The ARAKAN PROJECT

Forced labour still prevails:

An overview of forced labour practices in North Arakan, Burma

(November 2011 to May 2012)

Submission to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
for consideration at the International Labour Conference 2012

30 May 2012

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The Arakan Project, 30 May 2012

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The Arakan Project is an independent NGO engaged in research-based advocacy focussing on the human rights situation of the Rohingya minority of North Arakan State, Burma/Myanmar. The project coordinator, Chris Lewa, can be contacted at: chris.lewa@gmail.com

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QUOTES FROM ROHINGYA FORCED LABOURERS

"I do forced labour sometimes 3 days, sometimes 5 days a month, in the NaSaKa camp. My father usually does the sentry duties, but sometimes I also have to do it when my father is sick. I try to stay awake during sentry duty because, whenever I fall asleep, my father has to give chickens. Because of forced labour I cannot go to school."

-- A 10-year boy from Zaw Ma Tet, Maungdaw Township (South), 9 May 2012 (Interview #09)

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"Last month [April 2012] I worked 2 days for the NaSaKa, 5 days for Thin Ga Net Army Camp #552, 4 days for the Army Camp #564 and I had to spend 4 nights as a sentry. In our area the use of forced labour is basically the same as in previous years – mostly for the Army. Some months it is a bit less but then it increases again."

-- A villager from Mee Chaung Zay, Buthidaung Township (North), 16 May 2012 (Interview #14)

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"So far in 2012 I worked an average of 4 days a month for the NaSaKa camp and 2 nights a month as a sentry. 4 days plus 2 nights of forced labour in a month are too much for us as we depend on a daily income. If we don't work one day, we suffer the next day."

-- A villager from Myin Hlut, Maungdaw Township (South), 24 March 2012 (Interview #11)

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INTRODUCTION

This report by the Arakan Project offers an overview of forced labour practices in Northern Arakan/Rakhine State of Burma/Myanmar over a 6-month period – from November 2011 to May 2012 – corresponding to the dry season 2011/2012. It updates our previous submission *"Forced labour after the elections"* dated 22 August 2011[1].

Its key objective is to provide up-to-date information to the International Trade Unions Confederation (ITUC) for input at the Special Sitting on Burma/Myanmar of the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards to be held on 2 June 2012 during the International Labour Conference and for incorporation in the ITUC annual submission to the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) reviewing Myanmar's compliance with ILO Convention 29.

This submission is primarily based on field reports from sources within Maungdaw and Buthidaung Townships of North Arakan, complemented and corroborated by 18 testimonies collected among Rohingya seasonal migrants and visitors interviewed in South-East Bangladesh between March and May 2012 as well as among Rohingya boat people who had arrived in Malaysia in early 2012. It provides an analysis of trends and practices while interview excerpts are included as an appendix.

ANALYSIS

Following the 2010 General Elections, a new civilian government took office in March 2011 headed by President U Thein Sein and has since engaged in a number of reforms toward democratisation. With regard to forced labour, the Myanmar Government and the ILO signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 16 March 2012 to jointly develop action plans for the total eradication of forced labour by 2015[2]. According to this MOU, 13 categories of forced labour practices have been prioritized and a benchmarked strategy administered by a Joint Working Group, including representatives of the Ministry of Defence, is to be defined by 31 May 2012. While the reform agenda and new commitment to eliminate forced labour are welcome, major challenges to implementation remain and will test political will.

• Forced labour trends and patterns

In North Arakan/Rakhine State, forced labour continues on a large scale. Nevertheless, since the onset of this dry season, forced labour exactions have noticeably decreased in some areas, particularly in central and northern parts of Maungdaw Township. But villagers complain about increase in arbitrary taxes. In Buthidaung Township however, forced labour, exacted mostly by the Army, is as prevalent as in previous years and has even increased in some areas. Forced labour on camp maintenance for the NaSaKa and the Army as well as for sentry duty remains unchanged throughout North Arakan.

[1] The Arakan Project, *"Forced labour after the elections: Overview of forced labour practices in North Arakan, Burma (November 2010 to July 2011)"* dated 22 August 2011 – To be accessed at: http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/AP-Forced_labour_after_the_elections-2011-08-22.pdf

[2] ILO Governing Body GB.313/INS/6(Add.) dated 19 March 2012, Appendix 2 http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_175839.pdf

• Decrease in forced labour in Central and North Maungdaw

The decline in forced labour observed in Central and North Maungdaw may be attributed mainly to Garrison Engineers (GE), which are specialised engineering units within the Armed Forces under the Ministry of Defence. They are in charge of strategic infrastructure construction such as the border fence, certain roads and bridges as well as army camps. Although an adequate government budget is reportedly allocated for such projects, many villagers had ended up in previous years doing forced labour for little or no pay as GE used to subcontract these projects to the NaSaKa, who pocketed funds earmarked for the labour force and instead recruited forced labourers. This season, however, GE has directly hired the necessary work force for its projects in most areas (but not all) and labourers employed by GE are fully remunerated with a standard daily wage of 2,000 Kyat. This rate is less than the market rate in Maungdaw (2,500 to 3,000 Kyat per day) but villagers work willingly on these projects due to lack of other employment opportunities.

The reduction in forced labour in Central and North Maungdaw could be related to the fact that some major infrastructure projects requiring large pools of labourers have been completed. The border fence is now finished as is related infrastructure such as NaSaKa outposts built at each river mouth and connecting roads. Initially, the border fence needed substantive repair work as sections of the embankment on which it is erected had either collapsed during past monsoons or was washed away by tidal surges of the Naf River. The soil of the embankment has become more compact and more resistant to erosion, and any necessary repair to the embankment undertaken by GE is remunerated. Many bridges are under construction in North Maungdaw, all carried out by GE with paid labour.

In South Maungdaw, some worksites supervised by GE are still subcontracted to the NaSaKa, and are consequently implemented with forced labour.

In North Maungdaw, villagers also reported a decrease in demands for bamboo poles to cut and deliver to camps. However, in those areas, the Army and the NaSaKa have now replaced the compulsory supply of bamboo poles by an arbitrary tax collected at check posts whereby bamboo cutters have to part with an in-kind quota of what they had cut – 20 to 50 out of 1,000 bamboo poles.

• Increase in arbitrary taxes and fines

In Maungdaw Township, while forced labour has decreased, reports of arbitrary taxes and fines, including arrest and detention for the purpose of extortion, have increased. Extortion, arbitrary taxes, fines and arrest are nothing new for the Rohingya in North Arakan but the number of instances reported over the past few months indicates a more systematic use of such tactics. Villagers are increasingly targeted with allegations of drug peddling, extra-marital affairs, unauthorised marriages, illegal border-crossing to Bangladesh, unauthorised house extension, unlawful construction on land registered as paddy fields, illicit possession of a mobile phone, involvement in human smuggling, etc. or subject to extortion when receiving remittances from relatives abroad. In many cases, such allegations result in arrest and arbitrary detention without any legal process for the sole purpose of imposing a ransom for release. Forced labour should not be substituted by arbitrary fines and/or arrest to avoid scrutiny under Convention 29.

• Prevailing practices of forced labour in North Arakan

Demands for forced labour vary from one area to another, mostly depending on the number and proximity of camps in a given location. In Maungdaw Township, the NaSaKa has established camps and outposts all along the border with Bangladesh and is the main user of forced labour whereas in Buthidaung Township it is the Army. In North Arakan, as opposed to the rest of the country, forced labour is exacted on a discriminatory fashion as it is only imposed on the Rohingya population while other communities are exempt.

The District Administration has reportedly announced through loudspeakers that instructions had been transmitted to village authorities not to provide forced labour to the Army, the NaSaKa or police. But these directives have been ignored by the security agencies and the civilian administration is not in a position to challenge them.

Village authorities have to requisition quotas of unpaid workers on a daily basis according to the demands of the NaSaKa and/or Army camps, sometimes the police. The number of labourers depends on the size of the camp, the number of camps in the vicinity of the village and the tasks to be performed. Labourers are selected on a rotation system by the village administration. Villagers who can afford it prefer to pay bribes to avoid such work and, as a result, the poor have to perform not just their own stint of work but also that of those who have paid off the authorities. Fulfilling simultaneous orders from several camps or outposts from various authorities is an intolerable burden on the poor, depriving them of their daily income. As a result, they often send their children to comply with forced labour demands.

1. Road construction/rehabilitation

Roads, bridges and other public works typically require large numbers of labourers. Such infrastructure construction has witnessed a decrease in forced labour in Central and North Maungdaw as Garrison Engineers took over the direct implementation of these projects, remunerating the workforce accordingly.

But a similar improvement has not taken effect in South Maungdaw where GE continues to subcontract certain work to the NaSaKa. Villagers from Inn Din and Kyauk Pan Daw claimed that, during this dry season, they constantly received orders from the NaSaKa camp of Inn Din to collect rocks and break them up into stone chips. GE trucks were regularly seen collecting these stone chips to deliver to other worksites. These villagers have not been paid and they assume that the GE budget has been siphoned off by the NaSaKa.

In North Buthidaung, Mee Chaung Zay villagers were hired by GE to work on a military road near Thin Ga Net Army camp for a monthly salary of 60,000 Kyat. They complained that they were only paid half the promised wages. They were initially given a cash advance of 15,000 Kyat but only another 15,000 Kyat at the end of the month (Interview #14).

Other road rehabilitation projects are directly implemented with forced labour by the NaSaKa or the Army. Although of strategic importance, villagers we talked to are unaware whether GE has any supervisory role in them.

The main road running along the border with Bangladesh from North Maungdaw to Ah Ngu Maw in Rathedaung requires annual rehabilitation after the monsoon. In South Maungdaw

where the soil is sandy, sections of the road were badly damaged by the rains in 2011. The NaSaKa ordered villagers to repair and consolidate these sections, sometimes for 7 days at a time, without any pay. Later, villagers were made to water the road surface to compact the added soil (Interviews #10 and 11). The NaSaKa also recruited forced labourers to improve other sections of the same road in North Maungdaw.

In Buthidaung Township, numerous reports cited the Army forcing villagers to renovate and upgrade roads connecting different Army camps. There is a heavy military presence around Buthidaung town with two major camps in Da Pyu Chaung and Thin Ga Net and smaller outposts in villages situated along the Mayu Range with roads linking them.

Interestingly, a villager from Nga Yant Chaung (Taung Bazar) recounted how, in early 2012, Army Battalion #552 of the Thin Ga Net camp in Buthidaung Township had substituted forced labourers with soldiers on a road construction site for one day in order to fool high-ranking military officials visiting and videoing the worksite (Interview #13).

2. Other infrastructure construction

In May 2012, the NaSaKa is requisitioning up to 250 villagers from 4 village tracts of South Maungdaw on a daily basis to excavate a diversion canal on the Myin Hlut River to prevent damage to a bridge. Initially, the workforce was recruited with the assurance that they would be paid 2,500 Kyat a day. As workers only received a small portion of the promised wages, they abandoned the worksite and the NaSaKa issued orders to replace them with forced labour (Interview #10).

During the period covered by this report, we have not received any information about forced labour for the construction or extension of model villages.

Mid-April 2012, the Rakhine community celebrated the coming of the Buddhist New Year with the traditional Water Festival. For this occasion, wooden stages and pavilions are set up in many villages for people to enjoy splashing water on each other. The NaSaKa ordered Rohingya villagers to supply planks, thatch and other materials and build these structures with forced labour. On average 10 people were recruited for 4 to 5 days for this purpose in various villages.

3. Camp maintenance

Camp labour may encompass many types of activities ranging from maintenance chores and repair of existing facilities to paddy cultivation, vegetable gardening, tree planting, animal husbandry, portering or collection of forest resources, taking place in and outside the camp area. Most of these activities are typically associated with an institutional self reliance policy in the defence establishment, but sometimes this is also for the commercial profit of military or NaSaKa personnel.

Camp maintenance is a year-round duty imposed on all villages for all camps and consists in chores such as removing bushes and weeds from the camp area and its surroundings, trimming grass, fetching water and filling up water tanks, repairing buildings and fences, collecting and chopping firewood, washing clothes and dishes, etc.

4. Animal husbandry

Many camps raise livestock for the consumption of troops stationed there. Rohingya forced labourers have to look after pigs, cows and buffaloes – cleaning their sheds, feeding them, grazing the cattle. Taking care of pigs is a task particularly offensive to Muslims.

5. Cultivation and plantation work

Paddy cultivation and tree planting are usually the main types of forced labour during the rainy season. The monsoon had not yet started at the time of this research and it is impossible to predict whether the NaSaKa and the Army will use villagers in the same way as in 2011.

However, during the dry season, forced labour is used for cultivation of some crops. Some camps produce summer paddy and some paddy fields are often used for vegetable gardening during the dry season. Villagers are also called to look after fruit orchards, plant nurseries, eucalyptus, rubber and other tree plantations, even though the planting of new seedlings would only start after the onset of the monsoon season.

6. Collection of logs and bamboos

Villagers regularly received orders for logs and bamboo poles of a designated dimension issued by the NaSaKa and the military. These are used as construction materials, for burning in brick kilns or to be sold on the market as a profit-making venture. Each family is allocated a quota to cut in the forest and deliver to the camp. Most Army camps in Buthidaung Township have brickyards, which require large quantities of logs. An adult man can only carry 1 or 2 logs at a time and fulfilling the quota is physically heavy and also time-consuming. In North Maungdaw, the Army has reportedly substituted demands for bamboos by a 'bamboo tax' imposed on cutters.

7. Portering

The Army mostly collects porters in remote hill areas inaccessible by motor roads, especially in North Maungdaw, North Buthidaung and along the Mayu Range separating Maungdaw and Buthidaung Townships. Porters have to carry food rations and supplies from a main camp or markets to outposts or to carry soldiers' loads when on patrol or during transfer. They may be recruited through village authorities or simply picked up on the way.

During this dry season, villagers in North Maungdaw reported a decrease in portering duties but people residing in the proximity of Army camps in Central and North Buthidaung complained of an increase in demands for porters to escort troops on patrol.

8. Sentry duty

Recruitment of sentries is another set routine. Villagers are required to spend the night in village sentry posts, generally in groups of 4, and are frequently penalised if found asleep on duty. Demands for sentries may vary according to the security situation. Recently, civilian sentries were also used in some NaSaKa outposts. Sentry duty is particularly prevalent along the Bangladesh border in Maungdaw Township, where it is reportedly on the increase.

- **Forced child labour**

The presence of children among forced labourers, some as young as 9 or 10, is pervasive. Observers estimate that 20% or more of forced labourers in North Arakan are children. Children are often involved in forced labour for camp maintenance, agriculture work and as sentries, less commonly on road construction where the workload is physically demanding. In its alternative report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child examining Myanmar's report in January 2012, The Arakan Project documented the experiences of Rohingya children aged 9 to 12 engaged in forced labour[3].

Children are sometimes beaten on the worksite if they do not perform their duty adequately. The Arakan Project interviewed a 10-year old boy hit with a stick by a NaSaKa man who had caught him playing in the camp. His index finger bears a scar and his hand was still sore at the time of the interview, 3 months after the incident (Interview #9).

Child forced labour is a direct consequence of high demands for forced labour placed upon the population. The authorities do not particularly target children and would prefer able-bodied men fit to perform heavy work. But, with the recruitment system based on a quota per household, poor Rohingya families frequently send their children to forced labour sites on their behalf, as women are generally kept in the domestic realm and adult males have to work for the survival of the family. Forced labour seriously impacts on children's development and is particularly disruptive for those pursuing an education, often leading to their dropping out of school.

CONCLUSION

Despite the reform agenda pursued by the Government of Myanmar and the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the ILO and the Government aiming at the elimination of forced labour by 2015, there has been little progress toward this objective in North Arakan and no effective measures have been implemented there to eradicate forced labour.

Forced labour continues to be widely and systematically practiced in North Arakan and little has changed for the Rohingya population. A decrease in forced labour has been observed in certain areas, where Garrison Engineers took control of some infrastructure projects and employs paid labour. However, villagers in other areas continue to receive regular orders to work on road construction, in NaSaKa and Army camps, as sentries and porters, without remuneration and facing penalties if they do not comply, as in past years.

Myanmar has yet to take concrete steps to implement two recommendations of the 1998 ILO Commission of Inquiry and to translate formal commitments into realities on the ground in all regions of the country. In the view of the Arakan Project, it would therefore be premature for the ILO to lift the measures imposed under Article 33 of its Constitution.

It is also too early for governments in the region to consider initiating a repatriation programme of Rohingya refugees as long as forced labour remains a major cause for flight.

[3] The Arakan Project, *"Issues to be raised concerning stateless Rohingya children in Myanmar (Burma), Submission to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child"*, January 2012 – Available at: http://www.burmalibrary.org/docs12/AP-CRCMyanmar-12-01.pdf

APPENDIX: FIELD INTERVIEWS

From March to May 2012, The Arakan Project collected 18 testimonies related to forced labour among Rohingyas from Northern Arakan/Rakhine State, Burma/Myanmar. Most are interviews conducted with seasonal migrants or visitors within one week of their arrival in Bangladesh and a few are excerpts from longer interviews carried out with boat people who arrived in Malaysia in early 2012.

These narratives are presented geographically - by townships (Maungdaw and Buthidaung) and then from north to south.

Terms used by interviewees:

NaSaKa:	Border security forces (9 sectors along the Bangladesh-Burma border)
GE:	Garrison Engineers, specialised engineering units under the Tatmadaw in charge of strategic infrastructure construction
VA:	Village Administrator (lower-tier of administration, previously VPDC)
Sehgaung:	Leader of a hamlet (10 houses) reporting to the Village Administrator
Kani:	Local land measurement – 1 acre = 2 ½ Kani
SaRaPa:	Military Intelligence

R—, a 10-year old boy from Maungdaw, did forced labour in a NaSaKa camp in early 2012. A NaSaKa man saw him playing in the camp and hit his hand with a stick. He subsequently fled from Myanmar to Malaysia by boat (Interview #09)

A. MAUNGDAW TOWNSHIP

- **Interview #01**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **38, male**
Marital status: **Married with 4 children**
Occupation: **Day labourer**
Village: **Ye Aung San Yabway Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (North)**
Date of interview: **24 March 2012**
Ref: **#12/25**

There is still forced labour in our village but it is less than before. I have to work 2 or 3 times a month for the NaSaKa of our area.

Camp labour
Most NaSaKa officials in Sector 1 live in the camp with their families, so there are a lot of chores to do every day to maintain the camp. We have to fetch water for their use, collect, chop and pile firewood, clean the camp area, repair their houses and fences, etc. to maintain their office and houses.

There is also a NaSaKa outpost near a bridge in Majerpara village and this outpost also uses forced labour to maintain the outpost and its houses.

Last month I had to work a total of 3 days - one day in NaSaKa Sector 1 office in Ye Aung Tha Pyi, one day in the NaSaKa outpost in Majerpara and one day in another NaSaKa outpost in In Tu Lah - to do all sorts of household chores and maintenance work.

This year NaSaKa has leased out their brickyard to a local Rohingya man. This man bought logs from the local villagers and paid for them at the local rate.

Road and bridge construction are now implemented by GE and they do pay labourers for their work.

Bamboo collection replaced by arbitrary bamboo tax
The Army no longer use forced labour indiscriminately as they did in the past but they still collect labourers whenever they need. Before, they used to send orders for us to collect large quantities of bamboos in the forest. But now they collect bamboo taxes from the cutters when they float the bamboo downstream on the river to sell at the market. Soldiers take 50 bamboos as a tax for every 1,000 pieces. As many bamboo rafts are coming down the river every day, they collect a very large number of bamboos.

Nowadays forced labour is mainly used inside the NaSaKa camps and outposts in Ye Aung Tha Pyi, Kash La Det Pit, Majerpara, Rani and In Tu Lah.

Sentry duty
Sentry duty in the village remains unchanged. It is even more than before. Now I sometimes have to be in the sentry post for 3 nights a week.

- **Interview #02**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **35, male**
Marital status: **Married with 3 children**
Occupation: **Farmer**
Village: **Kyaung Na Hpay Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (North)**
Date of interview: **15 April 2012**
Ref: **#12/57**

Forced labour has decreased in some villages but it remains the same as before in others. It depends on the local Village Administrator. Villagers who have good relations with the village leaders are rarely summoned for forced labour but those who don't or the poor are not spared.

Camp labour & portering
Once a week I have to work for the NaSaKa Sector 1 in Ye Aung San Bway to maintain their camp or to carry rations from Sector 1 office to In Tu lah or Tat Chaung NaSaKa outposts. Sometimes, NaSaKa officers of Sector 1 order me and other villagers to accompany them all the way to Kha Maung Seik on market days to carry their purchases to their camp.

Last month, I worked exactly 4 days: 1 day to carry loads from their Sector camp in Ye Aung San Bway to Kha Moung Seik for a NaSaKa group being transferred out; 1 day to carry a load from their camp to Baw Tu Lar and 2 days for maintenance work inside their camps such as putting stones on pavements in their camp area, stacking up firewood and clearing bushes. Apart from this I had to supply 15 wooden poles to replace poles along their fence. However, in any case, my work is not more than 4 days a month for the NaSaKa, which is less than last year.

Sentry duty
4 days a month is not too much but we really resent sentry duty. I still have to be a sentry for 2 nights a week. This duty is really an extra burden. It hampers our daily life and, on top of this, we often have to pay fines for falling asleep.

Planting
During the last monsoon [mid-2011] the NaSaKa sold rubber saplings through our village administration office and each family had to buy 20 to 50 depending on their wealth. Poor families had to buy 20 saplings and the rich 50. I had to purchase 20 and paid 3,000 Kyat. Then we had to plant them on the hill we had cleared before the monsoon. I don't know what will happen this year. Many saplings died and we may have to replace them but so far we have not received any orders.

Arbitrary taxes
This year, the NaSaKa camps and outposts are collecting bamboos by imposing a tax in kind on the cutters. One has to give 20 bamboo poles for every 1,000 pieces collected. This is a new arbitrary tax.

- **Interview #03**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **38, male**
Marital status: **Married with 8 children (1 son and 7 daughters)**
Occupation: **Farmer**
Village: **Hlaing Thi Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (North)**
Date of interview: **28 April 2012**
Ref: **#12/58**

Camp labour
There is still forced labour in my village and I have to work 2 to 3 days a month for the NaSaKa Sector office, a NaSaKa outpost and the Army camp. The NaSaKa Sector 2 camp of Kha Maung Seik demands 10 labourers every day to maintain their camp. So, one day they recruit 10 labourers from one hamlet and the next day from another. NaSaKa Sector 2 is building new brick houses in their camp and we have to carry sand and water to the construction site. We also have to fetch firewood and water for their families living in the camp. There is also a small NaSaKa outpost in our village with 7 NaSaKa personnel. This outpost collects 1 labourer every day – to maintain their outpost and carry messages from the outpost to the sector office.

In addition, there is also an Army camp close by and the Army also requisitions labourers to collect firewood for their cooking fires.

Road repair
Our villagers are also made to repair the road from our village to Aung Zaw, another village near the border fence deep in the jungle. This road was damaged during the last monsoon and people from different villages were ordered to repair it. We have not received any wages for this work.

Collection of logs for brick-baking
There is a brickyard in Aung Zaw village. This year, the NaSaKa collected logs from each family under their jurisdiction. I had to supply 6 logs to this brickyard.

Bridge construction
Many bridges are under construction in the area of Kha Maung Seik to link villages under NaSaKa Sector 2. Many villages work on these construction sites under Garrison Engineers. They are unskilled labourers but they are paid 2,000 Kyat a day.

Sentry duty
Sentry duty remains the same as last year - in some villages it has even increased. Sometimes I have to do 3 nights a week of guard duty when there are rumours of robbers or rebels infiltrating from Bangladesh. The small NaSaKa outpost in our village also recruits 4 sentries from our village every night. They have to guard the post so that the NaSaKa personnel can sleep peacefully.

Portering
This year, the Army has seldom recruited porters. I have not been forced to be a porter.

- **Interview #04**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **45, male**
Marital status: **Married with 4 children**
Occupation: **Day labourer**
Village: **Kun Thee Pin Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (North)**
Date of interview: **14 April 2012**
Ref: **#12/59**

Camp labour
The use of forced labour has decreased in our area. Nowadays I have to work one or two days a month for the NaSaKa, mostly for camp maintenance in the Medai and Taung Pyo Let We NaSaKa camp. From January to March, I worked in these two camps for 8 days in total. This work was not too hard. We had to clean the camp area, repair the fence, replace damaged wooden posts, clear bushes around the camp, chop firewood for their cooking fires and other odd jobs.

Portering
Sometimes the Army collects porters to accompany them on patrol and we have to carry their loads from our village to Kha Moung Seik. But this is not regular, only when they go on patrol. Since the beginning of this year, I have only been summoned once, because Kha Moung Seik is quite far from my village, I had to spend the night there and could only return home the next day.

Sentry duty
Sentry duty, however, remains unchanged. I have to do sentry duty 1 night a week – that is 4 nights a month. Sentry duty usually means arbitrary fines as the NaSaKa always find some excuses to fine us. Sometimes they demand kerosene, diesel, a bag of cement or a chicken as a fine.

Bridge construction
A few bridges are under construction in our area. But such work is under the direct supervision of Garrison Engineers and workers receive a daily wage of 2,000 Kyat a day.

If the forced labour situation remains like this, we can bear it as we still have enough time to work for our family without starving. We hope it will not increase again. Our main problem is sentry duty because of the unavoidable arbitrary fines.

- **Interview #05**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **25, male**
Marital status: **Single**
Occupation: **Day labourer**
Village: **Leik Ya Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (North)**
Date of interview: **6 May 2012**
Ref: **#12/60**

Camp labour
The NaSaKa sector 4 camp is not far from our village. Consequently we have to work on average 4 days a month in their camp without pay. This camp has a brickyard, a vegetable garden, many houses and other buildings and they recruit many labourers every day. They use 15 to 20 labourers a day, just to clear their camp, do some small repair jobs, carry water to fill their water tank, collect and chop firewood, etc. This year I mostly worked in their vegetable garden and did some repair jobs.

Collection of logs
Apart from this, after the last monsoon, I was ordered to supply 14 logs to their brickyard. I could carry hardly 2 logs at a time and it took me 7 days to carry them all.

Working 4 days a month for the NaSaKa is a set routine. If I cannot go then I must inform our *sehgaung* in advance and pay him 500 Kyat or send someone else to replace me. Otherwise, he would complain to the NaSaKa that I had ignored NaSaKa's order and I may face punishment in addition to a fine.

Portering
Apart from the work for the NaSaKa camp, the Army took me as a porter on patrol. I had to carry their load to The Chaung. That is all the forced labour I have done for the authorities this year.

Sentry duty
Sentry duty is always a tiring job though; I still have to work 4 nights a month as a village sentry. I don't find any justification for such a duty. Why do the NaSaKa compel us night after night to do sentry duty as there has never been a single incident of robbery or attack in our village? Night duty takes lots of energy and I am too tired the next morning and I cannot do any work that day. Moreover, there are arbitrary fines to pay almost every night.

- **Interview #06**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **40, male**
Marital status: **Married with 6 children**
Occupation: **Day labourer**
Village: **Kyein Chaung Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (North)**
Date of interview: **24 March 2012**
Ref: **#12/24**

Camp maintenance
Forced labour has decreased but I still have to work in the Kyein Chaung NaSaKa camp to maintain their camp. However, there are fewer work days than last year: Last year I had to do forced labour there for 4 to 5 days a month and this year only 2 or 3 days a month. We have to clear their camp and courtyard, fix the fences, collect firewood, look after their garden, repair their houses, etc.

Construction of a NaSaKa outpost
Last year after the monsoon the NaSaKa established a new outpost in our hamlet manned by 7 NaSaKa personnel. Our villagers had to supply all the building materials such as wooden poles, bamboo and thatch and we had to build the post for them with forced labour. After

completion, this outpost also started recruiting labourers through our *sehgaung* – 5 to 7 every day. However, there is not much work to do but they still summon labourers and we have to spend most of the day sitting idle. The main tasks are fetching water and collecting firewood. Our villagers go there by rotation for at least one day a month.

This NaSaKa outpost also makes each family supply them with 1 kg of rice every month so that they don't have to carry their rations from the main camp.

Carrying bamboo
Last month [February 2012] our *sehgaung* ordered me to go to the NaSaKa camp in Kyein Chaung and bring bamboo rafts from there to the NaSaKa headquarters in Kyi Kan Pyin. Five labourers had to bring 30 bamboo rafts down the river. It took us 4 days: 3½ days to reach the NaSaKa headquarters and half day to return home.

Messenger duties
After that, our *sehgaung* sent me again to the Kyein Chaung NaSaKa camp to carry letters and files to the NaSaKa camp in Lake Ya.

In February I had to do 5 days of forced labour, which is more than in January. After the last monsoon, I usually had to work 2 to 3 days a month for the NaSaKa.

Road repair and bridge construction
Road repair is ongoing in my area but this is no longer forced labour. The GE [Garrison Engineers] now hires labourers to put stones on the road surface and they pay 2,000 Kyat a day. The average market wage is 3,000-3,500 Kyat plus one meal paid by the employer. The GE pay us less and do not provide a meal. Although 2,000 Kyat is less than the market rate, we are ready to do this work because there is no regular casual labour in our village. Whatever we receive is good for us – at least, we can buy some rice to feed our families.

There are two bridges under construction: one in the hamlet of Kerani Bazar, 1 km to the west of our village, and the other a bit further. Many villagers are working on these two worksites and they receive 2,000 Kyat per day.

Collection of wooden poles
There is no brickyard in our area but the NaSaKa camp of Kyein Chaung still orders each family to collect and supply one bundle of wooden poles every month. I do not know what the NaSaKa use them for every month – most probably to sell to Bangladesh. Just before I arrived here [March 2012], I had supplied my monthly quota.

Rubber plant nursery
Our Village Tract Administration office established two nurseries for rubber plants and collected 2,000 Kyat from each family during this dry season. I also paid 2,000 Kyat. They told us that the seedlings would be given to the villagers to plant during this coming monsoon. However, I wonder where these rubber seedlings will be planted as neither the NaSaKa nor the Village Administration has cleared any hillsides for this purpose.

Sentry duty
The amount of forced labour for the NaSaKa has decreased overall but sentry duty remains unchanged. I still have to do 2 nights of sentry duty a week. That is too much for me.

- **Interview #07**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **17, male**
Marital status: **Single**
Occupation: **Firewood collector**
Village: **Myo Thu Gyi Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (Central)**
Date of interview: **8 May 2012**
Ref: **#12/51**

I had to work at least one day a week – for NaSaKa, police or SaRaPa – sometimes in their camps to repair their fences or houses, sometimes on the road. Whenever there was an official visitor, we had to clean the road between Maungdaw and Buthidaung, paint the bases of trees and fence them, as well as remove any garbage from the roadside. If I could not go for any reason, I had to pay a fine. In addition, I had to do one night's sentry duty in our village once a week. If I could not attend, I had to pay one chicken. In my village, forced labour this year was the same as last year. This year, we did not need to work on the border fence but we did last year. Sometimes border fence work was paid, sometimes not.

- **Interview #08**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **50, male**
Marital status: **Married with 8 children**
Occupation: **Farmer**
Village: **Tha Yae Kone Tan Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (South)**
Date of interview: **20 March 2012**
Ref: **#12/23**

Camp labour
Our village is under the jurisdiction of NaSaKa Sector 8, located in Myin Hlut. The NaSaKa and the local Village Tract office categorize people according to their wealth. Those with money pay the NaSaKa and the Village Tract office regularly and do not need to do forced labour, but the poor who can't provide money, rice or chicken are the worst victims of forced labour.

I regularly pay the NaSaKa and the village authorities whatever they ask so I only have to do a little forced labour. But sometime I still have to supply a labourer to maintain the NaSaKa camp. Each family has to do so and they need a good number of labourers every day. In my village tract, there are 11 *sehgaung* and each has to send 5 labourers 4 times a month – this means 20 labourers a month from our hamlet have to work in the NaSaKa Sector camp in Myin Hlut or in their posts under that sector. In total, this makes 220 people working for the NaSaKa every month in our village tract as a regular practice.

They use forced labour to repair their houses inside the camp as their roofs are made of leaves or thatch and need to be repaired before the monsoon and replaced after the monsoon. They have a large camp area and wooden fence posts need to be replaced almost every day. Workers also have to dig trenches and replace the planks covering the trenches. In addition, they have orchards and plantations outside their camp area – on the hill – and they order labourers to look after them.

Road construction and repair
Apart from camp maintenance, the NaSaKa use labourers on the main road between Maungdaw and Ah Ngu Maw [South Rathedaung]. After the last monsoon, we had to supply stones and boulders for road repair. People from every village were summoned to repair the section of the road passing through their village. In fact, road repair is a regular work. After every monsoon, such work is very heavy as roads are badly damaged and many labourers are requisitioned for many days but, even at other times of the year, we are called to smooth uneven road sections and fill in the ruts made by heavy-loaded trucks.

Construction of a new Village Administration office
Now [March 2012], our Village Tract Administration is building a new office. The NaSaKa have sent an order to the Village Administration to supply building materials for this but the VA took advantage of this. They ordered each family to provide 2 planks, wooden poles or beams. Since there are a few hundreds families in our village tract, the building materials collected would be enough to construct 10 to 15 offices. But the village authorities sell the surplus to Bangladesh. I also supplied 2 wooden poles for their office and paid 10,000 Kyat cash to purchase nails. Villagers are busy building the office at this very moment.

As I said earlier, I have to hire 4 labourers every month to replace me. Most of the time they have to do camp labour in Myin Hlut camp but sometimes they do road work.

Sentry duty
Sentry duty is another burden on our people. Our hamlet has to send 10 men for duty at the sentry posts every evening. I also hire 3 sentries a month but poor people have to go as many as 7 nights a month.

Arbitrary taxes
Arbitrary taxes have increased. I am one of the victims. I needed to extend my house and applied for permission. I had to pay 500,000 Kyat to the NaSaKa through our Village Chairman to obtain verbal permission. Once the work was completed, the NaSaKa informed me that I had to pay more or I would be arrested because I had no written permission. After long negotiations, it was agreed that I had to pay 900,000 Kyat to the NaSaKa and 200,000 Kyat to the Village Tract Administrator.

Another problem occurred during an Immigration check this year. One of my daughters fled to Bangladesh to marry and I asked the Immigration officer to delete her name from our family list. He deleted a name but the name was that of a younger daughter living with me rather than hers. I requested Immigration to correct this. Then they demanded a bribe of 400,000 Kyat to correct their own mistake. I had no choice but to pay what they demanded.

Q – Has the use of forced labour decreased in your area?
In my assessment, the use of forced labour remains the same as before in our area as well as in other Muslim villages south of Maungdaw. But arbitrary taxes and fines have increased.

I would say that the NaSaKa is responsible for 50% of our suffering and the remaining 50% is due to our own community. The NaSaKa established a network of informers in every hamlet and they receive favours from the NaSaKa for giving them information. They get a cut from whatever the NaSaKa extorts. Our MP Aung Zaw Win requested our villagers not to harm one another and to stop reporting everything about our neighbours to the NaSaKa but these informers do not listen.

- **Interview #09**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **10, male**
Marital status: **Single**
Occupation: **Firewood collector**
Village: **Zaw Ma Tet Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (South)**
Date of interview: **9 May 2012 (in Malaysia)**
Ref: **#12/53**

I am the eldest son of my parents. We are 4 brothers and 2 sisters. Only one sister is older than me. My father collects firewood in the hills and sells it in the village. Sometimes he tries to find work in the village. He is the one who supports and feeds the family so he cannot do forced labour for the NaSaKa. It is I who do forced labour on behalf of my father.

I do forced labour sometimes 3 days, sometimes 5 days a month, in the NaSaKa camp. My father usually does the sentry duties but, sometimes I also have to do this when my father is sick. I try to stay awake during sentry duty because, whenever I fall asleep, my father has to give chickens. Because of forced labour I cannot go to school.

I was beaten by the NaSaKa. You can see the scars in my finger. It is still painful. This happened 3 months ago. I was cleaning the ground in their camp and I was playing with other children. A NaSaKa man saw me playing and he hit me with a stick on my hand.
I was angry and I fled from the work. That is why I decided to join some young people from my village when they embarked on a boat.

- **Interview #10**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **52, male**
Marital status: **Married with 8 children**
Occupation: **Farmer and day labourer**
Village: **Myin Hlut Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (South)**
Date of interview: **19 May 2012**
Ref: **#12/65**

Road repair
After the last monsoon was over [October 2011], the NaSaKa through the Village Administration ordered 30 villagers from our village to collect stones and pebbles and to put soil on the section of the main road from Maungdaw to Ah Ngu Maw that passes near our village. The road had been badly damaged by heavy rain. The soil in our area is very sandy so the mud is not sticky. Every monsoon, rain washes away part of the road. 30 of us had to work a total of 30 days to do this but we also had to erect fences on both sides of the road, so that the soil would not wash away.

A few months later, another 10 people from our village were ordered to spray water on the road to compact the road surface. We had to spray water twice a day - from early morning to late morning and again from mid afternoon to early evening. Two to three times a week we had to collect water from the river, carry it to the road in 2 containers hanging on a wooden pole resting on our shoulders and water the road. In total I spent 25 to 30 days doing this.

Road repair and watering took place at the time I had to plant my vegetables. So I could not work much on my own land. My wife and son had to prepare the land and do the planting.

I did not want to do this work but I had no other way. If I had missed one day our *sehgaung* would have fined me and if I had not paid the fine, he would have reported me to the Village Administration and I would have had to pay even more. If I had still refused to pay, I would have been beaten in public and the VA would refer this to the NaSaKa, which would bring even more serious problems. In fact, no one dares to defy orders from the *sehgaung* because they come from the NaSaKa.

But if the NaSaKa needs 30 labourers, the VA usually summons 50 to 60 and takes bribes from the additional people . They are experts in extortion and know who will pay to avoid the duty. Poor farmers and labourers always have to do forced labour.

Collection of logs and camp labour
I had to supply 7 big wooden posts to the NaSaKa camp to replace timbers on their houses. This took me 7 days and I also had to do camp maintenance for 4 to 5 days a month.

So far I have not received any wages from the NaSaKa or from village officials for working on the road or in the NaSaKa camp.

Child forced labour
Many children worked to repair the road after the monsoon. When a large pool of forced labourers is needed over an extended period, poor families send their young boys to do the forced labour duties, as adults need to do their own work to feed their family. Adults usually go to the worksite for the first 2 or 3 days and then send their children to continue the work.

By-pass canal construction
At this very moment, the NaSaKa is again using a large pool of forced labourers to dig a by-pass canal to divert the Myin Hlut River because the current is damaging a bridge. My son has already worked there for 3 days. The NaSaKa of Myin Hlut ordered the Village Administration under their jurisdiction to collect 10 to 15 labourers from each hamlet. As far as I know, 60 people are working on this canal from different hamlets of Gaw Yar Khar Li Village Tract; 80 people from Baharchara/Tha Pyay Taw Village Tract, 65 people from U Daung Village tract and about 50 from Myin Hlut Village Tract *[total: 250 every day]*.

The NaSaKa promised to pay the labourers 2,500 Kyat a day. However, on the very first day, labourers received only 2,000 Kyat each, and nothing on the second day. The NaSaKa then claimed that the wages were being brought from Maungdaw and that payment would be made later. After 15 days some people received 5,000 or 7,000 Kyat but others received nothing. As a result, villagers then lost interest as they were not paid as promised. Then the respective Village Administration officials made people go and work on the canal. There are still 40 to 45 villagers working there. When the labour force decreased on the worksite, our *sehgaung* ordered me to go there for 3 days but I sent my son to replace me.

Sentry duty
Sentry duty decreased a bit in our village. I have to work as a village sentry 3 nights a month now. Earlier it was 4 to 6 nights.

- **Interview #11**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **25, male**
Marital status: **Married with 1 child**
Occupation: **Day labourer**
Village: **Myin Hlut Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (South)**
Date of interview: **24 March 2012**
Ref: **#12/62**

Here is what I did for the authorities over the last 4 months [from January to April 2012]:

Road construction
About 4 months ago I did road repair on the main road from Maungdaw to Ah Ngu Maw. I had to work for 7 days without a break on a portion of the road near our village, putting soil on the damaged sections. After filling the holes with earth for 7 days, I had to collect rocks from the hills, carry them to the main road and break them into stone chips. This took 3 more days. The NaSaKa had ordered the Village Tract Administration to supply labourers and the *sehgaung* selected the labourers. Our village had to supply 30 labourers every day. I did not receive any wages for this work.

About 20 days ago the NaSaKa again ordered some repair on the same road because some sections were again damaged by heavy trucks and other vehicles. We again had to put soil on the road surface to make it smooth and again I worked for 3 days, just before coming here.

Camp labour
Every month I have to do 1 or 2 days of maintenance work in the NaSaKa camp. This is compulsory and regular. The NaSaKa Sector 8 camp in Myin Hlut is very large with many houses and a huge area within the fence, so they need a good number of labourers for maintenance every day. But even when there is no work to do in their camp, the NaSaKa still calls labourers to be present and just sit in the camp. However, in that case, they often create some work for us such as watering their lawn.

Plantation work
The NaSaKa camp of Myin Hlut has an orchard with mango and cashew nut trees as well as a rubber plantation on the hills. I worked a total of 3 days in these 3 plantations this year, cleaning weeds and wild bushes from the plantation area. For this work, the NaSaKa collected 40 labourers from our village every day – 20 for the orchards and 20 for the rubber plantation. They are now preparing to plant more seedlings during the upcoming monsoon.

Sentry duty
Apart from this I also worked as a sentry 2 nights a month.

I calculated that so far in 2012 I have worked an average of 4 days a month for the NaSaKa camp (road work, camp labour and plantation work) and 2 nights a month as a sentry. 4 days plus 2 nights of forced labour are too much for us as we depend on a daily income. If we don't work one day, we suffer the next day.

B. BUTHIDAUNG TOWNSHIP

- **Interview #12**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **18, male**
Marital status: **Single**
Occupation: **Farm labourer/Day labourer**
Village: **Kyun Pauk Village Tract, Buthidaung Township (North)**
Date of interview: **15 April 2012**
Ref: **#12/61**

The practice of forced labour remains unchanged in our area. We have to work for two NaSaKa camps, one in our village tract and one in the neighbouring village tract of Kyaung Taung. Both these camps collect forced labourers from surrounding villages.

The NaSaKa of Kyaung Taung has a brickyard. They collect logs for the yard regularly.

I have to work a minimum of 3 days a month for Kyun Pauk NaSaKa and another 3-4 days a month for Kyaung Taung NaSaKa and I have never received any wages.

Forced labour in these two NaSaKa camps is mainly for maintenance work such as repairing houses, fences, clearing bushes, collecting firewood and water and also collecting bamboos from the hills. After using bamboo poles for repair, they sell the surplus to traders.

In January and February [2012] I worked 3 days a month because my father replaced me for 3 days, but in March I worked for 6 days in both NaSaKa camps. Before I arrived here this month [April] I had already worked 4 days in both camps. This time I had to collect wood for their cooking fires and logs for their brickyard.

Portering
In January an Army patrol grabbed me and 5 other villagers on the road to accompany them to Ba Da Kar village market and to carry back their shopping bags with the goods they had bought. This happens sometimes on market days. Sometimes, when soldiers are being transferred, they also grab villagers on the road and give them their backpack to carry. However, so far I have only had to be a porter for the Army once this year but other villagers have had to do this many times.

In our village and in Kyaung Taung village forced labour for the NaSaKa is regular and compulsory but work for the Army is irregular and occasional. However, I heard that people from Ba Da Kar have to work for the Army on a regular basis whereas those from Pan Zee are forced to work regularly for the police.

Sentry duty
Sentry duty increased in all northern villages of Buthidaung Township because there was a robbery in Goke Pi area recently *[allegedly committed by some Rakhine rebels]*. After that incident, the NaSaKa ordered an increase in the number of sentry posts as well as the number of sentries in each post. Now I have to work 7 nights a month as a village sentry. In our area, there has been no decrease of forced labour or sentry duty.

- **Interview #13**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **21, male**
Marital status: **Single**
Occupation: **Farm labourer/Day labourer**
Village: **Nga Yant Chaung Village Tract, Buthidaung Township (North)**
Date of interview: **16 May 2012**
Ref: **#12/63**

Forced labour for the Army
In my opinion, forced labour has increased in our area as compared to last year. My younger brother and I have been doing forced labour since our father became sick. Last year we used to work 1 day a week for the NaSaKa camp of Taung Bazar and 1 day a week for the Army camp #552 in Thin Ga Net as well as 6 nights a month of sentry duty. This year I have worked 2 days a week for Army camp #552 of Thin Ga Net and 1 day a week for the Taung Bazar NaSaKa camp.

At present the Army uses a lot of forced labourers from many villages in our area. Army camp #552 has a large pig farm as well as cows and buffaloes. They occupy a big hill where their camp is situated. Their houses, offices and vegetable gardens are on the hill slopes to the east, north and west and the pig, cow and buffalo farms to the south. They also have a brickyard in the plain at the foot of the hill. They have a large physic nut plantation and other tree plantations on other hills. Every day, the Army collects more than 100 labourers from different villages and distributes various tasks to them in different areas.

Apart from forced labour, this Army camp also employs 3 permanent Rohingya staff. They work in the camp office mainly as couriers and they are paid. However, each family in our village has to supply 1 kg of rice and 600 Kyat a month to cover their salaries.

Clearing the hill slopes is an every-day duty. The Army does not want to see any bushes or weeds, not even on the pavement between their houses and offices. This has to be cleared every day so that they can spot snakes or the enemy. Every morning all forced labourers from various villages gather at the bottom of the hill and soldiers assign the tasks such as 10 people to collect bamboos, 10 people to collect firewood, 10 to 15 people to feed their pigs, 8 people to clean the sheds for pigs, cows and buffaloes, 5 to take cows grazing, 5 people to take the buffaloes to the river bank, etc. The rest of the people have to work in their plantations on different hills, others inside the camp area and in their vegetable gardens. Sometimes they send people to do road rehabilitation work. So we have no fixed job in the Army camp. When there is not much work to do in the camp area they send us all to the forest to collect bamboos and logs. They collect these for their own use, to supply other military camps but also to sell to traders.

Road construction
There is a road near their camp which links it to other Army camps and to their main camp in Da Pyu Chaung *[major upgrading work has taken place on this road over the last couple of years]*. Whenever there are holes or erosion, the Army immediately sends labourers to fill the damaged areas with soil and stones. From last November to the beginning of February, I mostly worked to upgrade the road. Many labourers worked for a long time. We had to put soil and stones on the road surface.

At the end of January [2012] a high-ranking Army official and other officers visited the work site to oversee the road construction. That morning, the commander of Army camp #552 told us to return home and 50 to 60 soldiers arrived with spades, hammers and other tools and started working on the road. We were really puzzled that they would have suddenly decided to replace us with soldiers. We did not return home and waited at a distance. Then we saw two jeeps arriving with a high-ranking Army officer and other officials. They videoed and took pictures of soldiers working hard on the road. We were upset that the Army camp #552 tried to show their high officers that soldiers had constructed the road, a job that we villagers had performed month after month over the past two years without any pay. The next day, Army camp #552 again ordered us to return to the worksite and we had to continue working on this road until completion.

I had to work 2 days a week on this road construction. If I could not go and if my younger brother could not replace me, I would have to pay a fine of 1,000 or 1,500 Kyat and provide a good explanation to the authorities why my family could not go to work.

In addition to forced labour, I also had to pay arbitrary taxes for this road. Each family had to pay 3 times: once 4,500 Kyat, then 1,500 Kyat and again 500 Kyat for the bullock carts needed to carry stones from the river bank to the worksite.

Collection of logs
Apart from the scheduled duty of 2 days a week, I had to supply 20 logs during this dry season for their brickyard. Each family had to do the same.

Camp labour and cultivation
In addition to the Army, I also had to work 1 day a week for the NaSaKa Sector 9. Their camp is also large. During this dry season my younger brother had to spend 4 days for the summer paddy cultivation and I also worked 4 days in their vegetable garden. Moreover, this NaSaKa camp has mango, jack-fruit and eucalyptus plantations near it where forced labour is also used. In total, they collect 30 to 40 labourers daily to work in their paddy fields and plantations as well as to maintain their camp.

We have never received any wages, not even a cup of tea, from the NaSaKa or the Army for all the work we do for them year after year. Instead, we are insulted and harassed if we do not work properly. They have no sympathy for us – it is normal for them and they do not consider that we have a stomach and need to eat.

Sentry duty
My family is also called for sentry duty – on average 6 nights a month. Sometimes my father replaces me in the sentry post.

This is a picture of our day-to-day life in Burma. We have no rights and no hope for the future and there is not enough work to survive. We do not know how we will continue to survive if the situation remains like this.

- **Interview #14**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **25, male**
Marital status: **Single**
Occupation: **Day labourer**
Village: **Mee Chaung Zay Village Tract, Buthidaung Township (North)**
Date of interview: **16 May 2012**
Ref: **#12/64**

Our villagers are sandwiched between 2 Army camps and 1 NaSaKa camp: the Thin Ga Net Army camp #552 and the Taung Bazar NaSaKa Sector camp to the north and the Chin Tha Mar Army camp #564 to the south. Consequently, forced labour is high in my village as we have to fulfil demands from both army camps as well as the NaSaKa Sector office.

The Army camp #552 uses the largest number of forced labourers - about 100 every day from different villages. Army camp #564 uses less – 40 to 50 every day - but recruits them only from a few villages. The NaSaKa uses 15 to 20 labourers every day mainly for camp labour and to look after their vegetable garden and orchards. At present they use labourers to clear the areas behind their camp. On average, I have to work 4 to 6 days a month in Camp #552, 4 days a month in Camp #564 and 2 to 3 days a month in the Taung Bazar NaSaKa camp.

Last month [April 2012] I worked 2 days for the NaSaKa, 5 days for Thin Ga Net Army camp #552, 4 days for the Army camp #564 and I had to spend 4 nights as a sentry. In our area the use of forced labour is basically the same as in previous years – mostly for the Army. Some months it is a bit less but then it increases again.

Just before I arrived here, I spent 3 days in Army camp #552: 2 days to take their cows out for grazing and 1 day to clear bushes around their camp. In Army camp #564 I mainly collected bamboos and firewood, fed their pigs, worked in their vegetable garden and cleared bushes around their camp and, in the NaSaKa camp, I had to work in their orchard and also cleared bushes on the hill behind their camp.

Both army camps have a brickyard and animal farms with pigs, cows and buffaloes. A good number of labourers are needed just to look after their pigs, cows and buffaloes.

Collection of logs and bamboos
This year I supplied 30 logs for the brickyard of Camp #564 and another 20 logs for the brickyard of Camp #552. This was in addition to the camp labour duties. Each family in our area is made to supply logs for both brickyards.

Both camps also send people to the hills to collect firewood and bamboos. They do not need so many bamboos for their own use but they sell them to local traders.

Cultivation
Army camp #552 of Thin Ga Net has rented out all its paddy fields for cultivation but Army camp #564 still cultivates 15 kanis with forced labour. They will soon requisition labourers to plough the land.

Road construction – paid but not fully

GE *[Garrison Engineers]* is building a road from the Thin Ga Net army camp to the border. They hire many labourers from our area. They promised to pay 60,000 Kyat a month without food. Many labourers joined from our village and all received 15,000 Kyat as an advance on wages at the beginning of the month so that their family could purchase food while they were on the worksite. GE promised that the remaining 45,000 Kyat would be paid at the end of the month. However, at the end of the month, they only gave another 15,000 Kyat so the workers only received half the promised wages. As a result, they lost interest and left the worksite. From April GE again hired 30 labourers from our village, again with promises that they would pay 60,000 Kyat without fail at the end of the month. I also applied but they told me that they only needed 30 workers and had already recruited them. If labourers received their full wage, I would also work for GE because 2,000 Kyat a day is a good rate in our area.

Child forced labour

This has been my life since I was 14. Initially I started helping my father for camp labour and sentry duty but, as he grew older and now can hardly work, this is now my responsibility. My younger brother and I work to support our family and also fulfil all the demands of the authorities. My young brother is just 15 and he has already been replacing me over the last 2 years when I have been away. We have no choice. If I cannot go I have to send someone else from our family. Many children and students are working for the Army because their fathers are either sick or they have to work to feed their family.

In our village, only families with money or connections with the Village Administration or the army do not have to work and are privileged. Sometimes they pay to avoid all these duties but poor people like us have to do our work quota and even more, as we have to work the stint of those who paid bribes to avoid it. That is why many people prefer to flee abroad.

- **Interview #15**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **47, male**
Marital status: **Married with 7 children**
Village: **Let Wea Det Pu Zun Chaung Village Tract, Buthidaung Township**
Date of interview: **27 March 2012**
Ref: **#12/27**

Last month [February 2012] the District Administration announced by loudspeakers that authorities will no longer use forced labour for any government work, that instructions had been relayed to the Village Tract Administration not to supply forced labourers to the Army, the NaSaKa and police camps and that, if labour is needed, labourers should be paid in accordance with daily market rates.

However, the Army did not care about the District Administration announcement and kept recruiting forced labourers through the Village Administration office in the villages. Our Village Administrator reminded them of these instructions but the Army commander reportedly told him: "We are not the District Administration here; we are the Army! They have nothing to do with us. They did their duty by announcing an official order but our order is that we need people to work for us and we need *'volunteers'*, not forced labourers!"

Collection of logs
The Let Wea Det Army camps continue to use forced labour regularly and openly. They have many brickyards in our area belonging to different camps and villagers are forced to supply logs for their kilns. The logs must be between 6 and 12 foot long. This year I already had to supply logs 3 times and each time I had to bring 3 logs.

Before I came here I had to work in the vegetable gardens in the camps of Army Battalions #234 and #345 - one day in each camp. These two camps try to conceal forced labour. At the end of the work day, an Army official told us: "We brought you here to help us because we cannot do it ourselves. So don't report that you worked for us without pay." In these 2 camps 8 people from our village have to take turns to work every day.

Cleaning pig sheds
There is a pig farm in Kyauk Hpyu Taung Army camp and villagers have to look after it, cleaning pig sheds and looking after the pigs. I have to work there one day a month and last month [February 2012] I also spent one day.

Sentry duty
Sentry duty remains the same as before; I have to do sentry duty one night a week.

There is no new road construction this year. However, the Army camp set up a rubber plant nursery and collected money from the villagers for this. I paid 2,000 Kyat because I am poor but the rich families had to pay more. In the coming monsoon the Army will distribute seedlings that we will have to plant on the hills near their camp. Forced labour has not decreased in our area. Whenever the Army needs labour, they order our Village Administration to collect and supply labourers and do not pay them.

- **Interview #16**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **19, male**
Marital status: **Single**
Occupation: **Farm labourer**
Village: **Da Pyu Chaung Village Tract, Buthidaung Township (South)**
Date of interview: **26 March 2012**
Ref: **#12/26**

Our hamlet Khan Daung is about 4 miles southeast of the main Da Puy Chaung Army camp but there is also another Army camp, #551, not far from our village. In addition, the NaSaKa has a camp near our village and the Joint Forces camp is near the Sai Din waterfall to oversee natural resources in the area. All these camps use forced labour regularly, mainly to maintain their respective camps and camp areas. The NaSaKa and Joint Forces only use forced labour to maintain their camp but the Army also uses us for cultivation, collection of logs, etc.

Forced labour for the Army
During last year's cultivation season, Da Pyu Chaung Army camp rented out all their paddy fields situated outside their camp area but used forced labour to cultivate the paddy fields inside their camp. People from surrounding villages were recruited to cultivate about 40 kanis of land inside their camp for no pay.

This Army camp also has a brickyard. So far this year I have had to supply 4 logs to this brickyard and each log had to be as big as one man could carry at a time. This Army camp also uses forced labour every day to clear bushes on the hills around their camp, cut grass and do other maintenance work inside their camp.

Army camp #551 established a large rubber plant nursery where I sometimes have to work. We were told that villagers would have to plant them on land and hills around our village during the coming monsoon. But we have not received any order yet.

In total, I have to work 3 days a month on average for all these camps. At this moment forced labour is less than last year when we had to work a minimum of 4 to 5 days a month. This year there is no road construction and few new buildings to erect in their camps. However, we will see what happens during the monsoon because the Da Puy Chaung Army camp has paddy land to cultivate and Army camp #551 has a large rubber plant nursery and may make villagers plant the seedlings.

Sentry Duty
However, sentry duty in our village has not been reduced. Last year I spent 3 to 4 nights a month as a sentry and this year I also worked 3 nights a month, sometimes even 4 nights, at the sentry posts.

- **Interview #17**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **48, male**
Marital status: **Married with 7 children**
Occupation: **Farmer and bamboo collector**
Village: **Sein Hnyin Pyar Village Tract, Buthidaung Township (North)**
Date of interview: **24 May 2012**
Ref: **#12/66**

There is a military camp in our village as well as a NaSaKa camp on the hill nearby. We have to fulfil many forced labour demands from the Army.

Camp labour for the Army
The Army camp also uses 7 to 10 forced labourers every day for camp maintenance such as collecting firewood, fetching water, repairing houses and fences, etc. The Village Administration selects workers every day.

Collection of logs
This Army camp also orders villagers to collect logs but they don't even have a brickyard. I don't know what they do with these logs but they send them to Buthidaung. I supplied 4 logs this year as did each family of my village tract and of Ba Gone Nar Village Tract.

Portering
Troops from central Buthidaung visit their camp regularly and stay there for a couple of days before returning to their base. They come on patrol duty on the hills separating Maungdaw and Buthidaung townships. Their total number is about 100 and such visits take place about 3 times a month. These visiting troops use porters to carry their loads and porters have to accompany them on patrol in the hills. They only select strong men – no old men or children.

Porters have to walk at their speed and they are kicked if they walk too slowly. These troops do not provide food to the porters. We have to carry our own food for 1 or 2 days.

Sometimes the Army recruits porters from Ba Gone Nar, at other times from our village tract. Sometimes they send an order to the Village Administration to collect them but sometimes they just grab people from the market. In April I was a porter for 5 days and this month 3 days. This is a serious problem in our area. Every time troops visit the number of porters increases. Each soldier is assigned one porter.

Arbitrary taxes for the Army

Each family from Sein Hnyin Pyar, Ba Gone Nar and other neighbouring villages have to supply 1 chicken, 1 kg of rice and 200 Kyat per month to this Army camp. Every month they receive 1,500 to 1,700 chickens. The Army camp in our village has to feed the visiting troops and therefore they need a lot of chickens and rice which they collect from the villagers.

Sentry duty

My family has to do 3 nights of guard duty a month: 2 nights in the village sentry posts and 1 night in the NaSaKa camp. Each hamlet has 4 or 5 sentry posts and 4 villagers have to do sentry duty in each post. In addition, the NaSaKa also uses 4 sentries from our village to watch their camp every night. These sentries also have to carry water up the hill to fill up 4 water drums. For this duty, they do not use children because a child cannot carry water up the hill to their camp.

Camp labour and taxes for the NaSaKa

When the NaSaKa needs repair materials, they just go to the village market and take whatever wood and bamboo they need and order traders to deliver these to their camp. Then they order the Village Administration office to recruit forced labourers to do the repair work. The NaSaKa also buys sacks of rice from a shop in our village market. For this purpose, the Village Administration collects money from villagers to pay the shop. Every family in our village and in Ba Gone Nar village has to pay this every month.

This year, forced labour for the Army is less than last year. This year we are mainly used as porters but last year and the year before, we had to work on the main road between Maungdaw and Buthidaung, collecting stones and clearing landslides.

- **Interview #18**

Ethnicity/Religion: **Rohingya, Muslim**
Age/Sex: **30, male**
Marital status: **Married with 2 daughters**
Occupation: **Firewood collector**
Village: **Hpar Yar Pyin Aung Pa Village Tract, Buthidaung Township**
Date of interview: **1 May 2012 (in Malaysia)**
Ref: **#12/34**

I left my country for many reasons but the main one is forced labour. I received an order to do sentry duty but I did not go. The next morning I was summoned at the NaSaKa post. They beat me and detained me for a day and a night. I was released on the promise that I would pay a fine of 25,000 Kyat. I had no money to pay this. So I fled to Bangladesh first and then took a boat to Malaysia.

Myanmar Information Management Unit
Village Tracts of Maungdaw Township
Rakhine State
N
Bay of Bengal
Kilometers
0 3 6 12
State Capital
Main Town
Other Town
Road
River and Stream
Township Boundary
District Boundary
State Boundary
Village Tract Boundary
Water Bodies
Data Sources
BASE MAP - MIMU
Boundaries - WFP/MIMU/UNICEF
Place names - Ministry of Home Affairs
(GAD) translated by MIMU

Myanmar Information Management Unit
Village Tracts of Buthidaung Township
Rakhine State
N
Buthidaung
Maungdaw
Kilometers
0 3 6 12
State Capital
Main Town
Other Town
Road
Riverand Stream
Township Boundary
District Boundary
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