



# **KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE**

## **MONTHLY REPORT**

**MARCH, 2006**

**Karen Refugee Committee**  
**Monthly Report**  
**March, 2006 – Newsletter**

March 27<sup>th</sup> is “**Tatmadaw Day**” in Burma. It was on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1945, that General Aung Sann the commander of the **Burma Independence Army (B.I.A.)** and later the **Burma Defense Army (B.D.A.)** issued an order for all troops to turn their guns on the Japanese Occupation Army. The Japanese Army in Burma was totally annihilated by the combined strength of the “**Tatmadaw**”, the Allied Forces and the Ethnic Guerrillas. Since then March 27<sup>th</sup> was being commemorated as “**Resistance Day**” and later as “**Tatmadaw Day**” every year. The “**Tatmadaw**” was formed from a core of the “**Thirty Comrades**” led by General Aung Sann at the beginning of World War II with the object of liberating the Country. The outcome of the liberation effort by the **Tatmadaw** was one of the factors that led to Burma achieving Independence from Britain in 1948.

General Aung Sann was quite sure in his belief, that the Military need not get involved in running an Independent Democratic Country. He was quite willing to discard his uniform to get involved in Politics as a member of the **AFPFL (Anti Fascist People's Freedom League)** Party. Sad to say, he was gunned down, together with many capable colleagues even before the country attained Independence. It was a loss that is still affecting the country unto this day. Burma achieved Independence from Britain in 1948. The country was thriving with good living for some time. But then the ugly head of dissent and talks of separation came to be manifested. There were dissenting voices from among the Ethnic Peoples due to inequality. The “**Failure**” that General Aung Sann mentioned seems to have set in. General Aung Sann had mentioned that it would be failure on the part of the Burmese majority if other Ethnic find it necessary to want separation from the “**UNION**” after (10) years of living together. General Aung Sann never belittled the strength of other Ethnic Peoples. His drive and stress was on “**Unity**” of the Country's Peoples.

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1962, General Ne Win, one of the “**Thirty Comrades**”, took over power from the Civilian Government of Prime Minister U Nu. The expressed intention being to “**Save the Union**”. What was sure was that General Ne Win would never tolerate Ethnic dissents (or) calls for separation. General Ne Win's rule was none other than the “**Iron – Fist**” Military Rule. His pretense of Civilian Rule with his “**Burmese Way to Socialism Programme Party**” was never a success, as Military Personnel in Civilian Dress were no doubt in overall control and management of the Country's affairs. Command and Management never goes along well.

Understandably, the country, which was considered the Rice Basket of Asia became in some few decades, one of the Least Developed Countries in the World.

The deterioration was such that repressed public sentiment would just need a small spark for conflagration. Students were also becoming restless after the Student Union Building in Rangoon was demolished by the Military in July of 1962, when there was open dissent by the student leaders.

On March 13<sup>th</sup> 1988, there was the small incident when Mg Phone Maw, an **R.I.T. (Rangoon Institute of Technology)** student was shot and killed by security / Intelligence Personnel after a quarrel.

There was also another incident called the “**Small Red Bridge**” incident where there was the confrontation between the Rangoon University Students and the Military near the small white bridge on the edge of the **Inya Lake**. It resulted in a clash where blood flow with many students dead or arrested.

These led to the now unforgettable “**Four Eights Movement**” of August 1988 that ended in many killed, arrested (or) imprisoned.

Just before the carnage, the star of the Show, General Ne Win, adroitly stepped aside, resigning from the Presidency. But on his departure and the handing over of power to his disciples, he gave ample warning that, “when soldiers shoot, they will not shoot into the air, and they will shoot straight”. And shoot straight the soldiers did. It will never be known how many died in the “**4-Eights Bloodshed**”. Most of the dead are Schoolchildren, Teachers, Monks, and Workers. Only recently, a noted Student Dissenter was “**gang-beaten**” to death. There was total Clamp-down of the incident by the authorities. People have gone so low that sobbing mothers are not even exempt from being harmed, physically or mentally.

Today, these same “**Generals**” are still in total control. They practice what they preach, to instill fear in the whole of the country. The Junta itself cannot be free from fear. The shift to Pyinmana can be manifestation of fear brought on by their own reasoning. For in an event of a showdown they may be quite sure that they will have very few friends, probably none at all. They may have heard of Marcos, Pol Pot, Suharto, Pinochet, Saddam Hussein and Milosevic.

Just recently Mr. Syed Hamid Albar, the Asean Foreign Minister had to cut short his visit to Burma. He didn't even meet with Junta Leader Gen-Thaw Shwe (or) for that matter, Daw Aung Sann Suu Kyi. The Asean Foreign Minister said that his visit had been a “Success”. It may be true in one sense – the success in showing the world, the true picture of Military Ruled Burma.

Then **M.S.F (Medicines Sans Frontieres)** announced that they will not work anymore in Burma. It would be more than difficult to help share, if friends are to be treated with suspicion and scorn.

**K.R.C - Camps- Activities – Report.**  
**March – 2006**

◆4 – 3 – 2006 – KRC Education Co-ordinator.

Have Meeting with School Heads and Teachers Made Assessments of School Teachers.

**Weakness found in Teachers/Schools**

1. Conditions of Teachers in Camp quite unstable.
2. Teachers looking for Posts where support / subsidy is much higher.
3. Teachers looking for jobs with other Support Organization.
4. Much time is being given to Training of New Teachers. So there is very little time for Capacity Promotion for current Teachers.
5. For the coming Academic year, I.C.S will not give funding for school buildings COERR will be supporting with less funding.

**Strengths found in Teachers.**

1. There are still teachers who are strong and committed to serving the Camps Population.
2. New Teachers, coming into camp as New – Comers are strong in their commitment to serve the Camp Population.
3. New Teachers receiving Capacity Building Workshop Training are having improved Teaching Capacities.
4. It time for the Final Examinations in Schools, so that there is much effort towards co-operation processes.

**Features – Advisory**

Because of Counsel Support, Camps Education Workers show willingness and dedication to serve with Camps Education Processes.

Teachers would like to have more regular meetings and decisions made for the Purpose of having guidelines and support / co-operative measures.

We will have to upgrade and build Teachers Capacity for the purpose of improving our Camps Education Standards.

## **Activities**

This month of March – New Shelters (Some Long Houses) are being built in Um Phiem, Mae La and Mae Ra Moo Camps in expectation of New Arrivals to be accepted.

(27 buildings for 4 families each in Mae Ra Moo Camp.) The 27 buildings are now fully occupied and some New Arrival families are living with friends and relatives. Also in Mae Ra Moo Camp, COERR is sending in Material to help build a bridge connecting section 6 and 7 in the Camp.

(In Um Phiem – 95% of Reception Centres have already been constructed. Latrines still need to be constructed. No. of Reception Centres to be built for accepting (200) families.)

## **MARCH – 2006, CMP (Camp Management Programme) Activities**

◆ 20 – 3 – 2006, CMP work Group Mae Sot. Visit Mae Ra Moo Camp

The Purpose being to meet / discuss with the Camp Committee and other responsible authorities for Provision of Extra – Needs in the Camp.

Latest Information – up to 20<sup>th</sup> of March 2006. No. of New Arrivals (Refugee Seekers) at Mae Ra Moo Camp Totalled 245 Families with (1135) persons.

## **Mae La Camp**

Camp Committee and Staff went to Every Section in the Camp for the purpose of updating the Population Figures together with getting the proper Eating / Feeding Figures. This was in conformity with the Camps Management Programme to get the appropriate Feeding / Eating Figures. Temporary control measures were taken, where people registered in the camp, but living and working outside the camp will have their rations cut. Rations will again be provided when their return and living in the camp is reported and confirmed. (This is to prevent people taking double rations and to prevent feeding of non – eating figures).

## NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS MARCH, 2006.

MAE SOT AREA	CAMP	No. of families	Over - 12 Yrs		6 - 12 Yrs		Under 5 Yrs		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
	Mae La	8622	16253	15653	4621	4225	3643	3437	47832
	Um Pheim Mai	3565	6756	6481	1921	1623	1322	1232	19335
<b>Total</b>		<b>12187</b>	<b>23009</b>	<b>22134</b>	<b>6542</b>	<b>5848</b>	<b>4965</b>	<b>4669</b>	<b>67167</b>
<b>NORTH</b>	Mae Ra Moe	2329	4533	4256	1442	1307	957	940	13435
	Mae La Oo	2722	5155	4742	1700	1524	1120	1104	15345
<b>Total</b>		<b>5051</b>	<b>9688</b>	<b>8998</b>	<b>3142</b>	<b>2831</b>	<b>2077</b>	<b>2044</b>	<b>28780</b>
<b>SOUTH</b>	Noh Poe	3258	4310	4117	1164	1218	844	823	12476
	Ban Dong Yang	949	1360	1479	441	381	310	263	4234
	Htam Him	1834	2113	2096	1046	1051	1692	1706	9704
<b>Total</b>		<b>6041</b>	<b>7783</b>	<b>7692</b>	<b>2651</b>	<b>2650</b>	<b>2846</b>	<b>2792</b>	<b>26414</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>23279</b>	<b>40480</b>	<b>38824</b>	<b>12335</b>	<b>11329</b>	<b>9888</b>	<b>9505</b>	<b>122361</b>

We shall always be grateful to the Thai people and Government for their sympathy and understanding in allowing us safe refuge.

We are also indebted to the NGOs for their Supports and Services.

**TBBC** – Support in Food and Shelter Material. **TBBC** is also supporting with warm clothing for all the camps.

**MSF** – Support in Medical and Health facilities.

**AM I** – Support in Medical and Health facilities.

**ARC** – Support in Medical and Health facilities.

**M. I (Malteser International) formerly MHD** – Support in Medical and Health facilities.

**ZOA (ABW aid)** – Support in Educational facilities Teachers' Training.

**Consortium** – Support in World Educational facilities, Teachers' Training and Education for Deaf / Mute / Blinds.

**TOPS** – Support in Educational facilities.

**ICS – Asia** – Support in Educational facilities and school buildings.

**COERR** – Rice and Educational support. **EVI** – To be involved with Extremely Vulnerable people.

**H.I** – Support for Refugee Handicaps with Prosthesis and rehabilitation and also year – end sporting events for Handicaps.

**NCA** – (Norway Church Aid) has been providing **KRC** with administrative & organizational Support. It has also supported with remuneration for **KRC** members and workers.

**UNHCR** – For Registration Process Protection and Ultimate Safe Repatriation.

**SMRU** – Support with Malaria Control, Prevention and Treatment.

**SVA** – To support with Libraries in the camps.

**PPAT** – Parenthood Planning Association Thailand – Supporting with Family Planning and Preventive/ Education in Refugee Camps.

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