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MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

AUGUST

1995

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.

Statement for the International Community as well as the Mon community

For the last time that I have been asked to address the international community, I feel that I have a duty to do so.

The Organization of The Mon National Relief Committee

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

MONTHLY REPORT OF MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE

(August, 1995)

Request for the international community in repatriation of Mon refugees

Since the New Mon State Party (NMSP) has agreed for a ceasefire agreement with the SLORC, the MNRC hopes there are no more fighting in Mon territory and but nobody can predict on the foreseen human rights violations will be committed by SLORC or not. By the meaning of refugees as MNRC recognized, all those refugees who are taking refuge in its camps, were escaped from their native village because of the systematic persecution of successive Rangoon military regimes.

Even though strict policy of Thai governments on Burmese refugees, some Thai authorities have sympathetic consideration on Mon refugees and they were allowed to stay in Thai territories. Under the strict policy, lack of protection and limited aids allowance to them, the Mon refugees have taken haven for five years in Thai territories, after the Burmese troops attacked and occupied the NMSP headquarters in Three Pagoda Pass since 1990. The Mon refugees had to pass hard experiences because of perpetually relocations by Thai authorities in previous times. Even the Thai authorities offered us the lack of protection in their soil which does not meet the international standard, anyhow we express our thankfulness for them.

By the permission of Thai governments, the international aids agencies could help our refugees for their survival. Since 1990, after Mon refugee camps were set up in Thailand, many Mon local inhabitants and other nationalities have consistently taken refuge in Mon refugee camps after they abandoned and escaped from their native places because of abuses by Burmese troops.

According to the NMSP leaders who participated in the ceasefire agreement, the SLORC has promised to discontinue its systematic persecution. If the SLORC discontinued for its persecution, it might be safe for refugees to reside in Burma. In the resettlement process, we plan to resettle those refugees in seven areas close to the border and must be more easier to flee into Thailand if the situation in Burma looked like unsafe or fighting occurred in Mon area again. Most of the areas are under the control of NMSP and its military faction. The MNRC hopes, if the resettlement sites were safe and received possible land for growing crops, some immigrant families will also join in. The map of resettlement sites of Mon refugees and immigrants is shown in the following page.

But for those Mon people who fled from the systematic persecution must need the protection of repatriation under the international refugee principals. In the repatriation process, we request for international community as an independent monitoring body for the repatriation, because we would to ensure the following points.

1. The refugees must need cross border assistance for one year or until refugees can subsist on their own.
2. The refugees must reside in safe areas where no human rights violations will be committed by any group.
3. The refugees must need safe haven and flee back into Thai territory if the fighting in Burma occurred again and possible helps from the international NGOs.
4. The refugees must need for shortterm community reconstruction aids and longterm development aids from the international community.

To ensure the mentioned points of desires of those refugees, the international community should participate in the repatriation. But the mentioned points do not mean that we are always to put refugees in Thailand or refuse to return back deeply inside Burma. If the Burma retained genuine peace and safe for every civilians, those peoples will return back to their native places where they originally escaped.

For the whole opinion of MNRC, it released a suggestive statement on June 29, 1995 by inviting the international community to participate in repatriation process of Mon refugees. The whole statement attached at the following page. And the invitation for Bangkok branch UNHCR to consider and participate in this repatriation process also attached herein.

Considerably, if those refugees did not receive enough food assistance and international assurance for safety, they must face for food-shortage problems and unstable situation. And, the presence of international organizations such as UNHCR, diplomatic community and NGOs in the repatriation process may contribute much to bolster the confidence of returnees.

STATEMENT OF THE MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE REGARDING THE REPATRIATION PROGRAM OF MON REFUGEES

As a recent political development in Burma, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) celebrated a ceasefire agreement on June 29, 1995.

The Mon National Relief Committee (MNRC) welcomes this good tidings. After many years of miserable life, Mon refugees now have an opportunity to return back home in peace.

Mons never wanted to become refugees. They had to flee from their native places in their homeland (Mon State, Burma) because there was fighting between the NMSP armed forces and the SLORC troops for several years during which systematic persecution on Mon people, such as, forced relocation, forced labour, press-ganged for portorage to be used also as mine-detectors and abuse of women porters.

Mon people who fled persecution are entitled to be accepted as refugees in accordance with the international norm.

This means that these refugees are entitled to be repatriated under secure conditions and it should be voluntary according to the established international principles.

As ceasefire agreement had been effected there will be no more fighting. The SLORC has promised to discontinue its systematic persecution, except using voluntarily given labour.

Even though the long-awaited ceasefire came into effect, Mon refugees are still reluctant to return because of their past miserable experiences. Therefore, Mon refugees need assurance for their safety and voluntary return.

The MNRC believes these refugees need protection and assistance as provided to other returning refugees worldwide.

Firstly, the MNRC calls for the establishment or identification of a proper independent monitoring body which can ensure the safety of the refugees before, during and after repatriation.

Secondly, the MNRC calls for the provision for cross-border resettlement relief assistance for the Mon refugees for a period of at least one year (or until they can subsist on their own).

We request the international community to provide us with development aid to help us rebuild the Mon State which had been shattered by protracted civil war.

The Mon refugees now are looking forward to returning home and are hoping to go back as early as possible. However, to attempt to return them prematurely without necessary protection and assistance would cause uncertainty among the Mon refugees as to their future existence in Burma and this could lead them to flee back to Thailand once again in the near future.

The MNRC calls upon the international community working for Mon refugees; the Royal Thai Government and the SLORC to ensure a safe, secure and confident return of the Mon refugees.

Date: August 31, 1995.

**Mon National Relief Committee
Thai-Burma Border**

To

Mr. Ruprecht von Arnim
Representative
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Bangkok

Date: September 5, 1995

SUBJECT: Invitation for monitoring of the repatriation of Mon refugees.

Dear Sir,

The New Mon State Party (NMSP) has signed a ceasefire agreement with SLORC, the military regime in Burma, at the end of June.

Because of the prolonged civil war between the successive central governments and the ethnic nationalities armed forces, the local inhabitants have suffered from the persecution of Burmese troops such as forced relocation, forced labour, press-ganged for portage to be used as mine-defectors and abuse of women porters. Even though those local inhabitants have escaped systematic persecution to the Thai-Burma border, they have received lack of protection from Thailand, and its governments also barred the international community from offering possible protection and assistances under the recognition of *refugee status*.

In view point of our relief committee, the NMSP had to sign ceasefire agreement because of the outside Thailand pressure and inside SLORC inhumane treatments to Mon community. The example of resumed fighting in Karenni areas and other ethnic areas show the ceasefire agreement does not mean absolutely that peace is returned to Burma. And, it also means there is not enough safety for the refugees to return back to their native villages where are deeply situated inside Burma, in the current situations. However, because of the ceasefire, the refugees must be repatriated to Burma side of the border in coming dry season and we would like those refugees who fled persecution to be repatriated under secure conditions and it should be voluntary according to the established international principles.

Therefore, the MNRC has plan to repatriate Mon refugees to the areas close to the border and if the situation becomes unsafe because of fighting, they could flee back into Thailand again in easily. We hope that in the future, if the ceasefire holds, that the refugees can return to their native areas *at a later date*. To ensure for the safety of the refugees before, during and after repatriation, it must need a proper independent monitoring body. As we hope, the most suitable international organization to establish a proper independent monitoring body is your Bangkok branch UNHCR. We would like you to consider this. We think, only the UNHCR monitoring can provide enough safety for the future of Mon refugees, provision for adequate cross-border resettlement relief assistance and other community reconstruction assistance as well. Thank you very much.

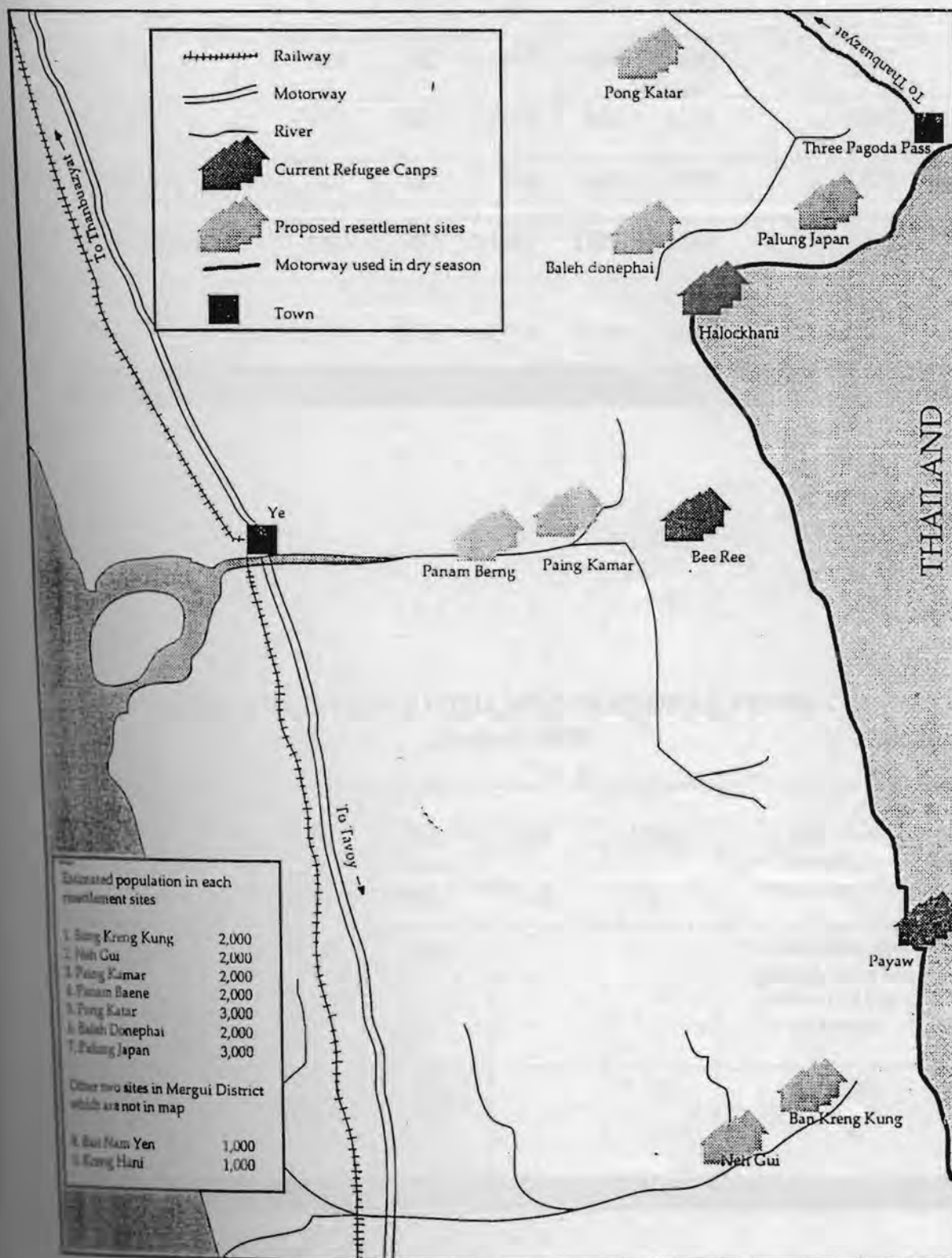
Yours sincerely,

Sd/- Wongsala Pala

(Ven. Wongsala Pala)
Chairman, Mon National Relief Committee

Map of resettlement sites of Mon refugees and immigrants

(The resettlement program will start in December and complete in April, 1996. In the program, it will resettle not only refugees but also immigrants who have been resided mostly in Kanchanaburi Province of Thailand. Estimatedly, the MNRC and the Development Committee of New Mon State Party have to resettle about 18,000 populations as following sites.)



THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF THE FOUR CAMP ARE AS FOLLOW
(August,1995)

No	Camp	Families	Adult		Children		Total
			M	F	M	F	
1	Bee Ree	261	302	347	468	480	1597
2	Payaw	657	807	1026	944	1123	3900
3	Prachuab	317	381	374	443	527	1725
4	Halockhani	852	968	1037	1325	1889	5219
	Total	2087	2458	2784	3180	4019	12441

THE MATERIALS RECEIVED BY THE MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE
(August, 1995)

No	Organization	Rice (sack)	Fish Paste (kg)	Salt (kg)	Chilly (kg)	Remark
1	COERR	100	550	-	-	Consotium already provided for rainy season stock-piling for all camps
2	Consortium	-	-	-	-	
	Total	100	550	-	-	