days and then I wanted to go back home. He took me to Cho Kaung Village and put me in a building there. There were many other people there already. Somebody asked me, "Why are you here?" so I told them, "I just came to work in the sawmill," but then they told me, "This place is for gathering porters, not for the sawmill."

The next morning, the police came in and took us to the police department. I tried to explain to them that I was just in the area to visit my sister, not to work, but nothing happened and the next day they sent us to Kyauk Kyi. I saw many porters there. Then the next day we arrived at IB 60 and we started to carry food supplies and ammunition to Byat Kaw.

I carried rice sacks and sugar sacks. Along the way I slipped and fell down because I was very tired, and then the soldiers kicked me down the slope. It was very hard for me because I had such a heavy load, but eventually one of the officers dragged me back up onto the path again. Along the way one of my friends was shot dead by the soldiers, and they threw his body down into the valley. His name was Than Saw. I felt very sad. We had carried together and eaten together. Finally I escaped.

Interview: 86 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Torture

Name: Saw Lah Ghay
 Sex: Male
 Age: 30
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kyauk Dagar township, Pegu Division

I was arrested when I was shopping at Pado Palaw market and they sent me to Pane Ze Loke police lock-up. I spent two nights in the cell there, then they sent me on a truck to Kyauk Kyi. We slept one night in Kyauk Kyi, then I had to carry a load from there. It was so heavy that I slipped many times along the way, and I was beaten up and kicked. There was an old man who slipped and fell down on the path because of his very heavy load, and the soldiers dragged him and beat him up with a big stick. Finally he was just laying there silent. He was left there. There was nothing along the path, no protection from the rain for him and it was raining. I slept one night on the way, then the next morning they ordered me to collect firewood for cooking and I escaped.

I can tell you about other porters too. Six years ago, I knew a man called Kyaw Myint who was taken and never came back. Another was my brother-in-law Tin Myint, two years ago he was taken and never came back. He had four children. There was also Ko KaLar nearly three year ago, and Tint Swe two or three years ago, they also disappeared. They were from my wife's home village.

Interview: 87 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Torture

Name: Maung Than Htay
Sex: Male
Age: 25
Family: Married with 2 children
Occupation: Vendor on trains
Address: Pa Nwe Gone town, Pegu Division

When the train stopped at Nyaunglebin Station, I was on the train selling rice meals to the passengers. I was arrested by the police because I didn't have a licence. [This is often used as an excuse to arrest people or extort money from them. SLORC authorities claim you must buy a "licence" to do most anything.]

I slept two nights in the police lock-up, then they sent me to the porter group at IB 60 in Kyauk Kyi. We started to carry from there. My load weighed 15 or 20 viss (24 to 32 kg). We slept one night at Mu Thet, then one night at Neh Gya and then we went to Byat Kaw. We ate very little food each day. There was no curry and no salt, just rice sometimes with some yellow beans. There was not fighting on the way. I was beaten with a rifle butt, and the others were also beaten up by the soldiers. When we got to In Gone, they sent me to collect firewood and I escaped.

Interview: 88 HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Torture

Name: Maung Cho
Age: 21
Family: Married
Occupation: Tea-shop owner
Address: Dagon new satellite Town, Rangoon Division

I was just going to visit my wife's elder brother. When I arrived at the railway station a policeman came up and arrested me and took me to the lock-up. Then the next morning I was sent to Kyauk Kyi and to IB 60, we slept one night there and the next day we had to carry loads. I was beaten up three times along the way. Many people got beaten up because we were so tired and couldn't carry our loads.

Some people tried to escape, and the soldiers shot them. These soldiers are not men, they are dogs. They only gave us 2 spoonfuls of rice to eat each day. Sometimes it wasn't even cooked and we had to cook it ourselves. At night we had to sleep in the rain. On the way one of the soldiers tried to run away but he was caught by the other soldiers. Another two porters were caught too, and they were tied up with ropes and beaten up.

Interview: 89 - HRV: Forced Labour, Torture

Name: Maung Tint Swe
Sex: Male
Age: 28
Family: Married

Address: Kyauk Dagar township, Pegu Division

I was arrested when I was fishing in the paddy field by the road, and they sent me to Kyauk Kyi. From there I had to carry food supplies for Coy 2 of IB 60 – the company commander’s name is Capt Than Win. My load weighed nearly 20 viss (32 kg) .We slept three nights on the way, and we went on until I escaped. There was no fighting along the way. When we got tired and we couldn’t go, they beat us up. I was kicked in my waist and on my head. We ate twice a day but it was very little, and it was never enough. Some porters got malaria and other sickness. Sometimes the soldiers gave them medicine, but sometimes nothing all. My shoulders and back were all wounded, so eventually I ran away.

Interview: 90 - HRV: Forced Labour, Torture

Name: EEE
 Sex: Male
 Age: 18
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single; Father, dead. He is an only child, and lives with his mother
 Occupation: Trishaw driver
 Address: Gyobingauk Town, south of Prome, Pegu Division

[EEE was encountered walking along a path in Nyaunglebin District by a human rights worker. His hometown is over 150 km to the west across the high Pegu Mountain Range.]

The police took me to be a porter, and they transferred me to 35 Infantry Battalion based in Tharrawaddy. At 35 Battalion they said, “You’re going to the Pegu Mountain Range”. But they didn’t stop there. The night of May 27 they took me on a truck, and we only arrived in Kyauk Kyi [on the other side of the Pegu Mountain Range] early the next morning. There were 10 of us going as porters. They kept us in the school in Kyauk Kyi, then brought us by a boat across the Sittang River and loaded on a truck again to Camp 60. We slept one night there, then the next day I had to carry four heavy shells, many bullets and one ration bag. There were about 400 porters, and the soldiers from 35 Infantry Battalion. One of the officers was Maj Soe Win. He’s a column commander.

We had to carry to Mu Thay, and we stayed about one month there [given the dates of his arrest and escape, his time in each camp may have been shorter than he estimates, but it probably seemed that long]. The soldiers weren’t fighting, they were only doing business. At Mu Thay the soldiers were opening a big shop so they were forcing all the porters to carry the goods for them to sell at their shop. They ordered us to cut bamboos, dig trenches, and do other kinds of basic labour every day. We only got to eat once every two days. If some traders came along and they knew some of the porters from Kyauk Kyi then they gave us some food.

After a month we left Mu Thay, and I had to carry a sack of rice as well as some cooked rice. Along the way there was a steep mountain called Hlan Hlan, and I couldn't climb up with my sack of rice so they beat me with a bamboo stick three times on my back, then they hit me on the head twice with a gun. When we arrived at the top of that high mountain they only gave a little rice to each porter. I wasn't satisfied so I went and demanded more, and Maj Win Ko from 35 Battalion punched me at the mouth and broke one of my teeth. After that we kept going and slept one night at Nay Kya Hill. From there we walked to Wah Ser Ko and stayed there nearly a week.

We had to cut bamboos, make roofing, repair the buildings and barracks, and make huts for them. We had to carry big bamboos, and when I couldn't carry them they beat me with a gun and the butt of a knife. Not only me – they beat everyone who couldn't carry. Some of the old men who couldn't keep up with us were beaten with guns by the soldiers. Then they used a knife to stab them in the arms and legs and kicked them down the mountainside. I saw them do this to three old men who were over 50.

When we left there we had to carry rations to Yah Ko, and we stayed over a month there. I said to Maung FFF [see related interview 91], "If we stay with SLORC we'll die, so we should escape." So we escaped on July 25 at 4 a.m. We walked all day and just before nightfall we slept beside a stream. The next morning we walked along the stream. We thought if we didn't run SLORC would catch us again and we'd die, so we ran even though we didn't have the strength to run. Then we saw two buffaloes by the stream, so we knew there must be a village nearby and we decided to let the buffaloes guide us there. We followed them and finally we found a house. The people there gave us some food and we dried our clothes, then we set out walking again and met you.

SLORC tortured me and my body is injured all over. I'll never forget this. I stayed with my mother and she's very old, so I worked to get money and food to give to my mother. If she has died because I've been away then I don't want to go back home. I'll stay here and join the Revolution.

Interview: 91 - HRV: Forced Labour, Torture

Name: Maung FFF
 Sex: Male
 Age: 20
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Single; parents still alive
 Occupation: Trishaw driver
 Address: Nattalin town, south of Prome, Pegu Division

[Maung FFF was encountered walking along a path together with EEE (see related interview 90) in Nyaunglebin District by a human rights worker. His hometown is also over 150 km to the west across the high Pegu Mountain Range.]

On May 24, 1994, at 9 p.m., the police arrested me in a video theatre and sent me to 35 Infantry Battalion in Tharrawaddy. They put us on a truck all night long to Kyauk Kyi. When we arrived there we had to sleep one night, then we had to carry a basket and cross the Sittang River. After that, a truck came and carried us to Camp 60 and we slept there one night. Then they sent us to Mu Thay. On the way I had to carry a big basket that felt like it weighed more than 30 viss [48 kg].

There were about 300 porters there. As the soldiers are opening a big shop in in Mu Thay , we had to carry all the goods for the shop as well as the rations and ammunition for all the soldiers. They only gave us food once a day, sometimes only once every two days. It wasn't enough for me.

In Mu Thay we stayed for nearly a month. We had to cut bamboo, make fences, dig trenches and make buildings. Then they sent us to Yah Ko. On the way I couldn't climb Hlan Hlan Mountain, so one of the sergeants came and beat and kicked me. He beat me on my knees with a bamboo [Maung FFF has a scar on his back from this beating]. We arrived at the Strategic Command hill. There were a battalion of soldiers there, and they said, "We're going to release you", but the next day they sent us to Yah Ko. After that they said they were going to send us to Plah Ko, so my friend and I decided that we should escape.

The soldiers slept on a platform while EEE and I were tied to a stake in the ground. We worked at it and managed to undo the rope, and we escaped in the dark. Then we crossed the mountains and jungle in the rain until finally we arrived here.

Interview: 92 - HRV: Child, Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture, Women

Name: Sai Naw Suk
Sex: Male
Age: 30
Ethnicity: Shan
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Tachilek, previously from Mong Pyak, eastern Shan State
Interviewed: early August 1994

[Sai Naw Suk was taken as a porter for SLORC's offensive against the MTA.]

I'm a farmer, but sometimes I go to Mong Hsu to buy rubies for trade. About two months ago I went to Mong Hsu and bought some rubies. While I was on my way back on a public car, I was arrested in Mong Pying [west of Kengtung]. All the travellers were searched and all their valuables, like jewellery and money, were robbed. The soldiers said we could come back later and ask for it back. So I lost all my rubies.

Then they commandeered another car and put us on it. I was sent to Mong Hsat [west of Tachilek], then to Mong Tung, then to Na Gong Mu, and on to Mong Kyot by car [Mong Kyot is near the Salween River – it was the area of severe fighting at the time]. They took 51 of us, and there were many other similar groups. About 200 of us altogether were attached to IB 244. When we got to Mong Kyot, no people were there because they had already run away for their lives. SLORC soldiers shot the pigs, buffaloes, ducks, chickens, whatever they saw they shot and ate. Then we were taken into the hills as porters.

I was forced to carry artillery shells. The soldiers said all the villages were belong to the rebels, so they arrested the men and taken as porters and forced the women to sleep with them as comfort women. They killed all the villagers' animals, and the people cried. The soldiers killed the people, even the children. Some children escaped but others were killed. I saw some new orphans as both of their parents were killed.

We only got a handful of boiled rice to eat, only once a day. At first it was twice a day and not as bad, but as soon as the fighting broke out, the meal turned into once a day and it wasn't enough. I had to carry six 75mm shells at a time, each shell weighs 3 kg, so my load weighed about 18-20 kg. The scars still remain on my shoulders – at the time there were even worms in them. We weren't given any medicine or treatment. People got sick, but when they asked for medicine they were hit with rifle butts.

When soldiers got sick or wounded, we had to carry them to their outpost. If people had money when they were arrested, SLORC took it, then when we were porters they beat those people badly all the time because they wanted them to die or flee. I myself was beaten because of this. There were two porters who were a bit

deaf, so they didn't hear the soldiers' orders and one time they just kept walking when they were ordered to stop.

The soldiers thought they were trying to run away, so they shot at them and hit both of them in the leg above the ankle, breaking their legs. Then we had to carry them to the senior officer, the soldiers told him what happened and the two men were sent to the hospital for treatment. At the same time two other who thought they'd be shot too ran away but fell into a ditch, and both of them broke their knees. Then they were beaten and didn't get any treatment because they'd tried to run away. They were beaten with rifle butts, then just left by the side of the path. I think they must have died.

One old man was very weak because he'd only been given a small meal every day. He got stomach trouble, so one night he unintentionally made some noise and the soldiers said, "You must not make noise or the enemy might know where we are", but he was sick and he couldn't help it. He made some more noise, and I saw them stuff some blankets in his mouth and then kick him down the mountainside. He was killed.

I also saw with my own eyes four old men were beaten to death. They were from Mong Tun and Mong Hsat. They were too old and couldn't carry heavy loads, so they were given duties fetching water and cooking rice for the soldiers. Then after the rice was cooked all of us were ordered to carry the rice up to the soldiers who were on the top of the mountain, and they told us we had one hour to get there. The rest of us made it up in time, but the four old men took an hour and 15 minutes to get to the top so the soldiers went wild. They beat the old men at the heads and all over their bodies, then left them laying there for a day. The next day they were all bruised and swollen and they couldn't walk, so the soldiers beat them with rifle butts all over their bodies until their last breath. They beat those men to death.

I was there and I myself saw it. I also saw some three porters wounded in battle, one in the forearm and two others in the shoulder. They were wounded very severely – the medics gave them saline intravenous transfusions and then sent one of them back to their Mong Pying outpost. The other two had to stay with us. Another time I saw three soldiers firing a big mortar, and the porters had to carry all the shells for them so there were about eight people there.

At about 8 p.m. that night one of the shells exploded right there, right near me. All three soldiers and five porters were killed. The next day when the officers came to examine the splinters, they said it was their own shell [probably a misfire]. I also saw planes bombing two or three times, very high and going very fast. The SLORC battalions in the fighting area are IB 329, 244, 333, and 65. I was with 244.

I was a porter for 40 days. Then one night SLORC launched a night attack and I had to carry shells. I was too afraid of the fighting, so I just dropped my load on the path, rolled down the hillside and ran away. I didn't know where I was going, I just ran and ate whenever fruits I saw in the jungle. I was alone and I had no food for seven days. Sometimes I could hardly do more than crawl. Then I found a hut at one night so I slept there, and the next morning I walked through the fields and I

saw some Thai soldiers. They asked me where I came from and why so. I told them I was a porter who ran from the SLORC troops. They sent me to Wat Wan Lan in Fang District [a Buddhist temple west of Mae Sai].

There were about 30 people there already, and food and supplies [from foreign donors]. After three days there they told us we had to go back. The Thai authorities wouldn't listen to our pleas, they just told us we must go back, so we asked them if they would take us to the border near Tachilek. Four people came and took us to the border – one in uniform from the Immigration Department, one in military uniform, and two in civilian dress. There were 39 of us, and they took us in two trucks close to the border bridge to Tachilek and just told us to go across as we liked.

Now it's been about 20 days since I escaped [meaning he escaped on 10 or 15 July]. Since I've been back in Tachilek SLORC haven't bothered me, but one of my friends who was also there was arrested and questioned after getting back. They just questioned him about what he saw in the frontline, the number of casualties, etc. I don't see them rounding up any porters in Tachilek right now, but I see soldiers guarding the perimeter of the town and along the road up to Mong Pyak. They're guarding every bridge, and after 6 p.m. nobody can cross. In Tachilek, if Military Intelligence hears anyone talking about the situation or sees a group of more than three people sitting around, those people are arrested.

People are angry. I was taken from my family to be a porter. We thought that as porters they'd treat us fairly and carry according to our strength, but now I've seen boys as young as 11 or 12 and old men of 50 or 60 forced to carry the same loads as the rest, and if they can't carry it then they're beaten or killed. SLORC don't treat us as humans so we want to free ourselves of them, but there's nothing we can do, just hope for help from other countries.

SLORC is stopping the Shan people from progressing either economically or politically. If they get involved with anything political SLORC arrests them. On the other hand, in areas SLORC controls you can grow opium, but you have to pay a tax and it's not cheap. In the fields which aren't very good or near the road, SLORC cuts down the poppies to show that they're eradicating poppy, but if the field is good they just keep collecting the tax.

All of us, you can ask anybody, we only want justice, to be treated as human beings and to live in peace. We'll accept anyone to govern us if they rule according to law and give us justice and peace. That's all we want, because now our life is horrible.

We want to get rid of this SLORC administration because there's no justice or rule of law. If you buy a house, the next day the government might come and confiscate it without any compensation and build a road. The farmland is confiscated from the farmers, and then they have to go and do forced labour in the fields.

The women are abused and they take people to be subjected to beatings, labour and serve in the military. Nobody gets any payment, we were just forced to serve them. They force everyone to give contributions but give nothing in return. Even if

you go as a soldier in the SLORC Army you'll only get one tin of rice for one month. And everyone else in society gets nothing at all.

Interview: 93 - HRV: Detention, Displacement, Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: GGG
Sex: Male
Age: 37
Ethnicity: Pa-O and Burman
Religion: Christian
Family: Married with 1 boy and 3 girls
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Shwe Kyin Township, Pegu Division

[GGG lives in a village in Shwekyin Township. He keeps detailed notes on events in the area, and his knowledge of the events he describes is mostly first hand. He has already left his village.]

On July 11, troops from Kyauk Kyi, 1st Column of IB 60, Column Commander Maj Tin Aye, came to Wah Boh Daun Village. They sat down there and watched over the road. They stayed there for two days.

On July 13, Maung Way, Hla Khine and Myint Oo from Ba Day Gone Village were on their way home from Kwee Oo Town so they met this column near Wah Boh Daun. The troops arrested them and searched them. They found 12,000 kyats in Maung Way's pockets and they took it. The troops said to the men, "You have contact with rebels, and you went to sell cattle to them".

They took the men away to IB 350 Camp at Bo Ka Hta and arrived there at 4 p.m. They put Hla Khine and Myint Oo in leg stocks [these are like medieval European leg stocks, where the victim sits with his legs straight out in front of him and both ankles clamped between two horizontal lengths of wood, or in this case bamboo], while they tied Maung Way up with rope, beat and interrogated him, saying, "You're a black marketeer. Who else in your village works with you?" Maung Way said, "I don't know. I'm not a black marketeer." So they beat him again until his head was cut open and he couldn't bear it any longer. He was so afraid that they would beat him again that he said, "Bee Li and Soe Myint are also black marketeers." Then they put Maung Way in the leg stocks.

Later that day at 6 p.m. a section from IB 60 went and surrounded Bee Li's house, but Bee Li wasn't there. They only found his wife Daw Pyone Kyi and they asked her, "Where is your husband?" She answered, "He went to Shwekyin to buy things", so they took Daw Pyone Kyi to the place where they were holding the three men, and they also took four of her buffaloes. When they got there they put Daw Pyone Kyi in the leg stocks like the others. They kept them all there for four days and during that time they also arrested five more people; Soe Myint, Nyunt Htay, Pu Tu Lay, Shan Hla Myint, and Ma Mi Ohn [female]. On July 16 Myint Htay, Pu Tu Lay, Shan Hla Myint and Ma Mi Ohn were interrogated and then freed from the stocks but the soldiers still kept them there under house arrest.

Soe Myint wasn't freed from the stocks. On July 17, Bee Li arrived home from Shwegyin. As soon as he got home he found out his wife had been arrested so he went to the camp. When he got there the troops arrested Bee Li and released his wife. At 7 p.m. they took Bee Li from the leg stocks, interrogated and beat him and pushed his head underwater. It was a diabolical thing to do, because his face was already badly injured from their beatings.

On the same day, July 17, Soe Myint and Maung Way were taken to Wa Boh Daun as guides for 1st Column of LIB 350, with nearly 100 troops led by Column Commander Maj Hla Myint. On July 18 there was no news of them, but on July 19 at 10 a.m. these troops stabbed Soe Myint and Maung Way to death with a knife. A porter who was with the troops was an eyewitness and later described it to the villagers. He also said that the Column Commander had given a special order to the porters: "We have killed these two guides but you must never tell anybody about this."

On July 19 at 2 p.m., IB 349 troops commanded by Capt Than Zin came from Shwekyin to take Bee Li to a camp south of Ba Day Gone. On July 20 they stabbed him to death at the east of Myin Thay Gone in the Nga Bwa Sho Stream Valley, only about one mile from Ba Day Gone. That day the same troops then went to Baw Tha Zin to wait for the enemy.

On July 21 at Bo Ka Hta Camp, there was an argument between officers from LIB 350 and IB 60 over who would get the 4 buffaloes they had stolen from Bee Li's house. I don't know the result, but the next day IB 60, 1st Column Commander Mar Tin Aye left to drive these 4 buffaloes to Kyauk Kyi at about 9 a.m.

On the way one of the buffaloes ran away and went back to Ba Day Gone Village. When Bo Ka Hta Camp Commander Capt Myo Min Than heard about this, he sent an order to Bee Li's son saying, "You must come and bring this buffalo back to Bo Ka Hta Camp." Bee Li's son Myo Myo was very afraid, and he was crying while he took that buffalo to them. Capt Hla Nyunt from LIB 350 then took it to the battalion at Shwekyin.

Maung Way was 36; his father was U Than Pe and his mother Daw Mweh Yee. He was a Burman Buddhist day labourer. His wife is Daw Kyi Win and they have two children. Soe Myint was 37, son of U Chit Dee and Daw Thein. He was a Burman Buddhist farmer with five boys and one girl. His wife is Daw Ohn Myint. Bee Li was 45. His father was U Maung Maung, his mother Daw Pan. He was a Karen Buddhist, and he farmed along the riverbank. His wife is Daw Pyone Kyi, and they have five children.

He was arrested on July 17 and murdered on July 20. Now his family's in a terrible situation. His sons are always crying and just wandering the village. His wife feels terrible because her husband is dead, but she can't even talk about it openly with the other villagers because of the Column Commander's order. She couldn't even go to retrieve his body.

This is injustice and oppression. These men lived in their village and everyone knew they were just honest people minding their own business. SLORC said they

were black marketeers, but this is wrong, I can guarantee it. These men never did that. But they're not the only victims SLORC has murdered – they're always committing arbitrary killings like that. When they come to the village they kill and eat our chickens, ducks, pigs and cows. They demand porters, and if they don't get porters then they demand money. We can't even count all their abuses. So now if the troops come everybody runs away from the village. Then if SLORC meets someone who's run from the village hiding in the jungle they say, "You're a rebel", and arrest, beat and kill him.

They're not rebels, they've just run away from the village because they're afraid of SLORC. The troops at Bo Ka Hta Camp have their own style. Every day they make each village send eight people for "emergency sentry duty". When they need porters or guides they use these people. This has been going on since 1984, right up until now. They also demand money, call people for forced labour, and now they're forcing everyone to build fences to protect their camp.

After SLORC falls, the civilians will have peace and we can stay in our homes and do our jobs. Ba Day Gone Village had 200 houses until now. After they killed the three men, the Bo Ka Hta Camp commander said, "This is an example for you. We're going to have to arrest some other people in your village too". So a lot of people, especially the men, have all fled the village. Nobody knows who they'll arrest next.

Interview: 94 - HRV: Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Kler Eh Mo
Sex: Female
Age: 48
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an township, Karen State

They never even ask us for our livestock. They just take it like it was their own. Their Coy 5 commander, Capt Thein Zar, makes us give jaggery again and again. They demanded 1,000 bundles of jaggery and paid us 18 Ks for each, then they sold them back to the village for 24 Ks each. They forced us to buy them.

They make us do four kinds of labour; guarding the road, portering, couriers, and other slave labour. They take 4 people at a time as porters, 8 for guarding the road, 8 for slave labour, and 2 for couriers; 22 altogether. Sometimes they demand people to cut wood, at least 12 people at once. Because of this, one time we could only send four people to guard the road, and they said, "If you can't send the people we ask, we will burn down your village and loot everything you have." When we go to guard the road, during the day we have to collect firewood, carry water, and sweep the road. Then at night we have to make a fire and sleep on the road.

Whenever they enter the village they catch our livestock without permission, and if they suspect any villagers they torture them and take them to the military outpost. They

beat and punched Maung Win and his face was bleeding, and they stabbed Kyaw Thaung with a knife. Then they took both of them away as porters. After a few days, the village head vouched for them and the soldiers demanded a ransom of 40 small tins of rice for the two of them. Because of this, all of the men are especially afraid to stay in the village when SLORC is coming.

They all try to run away, and when SLORC sees them they shoot at them. They've come and shot up our village before, and all the people run. They hit one village man named Saw C [see related interview 16], and then accused him of being a Karen soldier. When the soldiers came he was in his field, and when he tried to run to the village they shot him. The bullet hit his thigh. This happened on 27 December 1993. Whenever they torture villagers, they just accuse them of being Karen soldiers, but they are just doing it for absolutely no reason.

They arrested and killed two other villagers but nobody saw it, the men just disappeared. One of them was Maung Htun Bwah – they killed him by mistake instead of Maung Htun Oo, who is a Karen soldier. The other was Maung Than Chay. He was just a civilian, and he vouched for Maung Htun Bwah. Then they killed Maung Htun Bwah and took money from him. They thought if they released Maung Than Chay he would cause problems for them by telling people, so they accused him of being on the Karen side and killed him too. Both of them had families.

Interview: 95 - HRV: Execution, Livelihood, Movement

Name: Naw Htoo Baw
 Sex: Female
 Age: 27
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an township, Karen State

The Burmese [SLORC] killed my husband. His name was Htun Bwah, and he was 25 years old. He was a Buddhist Karen farmer. We have two children. I only know one of the soldiers: Nyo Soe Min. He is Coy 1 commander. Another commander's name is Thet Naing Oo, from Coy 3.

They arrested my husband on 5 February 1994 at the sugar cane field and they killed him on 17 February. It was soldiers from LID 99, IB 84. They saw seven villagers in the sugar cane field so they arrested them. They killed two of them – my husband and one other. The soldiers killed them because they accused them of collaborating with Karen soldiers. But the real reason was that they saw money on them so they killed them to get the money. One of the men's names was Maung Than Chay. He tried to vouch for my husband and the others so the soldiers killed him.

All of the men had papers from the village headmen [SLORC appoints a village "headman" (not the same as the real headman), usually against his will, and this man is then authorised to issue movement papers to his villagers verifying

who they are] and they showed the papers to the soldiers, but the soldiers didn't even look at the papers and just tore them up. After they killed my husband they stole 30,000 kyats from him.

Interview: 96 - HRV: Execution, Livelihood

Name: Naw May Oo Paw
Sex: Female
Age: 40
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 1 daughter
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an township, Karen State

My husband's name was Maung Than Chay. He was 46 years old. We have one daughter, and I also had one miscarriage. The man who killed my husband is Nyo Soe Min, the company commander from IB 84, LID 99. He arrested my husband at KKK on February 5, when he was cooking jaggery. He killed him on 17 February. They arrested seven men altogether, and killed two – my husband and Maung Htun Bwah from KKK, Maung Htun Bwah came to our village to make jaggery. He owned the equipment, so the villagers were using it to make jaggery and paying money to him.

SLORC found Maung Htun Bwah at the jaggery mill with a notebook that listed the villagers' names, how much jaggery they each made and how much they had paid him. So SLORC arrested him, accused him of being a Karen soldier and said the list was to collect jaggery for the Karen army.

Then my husband tried to explain that Maung Htun Bwah was not a soldier but the owner of the mill. He pleaded and vouched for Maung Htun Bwah. But the soldiers didn't listen – they said, "You two are together. You are just trying to protect him." And later they killed both of them at the same time. They cut Maung Htun Bwah's throat and they stabbed my husband in the chest.

After we heard the news, we went and tried to find where they'd buried the bodies, but we didn't find them. How could we find them? We don't even know where they're buried. We were just told how they were killed by a SLORC militiaman from LLL.

Interview: 97 - HRV: Detention, Execution, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Saw Win Nay
 Sex: Male
 Age: 30
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an township, Karen State
 Name: Maung Tin Win
 Sex: Male
 Age: 18
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an township, Karen State
 Name: Kyaw Htay
 Sex: Male
 Age: 25
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an township, Karen State
 Name: Saw Ler Doh
 Sex: Male
 Age: 16
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an township, Karen State

Saw Win Nay:

The soldiers who arrested us were from LID 99, IB 84. The officer who arrested us is Nyo Soe Min. He is company commander. We were arrested by two groups of soldiers – the other company commander's name is Thet Naing Oo. They arrested seven of us while we were cooking jaggery. They arrested all of us together, on February 5 1994. They released five of us later, on February 23, but they killed the other two. The men they killed were Maung Htun Bwah and Maung Than Chay. After they arrested us they tied us up, then beat our heads and forearms, and they made us bite on M79 grenades and then acted like they were going to make them explode [the M79 grenades he describes are normally shoulder-fired from an M79 grenade launcher about the size of a sawed-off rifle]. Then they beat me on my head with the M79 grenade launcher, and they poked us all over with knives until our clothes were full of holes. They cut through our clothes and drew just a little blood. They poked me in my back, legs and face. From me they demanded 5 bowls of rice, two chickens, and 500 kyats, then they released me.

Saw Ler Doh:

For me they asked Thukita cheroots, alcohol, and I don't know what else because my sister had to give it to them.

Maung Tin Win:

I had to give one chicken, one packet of jaggery and one viss of pork.

Kyaw Htay:

If I include all the money they've taken from me until now, about 2,000 kyats. I also had to give one pig weighing about 10 viss [16 kg].

Saw Win Nay:

The soldiers also made every young man in our village shave his head. They didn't tell us why, they just said, "There are so many fleas in your hair. If you shave you'll be different from Karen soldiers. If you don't then you're a Karen soldier." They only did this in our village.

Then they took us as porters and we had to carry most of their supplies, tinned milk, sardines and cooking pots. They never treated us well – most of the time we just got rice and salt to eat two times a day, and it was never enough. Sometimes they gave one spoonful of beans for each person. The soldiers ate well, and when we sometimes caught fish to eat they even took those from us and didn't give them back. They also made us do porter work whenever we were guarding the road for them.

Interview: 98 - HRV: Livelihood, Relocation, Torture

Name: Naw Ler Htoo
Sex: Female
Age: 28
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an township, Karen State

Maj Kyaw Shwe ordered us to move. He is a commander from IB 38. He said we had to move because there had been fighting in our village, but I'm sure there was no fighting there, only very far away. They gave us three days to move out of the village and said that after that, if they see anyone in the village they'll shoot them on sight. We had to move to MMM [alongside an existing village]. We asked if we could move to a better place instead, but they refused and we had to go to the place they'd ordered. This happened on 26 August 1993. We could only take some of our things with us. Most of our rice and other things had to be left behind. Later they allowed us to go back to get it, but only during the daytime.

It was two hours' walk. It was rainy season so it was very hard to travel and we couldn't go back every day. When we got back, a lot of our things had disappeared; most of the planks from our houses and all of our livestock were gone. It was terrible, and it never stopped raining, and I cried and cried. I don't want to stay in the new place, I want to go home. But we can't because the soldiers

are patrolling around there all the time, and if they see anyone they grab them, punch them and beat them. They beat my 18-year-old brother NNN one time until his nose was bleeding.

Another villager went back and tried to sleep one night in the old village, and the soldiers captured him, tied him up and tortured him all night. Now we face the problem of starvation because we can't work on our farms, we can't do anything. We don't have enough clothes. We don't know how to make a living in the new place, but we can't dare go back to our old place either.

No one can resist them, because everyone is afraid to die. Our lives now are just work in the morning to eat in the evening, surviving hand-to-mouth. Now I need to buy a new sarong but I can't. We all feel deeply humiliated and small in the new place, because we see the people from the village with new clothes while we don't even have a change of clothes. The village head there feels sorry for us, so whenever SLORC orders forced labour he gets his villagers to go instead of us.

Interview: 99 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood, Relocation

Name: Naw Heh
Sex: Female
Age: 30
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an township, Karen State

SLORC ordered us to move on 21 December 1993. I don't know why. Maj San Lin from IB 84 of LID 99 forced us to move to OOO, and wouldn't allow us to go anywhere else. After that he and his troops left for three months, then the same troops came back with a new major whose name I don't know.

There were 15 houses in our village. Here at the new place, we don't know how to work or survive. It's very hard to provide for our families. In the daytime we can go work at our old farms, but they won't allow us to sleep there so we have to be back here before dark. Our farms are far from here, so we don't have time to do all the work to grow a crop. Our old village is also the closest place we can get firewood. My house here is just a temporary shelter, and it's already starting to fall down.

Even so, SLORC still asks us for things all the time. They ask for pork, and if we don't have it we have to pay for it. When their truck exploded they demanded 60,000 kyats from the big village here, so their village head asked us to help them and we had to pay 4,000. We also have to guard the road.

Interview: 100 - HRV: Displacement, Execution, Forced Labour, Torture

Name: Pa Li Kloh
Sex: Male
Age: 25
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with two children (age 4 and ?)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Hlaing Bwe township, Karen State

There used to be 150 families in my village, but so many have left that now there are only 20 families. Everyone left because we had to work for SLORC most of the time. They made us build a car road and then we had to go guard the road for at least 10 or 20 days at a time. If we didn't go, they came to the village to beat us. All the families left separately – some went to Rangoon, some to other cities. I arrived here two days ago because I couldn't suffer it any longer. I was beaten up by soldiers myself.

We had to work on the road they are making from Meh Tha Wah to Shwegun. [Shwegun is on the Salween River between Pa-an and Ka Ma Maung. This road cuts to the northeast about 70 km, through steep mountains to Meh Tha Wah, a remote position on the Thai border which SLORC captured from the Karen in 1989. The only purposes of this road are as a military supply line against the Karen headquarters area.]

We had to work on the road about 10 days at a time, sometimes 11 or 12 days, then after one or two days at home we had to go do more work for them. At least 20 people from our village had to go each time – one from each family. The soldiers sent a letter to the headman and he had to obey. We had to carry rocks and load them on a truck [at the river side], then they took them away to the place where we were building the road. There were about 200 or 300 of us from various villages working together in one group.

At night we all had to sleep on the ground in the bushes. There were no good leaves around to make a shelter, so we had to sleep in the open. They let us rest on Saturday and Sunday, but the other days we had to work day and night. They never let us rest in the daytime. We had to work hard. We had to bring our own food. They didn't give us breakfast, there was no break for lunch, and we had to work at least until sunset. The soldiers gave us hoes, and we had to bring our other tools from home. The soldiers guarded us all the time, even at night. They are from IB 338 and 339. Some soldiers would allow us to take short breaks, but others wouldn't. If you kept working you weren't beaten, but those who couldn't work were beaten. One person was so seriously beaten up that we had to carry him to hospital. Some people have permanent scars from the beatings.

I was beaten at the road once because some of us came with some things to sell, but they wouldn't allow it. They caught us and beat us. They kicked me and hit my face and I fell down. They put bullets in their hands and hit us with them. After the beating I got a rest, then I had to go and work again. I also saw them beat

Dee Si Po. They made him carry a heavy load, then they beat him with the top of an iron bar. They kicked him with big boots, and he fell down and died. There were also two men who got fever and couldn't get up, so the soldiers kicked them and left them there. The other villagers picked them up and carried them home, and later those two men died. I don't know their names because they were from other villages. Other people also got sick with diarrhoea, but the soldiers wouldn't give any medicine. One time, some people died from the diarrhoea. We buried the dead bodies.

The soldiers also made us plant trees – we had to plant cashew trees, bay ta kah trees and also flowering trees along the roadsides to make it look nice. We had to plant in a strip about 150 feet wide alongside the road [the cashew trees are probably for military profit, and the villagers will be forced to harvest the cashews, while the other trees appear to be decorative. It seems that SLORC is using the roadside land as a convenient place for money – making tree plantations]. We had to level the ground as much as we could by digging and filling up depressions. There were about 600 or 700 of us, and we had to plant for 10 days.

Each village was given at least 2,000 or 3,000 trees to plant. If any of them got broken, they fined us 50 kyats per tree. If any of the trees we planted died, we had to pay to replace them and plant them again. They beat people who weren't working on the back and legs with a stick, but not too hard. One time they beat a man with a big stick until he was bleeding and so sick that we had to carry him back to his village. It was far from our village, and we had to sleep where we worked.

People from big families could take turns going for all this labour, but people from small families have to go themselves all the time. They have no voice. We had to go as porters – I had to go twice to carry ammunition and supplies from Hlaing Bwe to Meh Taree [a frontline camp at the Thai border]. We don't dare refuse to do the labour, so we have to drop everything and go work for them. Sometimes we have to borrow money and food from others, because we would get in deep trouble if we didn't go for forced labour. We couldn't even sleep at night, because they always forced us to go guard the road for them.

The soldiers also demanded money and livestock, and sometimes they took our cattle. The road isn't finished yet, and all of us who live near it have to work on it in rainy season as well as hot season. We couldn't take it anymore. We came here to try to find a secure place to stay. It took us three nights along the way. Now we have no choice, we'll just have to stay here. We won't go back until things get better.

Interview: 101 - HRV: Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Naw Eh Shee
Sex: Female
Age: 23
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 2 sons (age 4 and 2)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Hlaing Bwe township, Karen State

I came here two weeks ago. In our village, we have no time to provide for our families because we are working for SLORC most of the time. Whenever they want people for slave labour they ask the village head. Sometimes we didn't go, and then the soldiers came to the village and grabbed people. They forced us to provide road security for them. We had to sweep the road [for mines] all the time and then we had to guard the road at night. Sometimes when we were there to guard the road, they also forced us to carry loads for them in the daytime, and when we couldn't carry anymore they beat us. Then at night we still had to guard the road. We couldn't suffer this any longer. If we couldn't go for labour, we had to hire someone else to go in our place and it cost 450 kyats. This happened all the time, until we couldn't pay anymore and we couldn't work in our fields anymore. They even forced us to work for them during harvest time. That's why we came here.

Whether you had men or only women in your household, one person always had to go. We also had to go as porters to carry ammunition from Ler Cho to Noh Da Ya. We had to go as messengers, and many other kinds of work. At the army camp we women had to carry the bamboo that the men had cut down. We had to build the soldiers' huts, dig their trenches and raise the ground level. Many women had to go, and many of them had serious troubles. They had to leave their babies behind at home. Sometimes they asked for permission to go home, but the soldiers would only let them if a man was sent to replace them. Nobody dared go home without asking the soldiers – unless they said we could go, we couldn't go. I don't know their officers' names, because they kept changing them all the time.

There used to be 80 or 90 houses in my village, but so many people have already left. Many families have come here. My sister came first, and I followed her because we couldn't suffer all their forced labour anymore and we couldn't provide for our families. Each family also had to pay 400 kyats porter fees twice every month. We had no choice but to come.

Interview: 102 - HRV: Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Refugees, Slavery, Torture

Name: Saw Hla Maung
Sex: Male
Age: 37
Ethnicity: Pwo Karen

Religion: Buddhist
Family: Married with 7 children (age 1 to 20)
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Hlaing Bwe township, Karen State

In my village I fed my children by working my field, but now I have no farm to work. I had to pay porter fees so I had to sell my field. My father lived by working the fields, and my grandmother gave me that field, but I had to sell it to get the money. I have three brothers, and my grandmother gave us one field each. We all sold our fields at the same time, last year. We got 30,000 kyats altogether. Since then I had to work the fields for others as a labourer, but only got 10 or 20 kyats a day and all that went to porter fees. I couldn't support my family that way so I came here. After I sold the field I had nothing anymore.

The soldiers asked different amounts each time for porter fees – some house have to pay 300 kyats and others have to pay 700 [depending on how much money they have], sometimes I had to pay 200 kyats and sometimes 500. We have to send the money to Lu Pleh, but we don't know how they use it. Sometimes we have to go with them as porters as well. When I could I gave money instead of going, but if I couldn't pay I had to go myself. They made me carry rice and bullets from Pa Khay Kwee to Kaw Thu Kee for over 10 days each time. One time when we arrived at Pa Khay Kwee the soldiers went to the village, caught some chickens and told me to kill them. I refused because the hens had a lot of little chicks, so they beat me on the head with a bayonet handle. We couldn't escape, because if we did the soldiers would torture the head of our village when they got back.

The soldiers also make us plant rice for them. The soldiers come to our village and collect seed grain. Then they make us come and get the seed grain from them, and we have to plant it for them. Then when the seedlings grow we have to go and transplant them into the paddies. The soldiers don't have their own fields. So they make us go plant it in the fields of villagers. The soldiers say, "After we get our harvest you can use your fields for yourselves." But if we plant paddy then, we won't get a harvest. [Rice must be planted in early rainy season and ripens after rainy season. Without sophisticated irrigation it is only possible to grow one crop a year.]

Even so we still have to give our rice to the soldiers. We have to give them 1 big sack [100 kg] of rice for every acre of land, and those who have no land have to give them money – 300 or 400 kyats for every acre they used to have. The soldiers stay in their camp and order the villagers to bring food to them, and if the villagers don't then the soldiers come and take chickens and other things. They send orders to the village head. Sometimes we have to send them chickens and things, sometimes we have to go work for them. If we don't have the chickens they want, we have to give them money. We are near the army camp so they always force us to go and do everything for them.

We have to give money, go as porters and to build roads, and we have to go and make fences for them, clear all the scrub around their camp, replace their leaf roofing, dig their bunkers, etc. To build fences we have to make wooden posts, split bamboo, sharpen bamboo spikes and plant them between the posts.

Sometimes they make us work from 7 a.m. until 5 p.m. then if we don't finish the work they make us come back again the next day. It's two hours on foot to their camp. They built their camp around a pagoda. They order villagers to go there and work for them every day, and if we are too tired to go they come to point their guns at us and threaten us.

My wife and one child stayed behind for now, but the rest of our family came here. It took us three days to walk, because some of our children are very small so they kept getting tired and crying. We came quickly so we wouldn't meet any soldiers on the way. We didn't bring anything – one or two sarongs, but no plates or anything, and just 1 small pot. So many people from the village have come out here already, to Sho Kloh, Beh Klaw, etc. [refugee camps in Thailand]. The village used to have 50 houses, but now only 25 are left. We arrived here earlier this month. Other want to come now as well. The village head says, "If you don't have money to pay the soldiers, you'd better go." We don't dare tell the Burmese soldiers we're leaving. If they were around here we wouldn't have dared to come. I want to go on to Thailand, but will they allow us?

Interview 103 - HRV: Displacement

Name: U PPP
 Age: 54
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Family: Married with 7 children (age 14 to 27)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Kyauk Kyi Township, Pegu Division

I, U PPP, and my family of 9 people had lived and worked peacefully as farmers in Zee Gone Village, Kyauk Kyi Township since 1939. But my son Maung QQQ, his heart full of revolution, joined the KNLA and is serving in their 3rd Brigade. On April 27 1993, a battle broke out between my son's company and the Burma Army's [SLORC's] Coy 48 in the fields of Dike Pone Village. My son dropped his national ID card at the battle site.

Capt Aung Kyaw, commander of Coy 2, LIB 48 got his ID card and found out the names of his parents. He then alleged that we are an "insurgent household". Realising our danger in advance, we went into hiding. While we were in hiding Capt Aung Kyaw came to our house and forcefully stole my bicycle, 4 aluminium pots, 4 new blankets, 2 new longyis, 9 steel spoons, one cleaver knife, two chickens and one tiger-head brand flashlight. He also made threat that "This family won't have it easy if find them". In fear of what he would do to us, our family fled to the liberated area controlled by 3rd Brigade of the KNLA and we are now living as refugees. To certify that the above story is true, I hereby sign my name below.

Interview: 104 - HRV: Displacement, Livelihood, Slavery, Torture

Name: Pu Tha Kler
 Sex: Male
 Age: 64

Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

SLORC shot at me on 13 April 1994 at 2:30 p.m. It was IB 36 from LID 33. The battalion commander is Than Zaw. They saw villagers running and so they just started shooting at us. The bullet hit me in the back of my right foot, went through and came out the bottom of my foot. We were running because we were afraid to be porters. They always take villagers as porters. Even though we already give them porter fees, whenever they need porters they come to catch people, and any time at all they catch us they take us as porters.

They also always make us give them things. One time they came to my house and took everything; my smoked fish, my hat, my torch, my folding umbrella, pots, food, clothes, even my cloth bag and my cheroots. Even if they don't beat us, we don't dare face them because they demand so many things from us. I've seen what they do, so I always run and they never capture me.

After they shot me, they didn't come and capture me because they didn't know I'd been hit. Now I'm using traditional medicine. I put some oils and saffron on the wound and said some words, and now it's curing itself slowly. [Note: at the time of the interview, the open wound had not yet healed.]

Interview: 105 - HRV: Displacement, Livelihood, Women

Name: Saw Lah Ghay
 Sex: Male
 Age: 40
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Karen State

Troops from IB 36 arrived at our village on 30 April 1994. They stole eight pots and one pig, just as if it were their own. They steal so many things from us – they've also ordered 1,000 shingles of leaf roofing and 20 bullock carts, and we have to send it all by 15 May. Whenever they come to the village, all the girls have to hide away because the soldiers always give them trouble. RRR army camp also demanded 75 tons of logs from us. The log circumference has to be 2 feet to 4 feet, and they must be 10 feet long. They said if we don't send these on time, we will be forced to move within one week.

Interview: 106 - HRV: Detention, Execution

Name: Naw Eh Wah
Sex: Female
Age: 31
Ethnicity: Karen
Family: Married with 2 children
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Pa-an Township, Thaton District
Interviewed: Late March-early April 1994

At the beginning of March, my nephew was away from the village driving cattle. He was 13 years old, and that was his job. I waited for him to come home but he never came, so we knew SLORC must have captured him on the way, tortured him and killed him. We went looking for his body but we didn't find it, so then we held a funeral ceremony for him.

Then after four or five days some villagers went to cut firewood in the forest far from the village and they found his body. They couldn't bring it back because it was already decomposed, but they could see that SLORC had badly burned the back of his neck and tortured him. Then SLORC had sharpened a bamboo stick, shoved it through his anus and up through his body, like they would skewer a fish. He was only 13 years old.

At the beginning of April [other witnesses verify the date as 1 or 2 April 1994], SLORC troops came to the village and ordered a few of us to follow them to their camp. When we got there we saw SSS all tied up, and SLORC asked us, "Do you know this man? Is he a soldier or a villager?" We said, "He is a villager, not a soldier." They asked if we were sure, and we said yes. Then they said, "If he's a villager, we'll let him go now," and they untied him. Then the officer said, "I'll ask you a question. Tell me the truth, not a lie."

When we promised to tell the truth, he said, "A day or two ago some Karen soldiers passed through. Tell me who they were." We said we didn't know, and he asked, "Were they Chit Thu's troops?" We knew they were Chit Thu's troops, but we just kept saying we knew nothing, so he said, "I know very well that about 10 of his men have been around here and they have a walkie talkie. I know everything, so don't lie to me. Go find out for yourselves, then come back and tell me."

So we went away, then later we went back and said, "Yes, you were right, there were 10 of them." Then he said, "I've captured four men and I have them tied up. You must tell me if any of them are your villagers, and I'll let them go if they are." Then we followed him. We arrived at a stream in a rice field. The commander called out, and on the other bank SLORC soldiers came out with two men tied up. As soon as I saw them I said, "Oh! I know them very well." The first was Maw Na, and the second was Maw Toe Aung. We sat on a paddy dike and the soldiers let the two men sit not far from us.

The column commander asked, "Mother, are these your villagers?" and I said, "Yes, they're my villagers." He said, "You say they're villagers but they had guns with them." I said, "I know them very well, and they have no guns. Maybe other people just asked them to keep or carry the guns for them. If you don't believe me then come to our village and I'll show you their parents, wives and children."

Then they brought out another man, Maw Lay. They had him tied up and dragged him along. They didn't let him stay there long before they dragged him away again, and he just looked at me. I told him in Karen, "Don't tell them anything." Then we all stood up and started walking, and Maw Lay and the others were following behind me. Maw Na was right behind me, and he said, "Aunty, it looks like we will die now." I asked if they had said anything that would make the soldiers kill them and he said no. I said, "If not, then they can't just kill you for doing nothing wrong, and I'll also do my best to stop them killing you."

As we arrived at the camp, the column commander said, "Look at these men – they're not villagers, they're spies." He showed me a backpack with bullets and shells in it. There were two kinds of shells; one was big with a tail on it, and the other was small. There were also many bullets and one hand-grenade. He said all of it belonged to the four men. I told him, "That's not true – it's not theirs." Then he got angry and didn't say anything, he just went away and spoke to the battalion commander while a soldier guarded us.

Later on they let me and the other woman go back to the village. After we got back, they fired six shells after us at the village. Later they killed all of the four men in secret and never told us anything. They'd just captured them that morning, and that night they killed them all. I think they shot them, because afterwards some people went and found their bodies and said they'd been shot in the temple.

Interview: 107 - HRV: Detention, Execution

Name: Naw TTT
 Sex: Female
 Age: 27
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Family: Wife of Maw Na (30) with 2 children (one girl & one boy)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Interviewed: late March-early April 1994

Name: Naw UUU
 Sex: Female
 Age: 30
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Family: Wife of Maw Toe Aung (40) with 3 children (one girl and two boys)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Interviewed: late March-early April 1994

Name: Naw VVV
 Sex: Female
 Ethnicity: Karen

Family: Wife of Pa Boe (43) with 3 children (all girls)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Interviewed: late March-early April 1994
 Name: Naw WWW
 Sex: Female
 Age: 29
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Family: Wife of Maw Lay (34) with 2 children (both boys)
 Occupation: Farmer
 Interviewed: Late March-early April 1994

[The following account was given in an interview with the wives of the four men who were arrested and killed by SLORC on 1 or 2 April 1994. They are all from Pa-an Township, Thaton District, but the village name must be omitted for their protection. Their names have been changed, but their husbands' names are real as given.]

It was IB 119 of LID 33. They captured our husbands away from the village. Not all at the same time – two of them were going fishing when SLORC captured them, and the other two were going to the forest to cut bamboo. They took a cow along with them to the forest to feed, and when SLORC captured them the soldiers killed that cow and ate it. Our husbands had nothing, no guns or ammunition. They were just civilians. Not far from our village, Karen soldiers left some guns and ammunition that were no good anymore in jackary huts in a field. We didn't know about it at all until afterwards.

SLORC found these things, so then they captured our husbands and called them Ringworms. The men who were going fishing were on the other side of the hill from the jackary huts when they were captured, but the two who were going to cut bamboo were three mountains away. That's very far, not close at all. First the soldiers captured the fishermen and said, "These are your guns." Later they found the men cutting bamboo, and even though they were far away they accused the four of them of being part of the same group, and said the men had just split up.

The soldiers called the village head to go see them and talk to them, but then they just locked our husbands away and wouldn't let the village head talk to them. SLORC said, "Old man, your villagers are good, but now look at them, they have guns. Can you still say they're good?" The old man said, "Yes, they're good men. They're not Karen soldiers." The officer said, "We can't believe you anymore, old man, because we've found out they're Ringworms." The headman said, "If you don't believe me then come to the village and I'll show you." Then we could do nothing. They just killed them all. We know because we heard the gunshots in the evening when it started getting dark.

The next morning we went halfway to where they'd been shot and asked a woman there what had happened. She told us, "SLORC said they just let the men go so they could go home for the festival" [the Buddhist water festival, to celebrate the new year, from 13-16 April], so we just went back home. But by the next morning we were sure they were dead, so we went to try to find where they were

buried. We found the tracks of SLORC soldiers' boots going into the forest, so we knew this was the way and we followed the tracks.

We found Maw Na's slippers so we kept following, and we could see signs in the dirt of how they'd dragged the bodies. We knew they must be buried around there, so we stepped on the earth until we found a soft place, and that's where we found the bodies. They'd buried two in one hole and two in the other. Their hands were still tied behind their backs. The only marks on them were bullet holes. Two of them were shot in the back of the neck, and the other two in the temple. Maw Na had a bullet hole in one temple and the bullet came out the other side. As for Maw Toe Aung, the bullet had blown out the top of his head. SLORC did this secretly, and never told us they were dead.

Interview: 108 - HRV: Displacement, Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Slavery

Name: Saw Win Gate
Sex: Male
Age: over 50
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Family: Single
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Hlaing Bwe Township, Pa-an District
Interviewed: late March-early April 1994

SLORC commits so many abuses against Karen people. SLORC comes and arrests people, beats them and says they're "Ringworm", even though some of them are sick and weak. This dry season they arrested one man, tied him up, hit and beat him and said, "You're Ringworm." This man was from Ta Nay Bleh Village. I don't know his name – he came to our village to cure his sickness and stayed with his nephew who lives in our village. SLORC captured both him and his nephew, tied their hands behind their backs and tortured, beat and hit them, then they took them away to their camp and tortured them a lot.

The village heads from our village and Ta Nay Bleh Village went to the camp and swore that the men were just villagers, and then they were released. The soldiers say, "If you are real villagers then just stay in your village. We won't hurt you unless you make trouble." So now all the villagers don't dare go anywhere, just stay in the village. If you're just walking outside the village and you see SLORC, if you try to run they call and say, "Don't run, we're good men," but if you stop then they capture you and make trouble.

The soldiers beat people in my village all the time. I myself was beaten once when the soldiers came and accused my friend Tha Dee of being a Karen soldier. I tried to plead for him, and then they slapped both of our faces very hard again and again. My friend Tha Dee is about 20 years old, and he is just a civilian.

Three months ago, SLORC captured a man in our village and said, "Is he a villager or a Ringworm?" He was just a villager. They tied him up with rope and

tied the rope around his neck until he almost died, then they took him back to their camp. The villagers had to go plead for him to get them to free him. His name is Saw Eh Gay, age 20.

Also, I knew a villager named Kya Nay Pawt, and they shot him. That was two or three years ago. He was from Da Greh Village but he usually stayed in a hut at his farm. One evening his friends asked him to stay in the village but he said, "I left my animals loose to feed so I have to go back." He went back to sleep in his hut, then in the middle of the night SLORC came into his hut and woke him up. Some villagers who they'd already captured were there and saw the whole thing. Kya Nay Pawt woke up and saw SLORC, and they shot him in the leg. He tried to get up and run, but he couldn't and fell down, and then the soldier just walked up to him, pointed a gun at him and killed him. They shot him in the back of the head where he had fallen. We heard the gunshot from the village.

They order villagers to go work for them and to be porters, and if you don't go when they ask then they come arrest you and take you by force, both men and women, even children. You have to carry their shells, rice and rations. We have to go for one day, the whole day, and we only get back in the evening.

Sometimes when there's fighting they come and capture all of us and we have to go carry their things. Some have to go for 10 days, or more than two weeks. Porters have to carry up through Maw Po Kay, and back through Kawkareik, in Pa-an District. There are 30 houses in my village, and about 10 of us have to go at a time. Most of the men don't dare go as porters because men porters are tortured very seriously. But women are not treated quite so badly, so it is mostly women who go as porters from our village.

They force us to do a lot of other things too. We have to send food to them and carry it in our carts. Usually the men are carrying food to them in carts, while the women have to carry things on their backs and climb all the hills along the way. This dry season I had to take food on my cart to Baw Ye Pu, and when I got there I saw many, many, 400 or 500 other carts together there. All of them had to carry rations and supplies to the soldiers.

I had to send food to Baw Ye Pu and also to Ler Pu. I've had to do this six or seven times, and it was trouble because they made us do it through the middle of the day when it's very hot. Our cow couldn't continue in the heat, but the soldiers forced us to keep going quickly – so then our cow just stopped, and they yelled and cursed at us. They order us to go dig trenches and things for them, and if you can't go then they force you to go. We have to cut bamboo, cut down trees, dig trenches, and build their houses.

The worst thing is building fences for them – it took us over one month to make fences around their whole military camp. They forced us to make three fences all parallel to each other and plant sharpened bamboo sticks in the ground in between. We had to cut the bamboo ourselves and carry it to the camp to make their fences. We had to build them section by section, and there were people from many villages there working together. It was really hard work, and they were

always yelling at us to hurry. We all had to take our own food and walk there every day. At the camp we have to do exactly what they say or they would beat us.

They also order everyone, especially the women and children as young as 10 years old, to guard the road. While they are there they are supposed to watch everyone who goes along the road and report it to SLORC. But we are all Karen so even while we're guarding we don't report on all the villagers going by, but when SLORC finds that out then we have to pay them money. We have to go continually, in three day shifts. But that's finished for now, because they've finished sending their ammunition and supplies to the frontline for this season so they've closed the road.

Quite a few SLORC trucks explode on the road, but not near our village. When they explode SLORC demands 20,000 or 30,000 kyats from the villagers. Sometimes there are two or three small villages near the explosion, so if SLORC demands 20,000 or 30,000 [kyats] then those villages all have to collect the money and pay it. The Karen soldiers lay the mines. We know there are still some around because we saw them being planted, but we say nothing.

This dry season we had to build a bridge across the Da Greh River for SLORC. We had to cut down many, many trees and then they ordered us to carry them all to build the bridge. One time they ordered me to carry the logs and I almost died – they're so heavy, and even though they're much too heavy for you to carry you just have to keep carrying anyway, for as long as you can. They have 5 or 10 people working at this all the time. The soldiers force everyone they meet to come and do it.

I'm not in very good health so it's very hard for me. I have a lung disease. But even if you have a disease or handicap they don't care, they just order you to do it so you have to. They build this bridge to send all their military supplies, because the river is deep and has a sandy bottom, so their trucks can't cross. Every rainy season the river floods and destroys the bridge, so once every year they make us rebuild it. It takes us one to two months every year.

Around our village there used to be many trees, but because of this bridge there are now only a few left. SLORC has also cut down every tree in our village, like our coconut trees. [The soldiers sometimes do this just to steal the fruit, and sometimes as a deliberate measure to increase the destitution of the villagers so they have nothing to give the Karen army.]

We have to send people to them every day. Every day! Each family spends about 10 days of every month working for them. The camp commanders are always changing, and every time a new commander comes he makes up new things for us to do. As soon as one job finishes, they call us for another job the next day. The headman can't plan it in advance, so we just have to gather round every day and decide who has to go. People like me who often work far from the village don't have to go as much, but for those who are always in the village, it's every day. The soldiers are from IB 28, and from LID 44. Last year we had IB 338, but they were replaced by IB 28. IB 338 was better – this IB 28 is very bad.

One serious thing they do is whenever our animals go near their camp and they find out, they kill the animals and eat them. Then they say it's not their fault, it's the owner's fault. They've already killed many of the cattle and buffaloes in the village this way. When the soldiers shoot animals and eat them, they don't ask for money compensation as well because if they do then the villagers will know who shot their animals.

But some of the animals go near the SLORC camp, step on their landmines and are killed. Then the soldiers eat the animal, and not only that but they order the animal's owner to come to their camp and demand money as compensation for the cost of the landmine! They demand 400 or 500 kyats, sometimes over 1,000 kyats. So now when this happens, we don't go to the camp – we just say we don't know who owned the animal. I haven't lost any cattle, because I keep them in another village. If I kept them at home they'd always go towards the camp because that's where the food is, and they'd be killed.

The soldiers order us to send them our chickens and things and we send them, but even so they still come to the village and take whatever they want, and if you don't have what they ask for then you have to give them money instead. Some people talk back to them when they take things and say, "Don't take that!" but others don't dare. They order us to send 4 or 5 viss [6.4 to 8 kg] of chicken at a time, and just before I left the village we were having a Buddhist [new year water] festival and SLORC ordered us to send 40 viss [64 kg] of pork. We had to send it quickly, because if we hadn't they would have made trouble and we would have missed the whole ceremony.

We have to pay porter fees monthly, 100 kyats per month per family. We also have to pay "courier fees" of more than 10 kyats every month, and slave labour fees – these are 25 or 50 kyats every day you can't go for slave labour. If they capture you to be an operations porter [long term portering during fighting] and you refuse to go then you have to pay a lot. People are terrified to go as operations porters so we have to hire others to go in our place for 150 or 200 kyat. I can't go as an operations porter because I can't carry the loads.

We grow crops but as soon as they're ready SLORC just comes and takes it all away, so people don't want to plant anything anymore because they know they'll never get to eat it. We also have to sell them 4 tins of rice per acre. Last year I got 200 tins and I had to sell them 20, and if the rice is worth 100 kyats then SLORC only pays 50. But if you won't sell it to them they just come to your house and take all the rice you've got, so we have to sell it to them at their price. Sometimes they demand more rice than we have, and we have to go buy it at another village and give it to them. We just have to find food day by day wherever we can.

Most people have stopped planting rice close to the village so SLORC can't take so much of it. We have our rice fields very far away, but even there sometimes we still have to run from SLORC. If they see you while you're working in the field, they just grab you and take you to work for them, so we can't get enough time to do all the work in our fields.

Some people make a living taking cattle and other things to market for the owners, but then they lose everything to SLORC along the way. Then they don't dare come back because they can't repay the owner, and they have to go and find a living somewhere else.

SLORC hasn't ordered our village to move yet, but they don't let us go too far from the village. There are many people who've come from other areas to stay in our village [people displaced from SLORC-controlled areas], but now SLORC has ordered them all to go back.

There is no fighting around our village right now, but we don't know what may happen tomorrow or the next day. Even without fighting, right now the situation is three times worse than ever before. We always have to do so much labour for them, every day. The big village of Da Greh used to have 400 or more houses, but now only about 200 are left. 30, 40, 50 or more families have run away from the villages around us. Most of them have gone to stay in the refugee camps. More are still planning to move out, but as for me, I'll have to stay there until I die whether I can bear it or not, because I'm too old and weak to walk much. I have to stay to take care of my old mother. Most of my brothers and sisters have already gone.

Interview: 109 - HRV: Child, Detention, Displacement, Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Minorities, Religion, Relocation, Slavery, Torture, Women

Name: Naw Say
 Sex: Female
 Age: 39
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Family: Married with children
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Pa-an Township, Thaton District
 Interviewed: Late March-early April 1994

Hello nephew, we're glad to see you come and visit us from Manerplaw, we appreciate it and I'm glad to see you're in good health. We live here in our village and the situation is very hard for us here now. Do you know why? Because of the SLORC military, they come and oppress us and make life hard for us. The troops who stay at the camp order us to help them, so all the men and women and even any children who are big enough to work have to help them. If they demand bamboo, we have to give them bamboo. If they order leaves [for roofing], we must get them leaves. If they demand firewood or food, we have to give it to them – everything they ask for.

By food I mean rice, vegetables, fruit, even chickens and meat. We have to give them everything, and they don't give us anything for it. They eat for free. If they have all the food they want, their faces look happy, but if not then their faces become angry and you can tell they're going to make trouble so you must hurry and give them even more.

If any porters escape, they demand payment and we have to pay. Not money, but pork – they demand 10 or 20 viss [16 to 32 kg] of pork, which is worth about 3,000 kyats. More than that, our village is very small, only 17 or 18 houses, and they demand two porters at all times. Some villagers can't go as porters so they have to pay money: 100 kkyat for one day, so if they're ordered to go for five days that's 500 kyats. That's a lot, it's too much for us because we can't get money here. But if we want to be left in peace we just have to pay them the money.

XXX Village is nearby and has only four or five houses, but SLORC demands one porter from them. Think about that! Only four or five houses, and they have to give one porter for five days, then another for five days, and so on! The men don't have any time to stay home and work. They also order women to go to their camp one day out of every two, and if we don't show up even once the soldiers write us an order warning us to go.

They're always sending us orders, so neither men nor women have any time to work to survive, and it's very hard for us to live. Our whole village is brokenhearted by this and we all want to run away to somewhere else but we can't, so we have to live in poverty here. We can't do anything about this.

The soldiers are very happy when we give them money because we're too sick to go as porters. But when porters escape they are very angry, and we have to give them chicken, pork, rice, and whatever we have. Even if we don't have these things we have to find them.

Sometimes we have to buy them from other villages and give them to the soldiers. Then back in the village we have to total how much we all spent so we can divide it equally, and sometimes quarrels break out because of this.

We also have to send women as couriers for them, one woman every day. If a woman doesn't go then SLORC gets very angry, but nobody wants to go because these are hard times and we have to support our families, so the women end up arguing among themselves: "This is your turn – you have to go," "But I don't want to go!" and so on. In the end we just have to go. These problems are not only in our village, but in every village. So in what way are you going to help us so we can live peacefully?

There's just too much to tell! We have to sweep the road [for mines] every day, all the women are blind from all the dust sweeping the road all the time. All the women and children big enough to work, starting at 7 or 8 years old, have to go do this every day, then every night all the men have to sleep along the road as "guards". The men have to sleep on the ground unless they build a special shelter.

The women and children are very busy sweeping the road every day, and families in the village who only have one daughter have a hard time, because the mother and daughter have to go on alternate days or else there would be nobody left to work at home. Then if any mine explodes the soldiers accuse the women of laying the mine while they sweep! The soldiers pull their hair, slap their faces, then kick them. They don't care if they're old, young, or even children.

They just do whatever they want. Just think about the women and children having to do this every day while the men have to go work to produce food, and you'll see why we can't get enough food anymore. The soldiers are always out looking and listening for people. If they hear the bamboo bell of a cow or buffalo they follow it because they know the owner will be following, and then they capture the owner.

The owners of the animals don't know anything, they just walk along behind their animals singing a song and then suddenly they're captured by SLORC to be porters. Then no one tends the animals, so they wander into the rice fields and eat the rice and trample it and the farmer loses part of his crop too. It's wrong!

The Burmese don't even try to fight their enemies, they just come to oppress the villagers. I'll tell you about it, nephew. We ask them, "Son, why don't you fight your enemies? You only fight us," and they answer, "Because we don't find our enemies here, only you, so we fight you. If we ask you where our enemies are you never tell us, even though you know everything." That's wrong, but to them it's right.

SLORC orders women to go as porters, and if they don't go then the soldiers come and arrest them, take them away to jail and bind their hands and feet. Women have to leave their children at home and go to the camp to carry things. The soldiers say it will just be for one day, but then keep them there for two or three days, and their children get hungry and start crying because they want to eat. Some of the women aren't allowed back until late at night, and then they have to start cooking because they haven't eaten all day.

Sometimes we have to go as porters in rainy season, and along the way the rivers are flooded and we have to swim across with our loads. One woman from our village was carrying for them in rainy season, and while crossing a flooded river she slipped and fell over in the current. She couldn't swim and she had a load so she just sank, and her friend grabbed her by the hair and had to pull her out to save her.

When they ask for porters and we don't send them, the first time we get a letter, then we get a second letter, then for the third warning they send a letter with charcoal, chillies, and a bullet inside. Most villages often receive the bullet, charcoal and chillies. We just received it once, and I went directly to the camp commander and said, "Son, what does this mean?" He said, "Oh, it's very easy – the bullet means we'll kill all you villagers, the charcoal means we'll burn down the whole village and the chili means we'll cook all your animals into curry."

He told me, "If we set your village on fire then everyone in your village will have to flee, including you, Mother, and then everything you leave in the village becomes ours. The only thing I forgot was to put an onion in together with the chili." They're mad, these Burmese! They're just wrong, they're wrong! But me, I'm getting old so I can't fight and shoot them. If I do anything against them it will have to be slowly, bit by bit.

Now SLORC 84 [Infantry] Battalion of 99 [Light Infantry] Division has a camp at the village. I know some of the officers' names [these have been omitted to protect

the village]. In December [1993] 84 Battalion was making an operation to the south and they did many bad things and killed many villagers. They killed two people in Noh La Plaw [Burmese: Ye Aye] Village, one person in Pwo [Burmese: Thaline Kayin] Village, one person in Kru See [Burmese: Kyaun Sein], one person in Pwa Ghaw [Burmese: Pa Lan Daun] – I don't remember all the village names, but they killed people in almost every village.

They killed two people in Baw Tha Pyu, a father and his son in law who just went to cart their rice from the fields. SLORC saw them along the way so they killed both of them. They kill people senselessly. If you think carefully about that, nephew, there's no sense to it. If they found those two men with guns in the forest together with Karen soldiers, they could kill them. But now they just find people coming back from their farm on a bullock cart and kill them. That hurts the people very much, so all the people are afraid.

To get food we have to clear fields and plant rice, but now we dare not do this anymore. We can't work so we can't improve our lives, and it's very hard for us. 84 Battalion slept one night at Noh La Plaw, and the soldiers ordered one woman there to sell them a goat to eat but she said, "I only have a small kid and its mother, so if I sell the mother what will happen to the kid? How can I get any more goats?" The soldiers said, "Oh, don't say anything, we'll just eat both of them." She refused, so that night while she slept they killed both the mother and the kid and ate them. In the morning she saw that they were gone and asked the soldiers if they did it, and they said, "No, maybe they're just lost somewhere."

The SLORC soldiers don't come to search for their enemies, just to destroy things, make trouble and oppress the villagers. Last rainy season [mid 1993] 99 Division was fighting near Twee Pa Wih Kyo [Sleeping Dog Mountain], so they ordered village elders to come, one, two, or three elders from each village. They put them in a small house that fits eight people and tied their hands and feet so they were all standing facing each other, four in each side of the hut.

The elders asked them, "Why are you doing this?" and the soldiers said, "Don't you know? Because the Ringworm shell us here, but every time we ask you about them you say you don't know anything. That's why you're here." Some of the women elders who were tied up there needed to breastfeed their babies, and some had brought their children along. After feeding them they just had to put their babies down to sleep in the dirt. That's how 99 Division treats people. Now we have heard that these 99 Division troops will go home, but 33 [Light Infantry] Division will stay.

When their trucks explode SLORC puts all the blame on villagers even though it has nothing to do with us. SLORC's enemies do that, not us. SLORC comes here to find their enemies, so their enemies find them too and blow up their trucks, but then SLORC orders the villagers to pay for the truck. We explain to them, "Son, we didn't plant the mine, your enemies did, but when your truck explodes you come to us. Why does this have anything to do with us?"

They answer, "People of your own nationality did this because they don't love you, so you have to pay for it. They know that if they do this you'll have to pay, so why do they do it?" I told them, "Because you came out here to fight them, so of course they find a way to fight back, but then you oppress us by demanding compensation from us." He answered, "That's not oppression. We don't oppress you. We can't find them and make them pay for it, so we come to you instead, and then maybe they won't do it again."

There was a truck that exploded about the beginning of February at Tah Paw, not far from a SLORC camp. At the time I was on my way home from Thaton Town. The mine destroyed the truck, so SLORC ordered Tah Paw Village to pay 60,000 kyats. They didn't want to pay, because their village only has 50 houses and they can't afford it or get the money. So the villagers just kept quiet and hoped that SLORC wouldn't bother to come get the money. But instead, SLORC came into their village and shot their guns beside and above all the people to frighten them.

Then they started shouting, "If you don't pay the money we'll kill all of you in this village." All the women, men, old people and children were afraid so they started collecting money among themselves. Some of them didn't have any money so they took the rice they had for the next one or two months, sold it for money and then gave it. After paying, people had no food to eat and had to find some way to get some food. At the same time other villages had to pay too; Noh Aw Hla had to pay 50,000 [kyats], Noh La Plaw 50,000, Pwa Ghaw 50,000, Kru See 50,000, Pan Ta Ray 50,000 and Day Law Po 50,000. For just one truck they asked this much money – they are only coming here to do business. How can the people not get poor when they do this?

They also ordered money from our village and other villages around us [names must be omitted] even though we are not close to Tah Paw. When I got home people in our village were saying, "They've ordered us to pay 50,000 kyats – what can we do?" We decided that this isn't right, that we can't pay again and if we had to pay it would be better to run away to someplace far away and live there. So we decided to go to their camp and tell them bravely that we can't pay.

When we told the camp commander he answered, "Mother, I don't know anything about this, my job is just to sit in my office and follow orders from above. I have to ask you for everything we need, like leaves for the roof, firewood, porters, couriers, labourers and bamboo, but the truck has to do with the military, not me." I said, "But son, you are the military. Think about it. The soldiers have asked us for so much money that we don't have it, and the truck exploded far from us so this has nothing to do with us. Even worse, they said if we don't pay they'll kill us all and burn down our village. Is this the right thing to do?"

Just then an 84 Battalion officer named Capt Nyo Soe Min came in holding 40,000 or 50,000 kyat in his hand which other villages had paid him. He spoke suddenly, "Mother, what are you talking about? You don't need to talk, you just need to pay us 50,000 kyat. I control the area here. Whatever I ask for, I have to get it." So I said, "Son, this time we don't have the money. To pay would destroy all of us, so we can't." He said, "You have to pay. If not, your whole village will burn." Then an officer from 302 [Infantry] Battalion in Ler Klaw came and said he'd already warned villagers in his area that they would have to pay if any trucks exploded. I told him, "You're always asking for money, so why don't you just kill everyone in every village while you're at it?" He said, "Okay, if you don't pay we will."

Then I went to their other camp [name must be omitted] and talked to the camp commander, and he said, "Mother, I'll help you write a letter to the battalion commander – but don't give it to him in my handwriting, just copy it down and then give it to him." He said to write, "Battalion Commander, if a truck explodes in our area we'll pay but not if it explodes at Tah Paw." Two days later I went to the other camp and gave them the letter. Since then they've said nothing, but now another truck has exploded in our area so we have to pay anyway. This time they demanded 100,000 kyats. We can't give them 100,000, so we said we'll pay 50,000. Now we and five other villages [the village names have been omitted for her protection] have to pay 50,000 kyats each.

Think about that! It's an awful lot for the villagers to pay. [In a village of 18 houses, this is almost Ks 2,800 per family, over US\$450 at official rates – a family would be very hard-pressed to make this amount in an entire year.] It's very hard because some villagers have no money and have to try to borrow from others, and quarrels start because some can pay and some can't. We had to collect the money from house to house, and once we had enough we had to go give it to them.

When we had 50,000 kyats a group of us went to their camp. They didn't even give us a cup of tea when we got there, just plain water. They are very cruel. I didn't want to drink their water, but YYY's throat was very dry so she drank it. On the way home I said to her, "You must be desperate, because even though they only gave you a glass of water you drank it." I refused to drink it because these Burmese are very rude and cruel.

When we got home we said, "Now this problem has cooled down but what will we do if we have to do this again?" The only way is to run away. We'll have to run to the refugee camp and stay there. I said to the others, "You only have some pots and plates so you can say that easily, but I have cattle and buffaloes so how can I

move? We could sell them all, but then if Burma gets peace later what can we do when we come back? How could we buy our land and animals back again?" There's nothing we can do, we just have to stay here and live like this. Some people say, "Oh, I just want to die. Life like this is unbearable, it would be better to die."

There are also different SLORC troops from Strategic Command at Lay Kay. Their officer is Karen but he is very cruel, even worse than the Burmese – like a crocodile. I can't remember his name, but if I could I'd like very much to tell you.

Lay Kay is a very big village, with big houses with gardens and fences. The night after New Year's Eve [Karen New Year, 12 January 1994] SLORC said the Karen army came and shot at them, but it was a lie because we know it was just SLORC troops shooting at each other by mistake. But they blamed the villagers and the next morning they started treating them very badly. They started shelling the village from the camp, and the shells killed two pairs of cows that were attached to bullock carts. They also shelled Pya Way Village, and when the shells landed the novice Buddhist monks didn't know where to run, so they jumped into a big water tank to hide. After that two or three of them caught cold and then got sicker, and it took several days for them to get better.

All the houses in Lay Kay Village had very good fences around them, and that cruel officer who is Karen made everyone pull down their fences. Later he found a few houses that still had fences because their owners were away at their farms, and he said, "Why do these houses still have fences? Every house must pull down its fence." Then he forced the other villagers to pull down those people's fences and their houses as well. It's very hard for them to rebuild their houses all over again. This SLORC battalion is from 33 [Light Infantry] Division. Their commander is Maj Soe Win.

If villagers from Lay Kay travel outside the village and SLORC sees them, they shoot them. The people get wounded and it takes a long time and a lot of money to cure them. After shooting them SLORC doesn't help them or look after them. Nearly a month ago, there were two soldiers and one of them shot a young boy in the stomach and wounded him badly. The other soldier asked him, "Why don't you shoot him again and kill him?" and he answered, "Because now his sister is in the way, and I just wanted to shoot him, not her." It was only a young boy, and he's still not better.

One month ago the soldiers in Lay Kay heard that there were Karen soldiers in Khaw Po Pleh Village, just three miles away, so they shelled the village from their Lay Kay Camp. Why didn't they go look and find out if Karen soldiers were there? But they didn't, they just shelled the village. How can they know where the shells will hit? They didn't hit any Karen soldiers because there weren't any there. They just wounded the villagers.

There was a man from ZZZ Village who had come to Khaw Po Pleh to buy pigs for a memorial service for his dead mother. A shell hit the branch of a tree and exploded, and a shell splinter came and hit him in the jaw. He was seriously wounded and there is no clinic or medic in Khaw Po Pleh so they couldn't cure him. They wanted to take him to the Burman town, but at first they didn't dare go

because they were afraid SLORC would stop them and say he was a Karen soldier. It was very serious, and he lost so much blood I think he could only have had a third of the blood left in his body. There was almost no hope and we were sure he'd die on the way to hospital. But he didn't die; now he's still in Pa-an Hospital but he can't speak any more.

Last December [1993] the SLORC commander gave orders that many villages would have to move – four or five villages would all have to move into one place. Our village and four others [names must be omitted] were all ordered to move to AAAA and become one large village. AAAA is just a small, narrow place. How can so many villages move together with their animals and everything and live in such a small area?

The soldiers from 15 battalion (they've gone away now) said, "Mother, we order you to move but that's not our idea, we were ordered to do this by our leaders. They told us the villages must be moved by the end of December, and if they are still there when a military column comes to check after that, the soldiers must burn down the whole village. But before they burn it they'll do whatever they want, steal all your things and treat you very badly, so we're warning you, Mother, you'd better move by the end of December."

After that many villages moved to where they'd been ordered: people in Ta Thu Kee moved to Pwa Ghaw, Noh Aw Law Village had to move, and so did Kru See. Before they moved they kept going to talk to the SLORC leaders to prevent it, but it didn't work. Before the end of December 84 Battalion came to our village and said, "You'd better move now or when a military column comes you'll face big trouble. Do as we say or when the next soldiers come they won't warn you like this, they'll just take everything they want, destroy things and burn down your village."

Then we started moving to AAAA. We thought we'd just have to stay there a short time so we just built small huts, but four or five families built big houses out of wood. Then the soldiers suddenly ordered us to pull all our huts and houses down, which would be terrible for the people who'd built big houses because it would be very hard for them to rebuild anything.

So we went to SLORC's Strategic Headquarters and met with the officer there. He showed us the list of villages which had to move, and our village was on it. He said all the small villages have to move to big places [this is a SLORC tactic to exert closer control over villagers and cut off support for the Karen army]. I told him, "It's very hard for us to go and live in other peoples' villages and find work to survive – it's not our place and it's very hard for us. Then we moved as you ordered and built houses, and now you order us to tear them all down. Don't you know it's hard for us to rebuild? Please don't do this, just let us go back home to our own place." Then he agreed to let us move back until he found out if his superiors would allow it. So we all packed our things and moved back, and so far they haven't ordered us to move again.

Whenever the soldiers find a man they capture him and take him away, blindfold him, hit and beat him, then make him carry their things. They have to suffer torture, and some of them die. The village head has to try to follow them and

get them freed. They capture women, and the women say, "Oh son, I left my children at home and now they need to be breastfed," but SLORC doesn't let them go, they keep them for one or two days as porters. They are very cruel. What would happen if we treated their families the same way they treat us? All the women want to go down to the town to burn down all the SLORC houses and their whole city, because that's what they do to us.

Why doesn't the Karen army go to their town and burn down and destroy their things like SLORC does to us? Instead, the Karen soldiers tell us, "If you capture any SLORC soldiers don't kill them, just let them go and even give them money if you can." They don't know what it's like for us to have to deal with them all the time. I want to go and tell the Karen leaders about this.

The soldiers can never run out of money because they have their salaries and they also get so much money from us every time they come, they steal food and everything and never pay for it, and they get so much money when their trucks blow up. But even so they act like they're very poor, because when they come to the village they take everything, even our pots, plates, spoons, knives and cutting boards, etc. They take all our knives, hoes, and axes and sell them to other villages or trade them for alcohol. They sell 1 knife for 30 or 50 kyats, or whatever price they want.

They even take our clothing, even women's sarongs. Karen men wouldn't even touch a woman's sarong [it is Karen custom that men never touch women's clothing items], but the Burmese don't care, anything that looks nice they just take and put in their backpacks. Maybe some of them take all these things back home to give to their wives, but some of them probably just sell them so they can buy alcohol to drink. They must make enough money doing this to feed their wife and their whole family, and they also have their salary. All the SLORC troops do this – they're all the same.

When the Karen soldiers come to the village it is sad – they have so little, sometimes they just have to eat their rice with salt. We want to give them good food and curry but when they come the SLORC soldiers have already been there so we have nothing left. If SLORC comes to a house which only has 1 hen with chicks they kill the mother and leave the chicks to go crying – how can they survive? SLORC is very hard and cruel, and our animals are getting fewer and fewer.

When SLORC comes into the village, all the people have to run away and hide, but even the chickens and ducks run from them too. I have one chicken that disappeared every time they came into the village, and every time I thought they'd killed it, but then as soon as they left my chicken appeared again – this chicken has done this two or three times now. The dogs too, when they see SLORC coming they bark and then run away, and SLORC shoots at them. They even shoot at the dogs that don't bark. There are many dogs in the village, and they all know about SLORC. Even the animals can't live happily around them, so how can the people?

83 [Infantry] Battalion came to our village in November and killed and cooked every animal they found. Another group stayed at Shwe Oe Village for seven days

and ate everything, even the baby chicks and ducklings. There's a woman there [name must be omitted] whose husband was a Karen soldier. He bought 15 baskets of rice and food for her when he left for the frontline, and then he was killed. She was only left with that rice and food, and then when 83 Battalion came they took all of it and left her with nothing. There were only enough loose grains of rice left for one meal, so she cooked it for her children and they ate it, then they had nothing. Now she and her children have no food – she asked her neighbours but they all face the same problem, so now she and her children have to survive day to day, scrounging whatever money they can get to buy food from elsewhere.

Sometimes the soldiers order every village to give them 200 bundles of jackary. They say they'll pay and you have to carry it to their camp. Then they pay with old torn money, not good money. We say, "Son, how can I buy anything with this money? Please change it for a usable note," but they say, "You can buy anything anywhere with this money." But the women know it is unusable, so some of them just throw it away.

Also, villagers here have to buy things like fishpaste, chillies and salt from the Mon traders who come up to sell things. So SLORC give the Mon the jackary and tell them to sell it for them in Be Nwe Kla Village. Once the Mon sold 200 packets for them and brought back 2,600 kyat. They had to give all that money to SLORC and SLORC didn't give them anything, even though they had a big profit and it had cost the Mon to go by boat to sell the jackary. Because of this the Mon don't come anymore when SLORC is around, because they have nothing left after SLORC does this to them.

I know one man who went to sell his jackary at Be Nwe Kla, but SLORC stopped him at their checkpoint and forced him to pay one or two packets. They have many checkpoints, so before he even arrived at Be Nwe Kla all his jackary was gone, and he just sat down and cried. You could never finish describing all SLORC does to us. It's never ending.

In February they called a meeting at their Strategic Headquarters at Lay Kay, and at least 10 villages around there all had to go. During the meeting the Strategic Headquarters commander told everyone, "Next time you see the Ringworm come around, tell them you want them to give us peace. Tell them they must come to peace talks. If they give us peace then all of you can live in peace. If not, then you won't be left in peace. Next time they come tell them this." [In essence, a threat of continued SLORC abuse of villagers if the Karen do not agree to SLORC's "peace" terms.]

The villagers answered, "How can we tell them that? They'll just say it's you who won't give them peace." Then the commander said, "Oh, we'll give it to them, we will." But there's another side to this too. As for me, I don't understand anything about politics, but I still understand what happens and what has happened. The old people have told me about it, right back to when Aung San made a speech and said that Burmese and Karen must make peace. But it has taken a long time and a lot of fighting. Since then we've followed the saying, "Give Burmese one kyat and Karen one kyat."

As for me, I've heard about Grandfather Bo Mya but I've never seen him. I've just heard from others that he said, "If the Burmese give Burmese one kyat and Karen one kyat, then we will have peace." Then the commander said, "Not only 1 kyat, we'll give 2 kyat! Because in the beginning it was only Karen and Burmese who ruled in Burma." [Aung San was leader of the movement that secured Burmese independence from Britain. He is a hero of the Burmans, but his Burma Independence Army (an ally of Japan) was guilty of widespread atrocities and massacres against Karens and others during and after World War Two. Aung San was assassinated by Burmans in 1947 after promoting ethnic harmony and federalism. "Give Burmese one kyat and Karen one kyat" is a slogan from the first Karen peaceful demonstrations for equal rights in 1947, still promoted by the KNU. General Bo Mya is President of the KNU and Chairman of the DAB.]

So I said, "Oh, I know nothing about politics, but I only know "Give Karen one kyat and Burmese one kyat". So as for me, if you say you'll give it, then I'll put my hand on the table, and then Karen and Burmese can rule equally in Burma, half the country each. But I think maybe not, because we can't be sure you mean what you say." He said, "Oh, don't worry about that! Just tell the Ringworms to tell Bo Mya that if they give us something then we'll give them something.

By the way, did you know Bo Mya doesn't live in Kaw Thoo Lei anymore, he only lives in other countries? [This is disinformation.] So it's easy for us to fight them now, and we'll make their area smaller and smaller until we capture all of it!" I answered, "Oh, I don't know where Grandfather Bo Mya lives. I only know that we live here, whether you call it a Karen country or a Burmese country." After that he said, "Also tell the Ringworms that now we will allow some private trucks on the road, so if they like they can go to town and we promise not to hide our guns on the trucks and capture them, and they can set up checkpoints and force all the drivers to pay money like we do, and we won't bother them. The only thing you must make sure of is that no more of our trucks explode, so every village must watch carefully to prevent this.

Tell everything I've said to the Ringworms and we'll wait three days, then come and tell us if they accept or not." [Note: the promise to allow Karen soldiers on the road is not trustworthy, and most likely intended as a trap to lure KNLA soldiers into.] Later all the villagers gathered to discuss this, and even without talking to the Karen soldiers the villagers agreed that we would not accept SLORC's proposal. So three days later we went back and told the officer just below the commander, "We told them and they didn't agree.

They said they will keep laying mines and shooting at your trucks." Then he said, "Oh. If it's like that, then you villagers will have to pay for it. There's no other way." We said, "How can we pay? The Karen soldiers do it, not us. How can we find the money?" He answered, "Don't talk to me about it. Just pay, that's all we want. We control every village around here, so you'll just have to do what we say." The closer we look at SLORC, the more wrong are the things that they do, and they're getting worse and worse. They have their own rules and policies, but everything they do is against even the rules and policies they make themselves.

Interview: 110 - HRV: Detention, Displacement, Execution, Slavery, Torture, Women

[The following is a transcript from a video-taped interview. The date is unavailable.]

Q. Why did you come here?

A. Because the Burmans oppress us. They ordered me to be a porter; they also ordered me to go get information about Karen soldiers for them, but I only went part way to the place, then I stayed at a house. The Burman soldiers came and found me there and said, "You must be Kaw Thoo Lei. You are not even just a relative of Kaw Thoo Lei, you are one yourself!"

I pleaded that I was not a Kaw Thoo Lei soldier, and said that I had gone to the place they sent me and come back. After they asked me one or two questions, they started to hit me. One of the second lieutenants with one star, named Myint Thein, hit me with a carbine rifle butt twice in my chest, and I couldn't breathe for a few minutes, which was terrible. The officer then ordered the soldiers to tie me up. After a few minutes I told the officer that I had gone to the place they asked, and I said, "Anyway how could I be Kaw Thoo Lei? If I was, I could never go as a porter for you."

The villagers couldn't see what was happening to me. The soldiers untied me, and I asked permission to cook. While I was cooking I heard two soldiers talking – they said, "Be careful of this man – he might try to run, because this evening we'll take him and maybe kill him." I was listening closely to them. So I decided to run away. I walked to the river bank, looked around to see that no one was looking, and ran.

I ran to my house and told my wife what happened, and that we should leave before the soldiers came to bother her. Later I heard that the soldiers came that evening and asked the villagers where my wife's house was; but my wife had already left the village.

Another time, 107 [Infantry] Battalion came and raped a girl. She shouted loudly but the soldier slapped her face. We went and told the Burmese commander about it because he had said, "If my soldiers do something bad to the villagers, come and tell me." But when we told him the commander just said, "Do you have more girls? If you do, bring some for me."

They come in the village, catch the women and kill the animals, so we don't have any animals there. Nothing at all. If we had pigs, they ate them all. The women dare not sleep alone at night. In a house even if there are three women and one man the soldiers don't care. They don't fear the man.

They rape the women, and when the women shout they slap their faces and pull their hair. In a village named Kyone Weh, there was a woman who was friendly with the Burmese but one night they went and raped her. She shouted loudly and yelled, "He's come to rape me", so the Burmese soldier hit her with his

rifle butt here, on her head. Someone went and told the commander but he just said, "If you have another woman, tell that soldier to rape her too".

Karen soldiers came and fought, and the Burmese lost their post. Then the Burmese called all the village elders around to come to their camp. No one dared to go, but Pa Lu The village headman said, "I'll die for my village." He said to the villagers, "Please come and plead for me", and went. When he got to the camp they didn't even ask him any questions, just started punching and beating him until his face was so badly bruised we couldn't recognise him any more. Then the Burmese said, "We caught a ringworm – a Karen soldier". Then they took some villagers to their camp and asked them, "Do you know him?" When the villagers saw him they didn't even recognise him because his face was so badly beaten. His face and his whole body were covered in blood. The soldiers asked, "Do you recognise him? If you're sure you do, say yes." One villager said, "I think I know him." The soldiers said, "You'd better be sure. If you're not sure but you say you recognise him, you'll go the same way as him." Then no one dared vouch for him, and they came back to the village.

After the villagers left, the soldiers said to Pa Lu, "No one vouched for you." They took him to a field just beside the village, where there's a pond, and they cut his throat. They left the body there beside the village, where it would smell very bad. The villagers asked permission to bury him. When they saw his body they realised it was Pa Lu. So an old woman went to the soldiers to protest. The soldiers just said, "Don't be silly." They hit the old woman, and she ran back to the village.

Interview: 111 - HRV: Child, Detention, Displacement, Execution, Livelihood, Slavery, Torture, Women

Name: Daw BBBB
 Sex: Female
 Age: 49
 Family: Married with 4 children
 Address: Kyauk Kyi Township, Nyaunglebin District

[The following incidents and descriptions of the general situation were related by several Karen women and one Karen man, from villages scattered throughout Karen areas from Kyauk Kyi Township in the far northern lowlands to the area of Three Pagodas Pass in the south. Their stories include both the current situation and reports of incidents which have happened in their villages over the last one to four years; in their view, nothing has improved over that time, and many things have become worse. SLORC's pattern of repression and brutality in Karen areas is only becoming more systematic and entrenched, and as these women point out, their villages have suffered so much abuse that they cannot even relate it all anymore. It is now almost impossible to find a family in their areas which has not directly suffered at the hands of SLORC. The names of those who testify in this report have been changed and a few personal details omitted to protect them. However, all the names and places mentioned in their accounts are true. In the case of the nine women mentioned in the first statement below, they are still being held

by SLORC; they are almost certainly being regularly raped by their guards, and their lives are in great danger.]

For many years I lived in Shwegyin Township, but now I live in Kyauk Kyi Township. In both places SLORC's brutality has been so bad that I don't even want to tell it all, because it would only be repetitive. But I want to tell you about some things SLORC troops do in Kyauk Kyi Township.

Last year on 13 March 1992, IB 60 commanded by Column Commander Lt Myo Tin, came to Taw Kyaun Bauk Village in Kyauk Kyi Township. First they grabbed two men, named Saw Ismael, age 32, and Da Mee Mee, age 30, and accused them of helping the Karen rebels. The men were beaten until their eyes, noses and their whole faces were streaming with blood. They were kicked in the face with army boots and punched.

Then the soldiers left them, and Sergeant Ba Kyi and his men captured 9 women and accused them of supporting the Karen Women's Organisation [a non-political, non-revolutionary group dealing with the health and welfare of women and children in their villages]. Their names were Naw Heh Say, age 28; Naw San Win, age 26; Naw Dah Dah, age 27; Naw Nay Blut, age 24; Naw Wah, age 29; Naw Kyu Kyu, age 23; Naw Hla Ngwe, age 20; Naw Tin Kyi, age 15; and Naw San Myint Htay, age 17. All of them are from Taw Kyaun Bauk Village, and all of them are single. Naw Heh Say is chairwoman of the KWO in the village, Naw San Win is the Secretary, and the other seven women also helped the KWO.

They were all beaten brutally by Sgt Ba Kyi. The soldiers burnt off all of Naw Heh Say's head hair, and then her pubic hair as well. Sgt Ba Kyi raped her. She was also kicked in the face with army boots three times, and a soldier took off his boot and hit her in the face with that three times too. They also kicked her hard in the abdomen. Naw San Win was also raped by Sgt Ba Kyi, hit in the face with an army boot three times, and they stabbed her in both thighs with a bayonet.

The other seven women were not raped, but they were each lashed five times with a cane, then hit in the face with army boots four times each and also beaten. The women were then all tied up and taken away to Taungoo, 60 miles away, where SLORC threw them in Taungoo Jail. For the first two days in jail, none of them were given any food or water. On the second day, the women's families in the village got a message saying, "If you want your daughters back, submit 10,000 kyats per head and take them." Their families managed to raise the money by selling all their livestock and belongings, leaving them with nothing, and then begging money from all their relatives until they had enough. Then they gave the money to the column commander, Lt Myo Tin, but the women were not released. The women's families were also told to bring food for the women, but when they got there all the food was taken and eaten by the warden and guards.

Now the women are still in Taungoo Jail. There has been no trial, and we get no news of them. We know they're alive, because their mothers have had a chance to see them once or twice, but it is impossible for their families to take anything to them because the guards just steal it all. Sgt Ba Kyi told them that if they pay another 10,000 kyats for each woman, they will be released. Their families have no

more money, so they went to the hills and asked the KWO for advice, and were told that they should not pay Ba Kyi because he is lying. So now all of those women's families have fled their village and are living in the hills where the KNU controls. Many others in their village, which used to have 100 houses, have also fled, but many are still there.

Everyone in our area knows about this Sgt Ba Kyi. He has raped so many women that he has become notorious. The worst time was in 1991 in Mit Ta Yah Kweh Quarter of Kyauk Kyi Town. A 7-year-old girl child went around selling vegetables, and in the evening she didn't come home. Her parents went around everywhere asking and looking for her, and eventually they found her where she'd been raped by Ba Kyi, then just thrown into a swamp full of lilies. When they found her she was still alive but couldn't even walk. They took her to the hospital and she survived for a while, but later she died. All the villagers hate Ba Kyi so much they have often gone to the Karen army and asked for a gun to kill him with, but they have not succeeded yet. Now whenever there is fighting in our area, all the Karen try to get Ba Kyi in their sights, but he is still alive.

Now in our area it is getting almost impossible for the villagers to survive. In the past the Burmese army stayed in the plains and the Karen army controlled the hills, so when the Burmese harassed the people they could run to the hills, clear a field and plant a crop. But now the Burmese troops come into the hills at clearing time and harvest time. Often when villagers in the hills clear land to grow a crop, they cut the trees and leave it all to dry, but then SLORC soldiers come along and burn the place before it's ready to be burned, spoiling it. Other times, they deliberately wait until harvest time, then come and steal or destroy all the crops. They do this constantly. Villagers have nothing but their farms, and if they can't harvest it's very hard for them. Now we can't grow any fruit trees or orchards either, because every year we have to run and stay in another place.

Sometimes we can't even stay in one place for a whole year – only a few months or even a few days in each place. That's why the villagers have become destitute, can't buy clothes and can't even get enough food. They have to try and get just one or two measures [servings] of rice at a time, they can't even buy a whole tinful at once. We're very poor because we don't have enough rice, and we don't have enough rice because of the SLORC troops. People in the area have to stretch their rice by making rice gruel and throwing in bamboo shoots or whatever else they can find.

Many children are malnourished, and people don't even have blankets or a change of clothing. Many children die; some women have 10 children but all of them die. I've had seven children, but when we had to run to the jungle two of them got sick and died because we had no medicine. Now I've only got four children left. Just two weeks ago, a child in the village was suffering cerebral malaria, so we gave him a quinine drip. But we only had one, so we borrowed a second one from another village for him. After that, the child seemed much better, but we had no more medicine to give him so he died.

There were also a father and son in the village, and the father was an invalid, so his son went out to earn whatever he could to support him. Whenever he got

anything, he sent rice to his father, even though he often couldn't get enough. The father felt so bad for his son that last rainy season, about the time when we weed the rice fields, he hanged himself. Many people kill themselves now.

Whenever the SLORC troops need money, they look for the young boys who always watch their family's cattle, capture them and ransom them for 1,000 kyats each. They always do this around Ma Bee Po, Ma Bee Doh, Wet La Daw, Thu Ke Bee, and Thaun Po villages in Ler Doh Township. They also force all the big villages to move into small villages, or vice versa, depending on which place is the easiest for them to secure. Then with all the villagers in one place, the soldiers don't have to be spread out to control them all. Then they occupy and fortify these places, and force the village to send them 10 women every three days. The women have to stay three days at the camp. In the daytime they have to cut all the firewood for the soldiers, and at night they have to do sentry duty.

When these women come back the married women always say they've been raped, but the unmarried women don't say anything. They don't dare, because they're too shy; we know they've been raped, but they won't admit it. At Da Gela Village there's a widow named Ma Win Sein, she has two sons. Her husband was a Burmese soldier. She was raped, and when the villagers found her in the forest four days later she couldn't even walk. They did that to her even though she was the widow of one of them.

The soldiers also force all the villagers to take all our rice and store it in one place. Then we have to go and ask them for our ration once every three days. They give us 2 milk tins per day for each family member, but villagers can't survive on this much because we have to work very hard and eat a lot.

In late 1992, SLORC was retreating from their attack on U Mu Hta at harvest time, and they passed through the villages. Some of us had finished reaping our paddy, but others were still doing it. As soon as we heard they'd be passing near our villages, we just ran away quickly, and couldn't take hardly any of our possessions. We ran to the jungle, and when they came to our place they stayed there and destroyed all our paddy. They camped four days, took some of our belongings and destroyed the rest. They slaughtered our pigs, chickens and goats. There were three rice barns near the place. They ate all the paddy in two of the barns, and took the paddy left in the third barn and just scattered it; they couldn't eat it all so they destroyed it. On their retreat the Karen army ambushed them and killed 37 of them.

The SLORC troops didn't even bury their men properly; they buried some men five to a grave, others weren't even completely buried, and they just threw a lot of the bodies down the ravine among the rocks. Others were stripped of their clothes and just left by the roadside. They only buried their officers properly. When we came back from hiding we noticed a horrible smell. Then we found all the dead bodies – 37 dead bodies is a lot. They had even left behind a badly wounded soldier. When the villagers found him, they interrogated him and then put him out of his misery. With all the dead bodies, we couldn't bear to stay in that village anymore, and we had to move.

On 29 October 1992, three soldiers from IB 60, Coy 3, came and said they wanted to surrender. Their names were Khin Maung Win, 23 years old from Nyaunglebin Town, Maung Aung Htay, 23 years old from Rangoon, and Private Kyaw Kyaw, 18 years old from Butalin Town. They said they defected because they were ill-treated and they couldn't bear to see the way the troops treated porters. They said in the operation just one month before they saw many porters die. They gave the porters only very little food and water; the soldiers deliberately put sand in the rice before feeding the porters, and as for water, each two porters were only given one sardine-tin full.

They said the soldiers tortured elderly porters by making them carry very heavy loads, and when they couldn't carry anymore they just kicked them down the slope. The troops didn't care about their age or anything. They said they watched with their own eyes as soldiers stabbed some of them to death with bayonets or trampled them with army boots, and that they couldn't bear to do or watch this so they escaped and walked four days in the forest with no food to get away. They wanted to stay in the hills with us. Two of them are still there. Maung Aung Htay tried to return home, but he was captured by the SLORC army along the way at Daik Oo, and they killed him.

SLORC can go almost everywhere in our area now, and they can get at the villagers, so whenever Karen soldiers attack them they take their revenge on all the villagers, and we suffer severely. Because of this, some villagers ask the Karen soldiers to please not attack the Burmese troops. But now, the SLORC troops are harassing us all so severely that many people also say to the Karen soldiers, "Why don't you attack them more? Please attack them – then we will die, but they will die too." It's getting so bad that many people just don't want to live anymore.

Interview: 112 - HRV: Assembly, Child, Detention, Execution, Livelihood, Torture, Women

Name: Naw CCCC
 Sex: Female
 Age: 37
 Family: Married with 2 children (age 9 and 12)
 Address: Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District

On 4 August this year [1993], SLORC's IB 73, Coy 5, which is commanded by Zaw Win Nai, ordered the village headman who they'd appointed for Ko Nee village to go to their camp, and when he got there they asked him to name everyone in the village who's involved with the KNU or the KWO. The commander beat him and hit him so badly that he was coughing blood. After that he answered all their questions.

Then the commander and his troops went into Ko Nee Village to capture all the KNU and KWO people there, but they had all got away. So they went into the village tract elder's house – his name is Pa Ghe Thay. They captured his wife and two daughters, beat and hit them and slapped their faces. His youngest daughter is about 8 years old, her name is Naw Kyi Paw. One of the soldiers ordered her to

grab his penis, and then when she went over [to him] he just kicked her away very hard. She collapsed and was hurt very badly. After kicking her they left, went back to their camp and let the elder they'd tortured go back to the village. They ordered him to tell all the villagers not to have any contact with the Karen army, and that in future if they know any KNU people are coming, they must report it.

On 8 June 1993, SLORC soldiers went to O Shee Ken Village because they had heard that there were some Karen soldiers there. But they didn't go to the part of the village where they'd heard the Karen soldiers were – instead they went into another part of the village and started firing their guns everywhere, shooting at the villagers. They hit a young woman named Naw Peh, the daughter of Po Pyu. The bullet hit her right in the forehead, but she didn't die right away. The soldiers wouldn't take her to a hospital because they said they'd heard that Po Pyu's children work for the revolution. So they just left her there to die and she died. The villagers took her body and buried her by Ler Doh Hospital.

On 6 October this year [1993], SLORC BI 351 went to Weh Shwe Village. Their officer's name is Bo Khin Maung Oo, and he captured one villager named Da Nah Htoo. He took everything in Da Nah Htoo's house and all the houses around it: people's clothes, new clothes, things that they're weaving, everything. The soldiers also took everyone's chickens, and then took Da Nah Htoo back to their camp. They beat him very badly, then put him in jail and sent his name to their superiors. I don't know if they've freed him or not. When I left last week to come here he was still in jail.

The same thing happened on 15 October; the same troops went to Da Kaw Bwa Village, this time commanded by Maj Sin Kla, went into people's houses and searched through everything. A man named Nya Ko in the village sells medicine, and he knew they were coming so he hid all his medicine under his house on top of the chicken roost. The troops searched his house, and when they went to take his chickens they found the medicine, as well as a cassette tape he'd hidden there. They took all the medicine, the tape and his chickens back to their camp, and when they listened to the tape they found out it was a tape of Burmese students talking about what happened in 1988. So they came back and beat Nya Ko. Whenever they find a tape like that they beat the owner.

Then they took Nya Ko back to Mone Army Camp and sent a message to his wife to bring rice for her husband. They told Nya Ko that if his wife brought rice he'd be freed, but when she got there they wouldn't let her see him. She gave the rice to the commander, but he said, "I don't want rice, I want money." Then they ordered the village elders to come, so they came and tried to vouch for Nya Ko, but the commander wouldn't listen.

An elder went to Nya Ko in jail but the soldiers wouldn't let the elder see him – he could only talk to Nya Ko through the wall. Nya Ko said, "They beat me so badly that two of my ribs are already broken. At night I can't sleep, I only moan with the pain." The elder wanted to ask many more questions but the soldiers only let them talk for a minute. Then the elders had to leave, and later the soldiers killed Nya Ko.

Now the Burmese soldiers always come into the villages and order the villagers to give them rice and many other kinds of food. They never bring their own rations like in the past. Now they say, "You can feed the Karen soldiers so you have to feed us too." So the villagers have to pack rice for them; if 100 soldiers come then they have to make 100 packs of rice. It's very hard for them even if they have no food for themselves they must do this. The soldiers do this all the time, it's their habit now. They never think about how hard it is for the villagers.

We have no money but must pay porter fees to the soldiers or else they take us as porters. The soldiers also come and catch people as porters. Everyone's very afraid to go, so we pay 4,000 or 5,000 kyats, whatever they ask so as not to go as porters. They also order us to go and stand sentry duty, but everyone is also afraid to do this so we must pay them to avoid it. Last year the SLORC troops came to our village, called all the women together and ordered every one of us to give them 5,000 kyats. We didn't have enough money, but we had to get it and give it to them anyway.

The villagers have so many hardships, but we just have to suffer them, and can't do anything about it. Things are not the same as they were at the beginning of Four Cuts [the Burmese army's program to cut off support to the resistance by attacking civilians] in 1974. Back then if they suspected you of having contact with rebels they caught you, put a number on you and put you in jail. Now they have no jail, so they catch people and if you give them all the money they ask, they let you go. If not, they kill you. Even if they let you go, first they ask you many, many questions about Karen soldiers and torture you very severely.

If you want to go anywhere, even if you have a pass they don't care, they can just catch you and kill you. Life is very hard and rice is very expensive so many people can't buy it, and some become so desperate that they go and become SLORC spies for money. The spies tell SLORC everything, so if you try to meet or organise anything they know right away, and they come and capture everyone who is against them. This is happening everywhere.

Interview: 113 - HRV: Execution, Livelihood, Religion, Slavery

Name: Naw DDDD
Sex: Female
Age: 20
Family: Single
Address: Kawkareik Township, Dooplaya District

In June 1993, SLORC came to K'Toh Tah Village and burned down the whole village. They destroyed a church that had just been built and burned a lot of timber. They also destroyed a monastery. While some of them burned the houses, others went around robbing jewellery from everyone in the village. They stole about two pounds of gold altogether, consisting of earrings, necklaces, etc.

They captured all the villagers they could, took them back with them, forced them to work and ill-treated them. They seized the village headman, asked him a

few questions and killed him. They found a green utility belt that he had, so they said he had some connection with Karen soldiers. But they don't need a reason to kill a man. The village headman was in his fifties.

Interview: 114 - HRV: Detention, Displacement, Forced Labour, Torture

Name: Naw EEEE
Sex: Female
Age: 40
Family: Married with children
Address: Kya In Township, Dooplaya District

Four years ago there was a SLORC spy in our village, so the Karen soldiers came and killed him. SLORC wanted revenge against our village, so because my husband was the headman they charged him with murder, working with the rebels, resisting the government, and stealing teak logs. All of these were false accusations, but he was arrested by Infantry Battalion 32 and put in jail. He was tortured by SLORC. They tied him, kicked and stomped on him and poured water down his nostrils. Then they covered his head with a cloth and a plastic sheet until he almost suffocated, and then the covering was removed.

They kept doing this for more than a week, until he was vomiting blood, passing blood in his urine and stools, and starting to have convulsions. A doctor examined him and said his condition was critical, so they let him go to Seik Kyi Hospital for treatment. There he bribed his guards and one night he escaped. As soon as he got home we all fled the village, and just after that SLORC arrived and surrounded our house. When they discovered that we'd fled, they took and destroyed all our possessions and burned down the house and the barn.

That same year SLORC came to occupy Three Pagodas Pass, and stationed a company in Kya In Township, on the hill overlooking Htee Po Way Village. Life became very difficult for the people in the surrounding villages. Every day three men had to go and work for them. The soldiers were afraid to come down from the hill to get water, so the villagers had to carry all their water up to them, a one hour round trip each time. We also had to cut firewood for them and take them their food, meat, cooking oil and liquor.

Many villagers abandoned their farms and homes and ran away. Some villagers stayed because they knew they'd have no way to support themselves once they left their farms. So they stay and suffer SLORC's ill-treatment. Now this year in 1993 SLORC also came up towards T'Kut Kee Village, and set up camp on Ka Lee Kee Hill. Here again the villagers are forced to serve as a shield – to protect them and to serve them. People are running to other villages or places where they have relatives.

From April to July this year SLORC built a bridge across the Ka Lee Kloh River. We don't know why they built it. They seized the village elders in Kya In and T'Kut Kee, and wouldn't let them stay in their villages. Every day they had to go build the bridge. SLORC took them every morning and sent them back every

evening. In June, before it was done, Karen troops came and burned it. It was only partly destroyed, but then SLORC forced the villagers in the area to pay compensation of double the cost of the whole bridge, as well as being forced to provide unpaid labour to build it again.

Villagers from Noh Tah Hsu, Kya In, Ther Ter, Kyaw Kay Ko, Meh K'Taw, Du Ker Kee and Da Ka Kee villages are being forced to do this. Now they're still working on this, and the villagers are left no time to work to provide for their families. SLORC has told them that if the bridge is ever damaged again, every villager will be shot.

Interview: 115 - HRV: Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Slavery

Name: Saw FFFF
 Sex: Male
 Age: 30
 Address: Wa Raw Township, Dooplaya District

For the last four years, SLORC has made life very difficult for villages along the road from Theinbyuzayat to Three Pagodas Pass. Some of these villages are now abandoned because when SLORC came to occupy Three Pagodas Pass four years ago they killed many villagers, butchered their cattle and buffaloes and robbed all their rice. Some villagers fled the area, but others who were more afraid of the uncertain future if they fled are staying on, and bearing the brunt of SLORC's ill-treatment in silence.

When SLORC was rebuilding the road from Theinbyuzayat to Three Pagodas Pass, they used Infantry Battalions Nos. 31, 32, 61, 62 and 106, all under the command of Operations Commander Thiha Thura Sit Maung. More than 40 villages in the whole township were forced to provide labour on the road and as army porters, and also had to provide all the soldiers' food, including pork, chicken, and liquor.

The villages closest to the road suffered the worst. The villages affected are:

- 1) Pah Prah
 - 1) Yah Thaw Ta
 - 2) Lay Naw
 - 3) Htee Kler Nee
- 2) Noh Pa Taw
 - 1) Waw Poh
 - 2) Kwee K'Saw Kyee
 - 3) Meh Klu
- 3) Noh Bu Law
 - 1) Way K'Nat
 - 2) Meh K'Wah
 - 3) Kloo Th'Waw

- 4) Waw Taw
 - 1) Kyauk P'Loo
 - 2) Htee Maw Keh
 - 3) Taung Dee
- 5) Noh Kwee
 - 1) Lay Day
 - 2) Meh K'Naw Kee
 - 3) Myaing Gone
- 6) Lah Sha
 - 1) Mee Yay Htaw
 - 2) Kwee Hsaw Dee
 - 3) Noh Play
- 7) Htee Toh Kaw
 - 1) Doh Kaw Poo
 - 2) Maw Khee
 - 3) Maw Loo Taw
- 8) Pah Yah Hta Kaw
 - 1) P'Naw Kleh Kee
 - 2) Noh Hsoot Neh
 - 3) Noh Th'Waw
- 9) Pah Yah Lah Kaw
 - 1) Wah Maw Lay
 - 2) Hkaw Kla
 - 3) Ah Plone
- 10) Th'reh Kyaw
 - 1) Koh Kaw
 - 2) Lay K'Teet Kee
 - 3) May Play

Now the BBC radio and the Bangkok Post [daily Thai newspaper] say that the SLORC gas pipeline will be built along this road [in 1993]. I haven't seen any pipes or foreigners yet, but SLORC is using about 100 convicts to do forced labour on the road. They all have chains between their ankles, which are connected to a chain around their waists. I don't know which prison they're from. They have to break and lay down rocks, then a steamroller comes to flatten it.

The Karen soldiers are harassing and attacking the SLORC troops in charge to stop progress on the road. In one fight, three convicts escaped and ran to the Karen lines, so the Karen troops interrogated them, then broke their chains and freed them. Now the work is still going on, but they're not accomplishing much because

of the fighting. The Karen army has to keep harassing SLORC, because if they stop then SLORC is free to come and harass the villagers.

Interview: 116 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Naw GGGG
 Sex: Female
 Age: 56
 Family: Married with 5 children
 Address: Kru Tu Township, Dooplaya District

SLORC is very close to our village. Every month they make us pay 2,800 kyat as "porter fees"; every village in the area has to pay that. As for their Asia Highway project [a project in cooperation with Thailand to extend the Asia Highway right through Burma], they demanded 40,000 kyats from our village alone, and all the other villages had to pay too. We've also had to pay them 20,000 more for the road they're building from Chaung N'Kwat to Three Pagodas Pass. We have to give it to them; if we don't, then we can't stay there because they'll come and do very cruel things to us. The SLORC camp is only one hour's walk from our village, so they could come very easily. But as long as we pay the money they don't usually come.

In our area the SLORC troops are not as cruel as in other areas, but they can still be very cruel if they want to be; you just can't tell. Our village headman is very afraid, but they won't let him resign. They told him, "If you resign we will burn your village down." If they send for us and we don't go at once then they physically abuse the men. They say, "If you love the Karen you must also love us." We survive because we know how to answer them. You have to deal with them such that they can't get angry at you; you must be very humble.

Only women can deal with them; if a man says something that displeases them, they will hurt him. We must be very frank and open; we say, "Children, don't go there. The Karen soldiers are there. We don't want to see you dead, we want to see you alive. Go back." They listen, and they are afraid too. This is how we can make them go away. But now that the rains are over, this coming month they will begin their road construction again, so it will be very hard for us again.

Interview: 117 - HRV: Detention, Execution, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Shwe HHHH
 Sex: Female
 Age: 24
 Address: Wa Raw Township, Dooplaya District

On 28 April 1992, SLORC soldiers came to capture my brother and I at Noh Pa Taw Village because I am in the Karen Women's Organization. We barely managed to escape, but a man named Kyaw Ree Dee was left behind. The soldiers seized him and thought he was my brother, so they poured two buckets of water into his mouth. Then they took him down out of the house, tied him with rope and

beat him with a big bamboo stick until he was all black and blue. After that they took him to Lah Sha Village.

The monk, the village head and the village elders all pleaded with them to release him, but he was not released until a ransom of 5,000 kyats was paid. On their return journey these same troops met a villager named Dah But from Noh Pa Taw. They seized him and beat him up, and he was only released after the villagers gave the soldiers two baskets of rice.

At Taungalay Village, SLORC seized Aunty Naw K'Net, because they'd heard that she was hiding ammunition for the Karen soldiers. They interrogated and beat her, and then they were going to pour a pot of boiling water down her throat – so she couldn't stand it any more and she confessed. The SLORC troops then stabbed her all over until the other villagers couldn't even bear to look at her anymore. Then they released her, and they found the ammunition.

As for Naw Aye Mo, her husband was shot by trigger-happy SLORC troops for no reason at all. Now she's left with two small children.

Now there are many bandits in our township, including one gang of 300 robbers. SLORC is now working together with them, using them to plunder and terrorise the villagers and protecting them from being punished.

Interview: 118 - HRV: Detention, Execution, Livelihood, Torture, Women

Name: Naw IIII
Sex: Female
Age: 31
Address: Wa Raw Township, Dooplaya District

The stories I will tell you were all told to me by the people who suffered these awful experiences. The SLORC troops that did all these things are from No. 106 Infantry Battalion, commanded by Thiha Thura Sit Maung, and one of the officers involved is Bo Myint Aye.

These troops have seized many innocent men who had done no wrong and had no bad intentions. They torture these simple villagers using methods so cruel that we could never have imagined them in our wildest dreams. They use methods that do not leave a visible trace afterwards. One time they dripped water onto the villagers' palms and their heads, drop by drop, from morning until noon.

They accused these harmless villagers of being spies, and then cross-examined them even though they are just uneducated farmers who have never hurt anyone. They led them to the cemetery with their hands tied behind their backs and their heads covered with plastic bags. But the monks and the village headman followed them and pleaded for the soldiers not to kill those innocent men, so they were led back to the village.

SLORC knew these men were not involved in any activity against them, but they were running out of supplies and did it as an excuse to get rice and other food

from the villagers. They took the men to their camp at Loo Sha, and then the villagers had to give six baskets of rice [about 150 kg] to free each of them. The three men who they tortured were Haw Hsoo, Mu Klu, and Aung Myint Sein, all from Ka Li Village, Wa Raw Township.

I know a woman named Ma Ohn Kyi in Loh Sha Village. In 1991 she was robbed by the same SLORC troops. Now I just heard this month that they stabbed her husband to death, leaving her a widow. In the same village, I know a woman named Neh Peh Peh; she has a daughter named Paw Gway who is in her teens. A soldier named Bo Ngeh Lay Tin went to her house one night and raped Paw Gway. Then he told her family and offered to marry her. The girl's family objected, but they had no choice but to let him marry her.

That was 14 months ago. I know Paw Gway is very unhappy, but she was forced to marry this soldier. Now SLORC is repairing the Theinbyuzayat Road, so their camps are all along the road, and many more cases like this are happening.

Interview: 119 - HRV: Execution, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Relocation

Name: Aung Thein
 Sex: Male
 Age: 43
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Family: Wife deceased, three children
 Occupation: Farmer paddy and fruit orchard
 Address: Theeyachaung Township
 Interviewed: 29-30 November 1994

Q. When where you relocated, and to what location?

A. Starting in 1991, nine villages in Tompya Sub Township were relocated to Thechaunggi Village by SLORC.

Q. Why did they relocate you?

A. They said they wanted to free us from rebel groups and the Democratic People's Army.

Q. How far were you relocated?

A. It was about a four hour walk. However, because of the rains, we could only carry a few things on a bamboo raft down the stream. We could not take all of our rice. We only had a little food with us.

Q. How many families from your village were moved?

A. There were about seven families, or nearly 380 people.

Q. What if you refused to go?

A. SLORC soldiers said that if we refuse, they would kill us.

Q. Were any villagers killed?

A. Three villagers were killed on suspicion of being insurgents. About five others were put in prison. Later 14 more were arrested. Four were released within four years. The rest are still in prison I guess.

Q. Why were they arrested?

A. The soldiers said they violated Act 17.1 which says it is a crime to be against the government.

Q. Did you know any of those killed?

A. I knew one of them. He was Kyaw Thein, a 35 year old Karen Buddhist. He was stabbed to death.

Q. Did you see it happen?

A. Yes. I was a porter at the time and saw them kill him in the rice field.

Q. How did they do it?

A. They tied his hands behind his back and beat him with bamboo sticks. They beat him for at least two hours while interrogating him. He was beaten on the back, the head, and on the arms. After two hours of beating, they stabbed him in the back.

Q. How far away were you when you saw this happen?

A. About 60 meters.

Q. What work did you do in the camp?

A. We were forced to work on a rubber plantation and we were given no salary.

Q. Who owns the plantation?

A. The military owns the plantation. It is not less than 10,000 acres large. The law says that all labourers must be paid, but we never received anything. The local LORC officials would report how many labourers were in the plantation, and then pocket the money allocated for salaries.

Q. Who worked on the plantation?

A. All of the people, men, women and children, had to work. I think they relocated us to this area because they needed our labour on the plantation. I don't think it had anything to do with security.

Q. What else did you have to do?

A. We were also forced to dig ponds for shrimp farming. This site was quite far from the relocation camp. It is in Kanethari, about one day's walk from the camp and very near the ocean. It is in Theyachaung Township.

Q. Tell me about the ponds?

A. A total of about 13,000 people were working at the site. We had to dig a big pond and also an 8-foot-high dike to keep the sea water out. We had to prepare our own food at 4 a.m. in the morning, and then start work at 6 a.m. Our noon meal was at 12 noon and then we worked again from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. It was the rainy season, so it was very difficult. We had no shelters, so had to live with other villagers in the area nearby. Some of us took shelter in schools or monasteries.

The dike was very long, stretching for several miles. Shortly after we finished the work, a high tide came, washing it all away. All of our work was for nothing. The SLORC engineers did not plan it well. They did not use any cement or other reinforcement. Only a dirt dike.

SLORC had a budget of 300,000 kyats to pay us workers, but the local officials kept all of the money for themselves. We provided free labour for them.

- Q. SLORC often tells the international community that there is no forced labour in Burma. He says that community service is a tradition among the people of Burma, and that they volunteer for this kind of project. How do you respond to that?
- A. That is not true. We are definitely forced to work. Most of the people can not even produce enough to feed their families when they work full-time on their farms. It is impossible for us to donate any of our labour in such a situation. We are forced to work. Those who fail to work are punished, and sometimes locked in leg irons all day long. They have to pay the officials if they want to be released.

Also, every family in the camp must give the military three bundles of fire wood every month. Each of the nine villages are also forced to provide the soldiers with two pairs of bullocks for carrying water. These bullocks are worth about 14,000 kyats each. This is an impossible burden for the people.

- Q. Did you have to work on the Ye-Tavoy Railroad?
- A. Yes. In February of 1994, I was first forced to work on the railroad.
- Q. Did SLORC explain why the railroad was to be build?
- A. They said it was being built to carry goods from upper Burma to lower Burma. They said it would provide us with food more easily and cheaply.
- Q. Tell me something about work on the railroad.
- A. Our village of Meke was sent to the railroad slave labour camp four times during 1994. The first time we worked for 15 days and the last three times we worked for two days each time. The first time we had to send 15 villagers, and the next three times we had to send two villagers each time. They wanted us to send more, but most of the Meke families had already fled to the KNU area.

We were sent to Maung Mae Shaung camp along the railroad line. The first task was to clear the way. A strip at least 40 yards wide had to be cleared. The railroad itself is five yards wide, and then a strip more than 10 yards wide on each side also had to be cleared.

The railroad runs through many old rubber plantations, so we had to clear out all of the trees. Some of the trees were very large; at least 15 feet in circumference.

The first group had to clear a length of four miles. Some people died during this time. They were usually killed by falling trees. I also saw some die from malaria. There was very little medicine for fever, etc.

- Q. What was the area like through which the railroad passed?
- A. It was farms and gardens, and some rubber plantations. The owners of the farms did not even dare to request compensation. In fact, most of them were even

afraid to say they owned the land. We also cleared out many sugar and betel nut plantations.

Q. Tell me about the working conditions.

A. In the morning we worked from 6 a.m. to noon. Then from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. We ate at 8 p.m. We had to carry all of our own food. Nothing was provided for us.

Q. Were the workers only men?

A. No. Men, women and even children worked.

Q. What else happened?

A. Every evening each person had to carry firewood back to the camp. This was collected as we cleared the rail line. At the camp we had to give the firewood to the soldiers and they sold it to local villagers. We received nothing. Since we had to provide all of our own food, we had to spend at least 3,000 kyats during the two days we worked on the railroad. This was for our food, medicine and even our transportation.

Q. What are your strongest memories during your time on working on the railroad?

A. 1) We had to pay all of our own expenses while working. To get enough money, we had to sell all of our possessions.

2) We had to freedom at all no time to relax.

3) We were always guarded, just like prisoners.

4) We were forced to go work on the railroad. However, when we arrived at the site, the soldiers demanded that we pay 10 kyats each for the privilege of working on the railroad.

Q. Tell me a little more about the camp you lived in when working on the railroad.

A. The camp was about four miles from the railroad in Theychaung Township. As we worked, the distance became further and further, so every day we had to walk a little bit more. The camp was about one square mile and housed 10,000 people. There was no fence around it, but about 10 soldiers were guarding it. They were hidden at places all around the camp, so it was hard to know where they were. We had to construct our own shelters. We build long barracks to protect us from the rain. We brought bamboo for the construction from our old villages. Posts for the barracks were gathered free from the area. We could get them as we cleared trees for the railroad. However, we had to buy roofing from villages in the area.

There was a river nearby which we could use for water. The women had to work as hard as the men, carrying big baskets of soil, etc.

Q. Was the camp crowded?

A. Physically it was not so crowded, but mentally it was extremely tight.

Q. Why and how did you leave?

- A. I was in the relocation camp for four years. I had no chance to work in my fruit garden and sell my own produce. I was forced to work for SLORC the entire time. This it too difficult. Finally I just walked out and came to the border. Three of my children soon followed me. My one daughter is married and has a small child. She is still in the relocation camp.
- Q. What message would you give the international community if you could talk to them?
- A. I would tell them that life under SLORC is like this. An army commander from Regiment [IB] 404 named Soe Than Naing, promised to build a pagoda for us. We collected a total of 300,000 kyats to build it. After the construction was finished, 90,000 kyats was left over. A village leader called U Zan Thii used the money to buy his own personal car. Everyone was very sad and hurt by that action.
- Q. What would you tell SLORC?
- A. I dare not talk to them at all. If I talk, I will be tortured and killed.
- Q. What must happen in Burma now?
- A. The leaders must be changed. We can not live like this any longer. Every level of SLORC is the same. All ask money from the villagers. Each level, from the village up to the national leaders, simply keep the money for their own personal use.
- Q. What will you do now?
- A. All I want is to be able to go back home. I always think of my relatives and the other 6 villagers still there. I want to rebuild my village and live with them again. I want to farm my paddy field, and harvest my fruit trees.

Interview: 120 - HRV: Child, Women

[This is the true story of a young Burmese woman who was sold by two Thai soldiers to a brothel in Thailand when she was only fourteen years of age. She is now 20 and living in the Thai border town of Mae Sod. Her name has been changed to protect her. This interview was made in late 1994.]

Though I would like to tell my story to other women, I can not tell the exact date and month of the events based on the English calendar. When I was sold, I had very little education so that I do not know how to read the English calendar and I also can not recall the dates in my memory.

My name is Thwe and I was born in 1974 in Moulmein which is a coastal town of the Tenasserim Division of Burma. Thirteen days after I was born, my mother passed away and left my older sister and me behind. My father married another woman within a few days and he is, indeed, a womaniser.

My grandparents from my mother's side looked after me and my sister, but they were also very old. We were dependent on our grandfather who was a carpenter and could earn a little money for us to live on. My grandmother was a retired government servant. I was able to study only up to primary level education.

When I was 5 years old, my grandmother passed away which is one of the greatest losses in my life as she was very kind to me. When I was 11 years old, my sister was 16 and she married and followed her husband to his home in Myawaddy which is a Burmese border town on the Thai-Burmese border.

When I was 12 years old, my grandfather passed away and my aunt from my mother's side took me to Rangoon. I was able to live with my aunt only for a few months because she forced me to do housework the whole day which made me extremely tired. Her children also usually bullied me. Sometimes when I was extremely tired I was not allowed to take a rest.

Finally I ran away from my aunt's home and headed for Moulmein by train but unfortunately I took the wrong train and instead ended up in Mandalay, which is the capital of northern Burma. I had never been there before so I did not know where to go. I sat at the train station and was thinking what I should do.

A few hours later I met a Chinese-Burmese woman and she took me to her home to stay. A few days later she gave some money and put me on the train to Rangoon. I returned to my aunt's home in Rangoon. Several weeks later, some of my relatives in Moulmein knew that I was unhappy living with my aunt, and so they took me back to Moulmein.

I then moved in with my sister's family in Myawaddy where I worked as a hard labourer, carrying heavy goods at the border immigration gate. I could barely earn enough from my hard labour for my living. At that time I was 13 years old and sometimes the loads were very heavy and much bigger than my body.

Some traders in Myawaddy told me about job vacancies in Mae Sod, a Thai border town opposite Myawaddy. They said I could earn more there. After about a year in Myawaddy, I moved to Mae Sod and worked at a bamboo shoots canning factory. I was then 14 years old.

A few months later I met two Thai soldiers in a Buddhist monastery which is near the canning factory. They urged me to work for better wages as a maid at their friend's house in Pichi of Amphoe Pathan Hin.

After I agreed with them, they took me to their home at Mae Taw in Mae Sod where I slept one night. They were very friendly and treat me very hospitably in their home.

The next day, they took me to their friend's house. We entered the three-story house which is surrounded by a brick wall and met a big, tall man and his wife sitting in a private room. I immediately assumed they were the house owners. They looked very rich.

About half an hour later, after the two Thai soldiers had talked to the man and his wife, they left me in the house. Then the woman showed me a room to stay in. I met about 16 girls there who did not look like house maids and I became suspicious that this was a brothel.

I asked them about the house in Burmese, but all of them only spoke Thai which I barely understood at that time. However, the house owner fed me well and asked me to do only a few cleaning jobs in the house.

One day, after about two months, the couple told me to go along with them to visit a hotel. When we entered a room in the hotel, I met a man of about 40, sitting in a chair with a pistol on the table next to him. The couple stayed for a few minutes and then left the room. I thought that they went out to buy some food for dinner.

A few minutes later, the man grabbed my arms and try to take me to the bedroom. Then I realised he was planing to rape me and I started struggling, pulling my arms back and yelling at him, but I was also afraid of his gun. He then pushed me down on the bed. Though I was struggling he was very strong and I became tired. He raped me for a long time and finally I was unconscious.

When I regained consciousness, I was again in the couple's house. Afterwards, they did not ask me to do any thing for about two months. By that time, my Thai was better and I started asking the other girls about the couple and the house situation.

I found out that they were all prostitutes and the man in the hotel paid 10,000 baht to the couple to have sex with me. I was given nothing but sorrow. The price was very high because I was a virgin. Furthermore, one of the Thai girls told me that the two Thai soldiers had sold me to the couple but she did not know how much the couple had paid. This news frightened me, but I felt totally helpless.

About two months after being raped, the brothel owner told me to accept having sex with men who came to the brothel. He threatened to kill me if I refused or was impolite to the customers. So I was forced into prostitution. Now every day I have to accept about ten customers.

About three months after I was brought to the brothel, four new Burmese girls were also brought by somebody to the brothel. This was the first time I had seen Burmese girls in the brothel. They all were also lured into prostitution. When I explained about the situation, they were all shocked and started talking with me about escaping. I told them there was no good way to escape at the moment. However, we all tried several times to escape, but always failed.

A year after being sold to the brothel, we Burmese girls planned that me and another girl would run away and inform the police since it was very difficult for all the Burmese girls to run away simultaneously.

One evening, two of us climbed up the fence and jumped down behind the brothel. Immediately the brothel owner heard the sounds and followed us. We were hiding among the tall grass. The man could not find us but he knew that we were hiding somewhere among the tall grass. He finally shouted that if we did not come out, he would torch the grass. We panicked and decided to come out of our hiding place. He then took us back into the brothel and started slapping, kicking, and punching me in the face and all over our bodies. I was rolling on the floor in terror and pain. He kept yelling if I would try to escape again. It lasted for about half an

hour. By the end, my face was swollen and my entire body was painful. I even could not walk. Someone took me to my room. He did not hurt my friend because he assumed that I was the mastermind of the escape attempt.

I continued to think of some way to escape from the brothel even though the man and his wife were always watching us carefully. We all decided to save our tip money from customers to be used for an escape. After about four years working in the brothel, we got our chance.

One night in December 1992, the man was out of the brothel. Only his wife remained in the house. We all were staying on the second floor. The brothel owner's wife thought we could not run away without going through the front door but we all climbed down the drain pipe to the ground and immediately rushed to the main road. A tuk tuk (three-wheeled taxi) driver helped us by taking us to the bus terminal. That night we escaped to Mae Sod.

After a few days in Mae Sod, the other four Burmese girls returned to Burma. I remained in Mae Sod. I do not want to go back to Burma because I do not want to tell my story to any of my relatives. I have decided to live in Mae Sod.

One time I married a Thai man in Mae Sod, but our marriage could last only a few months. I am so discouraged about living with men. Generally, I think the Thai and Burmese men are only interested in sex, and not in women as human beings.

I am now working as a waitress in a restaurant in Mae Sod [on the Thai-Burmese border].

Interview: 121 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Ko Kyi Aung
Sex: Male
Age: 30
Family: Father, U Mya Hlaing
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Ye Phyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: 18 November 1994

There are about 40 households in my village and eight people are sent to the concentration camp for every 15 days to contribute corvée labour, covering their own expenses. If one cannot go, he/she has to hire somebody else at the rate of 3,000 kyats. Villagers from my village have to contribute labour at the worksite near Three Pagodas Pass. Each household in my village has been forced to pay a monthly fee of 50 kyats. Each labourer is forced to complete an earthen pit of 10 sq. feet wide and 1 foot deep every day.

Interview: 122 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Ko Aung Naing
 Sex: Male
 Age: 21
 Family: Father, U Aung Hla
 Occupation: Farmer
 Address: Ye Phyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 18 November 1994

There are about 30 households in my village and 15 people are sent to the concentration camp for every 15 days to contribute corvee labour, covering their own expenses. If one cannot go, he/she has to hire somebody else at the rate of 3,000 kyats.

Villagers from my village have to contribute labour at the worksite near Nat Kyi Zin Village. Each household in my village have been forced to pay a monthly fee of 50 kyats. Each labourer is forced to complete an earthen pit of 10 sq. feet wide and 1 foot deep every day. All the labourers have to line up at 5:30 p.m., and start working at 6:00 a.m.

SLORC LIB 406 is under control of that worksite. Labourers who took a rest without permission were subject to beatings. SLORC troops from LIB 406 forced some labourers from Ye Phyu to weed cultivated fields, grow seasonal plantations and sell the products to the labourers.

Since October 1994, hills near 36-mile (aka Heinze) Village has been bulldozed by two bulldozers while a hill near 34 miles (Heinze Bridge) has been bulldozed by other three bulldozers.

Interview: 123 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Ko Soe Win
 Sex: Male
 Age: 29
 Family: Father, U San Lun
 Address: Thayetchaung Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 18 November 1994

In my village 100 villagers are sent to the concentration camp every 15 days to contribute corvee labour, covering their own expenses. If one cannot go, he/she has to hire somebody else at the rate of 2,000 kyats. Villagers from my village have to contribute labour at the worksite near Ma Yan Chaung Village and LIB 410 is under control of that section.

Each labourer is forced to complete his/her assignment of 10 sq. feet wide and one foot deep every day. Each household in my village has been forced to pay a monthly "porter fee" of kyats 50 to the local LORC and another kyats 100 to IB 403 stationed in the village, in order to feed the soldiers. Moreover, whenever the

villagers sell pork or beef, they are forced to send to LIB 403 as their rations up to the amount the troops fixed.

Interview: 124 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Kyaw Nyunt
Age: 46
Family: Father, U Tar Din
Occupation: Farmer
Address: Thayetchaung Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: 18 November 1994

In Thayetchaung Township, 36 persons owned videos and run for their living. These owners had to collect money by themselves and buy one 28-inch National TV, one National Video, one Honda generator for LIB 403, 404 and 405.

The total cost at current prices is more than 250,000 kyats and SLORC troops said that these machines were for the labourers who are contributing labour for the construction of the railway line.

To raise that amount of money, each video owner had to pay 8,500 kyats. Moreover they also have to pay 400 kyats per person per month for diesel to run the generator. Aside from that they also have to pay 500-1,000 kyats for every people per month as "special fees" to SLORC.

After paying these amount of money, all these persons are spared from contributing labour at the railway construction site.

Interview: 125 - HRV: Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Ko Myo Myint
Age: 20
Family: Father, U Ba Myaing
Address: Ye Phyu Township, Tenasserim Division

In my village 50 villagers are sent since October 1994 to the concentration camp for every 15 days to contribute corvee labour, covering their own expenses. If one cannot go, he/she has to hire somebody else at the rate of 2,500 kyats.

Villagers from my village have to contribute labour at the worksite near Nat Kyi Zin Village and LIB 406 is under control of that section. Troops from LIB 406 forced the labourers to build halls to show video and shops to sell goods, including liquor, rum and beer, to the labourers.

Labourers who take a rest without permission were beaten with baton by SLORC soldiers. All the labourers were forced to lie up at 5:00 a.m. and started working at 6:00 a.m. In the afternoon, before they resumed their work, the labourers were forced to stand about 30 minutes under scorching sun. They were allowed to go to the worksite, after SLORC troops checked them to make sure that all of them were present.

U Than Pe, age 50, from my village, was arrested by SLORC troops from LIB 406 without reason in October 1994 soon after he came back to the village from the worksite and after he finished his assignment. In the first week of October, four elderly people who were over 60, from Lae Shaung Village, were forced to contribute labour for the rail line construction.

Four villagers from my village were summoned by SLORC troops to build new military base at Heinze (aka Boke) Island, covering their own expenses. That island is located west of Phaungdaw Village, where the proposed gas pipeline will come ashore and pass through.

Rice and other food items brought for them were also confiscated by SLORC troops. SLORC troops gave them only two condensed milk tins of rice, causing the villagers to face a shortage of food. According to them, SLORC IB 25 forced many people in Ye Phyu Township to contribute labour for the construction of the military base and landing pad for the helicopters.

All the labourers were forced to work on a full-time basis and those who took a rest without permission from were subjected to scolding, beatings and kicking. They have to contribute unpaid labour at least for one month and cover their own expenses for transportation. Each household in my village has been forced to pay a monthly "porter fee" of 100 kyats to the local SLORC.

Interview: 126 - HRV: Forced Labour, Torture

Name: Ko Soe Win
Age: 25
Family: Father, U Hla Aung
Address: Tavoy Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: 16 November 1994

In my village 35 villagers are sent to the concentration camp for every 15 days to contribute corvée labour, covering their own expenses. If one cannot go, he/she has to hire somebody else at the rate of 1,500 kyats.

Although SLORC said that labourers would be paid, it was just the matter of lip service. Villagers from my village have to contribute labour at the worksite between Zahar and Zalun villages and LIB 401 is under control of that section.

SLORC troops forced the labourers to pave a new rail line which passes near Taw Bae Zatar, Tha Pyay Chaung and Za Lun villages, causing many people farmland and houses destroyed. But no body dared ask for compensation from SLORC. SLORC troops under the command of LIB 401 ordered the villagers to clear their farmlands and destroy their houses which are along the railway line passing

Each household in my village have been forced to pay a monthly "porter fee" of kyats 50 to local LORC Chairman U Tun Aye and group forced every household to pay 40 kyats festival in Myae Khanti Village. As a villager, Daw Khin Yu, age 39, could not afford for the money, she was ordered to go to the concentration

camp to contribute labour for the construction of railway line in October for the first time.

Seven days after coming back from the concentration camp where she finished her assignment, she was sent for the second time as she could not afford to contribute 40 kyats of donation for the concentration camps. Before she went to contribute labour, Daw Khin Yu met with U Moe Hein, a member of local LORC and explained that she could not go to the concentration camp as she came back recently from contribute labour.

Daw Khin Yu was beaten and punched by U Moe Hein by screaming that she was failure to abide by SLORC's order. As a result, Daw Khin Yu got injuries at the whole part of her body and told an officer from IB 25 in Khan Ti Village while tears shed from her eyes. That officer not only took any action against U Moe Hein, instead she was told to abide by order of Township LORC and forced to contribute labour for the second time.

Interview: 127 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Torture

Name: Ko Maung Myint
Age: 25
Occupation: Trader
Family: Father, U Aung Than
Address: Ye Phyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Interviewed: 14 October 1994

In October-November 1994, 25 villagers from my village were sent to the concentration camp for every 15 days to contribute corvee labour, covering their own expenses. If one cannot go, he/she has to hire somebody else at the rate of 3,000 kyats. Those who refused were threatened by lawsuit and sentence to four years' imprisonment.

Because of that harassment, villagers dared not stay away from working, bring their own food covering their own expenses. Villagers from my village have to contribute labour at the worksite near Nat Kyi Zin Village. Each labourer is forced to complete his/her assignment of 10 sq. feet wide and 1 foot deep every day.

Each household in my village have been forced to pay a monthly "porter fee" of 150 kyats to 1st MSC, 100 kyats to township LORC and another 100 kyats for "runner fees". The total amount for each household per month is 265 kyats. They have to work from 6 a.m. and can take a rest only when they finish their daily assignment.

In October 1994 a SLORC platoon from LIB 401 led by a sergeant reached the War Laung Chang area in Ka Lone Htar Village, Ye Phyu Township, took away money and other property from U Su Aye's (50) house and beat him. In the same month, the troops came to U Su Aye's house again, forced the victim to get down from his house and shot him to death. U Su Aye died on the spot.

LORC in Ka Lone Htar Village went to the nearest LIB 407 and reported about the death of U Su Aye. LIB 407 said that to report to LIB 401 as it was not concerned with their battalion. When the village LORC went to LIB 401, they were told to come and get

the body of the victim in Ye Phyu Township. Officials from LIB 401 told the village LORC that the victim died of an accidental gunshot and they did not take any action against the platoon which killed U Su Aye.

Interview: 128 - HRV: Displacement, Forced Labour, Livelihood

Name: Ma Tin Tin Hlaing
 Sex: Female
 Age: 32
 Address: Ye Pyu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Interviewed: 10 November 1994

There are seven family members in our household and we were forced to contribute unpaid labour two times. One time lasted for 15 days. While other families went to contribute labour, the remaining members had to borrowed 4,000 kyats from the neighbours for survival. In order to repay this debt, I left for Thailand to work on 6 November 1994.

On my way to Thailand, I came across SLORC troops at Michaung Hlaung Junction and we had to pay 100 kyats to each of these troops and when I reached to Ma Yan Chaung concentration camp, we were forced to pay another 100 kyats and our property was seized.

Interview: 129 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour

Name: Kyaw Hla
 Sex: Male
 Age: 23
 Ethnicity: Arakanese
 Religion: Buddhist
 Address: Lehma, Arakan State
 Education: 4th Standard (primary school)
 SLORC army rank: Private, IB 404
 Salary: Ks 450 per month
 Interviewed: Shortly prior to 20 June 1994

[The following comments were made recently in independent interviews with defectors from the SLORC army in Mergui/Tavoy District, in the Tenasserim Division of southern Burma. Some of them defected earlier this year, while others defected over a year ago.]

However, all of their comments still apply because as the SLORC army continues to rapidly expand, conditions continue to deteriorate for both civilians and rank-and-file soldiers. In fact, as the comments of these former soldiers make clear, it seems that only the senior officers are deriving any benefit at all from the systematic oppression of the civilian population.

The monthly salary before deductions of a private soldier, 450 Ks, is not even enough to buy milled rice for two people for a month at current prices, not to mention that people also need other food to eat with their rice. Meanwhile, inflation continues to rage throughout the country as the kyat becomes increasingly worthless.

All of the defectors in this report have now joined the KNLA, but many other defectors choose instead to try to get home to their families or to settle down as civilians in Karen-controlled areas. If deserters are ever caught by SLORC they will be executed without trial, and their families also face possible retribution. Therefore, their names have been changed and some details, such as their army serial numbers, omitted to protect their families].

I joined the SLORC army in October 1990. I joined because I was so scared of SLORC. People in my village and my family were all beaten by SLORC, and they forced my father to be a porter. SLORC sent orders to their appointed headman in the village, and he came and called my father to be a porter. My father was 45 years old then. They also arrested my older brother. So I joined to be safe from them.

In 1992 we went to the frontline in Thayetchaung Township, and our commander forced all the villagers into portering – not only the old men, but children too. Some porters couldn't carry rice sacks so the soldiers forced the porters to keep going by kicking them.

They also called women to be porters. I remember one woman who was carrying a child as well as her load. The child still needed to be breastfed. Then when we went through another village we saw another woman together with two men, so we arrested all of them and then the woman cried, so Maj Myint Swe beat them and swore at them, and at me too.

Major Myint Swe was the battalion commander. [Note: this is the same Maj Myint Swe who was responsible for the brutal murders of 11 villagers from Thay Nyaw Chee Village in September 1993 – see the KHRG report "SLORC Murders in Mergui/Tavoy District", 17/12/93.] Maj Myint Swe used to tell men not to beat or swear at the porters by beating and swearing at me.

Third in command of the column was Thura Swe Paw Soe, and he ordered that whenever we were in a village none of the villagers were not allowed to go to their farms – they all had to stay at home. Most of the time when we passed huts in the farms or on the fields, if there was a man around we took him as a porter.

All the villagers were also ordered to come to our base, to build roads, etc. The villagers who called to our base were ordered to build a mass hall and offices on the base. If they didn't come we asked for money, and if they didn't give us money we arrested them and put them in jail.

At the base there was not always enough room for all the soldiers to live, and we had to live in very cramped and crowded conditions. There were often fights between soldiers and our personal things were often stolen. The wives of some soldiers lived at the base, and sometimes when their husbands had to go to the frontline the officers gave the wives money, condensed milk and rice to sleep with them.

Before I joined the army I'd seen books and things by the students [the Burmese students fighting for democracy] but when I was in the army the officers had rules that we were not allowed to read things like that.

I came and joined the Karen army in April 1993 because SLORC is a dictatorship and they forced us to obey every order of theirs.

Interview: 130 - HRV: Execution, Slavery, Torture, Women

Name: Maung Thein Soe
 Sex: Male
 Age: 21
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Buddhist
 Address: Mon State
 Education: 9th Standard (first year of high school)
 SLORC army rank: Lance Corporal, IB17
 Salary: Ks 650 per month
 Interviewed: Shortly prior to 20 June 1994

In 1988 I joined the uprising, so after SLORC took power I was afraid of being arrested. First I went home to my village, but then I left it again and had no aim in life for a while. Then my parents called me to come home, but I was still afraid I would be arrested so I joined the army thinking that it would make me safe from arrest. I joined in October 1989. Burmese troops don't come to our village very often, so I didn't know much about what they do to the people.

After I joined the army, I was in the Ywa Hee Lu Battle and I saw many porters die because the soldiers killed any of them who were sick or who couldn't carry their loads. I saw they killed four porters for this, and I saw they shot dead two others just because they couldn't feed them anymore. Other porters were just sent away on their own, very weak after getting extremely little rice to eat.

Whenever we arrived at villages in Palauk and Pa Law townships and people tried to run away, we caught, beat them and asked why they tried to run. Then we called village leaders and beat them too. Another time I heard that the commander and second-in-command of Column 3 raped a girl.

At the base, when the soldiers went to the frontline the officers didn't care about our families. Some of the officers slept with wives of soldiers who were at the frontline. Some prostitutes from Mergui came and called the soldiers' wives to become prostitutes like them.

All of these things happened in IB 17. The soldiers' wives and children faced a lot of trouble whenever their husbands were away, and their husbands knew nothing about it. After seeing so much oppression by the Burmese army, I came and joined the Karen army in February 1994.

Interview: 131 - HRV: Slavery, Torture

Name: Thein Htun
 Sex: Male
 Age: 24
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Address: Prome, Pegu Division
 Education: 4th Standard (primary school)
 SLORC army rank: Private, IB104
 Salary: Ks 450 per month
 Interviewed: Shortly prior to 20 June 1994

I joined the army in 1988 because I had problems with my relatives. In the army I often saw porters beaten by the soldiers. Some of them were unable to work but they were still forced to, and soldiers always asked people to pay "porter fees".

As soldiers, we were forbidden to listen to the BBC radio by the officers. We didn't even receive our full pay. Our monthly salary was always cut for so-called "social activities", "religious ceremonies", "games", etc. By the time they were finished, I usually ended up with only 145 kyats each month.

The pay was so bad that I have seen the wives of soldiers losing their character [sleeping with officers and becoming prostitutes] because their husbands got insufficient pay. I came to join the KNLA in 1992 because I didn't like the way SLORC oppresses the people.

Interview: 132 - HRV: Slavery, Torture, Women

Name: Maung Soe Min
 Sex: Male
 Age: 29
 Ethnicity: Burman
 Religion: Buddhist
 Address: Rangoon
 Education: 7th Standard (middle school)
 SLORC army rank: Sergeant, IB104
 Interviewed: Shortly prior to 20 June 1994

I joined the army in August 1985 to defend our country. But in the army I saw many problems, because the officers were so proud of their commands that they beat many of their soldiers for the smallest breach of rules of discipline.

Under SLORC I saw the army take porters, beat people and rape women. I didn't want to stay with them and I wanted to escape but I couldn't. I heard about the revolution through BBC [shortwave radio] and from some other people.

Then in 1992 I heard that my parents had died. I felt so sad that I left and came to join the KNLA, because then I knew that even if I went home, my parents wouldn't be there anymore.

Interview: 133 - HRV: Slavery, Torture

Name: Khin Soe Aung
 Sex: Male
 Age: 21
 Ethnicity: Arakanese
 Religion: Buddhist
 Address: Akyab, Arakan State
 Education: 2nd Standard (primary school)
 SLORC army rank: Private, IB404
 Salary: Ks 450 per month
 Interviewed: Shortly prior to 20 June 1994

I joined the SLORC army in October 1990. My father was beaten by SLORC soldiers, so I joined the army so my father could feel safe from more beatings. In the army I saw many porters being beaten by the soldiers as well.

Later I was beaten because the officer suspected me of being a Karen collaborator, so I fled the army and lived in a village as a farmer for a year. Then I joined the Karen army in January 1994.

Interview: 134 - HRV: Detention, Livelihood, Slavery, Torture

[The rank and file, despite committing atrocities to the people, are trapped and abused in their own army, subjected to both physical and mental torture. Being members of the armed forces is no protection from the horrors. Their eyes and ears are the witnesses to the "reality according to SLORC". Information and opinions they form come from inside themselves, influenced by the pressures of officers and the SLORC system of insanity.]

They know the truth even while being prohibited from reading leaflets and magazines issued from democratic opposition groups. They know what goes on around them is not right, but are forced by a fear and a lack of freedom into such circumstances as pawns of a higher perverted power. Listening to the radio will elicit sure punishment. Freedom of thought and actions are not tolerated, threats are common, all contact with the outside world forbidden, including to one's family. If they try to escape, army officers promise the soldier's parents, children and relatives will be killed. They dare not escape, instead silently suffering the misery each day with beatings, a lack of food and even living materials.

Despite the tales of horror by these soldiers, however, are the scapegoats for the brutal SLORC policy of lawlessness and disorder, even as the regime attempts to gain international recognition for their rule a legitimacy which Burma's own citizens refuse to give the illegal government. Many boys and men are held prisoners of their own army, and army once founded on protection and serving the people, now turned into an institution of terror and destruction of the SLORC.

Under such situation, 11 of the conscripted rank and file of SLORC IB 434 could no longer bear the barbaric ill-treatment of their officials. They shot dead Warrant Officer (II) Han Htun from Myan Aung, who was at that time in charge of the military

outpost, Lance Corporal Than Tun and Lance Corporal Thein Win at Ne Pu Khan outpost (Point 1653), located near Yun Salin River, in the eastern part of Papun in Karen State, in an effort to escape the injustices. They then joined the revolutionary forces on 4 June 1994. Most of them are of student ages, 16-17 years old. The following stories were told by them. Source: Dawn]

Name: Zaw Win Naing
Sex: Male
Age: 17
Education: 4th standard (primary school)
Address: Yeedashe Township, Pegu Division
Serial #: IB 434
Interviewed: June 1994

I left school after I passed the 4th standard examination as my parents were very poor. I had to sell goods in the markets to earn some money to help provide for my family's living.

In 1992, on my way home from the market, SLORC soldiers forced me to get into a military truck. It was about 3 o'clock in the evening. I was 15 at that time. I have been very depressed since the time of the training.

During the training, many recruiters suffered from malnutrition and lack of sanitation because they had to learn everything within 4 months and had insufficient nutrition. During the training some recruits died of cholera. Anyone's failure in the medical check-up was neglected by SLORC as the military wants the increasing numbers.

After the training, I was transferred to Ne Pu Khan Gone. No rank and file was provided with sufficient rations. I did not see any tins of condensed milk or sugar. When there was no curry and when we were about to take salt [i.e. eat rice], we were forced to stand in the rains or in the scorching sun, and kicked with combat boots.

Local people from Wai Mon, Koo Seik and Thakun Daing, living nearby Papun military area, were getting trouble from and were horrified by SLORC troops. Every farm owner was forced to pay five baskets of paddy to SLORC. Very often, the troops took away everything that the villagers grew and forced the owners of labourers to carry these crops without any payment. When these people refused or could not carry it, they were kicked or beaten by the troops. I saw many elderly people pulling the legs of soldiers and begging with tears in their eyes.

Most of the villagers love those of us who are in our childhood. When we went into the village, the villagers provided whatever they had. We, therefore, shared our rations with them whenever they came to the outpost. But when the officials knew what we did, we were beaten or put into confinement.

Moreover, the villagers and their cattle were forced to drag cut logs. Cattle which could no longer pull the logs because of foot disease, were killed. The owners were never compensated. My parents taught me not to insult any elders.

But if my parents knew what I did, I'm sure that they would be very disappointed with me.

The officials ordered us to bake bricks, saying that we would be paid. In reality, we were not paid. Rations of army rum for the rank and file were sold on the way to the outpost. We did not get anything from that ration. Sometimes, they forced two soldiers to conduct sentry duty for the whole night. Because the officials forced one soldier, who was admitted at Papun Battalion Clinic as he was suffering from sickness, he committed suicide. His name is Tin Hmwe. Many soldiers committed suicide because of misery, disappointment and depression.

We were not allowed to read any leaflets or magazines issued or distributed from the revolutionary organisations, and did not listen to the BBC. If the officials knew that we were listening to the BBC, we were beaten or put into confinement.

Interview: 135 - HRV: Detention, Livelihood, Slavery, Torture

Name: Moe Kyaw Soe
 Sex: Male
 Age: 17
 Education: 7th Standard
 Address: Ze Phyu Chaung, Dedayeh Township
 Family: Parents, U Soe Myint from Immigration Department, Bassein, Irrawaddy Division, and Daw Tin Htay
 Serial #: IB 434
 Salary: Ks 700 per month
 Interviewed: June 1994

In 1993, my family had to draw ballots under SLORC's recruitment programme and send one family member. If we could not send somebody in the family, we must pay 5,000 kyats for hiring somebody else, plus three baskets of paddy and three baskets of rice to the military. Although I was the youngest in my family, I had to join the military as my brothers were away and others are female. At that time I was in my 15th year.

I was sent to No. 6 Division Training Corps in Taungoo for about 5-months' military training. During this time, I experienced much maltreatment. An old man, 60, called "Mars" by the soldiers, were also at the training. As there was nobody else for him to hire or no money for the hiring price, he himself had to join the military. This man was blamed and beaten during the training period. He was not given any medical treatment. When we suffered from a malaria attack, each person was given only half a quinine tablet.

After the training, I was sent to IB 434. There, no rank and file was given enough food. We were given very little watery maggot-infested bean curry. When we were sick, we were never given any medicine nor treatment, instead we were told by the officials, "Cover the charges with your salary."

The monthly salary of 700 kyats was on paper. We got no more than 300 kyats. We were not spared from sentry even though we were sick. Warrant officers and sergeants forced us to massage them and buy liquor for them.

Now, I am occupied with a willingness to go to school again as I had no alternative than to join the military while I was preparing to attend my 8th standard class.

Interview: 136 - HRV: Slavery, Torture

Name: Moe Kyaw
 Sex: Male
 Age: 14
 Family: Parents, U Kyaw Shein and Daw Nwe Aye, farmers
 Address: Yaw Thit, near Kun Chan Kone and Let Khock Gone, Rangoon
 Division
 Serial #: IB 434
 Interviewed: June 1994

I joined the military service at the age of 14 because of maltreatment by my father-in-law. I attended the military training in Taungoo and was ill-treated as others.

When I was sick and could not climb up the mountain, I was beaten till blood flowed out of my mouth. While I was at Nay Pu Khan outpost, I was blamed and kicked from the back as I was not able to climb up the mountain.

At that time, I was about to commit suicide. But I failed to do so, as other soldiers prevented me. I joined the military because of the maltreatment of my father-in-law. Later on, I found that the military is worse than him.

Interview: 137 - HRV: Detention, Forced Labour, Livelihood, Slavery, Torture, Women

Name: Than Aung
 Sex: Male
 Age: 28
 Occupation: Farmer
 Family: Married, Wife Ma Khin Wine, with 3 children
 Address: Tak Gone Township, Mandalay Division
 Serial #: IB 434
 Salary: Ks 750 per month
 Interviewed: June 1994

I joined the military service on 19 June 1991. Before that I was a farmer. One day, one of my friends in the army came and asked me to go along with him by saying that he would buy some dried fish for me.

Later on, I knew that my friend was assigned for recruitment. I had no choice because my friend would be beaten in case of my refusal. While I was attending

the military training at No. 3 Training Corps in Yamethin, my parents and wife asked me to come back many times. I could not run away.

Lance Cpl Than Tun gave a "salary" to a married woman in Wai Mon Village, Papun Township and took her as his wife/mistress (against her will). The woman's husband dared not say anything. 2nd Lt Thein Oo mentioned himself as a bachelor and committed sexual abuses.

They always beat and kicked anybody near them whenever they were drunk. Most of the underage soldiers were forced to bear hardships. When they refused, they were inhumanely punished.

In the barracks, family of the soldiers were faced with insufficiency of food and a lack of medicines which led them to death. Most of their family members had to work outside as low-paid labourers at the construction site. The family members were forever being found at fault as they could not perform their assigned duties inside the battalion [which is also expected of family members by army officials].

Due to this situation, most of the soldiers were suffering from misery and were no longer eager to serve in the military. It is not the only problem in IB 434. We have no guarantee for our lives. It's like we are walking in the darkness without knowing our future. We did not know for what we were working for.

We were not allowed to listen to the BBC. Nobody dared listen to the BBC as they could be confined. Our maximum salary of 750 kyats was merely on paper. Our monthly deposits of 100 kyats was also meaningless as we were never given an account.

Interview: 138 - HRV: Child, Slavery, Torture

Name: Ye Win Htike
 Sex: Male
 Age: 17
 Education: 7th Standard
 Serial #: IB 434
 Interviewed: June 1994
 Address: Pabedan Township in Rangoon Division

Family: youngest son of U Thein Myint and Daw Khin Nyo. His mother earned the household income by selling various snacks in Bogyoke Market. His eldest brother was a guard on the train and not healthy enough. Another brother, Aung Myint Than, passed his 10th standard examination in 1990 and is now attending the Defence Service Academy. Another brother was in the 10th standard in 1990.

I joined the military service in June 1990. At that time, my brother who was in his 10th standard was living with my aunts in Lepadon Township in Pegu Division. When my brother was assigned to join the military by SLORC, he came back with tears in his eyes. My brother was very clever and should receive an education. I, therefore, joined the military in place of my brother. At that time, I was in 7th standard.

After attending training at No. 3 Training Corps in Yamethin, I forced the local people into portering. I forced even unhealthy persons, elderly and women. Most of the women were forced to stay near the officials. I saw with my own eyes what the officials pressed them to do.

Chit Ko Ko, a 12-year-old boy from Theinzayat, was also along with us. Whenever he could not walk along with the troops, he was beaten and kicked. The company quartermaster beat him all the time. At least the child became depressed. He was beaten with a bottle in the head and was in coma for a week.

When he regained consciousness, he did not speak to anyone nor eat anything. The lower part of his body nearly became paralysed and one of his eyes was affected. He was transferred to Mingaladon Military Hospital.

The official in-charge was put on trial as the chief's uncle was Maj Win Bo Shwe from Kya Sa Khan in Thaton, and he complained to headquarters [about the maltreatment of his nephew]. Any child not having relatives in the military or anybody with no family background will definitely receive more ill-treatment than Chit Ko Ko.

Most of the soldiers in our battalion want to come to the revolutionary area if they can get proper contact. Because they are miserable and ill-treated in the military all the time. We were threatened by the officials that we would be killed by the KNU. We did not care about our deaths compared continuing to stay with the SLORC troops, receiving ill-treatment all the time, insulting the elderly people and doing unjust things to the villagers everyday.

When I arrived to the liberated area, I found out that the situation is very different from what we were told. The KNU and other organisations welcomed us warmly. All of us have equal rights with them. There is no discrimination between the officials and the rank and file. We have the right to discuss openly with them. But in the SLORC troops, no soldier is allowed to eat on the same table as their officers.

Interview: 139 - HRV: Child, Detention, Slavery

Name: Zaw Min
 Sex: Male
 Age: 17
 Education: 7th Standard
 Address: Thetkala Kawa Township
 Family: Parents, U Maung Han and Daw Thein Kyin, farmers
 Serial #: 895561, IB 434
 Interviewed: June 1994

I was a 7th standard school boy and on my way to home from school, I was abducted by the SLORC soldiers and forced to get onto the military truck. Although I refused them, they forcibly took me by saying, "We will make a better life for you. Come along with us."

At that time, I thought that they were forcing me into portorage. But later on I came to know that they forced me to serve in the military service.

I was in the military in April 1993. My parents did not know my whereabouts. I had to attend the military training at No. 6 Division Training Corps. My experiences in the military are the same as my friends. ["I don't want to serve sentry duty anymore. I'm just willing to back to school," says Zaw Min with a tone that warns he is afraid of being forced into the military again.]

Interview: 140 - HRV: Child, Detention, Slavery, Torture

Name: San Lwin
 Sex: Male
 Age: 18
 Family: Parents, U Kyi and Daw Nyunt Shein
 Education: 8th Standard
 Address: Rangoon Division
 Serial #: 850951, IB 434
 Interviewed: June 1994

I was in my 8th standard in Htu Par Yon High School No. 1. On my way to home from school, I was abducted by municipal police in front of the market in No. 1 Quarter. I was forced to get onto the truck. They forced me to go along with them even though they could identify me as a student by my school bag and uniform. Another 3-4 students were also abducted like me.

I attended the military training at No. 2 Division Training Corps in Pyinmana, Mandalay Division. I also knew very well about the story of Chit Ko Ko.

Interview: 141 - HRV: Child, Detention, Opinion, Slavery, Torture, Women

Name: Nai Win Tun
 Sex: Male
 Age: 25
 Occupation: Worked in a workshop
 Family: Father, U Hla Kyi. His father was a herbal medic.
 Address: Waw Township, Pegu Division
 IB: 434
 Serial #: 899107
 Interviewed: June 1994

Even the elderly people were forced into portorage. When they could no longer carry the heavy loads, they were beaten and tortured. The girls who could no longer carry were reproved and taken behind the bushes and raped. Even 11-12 year old girls, the age of wearing a gown, were not spared.

We are not allowed to write to our family nor relatives. Any kind of contacts with the family is prohibited. "We are soldiers." But we were tortured and left

without any medical treatment as porters. Many soldiers committed suicide as they could no longer bear the hardships. Even the sergeants did it.

Nobody wants to bear arms. We were forced to work at odd-jobs, agricultural work and baking charcoal. We were fed not in time or with enough food. We were fed only two meals per day. Lunch was fed at 3:00 p.m. We couldn't bear it any longer because of hard work and insufficient food. Some villagers came and gave us food. They were very friendly with the rank and file in the army. But the officials did not like this.

Most of the rank and file, except for serial numbers 300000-500000 who are sergeants, are always trying to flee from serving the military. Therefore every soldier is under watch. They threaten us that our family members will get into trouble or killed in case we flee. Some soldiers dared not flee because of this threat and continued to bear all the suffering.

Most of the soldiers could not take care of their families who were left behind. Some of their wives had to find odd-jobs in order to earn their household living. Some of the had to sell their bodies to get the money.

Soldiers who joined the military after 1988 were not allowed to go very far from the outpost. These soldiers were accompanied by somebody else. Most of the newcomers are not acquainted with the areas very well. They threatened us that our throats would be cut by the Karens. It is also one of the reasons for some soldiers to be hesitant to flee. A certain number of soldiers committed suicide when they found that there is no exit for them.

Most of the soldiers who joined the military after 1988 gave respect to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Nobody dared to mention her name openly. We had to listen to BBC secretly. If the officers know, we are scolded and punished.

Interview: 142 - HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture

Name: Aung Soe Moe
Sex: Male
Age: 20
Education: 8th Standard
Family: Parents, U Kyi And Daw Khin Ohn, farmers
Address: Kyauk Kyi Township, Pegu Division
Serial #: 850829, IB 434
Interviewed: June 1994

In 1990, when each quarter in Kyauk Kyi was ordered to send 20 recruits for the military. As no one in the family could join, I resigned for my 8th standard class and join the military. If I'd refused my family would have had to hire somebody else at prices ranging around 10,000 kyats. But nobody wanted to get this amount of money even if they had to serve in the military.

I attended the military training in Pyinmana and then was transferred to IB 434. Soldiers were also tortured as porters and forced to work hard labour. As we were not provided with sufficient food and as there is lack of medical treatment,

diseases became rampant. We had to massage the sergeants and officials every night. Whenever they were drunk, they ill-treated us more.

Most of the students who were forced into the military service against their will under SLORC's recruitment programme were derisively called "DEMO" and suffered more ill-treatment than others. They were always under watch as the officers were afraid of their escape.

Interview: 143 - HRV: Detention, Slavery, Torture

Name: Maung Aye Shwe
Sex: Male
Age: 18
Education: 6th Standard
Occupation: Farmer
Family: 6th son of U San Khin and Daw Khin Thaung
Address: Moe Nyo Township, Pegu Division
Serial #: 899058, IB434
Interviewed: June 1994

In Moe Nyo Township, each qaurter was ordered to provide 5 recruits every month. I was sent to serve in the military on 4 February 1993 under this recruitment programme of SLORC. Then I was sent to No. 6 Division Training Corps.

I finished only my 5th Standard class and was a farmer before I was in the military. Although my parents did not want me to be in the military, they had no choice.

When I was in the outpost, the in-charge of the outpost and sergeants frequently asked me to buy liquor for them. One night, I bought liquor and cooked for them as usual. Then I went to bed as my sentry duty was from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. At about 10:30 p.m., I was forcibly woken up and ordered to prepare a meal for them. Lance Cpl Thein Win asked me to massage him. I told him I had sentry duty and I wanted to sleep before my duty. He scolded me and forced me to massage him. Because of that I fell asleep during my duty. The next morning, I was put in the scorching sun and a burnt knife was touched to my waist. ...Here are the remaining scars.

Interview: 144 - HRV: Torture

Name: Than Tun
Sex: Male
Age: 19
Address: Pegu Division.
Family: Parents, U Than Maung and Daw Myint Kyi. His father is chairman of the local LORC and his mother earns her living by selling clothes
Serial #: 850425, IB434

My father asked me to join the military service when I was one of those who was selected by rotation under SLORC's recruitment programme. I trained at No. 3 Training Corps in Yamethin.

In the military, nobody wants to fight. It is very hard for soldiers to walk or march to the frontline as they are not healthy enough because of hard work assigned to them by the officials.

Nobody dares to think about his life. As they are isolated from the outside world, they don't know what is good for them to do. They are afraid of being killed when they are recaptured. They also think that even if they are not recaptured and killed, they cannot survive or run away without food. They are also afraid of dying from the shortage of food.

Nobody knows that we are warmly welcomed by the revolutionary organisations. We left for here because we thought that it is better to die than to be subjected to torture by SLORC. They can cause trouble to my family anytime.

The military is increasing only in numbers not in capability. Soldiers are in the military not because of their belief, but because of forced recruitment. SLORC's tactic for recruitment is amazing. Even children separated from their mothers and crying in the markets are not spared from recruitment.

If somebody doesn't want to serve in the military, he has to hire another person to take his place at the price of 10,000 kyats. As all the people in general are very poor, no family has an extra 10,000 in cash even if the whole family works.

SELECTED SLORC ORDERS

ORDER 1

[The following is the direct translation of the typed, stamped and signed SLORC order sent to several villages in Kyauk Kyi Township in February 1993, ordering them to move].

Stamp:

"Exactly, Right, & Quick;
Be Simple, Be Honest, Try Hard
the Country;
All Government Servants
Must Stay Clear of Politics"

Stamp:

Township LORC
Kyauk Kyi Township to Build Up

Township Law & Order Restoration Council
Kyauk Kyi Township
No. 0201/1-14/TLORC
Date: 3 February 1993

To : Chairmen,
Kywetalin & Kyauk Sayit Village Groups;
Heads of Villages,
Kywetalin main village, New Kywetalin, In Dain Gone,
and Thaun Pu villages
Subject : Moving the Villages

- 1) Concerning the subject above, due to security reasons the villages mentioned below are instructed to move into one big combined location.
Kywetalin main village and New Kywetalin village, from In Net village group, to Nyaun Gone village.
In Dain Gone and Thaun Pu villages, from Kyauk Sayit village group, to Nat Than Gwin village.
They must completely move between 4 February 1993 and 8 February 1993.
- 2) Therefore, since the above villages must move all paddy, people and property between the specified dates and to the specified places, everyone must send a family registration list to the Township Law & Order Restoration Council committee, in order that housing plots can be allocated.

[Sd.]/3/2/93
(Substitute) Chairman
U Maung Maung Oo
Township officer #2

Copy to:
Southern Division Front Headquarters, Kyauk Kyi
No. 351 Light Infantry Battalion, Kyauk Kyi
No. 60 Infantry Battalion, Kyauk Kyi

ORDERS 2-17

[The following are the direct translations of some typical SLORC written orders. All of the orders were signed by SLORC officers, and in most cases were stamped with the unit stamp. Where necessary, the village name has been blanked out to protect the villagers.]

Many of the orders demand that the village head go to the military camp - in these cases, when the elder arrives he or she is generally interrogated about all movements of the resistance forces and beaten if not enough information is given. The elder is also threatened of what will happen if the village does not report the presence in the area of resistance forces, and given verbal orders regarding upcoming slave labour and porter requirements and how much money and food to send to the army camp.

If the villagers fail to obey these orders for any reason, the SLORC generally sends troops to loot the village, destroy some houses, and seize porters, and in some cases the village is shelled with mortars. In the orders the soldiers often refer to the village head as "mother", a casual way of addressing a female elder, because most village heads are now women at least 45 or 50 years old - no man would dare take the job, as male headmen are always tortured, and a woman any younger would likely be raped at the camp.

ORDER 2

Stamp : #28 Infantry
 #2 Column
To : X Village Head
Date : 4 October 1993

We have to repair #928 Advance Camp, so we need 20 people from X Village and 30 people from Y and Z villages, total 50 people. Whoever takes responsibility for this group, gather the people and send them to 928 Camp on 5 October 1993 without fail.

[Sd. illegible]
for Operation Commander
28 Infantry
Column 2

ORDER 3

Stamp : Frontline #338 Light Infantry
 #2 Column
To : Village Head
 X Village
Date : 5 August 1993
Subject : You must send us money for porter fees.

Regarding the above subject, send porter fees from your village to #338 Infantry, Column #2, on August 7, as soon as possible without fail. If you fail to do so for any reason, you will face the consequences.

[Sd. illegible]
Column Commander
#338 Light Infantry
Column 2

[Note: "Porter fees" are theoretically to be used to hire munitions and supply porters for the military. However, porters are never paid, and the same villages which pay the "porter fees" must generally provide porters as well, on a slave labour basis].

ORDER 4

Date: 6 September 1993
To: X Village

Mother:

- We have nothing to eat.
- So we ask for some meat from you.
- We have already asked for 2 days.
- But you haven't sent us any, so it looks like you don't care at all about us.
- We're not asking you to send it for free.
- We'll pay the cost.
- If our mother is good, your sons will never be bad.

Respectfully,

[Sd. illegible]
Your Son

[Note: Do not be fooled by the tone of this letter - it is a very serious threat. Note especially the last line, as well as the line stating that the villagers have already disobeyed for 2 days, and the statement "you don't care at all about us" - a line often quoted to villagers by SLORC troops just before looting and killing sprees. Regarding the promise to "pay the cost", it is almost certainly a lie. If the officer intended to pay, he would have sent the money with the messenger who brought this order. SLORC does not pay debts to villagers].

ORDER 5

Date : 9 January 1993
To : Village Head
X Village

- 1) By order of Strategic Command, villagers in your village will not be allowed to go outside the village between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.
- 2) In case of emergencies, go with a flame torch to guide your way, not a flashlight.
- 3) We hereby inform the village that if we see any villagers between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. outside the village, we will shoot them on sight.

Stamp:

201 Infantry

[Sd. Po Myint]

Column Headquarters

Lt. Po Myint

Column Commander

[Note: SLORC often issues orders that any villager using a flashlight at night will be shot - their logic is that a flame torch makes you visible for a greater distance, and that anyone using a flashlight can be assumed to be a Karen soldier. Similarly, villagers are not allowed to hunt with anything more than bows and arrows].

ORDER 6

Stamp : #338 Light Infantry Column Headquarters

Date : 15 January 1994

To : Village Head

X Village

Subject : To Come to Pain Kyone.

- 1) Regarding the above subject, your village head must come to Pain Kyone Camp on 15/1/94, today, at 1600 hours, without fail. If you fail to appear for any reason, you will face the consequences.

[Sd. illegible]

2nd Lieutenant, 15/1/94]

Acting Battalion Commander

338 Light Infantry

ORDER 7

Stamp : #28 Infantry

Date : 9 October 1993

#2 Column

To : Village Head

X Village

Come and see the labourers we've been using from your village. Come

and see them on 13/10/93, or before no-moon day. Come yourself to where we are.

[Sd. illegible]
for Column Commander
28 Infantry
Column 2

ORDER 8

Stamp : #28 Infantry
Date : 23 September 1993
#2 Column
To : Village Head
La Ka Village

When you get this order, your village head must come to us at Mi Kyaun village with a list of elephants, without fail for any reason.

[Note: Should you fail to do this for any reason, our column will come and arrest you.]

[Sd. illegible]
for Column Commander
28 Infantry
Column 2

[Note: The SLORC troops want this list so that they can then order all elephant owners to do shifts of forced labour, most likely using their elephants to haul logs for the army camp].

ORDER 9

Stamp : #28 Infantry
Date : 14 November 1993
#2 Column
To : X Village Head

This is your third warning. When you get this order, come to Pain Kyone camp.

This is already your third notification.

[Sd. illegible]
for Column Commander
Pain Kyone Camp

ORDER 10

Stamp : #28 Infantry
Intelligence Office
To : Village Head
X Village

- 1) From the village to which this is addressed, the village head and 2 village secretaries must come to see the Column Commander at Pain Kyone Camp on 12/11/93 at 0800 hours.
- 2) Bring along everyone with you who doesn't yet have an identity card.

[Sd. illegible]
for Column Commander
Place: Pain Kyone Camp
28 Infantry
Date: 11/11/93 Column 2

ORDER 11

Stamp : #28 Infantry
Date : 13 September 1993
#2 Column
To : Daw X
Y Village

When you get this letter, come with Daw Z to see the Column Commander, to discuss important affairs. Come without fail.

Note: Very Important.

Come with Daw Z.

[Sd. illegible]
for Column Commander
28 Infantry
Column 2
Nya Mayaw Village

ORDER 12

Stamp : #28 Infantry
Intelligence Office
Date : 16 November 1993
To : Daw X

When you get this order, bring a messenger to see the Column Commander.

[Sd. illegible]
for Column Commander
#28 Infantry
Column 2

[Note: Going as "messengers" is yet another form of slave labour the villagers are forced to provide].

ORDER 13

To : Daw X
Date : 30 August 1993
Y Village

Mother, if you get this letter, be sure to take any people who haven't yet registered with us to Nyan May Yaw Village on 1 September 1993.

(And if you hear of any unusual occurrences, report it right away).

[Signature illegible]
Company Commander
#4 Company
28 Infantry

[Note: The reference to "unusual occurrences" is a reminder and a threat that the village must report any news of Karen resistance forces immediately].

ORDER 14

Stamp : #28 Infantry
Intelligence Office
Date : November 4, 1993
To : X Village Head

When you get this letter, come right away to where we are without fail.

[Sd.]
Lt. Aye Lwin
Serial No. 23224
#28 Infantry

ORDER 15

Stamp : #28 Infantry
Company 5
Date : 23 December 1993
To : X Village Head

When you get this letter come to Pain Kyone army camp right away, without fail.

[Sd. illegible]

Company Commander

Company 5

#28 Infantry

ORDER 16

Stamp : #201 Light Infantry
Column Headquarters

Date : 30 December 1993

To : X Village Head

On 31/12/93, tomorrow morning at 9 a.m., come to Mi Kyaun without fail.

[unsigned]

ORDER 17

Stamp : #28 Infantry
#2 Column

Date : 24 August 1993

To : Village Head
X Village

Subject : To come and see the Column Commander

Regarding the above subject, the village head from X Village must come see Column commander Major Sein Pen, of #28 Infantry Column #2, on August 26 without fail.

[Sd. illegible]

for Column Commander

28 Infantry

Column 2

ORDERS 18-59

[Many of the orders end with phrases like "Should you fail to obey it will be your responsibility". The villagers know that this means that should they fail for any reason, SLORC will likely send troops to loot the village, destroy some houses, seize porters, or in some cases shell the village with mortars].

ORDER 18

Stamp : #120 Light Infantry Col.
 2 Headquarters
 To : Chairman
 Date : 15-1-94
 X Village

Chairman of X: As soon as you receive this letter, you must send (2) couriers to Y Village immediately. If you do not comply, we will bomb your village with heavy weapons.

[signed Kyaw Oo (?)]
 on behalf of 2nd Column Commander

ORDER 19

Stamp : Frontline Command
 Frontline #42 Infantry Battalion
 No. 42 Infantry Battalion
 Column 1 X Village
 Date : 30-1-1994
 Letter No : 109/4/001
 To : Chairman,
 Village Law and Order Restoration Committee
 Y Village
 Subject : Informing you that if an army truck sets off a land mine and is

destroyed, your village will have to pay compensation.

Reference: Ya Ta Ka Pa Ca (33) of 94, 28-1-94, 1600 hours
 Overtime Message No. 54 Ye 2

- 1) With reference to the order from Forward Command of No. 33 Division to all Battalions under its command, all villages in the area specified in that order must provide road security day and night.
- 2) Villages must keep watch day and night. If an army truck is destroyed by a land mine, then villages in the area will be liable and must take responsibility as follows:
 - a) If an army truck is destroyed by a land mine, the villages must pay a penalty of 1,000,000 kyats (one million kyats).
 - b) This penalty money must be paid within (7) days.
 - c) If a village fails to pay, it will be burnt down, the villagers will be forced to relocate and their livestock and other property will be confiscated by the Army.
 - d) Village leaders must come early in the morning at 5 a.m. every day to

report to the Army officer.

- 3) Starting with the next convoy [after a mine explosion], the villagers in the area will have to ride along on the trucks.

[Sd. illegible]

Column Commander

Frontline Command

No. 42 Infantry Battalion

ORDER 20

Stamp : Southwest Command Headquarters
Southwest Command HQ
#2 Strategic Command Group
Pain Neh Daw Camp

Letter No : 1/2/1/U 1

Date : 1994 March 4

To : Chairman,
Village Law & Order Restoration Council
X Village

Subject : Due to Government forestry laws, cutting and selling wood is prohibited

- 1) Regarding the above subject: Due to the government forestry laws, unless you get a legal licence you cannot cut wood into timber, establish any kind of sawmill, carry, buy, or sell timber. All of these acts are strictly forbidden.
- 2) Unless you get a legal licence, you cannot use convoys of private vehicles to transport timber.
- 3) Villagers must comply with the above order. If you do not, we will take action according to the law, we hereby inform you.

[Sd. illegible]

(on behalf of) Operations Commander

[Note: This order was distributed to many villages. These same villages are now receiving SLORC orders to cut hundreds of tons of logs and firewood and ship it to SLORC army camps (see the next order), where the soldiers have it transported to market and sell it. This order is not intended to protect the forest, only to make sure that local villagers derive no profit from it. These profits are reserved for military units and "licence holders", generally Burmese businessmen with military links or foreign contractors who have paid large "licence fees" to the SLORC army].

ORDER 21

Stamp : No. 1 Strategic Command
 Southwest Command Headquarters
 #1 Strategic Command

Letter No : 003/3/St. Cmd. 1/ Ye 2

Date : 1994 May [sic] 30

To : Chairman
 X Village

Subject : Further Request for (Class 2 hardwoods) of at least one-ton size

Regarding the above subject, to develop the car road and bridges for Win Ta Pat and Lay Kay, materials are needed for the road and bridges. Your village's quota for #2 Class hardwoods weighing more than 1 ton per log is (75) tons, with each log having circumference between 2 feet and 4 feet, length 10 feet [this is hard to read - it is either 10 or 18 feet], by 1994 - May inform you. [Unfortunately, the second half of this order paper is missing.]

[Note: This order was sent to villages throughout the area. It comes from Southwest Command Headquarters, the same group that issued the preceding order strictly forbidding villagers from cutting, transporting, buying, selling or carrying wood. People in the area confirm that most of this timber being ordered by SLORC is not for bridges at all, but is later sold with all profit going directly to SLORC Army Southwest Command].

ORDER 22

Stamp : No. 2 Company
 No. 84 Infantry

Date : 2/1/94

To : Chairman, X Village

Subject : To provide road security effectively

- 1) Regarding the above subject, you must provide road security in the Y River area at Z Village. This must be done effectively. If anyone sees anything unusual they must report it immediately.
- 2) If any landmine explodes in the area you are responsible and you will have to pay 50,000 kyats compensation. In addition, we will drive you out of your village. You will have to sign verifying that you have received and understood this order.
- 3) You must clear the bushes within 100 yards on both sides of the road in the area you have been given responsibility for.

[Sd. illegible]

Company Commander
 No. 2 Company
 No. 84 Infantry Battn.
 A Army Camp

ORDER 23

Stamp : Frontline #302 Light Infantry Battn.
 No. 302 Light Infantry Battn.
 Estimate (H-036003)
 Column 1 HQ
 Letter : # 2100/20/U 5
 Date : 1994-March-15
 To : Village Head, X village tract
 Subject : Collection of compensation for mine explosion

- 1) Regarding the above subject, because a landmine exploded between X Village and Y Village on 13-3-94, you must pay compensation of 3,000/- (three thousand kyats exactly).
- 2) Send the above amount of money to Z village head (A) on 16-3-94 at the latest.

[Sd. illegible]

cc: Office Copy (on behalf of) Acting Commander

ORDER 24

Receipt
 X, village head, Y Village,

FOR the land mine explosion near Z Village

Total sum in money for the above 20,000 Kyat In Words: (twenty thousand kyats) exactly.

7-2-92. This amount has been received by me on this date. Following the order from #99 Division frontline headquarters.

Money transferred by:

Received by:

[Signature]Signature:
 Army Serial No. Army 22169

[Thumb print]Signature:
 Army Serial No.:

Name: X
 Rank:
 Army Department: Y Village
 Location:
 Date: 7-2-92

Name: Lieut. Nyo Soe Min
 Rank:
 Army Department: Frontline #84
 Location:
 Date: 7-2-92

[Note: this is a standard Army receipt form. The writing filling in the blanks is shown in italics. Nyo Soe Min is still demanding landmine compensation money these days, only now he is a captain, Commander of Coy 1 of IB 84, and now he demands much more each time].

ORDER 25

Stamp:

24-2-94

No. 119

Light Infantry Column #1

To: Mother X and Y

Mother, I your son miss you, so I've written you this letter informing you to send seven male porters to me tomorrow, on the 25th or 26th, to Z. We will have you replace them once a week. Be sure to send them.

Missing you,

[Sd./24-2-94]

Lt. Min Than

Intelligence Officer

[Note: Most village heads are now middle-aged to elderly women, because the soldiers don't torture or kill them as often as men. SLORC soldiers often refer to older women villagers as "Mother"].

ORDER 26

Stamp : No. 84 Infantry

Date : 28-12-93

No : 5 Company

To : Chairman, X Village

Subject : Do not sleep at your farms or fields.

Regarding the above subject, your village chairman must inform the villagers not to sleep in their farm or field huts. If we meet these villagers by accident while we are on patrol we will not take responsibility for what happens to them. We also order you to send wood and bamboo to Y Army Camp on 1-1-94.

[Sd. illegible]

Company Commander

No. 5 Company

[Note: Many villagers' farm fields are far from their villages, so during the growing

season they build huts at their farms and stay there. Otherwise they will not have time to do all their field work, and animals will eat their crops by night. The real meaning of this SLORC order is to declare all areas outside of villages as free-fire zones where civilians will be shot on sight, and the villagers know this well].

ORDER 27

To : Village Head, X Village
Subject : Going to your fields or farms

When the villagers go to their farms or fields, they must only take enough food for one person for one day, never for any more than one day. If we discover any disobedience to this order it will be your responsibility.

Stamp:

Location: Y Army Camp
Frontline #307

[Sd. illegible]

Date: 11-9-93
Light Infantry Battn.
Army Intelligence Officer
Column #1
Y Army Camp

ORDER 28

To : Chairman, X Village
Date : 4-5-93
Subject : To send villagers to the army camp for courier duty

- 1) Regarding the above subject, every village in the Y area, eleven villages, must gather information regarding KNU rebel movements within a three-mile radius of their village. This must be reported by courier to the SLORC army camp at 10 a.m. each day.
- 2) Regarding the above, if we discover that you are not supplying information on KNU rebel movements then we will assume that your village is collaborating with the KNU, so we will destroy your village and relocate the villagers.

Stamp:

[Sd. illegible]

No. 308 Light Infantry
Intelligence Officer
Frontline #1 Headquarters
Frontline #308 Light Infantry

ORDER 29

Stamp:

27 Dec. 93, 1000 hours

Frontline No. 42 Infantry Battn.

Chairman (village head)

Column No. 2

X village

For sentry duty we need 12 people with food for 3 days. You yourself must bring them to the column at Y. You must do this without fail. We have informed you.

[Sd. illegible]

Army Serial No. 14705

Major Maung Maung Kyaw

ORDER 30

To : Naw X

Date : 10-3-94

When the courier arrives with this order, send 5 replacement porters if you can on 11-3-94. If you can't, just replace 4 of them and bring money for the other. Also, send 25 big bamboos to Y on the evening of 12-3-94. This is the last time. Give me help.

Bring rice for the porters as well. (That's all.)

Respectfully,

[Sd. illegible]

Than Htun

ORDER 31

To : X

Date : 13-3-94

If you get this letter please send us the 21 big bamboos which I've asked you for. Send them to Y. This is the last time. This time when you come to replace the porters please bring money for 3 persons. Nothing left to say.

Respectfully,

[Sd. illegible]

Than Htun

[Note: The "money for 3 persons" means ransom money to buy the freedom of 3 porters currently being held].

ORDER 32

To:
3-94
Naw Y
X Village, Head.

Date: 19-

Come to me immediately when you get this letter. Bring 2 villagers with you for sentry duty.

[Sd. illegible]
Sgt. Than Htay
Frontline #84

ORDER 33

Stamp : Frontline No. 51 Infantry Battn, Column 1 HQ
Date : 29-3-94.
To : Village Head, (X) Village
Subject : Changeover of porters and couriers

Regarding the above subject, send us the same number of people to replace those already here, working for Frontline No. 51 Infantry Battalion at Y Army Camp. We inform you that you must not fail to send us these porters and couriers.

[Sd. illegible]
Military Intelligence Officer
Frontline #51 Infantry Battn.

ORDER 34

Stamp : No. 2 Company, No. 84 Infantry
Date : 1/1/94
To : Chairman, X Village
Subject : Providing security for the road and attending a meeting

- 1) Regarding the above subject, divide your village into sections to take turns providing security for the road. Also, come for a meeting on January 2, 1994 at CCC Army Camp so we can tell you what you need to know.
- 2) Do not fail in this. If you fail it will be your responsibility.

[Sd. illegible, 1/1/94]
 Company Commander
 No. 2 Company
 No. 84 Light Infantry Battn.

[Note: SLORC demands a certain number of slaves from each village based on village size. The village head is then told to "divide the village into sections" so that each group of families within the village does their share of the slave labour].

ORDER 35

Stamp : No. 14 Infantry, No. 2 Company
 Date : 14-8-93
 To : Chairmen (Village heads), X & Y villages
 Subject : Summoning free labour

- 1) Regarding the above subject, the labourers which we summoned for the 18th are now required on the 17th. Each person must come with a machete to the army camp as soon as possible.
- 2) You must comply without fail.

[Sd. illegible]
 Company commander
 No. 2 Company
 No. 14 Infantry
 Z army camp

ORDER 36

3-5-94
 Mother

Mother, send us 20 cattle carts on the 5th of this month.

X Army Camp
 [Sd. "Aye/2"]

Note: Important. To carry wood and bamboo.

ORDER 37

Stamp : No. 84 Infantry, No. 5 Company
 To : Chairman, X Village
 Subject : To send cattle carts
 Date : 30-12-93

Regarding the above subject, for use by our operations column our Battalion needs 3 carts and 30 logs, to be sent on 1-1-94. You have been informed.

[Sd. illegible]
Company Commander
No. 5 Company
Y Army Camp

ORDER 38

Stamp : No. 14 Infantry, No. 5 Company
Date : 16-2-94
To : Chairman, X Village
Subject : Send two carts immediately

- 1) Regarding the above subject, two carts, while on duty, returned to X Village on 15-2-94 at 6 p.m. without permission from the camp commander.
- 2) Therefore send two more carts to replace them to Y Army Camp tomorrow, 17-2-94, without fail. You will be held responsible if you fail to comply.

[Sd. illegible, 16/2/94]
Company Commander, No. 5 Company

ORDER 39

Stamp : No. 84 Infantry, No. 5 Company
Date : 5-1-94
Subject : To send cattle carts

Regarding the above subject, you must come to Y Army Camp on 9-1-94 at 12 midday, where you will be informed of our requirements.

[Sd. illegible]
Company Commander, No. 5 Company
Y Army Camp

ORDER 40

Stamp : No. 307 Light Infantry Battn.
Date : 6-11-93
To : Village Head, X Village
Subject : Order for wood, bamboo, and roofing

We inform you that your village must provide us bamboo in six-foot

lengths: (50) lengths of small-diameter bamboo, (150) lengths of medium-diameter bamboo, (100) lengths of thick bamboo and (100) shingles of special leaf roof. Send it to Y Army Camp on 7 November 1993. Do not fail to do this.

[Sd. illegible]

(on behalf of) Intelligence Officer
No. 307 Light Infantry Battn.

ORDER 41

Stamp : #2 Column, #84 Infantry Battn.
To : Chairman, X Village
Subject : Invitation to attend a meeting

Regarding the above subject, we are going to build a gravel road under control of Y Army Camp. We will have a meeting about your involvement in this project. We respectfully invite you to attend the meeting.

Meeting time : 27/2/94, 10 a.m.

Meeting place : Y Army Camp

[Sd. illegible]

Y camp commander

[Note: Do not be fooled by the tone of this letter. The meeting is to demand large numbers for slave labour on the road from the village heads. If a village head doesn't attend, his village will face severe retaliation].

ORDER 42

Stamp : No. 84 Infantry Battn, No. 5 Company
Subject : Informing you to attend a meeting

Regarding the above subject, we will give you orders about what we need in our camp. You yourself must come to X Army Camp on 9-1-94 at midday, 12 o'clock.

[Sd. illegible]

Company Commander
5 Company, X Camp

ORDER 43

[Note: The next 3 orders form a sequence: first, second, and final warning.]

Stamp : No. 2 Company, No. 84 Infantry

To : Chairman, X Village
 Subject : Come and attend a meeting

Regarding the above subject, you must divide all the villages into sections to take turns providing road security. Come to Y Army Camp on 8-1-94 without fail. If you fail to come it will be your responsibility.

[Sd. illegible]
 Company Commander
 #2 Company
 #84 Infantry Battn., Y Camp

ORDER 44

Stamp : #2 Company, #84 Infantry Battn.
 To : Chairman, X Village
 Date : 9/1/94
 Subject : Asking for an emergency meeting

Regarding the above subject, we will have a meeting on 10-1-94 for sure. Because of your absence we could not hold the meeting on 8-1-94 so we changed it to 10-1-94. This meeting is very important for you. We can't fail to have this meeting for any reason. If you don't comply it will be your own responsibility.

[Sd. illegible]
 Company Commander
 #2 Company
 #84 Infantry Battn., Y Army Camp

ORDER 45

Stamp : No. 2 Company, No. 84 Infantry
 To : Chairman, X Village
 Date : 12-1-94
 Subject : Holding an emergency meeting

Regarding the above subject, we ordered you to attend a meeting on 8-1-94 but you failed to attend. You also failed to attend on 10-1-94. We inform you that this is the last order telling you to provide road security and to attend a meeting at Y Army Camp. If you do not comply it will be your responsibility, and we inform you that we will take very severe action.

Provide the road security starting today, 12/1/94. If you don't, we will take severe action.

[Sd. illegible]
 Company Commander

No. 2 Company
#84 Infantry Battn., Y Army Camp

ORDER 46

Stamp : Frontline #51 Infantry Battn. Column #1 HQ
Date : 24-3-94
To : Village Head, (X) Village
Subject : Supplying Load Carriers

Regarding the above subject, we need five cattle carts for Frontline #51 Infantry. You have been informed. Send them to Y Army Camp on 25th March at (0600) hours.

[Sd. illegible]
Army Intelligence Officer
Frontline No. 51 Infantry Battn.

ORDER 47

Stamp : Frontline No. 98 Infantry Battn, Column 1 HQ
Date : 16-2-94
To : Village Head, X Village

Village head:

We inform you that as soon as you get this letter, come and report to #98 Infantry at Y.

[Sd. illegible]
Commander
Frontline No. 98 Infantry Battn.

ORDER 48

Stamp : Frontline No. 36 Infantry Battn. Column HQ
To : Village Head, X Village
Subject : Providing leaf roof to roof our huts

Regarding the above subject, to roof the huts at Y Army Camp, obtain and send (1,000) shingles of leaf roof, either in pat or selu pat type, to Y Army Camp, on 12-4-94 at the latest. We have informed you.

Frontline #36 Infantry Battn.
Y Army Camp

ORDER 49

Stamp : Frontline No. 36 Infantry Battn. Column 1 HQ
 Date : 5-4-94
 To : Village Head, X Village
 Subject : Summoning the village head

- 1) We are going to discuss the area under the control of Frontline #36 Infantry, so your village head must come. If the village head is unavailable, the deputy village head must come, to Y Army Camp on 1994 April 7 at 9 a.m., without fail.
- 2) If you do not come as summoned to the army camp, we will take severe action. We have hereby informed you.

[Sd. illegible]
 Intelligence Officer
 No. 36 Infantry Battn.

ORDER 50

Stamp : No. 84 Infantry Battn.
 No. 5 Company
 To : Village Head, X Village
 Subject : Bring replacement porters and you yourself attend a meeting

Regarding the above subject, you must replace the porters who have been with the column until now, and the village head must come to Y Army Camp to talk tomorrow, 8-3-94, at 10 a.m. We have hereby informed you.

[Sd. illegible, 7/3/94]
 Camp Commander
 Y Camp

ORDER 51

Stamp : Frontline No. 51 Infantry Battn.
 Column 1 HQ
 Date : 23-3-94
 To : Village Head, X Village
 Subject : Informing you to attend a meeting

Regarding the above subject, we have to talk with you, so come and see the commander at Y Army Camp on March 24 at 0700 o'clock sharp. Come for sure, we inform you.

[Sd. illegible]
 Location: Y Army Camp

Intelligence Officer
Frontline No. 51 Infantry Battn.

ORDER 52

Stamp : Frontline No. 51 Infantry Battn.
Column 1 HQ
Date : 30-3-94
To : Village Head, X Village
Subject : Meeting with the village heads

All of your village committee must come to Y Army Camp as soon as you get this order. Come without fail, we inform you.

[Sd. illegible]

ORDER 53

To : X
Date : 18-3-94

I'm leaving you this note. Give the cost for one porter to Sergeant Y. In the future, we'll decide whether to keep doing it this way or not. For now, just pay the money. If you need any explanation ask Sergeant Y.

[Sd. illegible]

ORDER 54

Stamp : Frontline #84 Infantry Battn.
#4 Company
Date : 3-7-93
To : Village Head, X Village

Come to Y Army Camp today to talk and discuss things. When you come, bring one chicken.

[Sd. illegible]

Company Commander
#4 Company
Y Army Camp

ORDER 55

Stamp : Frontline #36 Infantry Battn.
 Column #1 HQ
 Date : 14-4-94
 To : Chairman, X Village
 Subject : Send leaf roofing to Y Army Camp

- 1) We ordered you to send (1000) shingles of leaf roofing to Y Army Camp on 12-4-94, but it has come to our attention that you didn't send them. Therefore, as soon as you get this letter go and send (1000) leaf roofing shingles to Y Army Camp.
- 2) You yourself must report to Y Army Camp on 17-4-94 that they have been sent.
- 3) If you do not comply, we will take severe action.

[Sd. illegible]
 Intelligence Officer
 #36 Infantry Battn.

ORDER 56

To : Chairman, X Village
 Date : 15-2-94
 Subject : Invitation to attend a meeting

We want to meet you to discuss things at Y Army Camp. Therefore we inform you that you yourself must come to Y Army Camp on 16-2-94 at 1000 (10) o'clock without fail. If you fail for any reason, it will be your responsibility.

[Sd. illegible, 15/2/94]
 Camp Commander
 Y Army Camp

ORDER 57

To : X
 Date : 13-3-94

When the courier brings this letter, we ask 8 tins of rice from you for the porters. Please try to settle things.

Respectfully,
 [Sd. illegible]
 Column
 Frontline #84

ORDER 58

Stamp : Frontline #84 Infantry Battn.
#4 Company
To : X Village Head

We inform you to come and see us at Y Army Camp on 4-7-93. If you can't come, send your secretary.

[Sd. illegible]
Camp Commander
Y Army Camp

ORDER 59

Subject : Signed Acknowledgement

- 1) Regarding the above subject, we the villagers, the travellers and the workers have never been ordered to give or sell things to the Heavy Weapons Support Company of No. 14 Infantry since they assumed their duties on 19-12-93.
- 2) We sign that they really have not taken any money from villagers.

[Thumb print]
Head of Village [Mrs Erection]

Age 45
Father's Name [Grandfather Incapable]
Address Z Village
Date 17-2-94

- 3) I sign in the presence of the following witnesses.

[Thumb print] [Thumb print]

Name	[Mrs Mother Dog]	Name	[Mrs Pa-O]
Age	60	Age	42
Father's Name	B	Father's Name	D
Address	Z Village	Address	Z Village
Date	17-2-94	Date	17-2-94

[Note: If you have read the other orders in this report, it should hardly be necessary to add that this order was signed at gunpoint. Even so, these three villagers managed to send all of us a message of their feelings about SLORC through an act of extreme courage: the village head signed her name "Mrs Erection" and her father's name as "Grandfather Incapable". The witnesses signed their names "Mrs Mother Dog" and "Mrs Pa-O". They got away with it because the SLORC officers cannot read Karen.]

Despite all the SLORC's terrorism, despite all their suffering and destitution and at great risk to their lives, with just a few joke names these three women have sent a message to us all that they will never give in to SLORC].

ORDERS 60-77

[Most of these orders are old, but they give a good reflection of the kind of harassment villages face every month from SLORC troops. Thousands of such orders are issued, many are lost, and many villagers are afraid to entrust them to others. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the courageous villagers who were willing to provide us with this powerful evidence of SLORC oppression.

Notes: While SLORC stands for State Law & Order Restoration Council, it administers locally through State or Divisional LORC, Township LORC, Village Tract LORC and Village LORC. This abbreviation LORC (Law & Order Restoration Council) is used throughout this report. In some orders we have translated "Month 10" as "October", "Month 11" as "November", etc. Calling the months by their numbers is common in Burmese].

ORDER 60

Stamp : #61 Infantry Battalion
Office of Army Column #1
Date : 21-3-94
To : Chairman, X Village
Subject : Notification

- 1) We have received information that there are more than 100 enemy troops in X Village.
- 2) We are going to have a battle with them, so all the villagers had better get out of the village.
- 3) When we didn't burn down Ma Oo Village after the battle there, the higher authorities were not pleased.
- 4) Therefore in the future, after a battle occurs at any village, that village must be burned down, and all the valuables belonging to the villagers must be confiscated.
- 5) Reply that you have received this letter, and if there are no enemies in your village then the village chairman and the army column commander must come and see me.

[Sd. illegible]
Intelligence Officer

ORDER 61

Stamp : Township LORC "Precisely, Truly, & Quickly"
 Kya In Seik Gyi
 Date : 1994-March-10
 Letter No.: 10/1-1/Ma Wa Ka (KISG)
 To : Village Headman, X Village, Kya In Seik Gyi Township
 Subject : Come and give compensation money for the cost of the bridge

- 1) Regarding the above subject, we already informed you to come to the office on 2-2-94 to pay the amount of 30,000 kyats, in words (thirty thousand kyats only) to rebuild the lower Thingan Chaung Bridge, which was blown up by the insurgents on 24-1-94. But we have found that up to this moment the money has not yet been delivered.
- 2) Therefore your village must deliver the payment for repair of the lower Thingan Chaung Bridge not later than 25-3-94, and if you fail to do so effective action will be taken against you.

[Sd. Aung Khin Myint 10/3/94]

(on behalf of) Chairman

(Aung Khin Myint, secretary)

Copies to : #32 Infantry Battn., Kya In Seik Gyi
 Office Copy

[Note: This order is a carbon copy of an original, with the village name and the amount to be paid penned in by hand, so money was clearly demanded from several villages, the amount probably depending on the size of the village].

ORDER 62

Stamp : Village LORC, X Village
 Kyaik Mayaw Township
 Date : 19-11-93
 To : Mr Y, rubber plantation owner
 Subject : Come and sell rubber

Regarding the above subject, you were informed to come and sell rubber in the amount of 30 pounds per acre to the army boots factory of No. 545 Military Weapons Company [the word used means a 'company' of soldiers in the military sense, not a commercial 'company']. As you have not come to supply your rubber to us up to this date, we inform you to come sell it to us tomorrow, 20-11-93.

If you cannot sell it to us come and report why you cannot. If you don't come it will be your responsibility.

[Sd. Z 19/11/93]

(Chairman)

Village LORC

X Village, Kyaik Mayaw Township

[Note: In 'No. 545 Military Weapons Company' the word used means a 'company' in the military sense, a unit of about 100 soldiers. Like in some Communist countries, the SLORC has some companies of soldiers which are devoted primarily to producing military equipment. 'Come and report' means bring money instead of rubber, especially since he probably can't get the rubber by tomorrow. 'It will be your responsibility' most likely means 'You will be arrested'. Although the signature at the bottom is legible, this name must be omitted].

ORDER 63

[Order 63-67 were sent to the same village, and demonstrate the kind of constant demands for money every village is faced with. This does not include the regular looting of their food and other belongings, as well as being taken as porters and for other slave labour].

Stamp : Village, X Village LORC, Kyaik Mayaw Township
 Date : 8-10-93
 To : Chairman, secretary, and members. Y Village
 Subject : To make contributions to the 4th Mon State Chairman's Trophy Boat-Racing Tournament

Regarding the above subject, according to the Kyaik Mayaw Township LORC order dated 4-10-93, No. (1464) 4-5/Ma Wa Ta, owners of enterprises in your village, for example anyone who owns a machine for splitting logs, must pay 50 kyats, rubber plantation owners 50 kyats per person, and also every house must pay 5 kyats.

We inform you to collect the contribution money from enterprise owners, rubber plantation owners and the working people at the rate of 5 kyats per house, as soon as possible, and deliver it to the house of the village chairman on 12-10-93 as soon as possible.

12-10-93 It [the boat-racing tournament] will be held at Azin Reservoir, Mudon.

15-10-93 It must be sent to Kyaik Mayaw.

[Sd. Z 8/10/93]

(Chairman)

Village LORC

X Village, Kyaik Mayaw Township

[Note: Presumably 'it' means the money must be sent from the village to Kyaik Mayaw on 15-10-93. As this is 3 days after the tournament, 'it' is hardly likely to be used for boat racing].

ORDER 64

Stamp : Village LORC, X Village, Kyaik Mayaw Township
 Date : 22-10-93
 To : Chairman, Y Village
 Subject : To deliver money for salary of government servicemen for October, contribution money for the boat racing, second stage of the road payments, and other general expenses

Regarding the above matter, we decided at a meeting that salary for the government servicemen for October, 75 kyats per household, will be delivered as soon as possible, but up to today you haven't done anything about it. We inform you to bring the money before the township's monthly meeting on 25-10-93, including all old debts and the contribution money for the boat racing tournament, all together.

[Sd. Z 22/10/93]

(Chairman)

Village LORC

X Village, Kyaik Mayaw Township

[Note: The term 'government servicemen' used here could mean anything from porters to soldiers or civil servants. Regardless of who the money is supposedly for, it will most likely just go into the pockets of military officers. In the order, 'October' is actually written as 'Month 10', which is common in Burmese.]

ORDER 65

Stamp : Village LORC
 Date : 7-11-93
 To : X Village
 Chairman, secretary, and all members,
 Kyaik Mayaw Township, Y Village

Subject : Sending salary for government servicemen for November

Regarding the above subject, we have already asked you for the salaries for government servicemen for November, to be delivered on 5-11-93. But after checking we found out that the salary money has not been sent yet.

On 7-11-93 the Da Gone Tine army column came and asked for the November servicemen's salary. So please send the salary money as soon as possible after receiving this letter. If you fail, you'll have to settle it with the army column.

[Sd. Z 7/11/93]

(Chairman)

Village LORC

X Village, Kyaik Mayaw Township

ORDER 66

Stamp : Village LORC
 Date : 10-1-94
 To : X Village, Chairman, secretary
 Kyaik Mayaw Township, Y Village, A Village Tract
 Subject : To prepare the salary money of government servicemen for January and the third money collection for the Rangoon-Mergui long-distance highway

Regarding the above subject, in order to deliver the money in the minimum time we want the authorities concerned to prepare the salary for government servicemen for January and the money for the Rangoon-Mergui Highway. You promised that you would deliver the salary for government servicemen for January on 15-1-94, and the money for the Rangoon-Mergui long-distance highway on 31-1-94. Therefore we would like you to give a good explanation to the villagers so that they deliver the two payments before the deadline.

The remaining money for government servicemen for December and the second payment of the Rangoon-Mergui Highway money must be sent as soon as possible.

[Sd. Z 10/1/94]

Dated 10-1-94

(Chairman)

Village LORC

X Village, Kyaik Mayaw Township

[Note: In the order 'Rangoon-Mergui' is written using the SLORC names, 'Yangon-Myait'].

ORDER 67

Stamp : Village LORC
 Date : 12-2-94
 To : X Village, Chairman, secretary
 Kyaik Mayaw Township, Y Village
 Subject : To send the third highway payment and money for government servicemen for February as soon as possible.

Regarding the above subject, we have already informed you to deliver the third highway payment on 31-1-94 by installments, but it has not been delivered yet. We inform you again to send the third highway payment and February salary for government servicemen on 14-2-94 at the latest. When you bring this money bring along the account papers of your previous payments as well.

[Sd. illegible, 11/3/94]

Chairman

Copies to: #32 Infantry Battn., Kya In Seik Gyi
Office Copy

ORDER 70

To : Chairman
Headman of X village Mr Y:

As instructed by our superiors, to level the road surface of the Z [Army] Camp Bridge, you must bring along spades and baskets. A and B villages have been informed of this. If nobody comes, effective action will be taken against these villages.

[Sd. illegible]
Z Camp Commander

[Note: The date 13/3/94 is written on the back of this order].

ORDER 71

Stamp : Township LORC
"Precisely, Truly, & Quickly"
Kya In Seik Gyi
Date : 1994 March 10
Letter No.: 121/1-2/Ma Wa Ka (KISG)
To : Chairman / Village Headman
Wards / Village LORC
Kya In Seik Gyi Township
Subject : Prohibiting bullock carts on motor roads
Aim : According to TLORC letter dated 23-2-94, Letter No. 121/1-2/
TLORC (KISG)

- 1) Regarding the above subject, we have already informed you by the letter referenced above that bullock carts are prohibited from using the car roads. Instead, they must use the track cut beside the car road.
- 2) Any bullock carts found using the car road will be fined 500 Kyat in accordance with Article #4, paragraph E decided by the Township Road Construction Supervision Committee on 8-3-94.
- 3) Therefore, notify the people in your village to act according to these instructions so that unnecessary problems do not occur.

[Sd. illegible]

Chairman

Copies to: #32 Infantry Battn., Kya In Seik Gyi

Township Officer, Township Police Station, Kya In Seik Gyi
Office Copy

[Note: This order, copied on a Gestetner machine, was distributed to villages throughout the area. The 'car roads' are only dirt tracks, and barring the villagers from using them makes it much harder for them to get around, while effectively restricting the roads to military traffic - despite the fact that it was the villagers who are forced to build and maintain these roads in the first place.]

ORDER 72

Stamp : Township LORC
"Precisely, Truly, & Quickly"
Kya In Seik Gyi
Date : 1994 March 8
Letter No. : 110/1-1/Ma Wa Ka (KISG)
To : Chairman and Headmen of the Village
X Village
Subject : Invitation to a meeting

To construct the Kya In Seik Gyi Chaung Ner Kwa Road, we will meet and have a discussion regarding the work in the following list on 11-3-94 at 10:00 a.m., which will be held at the Township LORC office hall. You are invited to attend the meeting without fail.

1) In order to pave the road, supply 30 truckloads of firewood.

[Sd. illegible]

Chairman

Copies to: Office Copy

[Note: This is another stencilled copy with the village name and the 'list of work' at the end (in this case only 1 item) penned in. The firewood is presumably to heat up tar].

ORDER 73

To : Chairman
X Village
Date : 20-2-94

We inform Mr Y to report to the company commander of #2 Company regarding the matter of supplying firewood and charcoal and to bring along 2 people from the countryside and the person who's returned from the meeting at Z, altogether 4 of you. Come without fail.

[Sd. illegible]
 (for) Company Commander
 #2 Company

ORDER 74

Stamp : #32 Infantry Battalion
 Battalion Command (Intelligence)
 Date : 12-3-94
 To : Chairmen
 X & Y villages
 Subject : Request for village heads to report

Regarding the above subject, we inform the village headman himself to report to the No. 32 Infantry Battalion headquarters without fail.

We inform you that if you fail to come, it is the responsibility of the village headman.

[Sd. illegible]
 (for) Acting Company Commander

ORDER 75

Frontline : #61 Infantry Battalion
 Da Gone Dine
 Letter No.: 1000/01/U1
 Date : 1994 February
 To : Chairman
 Village LORC
 X Village
 Subject : To come and meet the company commander

Regarding the above subject, we inform the chairman and all members of the Village LORC to come and meet with the commander of Frontier #61 Infantry Battalion at their headquarters at Da Gone Dine village on February 19, at 1200 hours exactly, without fail.

[Sd. illegible]
 (for) Company Commander

ORDER 77

To : Chairman
 xxxx village
 Date : 12-3-94

You are to come to #32 Infantry Battalion as soon as you receive this

letter. I am informing you that in case you fail to come, effective action will be taken.

[Sd. illegible]
Intelligence Section

ORDERS 78-88

[Following are the direct translations of some SLORC written orders sent to villages in the area of the Ye-Tavoy railway line between Mon state and Tenasserim Division, which is currently being constructed entirely by the slave labour of tens of thousands of Mon, Karen, Tavoyan and Burman villagers. The work has been ongoing since late 1993, and similar orders are still being issued now. We would like to thank those who provided this set to us, though these people cannot be named].

ORDER 78

Stamp : Frontline #3 Company
 #61 Light Infantry Battalion
Date : 1-12-93
To : Chairman X Village

Chairman:

We need 50 government servants to build along the railway line. Therefore send 50 government servants right away, each with a machete, and 10 tree-cutting [2-man] saws. Send the men with supplies for 7 days to Bauk Pin Gwin Village right away.

Send them tonight or tomorrow morning at 0600 hours without fail Chairman, come along and see me, I hereby inform you.

[Sd. illegible]
Company Commander
#3 Company
#61 Light Infantry Battalion

[Note: "government servants" is the direct translation of an expression often used by SLORC officers to refer to porters in written orders. Between themselves, they often refer to porters as "ghosts". This written order shows that they also use "government servants" to refer to many forms of village slave labour].

ORDER 79

[The original of this order is 2 pages long and was apparently sent to many villages throughout Ye Township].

SECRET

URGENT

Township LORC group

Mon State - Ye Township

Letter #100/2-10/TLORC(Ye)

Date 1994 January 11

To : Chairmen
All Ward/Village LORC groups
Ye Township

Subject : For all villages to cooperate to build the Ye-Tavoy railway line

1) The project of building the Ye-Tavoy railway line [Ye - ?? Kwin Lam Bai] we're going to implement as described below.

a) Worksite #1 (between Chaim Taung and Kalaw)

No.	Village	Deadline to send the labour to the specified place	[Army] Camp to report to
1)	Chaung Taung	14-1-94	Chaung Taung
2)	Nit Kayin	14-1-94	"
3)	Kaw Dut	14-1-94	"
4)	Hla Mine	14-1-94	Kalaw Gyi

b) Worksite #2 (between Kalaw and Ko Mine)

No.	Village	Deadline to send the labour to the specified place	[Army] Camp to report to
1)	Ha Ngan	14-1-94	Kalaw Gyi
2)	Kalaw Gyi	14-1-94	"
3)	Maw Kanet	14-1-94	"
4)	Taung Bone	14-1-94	"
5)	Ayut Taung	14-1-94	"
6)	Thaung Pyin	14-1-94	Ko Mine
7)	An Din	14-1-94	Ko Mine
8)	Thingan Kyun	14-1-94	"
9)	Abaw	14-1-94	"

c) Worksite #3 (between Ko Mine and Seneh Mine)

No.	Village	Deadline to send the labour to the specified place	[Army] Camp to report to
1)	Zee Pyu Thaung	14-1-94	Ko Mine
2)	Ee Sin	14-1-94	"
3)	Ko Mine	14-1-94	"
4)	Galah Gote	14-1-94	"
5)	Du Myaw	14-1-94	"
6)	Du Yah	14-1-94	"
7)	Kaw Line	14-1-94	"
8)	Thee Ree Ma La	14-1-94	"
9)	Thee Ree Nan Da	14-1-94	"

d) Worksite #4 (Bauk Pin Gwin)

No.	Village	Deadline to send the labour to the specified place	[Army] Camp to report to
1)	Thee Ree Kay Ma	We are going to inform you of your worksite and deadline again [i.e. later]	
2)	Thee Ree Say Ya		
3)	Yan Gyi Aung		
4)	Aung Minga La		

- 5) Aung Thu Ka
- 6) Aung Myitta
- 7) Kaw Hsa

2) We hereby inform you, the people of the wards and villages, to go to the worksite with all the tools you will need. Do it without fail, as has already been arranged (Without Fail).

Note: We have already arranged for train transportation from the villages along the railway route on 13-1-94. Therefore contact the authorities who are responsible for you.

[Sd. illegible]

Chairman

(U Soe Win)

Copies to - Chairman, State LORC group, Moulmein Township
 - Chairman, District LORC group, Moulmein Township
 - Commander Group, Military Command
 - Battalion Commanders, #61, 106, & 343 Battalions, Ye Township
 - Office Copy

[Note: The reason this is so "Secret" is that it is ordering slave labour from 29 different villages, while the SLORC claims internationally that all the workers are paid volunteers. Under Worksite #2, the first army camp listed is spelt slightly differently than Kalaw Gyi is spelt under Worksite #1, more like "Kalaw a'Gyi". This is probably a mistake by a semi-illiterate SLORC official. The place names "Ko Mine" and "Seneh Mine" actually mean "Nine-Mile" and "Twelve-Mile" respectively. The Note at the end about arranged transportation means the villagers should report to certain sites along the line on 13 January, and they will be transported to their labour site; they should therefore notify the authorities of when and where they'll be arriving].

ORDER 80

Stamp : #343 Light Infantry Battalion
 Intelligence
 Date : 13-1-94
 To : Chairman
 X Village
 Subject : Informing you about labour for the railway line

X Village must take responsibility for the railway line between Bauk Pin Gwin and Ma Lweh Taung Gya. The date to start work will be after the 20th. We will inform you of the exact location again [i.e. later]. We hereby inform you to contact the camp on the 18th and gather the villagers.

Friendly and Respectfully,

[Sd. illegible]
Intelligence Officer
#343 Light Infantry Battalion

ORDER 81

To : Chairman
X Village
Y Village tract
Subject : Informing you to be involved in railway labour

X Village, you are responsible for the railway line between Bauk Pin Gwin and Taung Gya. You must start working on 31-1-94. Z chairman and village head, report to A Army Camp on 30-1-94 to discuss this. We have hereby informed you.

[Sd. illegible]
Intelligence Officer

ORDER 82

To : X (chairman)
Y village tract
Date : 28-2-94
Subject : To come and meet the column commander

All the Village LORC chairmen of all the villages in the village tract, we inform you to come to the column office on 2-3-94 with U Z to have a discussion about labour. Come without fail, we hereby inform you.

[Sd. illegible]
Intelligence Officer
#343 Light Infantry Battalion
Location: B Camp

ORDER 83

Stamp : #343 Light Infantry Battalion
#4 Company
Date : 17/3/94
To : X, 17-3-94, Chairman, Y Village

Dear Village Head: The part of the railway which your villagers are responsible for is already finished. Therefore, come and give the money for the labour that we hired. As soon as you receive this letter, come to the worksite or to Selay-Mine [Fourteen-Mile] camp.

If you can't come, send another of the village heads as soon as possible without fail. And Z, send him as well.

If you fail for any reason it will be your responsibility.

Yours,

[Sd. illegible]

Company Commander

#4 Company

#343 Light Infantry Battalion

[Note: We had no chance to discuss this order with the villagers who received it, so it has a few possible meanings: a) the villagers have finished their slave labour assignment, but the military is still extorting more money from them for the labour that was theoretically "hired" to help them (for example, villagers have often been forced to pay to "hire" the bulldozers on site to 'help' them when their slave labour assignment is impossible to do with manual labour); b) The villagers' labour assignment was finished by slaves from other villages before they got there, and the military is using this as an excuse to demand money for its generosity in not forcing the villagers to come; or c) The villagers refused to go for labour so the military demanded cash instead, and the villagers haven't paid yet (meanwhile, the military would simply have obtained the required slave labour from some other village)].

ORDER 84

Stamp : #343 Light Infantry Battalion

#4 Company

Date : 10-3-93 [sic: should be 94]

To : Chairman, X Village

As soon as you receive this letter, Y village head, send the money to pay for labour and come to see me.

We've finished working, therefore if you can't find me at the worksite come see me at Selay-Mine [14-Mile] camp. Come as soon as possible.

Absolutely do not fail. Bring Z.

[Sd. illegible]

Company Commander

#4 Company

#343 Light Infantry Battalion

[Note: The date on this order should definitely say 94 and not 93, because the labour on the railway had not even begun in March 1993.]

ORDER 85

Stamp : #409 Light Infantry Battalion
 Column 1 Headquarters
 Date : 26-12-93
 To : Chairman, X Village
 Subject : Asking 3 big baskets of rice to feed the government servants

Regarding the above subject, we are asking you to bring 3 big baskets of rice to feed the government servants of the LIB #409 Column. As soon as you get this letter come and bring it to X Village, as soon as possible.

[Sd. illegible, 26/12]

Column Commander

#409 LIB

Along with this letter, bring the rice, (for)

10 viss [16 kg.] of dried fish,

10 viss of fishpaste, and fresh living fish

[Stamp:] Intelligence Officer

#409 Light Infantry Battalion

[Note: In this case "government servants" means porters. Not only does the army not pay its slave civilian porters, it doesn't even feed them - in this case it is stealing the food for them from local villages. The fish and fishpaste the officer added to the list as an afterthought will not be for the porters, but for the soldiers].

ORDER 86

Stamp : #409 Light Infantry Battalion
 Column 2 Headquarters
 Date : 24-2-94
 To : Village LORC chairman, X Village
 Date 24-2-94

We hereby inform you to come see the column commander as soon as you receive this letter. If you fail for any reason it will be your responsibility, we inform you.

If you are absent, a bullet will come to you.

[Sd. illegible]

(for) Column 2, Column Commander

ORDER 87

Stamp : Light Infantry Battalion # X
 Intelligence Branch
 To : Mr Y

We are detaining Z's wife, his younger brother and the head of the village from A Village. So in return for their lives, we know Mr Y has one AK-47 rifle and one Icom walkie-talkie. If you send them within 2 days along with one villager, we'll give you a guarantee for their lives and we won't arrest you. After 2 days has expired, we cannot guarantee their lives. You should handle this the same way as previously with Infantry Battalion # B, and we will help you.

(Sd. illegible)

Column Commander

X Light Infantry Battn.

C Outpost

ORDER 88

To : Mr X (Y Village) (one gun and one Icom walkie-talkie)
 Mr Z (A Village) (one gun and one walkie-talkie)
 Mr B (C Village)

We have sent letter to the above people, the headmen and villagers to inform them of our order.

Some members of the village defence group and other people from D Village area must hand over their guns and walkie-talkies to the column commander. If they hand over their guns and walkie-talkies, we [the column commander and strategic command commander] will take responsibility for the detained people. If they run away instead, we won't take responsibility for the detained families or the villagers.

At the moment, we are communicating with Mr E Village for the same report to this unit.

Stamp:

(Sd. illegible)

Light Infantry Battalion #F

Column Commander

Intelligence Branch

G Outpost

BRIEF REPORT ON SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

- I. United Nations and Human Rights situation in Burma
- II. Burma and International Human Rights Conventions
- III. Human Rights Abuses
 - 3.1. Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Execution
 - 3.2. Arbitrary Arrest and Detention
 - 3.3. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment
 - 3.4. Freedom of Expression and Opinion
 - 3.5. The Right to Organize
 - 3.6. Peaceful Assembly
 - 3.7. Fair Trial
 - 3.8. Forced Labour
 - 3.8.1. Forced Labour in Areas of non-Burman Ethnic Nationalities
 - 3.8.2. Forced Labour in Development and Other Projects
 - 3.9. Forced Relocation
 - 3.10. Mass Exodus and the Refugee Crisis
 - 3.10.1. Refugees in Thai-Burma border
 - 3.10.2. Refugees in India-Burma border
 - 3.11. Civil war Spilling over Thailand and Border Tension
 - 3.12. Violation of Humanitarian Law
 - 3.13. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- IV. The Restoration of Democracy in the Light of the 1990 Election
- V. Different Perspective on Human Rights
- VI. Vision on Human Rights Protection in Future Federal Democratic Burma

(I) UNITED NATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN BURMA

In the last six years, a broad international consensus has emerged that State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) is one of the most serious human rights abusers in the world. Successive annual resolutions of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) and the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, have been increasingly critical of SLORC. The UNCHR Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities has also been extremely critical of the SLORC's oppression of ethnic minorities.

The 1994 UNCHR resolution, unanimously adopted on 4 March, 1994, goes well beyond previous years' resolutions in its condemnation of SLORC. The UNCHR expressed its "grave concern" at the violations of human rights in Myanmar, "in particular the practice of torture, summary and arbitrary executions, forced labour, including forced portering for the military, abuse

of women, politically motivated arrests and detention, forced displacement of population, the existence of important restrictions on the exercise of fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression and association, and the imposition of oppressive measures directed, in particular, at minority groups."

The resolution made 23 recommendations including to accelerate the process of transition to democracy in particular through the transfer of power to democratically-elected representatives, the release of all political prisoners (including Aung San Suu Kyi), the restoration of basic human rights, protection of minority rights, the re-establishment of rule of law and fair trials, investigation of human rights abuses committed by the military and improvement in the condition of the country's jails. The UNCHR resolution also extended for one year the mandate of the Special Rapporteur to continue direct contact with the Government and people of Myanmar and urged the government to cooperate with him.

(II) BURMA AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENANTS

Apart from Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Political Rights of Women, Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Slavery Convention of 1926 and its amendments, Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of others, Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No.29) of the ILO and the freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No.87) of the ILO, Burma hasn't signed other important International Human Rights Conventions

(III) HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

Burma is still remaining in the serious condition of human rights situation despite its cosmetic gesture to respond to international criticism. Over the past year or more, pressure from the international community has made an impact on the Burmese ruling military regime. While, SLORC has, on the other hand, rejected criticism by the United Nations, by various governments, it has also taken some limited steps to try to defuse and deflect such criticism. But these steps have not fundamentally undermined SLORC's harsh military rule or ended the pattern of grave, widespread human rights abuses.

3.1. Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Execution

In the regions of non-Burman ethnic nationalities where ethnic resistance movement against the military regime are active, many of killings committed by SLORC's army are summary executions of ethnic villagers who are accused of being the members of armed ethnic opposition groups or collabo-

rating with them. These are also many cases where villagers were killed by unprovoked open fire in the course of SLORC's army's attempt to capture civilians for the purpose of military portage or other forced labour. Porters were inhumanely treated by the SLORC's army and killed by open fire when they tried to escape from the military column. They were often used as human mines-sweepers and as shields in combat. When porters are ill or exhausted because of heavy burden and unable to keep up with march, they were executed or abandoned without food or medical care. Many villagers are hiding in the jungle in order to avoid SLORC's army's forced relocation scheme and being put into concentration camps. These hidden villages are regarded by SLORC as rebel villages and there are cases of firing to villagers when they were faced with SLORC's army.

Prisons in Burma are facing the lack of proper food, water, sanitation and medical treatment. Many political prisoners were dead in custody because of torture or contagious diseases like malaria and dysentery. U Zawtika (a famous Buddhist monk and democracy activist), Bo Set Yaung, 80 (one of the Thirty Comrades), U Khin Maung Myint, 63 (Chairman of the Peoples' Progressive Party), U Maung Ko, 52 (Senior member of the National League for Democracy and a labour leader), Maung Thaw Ka, 65 (an Executive Committee member and famous author and satirist), Win Zaw (a writer and democracy activist), U Nyo Win, 60 (Secretary General of the Peoples' Progressive Party), U Tha Htun, 82 (a member of the Arakan League for Democracy and a distinguished historian), U Tin Maung Win, 50 (elected MP of the NLD), Ko Kyaw Win, 30 (a tutor and political activist), U Soe Win, 60 (Democracy Activist), Ko Than Win (an NLD member from Maubin), U David, 56 (a Karen political activist), U Aye Lwin, 38 (a pro-democracy activist), Mahammed Ilyas, 60 (Burmese Muslim and local secretary of the NLD), Maung Ein Ko, 31 (a leader of the Workers College Union), Ko Kyaw Myo Thant, 25 (an active member of the Democratic Party for New Society), Ko Soe Htay, 19 (an active NLD member), Ko Kyaw Soe, 22, Ko Zaw Win Htun, 21, Ko Nay Win Aung, 22, Ko Har Nit, 22, and Ko Aung Moe, 23 (all are student activists) were dead in custody.

3.2. Arbitrary Arrest and Detention

Some 2,000 prisoners detained under SLORC's emergency regulations have reportedly been released since April 1992, but it was not clear that the majority had been detained on political charges nor could most of the releases be verified. As their names have not been published, precise estimates are impossible.

Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of 1991 Nobel Peace Prize has began her sixth year of house arrest. Although she was allowed to meet American Congressman Bill Richardson and U Yaewata Dhama, reverend Buddhist monk from U.K as her first non-family member and had two meeting with leading members of SLORC in September and October 1994, there is no sign for her release and her political role in the future politics of Burma.

Aung San Suu Kyi has been held under a 1975 law for "Safeguarding the State from Dangerous Subversive Elements," which seeks to prevent Acts and deeds endangering the sovereignty and security of the state. In August 1991, the military government amended this law to extend the permissible time period for detention without charge or trial to a maximum of five years, the detention order to be renewed after each year. Previously the limit for detention without trial was three years, the detention order to be renewed every six months. The government retroactively applied the amended law to Aung San Suu Kyi. As a result, she is now being held under a provision that did not exist in July 1989 when she was first placed under house arrest. In February 1994, Aung San Suu Kyi was informed that the government has extended for another year which is beyond even the five-year limit on detention provided by the government's August 1991 amendment. In February, 1994, the SLORC authorities, for the first time announced that the initial year of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest had been pursuant to a decision of the previously unknown "Central Body" and that the 5 year clock began to run only after that time.

Besides herself, hundred of political prisoners remain in detention, including students, monks, National League for Democracy (NLD) members and at least 35 or 40 members of the parliament elected in May 1990. On 4 February, 28 political prisoners were released including a leading pro-democracy activist, Dr. Aung Khin Sint and one of the country's most popular poets, Tin Moe, who was arrested in 1989 and Win Tin, Central Executive Committee member of the NLD. But diplomats estimate there are between 1,000-3,000 dissidents still in jail. Though the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has reached agreement to organise training programmes for the Burmese military, ICRC has no access to prisoners and is unable to provide their usual range of humanitarian services. According to the first hand interviews with the ex-prisoners, various forms of physical and psychological torture are routinely practised in the Burmese prisons.

Severe restrictions on freedom of the press, assembly and association and harsh sentences to political dissidents have created an overall climate of fear and intimidation. In the course of the year scores of political activists were detained for low-level political protests, such as handing out opposition flyers or attempting to organise demonstrations. Such detentions often coincided with various political anniversaries. For example, in July a group of high school students was detained in Rangoon for participating in protest activities to mark the anniversary of Ne Win's destruction of the Rangoon University Student Union building. U Khin Maung Swe (NLD), U Sein Hla Oo (NLD), Dr. Khin Zaw Win (Dentist, former UNICEF worker), Daw San San Nwe (NLD) and Ma Myat Mo Mo Tun (daughter of Daw San San Nwe) were arrested in July 1994 on charges of having links with rebel groups and giving false, anti-government information to foreign media and diplomats, and providing human rights information to UN Human Rights Special Rapporteur Professor Yozo Yokota. According to information that was obtained from diplomatic sources, it was known that on October 6, a civil court at Insein Jail in Rangoon passed 15 years sentence to Dr. Khin Zaw Win, 10

years sentence to Daw San San Nwe, 7 years sentence to U Sein Hla Oo, 7 years sentence to U Khin Maung Swe and 7 years sentence to Mo Mo Htun.

3.3. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment

Military intelligence, Police and Burmese army continue to torture political prisoners in detention centres or subjected them to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment. Such treatment are routinely practiced in the course of interrogation and forced the detainees to make confession or expose information. Amnesty International has concluded that the problem of torture in Burma is pervasive, long term and endemic. Details of torture techniques are well documented by human rights organisation. These include beatings of prisoners severe enough to cause permanent injury, shackling, cigarette burns, electric shocks to the genitals and else where, suffocation, stabbing, rubbing of salt and chemicals in open wounds, forcing to stand in abnormal position for long hour, food and sleep deprivation, solitary confinement and psychological torture including threats of death.

There were cases of torture and ill treatment to porters by the SLORC's army including gang rape mostly to ethnic women serving as porters.

3.4. Freedom of Expression and Opinion

There is no freedom of expression and opinion in Burma. Existing laws require all publications, movie scripts and even song lyrics to be reviewed by government censorship boards. These boards invariably block works written in minority languages. Fear prevents newspapers other than the government-controlled *New Light of Myanmar* and army journals from being published.

Afraid of government informers, private citizens are reluctant to express opinions. Burmese found talking to foreigners are often arrested or disappeared.

These prevailing atmosphere were observed by the Special Rapporteur in his 1993 and 1994 reports.

3.5. The Right to Organize

Although Myanmar is a signatory to ILO Convention NO.87, its workers do not have the right to organize or form free trade unions, nor do they have the right to strike.

3.6. Peaceful Assembly

Martial Law announcement 2/88, which prohibits the outdoor assembly of five or more people, remains in force. Political parties must obtain permission from the military to hold meetings, even in private. Such control discourage public demonstrations, but when they do occur, as on 10 December

1991 when Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, government troops break up the activities and make large number of arrests.

However, in January 1994, SLORC organised a series of 26 stage-managed mass rallies throughout the country which were attended by approximately 4 million people. The meetings of this government initiated group, the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), were orchestrated by government authorities. On 9 October 1993 SLORC chairman Gen Than Shwe presided over the foundation ceremony of the SLORC-sponsored USDA and the erection of its signboard. Although SLORC announced that USDA is only a social organisation and there is no political platform in its movement, people inside the country believe that in the name of USDA, SLORC is strengthening its position by grassroots mobilising to gain support for the military and military-backed political parties. SLORC forces the people to attend USDA mass rallies and to support its objectives. The people inside the country are very much aware that the purpose of USDA mass rallies is to force the people into supporting the 104 principles of constitutional drafting adopted at the National Convention. Each family was forced to send one family member to that mass rally, and if he was absent, there was a fine ranging from 200-1,500 kyats. Civil servants and students were also forced to attend and support SLORC's objectives by threatening dismissals from jobs and schools, or failure of examinations in cases of absence.

3.7. Fair Trial

Throughout 1994, the SLORC continue to rule by decree and was not bound by any constitutional provisions guaranteeing fair public trials or any other rights. Although remnants of the British-era legal system were formally in place, the court system and its operation remained seriously flawed. Many observers believe there has been an improvement in judicial procedures, at least in the handling of nonpolitical cases. But ongoing unprofessional behaviour by some court officials, pervasive bribe taking, the misuse of overly broad laws, and the manipulation of the courts for political ends continued to deprive the country of the right to a fair trial and rule of law. The judiciary is not independent of executive.

3.8. Forced Labour

3.8.1. Forced Labour in Areas of non-Burman Ethnic Nationalities

Although there were no major fighting along the border before December 1994 when SLORC started military offensive to Manerplaw and Dawn Gwin, refugees continues to stream into Thailand fleeing from forced relocation, forced labour and forced conscription inside Burma. In many cases, human rights violations by military troops take place during routine army patrols. Local people of the entire village populations, both men and women

are forced to carry weapons, ammunitions and supplies by Burmese military under threat of beating, drowning, or rape if they refuse to cooperate.

For example, during the military offensive against Khun Sa's Muang Tai Army (MTA), there were reports of raids on villages in order to seize hundreds of people to porter for Burmese military troops. In early 1994 refugees arriving in Thailand confirmed the seizure of hundreds of farmers from the Kengtung area of Shan state and in May some 1,200 porters were reported to be accompanying 7,000 military troops fighting the MTA. Over five hundred men in the town of Tachilek in Shan state are reported to have been rounded up as porters for the soldiers fighting the MTA during one five day period alone. A porter who escaped with fifteen others confirmed that many civilians forced to act as porters had been killed in the course of the fighting against the MTA.

Along with forced labour, land confiscation is a major problem; SLORC is confiscating farmland everywhere, then using it to set up huge army camps or military farms on which the displaced farmers are forced to do all the labour without food or payment. All products of the farm go to army. Around Keng Tung, one farmer reported that the villagers are being forced to clear-cut the forest for miles so the army can set up cash-crop butter bean plantations. Worst of all, there are kinds of projects which SLORC is presenting to the UN Development Programme (UNDP) as "community income generation" under the Border Areas Development Programme. The slave labourers are portrayed as happy villagers working for their own benefit. The UNDCP is very secretive about its specific operations in Shan State, so it is difficult to estimate the extent of their involvement with such projects. Slave labour on a "community hydro-electric power project" in Mong Kwan, which is only sending its power to army offices and selected civilians was also described by a civilian and a prisoner who were forced to work on it — both knowing that they would never receive its electricity. The UNDP has also promoted the idea of funding SLORC's local hydro schemes in Shan State.

Since December, 1994, SLORC has been launching a massive offensive against the Karen National Union (KNU) and the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF). According to interview made by ABSDF to 42 porters escaped to Paw Pa Hta Camp at the Thai-Burma border, it was known that over 10,000 civilians were forced into portering for SLORC's on-going offensive in Karen State. Most of them are from Moulmein and Mudon in Mon State, Kawkareik in Karen State and Rangoon. These porters were rounded up and arrested in the cinema halls, at the markets, in the tea-shops and while they were travelling. Of them, some were prisoners whose prison terms would be going to expire soon. From Moulmein alone, over 2,000 civilians were forced into portorage.

3.8.2. Forced Labour in Development and Other Projects

Since 1988, forced labour in development and other projects, called "voluntary labour" by the SLORC, has been systematically used across Burma on

a huge scale. Lt-Gen Khin Nyunt, Secretary 1 of the SLORC, in a speech to members of Burma's foreign service in April 1994, claimed that "voluntary labour" is done willingly by the Burmese people as a "noble act of charity" and that the Burmese attitude was different from that in West, where "labour without wage is looked upon as an act involving loss of human rights. The "willingness" of the Burmese to submit to such labour, however, is belied by the testimony of refugees. Not only are the workers forced to put in long hours for no pay, but many other experience or witness physical punishment from the soldiers overseeing the projects.

Following are examples of massive use of forced labour in development and other projects. (See attached forced labour map)

- An estimated 120,000 to 150,000 local people from that regions have already been subjected to this forced labour in the construction of 160 Km long Ye-Tavoy railway line since it began in late 1993.
- The SLORC ordered 500,000 residents in Mandalay that each family in the city must contribute at least three days a month of free labour for renovation of Mandalay moat and palace in 1994. They are forced to dredge the silt and filth from the bottom of the Royal Palace's 5-mile-long moat and hammer rocks into its banks to make the location more attractive for tourists.
- 364,224 people were forced to work for the construction of 18.14 mile rail-road from Nahtogyi-Myangyan in Dec 1992.
- Over 300,000 people were forced to work for the construction Loikaw-Aungban rail road in Dec 1992.
- 921,753 people were forced to work for the construction of Pakokku-Monywa section of the Chaung Oo-Pakokku railroad in Dec, 1993.
- 350,000 people were forced to work for the construction of Bassein airport.
- Over 85,000 people were forced to work for the construction of 30-mile long Yenangyaung-Natmauk road.

3.9. Forced Relocation

Though there is no fighting in the other areas along the border, forced relocation of the people to leave their home village and move to government designated areas, is on-going phenomenon in Burma. The scale of forced relocation and internal displacement is extremely difficult to assess accurately due to the poor communication links between large areas of the country and the outside world. 500,000-1,000,000 people are estimated to be the internally displaced civilians in Burma. Forced relocation has been an important part of Burmese military's counterinsurgency strategy for many years. The military has continued its policy of relocating villagers who could provide a support base for the ethnic armed groups. In addition to the use of forced relocation as a counterinsurgency strategy, forced relocation is in-

creasingly taking place in order to make way for the unprecedented number of government infrastructure projects currently planned or underway throughout the country. The rapid growth in the size of the army — from an estimated 170,000 in 1988 to 350-400,000 today — and its increased control of ethnic minority inhabited territory has also resulted in villages being relocated to make way for the construction of military bases, as the army seeks to extend its presence throughout the country.

Amnesty International reports that during these forced relocation operations civilians are subject to arrest, arbitrary killing, rape and other forms of torture. The UN Special Rapporteur on Burma has confirmed that he too is continuing to receive reports of killings by the military of ethnic minority civilians in the context of forced relocation. He cites as examples reports of the killing of scores of Mon villagers who resisted relocation from villages in Yebyu township, Tanassarín Division, and Thanbyuzayat township, Mon State, in February and March 1993, and the killings of Karen villagers from Nyaunglebin district, Pegu Division who also sought to resist relocation.

Forced relocation for counterinsurgency purposes is part of a strategy known as the "Four Cuts" by which ethnic minorities living in places where armed opposition groups are active are relocated into areas under government control. Generally villagers are given very little advance notice that they are to be relocated and villages are frequently destroyed or declared "free fire" zones. That means that anyone entering the zone would be regarded as a member of an opposition group and liable to be shot.

This is true of the more than 82,000 people who — in spite of a cease-fire between the SLORC and the Wa which has been in operation since 1989 — remain internally displaced in the Wa populated areas of Shan State. Meanwhile in the Kachin populated areas of northern Shan state and Kachin state itself nearly 65,000 people in SLORC-controlled parts of the territory and a further 30-40,000 in KIO-controlled territory are still living where they have been forcibly relocated or internally displaced in the course of more than three decades of fighting. Conditions in both the Wa and the Kachin areas are said to be very poor, with diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, cholera and typhoid prevalent, and where the land available for farming is for the most part unsuitable for food crops, offering only extremely low yields.

The Burmese authorities claim that ethnic minorities who have to relocate do so voluntarily, but there is considerable evidence that this is rarely the case. In Taunggyi area of Shan State, several thousand people are reported to have been forced to relocate with their land either used by the military or else sold to developers.

3.10. Mass Exodus and the Refugee Crisis

3.10.1. Refugees in Thai-Burma Border

As condition in the country continued to worsen, a vast number of Bur-

mese and ethnic groups fled to the Thai-Burma border in 1994. Not only Thailand is the host country for the Burmese refugees, but all other four neighbouring countries. At the end of 1993, there were more than 289,000 Burmese refugees in five of six countries that border Burma. That figure included 198,800 Burmese Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and 5,100 in Malaysia, an estimated 72,400 members of various ethnic minorities living in refugee camps in Thailand, 10,000 Burmese Kachin in China, approximately 1,4000 Burmese Naga in India, and nearly 2,5000 Burmese students and pro-democracy activists in exile in Thailand and India. In addition, an estimated 350,000 Burmese were living working without documentation in Thailand. The Thai government was quick to refer to the new comers as illegal immigrants but many reported fleeing forced relocation, forced labour and forced conscription. Thai policy towards refugees from Burma has significantly changed and improved its relations with the SLORC. On August 23, 1994, Lt. Gen. Sanan Khachonklam, the officer in-charge of border affairs for the supreme commander's Joint Operations Center, declared it was Thai policy for all illegal immigrants to be sent back home, whether they came for economic or political reason. Over the past year the Thai authorities have clearly demonstrated through their actions that they are anxious to prevent as far as possible further increases in the Burmese ethnic minority refugee population in Thailand. No more new refugees are allowed in Thailand and the Karen Refugee Committee has been forced to prevent refugees moving through in Thailand. They were ordered not to accept any new refugees into the camps in Thailand. For that reason, Klay Muh Hta refugee camp was established in April 1994 on the Burma side for the new comers from inside Burma. The camp has existed less than three months and already over 5,000 people have flooded into it, most coming from the Hlaing Bwe area of Pa-an District. These are not economic refugees, but villagers fleeing the terror of SLORC oppression. More of them arrive everyday at Klay Muh Hta and more such camps will probably have to be set up in the future.

Since December 1994, SLORC has been launching a massive offensive against the Karen National Union and the All Burma Students' Democratic Front. Together with full scale offensive, civilians in the area have been subjected to atrocious human rights violations...forced portorage, arbitrary arrests, torture and summary executions. As of 1 Feb 1995, (15,000) villagers fled from their home and reached along the Thai-Burma border to seek refuge.

3.10.2. Refugees in India-Burma Border

In September, it was reportedly known that some thousands of people from Burma, taking refuge in Aizal and Mizoram were arrested and handed over to Burmese (SLORC's Army) authorities over the border, who promptly jailed them. The scene was shown on India television.

The Chin are close cultural and linguistic relatives of the Mizo themselves, and the majority of those living in Mizoram where they had sought refuge

from Burma, are Chin, but there are also a number of Burmans and other ethnic nationalities from Burma that were taken in this round up and deportation. It was reportedly sudden and without warning, and it is said that many were weeping and begging to be let go, and some tried to flee, but were subsequently caught. They all had to leave homes, properties and so on that they had there, and were sent off back to Burma with nothing.

3.11. Civil War Spilling over Thailand and Border Tension

Since the SLORC army launched offensive to Manerplaw (H.Q of the Karen National Union), Dawn Gwin (H.Q of the ABSDF) and Kawmoora (a KNU Base near Thai border town Maesot) in December 1994, it has fired hundreds of shells into Thai territory as it presses ahead its campaign against Karen and pro-democracy students.

On 8 February at night, SLORC troops and forces from Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), a Karen splinter group allied with SLORC, crossed the Salween river and took 400 sacks of rice provided for the Karen refugees near Pu Kwe Hta area in Mae Hong Son. DKBA troops asked the Karen refugees in the area to join them while SLORC troops ordered all the refugees to go back to Burma. The refugees have been forced to go back to Burma by SLORC troops at gun point. On 9 February at about 9 p.m., 8 DKBA soldiers armed with automatic rifles and M79 grenade launchers crossed into Thailand, entered Mae La Refugee camp in Me Ram Mat district of Tak province and raided Padoh Mhan Yin Sein's house. He is a Buddhist Central Committee member of KNU and Chairman of Pa-an district and Jeffer Win, Pa-an district judge and his wife Saw Aung Maw Aye were arrested together with him. Since the fall of Manerplaw and Dawn Gwin, DKBA/SLORC troops very often cross into Thailand and search for pro-democracy Burmese students and KNU on the Thai side of the border.

After that incidence, Burmese Ambassador U Tin Win was summoned to Foreign Ministry and told by acting Minister Surin Phitsuwan that the government considers the kidnapping "unacceptable" and a violation of Thai sovereignty. He said the government considers the Burmese violation of Thai sovereignty as "a very serious action". Over the past week, authorities in Bangkok and Rangoon have exchanged about 20 letters on the border situation, with Thailand protesting the incursions by Burmese troops and the arrival of over 10,000 Karen refugees who fled across the border after the Burmese captured KNU headquarters at Manerplaw. After the border incursions in Mae Hong Son, Thai army has reinforced units along the border.

3.12. Violation of Humanitarian Law

SLORC expanded military control in the territories of non-Burman ethnic groups, some of which have been fighting Rangoon since independence. Despite Burma's recent accession to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, viola-

tion of humanitarian law are severe and widespread, in particular arbitrary killings of civilians; torture; mass rape; pillaging; forcible relocation; forced labor; hostage taking, *inter alia* for use as "human shields," and deprivation of food and water.

The most significant example of violation of humanitarian law is the SLORC's army attack to Halockani camp, a Mon refugee camp on the border in Kanchanaburi district of Thailand. About 6,000 refugees from Halockni refugee camp fled to the Thai side after the part of their camp was attacked by the Burmese military on July 21, 1994. About 360 Burmese troops from Infantry battalions No. 62 which is stationed at nearby Three Pagoda Pass entered and occupied the western section of the refugee camp. Fifty refugees were used as a human shields and forced at gun point to walk ahead of the troops in proceeding to main refugee camp. On the way to main camp, they were prevented by the Mon armed forces and forced to retreat. The Burmese troops took sixteen Mon refugee men as prisoners on the way back to Burma. Before they left the refugee camp, they loot the valuables and then burnt down the houses. The attack on the Mon refugee camp is the violation to the Geneva Convention of 12 August, 1949. Although Mon refugees were allowed to take shelter near the Thai border check-point after the raid, they have been repatriated back to their old camp where their lives are in great danger by the Burmese army. This was the second time of repatriation by the Thai authorities to Mon refugees. The first time in early 1993 these Mon refugee were sent back to Burma side though their great concern of their safety once they are in Burma side. Ironically, after 24-hour of raid, Burmese Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw told the journalists in Bangkok, while he was attending a two-day Association of Southeast Asian Nations meetings that he did not believe Burma had a human rights problem.

3.13. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The vast majority of Burmese people are denied the basic rights to economic, social and political development. The economy in present day Burma, branded as "market-orientated economy" by the junta, is in fact a "military-monopolised command economy". Through the SLORC-controlled Union of Myanmar Holding Company Limited (MHC), profits from domestic economic enterprises and international joint ventures are channelled to the SLORC generals and retired officers. Capitalisation for MHC came from the state but its benefit goes only to them. As a result, as the economy is not based on the concepts of fundamental democratic rights and even the most basic human rights, the country has been plunged into an unyielding and unending circle of economic crises under this suppressive system of rule. Economic activities inside Burma reveal that the official figures of the regime are fictitious, and not indicative of real economic development but rather of excessive consumption (timber, oil & gas, fish, and precious stones). No productive capacity is being built. The lack of confidence in SLORC's economic policies is also evident in the increasing demand for gold, precious

stones and real estate.

More than 50% of all government spending goes to the military. Military overspending and centralisation, combined with incompetence and corruption, have weakened the Burmese economy to the point that most social services have collapsed. According to the 1992 Index on human misery, Burma has one of the worst level of human suffering in the world, with 16.7 million of its estimated 41.7 million population living below the poverty line. It is clear that military elite and their relatives can benefit from partially open economic policy of the SLORC.

In ethnic minority area, SLORC's army practice of forced relocation of villages, forced labour, pillaging, extortion and gang rape is destroying the traditional social and economic structures. In many areas, the village is no longer a viable unit, even if it has not been forcibly relocated. People has to hide out in the jungle, flee to the towns or seek refuge in neighbouring countries. This is the root cause of the influx of refugees even in the time of no major offensive and related bad consequences such like women trafficking and child prostitution.

(IV) THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN THE LIGHT OF THE 1990 ELECTION

The electoral process initiated in Burma by the general elections of 27 May 1990 has not reached its conclusion and that the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), has not still implemented its commitments to take all the necessary steps towards in the light of those elections. Instead, SLORC has taken several suppressive measures to cripple the government-elect, a body of representatives authorised by general elections in 1990 under the SLORC-created Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law to form a governing legislature. The 89th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) recently noted that SLORC was guilty of the world's most serious human rights violations against parliamentarians.

At the moment, as many as 35 elected representatives remain in detention together with approximately 1,000-3,000 political prisoners, including leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD). In addition, SLORC's Election Commission has disqualified more than 100 elected members of parliament, primarily from the NLD in pursuance of Order 4/91 defining offenses relating to law and order and moral turpitude, and Law 10/91 which amends the Pyithu Hluttaw election law, both enacted on 10 July 1991 by SLORC with retroactive effect to 31 May 1989. Imprisoned elected MP subjected torture and severe ill treatment. U Tin Maung Win, elected MP of the NLD and Fazal Ahmed from NLD (Arakan State) were dead in custody. U Win Ko, NLD MP from Ye U constituency and U Hla Pe, NLD MP from Pyawbwe constituency were assassinated in 1993.

Three months after the election, SLORC unilaterally announced Declaration 1/90 that said that "Under the present circumstances, the representa-

tives elected by the people are those who have the responsibility to draw up the constitution of the future democratic state." Since then, top SLORC officials have repeatedly emphasised that there will be no transfer of power without a constitution in place and started sponsoring National Convention on Jan 9, 1993. The people of Burma viewed it as a sham process which is totally against the will of the people that had expressed in 1990 election. SLORC-led efforts to write a new constitution for Burma are fundamentally illegitimate on three levels. (1) SLORC lacks the legitimate authority to call a constitutional convention (or) to prescribe the procedures to be followed in such a convention (2) The procedures followed before and during the National Convention preclude any effective constitutional dialogue. (3) The political structures prescribed in the SLORC constitution would entrenched the military's power, minimise democratic inputs, and exacerbate ethnic tensions in Burma. These points are addressed independently below.

First, the SLORC's call for National Convention is an illegitimate exercise of power. The SLORC did not allow the elected representatives of May 1990 election to convene Pyithu Hluttaw (Parliament) as mandated by the Election Law. Under the Notification 1/90, the newly-elected representatives were to form a new assembly responsible for drafting a new constitution.

Although, 1/90 seemingly recognised that only duly elected representatives have constitution making authority, the SLORC ordered National Convention in which it prescribe the rules that were to guide the selection of delegates, procedures and objectives. Lacking a popular mandate, the SLORC has no authority to convene an assembly to draw up a new national constitution. The people of Burma have entrusted only the Pyithu Hluttaw with sovereign power.

Second, SLORC order No. 13/92 formed the National Convention Convening Commission. The order also laid down the objectives of the national convention and prescribed the methods for selection of candidates. The vast majority of chosen delegates were hand-picked by the SLORC. Of the 702 delegates originally in attendance at the convention in Jan 1993, only 156 were elected representatives. Remarkably, of these, only 90 were from the NLD which had won over 80% of the seats in parliament.

The SLORC also issued the "National Convention Procedural Rules." According to this, delegates are required to submit for pre-approval all statements to be made at the preliminary session. The substantive content of statements that are denied approval cannot be discussed. Discussion at the convention is restricted to the six topics dictated by the SLORC.

In addition, the rules forbid "walkouts", individually or in groups, and any other show of protest, distributing leaflets, wearing badges, bringing in papers to the convention which have not been approved by the National Convention Convening Committee, and lobbying or influencing other representatives. Delegates have to live in the compound where convention is being held. They are not totally free to meet with other

delegates inside the compound and cannot leave the compound without authorisation. While delegates are staying in dormitories, their activities are closely watched by military intelligence. Delegates are not allowed to meet people from their respective constituencies to listen to the public opinion regarding the future constitution of Burma.

In Feb 1993, 14 people were arrested for distributing pamphlet disparaging the national convention. Dr. Aung Khin Sint, a convention delegate from NLD, was arrested and sentenced to 20 years in prison for writing leaflets critical of junta's role in convention; his assistant received more than 30 years for distributing leaflets. Dr. Aung Khin Sint was released recently because of the mounting international concerns.

Within this restrained environment, however, opposition view to SLORC's proposal were expressed by delegates from NLD and Shan State National League for Democracy (SNLD). SNLD openly voiced its preference for parliamentary system since that system "is better than the chief executive becoming a dictator." SNLD and NLD insisted that only elected representatives should exercise three power of government — judicial, legislative and executive. These views were totally ignored by the Panel of Chairmen. After that, current NLD Chairman U Aung Shwe was warned by Gen. Myo Nyunt, Chairman of the National Convention Convening Committee that "the consequence will be serious if the NLD did not support SLORC proposals." The constitution produced by this national convention will be written according to the rules set out by the SLORC and will be subject to SLORC approval.

Finally, the constitutional principles promoted by the SLORC would entrench the military's political power, minimise the influence of the electorate on national politics, and codify ethnic inequalities. One provision grants the military to take 25% of seats in both houses of bicameral parliament. Another grants Commander in Chief to exercise emergency powers during crises without taking approval of parliament and yet another institutes a presidential rather than parliamentary system. The president was to be elected by an electoral college consisting of three groups; members of parliament from the house equally representing States and Divisions; members of parliament from the house based on population; and Defense Service members nominated by the Commander in Chief to the two chambers of parliament. Among the presidential qualifications specified was experience in military. Many of the administrative positions at the regions, states and self-administered areas would be taken by Tatmadaw member representatives appointed by the Commander in Chief.

The SLORC constitution also fails to divide political power equally among ethnic groups in Burma. The SLORC contend that representation will be divided equally among the seven states and seven regions. However, equating the states and regions is misleading. The States are largely composed of non-Burman while the regions are composed of Burman. The SLORC constitution would equate the level of representation of Burma

with the level of representation afforded to all ethnic nationalities combined.

In conclusion, the current national convention process in Burma is far from contemporary notions of constitution making that include popular sovereignty, representative government, and popular participation. With regard to the national convention, previous Commission on Human Rights and General Assembly resolutions on Burma have limited their human rights criticism to its internal aims and procedures, assigning its overall structure and function to a "political" realm purportedly outside the scope of human rights discourse. Since the national convention was designed by the military to retain and legitimise its political power, this approach directly conflicts with the spirit of the resolutions, which call for the restoration of democracy in the light of the popular will expressed in the 1990 elections. Apparently, a number of members previously felt that flawed though it might be, the national convention offered some hope of democratisation in Burma and it should be given chance. More than two years along, however, this hope has died, now military has made it clear that within the national convention, as elsewhere, no views other than its own will be accepted.

As such, national convention cannot be regarded as a means aimed at establish a democratic state. Indeed, in key moves over the past year, the military leaders have incorporated into the Convention's "fundamental principles", the objective of maintaining a leading political role for the armed forces. The result is contrary to the popular will expressed in the 1990 elections and as such, thwarts the fulfillment of the principle recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government".

(V) DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Most of the rulers of Asian Countries interpret human rights as a Western concept which is alien to Asian culture. Similarly, General Khin Nyunt, Secretary-1 of the SLORC said, "Human Rights activities in Myanmar are undertaken openly and sincerely with the aim of bringing about development of all the fraternal national races, and enabling the people from all strata and classes to share the fruits equally. If one makes an in-depth study of the so-called "human rights" in some western nations, one will find that they are meant ultimately for the elite, the privileged and the ruling class. Myanmar ensure human rights with Myanmar's traditional values, customs and religion. The cultural values and way of life of Eastern nations are different from those of Western nations. In fact, they are totally different. It must be understood that "East is East and West is West."

Burmese people, the majority of whom are Buddhists, cannot agree with the SLORC's interpretation of human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, lan-

guage or religion. The purpose of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is development of freedom, equality, dignity, justice, rights and the spirit of brotherhood in the world. These are in complete accord with Buddhist principles, and we have to say that these are nothing new to Buddhism. Human rights ideals in Buddhism emerge from two basic assumptions: philosophical and ethical. In fact, according to the Buddhist view, human beings are born with complete freedom and responsibility. They are subject only to non-deterministic causal laws, but not being the creation of a Creator, their destinies are therefore in their own hands.

The Dhamma taught by the Buddha has various implications and meanings. It includes the philosophical and ethical doctrines which consider moral principles, rights and duties. The Buddha did not teach politics, but taught domestic and social ethics, which offered individuals the opportunity to acquire status in society regardless of caste, class or gender without discrimination between householders or ordained monks. If we study the Buddha Dhamma thoroughly, we see that the Dhamma means the Universal Law which is applicable to all mankind.

At this point, we would like to offer some quotations from the writings of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Noble Peace Prize Laureate of 1991. She said, "it was predictable that as soon as the issue of human rights became the integral part of the movement for democracy, the official media would start ridiculing and condemning the whole concept of human rights, dubbing it as a Western artifact alien to traditional values. It was also ironic. Buddhism, foundation of traditional Burmese Culture, places the greatest value on man who alone of all beings can achieve the supreme state of Buddhahood. Each man has in him the potential to realise the truth through his own will and endeavour, and to help other to realise it. Human life therefore is infinitely precious." A wholistic, integrated approach to human rights would demand urgent and equal attention to economic and social rights, civil and political rights, the rights of ethnic minorities and indigenous communities, women rights and rights of children.

(VI) VISION ON HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION IN FUTURE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC BURMA

In the future Federal Democratic Burma, the human rights of people must be protected by law enshrined in the constitution. In the draft constitution drawn up by the Democratic Alliance of Burma, the human rights of the people is enshrined Chapter 2 "Fundamental Rights". Article (31) said "any human rights victim must have the right to get the protection of the Human Rights Commission". Article (32) said "(a) Human Rights Commission must be formed with seven members nominated by the Prime Minister and approved by the Pyidaungsu-Hluttaw (House of Nationalities). (B) Any human rights victim has the right to submit written allegations to the Human Rights Commission. After proper investigation on the allegations has been

made by the commission, it has to make necessary arrangements or instructions so that victim can enjoy compensation and medical treatment, and legal action can be taken by courts against human rights violators. (c) the Human Rights Commission must submit a report on its works to the Pyidaungsu-Hluttaw. (d) the Responsibilities of the Human Rights Commission must be promulgated by the Pyidaungsu-Hluttaw, not in contradiction with this constitution.

Prepared by the All Burma Students' Democratic Front for the NCGUB Delegation to the 51st Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights (20 Feb, 1995)

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

All Burma Students' Democratic Front, Human Rights Report (various years).

Amnesty International, Myanmar: Amnesty International Briefing (New York: Amnesty International, AI Index 16/08/90).

ibid., "Myanmar: Human Rights Developments July to December 1993", (AI Index 16/03/94), January 1994.

ibid., "Myanmar: Human Rights Still Denied", (AI Index 16/18/94), November 1994.

ibid., "Myanmar: Prisoners of Conscience in Myanmar, A Chronicle of Developments Since September 1988" (New York: Amnesty International: November 1989).

ibid., "Thailand: Burmese and Other Asylum-Seekers at Risk," (AI Index: ASA 39/02/94), September 1994.

ibid., "Unlawful Killing of Peaceful Demonstrators, 29 September and 7 October 1988" (London: Amnesty International, 1988).

Allott, Anna J, ed., Inked Over, Ripped Out: Burmese Storytellers and the Censors (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1994).

Article 19, State of Fear: Censorship in Burma (London: Article 19, Country Report, December 1990).

Asia Watch, News from Asia Watch (Washington, D.C.: Asia Watch, 14 August 1990).

Asia Watch and Women's Rights Project, A Modern Form of Slavery: Trafficking of Burmese Women and Girls into Brothels in Thailand (NY: 1994).

Aung San Suu Kyi, Freedom from Fear and Other Writings (New York: Penguin, 1991).

Burma Information Group, Women in Politics, (Cambridge, MA: BIG, July 1994).

Burma Issues, "Operation Dragon King: The Forced Relocation of Burma's Village Peasants", (Bangkok: privately published paper, September 1993).

Burma Underground Rights Movement for Action, Life in Burma's "New Towns" (Rangoon: Burma Underground Rights Movement, August 1990).

Campaign for the Publicity of the People's Struggle in Monland, "Ye-Tavoy Construction: Report on Forced Labour in the Mon State and Tenasserim Division in Burma" (privately published paper, April 1994).

Caouette, Therese M., "Burmese Refugees in Thailand", a paper presented at the Joint FCO/ASIAN Studies Conference, St. Anthony College, Oxford, England, 13-15 December 1991.

Human Rights Watch/Asia, "The Mon: Persecuted in Burma, Forced Back from Thailand", (C614), Vol 6, No 14, December 1994.

Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Summary Injustice: Military Tribunals in Burma (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1991).

National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, The Human Rights Situation in Burma, 1992 (Report of the 1993 NCUB/NCGUB Mission to the UNCHR) (privately published paper, 1993).

ibid., Burma Update: A White Paper (Washington, DC: NCGUB, 6 June 1994).

Ohn Gyaw, Speech to the Forty-Ninth Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 10 October 1994.

Smith, Martin, Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1991).

ibid., Paradise Lost?: The Suppression of Environmental Resources and Freedom of Expression (London: Article XIX, August 1994).

Southeast Asian Information Network & ABSDF: Human Lives for Natural Resources: Oil & Natural Gas (privately published paper, July 1994).

State Law and Order Restoration Council Chairman, Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services General Saw Maung's Addresses (Rangoon: The Ministry of Information, February 1990).

United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Resolution E/CN.4/1994/L.99, 9 March 1994.

United Nations General Assembly, Resolution A/C.3/48/L.70, 6 December 1993.

UN, Resolution A/49/594, 28 October 1994.

UN, Note by the Secretary-General, A/49/594/add.1, 9 November 1994.

UN, Report of the Secretary-General, A/49/716, 25 November 1994.

UN, Resolution ANC.3/49/L.43, 13 December 1994.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Deportation to Ranong of Burmese Concern", Bangkok, 30 April 1991.

United States Department of State, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1988-1990 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1989-1991).

ibid., Burma Human Rights Practices, 1993, 31 January 1994.

United States Government, Congressional Record _ Senate S10487 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 19 July 1991).

United States House of Representatives, "To urge the Government of Burma (Myanmar) to release Aung San Suu Kyi, and for other purposes," House Resolution 471.

United States Senate, "Condemning the involvement of the military regime in Burma, also known as the Union of Myanmar, in the ongoing, horrifying abuses of human rights, the trafficking of illicit drugs, and the mass buildup of military arms for domestic repression," Senate Resolution 107, 7 April 1992.

ibid., "Urging sanctions to be imposed against the Burmese government, and for other purposes," Senate Resolution 112, 27 May 1993.

Weller, Mark, ed., Democracy and Politics in Burma: A Collection of Documents (Manerplaw: National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, 1993).

Yozo Yokota, Professor, "Report of the Human Rights Special Rapporteur Yozo Yokota on Burma to the 50th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights", 24 February 1994.

ibid., Introductory Statement by the Special Rapporteur to the Third Committee of the General Assembly, 23 November 1994.

PERIODICALS/NEWSPAPERS

Asia Week (weekly news magazine, Hong Kong).

Bangkok Post (daily newspaper, Bangkok).

Burma Alert, ed., Harn Yawngnaw. (Quebec: privately published papers, 1990-1991; Associates to Develop Democratic Burma 1991-1994).

Burma Debate, Open Society Institute (NY: Soros Foundation, 1994-1994).

Burma Focus. Oslo: ABSDF-Europe, 19XX-1994.

Burma Issues. Bangkok: B.U.R.M.A. (1990-1993; Burma Issues, 1994-1994).

Burma Monitor. Min Sun Min, ed. (New York: privately published paper, 15 July 1991).

Burma Review. Khin Nyo ed. (New York: privately published paper, September 1989).

D.A.B., Democratic Alliance of Burma, DAB Foreign Affairs Committee.

Dawn, ABSDF (January 1989-1994).

Irrawaddy, Burma Information Group (Cambridge, MA: privately published papers, 1993-1994).

Economic Intelligence Unit, "Country Report: Burma", London, Economist (various years).

Far Eastern Economic Review (weekly news magazine) (Hong Kong).

Far Eastern Economic Review, Asia Year Books (Hong Kong: Far Eastern Economic Review, 1970-1994).

Freedom House, "Freedom in the World" (various years).

Nation, The (daily newspaper, Bangkok).

New Era Journal, Tin Maung Win, ed. (1990-1994).

New Light of Myanmar, The (daily state newspaper, Rangoon; Working People's Daily 1988-1991). 1991-1994.

"Radio Burma", ed. Mr. Burma (in Burmese) (Bangkok: privately published papers, February-December 1994).

Working People's Daily (daily state newspaper, Rangoon; The New Light of Myanmar 1991-1994). 1988-1991.

SELECTED ARTICLES

"Burma as South Africa," Rev Desmond Tutu, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, September 1993.

"From South Africa to Burma," (editorial), *The Boston Globe*, 18 October 1993.

LIST OF RESOURCES AND CONTRIBUTORS

All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) (Central Headquarters)
P.O. Box 31, Mae Sariang, Mae Hong Son Province, THAILAND

Tel/Fax (+66-2) 53 68 18 13

G. P.O. Box 1352 Bangkok 10501 THAILAND

Tel (+66-1) 920 8286

(Publishes Dawn/Voice of the Peacock and Research Papers.)

All Burma Student League

Delhi Office, 3, Krishna Menon Marg, New Delhi 110011, INDIA

Tel/Fax (+91) 301 7172, (+91) 301 6035

Amnesty International

Burma Researcher, 1, Easton St, London WC1 X8DJ, UK

Tel (+44-71) 413 5500; Fax (+44-71) 956 1157; Email: amnestyis@gn.apc.org

(Good on political prisoners, forced labour and human rights in general. Effective in the human rights forums in Geneva. Publishes reports.)

Article 19

Frances D'Souza, Lancaster House 33 Islington High St, London N1 9LH, UK

Tel (+44-71) 278 9292; Fax (+44-71) 713 1356; Email: article19@gn.apc.org

(Specialises on freedom of information and expression. Publishes reports.)

Burma Action Group (UK)

Sarah Sutcliffe, Collins' Studios, Collins' Yard, Islington Green, London N1 2XU, UK

Tel (+44-71) 359 7679; Fax (+44-71) 354 3987; Email: bagp@gn.apc.org

(Publishes Burma News quarterly and thematic briefing documents; good on general information. Conducting campaign on oil companies in Burma.)

Burma Alert

Harn Yawngghwe, R.R. 4, Shawville, Quebec, CANADA J0X 2Y0

Tel (+1-819) 647 6131; Fax (+1-819) 647 5403, (+1-613) 794 2719 (home)

(Burma Alert published monthly. Good, systematic presentation. Especially good on companies. Also publishes lists of prisoners and other documents.)

Burma Information Group (BIG)

P.O. Box 14154, Silver Spring, MA 20911, USA

(Publishes The Irrawaddy twice a month, with summaries of mainly local press and radio news on Burma. BIG is also especially good on info relating to Burmese students in Bangkok.)

Burma Issues (formerly B.U.R.M.A.)

P.O. Box 1076, Silom Post Office, Bangkok 10504, THAILAND

Tel (+66-2) 234 6674; Fax (+66-2) 631 0133

(The most comprehensive Burma information service in Thailand. Includes information on human rights and companies investing or interested in investing in Burma. Publishes a monthly newsletter, Burma Issues.)

Burma Lawyers' Council (BLC)

P.O. Box 151, Klong Chan P.O., Bangkok 10240, Bangkok, THAILAND

Burmese Border Consortium

Jack Dunford, Church of Christ in Thailand, 14 Pramuan Road, Bangkok 10500, Thailand

Tel. (66-2) 236 021, Fax. (66-2) 236 7000

Burmese Relief Centre (BRC), Chiang Mai

P.O. Box 48, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50002, THAILAND

Tel/Fax (+66-53) 278 152

(Reliable and wide general knowledge. Good on border conflict, notably in Karen and Shan States.)

Campaign for the Publicity of the People's Struggle in Monland (CPPSM)

P.O. Box 227, GPO, Bangkok 10501, THAILAND

(Excellent information on HRV in Mon areas, and railway/gas pipeline/forced labour, which they made a report on in April 1994. Also regularly publishes CPPSM Newsletter.)

Democratic Alliance of Burma

P.O. Box 22, Mae Sod, Tak, THAILAND

Louisa Benson, (USA rep) 708, Kingman Ave, Santa Monica, CA 90402, USA

Tel (+1-310) 454 3123; Fax (+1-310) 459 8263

Green November 32

P.O. Box 201, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50002, THAILAND

(Specialises in ecological factors and foreign companies. Publishes Mya Yadana - latest issue on Thai-Burmese energy projects is particularly good.)

Human Rights Watch/Asia (formerly Asiawatch)

Sidney Jones, 485, 5th Avenue, NY NY 10017, USA

Tel (+1-212) 972 8400; Fax 972 0905; Email: hrwa:chnyc@igc.apc.org;

Mike Jendrzeczyk, 1522 K St, NW Suite 910, Washington DC, USA

Tel (+1-202) 371 6592; Fax 371 0124;

Zunetta Liddell, 33 Islington High St, London N1 9LH, UK

Tel (+44-71) 713 1995; Fax (+44-71) 713 1899

(Good general information on human rights in Burma. Publishes reports)

Indigenous Womens' Development Center

P.O. Box 169, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50002, THAILAND

Tel/Fax (+66-53) 278 152

Institute for Asian Democracy

Michele Bohana, 1518 K St NW, Suite 410, Washington DC 20005, USA

Tel/Fax (+1-202) 232 0474

(Good contacts with US senators and congresspeople. They work also on Tibet and Mongolia.)

Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

Ingeborg Schwarz (Human Rights), Place du Petit Saconnex, BP 438, CH 1211 Geneva 19, SWITZERLAND

Tel (+41-22) 734 4150; Fax (+41-22) 733 3141

(Particularly involved in working for imprisoned Burmese parliamentarians, as well as constitutional issues)

Kachin Independence Organisation

Seng Raw, P.O. Box 822, Bangkok 10110, THAILAND

Tel (+66-2) 300 1949; Fax (+66-2) 300 1972

Karen National Union (KNU)

P.O. Box 22, Mae Sod, Tak, THAILAND

Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)

Box 22, Mae Sot, Tak 63110, THAILAND.

(Puts out high quality human rights information including interviews.)

Karen Relief Committee (KRC)

Pastor Robert Htwe, PO Box 5, Mae Sod, Tak 63 110, Thailand

Tel. (66 55) 532 947, Fax. (66 55) 546 869

Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP)

Aung Than Lay, Abel Tweed, P.O. Box 19 Mae Hong Son 58000, THAILAND

Tel (+66-53) 611 691; Fax (+66-53) 612 469

Manerplaw Human Rights Center

Thein Oo, PO Box. 159, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand

Mon National Relief Committee (MNRC)

P.O. Box 1, Sankhlaburi 71240, Thailand

Tel/Fax (+66-34) 595 0801

National League for Democracy (Liberated Area) (NLD-LA)

Thein Oo, PO Box. 159, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand

New Mon State Party (NMSP)
Nai Shwe Kyin, G.P.O. Box 1983, Bangkok 10501, THAILAND

Norwegian Burma Council (NBC)
H.K.Kuloy/ Kathrine Biering
Josefinesgate 9, N-0351 Oslo, NORWAY
Tel (+47) 22 56 79 10; Fax (+47) 22 56 79 20; Email: hkk@oslonett.no

Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF)
P.O. Box 41, Mae Hong Son, 58000, THAILAND

Dr. Allan Smith
Research Fellow, Asia Institute, Monash University, Melbourn, Australia
PO Box 1865, Bangrak PO, Bangkok 10500, Thailand

Southeast Asia Information Network (SAIN)
P.O. Box 217, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50002, THAILAND
Tel (+66-53) 217 298; Fax (+66-53) 278 152; Email: sain@igc.apc.org
(For hard news, including video footage.)

Volunteers for Displaced Persons in Shan State (VDS)
Khun Kyar O, PO Box 7, MacHongSong 58 000, Thailand

Special Rapporteur on Myanmar:
Professor Yozo Yokota, Professor of Law, Division of International Studies,
International Christian University
3-10-2, Osawa, Mitaka-Shi, Tokyo 181
Tel. (0422) 33-3184, Fax. (0422) 33-3229

ELECTRONIC MAIL

BurmaNet	strider@igc.apc.org reader's list reg.burma@conf.igc.apc.org <directly to your mailbox
newsgroup	soc.culture.burma@conf.igc.apc.org <via 'rtin' or 'tin'
SEA newsgroup	seasia-l@msu.edu to subscribe: listserv@msu.edu
SEA languages	sealang-l@nucleus.nectec.or.th to subscribe: listserver@nucleus.nectec.or.th
ABSDF	Caroline@
ABSDF (Europe)	absdf@nn.igc.apc <Aye Chan Naing Boycott Pepsi brschmidt@aol.com <Brian Schmidt, sells stick ers
Buddhist Relief Mission	NBH03114@niftyserve.or.jp <Ken & Visaka Kawasaki
BAG-London	bagp@gn.apc.org <Sara Sutcliffe, Niels Burma Border Consortium dunfoj@morakot.nectec.or.th <Jack Dunford
BCN (Amst'dam)	bcn@xs4all.nl <Irene, Gijs, B. Centre NL
Burma Debate	jhess@sorosny.org <Soros publication; Mary Packed.
BPF	darnott@igc.org <David Arnott, Burma Peace Foundation
BSG-Norway	tormodl@ulrik.uio.no <Tanja, Burma Support Group
DVB (Oslo)	dvb@oslonett.no Franklin R&D frdc@igc.apc.org <ATTN Simon Billinness
FREE BURMA	free.burma@aol.com Free Burma Coalition peck@ae.agecon.wisc.edu <John Peck, Univ. of Wisconsin Maureen Ag Thwin maunghwin@- sorosny.org <Soros/Open Society Foundation aunghwn@acfcluster.nyu.edu <New York Uni versity
NCGUB (Wash.)	maung@igc.apc.org
NBC, Oslo	hkk@oslonett.no <H.K. Kuloy, Norwegian B.Council
Refugees Int'l	burmad@clark.net <Mary Pack, Zaw Zaw
Michael Beer	mbeer@cap.ywu.edu Gijs Hilleniusgijs@xs4all.nl <Gijs works for BCN
Jan-Egil Berg	jan-egil.berg@pr.uninett.no <journalism teacher, Voss, Norway
Amnesty Int'l	amnestyis@gn.apc.org <Demelza Stubbings Asia Watch hrwatchnyc@igc.apc.org <Aung Myo Minn, Mike Jendrzeczyk
Buddhist PF	bpf@igc.org <Alan, Buddhist Peace Fellowship
DharmaNet	dharma@netcom.com <network for radical Bud dhist monks

IRC (Heidi)	heidi@irc.com <Heidi Wagner, Int'l Rescue Committee
ITWF	Geonet - GEO2:ITF <David Cockroft,
LCHR	lchr@igc.apc.org <Lawyers Committee for Human Rights
OPIRG	wcsbeau@superior.ccs.carleton.ca <Boycott Pepsi Campaign, Canada
ACPP in H.K.	acppasia@hk.super.net <Asian Center for Progress of Peop
ASA	asa@peg.apc.org <Asian-Pacific Students Assoc.



DUR

Tortur,
henrettelser
og andre brudd
på menneskeret-
tinghetene
er burmesernes
hverdag.



Støtt jusstudentenes aksjon 23. September.