



# **KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE**

## **MONTHLY REPORT**

**JULY, 2006**

# Karen Refugee Committee

## Monthly Report

### July, 2006 – Newsletter

This month of July, we People from Burma remember Bo Gyoke Aung Sann, who can be called the father of Burma's Independence. Though he put all efforts, committing himself to the sole Task of Liberating the country, he was not to see the Day of Independence, for the country on January 4<sup>th</sup> 1948. On July 19<sup>th</sup> 1947, just a few months before Burma was to achieve Independence from Britain, Bo Gyoke Aung Sann and many National Leaders were gunned down by a Group of armed men. Included among the Dead were other Ethnic Leaders from the Shan, Karen, Arakan and Muslim Groups. From that time, there arose doubts of whether there can be a truly "Viable" Union of Burma, based on Equality for all Ethnic Peoples.

Burma achieved "Independence" from Britain on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1948, with a semblance of the feature of "Union", helped much by the participatory efforts from the strong Ethnic Groups of the Shan, Kachin, Chin and Arakan. It was not clear why other Ethnic Groups from the Karen, Karenni, Mons, Chose to keep the distance. Things seem to have been done in a rush. It was hoped that things could be sorted out "Internally". But then, Addressing Problems Internally came to result in the Mess, the country is in today.

Just short of a decade into Independence, dark clouds loomed as a result of Ethnic Dissents and the Leadership's wayward Efforts to deliver the country from the "Bad Elements", both inside and outside of the country. Deterioration set in.

On March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1962, the Tatmadaw, under General Ne Win took over complete control of the country. From then on, for Burma, it was the "Way" of the Tatmadaw – all the way unto this day.

On July 7<sup>th</sup> 1962, it can be remembered that the Military Junta had made a new enemy for itself. On that Day, there was open confrontation between the Rangoon University students and Police, due to imposition of harsh control regulations on the students. Conditions intensified and Troops were called in with orders to shoot. And "Shoot" the Tatmadaw did, leaving countless numbers of student activists, dead and injured. Many went missing.

Early the next morning July 8<sup>th</sup> 1962, the Students Union Building in the University compound was totally demolished by the Military, dynamited, with many student dissidents still hiding in the Building. Sad to say, the Building was the Symbol of Resistance to Colonial Rule, and where most of the Country's Leaders have their Initiation. The Tatmadaw had made for itself, a most unrelenting force of hostility in the form of "Students". The Feature seemed to be bitter enmity between father and son, which would never be good for the country as a whole. It is still on going unto this moment.

Also, around the world we are seeing features that can never be called “Good”. Especially of note is the Flare-up of Hostilities in the Middle East. This is nothing new but a resurgence of hostility still unresolved. Both sides have Legitimate Historical claims. The Question is with “Sharing” which had become contentious, with both sides unwilling to give ground. This may only lead to disastrous consequences as the potential of destructive weapons in case of flare-ups these days can never be minimal. However, Influential People are lending all efforts towards a “Cease Fire” as a first step. Its hoping and praying that they will succeed.

In the beginning, it was only dissent and contention between the Arabs and Israel. But because of support / participation of brothers and friends, antagonism intensified, became complicated. Still there are many worrying features for humanity and the world today. Apart from human conflict, we never fail to hear of increasing incidents of Destruction by Natural Forces – Quakes, Tsunamis, Rainstorms – Cyclones, Hurricanes, Floods and Landslides. We hear of Air / Water Pollution with the climate getting warmer. We hear of reports of heat related deaths, even in colder countries. We hear of 44.5° C Temperature hitting California. Then we hear of expanding deserts, rivers running dry and melting ice sheets. We hear of quarrels, fighting, displacements, starvation, Diseases. On top of that, we hear of Greed, Corruptions, and Exploitations that are everywhere.

On looking back, this month of July, we have cause to remember what transpired on July 27<sup>th</sup> 1953. That year saw the end of the (3) years Korean War, where brothers fought brothers on difference of ideology, with the threat of wider implication and conflagration. There was even heard of advocacy for use of the Ultimate weapon. Looking at Korea today, one cannot be sure if the war had really ended. It can even be a source for renewed wider conflict.

Again, this month of July, we have cause to remember what happened on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 1976. That was the big Quake in Tang Shan, China, which leveled the city in 15 seconds, leaving more than a quarter of a million dead. Now with Mother-Earth seemingly quite restless, no one can be sure such big shake will not happen again, another time, another place.

Now then, taking leave with one little feature of note from Burma. A Task Force from the Imperial Capital of Pyinmana was sent to the Border Town of Myawaddy. The Purpose was to look into and address problems related to “Bad Trades” in the Region. What resulted was that after Investigations, Interrogations and Arrests, there was wide – scale confiscations of Material including Food, building material and other Products, Motor Cars, Motor Cycles, even Bicycles which are simply considered “Contraband”. These were packed up and trucked direct to the “Capital”. People are just saying “It’s nothing out of the Ordinary. Just a case of “Setting a Thief, to catch a Thief”. Failed establishments could find it beneficial to copy, if only for the sake of “Face Lift”. As for Burma’s currency the “Kyat”, half a century ago, before the Junta came onto the scene, “Gold” was selling for Kyat 200 per tical . Now, a tical of the same commodity will fetch some Kyat 200,000 plus. It surely would be a world record for the Generals, inflation wise.

## **K.R.C – Camps – Activities – Report.**

### **July – 2006**

- ★ 06.07.06 Mae La Refugee Camp Administrative Committee Elections K.R.C Chairman and Members participated in Guidance and helping with the process. Altogether (15) Camp Committee Members were elected. Five Women Members were among those Elected.
- ★ 07.07.06 K.R.C Representatives attend the regular Meeting in Um Phiem Camp. Where the MOI, UNHCR, the Camp Committee, NGOs and K.R.C participated.
- ★ 13.07.06 There was a meeting between the Provincial M.O.I Representative (Tak Province) and K.R.C together with the Camp Committee Representatives from the 3 Camps of Mae La, Um Phiem, and Noh Poe. Discussed were matters related to Administration of the Camps, together with imposition of Regulations and keeping of the Law and Order. Matters related to increase in social misdemeanor and related problems sanitary and waste disposal. Also discussed was abundance of sales shops and video shows as income generation.
- ★ 14.07.06 K.R.C Education Coordination met and held Education related discussions with Um Phiem Camp's School Head Masters.
- ★ 15.07.06 Naw Christian Po, and Naw Elizabeth, representing K.R.C attended the meeting with K.W.O., where Social Exchange was the topic for discussion.
- ★ 16.07.06 Saw Bweh Say and Saw Day Law Lay visited Ban Don Yang and Tham Him Refugee Camps. They made Assessments and Evaluations with regard to the implementation of the Camps Management Programme works processes in the Two Camps
- ★ 18.07.06 UNHCR Ms. Elizabeth and Mrs. Koriew Jonker, Netherlands MP visited K.R.C Mrs. Koriew was on a fact finding visit of the Refugee Camps, with interest in the Camps Administrative and Support activities, the Camp Election Processes and Women Participation in Refugee Affairs.
- ★ 18.07.06 Ms. Katherine Gerson visit K.R.C and met with K.R.C Members. Discussed were matters related to the repressive measures by the SPDC on the Karen Villages, and the bearing it had on the Karen Villages, being displaced and people seeking refuge in Refugee Camps.

- ★ 18.07.06 Um Phiem Camp Committee Member visited K.R.C Discussed were matters related to Camps Management programme works processes together with the Finance Support and problem Control Activities.
  
- ★ 20.07.06 Mr. Chongrak, Mr. Tamarak and group (Bangkok) from the Asian Institute of Technology visited K.R.C. They had already visited Mae La Camp. Discussed were Congestion in the Camps, problems with Sanitation, waste - refuse disposal problems the effect problems with neighboring Thai Villages especially those downstream. The matter need to be taken as urgent.
  
- ★ 21.07.06 K.R.C – UNHCR, NGOs meeting at K.R.C office. It was a regular two monthly meeting where there was sharing of information and touching on matters related to Camps Administration, Support, Security, Protection together with Cooperation and Coordination in addressing Camps Refugees related problems.
  
- ★ 29.07.06 K.R.C and K.E.D (Karen Education Department) meet at K.R.C office. Discussed were matters related to schools and Regulatory measures for Students and teachers.  
 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> July. K.R.C Members, together with TBBC and CMP Coordinators visited Ban Don Yang and Tham Hin Camps. They met and held discussion with the Camps Committees.  
 Discussed were provisions of Extra Needs for the Camps and use of Contingency Supplies. There was also trainings give to Camps Staff for use and filling of Report Forms, Administration and stipend Supports of POCs, Camps population statistical Reports, and Feeding Figures Reports. There was also discussion and provision of Guidance for Sanklaburi and Ratchaburi, K.R.C Branch offices work Activities

## **Education Coordinator**

- Û 07.07.06    there was a meeting, where matters related to Camps Education was discussed. Participating were Camp's MOI officials, K.R.C - K.E.D members Mae La Camp Education Coordinator, Educational NGOs (ZOA), School Head Masters, including those from Private Schools.
- Û 08.07.06    Meeting in Ban Don Yang Camp.  
K.R.C, K.E.D Educational NGOs, Camp's Education Coordinators together with School Head Masters, Discussed Cooperation, Coordination and sharing of information.
- Û 13.07.06    Um Phiem Camp.  
Meeting and sharing of information, giving advice. Where K.R.C, Education Coordinators and school Heads participated.
- Û 16.07.06    Um Phiem Camp.  
Meeting between K.R.C and Vocational Training Committee, where stress was made on the important Role of Vocational Trainers.
- Û 22.07.06    Mae La Camp.  
Education meeting where matters related to school Curriculum were discussed.

## NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS JULY, 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	10,274	17,708	16,888	4,936	4,462	3,537	3,502	51,033
	Um Pheim Mai	3,612	7,217	6,921	1,916	1,748	1,368	1,305	20,475
<b>Total</b>		<b>13,886</b>	<b>24,925</b>	<b>23,809</b>	<b>6,852</b>	<b>6,210</b>	<b>4,905</b>	<b>4,807</b>	<b>71,508</b>
<b>NORTH</b>	Mae Ra Moe	2,576	4,960	4,790	1,607	1,510	1,156	1,110	15,133
	Mae La Oo	2,722	5,498	5,014	1,707	1,533	1,106	1,070	15,928
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,298</b>	<b>10,458</b>	<b>9,804</b>	<b>3,314</b>	<b>3,043</b>	<b>2,262</b>	<b>2,180</b>	<b>31,061</b>
<b>SOUTH</b>	Noh Poe	3,733	4,882	4,581	1,288	1,227	1,007	1,002	13,987
	Ban Dong Yang	934	1,461	1,587	389	370	343	305	4,455
	Htam Him	1,828	3,108	3,161	1,046	1,050	716	647	9,728
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,495</b>	<b>9,451</b>	<b>9,329</b>	<b>2,723</b>	<b>2,647</b>	<b>2,066</b>	<b>1,954</b>	<b>28,170</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>25,679</b>	<b>44,834</b>	<b>42,942</b>	<b>12,889</b>	<b>11,900</b>	<b>9,233</b>	<b>8,941</b>	<b>130,739</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.

**World Education / 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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