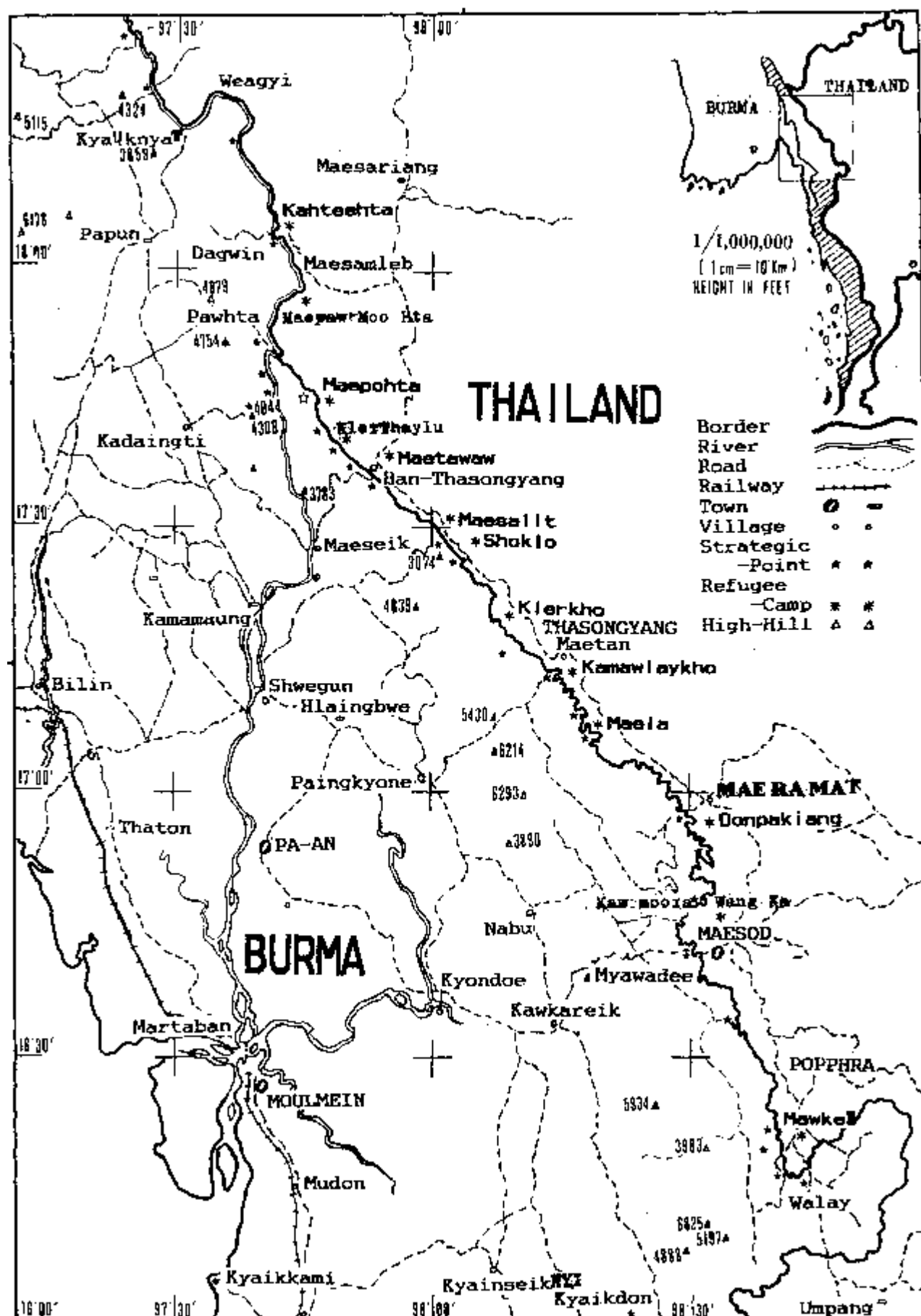




# KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

## MONTHLY REPORT

DECEMBER 1993



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The cool month of December has come to an end peacefully and it also brought to a close the calendar year 1993 which has been a relatively quiet and peaceful year for the Karen refugees and displaced Karens along the Thai-Burma border.

It cannot however be readily inferred that, the year has been uneventful nor can it be inferred that the situation has similarly been quiet and peaceful for Karens and people of other nationals in areas further inside Burma.

A large influx of Karen civilians from inside Burma into the Karen refugee camps during the dry season of 1993 and the many more civilians that continued to come trickling into the camps each month even through the rainy season are clear indications that all has not been too well inside Burma.

January is here again. Ten years ago in January 1984. Karen villagers of Mae Ta Waw village fled across the Moei river into Thailand to escape from the fierce fighting that broke out. Fighting between the Burma Army and the KNU that had gone on then inside Burma for three and a half decades already was brought over that year in all intensity to the border area when the Burma Army began its large scale offensive against KNU bases along the Moei river which forms the border between Thailand and Burma. Other villages along the border come under attack in quick succession during that summer and by the end of the dry season, some 10,000 Karen villagers had fled across the Moei river and took refuge in the various camps set up on the Thai side of the border. Pretty soon, these people will have been taking refuge in Thailand for ten years already.

Fighting that was brought over to the border areas ten years ago in January 1984 raged on and escalated. During those years Karen civilians from villages further inside Burma followed their fellow Karens to the border to the refugee camps in Thailand. Many villagers of other nationals also joined the Karens in the flight to the border. Consequently, the total number of civilians now taking refuge in the various Karen refugee camps in Thailand is 55,887. This number represents but a small percentage of the total number of Karens who have been displaced and uprooted by the war that has been raging on in Burma for four and a half decades now.

Of course, not only the Karens are affected. People of other nationals and people from all walks of life in Burma are affected. Anyway, those in the rural areas are more seriously affected. The difficult and turbulent situation they are in leaves the majority of them who are farmers and cultivators with very little time or very little peace to concentrate on their work. As a consequence of this, shortage of rice has become a bigger and bigger problem for them. The cost of living has sky rocketed. In some areas, inadequate rainfall resulted in crop failure and this will only make their already difficult situation worse.

Displaced people inside Burma are also generally facing with health problems. The outbreak of acute diarrhea and dysentery in the Bilin and Papun areas is said to have abated but has not yet disappeared altogether.

In the refugee camps, life goes on quietly. The refugees survive on the aid provided and on their part, they struggle from day to day to acquire those other items of daily necessity that are not provided. The children go to school in the camps. The health personnel work together with the refugee population for the maintenance and promotion of better health and sanitation in the camps. As the dry season arrives, water begins to be a problem again for residents in some of the camps.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS

CAMP:	No. of family	Over 12 Yrs.		5 - 12 Yrs.		Under 5 Yrs.		TOTAL
		M	F	M	F	M	F	
WANG KA	739	1155	1498	461	421	299	273	4107
DON PA KIANG	485	913	824	288	275	179	223	2702
MAE L4	1071	1317	1864	847	794	261	256	5339
KAMAW LAY KHO	670	1141	1170	376	345	297	290	3619
KLER KHO	533	1041	1004	346	338	228	275	3232
SHO KLO	1506	2481	3124	1121	1029	522	626	8893
MAE SA LIT	619	1078	1248	429	434	171	179	3539
MAE TA WAW	861	1536	1748	785	782	396	392	5639
MAW KER	837	1714	1562	370	304	576	594	5120
KLER THAY LU	135	263	295	86	75	38	43	800
MAE PO HTA	224	393	419	133	131	44	36	1156
MAE PAW MOO HTA	377	754	840	291	263	176	202	2526
KA HTEE HTA	403	574	693	323	344	147	195	2276
	8460	14360	16289	5356	5535	3334	3574	48948
SOUTHERN CAMPS								
PER KLSR	566	952	1043	459	409	221	206	3290
PANG SA HOK	501	754	763	298	269	191	180	2460
NAT IN DAUNG	271	375	393	119	127	89	86	1189
TOTAL:	9798	16441	13493	6732	6340	3835	4046	55887

RICE RECEIVED FOR THE MONTH

FROM:-

-BURMA BORDER CONSORTIUM (BBC)	...	6020	sacks
-CATHOLIC OFFICE FOR EMERGENCY RELIEF AND REFUGEES (COERR)	...	350	»
		6370	sacks

OTHER ITEMS RECEIVED FOR THE MONTH

FROM:-

-BURMESE BORDER CONSORTIUM (BBC)			
Salt	...	14,720	kgs.
Fish Paste	...	2,241	tins

DISTRIBUTION OF RICE AND OTHER ITEMS RECEIVED

CAMP	RICE	SALT	F. PASTE
WANG KA	627	1480	217
DON PA KIANG	404	970	143
MAE LA	803	2150	284
KAMAW LAY KHO	543	1340	192
KLER KHO	476	1050	168
SHO KLO	1405	3160	490
MAE SA LIT	532	1240	188
MAE TA WAW	810	1650	287
MAW KER	770	1680	272
TOTAL:-	6370 sacks	14720 kgs.	2241 tins

The Karen Refugee Committee expresses its sincere gratitude to the authorities and to the people of the Kingdom of Thailand for their kindness in granting refuge to the Karens and other displaced people from Burma who are in trouble and need. This noble gesture of goodwill is sincerely appreciated by the Karen refugees and the Karens of Burma and will always be remembered by them.

The committee also expresses its sincere gratitude to the individuals and agencies concerned for their unfailing help and support through the years to make life easier for the Karen refugees. Unless for these help and support, the refugees will not be able to survive.

The refugees dream of peace and the chance to go home. They however greet the dawn of this new year with a mixed feeling of hope and anticipation. Amid talks of peace there are signs of war. Will their hope be realised? will the new year bring about a change that will convince them that it is safe for them to go back home? Even though the answer is still blowing in the wind, it is their ardent wish that, through the sincerity of all parties concerned and through the concerted effort of all peace loving people around the world, a practical solution to the already ten year old Karen refugee problem could be found.

It is our earnest wish and prayer that 1994 will be a year of peace, justice and prosperity for all mankind.

Yours faithfully,



Robert Htwe  
Chairman  
Karen Refugee Committee