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ကော်မတီ

မင်္ဂလာဒုံ မြေအေးမြရေးအဖွဲ့ချုပ်

MON RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

OCTOBER

2000

The Five Points of the Aim of Mon Relief and Development Committee



1. To provide temporary settlement to the refugees in Thailand-Burma border areas who become homeless and helpless situation due to the oppression of Rangoon military regimes.
2. To help the welfares of the refugees in border areas and IDPs who are displaced inside the country, with foods, shelter and possible protection.
3. To coordinate with local Mon people in developing the grassroots community in the fields of health, education, literacy, agriculture and other rural development projects.
4. To empower the local community for the participation of decision making processes for their own lives and communities.
4. To struggle for the human rights.

The Organization of Mon Relief and Development Committee

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Phra Wongsā Pala | - Chairman |
| 2. Nai Chann Ai | - Vice-Chairman |
| 3. Nai Kasauh Mon | - General Secretary |
| 4. Nai Dung Htaw | - Member |
| 5. Nai Aung Mon | - Member |
| 6. Nai Glae | - Member |
| 7. Nai Chit Nyunt | - Member |
| 8. Nai Tay Jae | - Member |
| 9. Phra Jon Dae | - Member |

Monthly Report of Mon Relief and Development Committee (October, 2000)

Summary of Assessment of Mon Resettlement Sites on Population and Food Situation

In October, 2000, the staff of Mon Relief and Development (MRDC) prepared some questionnaires and traveled around all Mon refugees and IDPs resettlement sites in the Thai-Burma border, but inside the Burmese territory, to conduct a rapid needs assessment survey to determine the population situation in these sites and food conditions in 2001.

In this survey, we, MRDC mainly focus on the population/demography, news arrivals and refugees' perception, agriculture and livelihood in each site and the related political situation and security that effect the population in these sites. Although these refugees prefer that they would like to get full amount of food assistance like the refugees in Thai camps, it is impossible and has informed them to create "self-reliance" for their own families. However, many situations have effected them that they could not stand on their own foots at the moment and that is why MRDC has tried to determine what are their needs and the amount.

The information in this report would provide the aid agencies to consider for humanitarian assistance to those internal refugees like other Burmese refugees who fled from the systematic persecution in their native places and have no stable place to settle.

Although these refugees are on the other side of the border into Burmese territory in area opposite of Kanchanaburi Province, their resettlement sites is quite similar to refugee camps in Thailand, except they could get some access to limited agriculture lands. They could get access to limited agriculture lands because of geographical situations and security conditions near the sites. Even some resettlement sites are not so safe, the new arrivals, who have no choice to settle in other places, still come and take refuge in these sites. Another reason is, that these new arrivals normally have faced food-shortage problems in their home villages for some months already and they required some food and health assistance from MRDC, NMSP and international organizations. Additionally, since NMSP-SLORC/SPDC ceasefire, Thai authorities have closed Mon refugee camps in Thailand and have not accept any new refugees, and the population have gradually increased in these camps.

The internal refugees have no desire to return their native homes (in safely and dignity or otherwise), if there is no genuine peace in Burma. For new arrivals, they are very afraid even to move out not so far outside of the sites, because their past experience in their native villages. And, during the (NMSP-SPDC) ceasefire, which is not the genuine peace, the conditions of these camps have not been stable and whenever fighting happens, they must have to flee from these places.

The summaries of each site situation are as below:

Halockhani – population 7,670 at four main sections or villages (including 2, 033 Karen refugees in Htee Wah Doe); **Supply:** will be enough until the end of December 2000. **No. of rice farms: 172 totally:** 126 farms at three Mon section, Baleh Hani,, Kyaik Soi Mon and Baled Donephai (of 1101 registered families, 11%) and 46 farms at Htee Wah Doe (of 420 registered families, 11%), so only 11% (172 farms) of the total 1521 families in Halockhani site have farms. **Security situation:** permanent ceasefire position, but close to

SPDC base and the Burmese Army's local troops always check the activities of KNU/KNLA in the surrounding area. The borderline in this area is still in dispute situation between Thailand and Burma, and so the Burmese Army always cares about this site. **New arrivals:** about 89 families of 455 population fled from Kya Inn Seikyi, Yebyu, Ye and Thanbyuzayat Townships have come to this site to take refuge.

Bee Ree – Population: 3484 (including 251 members of MNEC, MWO and agriculture office) at four main sections or villages, such as Suwanaphoom, Jo Haprao, Naung Perng and Nyi Sar, while **Nyi Sar** is the base of MNEC, MWO, NMSP's agriculture office and a Mon National High School. **Supply:** will be enough until the end of December 2000. **No. of rice farms: 162** (of 625 registered families, 26%). **Security situation:** the most safe site and permanent ceasefire position, but NMSP/MNLA could not protect if ceasefire breaks out. **New arrivals** in Year 2000 have been about 72 families of 371 people and they have come from Thanbyuzayat, Ye and Yebyu Township area.

Tavoy – Population: 3378 at six sections or villages, such as Krone Kanaing, Weng Naike, Tor Lawi (Agriculture), Jao Done, Krone Baing and Meip Zeip. **Supply:** rice will be enough until the end of December 2000. **No. of rice farms: 114** (of the 639 registered families, 18%). **Security situation:** temporary ceasefire position and close to Burmese Army's outpost, many Burmese troops in the surrounding area. SPDC/SLORC has remained calm since 1997 after a withdrawal of Mon troops from the area by some NMSP officials still base near the site. **New arrivals:** 102 families of 548 people fled Ye, Yebyu Township and repatriated refugees from Thailand have taken refuge in this site.

Therefore, the population have increased about 2, 000 since October 1999, the current population of three sites (Halockhani, Bee Ree and Tavoy) is – 14, 523.

Food – BBC provided and **MRDC** sent in supplies for refugees in all sites through the end of 2000, with 50% of food requirement of the refugees. In February, after many new arrivals arrived to Halockhani, MRDC requested extra assistance. In April and May, after many new arrivals arrived to Bee Ree and Tavoy District camp, MRDC also made another request for extra foods. Although MRDC could manage sending in additional foods before the rain started to Bee Ree, but it could not send in to Tavoy. In September, MRDC managed to send in the remaining foods to Tavoy. Among the families, 11% of Halockhani; 26% of Bee Ree; and 18% of Tavoy families have rice farms. The number of rice farms in Halockhani is lower than last year and rice farms in Bee Ree increase, while Tavoy site has the same number if compares with last year. The average seeds for growing paddy is about 1 tin (palm oil tin produced in Thailand), and the average harvest is only 25 to 45 tins of paddy. This paddy could produce 12 to 20 tins of polished rice and it could sport only 2 to 3 months food supply for one family.

Security: In Year 2000, there has been no sign of political improvement and ceasefire is in on-going situation. However, there have been a lots of fighting near the sites between the Burmese Army and ethnic armed forces, such as KNU and one Mon armed group. This makes not so safe for refugees to move far from their section of resettlement sites. If the NMSP-SPDC ceasefire breaks down, all sites are not safe, and the refugees have no way to flee, except into Thailand.

New arrivals have resettled in these three sites have come from some parts of Karen State, Tenasserim Division and Mon State. Those new arrivals or villagers had been horribly suffered from the various types of human rights abuses and violations committed by government authorities or Burmese Army's local military battalions. In most parts of these local areas, the authorities and army have forced the local villagers to work in road or other construction sites, in army's paddy farms and as civilian porters in the military offensives or regular military operations. In the conflict areas, most villagers are suspected as rebel-supporters and they could face arbitrary killing and punishment. About 20% of men who arrived to refugee resettlement camps in 2000 were suffered from beating because they were suspected of rebel-supporters or during porter service used by Burmese Army. The villagers in Mon State, although they were less suffered from the suspicion of rebel-supporters, they

had to pay a huge amount of tax to government authorities for various taxation instructed by authorities. Because of these tax and continuous use of forced labour, some villagers left nothing and faced food-shortage problems and then fled to resettlement sites.

The refugees' perception is that the current situation inside Burma poses to them that it is not safe to return to their homes. Thus, they could not estimate how long they would remain in these resettlement camps. The refugees are well-informed about the on-going human rights situation in their native places. They received this information from new arrivals and traders, NMSP authorities and other informal sources. Sometimes the refugees also visited back to their relatives in festival time, they knew the detail situation of their native villages. Only a few Mon refugee families who had no choice to take care the elder relatives returned to their native villages. In the resettlement camps, because of unreliable conditions of hilly paddy farming and lack of work opportunity, the refugees have been relied only outside assistance.

The recommendation on needs of internal refugees in the resettlement is to continue supports for these refugees, because they still could not support themselves. It is estimated that only 10-15% of refugees who have rice farms and other businesses in the sites can support themselves. Besides the assistance provided by aid agency, they have to earn as day-labourers and bought rice from traders. Sometimes, during rainy season, while the communication was difficult, some families also faced food-shortage problems for some days until the rice distribution was made.

If the human rights situation inside Burma is not improved and the political problems is not solved, these repatriated refugees may face various difficulties to support themselves. **Therefore, MRDC would like to request the aid agencies to support the refugees with humanitarian food assistance as did in the previous years.**

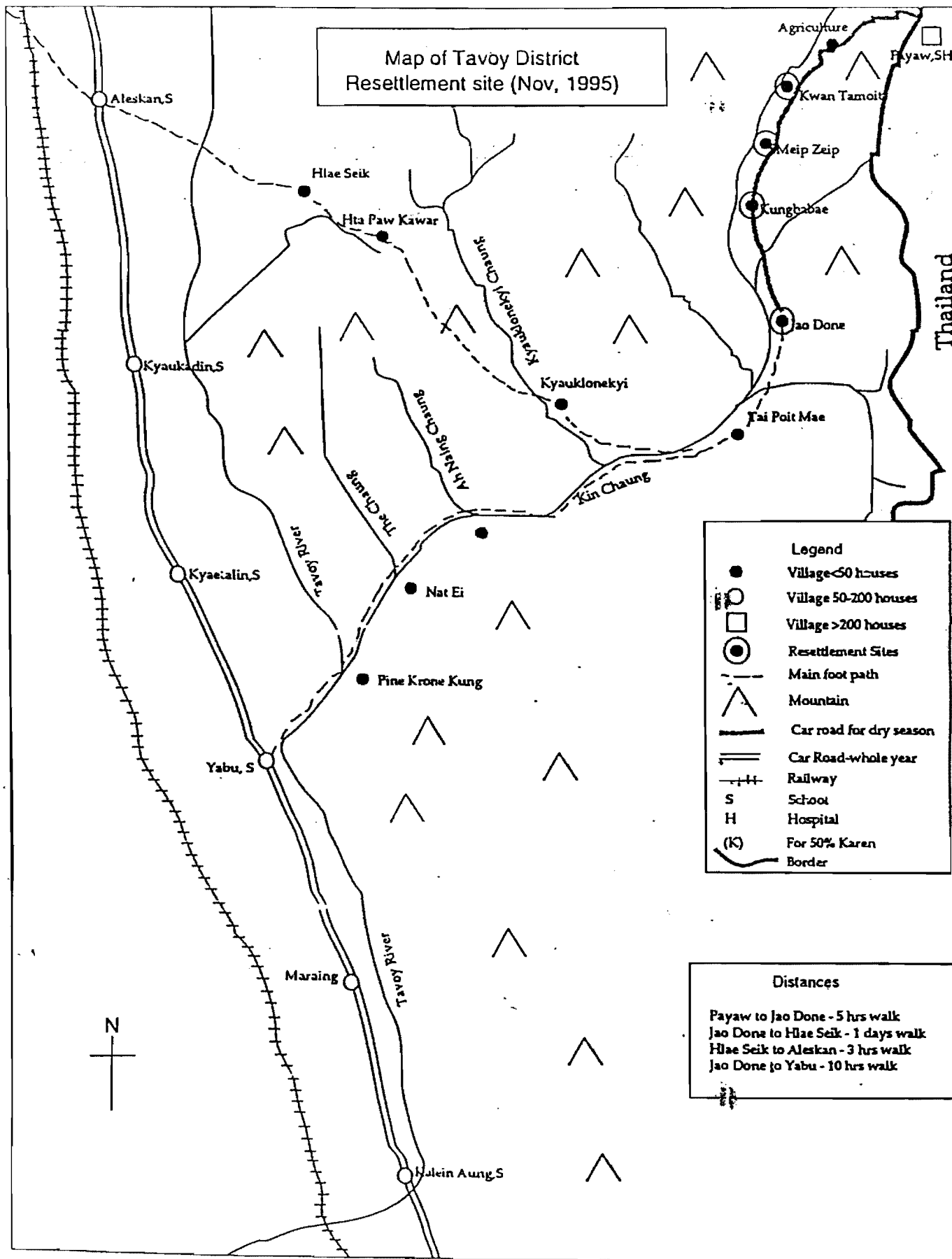
THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF THE THREE CAMPS
(October, 2000)

No.	Camp	Number of Family	Over 12 years		5-12 years		Under 5 years		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Bee Ree	625	1139	1240	390	396	156	163	3484
2	Tavoy	639	1069	1073	427	414	203	192	3378
3	Halockhani	1521	2388	2384	986	944	477	491	7670
	TOTAL	2785	4596	4697	1803	1754	836	846	14532

THE MATERIALS RECEIVED BY THE MON NATIONAL RELIEF COMMITTEE
(October, 2000)

No	Organization	Rice (Sack)	Fish Paste (kg.)	Salt (kg.)	Bean (Kg.)	Remark
1	COERR	120	360	240	1000	
2	BBC	-	-	-	-	
	TOTAL	120	360	240	1000	

Map of Tavoy District Resettlement site (Nov, 1995)



Map of Ye River
Resettlement site (Nov, 1995)

