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MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE

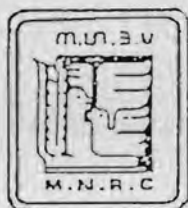
MONTHLY REPORT

AUG

1994

THE FIVE POINTS OF THE AIM OF
THE MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE

1. Resettlement of the refugees who become homeless due to the oppression of Rangoon military regime.
2. To help for the welfare of the refugees who become jobless due to the oppression of Rangoon military regime.
3. To take care and look after the health of the refugees.
4. To fight against illiteracy for the children in the refugee camps
5. To struggle for human rights.



The Organization of The Mon National Relief Committee

1. Phra Wongsala Pala - Chairman
2. Nai Shwe Thein - Vice-Chairman
3. Nai Siri Mon Chan - Secretary General
4. Nai Pho Sein - Member
5. Nai Chit Nyunt - Member
6. Nai Kasauh Mon - Member
7. Nai Banya Leir - Member
8. Phra Nonda Pala - Member

**MONTHLY REPORT OF MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE
(AUGUST, 1994)**

**THE WHOLE SITUATION AND
THE NEEDED REAL PROTECTION OF MON REFUGEES**

(1) Terrible incident for Mon refugees after SLORC troops attacked their Halockhani Camp

On 21 st July, at 8:00 a.m. in the morning, over 100 troops of SLORC's Local Infantry Battalion No. 62, based in Three Pagoda Pass, led by deputy battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Ohn Myint, came into one section of Halockhani Mon refugee camp named Kwan Saya (Baleh Donephai) and completely occupied it. This village, with 120 households of over 500 refugees, is 2 kilometers of half-hour walk from Halockhani main camp. After SLORC troops occupied the whole village, they arrested all men and try to move and occupy the Halockhani main camp at 12:30 afternoon of that day. When they moved to the main camp, they put about fifty men in front of them used as human shields. On the way after they had gone about 15 minutes from the village, some of Mon troops ambushed them. The fighting lasted about 15 minutes and they retreated back to the village. The fighting made them very angry and they burnt down the whole village including school about 4 p.m. in the evening.

When they left from the village, they arrested sixteen men including village headmen and teacher from the primary school, as porters and prisoners. Half of them, especially village headmen, teacher were taken away in hand-cuffs because they assumed those refugees are supporters of Mon troops. According to the sources from Three Pagoda Pass, the SLORC's Infantry Battalion No. 62 was replaced by No. 61 on July 20. At night of July 20, the Battalion No. 62's 360 troops slept in the forest nearby the Kwan Saya village and only over 100 troops made disturbances to Mon refugee camp in the morning of July, while the rest troops were waiting them outside the camp.

Therefore, all Mon refugees from the whole Halockhani camp situated in Burma side fled into Thai side of the border without their belongings. Now, about 6,000 Mon refugees are seeking shelters in Thai soil of Sangkhlaburi District of Kanchanaburi Province. They made the make-shift temporary shelters around the checkpoint of the Thai Border Patrol Police and they are staying like under the protection of those polices. MNRC, Medicins Sans Frontiers (MSF) and Burmese Border Consortium (BBC) still provided them with temporary shelters, foods and pure water. Beacauce of lack of pure water and toilets, the diarrhea patients are increasing everyday and MNRC try to make more toilets and had already built for diarrhea patient shelter. Hopefully, the MSF doctors and its medics can control the rates of diarrhea patients.

(2) The Opinions of Mon National Relief Committee

Among four Mon refugee camps under the care of MNRC, Halockhani Camp is the biggest one. Most refugees from this camp are those of repatriated from Loh Loe Mon refugee camp which was situated in Thai soil of Sangkhlaburi District. Following several times of discussing, MNRC unadvoidably agreed with Thai authorities to relocate the Mon refugees to the new sites of Halockhani Camp that is only one hour's walk from the nearest outpost of SLORC troops from

Three Pagoda Pass. It is very vulnerable that any disturbances might be made by SLORC troops.

When Thai authorities repatriated these Mon refugees, they promised to take responsibility for security of the camp although it is in Burma soil. Following this promise, they discussed with Burmese authorities regarding the security of the refugee camps and not to make any trouble and disturbance. Hopefully, the Burmese authorities accepted the requests of Thai authorities very easily in order to resume the negotiation with the New Mon State Party separately. But MNRC does not completely believe the promise of Burmese authorities, and always worries about the safety of its refugees.

Certainly, MNRC believes that there were two reasons why the SLORC troops occupied and made disturbances. The first one is that SLORC troops wanted to conscript the refugees as porters to carry their ammunition, food, etc., and to walk in front of troops as human shields on the way to the battalion headquarters in Thanbyuzayat, Mon State. The latter is to give more pressure to the Mon refugees instead of Mon troops because the third cease-fire talk between the New Mon State Party and SLORC has reached a complete deadlock.

Regarding the political situation inside Burma, MNRC firmly believes there is no longer security or safety for Mon refugees to stay in the Burma side of the border. After many discussions with camp leaders, MNRC has understood that, for the real protection of Mon refugees, it is needed to appeal the Thai Government for the resettlement of Mon refugees to stay in Thai side of the border. On 28th July, MNRC released a statement which appealed the Royal Thai Government to allow the Mon refugees for temporary refuge in Thai soil again. In the beginning of August, MNRC wrote the letters to Ninth Division of Royal Thai Army in Kanchanaburi and Prime Minister of Royal Thai Government, to allow Mon refugees for temporary refuge in Thailand until they can go back to their home territory.

(3) Pressure from the local Thai authorities to push back Mon refugees

On July 25, at about 9:30 a.m., District Chief (Nai Amphoe) of Sangkhlaburi District invited MNRC to a meeting with local authorities of District regarding the current situation of Mon refugees who have been seeking temporary shelters around the checkpoint of Thai Border Patrol Police since the raid was launched by SLORC troops. Two members of MNRC attended to the meeting and District Chief proposed the following points to MNRC.

- (1) The refugees who are staying around the checkpoint of Thai Border Patrol Police must return to their Halockhani Camp as quickly as possible in the evening of that day.
- (2) The commander of SLORC 61st Infantry Battalion Col. Tin Kyaing has already promised to the Thai authorities that they would not make any troubles and disturbance to the Mon refugees, if they returned back to their Halockhani Camp. The Battalion stationed in the Three Pagoda Pass at the time.
- (3) At the same time, when the refugees returned to Halockhani Camp, the Mon peoples who have been illegally staying in Songkhalia village which is situated between Three Pagoda Pass and Sangkhlaburi must remove together with them.
- (4) To prohibit any Mon troops to come with arms into Halockhani Camp and to make this refugee camp as a "Peace Zone".

- (5) Anyway, the Thai Government does not allow any Mon refugees to stay in Thai soil.

As mentioned above, the District Chief ordered the MNRC to implement these points immediately. In the evening of that day, MNRC explained the camp leaders, relief organizations and the refugees about the meeting with local Thai authorities. Most refugees refused to return back to their houses in the camp as they, especially women and children, are afraid of another attack. Even in day time, the camp leaders did not allow women and children to take their belongings left in their houses. They believed the Burmese troops could come to their camp at any time and too scared to return back.

(3) The National Security Council of Thailand reaffirmed Mon refugees must go back home

On 13 th August, deputy chief Kachadpai Burusapattana of the National Security Council (NSC) of Thailand reaffirmed that the Mon refugees who fled across the border into Thailand must return to their former Halockhani camp as the situation is normal and safe. And, he assumed those refugees only as illegal immigrants trying to seek jobs in Thailand. He also barred the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to help the Mon refugees and said it is not right for UNHCR or anyone else to say that the Mon people are refugees.

After his strong exclamation, the Thai authorities arranged to cut off the Mon refugees from the outside world and block the transportation road from Sangkhlaburi to the make-shift shelters. The Thai Border Patrol Police is responsible to implement the procedure of the blockade and they did not allow any supply trucks, any UN agencies, Foreign Government agencies, Non Governmental Organizations and journalists to go into the temporary camp. On 17th August, even officials of UNHCR were prohibited by Thai Border Patrol Police to access to the make-shift temporary shelters.

(4) The Current situation of Mon refugees in New Halockhani

After the restricted blockade for transportation was made by Thai Border Patrol Police which have been in effect since August 16, the Mon refugees under the make-shift shelters dubbed New Halockhani faced the worst situation with shortage of food and other relief supplies. Although the blockade process was started on 11 August when Ninth Division of Royal Thai Army unofficially ordered to the Thai Border Patrol Police, we could transport some supplies by trucks to Mon refugees. On 15 August, some Thai Army officers from Ninth Division sat a meeting with Commander of local Thai Border Patrol Police and District Officer of Sangklaburi and made a strong command and issued an official order to block the access to the make-shift shelters from Sangklaburi until the Mon refugees voluntarily return back to their former Halockhani camp inside Burma just beyond the border. Since 16th August, the Thai Border Patrol Police have not allowed any supply trucks and our committee members to access to Mon refugees.

The Mon refugees, at present, face shortage of food and other supplies which can cause the diseases of vitamin deficiency. We have to provide them with bean, sardine, meat, milk, sugar to prevent from malnutrition, and other necessities such as clothes, plastic sheets to make more possible shelters. Although we have rice to last three weeks for the refugees, we hope that it is not enough for the proposed time as many illegal immigrants were deported back to the camp in every

week of this month. For Mon refugees, they could find just a little bit vegetable and bamboo shoots in the nearby forest. We have prompted worries about the malnutrition problems of over 3,500 children while fifteen percent of the camp's population is the children under five. Later, we hope, it may be problem if the Thai Border Patrol Police do not allow the medical supplies of Franch Medicine Sans Frontier (MSF) and its doctors to enter the camp.

Health conditions for Mon refugees staying at the make-shift camp are precarious, with increasing cases of malaria, diarrhea, respiratory diseases and vitamin deficiencies being treated, medics in the make-shift shelter said. Although we have to extend the temporary hospital building which is situated in a limited place, and to make more shelters to prevent staying in squalid conditions, it is impossible to get plastic sheets from Sangkhlaburi. Now, the health workers can control the numbers of diarrhea patients after more sanitary toilets were built. As the heavy rain is falling, we can collect pure rain water with tanks and distribute to them. If the rain stopped for many days, they would face the problems of water scarcity.

(5) An explanation about Mon refugees

Almost all of Mon refugees fled into Mon refugee camps were from rural areas of inside Burma. Because of human rights violations of the SLORC Army - arbitrary arrests, killings, torture, rape, forced location, forced labour, looting, extortion and etc. which are always committed in everyday they unavoidably have to take refuge in Thai soil. Fear of the persecution by the Burmese troops made them decide to take refuge along the Thai-Burma border where the Burmese troops cannot reach. They will never try to work as labourers for some cash as many Burmese **illegal economic immigrants** who came from several parts of Burma including many different nationalities, crossed into Thailand to seek good jobs in many provinces and around Bangkok. They just want a real protection of Thai authorities with the humanitarian consideration until they can go back to their home territory.

It is very clear that they Mon refugees always believe that the Thai authorities will not push them into dangerous conditions and give them a suitable place for the protection of their safety. In June 1991, Day Bung, a Mon refugee camp with 2,500 population and in April 1992, Krone Kung, Panang Htaw and Baleh Hnook which were with a total population of some 5000, were relocated to Loh Loe, as they believed Thai authorities arranged better protection for them by staying in the new location. In the beginning of this year, they still believed in the promises of Thai authorities when relocation process was started from Loh Loe to Halockhani, even in Burma side of the border, as the Burmese promised to Thai authorities that they would not make any trouble to the refugees. After the Burmese troops broke the promises and attacked them, it was very hard for Mon refugees to consider to return back to Burma side again as they believe that there would be no longer safety and made an appeal to the Thai authorities not to push them back to the places where there were full of dangerous conditions.

(6) Suggestion to International Community

We, Mon refugees, have suffered helplessness and hopelessness after we abandoned our native places and are needing the protection of international community like other refugees over the world. We need the stable situation and permanent international monitoring which made a sympathetic atmosphere for our refugees in the future. We firmly believe that the best protection for our refugees for the time being is to stay in Thai soil, because the situation in Burma is not stable

and no conducive for suitable repatriation.

Although the Mon refugees want to stay in Thai side of the border, we clearly understand that the Thai will not allow them to do so. On 25th August, the MNRC negotiated with some commanders of Ninth Division of Thai Army in Kachanaburi and they asked MNRC to persuade the Mon refugees for voluntarily repatriation to their former camp. On 29th August, Thai authorities allowed the Committee to go into the camp and to explain the refugees about the discussions between the commanders of Ninth Division and MNRC. But the Mon refugees still refused to voluntarily return back. On 30th August, MNRC discussed with camp leaders again to find the best ways for real protection of them, after they returned back to their former Halockhani Camp. In the meeting, we adopted the following five points and informed the Ninth Division Army through the Thai Border Patrol Police, later they rejected the proposed points.

On 31st August, under the cammands of Ninth Division Army the Thai Border Patrol Police closed the rice store in the camp and gave pressures on Mon refugees. The police have arranged to cut off the rice distribution to the refugees who refused to return back to the former camp. Therefore, we urgently need the international communities including UN Agencies, Government Agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations, mass media to approach the terrible situation here and appeal the Thai Government as following points suggested below.

- (1) Appeal the Thai Government and Thai Army to lift the blockade and not to use force or pressure on the Mon refugees as MNRC is ready to negotiate the process of repatriation of Mon refugees with Thai authorities.
- (2) Appeal the Thai Govenment to take responsibility for guarantees or signing an agreement of government level which assures that there will not be any troubles to the Mon refugees in the future from the Burmese Government.
- (3) After returning of Mon refugees to their former Halockhani Camp, it is needed that the Thai Government will have to allow internaional aid agencies and make agreement in providing the assistances to them until the situation permits them to go back home safely.
- (4) Appeal the Thai Government to relocate the Mon refugees from Kwan Saya (Baleh Donephai), who were homeless when the Burmese attacked them and burnt down their houses, in a safe place.
- (5) Propose the International Communities that Mon refugees in need of the international agencies or UNHCR to open office in the camp and to monitor the situation there after the refugees have returned back to their former Halockhani Camp.

THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF THE FOUR CAMP ARE AS FOLLOW

No	Camp	House Hold	Adult		Children		Total Remark
			M	F	M	F	
1	Bee Ree	197	210	214	339	340	1103
2	Payaw	485	624	840	679	821	2964
3	Prachuab	245	271	282	301	393	1247
4	Halockhani	998	1013	1209	1859	1991	6072
	Total	1925	2118	2545	3178	3545	11386

THE CONSUMPTION NEEDED PER MONTH FOR THE 'FOUR' REFUGEE CAMPS

No	Camp	Total Number of Refugees	Consumption per month				Remark
			Rice (sack)	Fish Paste	Salt (kg)	chilly (kg)	
1	Bee Ree	1103	172	367	551	367	
2	Payaw	2964	463	988	1482	988	
3	Prachuab	1247	197	415	623	415	
4	Halockhani	6072	948	2024	3036	2024	
	Total	11386	1777	3794	5692	3794	

**THE MATERIALS RECEIVED BY THE MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE
(AUGUST, 1994)**

No	Organization	Rice (sack)	Fish Paste (kg)	Salt (kg)	Chilly (kg)	Remark
1	Remained from JULY	1895	10819	1002	—	
2	COERR	100	1250	1000	100	
3	Consortium	—	—	—	—	
	Total	1995	12069	2002	100	

**THE BALANCE OF THE MATERIALS RECEIVED AND CONSUMED
IN THE FOUR REFUGEE CAMPS IN AUGUST 1994**

Subject	Rice (sack)	Fish Paste (kg)	Salt (kg)	Chilly (kg)	Remark
Received from the various refugee relief organization	1995	12069	2002	100	
Distributed to the four refugee camps in AUGUST	1777	3794	5692	3794	
Balance Remained	218	8275	—	—	

THE LOCATIONS OF MON REFUGEE CAMPS

