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MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE

# MONTHLY REPORT

June

1997

## **The Five Points of the Aim of Mon National Relief Committee**

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**Resettlement of the refugees who become homeless due to the oppression of Rangoon military regime.**

**To help the welfare of the refugees who become jobless due to oppression of Rangoon military regime.**

**To take care and look after the health of the refugees.**

**To fight against illiteracy for the children in the refugee camps.**

**To struggle for human rights.**

## **The Organization of Mon National Relief Committee**

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- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>1. Phra Wongsā Pala</b> | <b>- Chairman</b>         |
| <b>2. Nai Shwe Thein</b>   | <b>- Vice Chairman</b>    |
| <b>3. Nai Kāsauh Mon</b>   | <b>- Acting Secretary</b> |
| <b>4. Nai Dung Htaw</b>    | <b>- Member</b>           |
| <b>5. Nai Chit Nyunt</b>   | <b>- Member</b>           |
| <b>6. Phra Tay Jae</b>     | <b>- Member</b>           |

# Monthly Report of Mon National Relief Committee

(June, 1997)

## Difficulties in Transporting Supplies

In June, the monsoon weather of rainy season already came to Thailand and Burma. But the supply transportation process for the Mon refugees is not completed as the MNRC was re-allowed to continue transporting supplies by Thai authorities in late May. Anyhow, it has attempted to send all defined supplies into camps even the permission was late.

Because of heavy rain and windy in first week of June, all roads that have access to Bee Ree and Tavoy campsites were nearly destroyed. Some places of road were collapsed and flow of water also cut the route. After one week of hard rain, it stopped for another one week. The sunshine came and offered opportunity to MNRC to repair the roads and re-carry supplies and sent into camps. Initially, the MNRC could send supplies up to former Loe Loh (Bob Ju) area and made temporary rice-stores there keeping it for some days. But the most parts of the roads that close to campsite already destroyed and could not repair to become as normal.

Since the road collapse and water level in streams made difficulty for transportation to store all stock-piling supplies inside camps and then, the MNRC decided to store it on the way where the refugees could carry it easily. On the road proceeded to Tavoy campsite, the MNRC built another two temporary rice-stores after the trucks could not climb up the mountains and kept supplies in those stores. The refugees themselves agreed to store rice in there and helped in building rice-stores.

The security situation in area where Tavoy campsite situated is not so stable and all detail information was informed by camp committee to MNRC and it has been reluctant to store all supplies in camp's rice warehouse. About the three hours walk from campsite's area, the SLORC troops have been taking base for several months and presently they have increased the numbers of its troops and also created a military training school there. The place is lied in Ai-shay Ai-Mae area where the SLORC troops have taken base since before the end of 1996.

According to local source, the SLORC have conscripted new soldiers since the beginning of May and brought them to this basic military training school. Those conscripts were mostly taken from Yebyu, Tavoy and Tha Yet Chaung township of Tavoy district. Under the instruction of Coastal Region Military Command led by Brigadier Sit Maung, the Burmese troops conscripted from every villages to provide them from two to five male young villagers depend on the population of the village, to attend the basic military school. After they were trained, they have to serve as new soldiers in SLORC several battalions.

According to SLORC initial plan, it has slowly increased the numbers of its troops up to 500,000. But the SLORC has no external enemy and the main aim of increasing of troops is clearly realized that to suppress ethnic armed resistance groups which are separate in the whole border area of Burma. When the SLORC tried to gather new conscripts voluntarily, it has been impossible to reach necessary numbers that they have defined. In its new tactics, it attempted to conscript new soldiers by force without waiting to get them voluntarily. Comparing with other military zones Coastal Region Military Command has several enemies around and planned to conscript local ethnic villagers to become Burmese soldiers.

Because of this conscription of new soldiers, many young villagers fled into Thailand to escape. Some villages have to provide payment to military to avoid providing villagers. The villagers had to provide at least 10,000 Kyat for one villager if they could not provide accordingly to instruction. The local commanders also made money from forced conscription of new soldiers.

Because of this unstable situation that happens close to Tavoy campsite, the refugees there would not like to keep all supplies in camp's rice warehouse. They preferred to keep supplies in more safe places. For Tavoy campsite's refugees, the MNRC could send all supplies that provide to the end of 1997, but they had to carry it about some kilometres from their camp.

In June, the rain situation did not give much chance to MNRC all supplies to reach to Bee Ree, where the campsite is situated far in comparing with Tavoy area. As the road passed various mountains to reach to the camp, it was the most difficult places to send in all supplies. We put most supplies in Loh Loe area for Bee Ree camp and when the weather allowed we had to arrange to re-carry it. Too many places of the road were collapsed and we had to fix it again. We also arranged to keep supplies in rice-store on the way that situated on the top of a mountain. We could send supplies which provide up to mid of November. We will have to consider how to provide supplies for Bee Ree refugees to complete up to the end of the year.

### **Prachaub Refugees, Hunger for Protection**

About 900 refugees who remained in Thai territory after the homes in Prachaub camp of Chaung Chi area were burnt down, did not receive much protection and safe shelters and then, returned to former campsite where the Burmese Army is taking base. To ensure for voluntary return, the officials from Bangkok based UNHCR also visited to temporary campsite of those refugees while they were sheltered in Thai territory. But after they arrived back to their former campsite, no monitoring have been provided and followed up.

After the Mon Army, Mergui District (MAMD) surrendered to Burmese Army on May 25, the refugees have been confused where they should return. On May 25, SLORC troops and MAMD celebrated official surrendering ceremony for a brief while some part of MAMD group agreed to surrender. On the following days, more MAMD agreed to surrender. At that time, all refugees from Chaung Chi were in Thai territory and were under care of Thai border police. They were provided with safe protection and foods by Thai authorities and other individuals.

Before the surrender, they have asked the local Thai authorities who encamped them to provide safe shelter in Thai territory. But they were constantly refused by the authorities. According to Thai authorities, they must be returned to Burmese territory, but they could return to Sangkhlaburi or must return to Chaung Chi again. They were remained in fear of forced repatriation to Chaung Chi area. But after MAMD surrender, it was very unsafe for them to decide returning to Chaung Chi area because the Burmese Army already took base in place where is close to their villages.

After the surrendering ceremony, the SLORC has to arrange another important ceremony to publicize that the public in the area are supporting the surrender of MAMD and welcome the SLORC leaders and their border area development program. When the SLORC and MAMD celebrated surrendering ceremony, there were no much villagers in Chaung Chi area and the SLORC local officials had to wait for villagers for several days to celebrate **Public Supporting Ceremony**.

The SLORC officials also told to MAMD to organize their own villagers to return back. On May 29, some MAMD officials arrived to temporary camp in Thai territory and organized the villagers to return the former homes again. According to them, they said that SLORC has prom-

ised them to develop the area with education, health assistance and other factors. In the meeting, the most villagers insisted that they would not like to return former villages because the Burmese troops are taking base. But according to MAMD officials, SLORC officials Brigadier Sit Maung, chief commander of Coastal Region Military Command, will meet with Thai military officials to arrange for the return of the villagers to their former places.

On May 30, Brigadier Sit Maung officially met with Thai military officials from Ninth Division and then agreed to send those refugees back. On the following days, the Burmese and Thai military officials made often visit to temporary campsite and put more pressure to refugees to return Chaung Chi area. The Thai authorities said they will not accept refugees to stay in Thai territory and should return their peaceful homes. At the end after several rounds of talks and intensive pressure, the refugees had no choice except to return. When the UNHCR officials arrived to them and inquired whether they would like to return or not, they had to agree to return.

It is not the end of the story. After the refugees returned and stayed in former homes, they were ill-treated and blocked by the army not to flee into Thai territory again. The all entrances of the village are with check-points of the Burmese Army and the villagers could not have possible chance to get access into Thailand. But some villagers also tried to flee into Thailand.

According to escapees from the villages, presently the SLORC has conscripted forced labour from the whole villagers to build their military encampment. In each village of Chaung Chi area, the SLORC planned to build their military bases and soon after arrival of villagers on Burmese territory, they were forced to work for the military. The SLORC officials ordered village headmen to take responsibility to bring villagers to worksites. They have been forced to work with daily basis and if refused, they were severely punished. The most village headmen were the main leaders who refused to return when they were in Thai territory and now the SLORC used them to take responsibility to build bases, as a revenge. Their daily works in military camps are clearing grass, digging earth, making fence and etc.,. Every able-persons including women and children in the villagers have been forced to work. The officials also promised to provide six month rice to the refugees, but only little amount of one week rice was provided at the end of June.

When they arrived in villages they have lack of opportunity to re-build their houses and make farms for survival because they are busy with military defined works. But they could not insist the military, or they will be punished. Among the villagers, the SLORC officials organized some villagers to be their agents and checked opinion of villagers. If one villager tried to escape, he must be severely punished or killed. The villagers could not trust each other as they do not know who are agents. Thus, they are staying in fear of terrible circumstance.

On June 21, when the SLORC officials called a meeting with villagers and ordered them to complete the encampment as early as possible. And they also instructed to bring their own tools and foods from their homes. At the end of the meeting, a villager also asked them not to use every villagers in daily basis and allow some of them to work in re-building houses and clearing land for farms. While he was proposing his opinion, one official hit him with water glass and warned all villagers not to make any complaint to military. They were also warned that to eat the rice distributed by military and work for military, if not, they must be severely punished.

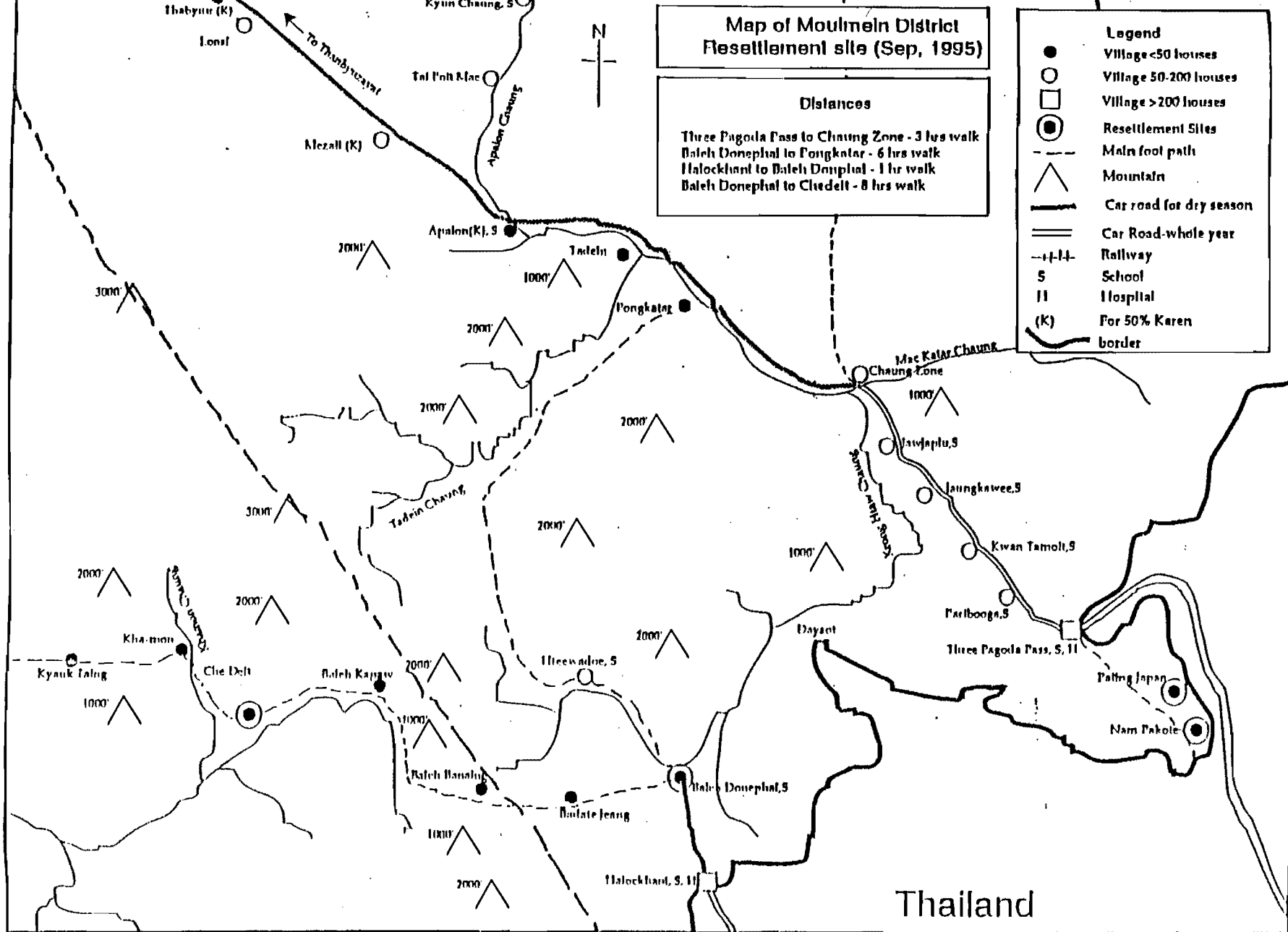
In future, the SLORC has several projects to develop this area mainly to build roads. The conscription of forced labour in area may continue as the SLORC has much examples using forced labour in building several roads in the whole country of Burma. Even though they lost their houses in Burma, country of origin, and fled into Thailand they were still not recognized as refugees by Thai government. The international community could provide lack of protection. It is sadly that no any world organization would like to provide monitoring after they returned.

**THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF THE FOUR CAMP ARE FOLLOW**  
(June, 1997)

No	Camp	Family	Adult		Children		Total
			M	F	M	F	
1	Bee Ree	415	486	543	688	772	2489
2	Tavoy	685	878	1087	989	1144	4098
3	Prachuab	491	452	558	702	771	2483
4	Halockhani	1011	1324	1376	1686	1733	6119
	Total	2602	3140	3564	4065	4420	15189

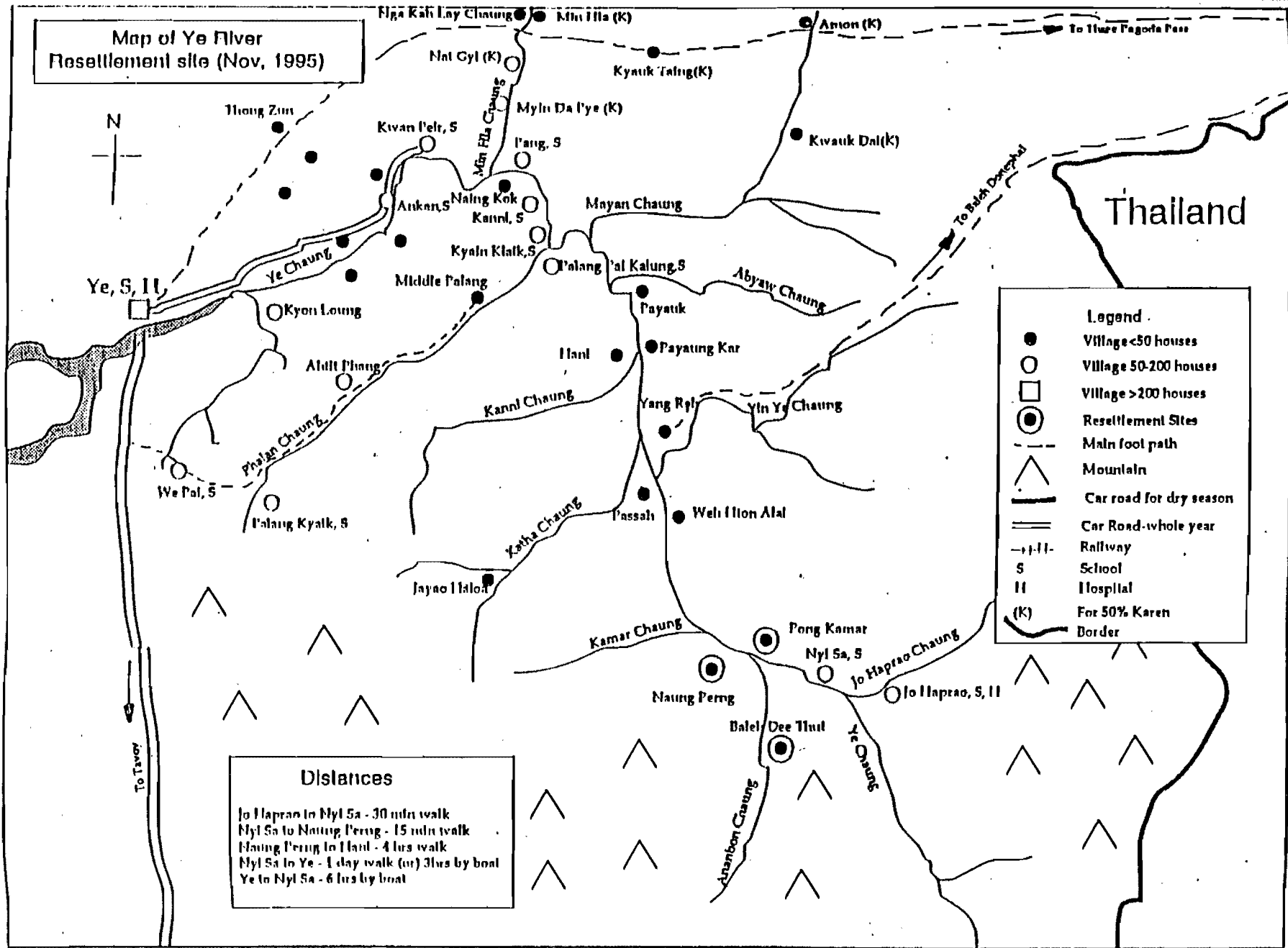
**THE MATERIALS RECEIVED BY THE MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE**  
(June, 1997)

No	Organization	Rice (Sack)	Fish Paste (Kg)	Salt (Kg)	Bean (Kg)	Remark
1	COERR	250	1688	1125	1588	
2	Consortium	4000	-	9000	-	
	Total	4250	1688	10125	1588	





Map of Ye River  
Resettlement site (Nov, 1995)



# Map of Tavoy District Resettlement site (Nov, 1995)

Agriculture  
Payaw, SH

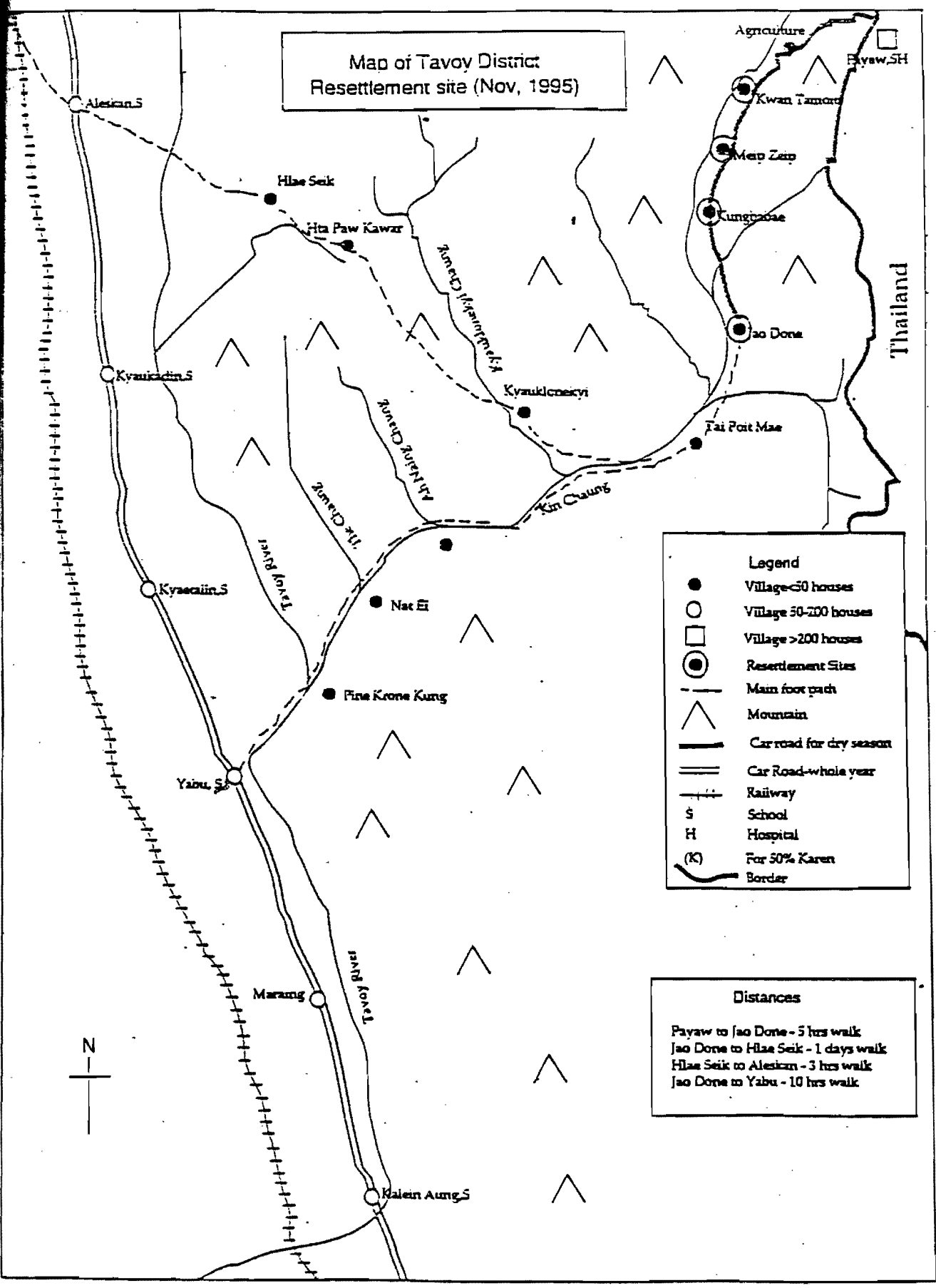
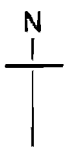
Thailand

**Legend**

- Village <50 houses
- Village 50-200 houses
- Village >200 houses
- ⊙ Resettlement Sites
- - - Main foot path
- △ Mountain
- == Car road for dry season
- === Car Road-whole year
- + + + Railway
- S School
- H Hospital
- (K) For 50% Karen
- ~ Border

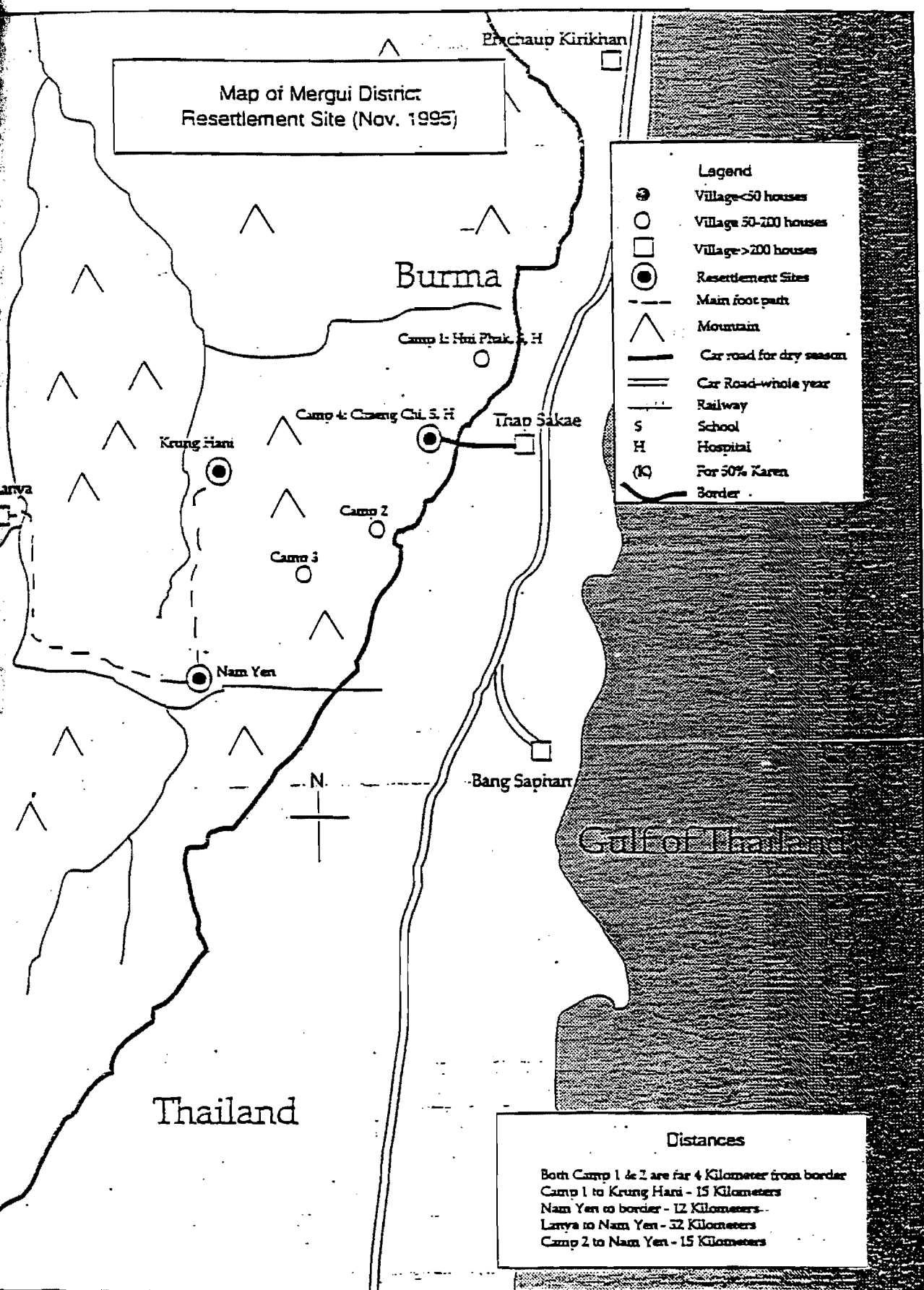
**Distances**

Payaw to Jao Done - 5 hrs walk  
 Jao Done to Hlae Seik - 1 days walk  
 Hlae Seik to Alesiam - 3 hrs walk  
 Jao Done to Yabu - 10 hrs walk



Map of Mergui District  
Resettlement Site (Nov. 1995)

- Legend**
- ⊙ Village < 50 houses
  - Village 50-200 houses
  - Village > 200 houses
  - ⊙ Resettlement Sites
  - - - Main foot path
  - △ Mountain
  - Car road for dry season
  - == Car Road-whole year
  - Railway
  - S School
  - H Hospital
  - (K) For 50% Karen
  - Border



**Distances**

Both Camp 1 & 2 are far 4 Kilometer from border  
 Camp 1 to Krung Hani - 15 Kilometers  
 Nam Yen to border - 12 Kilometers  
 Lanya to Nam Yen - 32 Kilometers  
 Camp 2 to Nam Yen - 15 Kilometers



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