

1. Forced Labour and Forced Conscription

1.1 Introduction

“Forced Labour: work or service which is extracted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered themselves voluntarily.”

- Article 2 of Convention No. 29, Forced Labour Convention, 1930.

“I cannot remember that we have ever experienced such bad times. The NaSaKa (Burma Border Security Force) and the Army joined together to suck all our energy and money. How will the poor survive with so much forced labour? When will this end? Soon we won’t be able to stay in Burma. Another famine is already looming.”

- Villager from North Buthidaung, 2 May 2006.¹

Despite Burma’s ratification of the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) Forced Labour Convention 1930 (No. 29) in 1955, there continued to be countless credible reports of the widespread use of forced labour by the ruling junta; the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), throughout 2006. Forced labour in Burma takes many forms, from the construction of roads and infrastructure, including projects for gas pipelines carried out in collaboration with multinational corporations, through to the building of military bases, forced sentry duty and forced porting for the military. The primary victims of forced labour are innocent villagers, and increasingly, prisoners from the Burmese penal system. Furthermore, there continued to be numerous reports of villagers being forcibly conscripted into the military and into forming local militia groups.

The most prevalent use of forced labour has been in the ethnic minority rural areas of Burma where it has long been shown that an increase in the military’s presence results in an increase in human rights violations, including forced labour. In 2006 the ongoing military offensives against Karen, Mon and other ethnic resistance groups have increased the militarization of many areas. The expansion of troop deployment has been a major factor for the continued use of forced labour in 2006, particularly in the Karen areas of Toungoo, Nyaunglebin and Papun, as well as in Kwar Zar sub-Township in Mon State. Thousands of civilians have been forced into portering for the offensive in Karen State, as well as thousands of prisoners who are often subsequently summarily executed.² Furthermore, the establishment of mining enterprises, hydro electric dam sites and gas pipelines are concomitant with an increase in SPDC military presence around these areas, ensuring a secure zone around the site.³ An increase in forced labour as well as other human rights abuses has been shown to generally accompany such a military build up.

In ethnic areas where the SPDC has already established military control, instances of forced labour remain commonplace used to sustain a hierarchical militarised society where civilians are at the mercy of the military and are used to serve their needs. In northern Arakan State, reports of forced labour have been on the increase since the SPDC military took over the entire area in March 2005.⁴ Similarly, in Thaton District, arguably the most extensively

controlled of all seven Karen Districts, the SPDC and Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) made frequent demands for forced labour upon local villagers throughout 2006.⁵ As stated by Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Burma, in February 2006:

*“The concerns of the ceasefire groups are compounded by reports of increased militarization in ceasefire areas. Contrary to expectations that entering into a ceasefire agreement would result in a loosening of military control, the confiscation of lands, the continued construction of military camps in ceasefire areas and other activities which have a negative impact on the civilian population, including forced labour demands, are leading many to query the dividends to be gained from entering into ceasefire agreements.”*⁶

Mindful of international condemnation of the use of forced labour, in recent years the SPDC have employed new tactics when requisitioning labour to try and avoid criticism. The SPDC has for a long time tried to justify their use of forced labour through semantics. The terminology used to describe the practice by the SPDC is “*loh ah pay*” which refers to the Buddhist notion of contributing voluntary labour to gain merit, and in 2006 it was reported that local authorities were informing villagers that they had to *contribute to the development of their area* by repairing the roads in front of their houses as well as working in public areas. During a press conference in December 2006, Deputy Minister of Labor Maj. Gen. Aung Kyi, denied the use of forced labour but asserted that the SPDC was justified in requesting its citizens to work in certain cases, including “*tasks for regional development*”.⁷

Whereas, in the past, written orders were frequently distributed to villages to supply labour, the SPDC has increasingly used only verbal orders issued at meetings with village headmen and local VPDCs who then instruct their villages what they are required to do; thus distancing themselves somewhat from the orders and doing away with any paper trail.⁸ The position of village heads does in itself amount to a form of forced labour. Incumbents are forced to assign villagers to perform labour for the SPDC, report visitors to the village, and summon villagers for interrogation and torture at the army camp. They are also unable to give over enough time to sustaining their own livelihoods, and face greater risk of abuse at the hands of the military. In 2006, the SPDC issued orders in areas of Burma insisting that village council chairmen are not permitted to resign from their posts.⁹

There has also been a reported increase in the use of the members of GONGOs in forced labour practices, justified by the fact that such groups contain in their mandates points of national development.¹⁰ However, given that such organisations rely on forced recruitment in the first place, the coercion is again simply one step removed. Further, the SPDC has increased its use of convict labour, again seemingly to cloud international condemnation. In one instance in 2006, the SPDC employed forced prison labourers whilst forcing them to wear the uniforms of the auxiliary fire brigade and army, thus disguising their forced employment.¹¹

Continual demands for forced labour place a huge strain on villagers’ daily lives and livelihoods. The time spent performing forced labour takes villagers away from their own fields and jobs, leaving crops vulnerable to animals, and reducing yields at harvest time. Education is also adversely affected. Villagers informed the Karen Human Rights Group, that they were only able to study for one week out of every three or four due to the demands of forced labour. Such impacts of forced labour on the lives of villagers is a major cause for villagers to flee their homes when the military approaches and settles in their area, fleeing

either into the surrounding jungle as IDPs or crossing the border into a neighbouring country. KHRG assert that most of the internal displacement that occurs in Thaton District comes about because of this.¹²

Hopes of a change in the regime's attitude towards forced labour surfaced in 2005 when perpetrators of the practice were officially prosecuted for the first time. Su Su Nway, a Burmese labour activist, successfully brought convictions against local officials who forced villagers to work on a road building project for which they received sentences of 8 months. However, hopes were short lived, as in October 2005 Su Su Nway was countersued for "*abusing*" state officials and sentenced to 18 months in prison. This trend continued, and other cases were brought against people for supposedly making "*false reports*" to the ILO on the use of forced labour.

In 2006 the issue of prosecuting complainants remained high on the agenda in the negotiations between the junta and the ILO in Geneva. The regime's relationship with the ILO had been steadily deteriorating during 2005 due to its lack of cooperation on addressing the issue of forced labour. 2006 saw a significant toughening of the ILO's stance towards the Burmese regime, after years of trying to engage them in effective dialogue had resulted in no significant progress. At the ILO Governing Body meeting in March 2006 the members agreed to begin reviewing new courses of action which could be taken against the regime for its non-compliance with the Forced Labour Convention. The key sticking point was the continued lack of any viable complaints mechanism for accusations of forced labour, and the new practice of prosecuting people for "*false complaints*". Three options for future action were presented at the annual ILO conference in June. Two involved referring Burma to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the other would see the establishment of an ad hoc tribunal to rule on the matter. In response to this increased threat of international legal measures the regime released Su Su Nway during the conference, and later released another high profile prisoner, Aye Myint, who was being held on similar charges.

Even though the regime had taken some steps to address the ILO's concerns it was widely felt among members that the actions did not go far enough and as a result the ILO remained firm on its insistence that effective action on the establishment of a complaint mechanism had to be made by November 2006. This deadline subsequently passed with no further progress on the issue. The ILO Governing Body then agreed to begin full preparations to refer Burma to the ICJ for an advisory opinion on the matter and placed the issue on the agenda for a final decision at the Governing Body meeting in March 2007.

2006 also saw the start of the distribution of US\$6.12 million from the settlement of the Total lawsuit in 2005. The majority of the funds were allocated for use by humanitarian aid organisations working with Burmese refugees in Thailand. Several organisations refused the money but two, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the National Catholic Commission on Migration (NCCM) did agree to accept and distribute the financial aid. Other international joint ventures such as the Salween Dams and the Shwe Gas Project continued to be negotiated with many human rights groups worried that they too will result in an increase in human rights violations in the future, including the use of forced labour.

Forced Portering

Throughout 2006 reports continued of civilians and prisoners being forced to carry goods and supplies for the SPDC military. Portering is a particularly dangerous form of forced labour as victims are often overloaded with goods and given no time to rest. If the porters collapse they are often beaten, murdered, or simply left by the side of the road to die. Porters are often forced to walk at the front of the convoy to protect the soldiers from landmines.¹³ In previous years civilian porters were often taken by a battalion and used for several weeks on end, however in the last two years, a column of soldiers will more likely pass through a village and demand “emergency porters” to carry goods to the next village where they will be released if another porter can be secured.¹⁴ According to KHRG the use of prisoners for the heavy portering duties has increased. (For more information see section below Convict Labour).

The baskets that the porters carry can contain anything from food and clothing to ammunition and mortar shells with the average load weighing between 16 and 33 kgs. Porters are very often not supplied with food and have to carry their own rations in addition to their loads. The practice of forced portering takes villagers away from their fields and livelihoods and therefore directly affects whole families and communities. In some cases, especially if civilians are too sick or weak to carry loads, they will hire itinerant labourers to work as porters in their place.¹⁵

Military camps are supplied with monthly or bi-monthly rations which are often brought by truck to a central point from where villagers are used to transport the rations to the individual camps. There have been reports of hundreds of civilians at a time being used for these operations. For example, in May 2006 in Toungoo District, 850 villagers were taken for just one of these camp re-supplies.¹⁶ The use of forced porters has actually decreased in some areas in 2006, most notably in northern Arakan State, where this trend can be attributed to the improvement of road networks to the military bases, meaning goods can now be transported by vehicles instead of using civilian porters.¹⁷ However, the overall increase in the road network allows the SPDC to more easily extend its control over the population, and residents in northern Arakan experienced increased demands for other forms of forced labour throughout 2006.

In addition to the widespread use of forced porters by the SPDC military, and armed groups aligned to the regime, there have also been reports of their use by opposition groups such as the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). However, in contrast to their treatment by the SPDC, reports suggest that KNLA porters are at least provided with food and medical treatment of the same standard as the soldiers, although this is still of a relatively poor quality. In addition they are reported not to be tortured, mistreated or used as human minesweepers.¹⁸

Forced Labour

For many years the SPDC military have routinely forced civilians to work on state infrastructure projects, such as the building of roads, bridges, towns, military bases and various economic enterprises, and 2006 was no exception. Wherever these projects are carried out, the military will typically demand labour from local villages, with the threat of fines if households are unable to supply the required amount of people. Projects vary in length, but always mean that people are taken away from their land and livelihoods and are not given any remuneration in return. In addition, the forced labourers are often expected to supply their own tools, materials and food, which all result in severe economic hardship.¹⁹

In 2006 the practice of forced labour continued unabated, particularly in the ethnic border areas. The increased militarization which has accompanied the large scale offensive in the northern Karen areas has produced weekly reports of forced labour in Toungoo District. The most common types of work civilians are forced to do in these areas are the clearing of land, road building, and the construction and maintenance of military camps as well as the regular clearing of vegetation from roadsides to reduce the possibility of the SPDC troops being ambushed as they use the roads.²⁰

In Northern Arakan State, forced labour has been on the increase during 2006 and the type of labour has changed with the seasons. In the rainy season villagers are forced to cultivate paddy fields for the military as well as clear areas of jungle, while at the same time they are busy with their own crop cultivation. In the dry season the nature of the forced labour changed to demands for brick baking, road and village construction, wood collection and crop procurement. A number of new road projects used forced labour in 2006, mostly in Buthidaung and Maungdaw Townships, the roads link military bases to towns and to other bases, and are designed to facilitate the movement of troops and supplies. The construction of “model villages” for Buddhist settlers also continued in Arakan State during the dry season. Local Muslim villagers not only had their land confiscated, but were forced to supply building materials and construct the settlers’ villages. All of this seasonal labour is in addition to the year round demand for sentries, porters and labourers to maintain the military bases.²¹

A new development in forced labour began in January 2006 with the SPDC announcing an ambitious new “national project” which compels people throughout the country to grow physic nuts. These nuts produce oil which can be used as an alternative to diesel fuel, which, if produced on a large scale could potentially save the regime millions of dollars in foreign exchange due to rising oil prices.²² The SPDC plans to cultivate 500,000 acres in each state, which has already led to the confiscation of fertile land in many areas. Villagers have been instructed to plant the nurseries around their homes or face fines, and forced labour has frequently been used to prepare, plough and maintain the plots of land for the nurseries. It is feared that once the saplings are matured, more land will be confiscated and more forced labour used to establish large scale plantations. (For more information see Chapter 5 Deprivation of Livelihood)

When the SPDC troops enter a village and make their demands for forced labour, their task is made easier by the existence of registration documents which detail the exact number of inhabitants, property and livestock within a village. Inhabitants have no choice but to apply for national identity cards and register their details or risk arrest or fines. This information is then used by the soldiers to tailor their demands for labour and materials.²³

Forced labourers in Burma are very rarely remunerated for their labour or even costs incurred during their employment, such as for food and tools. Regardless, the SPDC will often extort money in the name of such payment. Throughout 2006, fees were collected from civilians under the pretext that the money would be used to pay those contributing their labour to state projects in the area. The pretence is a complete sham, with villagers fully aware that their money will not be paid to their peers but will instead line the pockets of local officials and senior army officers.²⁴ Other pretences utilised by the army in 2006, were in some ways crueller, given that local villagers actually believed them. For example, in North Buthidaung Township, Arakan State, SPDC forces announced that they would rent out their land against the supply of a number of baskets of paddy per acre. Once villagers had completed the ploughing and planting of their acres, the SPDC reclaimed the land, employing forced labourers to continue their work.²⁵



Bags of castor bush seeds sent by SPDC authorities to villages in Bu Tho Township. The villagers were forced to buy these seeds and then were ordered to sow them on 14 May 2006. Each man, woman and child (including infants) in every village was ordered to account for planting 100 castor bushes. However, on 14 May the villagers were in the middle of sowing the year's rice crop, a cooperative activity where they work as a group on a different family's field each day. As a result of the order, they had to hurry to finish their rice sowing to allow time to go and plant the castor bushes. *[Photos and Caption: KHRG]*

Forced Convict Labour

Although the use of prison labour is not specifically prohibited by the Forced Labour Convention, the ILO does not support the practice²⁶ and in the case of Burma, the severe manner in which it is employed is in clear contravention of regulations within the Convention and also Article 3 common to all four of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, to which the SPDC is a signatory, and is acknowledged to be customary international law, regardless.

Human rights organisations have reported an increase in the use of forced prison labour in Burma in recent years and especially in 2006. Some prisoners are sentenced to serve terms of ‘prison with hard labour’ and are sent to prison labour camps, where it has been estimated that as many as 20 percent of prisoners die because of the conditions of their detention. There are thought to be 110 such camps, throughout Burma, with between 50 and 1000 inmates in each of them. Prisoners are forced to work from 6 am to 6 pm, without rest, bar one meal break. The sick are not exempted from their work.²⁷ (For more information see Chapter 2 Arbitrary Detention and Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances). One Chin woman interviewed by Christian Solidarity Worldwide, told of her visit to a labour camp, 55 miles outside of Kalaymyo on the road to the Indian border. Prisoners were reported to be yoked around the neck and forced to work ploughing the fields, akin to the treatment of buffalo.²⁸

Whilst those sent to such camps are often informed at their trial that they will be required to perform hard labour as part of their sentence, for many others, there is no mention of the fact that they will be required to perform labour during their sentence. KHRG reports that thousands of prisoners have been brought from prisons around Burma to carry supplies and act as minesweepers as part of the large scale offensive in the northern Karen areas which began in November 2005.²⁹ It is believed by many that this move towards a greater use of convict porters has been a means to try and deflect international criticism. The rights of prisoners are generally less clear cut than those of civilians and the SPDC may well hope that because of this, they will receive less criticism with labour and rights activists less likely to take up their case³⁰.

On 22 August 2006 it was reported that the SPDC military authorities had begun the transfer of thousands of prisoners from across Burma to northern Karen areas to serve as porters for military columns in the ongoing offensive. The military transferred porters from prisons across the country including Rakhine, Kachin and Shan States and Mandalay, Rangoon, Irrawaddy, Pegu and Magwe Divisions. Most were sent to military bases along the Kyauk Kyi – Saw Hta road in Mone Township, northern Nyaunglebin District and Lu Thaw Township, northern Papun District. Some prisoners were transited via various prisons along the way or where the offensive battalions were based, namely those at Toungoo, Thaton and Moulmein. Convicts from Thayet prison in Magwe Division were sent to Insein Prison near Rangoon and then to Moulmein Prison in Mon State, where they were handed to a battalion that took them to Karen areas. From these bases and prisons, porters were assigned to battalions under the control of MOC #10, MOC #15 and LID #101 to be used in operations throughout Tantabin Township, southern Toungoo District, Lu Thaw Township and Mone Township. All of the prisoners were deployed in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts. Almost half of them were sent to Baw Hser Ko, an SPDC military base overlooking Pwa Ghaw along the Kyauk Kyi – Saw Hta road in western Papun District. Other Army bases from which prisoners were deployed were strung out along the Kyauk Kyi – Saw Hta road at (from west to east) Kyauk Kyi, Mu Theh, Plah Ko, Yunzalin camp (near Maw Pu) and Saw Hta; some were also sent to Pah Heh camp just north of Papun. Prisoners being sent to Toungoo District

were brought to Kler Lah and then deployed to Army camps throughout the District. Previous reports have also documented the large-scale use of convict porters in 2006 by MOC #16 and MOC #21 in Nyaunglebin District and by LID #66 in Toungoo District.³¹ It has been claimed that the SPDC takes prisoners from areas far away from where the offensive is taking place, so as the porters will be less likely to try to escape, not knowing the language or area, and being fearful of treatment by insurgents in the area.³²

A constant supply of prison labour is assured by the continuing arbitrary arrest of civilians by the SPDC, as well as the imposition of lengthy sentences for minor misdemeanours. Those arrested are often dealt with without any due legal process and told they will be released on payment of a bribe. Those who are unable to pay the police or the judiciary are automatically sent to prison, whether there is evidence against them or not. Many escaped porters interviewed by KHRG reported that police officers had demanded between 10,000 and 500,000 kyat for their release after being arrested.³³ At no time during their sentencing were these prisoners told that they will be forced to work for the military. When prisoners are rounded up and transferred to military bases they are often given the opportunity to bribe the prison officers to avoid being taken.³⁴



One Convict Porter's wounds obtained as a result of carrying supplies for the SPDC military. It is common for convict porters to be forced to carry loads of between 33 and 44 kg. [Photo: FBR].

The living conditions, food supplies and general treatment of forced prison labourers are widely reported to be far worse than for civilian forced labourers. The work is more dangerous and health provisions are non-existent. The military view the prisoners as expendable labour and there are countless reports of their torture, beatings and killings.³⁵ It is common for convict porters to carry loads of between 33 and 44 kgs, much heavier than their civilian counterparts. As a consequence of overwork and poor conditions, prison labourers frequently fall ill and suffer injury. Neither illness nor injuries are treated by the army medics, who state explicitly that medical care and medicine is only for soldiers. Regardless of the severity of their condition, porters are forced to continue at the pace of the soldiers and hence often die from illness or exhaustion, or killed for not being able to keep up.³⁶ One escaped convict porter, who had portered for LIB #251 as they moved from Thaton to Papun District, reported that they were told, *"You are going on a pilgrimage. If you can't continue, you won't be left behind alive."*³⁷



The corpse of a convict porter killed by SPDC soldiers in punishment for fleeing from the army patrol he was serving with. He had escaped to a monastery where SPDC soldiers from IB #255 of LID #10 discovered him, detained him and tortured him. On March 31st, following the torture, IB #255 commander Aung Lwin Oo ordered his soldiers to kill him. One non-commissioned officer and five soldiers took the porter out of the village of Dt' Maw Daw, killed him at 8:00 pm and subsequently buried him. [Photo and Caption: KHRG].

Forced Military Conscription

Following the pro democracy demonstrations of 1988, the Burmese junta began a large scale expansion of its military forces, requiring many more recruits leading to much forced recruitment into the ranks of the army. This forced recruitment into the *tatmadaw* continued throughout 2006, mirrored and impelled by high rates of desertion throughout the year.³⁸

In 2006, one Major whom had defected from the SPDC, to the Kachin Independence Organisation, told Christian Solidarity Worldwide, that each month every battalion is ordered to recruit at least five new soldiers. If they cannot meet the quota they face a fine. If they are able to exceed the quota they are rewarded with a bonus and the opportunity for promotion.³⁹ Children are frequently targeted in such recruitment drives, being vulnerable and more easily connived. In Mong Ku District, northern Shan State, over 30-40 children, aged between 15-16 years old, have reportedly been forcibly recruited from one Township alone in 2005 and 2006. A report in June 2006 suggested that as many as five children were recruited each day at Rangoon's main railway station.⁴⁰ Elderly men, in no physical condition to serve in the armed forces, are also targeted.⁴¹

The most frequent tactic used by SPDC recruiters is to give their targets the option “*join the military or go to jail.*” Recruiters often “*lurk in train stations and other places where impoverished children not attending school during the day can be found,*” promising children good salaries and opportunities.⁴² Often, recruiters ask a child if he has a national I.D. card. If, as is often the case, he does not have an ID card, the recruiters threaten the child with arrest if he refuses to join the military.⁴³ Homeless children, orphans and street traders are particularly vulnerable to the threat of arrest for ‘loitering’ or trading without a license.⁴⁴

In some instances, the Burmese police sell young offenders directly to military recruitment camps. On 22 August 2006, three 15 year old boys, Than Naing Aye, Lin Lin and Yan Lin

Maung, were sold in such a way by Police Lt. Sgt. Min Aung Thein from No.1 Police Station Meikhtila, Mandalay Division. They were sold to Mandalay Taung Thone Lone Army Recruitment Camp for 65,000 kyat. They had been arrested on 3 August and charged with theft.⁴⁵ Officers at recruitment camps then sell recruits to individual battalions.⁴⁶

The practice of compulsory military training and forced conscription into local militias also continued in 2006, notably in Arakan and Mon State as well as Thaton District. Reports continued of SPDC officials issuing orders to villages to set up militia groups to help protect the state's interests, and in particular, to assist the SPDC forces in controlling dissidents and dealing with external security threats.⁴⁷ In 2006, in Arakan State, the SPDC forcibly recruited and trained civilians to serve alongside Fire Brigade and Red Cross members in increasingly large militia forces. The reasons given for such recruitment, included the threat posed by the U.S. to local Muslims, as well as the threat of elements, both inside and outside the country, disrupting gas exploration in the area.⁴⁸

These auxiliary militia forces have been around since 2000 and are formed under pseudonyms such as the 'Anti-Foreign Invasion Force' or the 'People's Vigorous Association' (PVA). Villages in Thaton District were forced to pay a fine of up to 80,000 kyat a year if they failed to supply the required number of persons for the training. As the SPDC does not pay the members of the militias, the villages are forced to provide food and shelter for them.⁴⁹ Often people are first forcibly recruited into one of the SPDC's numerous GONGOs, and then required as members to attend military trainings and serve in militias. Members of GONGOs are also utilized in the recruitment of non-members into such militias.⁵⁰ The PVA, for example, is made up of Myanmar Red Cross members, 'firemen', troops, Myanmar Women's Affair Association members, Maternal and Child Welfare Association members, Retired Soldier's Organization members, village militias, and the members of the USDA.⁵¹ An SPDC press statement in 2006 asserted that the mandate of the Auxiliary Fire Brigade and the Myanmar Red Cross was to "*crush the destructive elements who have encroached upon perpetuation [sic] of the sovereignty.*"⁵² In the run up to Martyr's day in 2006, state run media threatened that any demonstrations would be countered by 'people's power-holder members', a euphemism for such militia forces.⁵³

Reports from inside Burma claim that the junta has ordered authorities in large cities across the country to train as many as 5,000 people each, with the USDA not only providing recruits but financial and material assistance.⁵⁴ In keeping with such a move, in October 2006, it was reported that the junta was planning to launch a national conscription service for a people's militia, a proposal that had reportedly been agreed upon by delegates at the SPDC controlled National Convention process for the drafting of a new constitution.⁵⁵

1.2 ILO Activities in Burma

In July 1998 the ILO reported that forced labour was practiced in Burma in “*a widespread and systematic manner*”.⁵⁶ Since that time, the ILO has attempted to engage with the Burmese regime to bring about an end to this practice. In November 2000, the ILO made moves to invoke Article 33 of its constitution which allows member states to take actions to pressure a government into complying with its recommendations. The members threatened Burma with the imposition of trade and other sanctions if it did not discontinue the use of forced labour. In response, the Burmese regime issued a Supplementary Order to Order No. 1/99, which made forced labour a criminal act and specified that this order applied to all persons, including authorities, members of the armed forces, police and public servants. In addition they allowed the ILO to open a regional office in Rangoon and in March 2002 to appoint a Liaison Officer to Burma.

After further negotiations, the SPDC agreed with the ILO to a “Joint Plan of Action for the Elimination of Forced Labour Practices in Burma” which was signed by both parties on 28 May 2003. The plan was designed to demonstrate that the SPDC could take clear and decisive steps toward ending forced labour including the implementation of new procedures for the filing and investigation of allegations of forced labour. Implementation of the plan was then suspended twice, firstly following the Depayin Massacre and the crackdown on pro-democracy supporters and again in November 2004 when three Burmese citizens received death sentences for their contact with the ILO and the Federation of Trade Unions Burma. Previously the SPDC had allowed the ILO to appoint a facilitator to help victims bring forced labour cases to the courts, but in November 2004 the ILO Liaison Officer in Rangoon reported that the regime’s methods for dealing with complaints was inadequate and represented a conflict of interests, as allegations of forced labour by the military were referred to the Ministry of Defence and as such, the cases were routinely dismissed.

In an attempt to assess the SPDC’s commitment to eliminating forced labour practices and open up new dialogues, the ILO sent a very High Level Team (vHLT) to the country in February 2005. However, the delegation cut short their trip after just two days after they were unable to secure key meetings, including with the regime’s top official Sen. Gen. Than Shwe. Following the failure to complete their mandate the vHLT requested the regime take immediate actions to end the use of forced labour. The SPDC did take a number of steps to address the use of forced labour in the military but overall the ILO were dissatisfied with their efforts and stated that they “*fall far short of our expectations*”.⁵⁷

In April 2005 the relationship with the ILO became further strained by the SPDC’s announcement that “false” allegations of forced labour were detrimental to the dignity of the State and, as such, legal action would be taken against the complainants. This led to the conviction of Su Su Nway on 13 October 2005 who was counter-sued after she had successfully secured the prosecution of local officials in Htan Minaing and Mya Sinnai villages in Rangoon Division for perpetrating forced labour. She was sentenced to 18 months in prison. Two further notable cases include the sentencing on 31 October 2005 of Aye Myint, a lawyer from Pegu, to seven years in prison after allegedly supplying “false information” to the ILO in relation to his assistance to a group of farmers who had their land confiscation by the military.⁵⁸ Similarly, three NLD members, Thein Zan, Zaw Htay and Aung Than Tun from Aungmye, Magway Division, had cases brought against them on 20 October 2005 for giving “false information” to the ILO when reporting the death of Win Lwin, a villager from Ngapyin, who died during a forced labour session in December 2001.⁵⁹

At the subsequent meeting of its Governing Body in November 2005, the ILO expressed grave concern at the deteriorating situation in Burma, particularly in relation to the legal measures being taken against those who report incidents of forced labour. They were also severely critical of the regime's attempts to pressurise and intimidate the ILO by using state-sponsored organisations to hold protest rallies against their involvement in Burma. In addition, a series of death threats were made against the Liaison Officer. This resulted in the Governing Body recommending that the ILO members revisit the issue of actions against Burma at their conference in 2006.⁶⁰

In March 2006, Richard Horsey, the ILO Liaison Officer in Burma, submitted a report to the meeting of the ILO Governing Body in which he further stated his concerns regarding the lack of a competent authority to which he could refer complaints of forced labour for investigation. He declared that this will “*tend to reinforce the climate of impunity surrounding government officials who have recourse to forced labour*”. He also noted how the recent convictions of complainants of forced labour was undermining any previous progress made on this issue and called for a speedy resolution of this issue, referring specifically to the three cases mentioned above. The question of his own personal safety was subsequently considered closed after he received assurances from the Minister for Labour.⁶¹

On the final day of the two-week long meeting, the ILO Governing Body put forward a resolution to “*review what further action could be taken by the ILO in accordance with its Constitution in order (i) to effectively secure Myanmar's compliance with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and (ii) to ensure that no action is taken against complainants or their representatives.*”⁶² Crucially this resolution differs from previous statements as it is not solely a question of reactivating the previous measures from 2000, but opens the door to discussions on additional measures.⁶³ As such the Governing Body was instructed to prepare an analysis on all the available options in time for the annual ILO members' conference in June 2006.⁶⁴

In the following months, the investigative work of the ILO office in Rangoon remained effectively stalled as no new cases of forced labour could be referred on, for fear of prosecution of the complainants. The ILO concluded that this situation “*contradicts the very raison d'être of the ILO presence*”⁶⁵ in Burma and subsequently drew up three possible courses of further action to be presented at the members' conference.⁶⁶ The three courses of actions refer specifically to the regime's practice of prosecuting complainants and its incompatibility with Forced Labour Convention No. 29. Option one involved an ILO member requesting a binding ruling from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which would then be enforceable by the United Nations Security Council. Option two would see the establishment of an ad hoc ILO tribunal to rule on the matter and option three involved the ILO requesting an advisory opinion from the ICJ which although not binding, would carry significant judicial weight. Further, requests for advisory opinions do not enter the queue of contentious cases before the Court, and are therefore dealt with more quickly.⁶⁷

The 2006 annual ILO conference began on 31 May and during the two weeks there were an unprecedented one and a half days of meetings to discuss the situation in Burma and the possible course of actions. The representative for the Burmese junta responded to the negotiations by announcing on 3 June that they would “*place a six month moratorium on the prosecution of complainants on an experimental basis*” during which time any new complaints would be dealt with jointly by the Director General of the Department of Labour and the ILO Liaison Officer. In addition, as a goodwill gesture, they also announced they

would release Su Su Nwe.⁶⁸ On 6 June 2006, Su Su Nwe was indeed released from Rangoon's Insein prison. Her release was welcomed by many including the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan who urged the Burmese authorities to follow up this action with the "*lifting of remaining restrictions*" on over 1000 other political prisoners including opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.⁶⁹

At the conference, the Burmese authorities appealed to ILO members to see their recent steps as evidence of their willingness to cooperate with the organisation and urged them not to adopt any of the further "*harsh measures*" being discussed.⁷⁰ Although the ILO welcomed the actions by Burma, the general consensus among members was that the steps "*came very late and did not go far enough*," said Richard Horsey.⁷¹ However, they did feel that the path of cooperation and dialogue could be continued on the proviso that "*any such cooperation needed to rapidly produce tangible and verifiable action from Myanmar towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry*". To demonstrate its insistence on this matter the ILO then set a deadline of November 2006 (the next Governing Body meeting) for tangible progress to have been made on the establishment of a credible complaints mechanism. The ILO also demanded that the regime release Aye Myint and cease all pending prosecutions on other forced labour complainants.⁷² On 8 July, Aye Myint was released from Pegu prison after serving nine months of his seven year sentence. The ILO welcomed the release and confirmed that they were not aware of any other people still being detained in Burma for similar offences.⁷³ On 27 September 2006, following continual adjournments in the case, the SPDC announced to the UN Human Rights Council, that the three Aunglan NLD members had been freed of all charges.⁷⁴

However, on 10 November 2006, Altsean reported that nine persons sentenced in November 2005 remained imprisoned following making complaints to the ILO. Wai Lin received a 25 years sentence while another defendant, Win, was given 17 years. The remaining seven people, Thein Lwin Oo, Ye Myint, Hla Myint Than, Aye Chan (f), Aye Thi Khaing (f), Yin Kyi (f) and Myint Lwin each received 8 year prison terms.⁷⁵

The deadline for the Burmese regime to establish a credible forced labour complaints mechanism expired at the start of the ILO Governing Body meeting on 14 November with no tangible progress having been made. All three member groups of the ILO, the Workers, Employers and the majority of Governments agreed on a toughening of their stance towards Burma. In their concluding statement the Governing Body expressed "*great frustration that the Myanmar authorities had not been able to agree on a mechanism to deal with complaints*" and criticised the regime for missing "*a critical opportunity to demonstrate a real commitment to cooperating with the ILO... which once again raised serious questions as to whether any such commitment existed.*"⁷⁶

As a result, the Governing Body agreed to place an agenda item for their next session in March 2007 to move forward on the legal options outlined during the June 2006 conference, including making full preparations to request an advisory opinion from the ICJ. They also stated that ILO Director General Juan Somavia could make information available to the United Nations Security Council when they next come to consider the Burma situation and also to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for use in any future proceedings. The ICC has the authority to prosecute individuals, including military and government officials, for the most serious crimes within the international community. Forced labour could conceivably fall under the crime of "enslavement" which is referred to as a "crime against humanity".⁷⁷

The unprecedented move towards legal action against the SPDC was seen by many ILO members to be crucial to ensure the credibility of the organisation and to demonstrate that they take the issue seriously.⁷⁸ Director General Jean Somavia commented in November that *“Forced labour is a scourge on humanity. Any government or regime intent on perpetrating it will clash with the ILO head on...The ILO has been committed to dialogue with the Burmese authorities to solve the problem, but for some time now the message hasn’t been getting through....The door is still open, but if negotiations are not conducted in good faith, then other ways have to be explored”*.⁷⁹ However, some member countries particularly from Asia claimed that dialogue was still the best course of action. While the ICJ itself has no power to enforce a potential ruling, it could be referred to and enforced by the Security Council.⁸⁰ Russia asserted it would not accept the authority of an advisory opinion by the ICJ as binding.⁸¹

Construction of the New Capital

In November 2005 the junta began moving its administrative departments from Rangoon to the new capital city of Nay Pyi Daw. For the development of the new town, Asia World Company, a private Burmese enterprise with close ties to the junta, has been contracted for a further six years, suggesting Nay Pyi Daw will remain under construction into 2012. The ILO previously reported that 2,800 villagers from the surrounding area were forced to build a military and air force base to secure the area prior to the construction work.⁸² In 2006, DVB reported on the transfer of around 900 inmates from Rangoon’s Insein Jail in 30 trucks to the Nay Pyi Daw on 1 February 2006 to be forcefully employed in the construction of the new capital city.⁸³ However, the ILO was reluctant, throughout 2006, to draw attention to labour complaints from Nay Pyi Daw for fear that the SPDC might punish complainants for “spreading false information.”⁸⁴

The junta is also planning the construction of a new gas pipeline to serve the new capital which will be part of the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise’s wider plans to expand the entire gas pipeline network across the country.⁸⁵ Pipelines in Burma have traditionally been associated with increased human rights abuses along their route including forced labour, such as in the maintenance of the pipeline and the employment of sentries to guard the pipeline.

1.3 Forced Labour Resulting from International Joint Ventures

The settlement of the Total Lawsuit

Total, the French multinational oil and gas company were involved in a consortium in the 1990s to develop the off-shore Yadana gas field in the Andaman Sea and construct a 65km gas pipeline across Burma to Thailand. The SPDC military were contracted to provide security for the project. During the construction of the pipeline the military engaged in serious and widespread human rights abuses including the widespread use of forced labour. In the following years several lawsuits were brought against consortium members, namely Unocal and Total, centring on their knowledge, complicity and liability for the human rights abuses carried out by the military during the project.

Total has been sued in two separate lawsuits, the first in the French courts in 2002 and the second in the Belgian courts, where the case was finally dismissed in 2005. The French case was brought by eight Burmese citizens who claimed that the military forced them to work on the pipeline construction site with threats of physical violence and death and that the Total executives were present at the sites and witnessed the actions of the military.⁸⁶ Charges were brought against Total's President Director General Thierry Desmarest and Director of On-Site Operations Herv Madeo for recruiting and paying battalions of the military and for promoting a situation of forced labour on the construction site. The court case came to an end in November 2005 with an out-of-court settlement for 5.2 million euros (US\$6.12 million) despite Total still denying any direct or indirect responsibility for the situation and asserting that neither they nor any of their sub-contractors used forced labour.⁸⁷ The settlement terms include 10,000 euros (US\$12,000) to each plaintiff on agreement that they drop the charges against Total, 1.2 million euros (US\$1.32 million) for other victims who can verifiably prove that they were subject to forced labour on the pipeline project and a further 4 million euros (US\$ 4.7 million) for development and humanitarian aid to Burmese refugees along the Thai border areas.⁸⁸

The allocation of the settlement money began in 2006 with the two larger sums being channelled through NGOs working in the Thai border regions. Initially Total encountered problems when two organisations refused to accept the funding. The Migrant Assistance Programme and the Thailand-Burma Border Consortium both declined the settlement money, citing Total's ongoing business involvements with the Burmese regime and their previous involvement in forced labour as the reason. Jackie Pollock of the Migrants Assistance Programme stated that "It would be unethical to be funded by a company that has ignored human rights abuses."⁸⁹ However, two other organisations: The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and the National Catholic Commission on Migration (NCCM), did agree to accept and distribute the financial aid. The UNHCR will spend the settlement money on aid projects in seven refugee camps in Thailand and the NCCM stated that it would use the funding to continue education and health projects in the Mon and Karen State areas. In addition the NCCM would also assist with the allocation of compensation to other victims of forced labour. They will manage a support fund for people subjected to forced labour for one week or more between 1995 and 1997 in southern Mon State and Tenasserim Division.⁹⁰ To receive the compensation the victims have to provide proof in the form of written or oral accounts which must be officially verified by a recognised

international, regional or local organisation. By July 2006 Total's lawyers were investigating 18 claims from victims in Kanbauk, Paukpinkwin and Yebyu Township.⁹¹

Potential Use of Forced Labour on Internationally Sponsored Projects

Throughout 2006 the Burmese junta conducted negotiations with many neighbouring governments and multinational corporations concerning future development and energy projects in the region. Several new projects also began during the year. As has been shown in the past, development projects in Burma usually mean an increase in militarization in the surrounding areas, which then increases the prevalence of human rights abuses, particularly forced labour and portering. All of the following projects raise serious concerns regarding potential new human rights violations.

Salween Dams

In December 2005 the SPDC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) to build a series of hydroelectric dams along the Salween River. Thailand has almost exhausted all of its domestic hydroelectric capability and is hugely dependent on foreign oil, so it is keen to secure energy deals with its neighbouring countries. It is estimated that Thailand will receive as much as 85-90 percent of the energy produced by the Burmese Salween dams.⁹² Of the five proposed dam sites the two that seem to have the most developed plans are the Hat Gyi Dam in Karen State and the Tasang Dam in Shan State.⁹³

The Hat Gyi Dam is due to be completed first, work is scheduled to start in 2007 and the project should run for five to six years. However, the joint dam project is reportedly going ahead without social or environmental impact studies having been carried out.⁹⁴ The project has generated widespread criticism from environmental and human rights groups who claim that the dam will force thousands from their homes, depriving people of their livelihoods and that forced labour will be used by the military on the construction sites.⁹⁵ Whilst, there is a complex web of reasons behind the 2006 military offensives in Karen State, a direct link can be discerned between the offensives and proposed dam sites. *"In terms of the offensives, this is quite clear,"* said David Scott Mathieson, of Human Rights Watch. *"The current offensives have to do with dams, as did the Shan forced relocation campaign between 1996 and 1998. The best way to (see) this is to place maps of proposed dam sites next to maps of the offensives and previous campaigns. The SPDC is clearing people away from development sites."*⁹⁶ According to KHRG, relocated people are being used to clear forest areas and build access roads to newly established SPDC camps in areas near the dam sites.⁹⁷ Increased militarization in the area has also resulted in villagers being conscripted to serve as guides and porters for the military, as well as labouring on their bases.⁹⁸

The terms of the MoU state that all information on the project is to remain confidential. This has angered many in Thailand, and throughout 2006 there were protests calling for the information to be made public. Reports have emerged from local NGOs that 10,000 refugees have already fled into the Mae Hong Son area in Thailand as a result of the dam project areas.⁹⁹ The exodus of villagers in the construction area was said to be prompted by the settlement of Burmese troops near a proposed reservoir for the Hat Gyi dam.¹⁰⁰ In March 2006 a group of Thai senators submitted an official letter to the Ministry of Energy demanding information on the project, as they became increasingly concerned about the negative impact of the dam on local communities. Still no information was made public, as

the company asserted that they were unable to publicise anything without the permission of the SPDC.¹⁰¹

On 19 September 2006, a military coup took place in Thailand and the government of Thaksin Shinawatra was removed from power. Thaksin's government had previously developed a strong relationship with the Burmese junta including strengthening economic ties on projects such as the Salween dams. With a new regime in power, local environmental and human rights groups saw a renewed opportunity for a change in the relationship with Burma and began petitioning for an end to the dam projects.¹⁰² In early November the new regime signalled that it intends to reassess its relations with Burma, particularly in the area of power generation. The new Energy Minister Piyasvasti Amranand stated that they may possibly abandon the Salween dam projects; however, many observers believe that at least two of the five dam projects (Hat Gyi and Tasang) may be considered too far advanced to back out of.¹⁰³

When completed, the proposed Tasang Dam in Shan State will be the tallest hydroelectric dam in South East Asia, measuring 228 meters high with a generating capacity of over 7,000 megawatts. The project is estimated to cost US\$6 billion and take 15 years. In April 2006 the Burmese regime signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Thai company MDX to build the dam.¹⁰⁴ The flood plain is expected to cover hundreds of kilometres which will mean the displacement of thousands of people. The Shan Sapawa Organisation reported in September 2006 that over 60,000 had already been forcibly relocated from the flood zone and that MDX were building roads, staff buildings and other facilities in the area. Due to conflict in the region the SPDC military has tripled the number of battalions in the area, increasing the corollary risk of human rights abuses and forced labour.¹⁰⁵

Shwe Gas Development

In August 2000 the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) signed a deal with the South Korean multinational Daewoo International to explore and develop natural gas fields in the Bay of Bengal, off the coast of Arakan State. In 2004 they announced the discovery of a large off-shore gas field containing several blocks of gas. The largest block being A-1 is estimated to contain upwards of 3 trillion cubic feet of gas. The subsequent development project was named "Shwe" which means gold in Burmese.¹⁰⁶ The estimated market value of the A-1 block alone is US\$80 billion. The Shwe Gas Consortium was set up to oversee the development of the project. Consortium members include Daewoo International with a 60 percent share, the Korean Gas Corporation with 10 percent, India's Oil and Natural Gas Corporation with 10 percent and the Gas Authority of India (GAIL) with a 20 percent share. The gas field is thought to have a lifetime of around 20 years and it has been estimated that the project will increase the junta's income by 150 percent, bringing in between US\$580 and US\$824 million each year, or up to US\$17 billion over the life of the project.¹⁰⁷

The Shwe Gas Movement, a coalition of NGOs, is calling on the Consortium members to cease cooperation with the Burmese regime as the gas revenues from the project will only strengthen the junta's oppressive control of the country and allow for further development of the military. *"The hopes of many people in Burma for democratic change will be dealt a serious blow by the Shwe gas project if it goes ahead,"* said Wong Aung, coordinator of the Shwe Gas Movement in Thailand.¹⁰⁸ Daewoo have stated that they will not withdraw from the project and that *"it is not the right time to discuss a human rights abuse issue because we are...yet to begin development"*.¹⁰⁹ Previous gas deals have been directly linked to arms purchases by the junta.¹¹⁰ At the end of 2006, 14 Daewoo International executives were

indicted in South Korea for violations of international trading law and technology development facilitating law, for illegally exporting gunnery production factory, equipments, and technical skills to the Burmese military regime.¹¹¹

The Gas from the A-1 field was initially earmarked for Indian consumption which would mean building a pipeline overland through Arakan and Chin States, then through Bangladesh to India. However during bilateral negotiations between India and Bangladesh, the latter imposed conditions on any pipeline agreement including access for commodities and energy from Bangladesh to Nepal and Bhutan through Indian territory. India could not agree to the conditions so the project stalled. On 7 December 2005 the Burmese Junta and the Consortium unexpectedly signed a MoU with PetroChina, a private oil and gas company from Beijing, to supply gas from the A-1 field, including an overland pipeline to China. The route of the proposed pipeline will stretch from Taungup Township to Mindon, then through Shan State and into Yunnan in China.¹¹² In January 2006 Burmese officials confirmed that despite the deal with China, they could still supply gas to India but it would have to be from block A-2 which being further out would require an additional 150km of pipeline.¹¹³ Daewoo International also continued to explore the A-3 block which is estimated to carry reserves worth around US\$4 billion. In April 2006 they sold 20 percent of the development rights to India's Oil and Natural Gas Corp.¹¹⁴

By August 2006, GAIL had completed a feasibility study on the construction of a 1,400 kilometre pipeline, by passing Bangladesh, running through Arakan and Chin States along the Kaladan River to Gaya in Bihar via Mizoram State of India.¹¹⁵ The Shwe Gas Movement reported that the SPDC military, in charge of protecting the project, had already begun building 15 new army bases along the proposed pipeline route. The military has reportedly used forced labour to build these bases, as well as in the construction of roads in the area. Forced relocations have also reportedly increased along the proposed route. Following previous experiences on the Yadana and Yetagun pipelines, the concern is that when the project begins, the number of human rights violations will increase.¹¹⁶



Proposed routes of gas pipelines, transporting natural gas from the Shwe Gas Fields, through Burma, to China and India. Pipelines have traditionally been the site of many human rights abuses within Burma including forced relocation, forced labour in the maintenance and construction of the pipelines and in the form of sentry duty, as well as draconian movement restrictions so as the SPDC can completely secure its investment. Numerous other abuses arise in conjunction with these abuses or simply as a result of increased troop build up along the pipeline. [Picture: Shwe Gas Movement].

Road and Rail Projects

In 2006, the SPDC was a partner in ‘The Asian Highway’, an inter-governmental project which aims to connect 32 countries throughout Asia, and has been organised in partnership with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Within Burma one section already under construction is intended to run from Thailand via the border town of Myawaddy in Pa-an District, continuing north to Rangoon, through Thaton District. The DKBA has been charged by the SPDC with implementing the construction of the Highway in Thaton District. In doing so, the DKBA have in turn forcibly relocated villagers, and forced local residents to clear the land, dig irrigation trenches and build bridges. KHRG have asserted that “*similar destruction can be expected along the Asian Highway’s entire route through Burma.*”¹¹⁷

Throughout 2006 negotiations continued between the Bangladeshi government and the Burmese junta on the construction of a “friendship road” which would connect the two countries. The proposed 153 km route would stretch from Taungbro to Kyauktaw in Burma via Ramu-Gundom to Cox’s Bazaar in Bangladesh.¹¹⁸ In January 2006 the Government of India announced that plans to construct a railway link with Burma were to go ahead. On the Indian side the proposed rail route will cover 98km from Manipur State to the Indo-Burma border. The junta will construct a further 130km via Kalaymyo to Mandalay.¹¹⁹



Part of the ‘Asian Highway’, a UN-sponsored project to build road links all over Asia, where it passes through Thaton district in Burma. This particular piece of land (above left) was confiscated for the highway from Uncle M---, a 62 year old farmer of K--- village. He was not consulted or paid any compensation for his destroyed rice field. The people of his and the surrounding villages were then forced to do unpaid labour levelling the roadbed, laying gravel on it, and digging the ditches the entire length of the road as it passes through their area. They were ordered to make these drainage ditches 4 cubits (6 feet) deep by 3 cubits (4.5 feet) wide on both sides of the road. Local villagers were also forced to build a wooden bridge; this included cutting and milling the logs and providing all required materials and labour without any payment. These photos were taken in March 2006. [Photos and caption: KHRG]

1.4 Forced Portering – Partial List of Incidents for 2006

Arakan State

On 26 January 2006, it was reported that civilians were forced to carry goods and commodities from Taung Baza market to Sai Din Army Camp where at least three SPDC battalions were stationed. The distance between Taung Baza market and Sai Din Army Camp is 23 miles (more than 38 kilometres) and it takes at least seven hours on foot each way. The porters were forced to carry army rations including rice, peanuts, cooking oil and fuel including diesel. Villagers reported that if a family refused they were fined at least 500 kyat. The army also forced people to work as sentries at night, especially in villages close to the Bangladesh border. Twenty to 30 persons from each of the following villages were forced to work as porters on a rotational basis:

1. Pado Para,
2. Pi Yuat, Mai Zari,
3. Taung Gri Run,
4. Pyin Kaung,
5. Sun Zwera,
6. Wra Thaya,
7. Yin Baung Laung Chaung,
8. Baho Byin,
9. Pangon Ma Inn Chaung,
10. Pauk Kyaing Aouk.¹²⁰

Chin State

On 8 January 2006, troops from LIB #30 arrived at Satu village, and stopped a Sunday church service in order to commandeer 20 persons to porter for their unit. The church president, Mr. Vansen, was given an hour to select 20 people. Those who subsequently portered for the SPDC troops included 2 church elders, and a 15 year old girl called Ma Yin.¹²¹

On 10 October 2006, it was reported that Major Aung Lin Thwat, and troops from LIB #16 camped in Sabawngte village forced villagers from the surrounding area of Chin State to carry their supplies. The soldiers called up seven villagers from Sabawngte and forced them to carry backpacks and rations to the military camp in Darling Village. The goods carried by each villager weighed around 12 kilograms.¹²²

Karen State

In early 2006, DKBA Battalion #333 Commander Boh Lweh shot 25 year old Saw B--- 30 times in the head with a slingshot before demanding he porter for their battalion.¹²³

On 4 February 2006, troops from SPDC LIB #440, based at Kaw-thay-doe camp in Tantabin Township, forced 4 men and 7 women from Kaw-thay-doe village to carry 3 sacks of rice to Naw-soe and then on to Kaw-thay-doe camp.¹²⁴

On 11 February 2006, Captain Aye Aung with 60 of his soldiers from LIB #104 entered E--- village, Pa'an Township, and ordered the village head to find him four guides. Once they left

the village the guides were also forced to porter for the battalion, with each villager having to carry loads weighing around 24 kgs. When they reached the next village the troops again demanded guides from the village head and released the E--- villagers.¹²⁵

On 16 February 2006, a DKBA unit in Bilin Township forced the Kaw-heh village head, Par Noe, and fellow villager, Par Na Da, to serve as porters for a month, under the justification that they had connections with KNU soldiers. If they refused, they were told that they would instead be sent to prison for the month.¹²⁶

On 21 February 2006, Captain Than Htun along with 40 soldiers from DKBA Headquarters Security Battalion came to P--- village, Pa'an Township, and ordered the village head to find him 13 porters. The 13 villagers were forced to serve the battalion as porters for three days.¹²⁷

On 23 February 2006, Captain Than Htun along with 40 soldiers from DKBA Headquarters Security Battalion entered K--- village, Pa'an Township while the villagers were worshipping. They captured all of the men and took six of them as porters, only releasing them two days later.¹²⁸

On 24 February 2006, SPDC TOC #663 Commander Tin Aung, based at Play-hsa-lo camp, Tantabin Township, forced 5 Play-hsa-lo villagers and one Yar-lo villager to carry army rations from Htee-lo to Play-hsa-lo.¹²⁹

On 27 February 2006, Major Aye Lwin of LIB #6, in Thandaung Township, forced villagers of Htee-tha-saw and Ka-mi-lo to carry rations comprising of:

1. 84 sacks of rice,
2. 20 boxes of condensed milk,
3. 127 tins of sardines,
4. 100 viss of salt,
5. 150 viss of sugar,
6. 150 viss of onion, and
7. 100 viss of dried tea-leaves.

In addition, Htee-ta-pu villagers were forced to carry 30 sacks of beans from Thauk-ye-kat stream to Htee-tha-saw.¹³⁰

On 3 March 2006, LID #66, TOC #3, under Commander Tin Aung, made 70 bullock carts from Za Ya Gyi take rice from Za Ya Gyi to Hti Loh.¹³¹

On 9 March 2006, SPDC TOC #663 Commander Tin Aung forced 10 Play-Hsa-Loh villagers to transport rice from Hti Loh back to Play-Hsa-Loh.¹³²

On 11 March 2006, the SPDC TOC #663 Commander Tin Aung, based at Play-Hsa-Lo camp in Tantabin Township, forced Ya-lo and Plaw-baw-doe villagers to carry army rations from Paw-per-lay-la to Play-hsa-lo. The victims from Ya-lo village were:

1. Saw Maung Pweh, aged 42;
2. Saw Maw Lay Htoo, 52;
3. Saw Heh Pweh, 42;
4. Saw Soe Myint, 20;
5. Saw Toe Per, 30;
6. Saw Taw Bo, 28;
7. Naw Ka Mu Tu, 21;

And Plaw-baw-doe villagers:

1. Saw Ta Kaw Raw, 46;
2. Saw Ta Ma Taw, 17;
3. Saw Ywa Heh, 15;
4. Naw Si Wae, 34;
5. Naw Wa Doe, 21;
6. Naw Ker Lay, 20;
7. Naw Heh Klu, 18; and
8. Naw Kler Paw, 18.¹³³

Also on 11 March 2006, SPDC LID #66 Commander Khin Zaw Oo, based at Kler-lar (Baw-ga-li-gyi) in Tantabin Township, ordered all the truck owners in Kler-lar (Baw-ga-li-gyi) and Kaw-thay-doe areas to transport army rations from Pa-let-wa to Kler-lar (Baw-ga-li-gyi).¹³⁴

On 12 March 2006, in Tantabin Township, SPDC TOC #3, IB #35, Column #2 Commander Bo Nay Myo, based at Klaw-mee-doe, forced: 8 women and 22 men from Ler-ka-doe, 10 women and 17 men from Hu-mu-doe and 18 women and 60 men from Klaw-mee-doe villages to carry army rations from Paletwa to Klaw-mee-doe army camp, for the next three days.¹³⁵

Also on 12 March 2006, SPDC TOC #663 Commander Tin Aung, in Tantabin Township, forced 9 Yer-lo villagers, 9 Paw-per villagers, 8 Ka-mu-lo villagers and 5 women and 13 men from Play-hsa-lo village to carry army rations from Lay-lar-taw to Play-hsa-lo army camp.¹³⁶

On 17 March 2006, LIB #108 troops, in Tantabin Township, forced Htee-lo villagers to carry army rations from Htee-lo to Play-hsa-lo army camp.¹³⁷



The people of M--- village meet in their village head's house in May 2006 to discuss the DKBA's latest demand for the village to send two 'permanent porters', i.e. two people to remain at the DKBA camp on call 24 hours a day in case porters or messengers are needed, to be replaced with fresh people every couple of days. The order comes from the DKBA's Ka Hsaw Wah battalion, and if the villagers cannot comply they have been ordered to pay 300,000 kyat to the battalion as compensation. *[Photo and caption: KHRG]*

On 18 March 2006, SPDC troops from Play-hsa-lo camp under TOC #663 of LID #66, led by Commander Tin Aung forced 16 villagers from Play-hsa-lo, 9 from Yu-lo, 2 from Por-pa and 3 from Yeh-lo to carry their rations and ammunition from Nart-kyar area to Play-hsa-lo army camp.¹³⁸

On 18 March 2006, SPDC troops from LIB #11 led by Bo Han Moe Aung, forced 15 villagers from Khaw-law-kar village, 15 from S'bar-law-khee and 15 from Khu-thay-doe to carry their rations and ammunition to Khu-thay-dar army camp.¹³⁹

In March 2006, DKBA troops apprehended Poe Choh, of Gk'Wah Htah village, Bilin Township who had been staying in Dtah Meh Kee village. They forced him to serve as a porter, during which time he was assaulted by the troops.¹⁴⁰

On 28 April 2006, it was reported that TOC #1 Commander Thin Aung, had ordered the forced employment of 2,000 villagers from the Kler La/Baw Ga Lyi Gyi area, Mone Township, in the portering of food supplies, as part of a major re supply of camps on the Kler La- Busakee road; including Naw Soe, Busakee and They Mu Ko camps.¹⁴¹

On 3 April 2006, the SPDC military forced villagers from Ger Mu Loh to go to Hti Lo, pick up rations of rice and take it back to Play Hsa Loh camp. The villagers were:

1. Saw Htee Moo, aged 35;
2. Saw Khu Heh, 30;
3. Saw Hee Paw, 30;
4. Saw Thu, 12;
5. Saw Maw Plo Gaw, 16;
6. Saw Tha Way, 50; and
7. Saw Kyaw Soe, 17.¹⁴²

On 11 May 2006, it was reported that the SPDC had been forcing villagers in Shwegyin Township to work as forced porters during their offensive. For three months, villagers and bullock carts from Donzayit, Salu Chaung, Kyunchaung, and other villages in Shwegyin Township were commandeered to transport food supplies to the frontline and transport SPDC troops back to Shwegyin and military hospitals. As a result, farmers were largely impeded from sustaining their own livelihoods.¹⁴³

On 13 May 2006, troops from SPDC LIB #108 under LID #66 forced 6 residents of Ye-tho-gyi village, Tantabin Township, to transport army rations from Ye-tho-gyi to Ku-leh-doe army camp.¹⁴⁴

On 20 May 2006, LID #66 Commander Khin Zaw forced the residents of 10 villages in Baw-ga-li-gyi village tract, a total of 350 villagers, to transport 200 sacks of rice to Naw-soe military camp.¹⁴⁵

On 6 June 2006, troops from SPDC TOC #2 of MOC #16, led by Major Ko Ko Kyi, forced 72 villagers from Play-hsa-lo, Yeh-lo, Plaw-baw-doe, Ta-pa-khee, Mwee-lo, Paw-pa and Lay-wor-lo villages to carry their army supplies from Htee-lo camp to Tain-pu camp.¹⁴⁶

In June 2006, DKBA Brigade #333 troops, under the command of Mo Kyo, began operations in Bilin Township. From this time on through to the end of 2006, troops have

frequently entered villages demanding information and porters, threatening that anyone caught fleeing from portering duty would be fined 300,000 kyat.¹⁴⁷

On 11 June 2006, DKBA troops under Hla Maung forced 17 residents of Ta-eu-ni village, Bilin Township to serve as porters for their unit.¹⁴⁸

On 5 July 2006, SPDC TOC #661 ordered villagers from the west bank of Thauk-ye-khat River to carry food supplies from Thandaung town to Tahuk-ye-khat river suspension bridge camp. The villages included in this order were:

1. Ku-ler-der,
2. Kaw-law-kah,
3. Sa-bah-lor-khee,
4. Ler-gi-kho,
5. Ler-gi-kho-der-hah,
6. Ler-gi-kho-der-kho,
7. The-ta-pu,
8. Thu-geh-der,
9. Ka-thaw-pwe,
10. Ker-weh, and
11. Ker-do-Kah.¹⁴⁹

On 5 July 2006, SPDC IB #57 Commander Min Kyaing Thant commandeered 90 bullock carts from Pa-deh-gon village Tract and 150 carts from Ma-bee village Tract, with 3 persons per cart, to carry the battalion's food supplies. Despite villagers' protestations that they were unable to go due to heavy flooding, they were refused the option to decline.¹⁵⁰

On 6 August 2006, SPDC MOC #16, TOC #2, IB #241 and Southern Command attempted to capture 700 villagers in Tha Bin Nyut to carry food for the SPDC soldiers from Play Hsa Lo camp.¹⁵¹

On 15 August 2006, SPDC LIB #10 forced 10 villagers to carry food from Kaw Thay Der (Ye Tho Gyi) to Noe Soe (Mong Di Gyi) camp.¹⁵²

On 15 August 2006, SPDC TOC #662 troops forced 6 Der-kah villagers and 13 Htee-pu-khee-der-kho villagers to carry food supplies from Waw-gyi camp to Ka-ya-khee camp.¹⁵³

On 15 August 2006, SPDC LIB #599 troops ordered Maladaw villager Maung Ro to carry durian fruits from Wah-khee to Maladaw.¹⁵⁴

In August 2006, two soldiers deserted SPDC LIB #308 after being accused of rape. They were later captured, and as punishment for deserting and stealing a pistol they were used as porters to carry ammunition and rations during an offensive against the KNU, 25 km west of Three Pagodas Pass, along the Thai border. One of the soldiers died while portering and the fate of the second is unknown.¹⁵⁵

On 19 August 2006, SPDC LIB #439 commanded by Kyaw Htun Win from Shasibo Camp forced 16 villagers to carry food to Hti Lo Camp.¹⁵⁶

On 23 August 2006, SPDC IB #35 battalion commander ordered the following groups of villagers to carry food supplies for the army: Ker-weh village, 40 persons; Ler-gi-kho-doe-ka

village, 15 persons; Ler-gi-kho-doe-kho village, 30 persons; Ku-thay-doe village, 30 persons; Sa-ba-ler-khee village, 15 persons; and Kaw-law-ka village, 15 persons.¹⁵⁷

On 20 September 2006, troops from SPDC LIB #558 ordered villagers living in Ta-nin-tha-yi Township to transport food supplies for SPDC IB #24 in the Moe-taw area. Villagers required for this task were: Thee-daw village, 80 persons; Ta-gu village, 80 persons; and Thay-baw-na village, 50 persons.¹⁵⁸

On 21 September 2006, SPDC IB #17, in Ta-nin-tha-yi Township, forcibly seized 100 Ananguin villagers along with 90 Ah-ku-nge villagers, for use in carrying food supplies for the army in Moe-taung Township.¹⁵⁹

On 21 September 2006, SPDC MOC #16, based at Teik-pu camp, seized 59 villagers of Teik-pu village, taking them to Tha-byay-nyunt to carry food supplies.¹⁶⁰



On 25 May 2006, SPDC LID #66 forced 850 villagers from Kaw They Der Village area to carry military supplies from Kaw They Der Village to Naw Soe Burma Army camp, in preparation for an offensive into eastern Toungoo District and north-western Papun District.¹⁶¹ [Photo: FBR].

On 2 October 2006, Commander Aung Min of SPDC IB #1, based in Maung Ko Der camp, forced 35 villagers to carry their food rations for them.¹⁶²

On 4 October 2006, Bo Zaw Win of SPDC LIB #5 ordered 8 men and 12 women of Ler-gi-kho village and 30 men of Kher-weh villager to carry food supplies from Thandaung to Kher-weh camp.¹⁶³

Also on 4 October 2006, SPDC LID #66 Commander Maung Maung Aye, ordered Bawgali-gyi villager Po Pyu to transport bamboo cut by Kaw-thay-doe villagers to Bawgali-gyi.¹⁶⁴

On 7 October 2006, Commander Kyaw Tun Win of LIB #439 forced 8 Shasibo villagers to carry rice to Hti Lo Camp.¹⁶⁵

On 18 October 2006, Major Zaw Min of SPDC IB #1 based at Maw-koe-doe camp, ordered 6 Peh-kaw-doe villagers to carry food supplies from Baw-gali-gyi to Maw-koe-doe camp.¹⁶⁶

On 21 October 2006, SPDC IB #580, based at Play-hsa-lo camp, Tantabin Township, ordered 42 villagers from Play-hsa-lo, Ler-lo, Plaw-baw-doe, Paw-pa and Ka-nue-lo villages, to carry military supplies from Tha-bye-nyunt camp to Play-hsa-lo camp.¹⁶⁷

On 21 October 2006, SPDC LID #66, TOC 662, IB #11, under Commander Aung Min forced 12 Beh Kaw Der villagers to carry supplies from Kler La to Maung Ko Der camp. Commander Maung Maung Aye, based in Kler La camp, also forced villagers to carry food from Kler La to Busakee.¹⁶⁸

On 23 October 2006, SPDC soldiers from LID #66, TOC #662, IB #105 under Major Kyaw So, forced 22 villagers to carry food supplies from Thandaung to Kuh Thay Der camp. The villages and the number of persons involved were:

1. Kaw Law Ka, 9 persons;
2. K'Ba Law Kee, 5 persons;
3. Htee Tha Bu, 5 persons; and,
4. Ler Gih Ko Der Ka, 3 persons.¹⁶⁹

On 30 November 2006, LIB #590 ordered 20 villagers and 6 ox cart owners from Mae Ta Taw, Myaw Oo, Paw Pi Der, Aung Chan Tha and Htee To Lo villages to carry food supplies from Ye Oh Sin to the Htee La Baw Hta army camp.¹⁷⁰

On 5 December 2006, LID #66 Commander Maung Maung Aye, ordered LIB #6 Battalion Commander Aung Soe Win to send 35 people from Kaw Thay Der village to carry army supplies from Kaw Thay Der to Naw Soe. They were subsequently ordered to carry supplies from Naw Soe camp back to Baw Ga Li Gyi camp. On the same day General Maung Maung Aye ordered villagers from Wa Thee Ko to cut 300 pieces of bamboo and take them to Wa Thee Ko for the construction of the camp.¹⁷¹

Mon State

On 8 January 2006, two soldiers deserted from SPDC IB #31, based in Khaw Zar sub-Town, and reportedly joined a Mon rebel group operating in the area. As a result, SPDC forces began threatening the people of Mi-Htaw-Hlar Kyi village and forced six villagers, on a rotational basis, to patrol the village and act as porters to track down the deserters. *“Our villagers are being used as porters to track down the deserters. At least two or three men were used and they had to carry supplies for the soldiers. Sometimes we were used for four days,”* one villager explained.¹⁷²

Shan State

On 4 January 2006, it was reported that during battles with the Shan State Army-South in the area three miles from Namkhan, the SPDC military had forced 20 people from each surrounding village to act as porters during the day and to work as sentries during the night. At night they were forced to stand guard along the Namkhan-Namphatkar road and at the ferry ports on the Shweli River.¹⁷³

On 5 February 2006, a patrol of about 30 SPDC troops from Nam-Zarng based LIB #543 conscripted 4 villagers from Nawng Wo village in Wan Zing village tract, Kae-See Township, to serve as porters. The villagers were forced to carry heavy loads whilst on patrol with the troops. One porter escaped into the jungle, and the load was divided into 3 portions. After four days, the 3 porters were released at Wan Yurng village, and replaced with villagers from Wan Yurng.¹⁷⁴

On 28 April 2006, SPDC troops from LIB #576, under Capt. Thein Htun Oo, forced 4 villagers of Pa Sa village in Nawng Hee village tract, to serve as porters for 6 days, seriously injuring their shoulders as a result of the heavy loads they were required to carry. The four villagers were:

1. Zaai Aw, aged 29;
2. Kaw-Na, aged 36;
3. Kan-Thi, aged 35; and
4. Zin-Ta, aged 53.¹⁷⁵

On 19 June 2006, a patrol from SPDC LIB #516 conscripted 3 villagers from Tin Paet village, Nawng Hee village tract, to serve as the patrol's guides. The 3 male villagers were: Zaai Kyan, aged 37; Zaai Sa, aged 20; and Kaw-Ling, aged 30. Once they left the village, two of the men were forced to porter cooking utensils for the patrol. After three days of patrol, they were interrogated about the movements of Shan soldiers in the area, during which time they were assaulted, and cruelly tortured, with burning plastic sheet dripped on their head. The following day, a Pa-O ceasefire group negotiated for the release of the villagers, who were threatened with death if they informed anybody what had happened.¹⁷⁶

In September 2006, it was reported that villages in Murng Khun village tract had to provide at least 1 person each day to go to each of the two local SPDC military camps; the Murng-Kerng-based LIB #514 to the south and the Kae-See-based IB #286 to the northeast, to be ready to serve as military porters if and when required; which was said to be frequently. If villagers escaped, their whole village was liable to punishment, often paying a fine in the form of livestock. Villagers of Nawng Kio, Wan Paang and Ta Saa Le villages in Murng Khun tract said that the arrangement had been in place for many years.¹⁷⁷

1.5 Forced Labour – Partial List of Incidents for 2006

Arakan State

In February 2006, The Arakan Liberation Army burned a temporary SPDC Army camp. In response, SPDC troops accused local villagers of being rebels, demanded 80,000 kyat as compensation, and forced the villagers to rebuild the camp.¹⁷⁸

On 9 May 2006, it was reported that villagers from Kyaukpan Du, Thawin Chaung, Inndin, and Mrin Lwet in Maungdaw Township, as well as Atwin Byin, Chut Byin, Owe Thima, Thein Daung and Taungmaw in Buthidaung and Rathidaung Townships, were being forced to construct an 18 mile road between a ‘model’ village for Buddhist settlers in Rathidaung Township and a border village in Maungdaw Township. Whilst local authorities promised to pay the villagers 500 kyat for each days work they later refused to honour their promise.¹⁷⁹

Buthidaung Township

From January 2006 to at least the time of this report on 8 May 2006, NaSaKa, Burma’s Border Security Force in western Burma, forced villagers into providing free labour for road construction projects in Buthidaung Township, Arakan State. The road which is being constructed by villagers will connect the MOC #15 of Dabru Chaung to Thin Ga Net IB #552. It is 14 miles long, 30 feet wide and 4 feet high. Villagers recruited for the construction of the road came from:

1. Taung Bazar,
2. Thin Ga Net,
3. Mi Gyaung Gyi,
4. Badana,
5. Mee Gyaung,
6. Gaung Swe,
7. Paungdaw Pyin,
8. Krin Tha Ma,
9. Bo Gyi Chaung,
10. Nan Yah Gone,
11. Dabru Chaung.

Each family was required to construct at least 15 to 21 feet long stretches, working each day from early morning till sundown. The families which were not able to provide labour themselves had to find somebody to work in their place.¹⁸⁰

On 8 January 2006, it was reported that large numbers of Rohingya villagers were being forced to perform sentry duty at night in areas of northern Arakan. Numerous sentry posts were built on the back of forced labour. Six Rohingya were required to man each sentry post for the entire night, meaning that at least 78 villagers had to do sentry duty from each village everyday. Villagers had to stay awake the whole night and keep shouting and asking again and again “*Hey! Who are you?*” whether they saw anyone or not. Two or three times in every week, soldiers, NaSaKa or the police would come to the villages to check whether the sentries were on duty and awake. Perversely, the sentries were punished for both shouting when they visited and again for not shouting.¹⁸¹

On 18 March 2006, The TOC office in Buthidaung Town ordered IB #234 to complete the construction of a three-kilometre stretch of road in Tat Min Chaung and Min Gyi Taung within 30 days. The TOC required the road to be 18 feet in width and 2.5 feet high. Every family in Maung Gyi Taung, Lat Wat Dad Pazung Chaung, Min Gyi Zay, Dar Bine Sara, Tatmin Chaung and Shari Gona villages had to send one person as a ‘volunteer’ for the construction work. The military warned villagers not to divulge the fact that they were being used as forced labour, rather they were asked to identify themselves as volunteer workers.¹⁸²

On 5 May 2006, Abu Sayed, 50 years old, from Nan Yah Gone village, Buthidaung Township was detained for three days in an army camp and fined 10,000 kyat for his refusal to work as a forced labourer.¹⁸³

On 14 May 2006, it was reported that villagers in northern Buthidaung Township, were being forced to lay a road by the military authorities. The road constructed by villagers connected Taung Bazar to Bow Gawli village. It was required to be 8 miles in length, 80 feet wide and 3.75 feet high. Villagers used as forced labour were from nearby village tracts such as:

1. Bow Gawli,
2. Tin May,
3. Pand Zee,
4. Upper Kyaung Daung,
5. Kyun Pauk,
6. Goat Pi,
7. Taung Bazar,
8. Panbai Chaung,
9. Zeedon,
10. Yinma Kyaung Daung.

Tatamadaw and NaSaKa commands allotted the length of road that every village had to construct. The villages had to provide 100 to 120 workers each to build the road, with each family from the local area required to contribute labour for the project. The villagers received no remuneration. Those villagers, who had motorboats, rowboats and sailing boats, were required to transport stones to cover the road.¹⁸⁴

On 15 June 2006, at about 7:30 am, a seven-member police team from Taung Bazaar police station went to the Gyi Nuk Thi village tract, accompanied by the VPDC Chairman U Maung Hlun Chay, and arrested seven people from the village to provide forced labour. However, four of them were later released on the recommendation of the VPDC Chairman. Among the police personnel was San Tun, the Sergeant of Taung Bazar police station. The three Rohingya detained were Ali Hossain, 40, Mohamed Sayed, 35, and Kairul Amin, 19, who were forced to work in the police camp till sun set without food or wages. Kairul Amin fell unconscious as a result of the heat and lack of food, only to be assaulted and accused of feigning his exhaustion. The three men were released the following day after having no charges brought against them.¹⁸⁵

On 15 October 2006, Zamal Uddin, a Rohingya villager from Gufi village, Buthidaung Township, was accosted by NaSaKa forces whilst on his way to market. He was taken to their camp where he was forced to work alongside other Rohingya detainees. He was released on 25 October without any compensation for his work.¹⁸⁶

Kyaukpru Township

In August 2006, the China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) initiated the construction of a 28 mile long pipeline from oil fields in Kyaukpru and Rambree Townships to a processing factory in Kyaukpru. It was reported that many local residents had been forced to work on the construction of the pipeline for minimal wages. Land had also been confiscated for the pipeline and 329 hand drilled wells had originally been confiscated by the SPDC for CNOOC to begin their enterprise.¹⁸⁷

Maungdaw Township

On 16 February 2006, it was reported that Mohammed Ibrahim and Noor Boshor, from Wabag village of Kyi Kan Pyin village-tract (Khawarbill), Maungdaw Township were arrested by a NaSaKa patrol operating from their headquarters in Kyi-Kan-Pyin. During a surprise check at the sentry-post which the two men had been forced to man for the night, NaSaKa accused one of the men of sleeping and alleged the other had left his post. This has been denied by sources from the village. The two men were taken to the NaSaKa headquarters where they were beaten severely before being released after paying 6,000 kyat.¹⁸⁸

On 4 June 2006, a bridge crossing the river which flows between the Dou Dhan and Ngar Sakyeu villages in Maungdaw Township was completed. The 200 foot long bridge was built through forced labour and money extorted from villagers, with about 2,800,000 kyat of villagers money used by NaSaKa to construct the bridge. The villagers were also reported to have provided the timber for the bridge. Villagers will nevertheless be forced to pay a toll to cross the bridge.¹⁸⁹

On 29 June 2006, NaSaKa forced seven villagers from Maungdaw Township to plant castor oil saplings on a state-owned plantation. The villagers planted 17,600 castor oil saplings in one day.¹⁹⁰

On 2 July 2006, NaSaKa troops arrested 17 Rohingya villagers in Fokira Bazaar, Maungdaw Township, as they had come to the village without obtaining travel documents. The villagers were subsequently forced to work on a road construction site between Aung Zu and Khamaung Zeik in Maungdaw Township as punishment.¹⁹¹

Ponna Kyunt Township

On 8 January 2006, it was reported that Arakanese farmers were being forced by the regime to cultivate onions during the dry season. Farmers from Aung Pru Byin village in Ponna Kyunt Township reported that the authorities ordered each of them to cultivate onions on a piece of land with a minimum size of 75 feet by 150 feet. If any farmer disobeyed the order he would be punished by the local authorities.¹⁹²

Paletwa Township

In June 2006, it was reported that SPDC LIB #289 had ordered the following villages to each send 20 labourers every day to their camp:

1. Nharmatar,
2. Mondawn,
3. Loundkadu,
4. Palawa,
5. Ruwa,
6. Kethar,
7. Panetapan,
8. Jalay,
9. Chindawn,
10. Nupu,
11. Kuwa.

The villagers, aged between 15 and 40, were forced to bake brick, clean the camp, make fences, build a temporary building and do general work round the camp. Each person was forced to bring rations and firewood for three days. They also had to bring tools such as hoes, pickaxes, and knives to use during their work.¹⁹³ Villagers had to arrive at six in the morning and work eight hours a day without payment.¹⁹⁴

Rathidaung Township

On 30 January 2006, Captain Zaw Min Oo, of the Regional Security Control Headquarters, summoned villagers from the western part of Rathidaung Township, and forced them to carry timber and tin plates for the construction of modern (model?) villages at the foot of the Mayu range. In Rathidaung Township the military junta was constructing three such villages, Padauk Myin, Mala Myin, and Thaza Myin. The villagers did not receive any wages for their labour. They had to work for three days carrying loads between Sapho Kyunt jetty and the three villages; a distance of roughly 15 miles. The villagers were from;

1. Athat Nanrar,
2. Auak Nanrar,
3. Zay Di Byin,
4. Kan Byin, Pyin Wan,
5. Maw That,
6. Chut Byin,
7. Kyauk Ran,
8. Doeway Chaung,
9. Chin Wra.¹⁹⁵

On 3 April 2006, it was reported that SPDC authorities in Rathidaung Township were ordering VPDCs to send forced labourers from their village-tracts, as well as apprehending villagers, for use in SPDC brick fields. On 6 March 2006, Mohammed Sayed, 25, was accosted by the police who brought him to the brickfield and set him to work. He worked there for four days with little food and finally collapsed. On 10 March 2006, Abdu Malek, 27, was arrested by police while he was going to the market, and forced to work at the brick fields. He subsequently became ill. Similarly, on 23 March 2006, Mohammed, Abdu Koyum, Zamal Hussin, Nozir Ahmed and Abul Hussin from Zedy Pyin village tract were detained by police whilst they were leaving their mosque and forced to work at the brick fields. After one week, they were released without charge.¹⁹⁶

On 1 July 2006, Obiadullah, from Koe Tan Kauk village tract was put to work on the construction of NaSaKa camp #18, and was not permitted any rest period whilst working. On 10 July 2006, his relatives received information from other local people, who were also working in the camp, that Obiadullah had died. Villagers believe that he died as a result of injuries sustained from torture as his body was heavily scarred. NaSaKa subsequently handed over the body to his relatives claiming he died of a mysterious disease. NaSaKa ordered the relatives to bury the body immediately and also warned the villagers not to talk about the death to other authorities.¹⁹⁷

From 8 August to at least the time of this report, on 23 August 2006, NaSaKa forces were reported to be employing Rohingya villagers; Sayed Karim, Boshor, Sultan, Fayas, Kala Meah and Jamal, of Zaydi Pyin village, as forced labourers for a NaSaKa camp. The villagers were forced to go to the NaSaKa work site for four days each week, or else be fined 4,000 kyat per day.¹⁹⁸

Chin State

Falam Township

From the first week of May 2006, until at least the time of this report on 19 May 2006, the second commander of the SPDC military based in Tihbual village of Falam Township forced villagers from Tihbual, Mual Kawn and Laikual to work on the construction of an army camp. The forced labourers were required to bring their own tools and food. In addition, the villagers were forced to provide the raw construction materials, such as wood for the poles of the building and thatch for the roof. Between 20 and 30 villagers were required to work on the camp each day. The forced labour duties prevented villagers from working on their chilli crops despite it being harvest time, a crucial period for these farmers. If villagers failed to fulfil their duties they were subject to a large fine.¹⁹⁹

Hakha Township

In the first week of January 2006, villagers from four villages in Hakha Township were ordered to clear trees from more than 600 acres of forest for an SPDC tea plantation. The order was issued by Chin SPDC Chairman Colonel Tin Hla, who is also Commander of TOC #1. Hniarlawn, Chun Cung, Hran Hring and Nabual villages were affected by the order. Each village was ordered to clear 160 acres of forested land within a week. *“It took one person from every household in the village to finish the work in one week. The designated site was 2 miles away from our village and we had to bring our own ration and tools for the work,”* said a Hnairlawn villager.²⁰⁰

Matupi Township

In early 2006, Colonel San Aung of TOC #2, based in Matupi town, forced the local residents living along the town road to widen that road up to 5 feet in front of each house without pay. As a result, the road extended into the property of some residents living in the lower area of the town, who were forced to move. U Lu Voei and U Hu Hna who owned houses at the lower area reported the matter to the military command who verbally agreed to pay 10,000 kyat in compensation for them having to move their houses. However they had not received any compensation at the time of this report (24 May 2006).²⁰¹

In the third week of February, TOC #2 commander, Colonel San Aung, ordered the construction of a four mile motor road between Valangte and Leisin village, Matupi Township. The project was carried out under the command of Sergeant Aung Myo Thun. Around 200 local villagers were forced to work on the construction of the road, including roughly 30 women, with each village in the vicinity charged with constructing 3,000 feet of the road. The villagers had to supply their own food and tools. Some of the villages affected were:

1. Luivang, Pa Mai,
2. Daihnan,
3. Boi Ring,
4. Khua Hung,
5. An Thaw,
6. Thang Ping,
7. Lei Ring,
8. Tin Lawng,
9. Kho Bal.²⁰²

On 23 March 2006, it was reported that Mr. Lebuai, a village headman and member of the Ahru VPDC, had been detained for the previous three days after asking a contractor to pay wages to labourers forced to work in the construction of a hospital in Matupi. Troops from LIB #140 arrested Mr. Lebuai who was subsequently beaten and detained in the Lailenpi military camp. The army officers demanded 50,000 kyat in exchange for Mr. Lebuai's freedom. Ten villages around Lailenpi had reportedly been forced to supply 1,000 burnt bricks each for the construction of the hospital, under orders from Dr. Tin Thura, who demanded the bricks on 20 March. The villages forced to supply the burnt bricks were;

1. Mala,
2. Ahru,
3. Tin Nam,
4. Satu,
5. Paseing,
6. Cakheng,
7. Tisi,
8. Lailenpi,
9. Tawngla, and
10. Pintia.

Although villagers from Pintia refused the order and said they were “*ready to face any action by the military*”.²⁰³

In the second week of March 2006, Captain Than Htike Soe of the LIB #140 began summoning groups of villagers, 30 at a time, in Matupi Township, for use as forced labourers in the construction of a new military camp. No payment was offered. The labourers had to work on rotating shifts for five days at a time. IB #304 in Lailente is due to be based in the new camp.²⁰⁴

In early April 2006, construction work on a hydro-electric power project at the Bungtla waterfall, on Rha Lawng River in Matupi Township, resumed after heavy rains during the monsoon season. Construction restarted under the orders of Colonel San Aung, the Commander of TOC #2. Local residents were conscripted to work on the plant's construction, on a rotational basis, camping there for a week at a time. Villagers who could not contribute labour were fined. One labourer reported, “*They said the fines are meant for*

labourers but we provide our own food.” The power plant will supply electricity to the battalion headquarters based in Matupi Township, with reportedly nothing earmarked for the local population.²⁰⁵

On 2 May 2006, Assistant Director of the Warrant Office, General Hlah Win of LIB #304, based at Sabawngte village, forced 16 civilians from four nearby villages to cut timber planks for the construction of a Buddhist monastery inside the military camp. The construction of the Buddhist monastery in Sabawngte village military camp was due to begin in June 2006. General Hlah Win summoned village headmen from Hlungmang, Sabawngpi, Lungcawi and Sabawngte villages on 1 May 2006 to discuss the construction of the Buddhist monastery at the military camp. During the meeting, the four village headmen were ordered to produce four labourers from each village, and a total of 16 villagers from Hlungmang, Sabawngpi, Lungcawi and Sabawngte villages arrived in Sabawngte village on 2 May 2006. They were ordered to cut 200 cubic timber planks over the next seven days. The timber plank was cut three miles away from Sabawngte village and General Hlah Win himself supervised them. The villagers brought their own rations and tools from their respective villages for the seven days while they cut the timber.²⁰⁶

In July 2006, SPDC LIB #140 (also reported as LIB #304²⁰⁷) forces lost a G-3 gun in the river near the village of Hnawte, eight miles from Matupi and ordered villagers from Hnawte, Tin Lawng and Kho Bal to search for it until it was found. The army ordered at least 10 to 20 villagers at a time to search for the gun daily.²⁰⁸ Those villagers were forced to build a small dam to change the direction of the river, making little impact due to the heavy rains. U Oon Lwin, secretary of Union Solidarity Development Association, and U Cang Va, Chief of the Immigration Department, were reportedly in charge of recruiting villagers for the search.²⁰⁹



A woman (left) in M--- village near Papun weaves roofing thatch shingles. In January 2006, SPDC units and DKBA #777 Brigade Ka Hsaw Wah battalion based in Papun issued a joint order to all villages in the Papun area demanding roofing thatch to repair their Army camps. Each household in every village was ordered to provide 50 shingles of thatch, totalling tens of thousands of shingles, all of which was to be delivered to Papun town by the deadline of 30 January. In cases like this, the troops usually use some of the thatch to repair their camps and sell the rest on the market for personal profit. None of the villagers were paid anything, despite all the time-consuming labour required: leaves and bamboo must be gathered in the forest, the bamboo must be split into sticks which are then tied with shaved bamboo ties to make frames, and the leaves are then tied onto the frames one by one. Making 50 thatch shingles would be two full days' work for a family.. [Photos and Caption: KHRG]

Paletwa Township

In the last week of September 2006, military authorities from Paletwa Township, ordered local villagers from 16 surrounding village tracts to fell bamboo. Each family in these areas was required to shear 15 pieces of bamboo. All the felled bamboo was sent to the army camps in Shinletwa and Tura Iang and then sold by the military on Pungna Island, Arakan State. Those unable to comply with the order were forced to pay a 450 kyat fine.²¹⁰

Tedim Township

From 4 September 2006 until 9 September 2006, residents of 11 villages in northern Chin State along the India-Burma border trade road were compelled to work repairing the road for six days without pay. The forced labour orders were issued by the chairman of the TPDC in Tedim town. Among those who were compelled to work on the road, 67 villagers were from Zimte village and 275 people hailed from ten other local villages, which were:

1. Lamzang,
2. Laitui,
3. Haimual Khuahlun,
4. Haimual Khuathar,
5. Zimpi, Zimte,
6. Rihkawdar,
7. Tio,
8. Lentlang,
9. Kaptel,
10. Tihbual.²¹¹

Thantlang Township

On 30 January 2006, a fire broke out during the day and destroyed around 16 houses in Zeiphai village, Thantlang Township. There were few villagers to douse the fire as most male residents were engaged in the forced construction of a road between Zeiphai and Cawngthai villages whilst most women were attending a women's conference of the Zeiphai Baptist Association in another village.²¹²

In August 2006, it was reported that the SPDC had sent orders to Banawh Tlang, Bel Har, Tluang Ram A, and Tluang Ram B villages instructing that their village council chairmen were not permitted to resign from their posts. Village headmen are forced to assign villagers to perform labour for the SPDC, report visitors to the village, and summon villagers for interrogation and torture at the army camp. They are also unable to give over enough time to sustaining their own livelihoods.²¹³

Kachin State

Hopin Township

On 24 November 2006, it was reported that the Hpakant-based tactical commander, Colonel Khin Maung Cho, had, for the previous month, commandeered residents of Hopin Township and its surrounding villages to supply labour for a new road leading east to Sinbo through the heavily forested Gau Gwi Pa region. About 50 elephant owners were also ordered to contribute their labour without pay. Those unable or unwilling to work on the road were forced to hire a replacement or face a fine of between 5,000 kyat and 20,000 kyat. Each household was assigned a stretch of road, with instructions to make it 200 feet long and 20 feet wide. Every morning 3 to 4 trucks would charter around 50 people each to their worksite. The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the largest Kachin ceasefire group, is said to be involved in the project, as well as well-known Kachin business leader Yup Zau Hkawng, owner of the Jade Land Co. Ltd. However, a KIO officer denied any involvement in acquiring forced labourers for the project, stating that Col Khin Maung Cho made the order and is responsible for the project. Local authorities called residents for meetings almost everyday, forcing those who had not contributed their quota of work to pay fines, and warning them they could be arrested if they failed to pay.²¹⁴

Sinbo Township

On 20 April 2006, it was reported that the SPDC LIB #141 was forcing villagers from around the town of Sinbo, Kachin State, to renovate their military camp and to repair the road leading to the state capital, Myitkyina. Around 80 people were forced to work on the road, including children and the elderly, according to a local businessman. The battalion ordered the villages of Yinna Pinlong, Min Thar and Man Khin to provide one person from each household to work without pay in a “*voluntary program*.” The battalion was reportedly ordered by Northern Commander Maj-Gen Ohn Myint to upgrade the road. Those who couldn’t work had to provide a replacement or pay a fine of up to 20,000 kyat. The ILO reported that it was unable to act on the report through fear of retaliation against the complainants.²¹⁵

Karen State

Doooplaya District

On 29 April 2006, it was reported that up to 160 residents from four areas of the Three Pagodas Pass were being forced to repair the roads in front of their houses as well as work in areas around the public hospital and the home of Daw Saw Khin, a highly placed official in Three Pagoda Pass area. Residents had to work once a week on Saturdays and were told it would continue until the development of the town was over.²¹⁶

On 13 September 2006, it was reported that residents in the Three Pagoda pass town were being forced to act as sentries and patrol the city at night. The SPDC failed to clarify the reasons for the heightened security but it was believed that they feared retaliation from the ceasefire Karen Peace Force group following the disappearance of their leader Major Lay Way in Mudon, after he had gone to meet with the SPDC. “*The city is on alert and they order 5 to 6 persons from each Quarter to patrol at night. They told us to watch any strangers and suspicious activities,*” said one resident.²¹⁷

Nyaunglebin District

On 8 January 2006, troops from SPDC LIB #351, led by Shwe Than Oo, forced residents from the following villages to clear bushes between Ler-doe and Klaw-maw:

1. Pa-ta-la,
2. Noe-gaw,
3. Thoo-ka-bee,
4. Inn-net,
5. Ga-mon-aing, and
6. Wet-lar-daw.²¹⁸

On 15 February 2006, Commander Zaw Tun of SPDC LIB #351, in Kyauk-gyi Township, forced the villagers of Pa-doe-kaw, Baw-ka-hta and Mar-pi-poe to work in Klaw-maw army camp.²¹⁹

On 13 March 2006, a column of about 50 SPDC troops from LIB #599, led by Ba Thaung, entered Kyauk-pyar, Nga-lauk-tet, Thit-cha-hsate, Oak-shit-khin, Poe-thaung-su, Tai-pin and Myet-ye villages and demanded 500 roofing leaves and one person per household to build their camp. Households which could not provide labour were forced to pay 5,000 baht each.²²⁰

On 27 May 2006, SPDC troops forced the residents of Maladaw village to construct a fence around their village and forced villagers of Tha-byay-nyunt village tract to use 200 ox carts to transport military rations.²²¹

On 3 June 2006, SPDC troops from LIB #599, based in Mone Township under Commander Win Htway, ordered residents from 8 villages to begin planting and farming for future army rations. The villages, and acres of land they were forced to farm, were:

1. Ta-khot-bwa, 8 acres;
2. Ko-ne, 4 acres;
3. Kyun-bin-hsate, 4 acres;
4. Mwae-dway, 12 acres;
5. Thaw-leh, 13 acres;
6. Nyaung-pin-thar, 15 acres;
7. Taw-pu, 12 acres; and
8. Toe-taw, 1 acre.²²²

On 8 June 2006, SPDC troops from LIB #559 forced villagers to clear the road between Maladaw and Ta-kweh-lay-kho.²²³

On 25 July 2006, SPDC IB #60 Battalion Commander Saw Lwin demanded 10 villagers from Shwe Dan to clear a palm oil tree plantation belonging to IB #60. The land had been confiscated from U Mi Thwin in early 2006 and was located near the abandoned village of Sein Myaung. On 30 July 2006, he demanded 6 more villagers to cut and clear the palm oil tree plantation. The plantation covers about three acres. The villagers were not paid and had to take their own food with them.²²⁴

On 2 August 2006, SPDC IB #60 Battalion Commander Saw Lwin demanded 100 pieces of bamboo from Shwe Dan village, in order to build a chicken coop. Fifteen households from the village were given responsibility for cutting down the bamboo and bringing it to the

appointed place. The distance between the village and the area where bamboo is harvested was roughly five hours on foot. It took the villagers one day to cut the bamboo and one day to transport the bamboo to the appointed place. On 25 August 2006, SPDC IB #60 demanded another 50 pieces of bamboo to build another chicken coop. On 30 August they demanded seven villagers to go and build the chicken coop for them. The workers had to bring all of their own necessary tools and their own food. On 30 September, they demanded 100 more pieces of bamboo to repair their chicken coop.²²⁵

On 3 August 2006, Thein Win, of SPDC LIB #599, ordered Ta-koc-pwa villagers to cut 400 bamboo poles.²²⁶

On 10 August 2006, SPDC Strategic Operations Command #2, of Southern Command, led by Major Khin Maung Oo, demanded 30 villagers from P'Na Gwa village, to clear brush and scrub from the side of a road. They had to bring their own food and machetes with them. The task took the villagers all day, 6 am until 5 pm, for which they were not paid.²²⁷

On 14 August 2006, according to a local source, SPDC LIB #351 Battalion Commander Chit Than Oo demanded one person from each house in Shwe Dan, totalling 20 people, to cut and clear a 10 acre castor oil plantation near Than Boh. The villagers had to take their own machetes, food and other necessary tools. When the bushes grew back he demanded 10 more people on 19 September. On 28 September he demanded one person from each house to weed and tend to the plantation. There was no payment for this work.²²⁸

On 17 August 2006, Major Min Kyaing Thant of SPDC IB #57 ordered villagers in Kyauktan, Them seik, Tone-ta-da, Shu-khin-thee, Po-pay-gon, Kaw-tha-say, Baw-ka-ta and Pa-deh-gaw villages to complete fencing their villages within 2 days.²²⁹

On 29 August 2006, Battalion Commander Kyaw Kyaw Oo of SPDC LIB #421, under MOC #16, ordered Ker-ka-kho villages to erect fences around their village and ordered 2 villagers to perform sentry duty from 6 am to 6pm, daily.²³⁰

On 7 September 2006, SPDC MOC #2 reportedly forced villagers from Shwe Dan, Tha Pyay Gone and Aung Soe Moe to repair the road between Ler Doh and Than Bon. It was about 800 metres in length but the villagers were required to complete their task within one day. Over 70 villagers, including 20 women, and a 13 year old girl were forced to work on the road.²³¹

From 9 September 2006, SPDC IB #242 forced villagers in Muthey to contribute their labour to the construction of their army camp, and surrounding relocation site. They were required to make a fence around the camp and village and carry logs and bamboo for the soldiers.²³²

Pa'an District

From early 2006, SPDC officers from LIBs #547, #548 and #549 forced villagers in Dt'Nay Hsah Township to plant castor oil plants on village-owned land lying along roadways, with the intention of harvesting the resulting castor beans. Each village was ordered to purchase and plant 20,000 castor bushes. Villagers have been forced to plant and tend the castor bushes with no assistance or information, and are held responsible for any damage to the plants.²³³

On 22 December 2006, it was reported that villagers throughout Dt’Nay Hsah Township were being forced to labour on SPDC-owned rubber plantations established on land previously confiscated from local villages. Tasks included clearing the scrub from around the base of the trees, cutting back branches, clearing new plantation grounds and planting new saplings. No villagers were paid for their labour, whilst the rubber was sold to profit the SPDC units in the area.²³⁴

Papun District

In January 2006 SPDC and DKBA troops stationed in Papun town ordered local villages to make thatch roofing shingles for them, by the 30 January. For each thatch shingle, villagers had to gather thatch leaves and cut bamboo, then split the bamboo into sticks and shave it into ties, then make bamboo frames and tie the leaves to the frame to make shingles, each about one metre by 30 centimetres. The demand was allocated based on village size as follows:

1. Kler Ru Der village, 1,750 shingles;
2. Wah Mi Day village, 1,250 shingles;
3. Klaw Hta village, 850 shingles;
4. Toh Thay Pu village, 200 shingles;
5. Hto Lwee Kyo village, 1,250 shingles;
6. Day Baw Khaw village, 1,250 shingles; and
7. Ter Khaw Kyo village, 1,250 shingles.²³⁵

Also in January 2006, SPDC troops based in Kwih Si ordered 35 local villagers, including both men and women, to clear the brush alongside the road. The villagers had to bring their own food.²³⁶

On 29 July 2006, it was reported that the K’Saw Wah battalion of DKBA Brigade #777 forced villagers from Keh Daw to clear their rubber plantation, twice a year, taking the villagers three days each time. The DKBA also forced the villagers to build 3 houses for them. The villagers had to bring their own tools, as well as materials to be used in the construction including 60 logs of wood, 1,500 shingles of leaves and split bamboo.²³⁷

Thaton District

From 1 January to 2 July 2006, SPDC troops in Thaton District were reported to have engaged the local villagers in on going forced labour in the absence of any remuneration. Villagers were forced to carry supplies for the army, to construct and maintain army camps, roads and bridges, and provide one person from each household to work on the SPDC’s rubber and physic nut plantations.²³⁸

On 2 February 2006, DKBA Headquarters Security Force Commander, Captain Than Htun, ordered the villagers of K--- in Pa’an Township to send 2,000 shingles of thatch to the Law Pu Army camp. This demand is reportedly a yearly occurrence.²³⁹

On 26 March 2006, it was reported that the SPDC in Pa’an Township was implementing a castor oil plantation project by forcing the local population to grow the plant. Local middle school students were included in this order and were forced to grow 200 plants each.²⁴⁰

On 9 June 2006, DKBA troops led by Tin Win forced Ta-roi-khee village tract security officer, Ta Paw, to act as their guide.²⁴¹

On 29 June 2006, DKBA Brigade #333 Commander Maung Kyi ordered one person from each house hold from Htee-pa-doh-khee, Noh-kha-day- Meh-theh-no, Law-plaw, Ta-paw and Ler-klaw villages to construct an army camp for them at Pwo village.²⁴²

On 15 August 2006, DKBA troops in Bilin Township ordered E-su-khee villagers to cut down 4 trees for timber.²⁴³

On 16 August 2006, Moe Nyo of the DKBA ordered one person from each household in Kaw-heh village tract to go and work at Mae-se pagoda, taking with them their own food supplies.²⁴⁴

Toungoo District

On 4 January 2006, Bo Saw Htun Aung from SPDC IB #30 in Thandaung Township, seized 25 Ku-thay-doe villagers and forced them to work in Htee-thee-pu army camp.²⁴⁵

On 7 January 2006, troops from SPDC IB #48, led by Bo Htun Nay Lin, forced villagers to work for the Shasibo camp. The villagers and their ages were;

1. Saw Ako, 45;
2. Saw Heh Nay Htoo, 27;
3. Saw Toe Nay, 70;
4. Saw Tay Nay, 42;
5. Saw Htoo Hla Say, 35;
6. Saw Leh Meh, 40;
7. Saw Naing Oo, 23;
8. Saw Say Doe Htoo, 15;
9. Saw Say Poe, 7;
10. Saw Theh Thaw, 30;
11. Naw Li Paw, 53;
12. Naw Mya Paw, 30; and
13. Naw Julia, 23.²⁴⁶

On 10 January 2006, troops from SPDC IB #48, led by Bo Htun Nay Lin, forced the following villagers to work in Shasibo army camp:

1. Saw Tun Oo,
2. Saw Tun Tun,
3. Saw Dee Kweet,
4. Naw Ma Kaw,
5. Naw Taw Nor Naw,
6. Naw Mu Ye,
7. Naw Leh Ler,
8. Naw Dalia, and
9. Saw Peter.²⁴⁷

On 25 January 2006, troops from SPDC IB #92, ordered 2 Htee-ta-pu villagers and 2 Thu-weh-doe villagers to work at their camp in Thandaung Township on a daily basis.²⁴⁸

On 30 January 2006, Commander Thein Htun from the SPDC Southern Command Headquarters, Strategic Command #1, ordered one person from each household in Kaw-thay-doe (Ye-tho-gyi) village, in Tantabin Township, to clear bushes and landmines on the road from Kaw-thay-doe to Bu-hsa-khee village.²⁴⁹

On 31 January 2006, troops from SPDC LIB #439, led by Commander Aung Tun Oo, demanded 30 villagers from Peh-kaw-doe in Thandaung Township, to clear landmines on Maw-chi road from Tha-aye-hta to Pi-mu-kho.²⁵⁰

Also on 31 January 2006, troops from SPDC IB #48, led by Bo Htun Nay Lin, in Tantabin Township, demanded Ye-shan villagers to cut bamboos and send them in 5 carts to Shasibo army camp. In addition, they forced 14 Ye-shan villagers to work in the Shasibo army camp.²⁵¹



A section of the Kyaik Khaw - Ka Ma Maung road (left) which villagers are being forced to build from Thaton district to southern Papun district, shown here in late February 2006. This segment lies between T'Kaw Bo and Meh Bpu villages. *[Photos and Caption: KHRG]*

On 4 February 2006, Bo Zaw Aung from SPDC IB #48, based at Htee-lo camp, forced Pler-daw-day villagers; 17 men and 11 women, to work in Htee-lo army camp.²⁵²

From 4 February 2006 until the time of this report on 13 March 2006, column 2 from TOC #663, and SPDC IB #73, #48, #53 and LIB #599 from Southern Command headquarters, forced villagers from Htee-lo and Ka-ser-doe areas, Tantabin Township, to work for them.²⁵³

On 5 February 2006, troops from LIB #3, IB #14, IB #35 and LIB #108, forced villager Saw Dta Du Du (41 years old) to work as their guide in the Wah Mee Ber Ko area. They later cut off his left hand before killing him in Blah Kee.²⁵⁴

On 7 February 2006, combined forces of two columns of troops from SPDC LID #66, based in Tantabin Township, and Eastern Play-hsa-lo respectively, forced Play-hsa-lo villagers to work on the construction of their camp.²⁵⁵

Also on 7 February 2006, troops from SPDC LID #66, based at Kler-lar (Baw-ga-li-gyi), Tantabin Township, demanded 100 bamboo poles and 50 timber poles from each of Kler-lar (Baw-ga-li-gyi), Maw-per-doe (Pyaung-tho), Kaw-soe-kho (Thit-say-taung), and Ler-kho

(Kyauk-pon) villages, for the construction of Kler-lar (Baw-ga-li-gyi) army camp. Troops from SPDC LIB #10 ordered truck owners to take their trucks in Kaw-thay-doe and Kler-lar (Baw-ga-li-gyi) to Toungoo town.²⁵⁶

Between 8 and 14 February 2006, at least 135 people were kidnapped from Kaw Thay Der, Kaw Law Kar, Ku Thay Der and Sar Bar Law Khi villages for use by the military as forced labourers, according to a report by the Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People.²⁵⁷

On 8 February 2006, Bo Zaw Aung from SPDC IB #48, based at Htee-lo camp in Tantabin Township, forced Ka-ser-doe villagers, 13 men and 13 women, to work on the Htee-lo camp construction.²⁵⁸

On 9 February 2006, troops from SPDC LID #66, led by Column Commander Thein Lwin, based in Thandaung Township, forced Htee-tha-saw villagers to cut timber and bamboo for their camp construction.²⁵⁹

On 10 February 2006, a column of troops from SPDC IB #124, in Thandaung Township, forced the villagers of Ku-thay-doe, Kaw-law-kar and Sbar-law-khee to cut timber and bamboos for the Ku-thay-doe camp construction.²⁶⁰

Also on 10 February 2006, troops from SPDC LID #66, in Thandaung Township, forced Ler-ge-kho villagers to work at the bottom of Per-doe-kar Bridge in the construction of an SPDC camp.²⁶¹

Also on 10 February 2006, the commander of SPDC Strategic Command #663, under LID #66, based at Play-hsa-lo, Tantabin Township, summoned a person from each village of Ya-lo (Myauk-chaung), Lay-wo-lo (Kan-bay-myaung), and Paw-per (Bin-ba), and forced them to work in Play-hsa-lo camp. Moreover, he demanded the village heads to collect the data regarding population and number of houses in the villages.²⁶²

On 13 February 2006, troops from SPDC LIB #80, led by Bo Kyaw Thura, in Thandaung Township, arrested 10 Kaw-law-kar villagers and 40 Ku-thay-doe villagers and forced them to cut timber, bamboo and clear bushes for the new Ku-thay-doe army camp.²⁶³

On 25 February 2006, Bo Aye Kyaw from SPDC IB #53, based at Htee-lo camp in Tantabin Township, forced Per-taw-tay villagers to work for Htee-lo army camp. The victims were:

1. Naw Ka Neh Paw, 15;
2. Saw Thein Lwin, 15;
3. Saw Wae Waw Htoo, 15;
4. Saw Kaw La Htoo, 15;
5. Saw Heh Say, 22;
6. Saw Poe Say Mya, 36;
7. Saw Aye Poe, 34;
8. Saw War Thoo Bay, 30;
9. Saw Kyaw Lay, 32;
10. Saw Tha Soe, 35; and
11. Saw Say Poe, 30.²⁶⁴

On 1 March 2006, troops from SPDC IB #92 moved into Htee Hta Pu village in Thandaung Township where they forced the local villagers to work as their messengers and servants as

well as forcing them to build their army camp. Furthermore, the SPDC established camps in the Pah Der Kah (Par Der Ka) area east of Than Daung Gyi, and ordered villagers from Ler Ghee Ko, Pah Der Kah, Htee Hta Pu, K'Thwee Dee and Ker Der Kah to carry their rations and cut bamboo and logs to be used in the construction of the camp.²⁶⁵

Also on 1 March 2006, LID #66, under Commander Khin Zaw Oo, forced one person from each family in Kaw They Der village to clean the road between Kaw They Der and Naw Soe camp.²⁶⁶

On 20 March 2006, SPDC troops from IB #6, under TOC #661 of LID #66, based in Thandaung, and led by Bo Aye Lwin, forced 17 persons from Htee-tha-hsaw, Ka-ma-ti-poe-lay and Ho-thaw-plo villages to dig 2 pits for large pebbles, 2 pits for small pebbles and 2 pits for sand. They were also required to carry the materials to the army camp.²⁶⁷

On 22 March 2006, SPDC troops ordered one person from each family in each of the following villages to clean the road from Muday to Bee Mu Ko (near the Karenni State border):

1. Kler Lah,
2. Kaw They Der,
3. Klay Soe Kee,
4. Wah Tho Ko,
5. Baw Soe Ko,
6. Ler Ko,
7. Gka Mu Der,
8. Der Doh,
9. Maw Ko Der,
10. Beh Kaw Der,
11. Ku Plaw Der, and
12. Ma Pah Der.²⁶⁸

On 4 April 2006, SPDC troops from IB #53 based in Shar-si-bo, forced 6 villagers with carts from Shar-si-bo and 5 from Zee-phyu-gon to cut down teak trees and transport them to Natywa village.²⁶⁹

On 11 April 2006, SPDC troops, from TOC #661 and led by Soe Htway, demanded labour from the following villages to haul roofing leaves and build a military camp:

1. Htee-ta-bu, 20 persons;
2. Thoo-ghan-dar, 20 persons;
3. Ka-thaw-bweh, 25 persons;
4. Ka-wei, 30 persons;
5. Leh-ge-kho-dar, 15 persons;
6. Sa-ba-law-khee, 18 persons;
7. Khaw-law-kar, 18 persons; and
8. Khu-thay-doe, 20 persons.²⁷⁰

On 13 April 2006, troops from SPDC LIB #20, led by Bo Than Hlaing, forced villagers to clear land owned by Saw Shei Kaw of Ka-ma-te-po-le village without permission, for the purpose of setting up a new camp. Those villagers requisitioned for this task were from:

1. Ka-ma-te-po-le,
2. Mae-thaw-po-le,

3. Htar-bu-khee,
4. Mar-hsar-khaw,
5. Mee-maw-khee,
6. Dar-yoe, and
7. The-khee.²⁷¹

On 17 April 2006, SPDC troops from LIB #5 led by Bo Ko Ko Aung, forced 32 villagers from Peh-kaw-doe, 13 from Maw-koe-doe and 5 from Dar-doe to build their new camp near Maw-koe-doe village.²⁷²

On 19 April 2006, SPDC troops, from LIB #5 led by Bo Ko Ko Aung, demanded 70 more persons from Peh-kaw-doe, 15 from Maw-koe-doe and 7 from Dar-doh to work in the construction of their new camp.²⁷³

On 2 May 2006, MOC #16, TOC #2, under commander Ko Ko Kyi instructed villagers to guide them on a patrol. One villager was forced to go from each of the following villages:

1. Play Hsa Loh,
2. Baw Pa,
3. Lay Kwo Loh,
4. Blaw Baw Der, and
5. Dah Bah Kee.

The villagers were forced to walk in front of the SPDC troops and the operation lasted 10 days.²⁷⁴

On 5 May 2006, in Tantabin Township, LID #66 Commander Khin Zaw Oo forced villagers from the following villages to clear bushes and mines on the motor road:

1. Baw-ga-li-gyi, 25 persons;
2. Thit-say-daung, 15 persons;
3. Kyauk-pon, 8 persons;
4. Baw-ga-li-lay, 10 persons;
5. Ye-tho-lay, 11 persons; and
6. Ye-tho-gyi, 14 persons.²⁷⁵

On 13 May 2006, troops from SPDC IB #53, led by Major Thein Naing Tun, forced 90 villagers of Zi-pyu-gon (Male 62, Female 28) and 31 villagers of Taw Gone (Male 23, Female 8) to work on construction of a new army camp located between Ye-shan and Shasibo in Tantabin Township.²⁷⁶

On 15 May 2006, troops from SPDC IB #53 led by Captain Naing Tun ordered the villagers of Shasibo and Zee-pyu-gon to cut bamboo and wood and transport them to their army camp. 30 ox-carts of Shasibo and 7 ox-carts of Zee-pyu-gon were used in the transportation of the wood.²⁷⁷

On 19 May 2006, troops from SPDC #IB 92, led by Major Kyaw Zwar, ordered villagers of Tone-bo, Doh-thaung, Chaung-san and others in Tantabin Township, to repair and lay stones on the Doh-thaung-Tone-bo motor road.²⁷⁸

Also on 19 May 2006, troops from SPDC LIB #53 based in Shasibo camp forced 61 villagers (Male 20, Female 41) of Zee-pyu-gon village, Tantabin Township, to work on the construction of their army camp.²⁷⁹

On 20 May 2006, troops from SPDC LIB #5 led by Capt Min Zaw and Bo Kyaw Thu gave orders to the villagers of Ye-tho-gyi to construct, within two days, a new army camp at a site near Ye-tho-gyi primary school.²⁸⁰

On 23 May 2006, the SPDC military forced villagers from Shasibo, Yay Sha, Zibyugo and Daw Go, to cut 30 pieces of wood. They were ordered to finish their task within one week. They also blocked all travel by bullock carts thereby preventing the villages from gathering the wood by any other way than on foot. The four villages had to send one person each for one week, with a different villager then taking their place at the end of the week.²⁸¹

On 25 May 2006, TOC #663 commander gave orders to truck owners of Ye-tho-gyi and Baw-ga-li-gyi, in Tantabin Township, to use six of their own trucks to transport army rations from Baw-ga-li to Ye-tho-gyi, twice a day. These troops always forced the villagers to transport army rations from Ye-tho-gyi camp to Naw-soe and Bu-hsa-kee Camps.²⁸²

In June 2006, SPDC IB #35 under Bo Myo Tun forced Ka-ya-khee villagers to build the Bay-dai army camp.²⁸³

On 17 June 2006, SPDC LID #66 Commander Tin Aung, based at Aaw-ga-li, ordered 2 village elders each from 12 local villages to supply one person from each of 1,300 households in their villages to work in the construction of SPDC battalion head quarters at Bu-hsa-kee camp. The villagers were ordered to gather themselves at Ye-tho-gyi on 18 June to leave for Bu-hsa-kee camp. In addition, 70 households from these villages were ordered to relocate to the camp site. The villages from which labour was drawn were:

1. Baw-ga-li-gyi,
2. Thit-say-taung,
3. Kyauk-pone,
4. Baw-ga-li-lay,
5. Ye-tho-lay,
6. Ye-tho-gyi,
7. Gar-mu-doh,
8. Der-doh,
9. Maw-ko-der,
10. Sa-ba-gyi,
11. Ku-pyaung, and
12. Pyaung-tho.²⁸⁴

On 6 July 2006, SPDC IB #35 ordered that all villages located on the west bank of Thauk-ye-khat River had to complete the fencing of their villages by 15 July 2006.²⁸⁵

In mid 2006, the SPDC invited people in Toungoo Town to participate in an SPDC 'development' scheme, informing them that a new village was being established in the hills to the east, on the outskirts of the large village of Kler La (Bawgali Gyi), and that families settling there would receive 20,000 kyat per month and rations from the army to help build this new village, as well as having the opportunity to earn added income in the nearby durian and mangosteen plantations. Participants were transported on 18 July 2006 to Kler La and the next day to Maung Daing Gyi SPDC army camp, near Naw Soh village on the Kler La – Buh Hsa Kee road, where they were put to work cutting bamboo and building perimeter fences around the army camp. They were given no money nor any place to build a house, and only received meagre rations. After a month of forced labour, nine people escaped into the

surrounding hills, where they joined villagers in hiding from SPDC forces. They informed KHRG that there were still 15 people from Toungoo being held at the army camp as forced labourers.²⁸⁶

On 5 August 2006, Battalion Commander Myo Htun of SPDC LIB #10 ordered villagers of Ku-thay-do, Kaw-law-ka and Sa-ba-lor-khee to cut 700 pieces of rattan cane, 7 feet long each.²⁸⁷

On 10 August 2006, troops from SPDC IB #73, based at Shazeebo camp, Tantabin Township, ordered 8 women and 30 men of Shazeebo to clear bushes in Mae-aw area.²⁸⁸

From 11 August 2006 to 18 August 2006, Bo Htun Htun Lay of SPDC LIB #1 ordered 360 villagers of Thit-say-taung village to cut 200 poles of bamboo to be used for the army camp.²⁸⁹

On 19 August 2006 LID #66 Commander Maung Maung Aye from Kler La (Bawgalygyi) camp, ordered the residents of 12 villages to cut 150 bamboo poles per village for use in the construction of their army camp.²⁹⁰

On 22 August 2006, Bo Aung Khaing of SPDC IB #73, ordered villagers in the Shazeebo area to cut bamboo poles, with Shazeebo village having to cut 150 poles, Ye-shan village 50 poles, Shan Zee-pyu-gon village 200 poles and Taw-gon village 50 poles.²⁹¹

On 23 August 2006, troops from SPDC LID #66, based at Kaw-thay-doe, ordered Kaw-thay-doe villagers to cut 800 12 foot bamboo poles, and 50 10 foot poles.²⁹²

On 27 August 2006, it was reported that SPDC IB #53 troops had ordered villagers to build a new army camp between Ye-shan and Shan-zi-bo villages, on the bank of Tee-hsa-lo River. They forcibly relocated the villagers and destroyed Saw Kha Lay, Saw Lah, Saw Ler Taw and Saw Po Aye's houses, which were near the new campsite.²⁹³

On 5 September 2006, SPDC LID #66, based in Bawgali gyi, Tantabin Township, ordered Bawgali gyi, Kaw-thay-doe, Klay-soe-khee, Kaw-soe-kho, Wa-htoo-kho and Ler-ko villagers to cut 800 bamboo poles for the repair of the army camp.²⁹⁴

On 1 October 2006, TOC #3 Commander Than Tun Oo forced villagers to cut 100 bamboo poles and 100 beams of wood for the Play Hsa Lo camp.²⁹⁵

On 22 November 2006, LID #66 Commander Maung Maung Aye ordered local villages to supply a quota of workers for forced labour along the Kler La – Mawchi road. Villagers were required to work twice in December 2006, clearing brush along the side of the road. Villagers were also forced to porter army goods along the road.²⁹⁶

On 12 December it was reported that LID #66 had forced villagers to clear landmines and act as human shields on the Toungoo- Mawchi road. Villagers from 12 villages surrounding Baw Ga Lyi Gyi were forced to act as human shields around a bulldozer and walk ahead of the construction unit to clear the roadway of potential landmines. One of the villages affected was Maung Pah Der, where the military forced 1 person from each of the 55 household to provide security for the bulldozer with 5 men walking on the left side, 5 men on the right side, 3 men on the bulldozer itself and the rest to walk in front of and behind the bulldozer.²⁹⁷

On 13 December 2006, LID #66 Commander Maung Maung Aye ordered villagers to build a road from Klay-soe-kee on Toun-goo-Maw-chi road to Bo-mi-koh on the Karenni border, taking with them their own food supplies.²⁹⁸

On 22 December 2006, SPDC LIB #349 Battalion Commander Zaw Tun forced 70 Shasibo villagers, 42 Zee-pyu-gon villagers and 32 Taw-gon villagers to work on the construction of Kyaut-O army camp. The villagers had to take their own food supplies with them.²⁹⁹

On 23 December 2006, Commander Aung Soe Win of SPDC LIB #6 ordered 30 villagers from Kaw-thay-doe village to clear bushes along the Koe-day-maw-kee road. The villages refused due to fear of landmines planted along the roadside. Aung Soe Win retaliated by placing three villages in detention, only to be released once the villagers had cleared the road.³⁰⁰



Private vehicles belonging to people from Kler Lah, Kaw Thay Der, Kaw Soh Ko and Wa Tho Ko villages in Toungoo district transport rice and other supplies from Kler Lah to Naw Soe SPDC Army camp in late April 2006 by order of the SPDC Light Infantry Division #66 commander in Kler Lah. The truck owners are regularly forced to do this work throughout the dry season, and are paid nothing for it. Their vehicles are their livelihood, so whenever they have to do this work they are kept away from working for their families' survival *[Photo and Caption: KHRG]*.

Karenni State

In February 2006, SPDC IB #102 were ordered by Loikaw Military Control Command to construct a new army camp in Phukrakhu, Dohpreh village tract. Since that time, until at least the 24 June 2006, villagers from seven villages in Dohpreh village tract were forced to build barracks, make fences, fetch water, look for firewood and cook for the troops. Villagers had to bring their own food while they were working. The villagers were from;

1. Phukarkhu,
2. Dohpreh,
3. Weithutaw,
4. Beso,
5. Lyadu,
6. Hteeduleh, and
7. Hteeduku.

Those who failed to attend had to pay a fine in cash or livestock. Two villagers from Hteeduku and Hteeduleh were ordered to pay 30 viss of chicken for failing to work on the camp construction.³⁰¹

On 1 October 2006, troops from the Karenni People's Liberation Army (KPLA) destroyed a cache of wood and bamboo that SPDC LIB# 336 had been storing for use in the construction of 2 new military camps in Phruhso Township. Since 11 September 2006, the SPDC had been demanding wood and bamboo from nine villages without pay, and had forced between 200 and 300 villagers to work as labourers on the construction of the camps. Following the raid by the KPLA, SPDC troops summoned village heads from Kaylia, Htee-bya-nyay and Daw-ta-kleh village, and forced them to sign a pledge promising to replace the wood and bamboo lost within 15 days.³⁰²

On 5 December 2006, it was reported that residents of Loikaw Township, including women and children, were being forcibly employed in the construction of local police stations and military camps. Reports stated that villagers were forced to carry water, build fences and collect wood for police and military personnel. Twenty villages were reportedly ordered to send roofing materials, including large dried leaves, to the Loi Linlay police station in Loikaw Township. In addition, SPDC LIB #530 was reported to have forced villagers to help build a new military camp. Whilst the Loikaw TPDC denied the allegations, one resident reported that the authorities *"demand one person from each household. Some widowers and old people are not able to go so their children, who are students, have to be absent from school while they work at those places."*³⁰³

Mon State

In October 2006, it was reported that villagers across Mon State were forced to plant 20,000 castor oil seeds at their own cost. Each family had to provide at least one person for the plantation or else pay a fine of 500 kyat.³⁰⁴

Khaw Zar Sub-Township

In January 2006, between 300 and 400 people per day were forced to work on the construction of a new school, in Khaw Zar Sub-Township, under the command of SPDC IB #32 and IB #61.³⁰⁵

On 10 February 2006, it was reported that Mon National School students in Khaw Zar Sub-Township were forced to work as labourers on the construction of an SPDC high school, as well as carrying food and water for the military camp, feeding the camp pigs, and doing other odd jobs such as cleaning the toilets and picking up garbage around the camp.³⁰⁶

In March 2006, every household in Khaw Zar Sub-Township (2,000 households in all) were made to spend a day cleaning the roads and bridges for a visit from SPDC officials.³⁰⁷

In mid-March 2006, SPDC IB #61 troops forced local villagers in Khaw Zar Sub-Township to carry rocks from a stream for use in the construction of SPDC army barracks. *“At least 50 people per day have had to work once every four days.”* reported one villager.³⁰⁸

In April 2006 at least 20 people from villagers in Khaw Zar Sub-Township were forced to build a bridge for the SPDC.³⁰⁹

From 5 May 2006, to at least the time of this report, 1 June 2006, IB #61 and IB #32 based in Khaw Zar Sub-Township, forced local residents to contribute labour to the construction of a road. The road was to stretch from Kaloh village to Dhani-Thakyar village on the edge of the sub Kalein-aung Township in Tenasserim Division, a distance of 20 miles. The villages forced to supply labour included:

1. Kaloh,
2. Hanggan,
3. Kaw-zar,
4. Yin-ye,
5. Yin-dein,
6. Mi Htaw-Hlar Lay,
7. Mi Htaw-Hlar Kyi,
8. Kyone-Ka-Nyar,
9. Kabya,
10. Kabya-Wa, and
11. Dhani-Thakyar.

Each village was responsible for about 5,000 to 8,000 feet of road construction. In one village it was reported that 60 people per day had to work on the road. Each household was required to send one person for one week each month. If each household did not send someone then they were forced to hire someone in their place, something they could ill afford to do given that they were being made to contribute large amounts towards the cost of the project. *“We had to stop our own work because we were forced to work on the road for about three days a week. We not only can’t hire substitutes but also can’t send our sons and daughters,”* said a local villager.³¹⁰

In October 2006, it was reported that SPDC army battalions stepped up the use of forced labour within rural areas of southern Mon State. Fifteen villages in Khaw Zar Sub-Township were forced to send residents to cut trees and bamboo, repair roads, construct office buildings, and perform sentry duty every day. Nai Tun Oo and Nai Yought, were severely tortured by LID #3 soldiers for allegedly failing to carry out sentry duty.³¹¹

Mudon Township

On 30 July 2006, residents of Kalort-tort village, Mudon Township, were forced to remove plant growth from the side of a road running near their village. Those who refused were forced to pay a fine of 500 kyat to the VPDC. The authorities described the exercise as *“local people enjoying the fruits of development even while earning livelihood peacefully.”*³¹²

On 18 September 2006, villagers from Thar-pa-thun and Thayagone, Mudon Township, were forcibly made to clear the roadside by order of the local VPDC. One member from each house was forced to cut bushes. Thar-pa-thun and Thayagone villages have about 400 households.³¹³

Thanbyuzayat Township

On 1 February 2006, a section of the Kan Bauk - Myaingkalay gas pipeline in central Mon State was blown up near Kwan Hlar Village, prompting the SPDC to force local residents to patrol the pipeline and nearby bridges. *“A total of 96 people from four villages in the area adjacent to the pipeline explosion were rounded up and forced to guard it along with soldiers,”* reported one local resident.³¹⁴

On 6 October 2006, it was reported that villagers from Klon Htaw, Wor Kada, Wor Kamate, Kum Sar Yar, Klaw Pnot, Klaw Prat were being forced to labour at the behest of IB #62 for the maintenance of the Kan Bauk – Myaingkalay gas pipeline. Villagers were forced to erect fences around the pipeline, as well as replacing earth around the pipeline washed away by heavy rains. Villagers in Thanbyuzayart and Ye Township continued to be forced to work as sentries for the pipeline.³¹⁵

Ye Township

On 22 February 2006, it was reported that the SPDC had sequestered roughly 8 acres of farmland in Mon State where they then built brick factories, with the bricks intended for use in the construction of military camps. Villagers have been forced into manning these factories, reportedly having to work up to 12 to 15 hour shifts per day, standing up the whole time they are working.³¹⁶

On 25 October 2006, Nai Htaw Mung, 35 years of age, of Toa Tate village, southern Ye Township, attempted to commit suicide by drinking poison, later stating *“I cannot work and I have to do guard duty almost everyday. I have no property to fall back on for my family...that's why I wanted to die.”*³¹⁷

Pegu Division

On 8 January 2006, it was reported that schoolteachers at the state middle school of Myochan Village, Nattalin Township were subjecting their pupils to forced labour practices, causing physical injuries to the children, who were then not given proper medical care. Thirteen year old Thein Aung's legs were crushed after he was forced to carry heavy logs and a 10 year old girl, Ni Ni, lost consciousness after she was forced to climb and clean rubbish on the school clinic's roof. The girl fell down from the roof and also broke her arm in the fall.³¹⁸

During March 2006, U Sein Myint, 60 years old from Wayonkone village, and a 17 year old from Myoma High School No.2 were killed by oncoming trains whilst being forced to guard railway tracks in Nyaunglebin Township, Pegu Division. Local residents said that the two victims were too poor to pay the 880 kyat fee to exempt them from sentry duty and died after falling asleep.³¹⁹

On 10 August 2006 it was reported that SPDC soldiers in charge of the security of railway tracks in Daik-U, Pegu Division, were forcing local people to guard the tracks, and maintain the area. It was reported that troops had assaulted a student who had refused to collect rubbish and clear the bushes along the tracks.³²⁰

Sagaing Division

On 2 January 2006, it was reported that regional authorities of Tamu District, Sagaing Division, had been forcing local farmers to grow paddy during the unproductive dry season. Tamu District is an area where water is not easily available during the dry season and farmers have been finding it hard to grow rice plants even during the rainy season. Regardless, the authorities threatened to confiscate their paddy fields if they did not grow paddy during the dry season.³²¹

On 8 September 2006, Sergeant Kyaw Maung Win from the LIB #16 headquartered in Monywa town, Sagaing Division, ordered the village head of Pintia village, U Ngawn Thawng, to send six villagers to the army camp at once to dig bunkers. The measurements of the constructed bunkers were 250 ft in length and 2 feet in width. *"We are involved in bunker construction for five days a week and our working hours are from 7 am to 6 pm."*, said Mr. Paik Hmo who forced to work on the bunkers.³²²

Shan State

Since late October 2006 right through to 2007, the SPDC forced residents of Loi-Lem, Nam-Zarng and Murng-Nai Townships to repair a railway line damaged by flash floods and landslides. Sections of the track passing through populated areas were assigned to the local population. Sections that passed through jungle and mountain regions were assigned to people from villages chosen by SPDC troops from IB #248, IB #66 and IB #9, who were in charge of overseeing the work in Murng-Nai, Nam-Zarng and Loi-Lem Townships, respectively.³²³

From October 2006, residents of Lai Kha, Nam Zarng and Murng Nai Townships were forced to grow sesame between physic nut plantations along the roads. SPDC IB #64 in Lai-Kha, IB #66 and LIB #543 in Nam-Zarng, and IB #248 in Murng-Nai forced villagers to work in

rotation, with a person from each household required to work every 4 days, either on physic nut or sesame plantations.³²⁴

Kae-See Township

From October 2005 up to the time of this report in April 2006, SPDC troops of IB #2 were using the unpaid forced labour of the residents of Murng Nawng village tract, Kae-See Township, in the construction of a new military base. Villagers were forced to split rocks and 10 small tractors had to transport the rocks twice a day accompanied by 3 villagers per tractor, who then had to load and unload the rocks. All the tractor drivers had to provide their own fuel and all the workers had to provide their own food.³²⁵

From November 2005 to at least the time of this report in February 2006, SPDC IB #131 troops forced residents of Kae-See town to work on the construction of a road leading to their military base. People were forced to split rocks in the mountains and small tractors were forced to transport the rocks to the road building site and the base. All of the 43 tractors in the town were required to take turns and work on a daily basis with 3 persons required to go with each tractor to load and unload the rocks. Workers were unpaid and unfed and drivers had to provide their own fuel.³²⁶

Kunhing Township

Throughout 2006, the SPDC forced residents of Kun Hing Township to plant and then maintain SPDC physic nut plantations, on land confiscated from local farmers. Most villagers worked on rotation, required to be at the plantation every five days. Those unable to work were fined 6,000 kyat. Those villagers who lived far from the plantations were transported there by the SPDC, who then required a payment of 500 kyat for the transportation costs. Naang Naang of Wo Long village, a single woman supporting her elderly mother, was forced to flee along with her mother to Thailand, as she was unable to maintain a livelihood alongside the demands of forced. In October 2006, the villagers were forced to harvest the physic nut. Each household in Wan Paang, Kaali Murng Yaai, Nawng Mai, Wan Lao and Saai Khaao village tracts was required to hand over 2 *pyi* of physic nuts to SPDC IB #246.³²⁷

Lai-Kha Township

On 13 March 2006, SPDC authorities of Lai-Kha Township called a meeting of 9 village tract leaders at the SPDC Township office in Lai-Kha town. At the meeting, the village tract leaders were told that they were required to help the SPDC in building a road starting from Lai-Kha town up to the boundary of Murng-Su Township. The 9 village tracts from which forced labourers were drawn from were:

1. Paang Saang,
2. Wan Heng,
3. Wan Saang,
4. Wan Lur,
5. Nawng Kaw,
6. Haai Seng,
7. Taad Mawk,
8. Wan Thi, and
9. Naa Yawng.

Each village tract was required to pave at least a 3 mile span of the road with rocks and stones, which they were required to split elsewhere and transport to the road, using their own means and resources. Forced labour was also reportedly being used in Kae-See and Murng-Su Townships for the same road building project. The road was planned for completion by the end of June 2006.³²⁸

Lashio Township

On 14 June 2006, it was reported that farmers and their children in Lashio Township, northern Shan State, were being forced to work on a castor oil plantation owned by the SPDC. It could take villagers as long as two and half hours to reach the plantation. Nevertheless, one person per household was required to work from 11 am to 5.30 pm planting trees and clearing the weeds in the surrounding areas. Workers had to provide their own food and water. There were reported to be more than 1,000 people affected by the order.³²⁹

Muse Town

On 16 January 2006, authorities in Muse, northern Shan State, ordered local residents to grow castor oil plants. One man from every household in the city was ordered to help plant 10 acres of the crop. Workers were required to spend whole working days on the plantations, forcing many to hire labourers to fulfil their quota. It was reported to be unusual for residents of the town's wards to be used for forced labour, as previously only the people from village tracts were used in this way.³³⁰

Murng-Ton Township

In September 2006, SPDC IB #65 forced residents of Pung Pa Khem village in Pung Pa Khem village tract, Murng-Ton Township to split rocks and load them onto trucks for a period of ten days, as part of a road construction project. The villagers were not paid for this, but instead had to contribute funds towards the cost of the project.³³¹

On 16 October 2006, 2 villagers from Murng Haang village, Murng-Ton Township, died in a landslide whilst working as forced labourers, repairing a road, under the orders of SPDC IB #65.³³²

Tachilek Township

From July 2006, the SPDC forced residents of several village tracts in Tachilek Township to cultivate physic nut plantations. For example, in Ta Lur village tract each household was assigned one acre of land by the SPDC, generally confiscated from local farmers, in order to grow physic nut on. Each household had to clear the land, prepare the ground and build fences. They also had to buy physic nut seedlings from the SPDC troops at a rate of 5 baht per plant. The families' responsibility for tending to their plantations continued right through into 2007. Residents of Murng Laen, Nam Khern and Pa leo Kaeng Laab village tracts have similarly been forced to cultivate physic nut plantations.³³³

Tenasserim Division

From the first week in June 2006 to at least the time of this report, 31 July 2006, village headmen from Ala-Sa-Khan, Kyauk-Ka-Din, Kywe-Ta-Lin, Yapu and Ma-Yan-Chaung villages were ordered by LIB #409 Commander Aung Maing Mynit to send eight villagers per day to watch the Ye-Tavoy motor road. The order followed an armed clash between a Mon rebel group and the *tatmadaw* in May 2006. Each village had to build at least one hut in a designated place for use by those on sentry duty. In addition, it was reported that residents from Ye Township such as Sone-na-tha, Taung Zun, Pin-Gone, Thin-Gan-Daw, Pha-Ram-Maw and Son-ta-lin villages were ordered to watch the motor road on a rotational basis. *“We have been facing many difficulties because of this duty. We have no time to work in our own jobs. My village and the selected security site where I have to guard the road are very far from each other. Sometimes I also have to go and do porter service and sometimes I have to go and work for them (the Burmese battalion)”* said Ko Htun Lwin from Kyauk-Ka-Din village, Yebyu Township.³³⁴

On 11 August 2006, troops from SPDC IB #589, led by Battalion Commander Tin Win Hlaing, ordered one person from each household in Htee-nya-eu and Ma-no-rae villages to repair a certain part of Ta-nin-tha-yi-Lay-nya-bote-pyin motor road.³³⁵

On 21 October 2006, the VPDC from Myaykhanbor village tract order to initiation of a castor oil plantation, with responsibilities divided as follows:

1. Siphyone village, 2 tins of castor oil seedlings, 2 plantation acres;
2. Myaykhanbor village, 2 tins, 2 acres;
3. Nyaungdone village, 2 tins, 2 acres;
4. Hninpayeuk village, 1 tin, 1 acre;
5. Kami village, 1 tin, 1 acre;
6. Kyaythainn village, 1 tin, 1 acre;
7. Thabyu Chaung village, 1 tin, 1 acre; and
8. Pyinthadaw village, 1 tin, 1 acre.

Local authorities demanded that the villagers clear the brush in the plantation areas by the 10 November 2006. In Thabyu Chaung village, one person from each house was required to clear the brush and to serve as a labourer at the specified one-acre plantation area without pay. Villagers who failed to abide this diktat were fined 2,000 kyat, the cost of hiring a substitute. The Thabyu Chaung village VPDC also collected a monthly fee of 1,000 kyat from each family for general funding.³³⁶

1.6 Forced Prison Labour – Partial List of Incidents for 2006

Arakan State

On 4 October 2006, approximately 400 prisoners were brought in seven army vehicles from Sittwe prison to SPDC military headquarters in Ann. The prisoners were then forced to work on construction sites for the Sittwe-Rangoon and Kyaukpuru-Ann-Rangoon roads while wearing the uniforms of the fire service and army. The prisoners were detained in barrack buildings surrounded by barbed wire and were brought to the construction site in military vehicles every morning. The prisoners were forced to wear army and fire brigade uniform whilst performing their work in order to disguise the fact that they were forced labourers.³³⁷

On 30 October 2006, it was reported that prisoners from Kyaukpuru and Buthidaung Prisons had been forced to work on a large number of furnishings for the Union Solidarity and Development Association over the previous months. No wages were paid to the prisoners.³³⁸

Chin State

In March 2006, it was reported that five prison labourers, being employed in the construction of a hospital in Tedim Township, had died as a result of malnutrition and being denied adequate healthcare.³³⁹

Karen State

On 22 August 2006, it was reported that the SPDC military authorities had begun the transfer of thousands of prisoners from across Burma to the northern Karen areas to serve as porters for military columns in the ongoing offensive. The military transferred porters from prisons across the country including Arakan, Kachin and Shan States and Mandalay, Rangoon, Irrawaddy, Pegu and Magwe Divisions. Most were sent to military bases along the Kyauk Kyi – Saw Hta road in Mone Township, northern Nyaunglebin District and Lu Thaw Township, northern Papun District. Some prisoners were transited via various prisons along the way or where the offensive battalions were based, namely those at Toungoo, Thaton and Moulmein. Convicts from Thayet prison in Magwe Division were sent to Insein Prison near Rangoon and then to Moulmein Prison in Mon State, where they were handed to a battalion that took them to Karen areas. From these bases and prisons, porters were assigned to battalions under the control of MOC #10, MOC #15 and LID #101 to be used in operations throughout Tantabin Township, southern Toungoo District, Lu Thaw Township and Mone Township. Almost half of them were sent to Baw Hser Ko, an SPDC military base overlooking Pwa Ghaw along the Kyauk Kyi – Saw Hta road in western Papun District. Prisoners being sent to Toungoo District were brought to Kler Lah and then deployed to Army camps throughout the district.³⁴⁰

Papun District

On 21 February 2006, it was reported that Ko Than Tun, an Arakanese prisoner who was forced to work as a porter, was killed by SPDC forces after he could no longer walk while carrying army supplies. According to the report Ko Than Tun requested that he be left on the trail as he could not walk and was unable to carry the goods, he then lost consciousness and

the soldiers killed him in a graveyard in Shan Wra Village, near Milestone 33 under Papun District. Ko Than Tun was among 200 prisoners from the Sittwe jail who had been brought to the area to be used as military porters on 19 January.³⁴¹

In March 2006 KHRG fieldworkers reported finding several bodies of convict porters floating in the Salween River, and attributed their deaths to drowning while trying to swim to Thailand.³⁴²

In June 2006, 10 bodies of convict porters were found along a route where MOC #15 had been conducting operations between late May and mid June, moving along the upper Bilin River to their camp at Baw Hser Ko.³⁴³

In December 2006, it was reported that, in Papun District alone, over 20 boys, under the age of 16 years old, had been conscripted from Insein Prison to work as SPDC porters.³⁴⁴

Thaton District

In late January 2006, roughly 200 prisoners were reported to have been transported from Sittwe Prison, Arakan State, to Thaton Prison, for use as porters in the SPDC offensives against Karen villagers. These prisoners were assigned to different battalions at the prison. One prisoner, Aung Min, who later escaped, told how he and 43 others were assigned to LIB #251, accompanying the troops as they moved from Thaton to Papun District. Aung Min claimed that the SPDC told the convicts *"You are going on a pilgrimage. If you can't continue, you won't be left behind alive,"* Aung Min managed to escape 10 days into the operation.³⁴⁵

Toungoo District

On 7 February 2006, troops from SPDC IB #35, IB #14 and LIB #108 travelling through Play-hsa-lo (Tate-pu) village forced 250 convicts to carry their food supplies. They ordered the convicts to keep the information about transportation of the supplies secret, and threatened to take harsh action against Play-hsa-lo (Tate-pu) villagers if the information was leaked.³⁴⁶

On 5 September 2006, SPDC Southern Command sent 500 prisoners from Pa La Wah to Kaw Thay Der. Troops from LIB #10 killed 5 of those prisoners. LIB #55 reportedly killed two prisoners in the Noe Soe area.³⁴⁷

On 5 October 2006, LIB #80 and IB #108 under LID #66 and IB #551 and IB #35 under MOC #15 began operations along the Kler La--Busakee road. IB #551 and IB #35 reportedly killed over 40 prisoners during their operations.³⁴⁸

On 10 October 2006, 600 prisoners were moved by the military from Toungoo to Kler La (Bawgalygyi) to Busakee, to be used as porters for the military.³⁴⁹

Mandalay Division

On 1 February 2006, around 900 inmates from Rangoon's Insein Jail were transferred in 30 trucks to the Pyinmana Kyappyay region in central Burma to be forcefully employed in the construction of the new capital city Nay Pyi Daw.³⁵⁰

1.7 Forced Conscription and Forced Military Training – Partial List of Incidents for 2006

Arakan State

On 20 July 2006, it was reported that the SPDC had ordered each village tract in areas of Arakan State to provide at least 15 new recruits for nearby army battalions during 2006. Each VPDC was informed they would be fined 50,000 kyat for every person they failed to supply below this quota.³⁵¹

Manaung Township

On 8 August 2006, a team of military officers led by Colonel Maung Maung Lwin of the Western Command began visiting the major villages in Manaung Township to organise the formation of reserve forces. Colonel Maung Maung Lwin stated that militias and reserve fire fighters will be formed in every Township of Arakan State to guard the SPDC's interests, particularly in relation to the gas exploration and extraction activities. At that time, Kyaukpriu, Ramree, and Manaung Townships were the focus of the junta's attention as they are the site of many gas exploration projects and oil wells operated by foreign companies.³⁵²

Maungdaw Township

On 14 February 2006, the SPDC initiated the formation of a people's militia in the western border area. On 16 February 2006, a military team led by Lt Col Maun Maung Lwin from Dakasa, came to Kodan Kouk village in southern Maungdaw, accompanied by the Maungdaw TPDC, to set up the people's militia, which was to be formed with 60 individuals. Of these, 20 were to comprise a standing force, and 40 were to make up reserve forces. After military training the regime planned to arm members of the militia with weapons. The same military team also planned to form another people's militia in Ahgumaw village. At that time there were already at least five people's militias in northern Maungdaw.³⁵³

Ponnar Gyung Township

On 9 January 2006, it was reported that SPDC LIB #550 based in Ponnar Gyung Township issued orders for the conscription of 10 soldiers from each village area, with a failure to meet the quota resulting in a fine of 50,000 kyat. The local VPDCs were given the duty of ensuring these orders were fulfilled. The villages, which received the order, included:

1. Poyipyin,
2. Yahaphtaung,
3. Wapo (Sittwe Township),
4. Tankho,
5. Tanswe,
6. Kyawzan, Sinthi,
7. Khuithi, Kyaukseik,
8. Yongngu,
9. Kyansauk,
10. Yotayoke,
11. Thayetcho, and
12. Pyinsharshe.³⁵⁴

Yathetaung Township

On 15 February 2006, SPDC Brigadier General Khin Maung Myint ordered the formation of militia groups in 20 villages of Yathetaung Township. Villages affected by the order included; Kondan, Sin Paik, Done Paik, and Ahngu Maw. A lieutenant colonel from the military's western command, a captain from each IB and LIB and the local Peace and Development Council secretary visited the villages one by one to supervise the setting up of the militia groups. They warned villagers about the threat the United States military posed to Burma's security. The size of the new militia groups varied from village to village but were all made up of at least 30 men aged between 18 and 45. The groups were to be given military training and similar forces were also planned for neighbouring Townships.³⁵⁵

Chin State

Paletwa Township

On 10 March 2006, LIB #538 based in Yateh Taung of Arakan State, forced hundreds of civilians to take part in militia training for a period of 45 days, in Mizathit village of Paletwa Township, southern Chin State. A total of 25 village tracts in the area were notified to send 20 persons each to the training. Orders were issued through village tract administrative officials. Trainees had to bring their own food supplies for the training and all expenses were paid for by local villagers, with each household required to pay 500 kyat. No specific penalty was explicitly mentioned although one village tract official indicated a failure to report for training would result in imprisonment and a fine. Weapons provided to trainees were to be stored at the house of local village headmen upon the completion of the training. Trainees were allowed to attend to their own livelihood for one week after the completion of the training after which time they had to perform village defence duties on a rotational basis.³⁵⁶

In June 2006 a village headman from King Kang Kung village, Lawng Zaw Kung tract, Paletwa Township, was killed and two others forcibly recruited to the military for their failure to report the presence of an armed group, the Chin National Army (CNA), in the area. The headman, Andry, 40, was kidnapped and killed by Burmese soldiers in the last week of June. The commander of LIB #140, Captain Aung Kyaw, apprehended Mr. Nga Vang, 36, the headman of Khua Hung village and Mr. Maung Hlah, 25, the secretary of Khua Hung and took them to Pakkoku. They were threatened with imprisonment but were also given the option of joining the SPDC military. Mr. Nga Vang and Mr. Maung Hlah chose to join the army to avoid a long prison term.³⁵⁷

On 7 July 2006, it was reported that the second commander of LIB #550 from Ponna Island, Arakan State, stationed in Shinletwa Village, Paletwa Township, Southern Chin State, ordered 9 village headmen to send 30 persons from each of their villages to attend two months of military training from September to October. The villages forced to participate in the training were:

1. Para Sia O,
2. Pathiantlang,
3. Ma Oo, Wa Zong,
4. Sin Oo Wa,
5. Shwe Le Wa,
6. Kung Pyin,
7. Shinlewa.

Altogether 210 villagers were forced to attend the military training. The commander's justification for the training was to ensure security for the village, the battalion and other camps, and also to assist the SPDC militarily. The village council was informed that they would have to bear the cost of the training, including the uniforms.³⁵⁸

Matupi Township

On 20 July 2006, Colonel San Aung, of TOC #2 based in Matupi Town, issued an order requiring three villages from the southeast region of Matupi Township to send 30 persons per village to attend militia training. The order was issued through the company commander based in Lai Len Pi Village. Chairmen of the VPDCs were ordered to select the trainees. The villages affected were Lai Len Pi, Lai Len Te, and Aru. Those selected were unable to tend to their crops for the period in which they were forced to attend the trainings.³⁵⁹

On 20 August 2006, the SPDC opened a militia training centre at a play ground in Phaneng village in Matupi, and began training villagers between the ages of 35 and 45 from 11 villages in the surrounding area, with orders to local authorities stating they had to train one person from each family. Lieutenant Colonel Ye Lyun, commander of LIB #140 led the training. Each family in the area had to provide two kilograms of rice and 1,000 kyat per week to support the trainees. The order stated that if any of the following villages were unable to meet their quota of 25 persons they would be punished severely:

1. Phaneng,
2. Ngaleng,
3. Cawngthia,
4. Tibaw,
5. Hnawte,
6. Valangpi,
7. Tinlawng,
8. Leiring,
9. Khuangang,
10. Vuitu, and
11. Tangku.³⁶⁰

On 13 September 2006, it was reported that Chin residents of Matupi Township had arrived in Mizoram, India, fleeing forced conscription into SPDC militia trainings to begin on 20 September. It was reported that training sessions for those aged between 35 and 45 years old from eleven villages had already been finished, and the SPDC was subsequently seeking to recruit villagers between 45 and 50 years old.³⁶¹

In December 2006, it was reported that a recruitment drive by Colonel San Aung, of TOC #2, led to many arrests of youths in the area, who were then detained in the recruitment camp in Matupi Township, leading children in the area afraid to leave their homes at night.³⁶² Soldiers from LIB #104 arrested four youths on 6 November in Matupi Town. They later released one, a high school student, after his teacher negotiated for his release. The other three were reported to have escaped when their truck overturned. A further 10 youths were reported to have been arrested and detained in the recruitment camp.³⁶³

Kachin State

On 31 October 2006, it was reported that the junta's forces had opened a training centre near Mayan, about 32km (20 miles) outside Myitkyina for the purpose of recruiting and training a secret militia force tasked with suppressing political dissidents. The training was said to be conducted by IB #21, #29 and #37, stationed near Myitkyina. Members of SPDC-affiliated agencies, such as the fire brigade, municipal workers and members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association, were recruited for the training. After completing the training course, participants were sent back to their home towns and instructed to gather information about the movements of political activists. They were also given as much as 30,000 kyat (about US\$23) per month. Local residents reported that the junta has ordered larger cities across the country to train as many as 5,000 people each. Myitkyina was said to have about 5,000 recruits, spread across the cities of Mohnyin, Mogaung and Hpakant. Bhamo was said to have 2,000 recruits, while Putao had another 1,000. Local residents said the regime fears mass rioting, and the main purpose of the training was to eliminate dissent and deal effectively with any future uprising. Participants were reportedly trained in the use of a bamboo rod two inches in diameter and four to five feet long.³⁶⁴

Karen State

Nyaunglebin District

From the 2 September 2006 to 2 October 2006, villages in Kyauk Gyi Township were forced to attend administration and security trainings. The TPDC ordered that three people from each village tract had to attend, and demand 90,000 kyat and three bags of rice from each village tract to finance the training. Residents also had to finance the travel, accommodation and food costs of each attendee, equating to 1,500 kyat per household.³⁶⁵

Pa'an District

On 1 August 2006, SPDC LIB #356 Commander Bo Myint Thein ordered a total of 125 villagers from villages located around Kyo Gk'Lee village, Dt'Nay Hsah Township, to attend a People's Militia training. The ten day training began on 3 August 2006. The SPDC also ordered villagers to attend subsequent trainings for the Auxiliary Fire Brigade and Myanmar Red Cross. The purported aims of these trainings were: village security, support for the village, village development, and support for SPDC soldiers.³⁶⁶

Mon State

On 14 August 2006, SPDC LIB #209 conscripted 30 villagers from Goun Njin Tan village for 20 days of military training. According to community leaders, at the time, the training was set to continue for a long time until all the villages in the area had participated. Villagers were informed that once they had undergone their training they would have to be available to join the army if needed. Military training had begun in Kyaikkami Township a few weeks earlier where the battalions initially ordered local residents to pay 500 kyat per month to support the training. This figure then increased to 2,000 kyat when the military training actually began.³⁶⁷

In September 2006, Mon villagers arrived in Thai refugee camps citing their forced recruitment, at the hands of the USDA, into militia training courses, as their prime reason for seeking refuge.³⁶⁸

On 30 October 2006, it was reported that villagers in southern Ye Township were being forced to participate in militia training. Each village had to send at least 35 villagers to join the people's militia, with recruits chosen through a voting system. Residents were then forced to cover the expenses for training, including food and the militia's stipends. In order to avoid forced recruitment, villagers could pay 400,000 kyat each to IB #31. Others fled to Thailand to to avoid conscription. *"I don't want to kill our own people so I fled to Thailand,"* stated one villager.³⁶⁹

Tenasserim Division

From September 2006, SPDC LIB #282 forced the residents of Kyauk-ka-din and Yapu village tracts, Yebyu Township, to enlist in the People's militia forces. All men under 45 years of age was required to serve a three month term in their village militia to assist the SPDC in combating insurgent forces in the area. The men were armed and forced to perform sentry duty.³⁷⁰

1.8 Interviews and Personal Accounts

Interview #1

Source: The Arakan Project
Ethnicity/Religion: Rohingya, Muslim
Age: 40
Sex: Male
Occupation: Fisherman
Residence: T-- Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (South)
Date of Interview: 13 July 2006

Life in Burma is becoming unbearable for me. I have to spend all my energy and time for the authorities and there is very little left to sustain my family. So now we do not have enough food. Most of the poor are like me.

The NaSaKa of Alel Than Kyaw cultivates a large area of land inside their camp. Initially they told the villagers they will do share-cropping but suddenly they changed their mind and started using forced labour to plough their land. Now, everyday, 50 to 70 people work in the NaSaKa paddy fields. Some villagers have to supply bullocks; others, paddy seeds. I had to work there as a labourer for 12 days in June and early July. Now the paddy planting is nearly over.

As soon as the monsoon started the NaSaKa asked all villagers to plant physic nut saplings in their house yards. I have a small area around my house, so the NaSaKa gave me only 20 young physic nut saplings to plant. When that was done, the VPDC instructed us to plant rubber saplings on the hills. We had prepared this hill for rubber plantation during the dry season and I had already worked there for 6 days clearing the jungle and digging small holes. Now they gave me 100 rubber saplings to plant and I had to work there for another 3 days. And, after the rubber saplings were planted, the NaSaKa called us again to work in their paddy field and this work still continues.

Beside this I have to work as a sentry for at least 3 nights a month in one of the village sentry posts.

Moreover, the NaSaKa built a road from Alel Than Kyaw market to the sea beach. I had to work on this road for 7 days. In addition, my 12-year old son also had to work for 2 days on the road construction because I was at sea fishing. Actually the village seingaung [leader of 10 houses] had informed me about the road construction but, since this was a good time for fishing, I went to sea. When the seingaung could not find me, he ordered my son to replace me. I returned two days later and then still had to work for 7 more days on the road construction. The NaSaKa recruited 40 villagers every day for about one month to complete the road work. Beside this type of forced labour on specific projects, we also had routine camp maintenance for the NaSaKa such as supplying firewood, clearing their garden and lawns, filling up the water tanks in their bathrooms and repairing their houses and fences. During the dry season I also had to supply 2 big wooden poles to repair the fence round their camp.

Interview #2

Source: The Arakan Project
Ethnicity: Rohingya
Religion: Muslim
Age: 35
Sex: Male
From: T--- Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (South)
Date of Interview: 15 July 2006

The NaSaKa of our area has about 100 acres of paddy land. In May they said that they would rent out this paddy land for 75 baskets of rice per acre. Many villagers came forward to rent land from the NaSaKa and started ploughing about 50 acres after they got a verbal agreement. But, by mid-June, when the land was ploughed and ready for planting, the NaSaKa changed their mind and told the farmers who had hired their land to stop working there as they would continue to cultivate it themselves. For the other 50 acres, they had already used forced labourers from 4 village tracts from the beginning of the monsoon. After they took back the land from the tenants, the NaSaKa sent new orders to the VPDC chairmen to send more labourers to work on this part of the land as well. So far, I have had to send 6 labourers for one day to the NaSaKa paddy fields to replace me. More than 100 labourers work there every day.

Since I am busy on my own business, I usually hire labour to replace me. Since January this year, I have had to send more than 50 labourers to the NaSaKa rubber plantation. During the dry season they first selected some hilly land for the rubber plantation. Then they collected labourers to clear the jungle and dig holes at the same distance from each other and put cow dung inside them. When the rains started, the VPDC brought seedlings from the NaSaKa headquarters in Kyi Kan Pyin. We had to pay the transportation costs ourselves. Each family had to buy a minimum of 10 saplings, each costing 750 Kyat and plant them on the hill. Those with grazing fields or slash-and-burn land at the foot of the hill had to buy more saplings and pay extra money in order to retain possession of their land. The poor had to pay 3,000 Kyat to the VPDC for rubber saplings and in addition they had to plant them. No-one except widows could escape from this tax. Before the planting of rubber saplings, the NaSaKa ordered us to plant physic nut saplings. I had to plant a total of 120: 40 in the late dry season and 80 in the early monsoon. The number of saplings depended upon the area of each family's house yard. Those with no house yard had to plant them beside the road or on barren land.

Our NaSaKa Sector 7 camp is quite large. They often use labourer for odd jobs in their camp. I often visit their camp on business and every day I see between 30 and 100 labourers working there. I have to bring two bundles of firewood per month to their camp and, as far as I know, every family under the NaSaKa Sector 7 has to supply the same. Each family also has to supply one chicken per month. I do not need to do that because I give them meat.

Every night 5 youths must go to the NaSaKa camp for sentry duty inside their camp. They have to act as sentries together with the armed sentries of the NaSaKa. These young men have to be there at 6 p.m. and stay till 6 a.m. Sentry duty at the village sentry post is a routine task, but arbitrary punishment and fines on the sentries have increased. I always hired villagers to replace me for this. In June I sent three, and four in May. I paid them 1,500 Kyat

per night. This is a risky duty because of the fines, so no one is keen to replace me and I have to pay them well.

As far as I know, 15 families have fled from our village to Bangladesh because of forced labour. Poor people in our village have to work between 10 and 20 days a month without pay, and they cannot earn enough income to support their families.

Interview #3

Source:	The Arakan Project
Ethnicity:	Rohingya
Religion:	Muslim
Age:	37
Sex:	Male
Occupation:	Farmer and labourer
From:	M--- Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (South)
Date of Interview:	13 July 2006

I was threatened many times by the VPDC that the NaSaKa need my land to enlarge their rubber tree plantation and that I could pay 100,000 Kyat to keep it. But I have no money and my land is my only source of paddy for my family. Other richer farmers paid the NaSaKa and the VPDC in order to save their land. However, the NaSaKa does not need our land for their rubber plantation. They have the entire hill to plant whatever they want. They only threatened us in order to grab money. And, since I could not pay, the VPDC imposed various forced labour duties. I had to go with other labourers to clear the jungle and dig holes to plant the rubber saplings. I worked there for 10 days during the dry season.

Once the hill was cleared, the VPDC and the head of the NaSaKa of Myinn Hlut camp ordered the villagers to supply 200 large wooden poles and 200 big pieces of bamboo. The VPDC collected money from the wealthy people of the village and we, the poor, have to go to collect wooden poles and bamboo. We worked for 6 days to fulfil the requirements. Then we had to load them onto a cargo boat. The officer selected 50 people from our village, six of them skilled carpenters, and took them with him on the boat to a place named Anguma. The place is situated in Rathedaung Township just across the river from Sittwe Township. The NaSaKa officer of Myinn Hlut then instructed us to build 100 wooden houses. He also said that more labourers and material would be coming soon and we would receive food there three times a day. We, the 50 people, stayed there for one month. We were fed three times a day but we did not receive any salary. I heard that only the skilled carpenters got paid, but I don't know how much. The NaSaKa also brought labourers from other areas, all of them Rohingya from the far south of Maungdaw Township and from Rathedaung Township. They also collected many building materials from other areas, especially from south Maungdaw. We are not sure why they built so many houses but we heard rumours that the NaSaKa will set up offices there and that some Rohingya families will also be moved to this place. But finally we don't know what happened to these houses.

After returning from Anguma I had some time to look after my family. Then the NaSaKa ordered us to collect cuttings of physic nuts for a nursery. I worked 2 days there. Then I had to supply 8 logs, my quota of firewood for the brick kilns. After a few days they called me again with other villagers to repair the embankment of a shrimp project. 400 people from different village tracts worked 4 days in the NaSaKa shrimp farm. We had to put mud to consolidate the embankment and small thin bamboos in the water.

Our main problem is sentry duty. I have to work a minimum of 4 nights a month –sometimes even 6 nights - as a sentry. For us, sentry duty means losing some money but to the NaSaKa it is an opportunity for extortion every night. The NaSaKa of Myinn Hlut extorts 150,000 to 200,000 Kyat every night from all the sentry posts under their jurisdiction. Whenever they visit a sentry post in the night they collect a minimum of 5,000 Kyat, or else chicken, rice, etc. Some sentries have to sell their household essentials in order to pay the NaSaKa. June was one of the worst months for me. I worked six nights as a sentry and during these six nights our sentry post [with 4 sentries] had to pay fines twice: the first time 5,000 Kyat and the second 6,000 Kyat. We all paid an equal share of these fines.

When the first monsoon rain started, the villagers were then asked to plant physic nut around our house yard, beside the road and on empty land. The NaSaKa gave us the physic nut saplings and ordered us to plant them and look after them.

The Chairmen of from the village tracts of Gaw Yah Khar Li, Oo Daung, Myinn Hlut and Tha Win Chaung also brought rubber saplings from the NaSaKa headquarters. Our VPDC Chairmen brought 150,000 saplings and sold them to villagers according to their financial conditions. I was compelled to purchase 60 saplings which cost me 40,000 Kyat. I bought them and planted them on the hills we had cleared and prepared during the dry season. Every village, rich or poor, had to participate in the rubber plantation. As usual, the rich paid money to avoid the work and the poor had to work. A person like me with a piece of land but no cash also had to buy and plant the rubber saplings.

As soon as I had finished planting the physic nut and rubber saplings, I was ordered to bring my bullock to the NaSaKa camp. This was really a crucial time for me as I had to plough my own land. This time I hired a man to help me on my land and I worked for 10 days on the NaSaKa land. Each morning I took my bullocks and ploughed their land till 10 or 11 a.m. and then sent the bullock to my land. The rest of the day, with 30 other villagers, I had to clear the grass from the NaSaKa land. I had to work there for 10 days. Then my turn was over and I could work on my own paddy field.

Interview #4

Source: The Arakan Project
Ethnicity: Rohingya
Religion: Muslim
Age: 25
Sex: Male
Occupation: Farmer and day labourer
From: S--- Village Tract, Buthidaung Township (South)
Date of Interview: 14 July 2006

Cultivation work is almost over now in our area. The NaSaKa camp of Phone Nyo Lake has cultivated more than 150 acres of paddy land. They requisitioned labourers from all the areas under their control. The Phone Nyo Lake NaSaKa camp controls a number of village tracts such as Phone Nyo Lake, Sein Nyin Pya, Tha Pate Taung, Kin Taung, Ywet Nyo Taung, Wa Ra Kyun, Kwan Dine, Oo Hla Pe and 2 or 3 more village tracts.

Some of these village tracts are situated far away from the camp and it is difficult for the labourers to reach the worksite each morning. The NaSaKa of Phone Nyo Lake built temporary shelters with bamboo and straw near their fields to accommodate the labourers at night. The villagers from distant places had to stay at the cultivation site for at least 5 days. I was ordered to go to Phone Nyo Lake with 90 other people from my village for 5 days with our own food. In Phone Nyo Lake we slept in makeshift shelters for 5 days and we had to plough a vast area for the NaSaKa. We learnt the NaSaKa also ordered all the VPDC chairmen to send people on a rotation basis.

After completing this duty for the NaSaKa, I was instructed to help the local police for their cultivation. Almost all poor day labourers from our village tract and the neighbouring villages have to work in the paddy field of the Sein Nyin Pya police. Their land is situated in our village and I worked there for 7 days.

Soon the NaSaKa and the police will call people again to clear weeds from the paddy land. During monsoon, the NaSaKa and police use labour to plough, plant, weed, harvest and to carry the paddy to their store. This is a burden for us. I had to hire a man to plough my own land while I spent 12 days in total for the NaSaKa and the police. They call this voluntary work.

During the monsoon, when water started rising and submerging the road, the police and the NaSaKa called us to bring boulders and stones from the hill on the east side of our village in order to put them on the road, in the courtyard of the NaSaKa and police houses, and even for the houses of the Rakhaing people. This is common during the monsoon.

All villagers were given physic nut saplings to plant in their house yard. I received 20 plants from the NaSaKa of Phone Nyo Lake - the number depends upon the size of the house yard. Mine is very small. They warned me that I must take care of these plants or I would be fined 1,000 Kyat for every sapling that dies.

Sentry duty remained unchanged. I have to work as a sentry at least three nights a month and all poor people do sentry duty like me.

Interview #5

Source: The Arakan Project
Ethnicity: Rohingya
Religion: Muslim
Age: 42
Sex: Male
Occupation: Farmer
From: G--- Village Tract, Rathedaung Township
Date of Interview: 16 July 2006

I will give a brief summary of the use of forced labour in our area.

During the dry season, the NaSaKa constructed a building in our village with forced labour. We do not know the purpose of this because the NaSaKa does not have any post here. I had to work for this building for 11 days and supply 100 bamboos and 2 large wooden beams. Other people of my village also worked there. They had to bring pebbles from a distant place and sand from up-river in order to avoid salinity. My son also worked for 6 days to carry sand. After that, I had to work 5 days to carry bricks from the Maungdaw side of the hills.

In the middle of the dry season, the NaSaKa demanded 10 labourers from our village to build houses in Anguma. Our village decided to collect 500 Kyat from each family in order to hire labourers to go to Anguma. We selected 10 people and told them that we would pay them if the NaSaKa did not. They returned after 15 days and were not paid. Some of them were severely attacked by malaria. So, we paid each labourer 12,000 Kyat for 15 days from the money we had collected. The 10 people we selected were experts in making tight bamboo walls and they had to make bamboo fences in Anguma under the supervision of the SaRaPa (new military intelligence unit). One of 10 labourers, Mohammed Shafi, son of Noor Ahmed, died soon after he returned from the construction site of Anguma. He was about 46 years old and the father of 2 daughters and one son. We villagers appealed to the local NaSaKa post to arrange for the treatment of the sick workers but they did not respond. When Mohammed Shafi died, we informed the NaSaKa and asked them help for his family, but our requests remain unheard.

After the monsoon started, the NaSaKa announced they would cultivate the paddy land in their possession. We were ordered to send our bullocks and plough their land. This year the NaSaKa of our area brought 7 acres of land under paddy cultivation. I worked there for 2 days and used my bullock to plough the land for 2 more days.

This NaSaKa post also uses 8 to 10 labourers per day on a permanent basis to maintain their barracks, houses, fences and gardens. Either I or my son has to work 4 to 6 days a month there as a regular duty. I also work as a sentry in our village at least 3 nights a month.

The NaSaKa of our village ordered us to buy physic nut saplings at the beginning of the monsoon and charged 40 Kyat each. The number depends upon the financial conditions of each family. I had to buy 100 saplings. They instructed us to plant them and fence them so that the cattle cannot destroy the plants. During the dry season, we had to supply cuttings from branches of physic nut trees and now they sell them back to us!

Interview #6

Source: The Arakan Project
Ethnicity: Rohingya
Religion: Muslim
Age: 22
Sex: Male
Occupation: Farmer and Day Labourer
From: N--- Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (North)
Date of Interview: 19 April 2006

There is no work in our area but we are compelled to do forced labour.

There is a NaSaKa camp in our village and 8 to 10 labourers are needed to work there every day. I have done unpaid labour for the NaSaKa for the last 8 or 9 years. I am now a regular labourer for the NaSaKa camp 3 to 4 days each month fetching water, chopping firewood, maintaining their garden and lawn, cleaning the camp area, repairing the houses, etc.

Sentry duty has never stopped. Every poor person has to work as a sentry in the village sentry posts. There are 4 sentry posts in our village and I have to work there 4 nights a month-one night each week. We never encountered any rebels or thieves. We only see the NaSaKa patrolling the area at night.

Many people work in the NaSaKa brickyard. The skilled workers are paid but the local Rohingya have to supply the firewood for the kilns and carry the bricks to the storage place. I worked for 4 days to provide firewood like many other villagers. We are lucky that the hill is close by and that we can easily find wood.

In February 2006, some NaSaKa personnel were transferred from our camp. They used 8 porters from our hamlet, including me, to carry their goods from Ngar Yant Chaung to Ta Man Thar where they released us. In Ta Man Thar another group of villagers were collected by the local VPDC Chairman to carry the loads to Kyein Chaung and from there the NaSaKa would take a jeep or a boat to reach Maungdaw. This is the way the NaSaKa and the Army use porters to carry their goods.

A week ago the VPDC Chairman ordered me to go to Thet Kaine Nyar with 5 other youths from our village to pull 6 rafts upstream from Thet Kaine Nyar to our village, Ngar Yant Chaung. On the raft, there were gasoline drums, rice bags and drums of vegetable oil. These were rations for the NaSaKa Sector-2. It took me the entire day to pull the rafts and these goods were then carried by other villagers from the riverbank to the camp. We have to do this kind of work from time to time whenever they need.

I also had to supply 3 baskets of gravel to the construction site of a new bridge and to pay 3,000 Kyat to the VPDC office. The VPDC did not explain what they would do with this money but both gravel and money had to be delivered at the same time.

Interview #7

Source: The Arakan Project
Ethnicity: Rohingya
Religion: Muslim
Age: 39
Sex: Male
Occupation: Farmer
From: ---- Village Tract, Maungdaw Township (Central)
Date of Interview: 8 March 2006

We live in a Rohingya hamlet and most people of our hamlet have to work as forced labourers not only for the NaSaKa but also for the new settlers' village close to the NaSaKa headquarters of Kyi Kan Pyin. There are about 120 new settlers' houses in that model village called 'Wabeg'. In this NaTaLa village, I often have to clean the ring wells. There are about 40 wells and the children of the new settlers are very naughty and throw garbage inside the well. Others have to repair the roofs of their houses or do other odd jobs.

After the monsoon, when we were busy with our paddy harvest, the NaSaKa ordered us to build a 2-mile long road to link our village with their headquarters at Kyi Kan Pin. I worked on this road a total of 16 days in December and January. The work is still going on, but now other villagers work there.

In early February, the NaSaKa gave orders to supply physic nut plants. Each family had to collect 200 pieces of physic nut branches or 10,000 Kyat. This is a new crazy project creating a lot of troubles for us. Many people will have to pay the fine because collecting 200 physic nut cuttings is not easy. I found some of these trees around my house, cut the branches to the required size and deposited 80 cuttings. But as long as I do not supply all of the 200 pieces, the NaSaKa and VPDC will not be satisfied and they will ask for either more cuttings or money.

Inside the NaSaKa camp, we have to do all sorts of work. The main tasks are cleaning their compound, looking after their garden, watering their plants, maintaining their golf course and gathering firewood for the NaSaKa families.

During sentry duty, we are often accused of not doing our work properly and the NaSaKa patrol always imposes fines on us. Each time they fine me, I have to give them a chicken. My wife has already given all our chickens and we have nothing to pay now.

The work I have to do for them is too much. Every month I have to do sentry duty for at least 4 nights and spend 4 days [once a week] in the NaTaLa village [new settlers' village] as well as 4 days in the NaSaKa camp. After working 10 to 12 days, including nights, we have no time to feed our family. My family is hungry on the days that I have to work for them.

Interview #8

Source: The Arakan Project
Ethnicity: Rohingya
Religion: Muslim
Age: 21
Sex: Male
Occupation: Farmer
From: --- Village Tract, Buthidaung Township (North)
Date of Interview: 9 May 2006

My father is sick, so I am now looking after the family farm and cattle. I also sent labourers to work for the NaSaKa, Army and VPDC. Our VPDC Chairman is not a Rohingya, he is greedy, extorts money as much as he can and has no sympathy for our community. If the Army or the NaSaKa ordered him to collect 20 labourers, he would collect 40, send 20 and collect money for the rest. Those unable to pay are sent to collect bamboo, cane and logs in the hills which he later sells for his own profit. Similarly, when he has to supply 5 chickens, he orders the villagers to provide 10 and keeps 5 for himself.

The use of forced labour by the Army, the NaSaKa and the police has increased since the start of the dry season. Every day, the Army of Bagali needs 20 to 25 labourers to work in their barracks and offices, which are spread over three hills. Even when there is no work to do, the labourers must come and be on standby at the camp. This year, the Taung Bazar NaSaKa have planted summer paddy on their land and they have a brickyard. The Kyaung Taung NaSaKa also has a brickyard where they use forced labour for brick baking every day. In addition, the Pan Gyi police station recruits labourers to look after their barracks, to cook and to carry rations and letters.

Two months ago [in March], the VPDC Chairman told us that the Army had ordered him to build a road to link our village to the Mrong village, 3 miles to the east of our village. The Chairman said: "This road must be 4 feet high and 6 feet wide and must be completed as soon as possible." But after we completed the road, we were again ordered to build a new section from our village to the Kyaung Taung NaSaKa camp, to the west of our village. This road now connects the Kyaung Taung NaSaKa camp, Tin May and the Mrong village. This time I had to work for 15 days because I had no money to hire a labourer to replace me.

I also saw that the Army camp of Da Byu Chaung used forced labour to build a road from their camp to another Army camp in a place called 'Magh Bill'. Some soldiers worked on this road, but Rohingya forced labourers were recruited to cut the ground and carry mud. The Army is currently building roads to link up all their camps on the east of the Mayu River. Road building is ongoing in various places. The Army claim they are working to build the roads, but in reality the local people have to do most of the construction work. Furthermore, the Army collects taxes for the construction of this road.

I pay 18,000 kyat yearly to the VPDC Chairman to avoid sentry duty. Otherwise I would have to do it 4 to 5 nights a month. About one third of our villagers can afford to pay while the rest, who are poor, have to do regular sentry duty. But I may have to do sentry duty too because I am running out of money.

Most of the farmers have no more pulse in their stock because we had to sell our produce to the Army and they paid less than half the market price. The Army bought almost all the pulse in our area. They requisitioned a large number of porters to collect the pulse – and later rice. The labourers also had to weigh the pulse and put it into sacks. As I had to supply pulse, I was not called to carry it. But most poor people had to do this over the last two and half months.

After the paddy harvest, the authorities selected some land. They selected 7 *kani* (about 3 acres) of land from our family and marked it with red flags. They did not explain why, but told us not to cultivate it.

Then we had to supply branches (cuttings) of two types of shrubs: the physic nut and the castor plant. Both plants grow mostly in and around graveyards. We had to supply these cuttings to the nursery on the bank of the Mayu River, a very fertile plot confiscated by the Army for cultivating physic nuts. We had to plough and prepare the plot for planting. I worked a total of 5 days there. Then I paid the VPDC Chairman 2,000 Kyat not to work there any more. People are still recruited every day to water the plants.

The VPDC Chairman and the Army of Bagali camp also ordered us to supply more cuttings for similar nurseries in other villages. Those who did not were fined. I managed 4 bundles of 10 cuttings each and supplied them to the VPDC office. But these plants are no longer available in the graveyards because people had already collected them to fulfil the previous order. So many people had to pay money to the VPDC because they could not find any.

I understand that my nice days have ended. Now I will have to work like other labourers and poor people because I have no money left to hire a labourer to work on behalf of my family.

If the situation continues to deteriorate, I will sell my cattle and paddy land and leave the country. We can guess that the worst is still to come.

Interview #9

Source: Free Burma Rangers
Ethnicity: Shan
Religion: Buddhist
Age: 35
Sex: Male
Date of Report: October 2006

I was taken by (Burma Army) IB 241 from MOC 16 led by Thet Oo, with a troop strength of 100 soldiers. They had 40 porters.

I was sentenced ten years in prison, which started in October 2003. I stayed three years and the Burma Army took me out. I was moved from Kyen Don Prison to Taung Gyi Prison in 2004. The Burma Army took me out and forced me to be a porter. I worked for the Army by cutting bamboo and trees to build their camp.

The Burma Army convicted me because I was working in black market. They tortured me and put me in prison. Myself and 39 others porters were taken by the Burma Army and forced to do heavy, hard work. They tortured us in many ways. When I was in prison the Army did not feed me enough food (not only me - every prisoner). I got enough food when my relatives occasionally brought it for me. Because the Burma Army tortured me a lot and I could not bear it any longer, so on 13 October 2006 I escaped from the Burma Army to the KNU. The Burma Army bases in Nyaunglebin are there to attack the Karen people and torture Karen villagers. That is the plan of Burma Army. The SPDC and the KNU are very different. The SPDC tortured all the porters and villagers and do not give us enough food. The KNU (who helped the porter when he escaped) gave us enough food, took care of our health and helped us in any way they could.

Interview #10

Source: HURFOM
Name: Nai AJit
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
From: Taung-Pone village, Northern Ye Township
Sex: Male
Age: 22
Interview date: 14 September 2006
Perpetrator: Commander Min Min Tun and Captain Htwe Khant (LIB #587)

On the above mentioned date, while I was on the way to my parent's paddy farm, Burmese troops, approximately about 15 soldiers led by Captain Htwe Khant from Light Infantry Battalion No. 587 and some village administration members of our village stopped me and ordered to carry bricks for their battalion. The reason they asked me was I have an old truck which is operating with a Chinese engine. They needed my truck in order to carry their bricks from their brick production site which based outside village to their battalion. But the problem was I could not afford to buy fuel anymore since the price of fuel has gotten higher and higher. I told them I could do it if they bought fuel for my truck and they said "yes". Actually, I did not want to work for them because I have worked without payment for them several times.

When I got to their brick production site, I found about 30 truck owners with their trucks from our village and Tounng Pyin village, a neighbouring village. At that time the Captain Htwe Khant announced the instructions from Commander Min Min Tun from LIB No. 587, each truck owner should carry 1400 pieces of bricks to the battalion. For me I told the Captain Htwe Khant that my truck was very old and not in good condition and he should let me carry just 700 pieces of bricks in my truck. Unfortunately he replied that he could not change the order of the Commander. In the end I had to carry two loads to finish my duty. At first, they promised that they would pay for fuel cost. But when I asked them they said that not only me, but no truck owners received the fuel costs. For me, I had served like this five times already. This is the sixth time. I realized that this is the main reason that a lot of truck owner quite their transportation jobs and changed jobs or went to Thailand as migrant workers.

I told my problem to the village administration group and they replied that they themselves are scared of the Burmese commanders. One of the village administration members who is a friend of mine told me that the village administration is the first victim if they could not complete the instruction of the local commander. So they have to follow the order of the local commander.

For me, I have shifted jobs from a truck driver to a farmer since the beginning of this month. Now, I am working on my parents' farm. Now I want to sell my old truck, but no one wants to buy it because they are afraid of being used by the local battalion. Being a farmer in my village is not easy. Since last year Commander Min Min Tun, Light Infantry Battalion No. 587, ordered all farmers via village administration group to give 40 baskets of paddy per year to the battalion as food supply. If anyone who failed to complete this responsibility they would be punished. Moreover, we, villagers have to cover the cost of the village militia force which is known as the "village security fee". Included in the fees is their salary, food supply

and materials. For our family, we have to pay 2,000 to 3,000 Kyat for the village militia force. Most villagers are facing economic crisis because of various types of taxes, unpaid labors and movement restriction which were committed by the Light Infantry Battalion No. 587. My individual opinion is, I recognize that currently, I am living in hell and I really don't know what I am going to do.³⁷¹

Interview #11

Source: HURFOM
Name: Nai Chan Mon
Sex: Male
Ethnicity: Mon

Who used you as porter and when?

While LIB #409 launched a serious offensive against a group of thirty members of the Mon rebel group led by Nai Chan Dein in Kywe-Tha-Lin village from June 6 till June 14 2006. I was used as a porter to carry military supplies and some materials. It took about nine days long.

How did they find you as their porter?

When I was working in my farm which is about 1 mile from my village on 6 June 2006, the village headman came and ordered me to go with the Burmese IB #409. I did not dare to refuse and I did not want my family get troubles because of me. So I promised to go with them. The headman told me that it would be for just three days but actually it took nine days.

How much weight did you have to carry and how long did you have to walk for?

I did not see inside the cargo. It was already packed in a black plastic bag. I think the load on my shoulders were communication materials. A Burmese soldier told me not to drop any of the cargo or I would be punished. It weighed about 38 viss (62 kilograms) I guess. I am sure that it weighed more than one and half basket of rice, the most I have every carried.

I had to walk with the LIB #409 troops toward the south west of Kywe-Tha-Lin village to Kyaik-Dae-Marn hill, Ye Township. The distance was about 32 miles. On June 8 and 9, 2006, the troops were crossing a rebel controlled area so they walked for the whole day without taking a break.

Do you know how many porters the troops used?

I don't remember. I was confused because I saw four men with no army uniform and the other two young guys with only army shirts and Long(yi?). I thought those four men who did not have an army uniform are porters like me. I heard them speak Tavoyan languages. We were not allowed to talk to each others. I think I was the only one from Kywe-Tha-Lin village to go along with them.

Did you suffer any abuses from the troops or did you see anyone abused by the troops?

No, they used a lot of abusive language when I walked slow and when I asked for water. But when we reached a Karen village near Kywe-Seik village, the Commander and his troops asked the villagers from that village to provide five chickens and two baskets of rice for the armies food supply. At first the villagers did not understand what the commander asked for. I had to translate using my poor Karen language skills. The villagers collected food supplies

for the troops. That evening I helped to collect some wood and water for cooking. When we were preparing to leave, I saw another Karen villager with a load on his shoulders. I thought he might be a porter the same as me.

Did they feed the porters well and how did you manage to sleep at night time?

No they provided just a plate of rice with some vegetables. For me, it is not enough to be full. Normally I eat a lot of rice. I know that if I asked for more I might get a black eye instead of rice. It was not a problem for me I could tolerate it. But I could not bear the body pain from walking the whole day. Sometimes when I slept my whole body hurt. When I tried to ask for some pills from the troops they said they had none. It was difficult to sleep because of the rain at night time. I collected some banana leaves to sleep on and managed to sleep. But it was still hard to sleep because of mosquitoes.

How did you get back to your village?

When the Burmese troops reached to Kyaik-Dae-Marn hill, Ye Township, I saw there was another Burmese troop waiting for our troop. I also saw another seven porters with the other troop. As soon as the troops met, the commander told me to go home. At first I did not know how to get back to my village. Later I found a group of betel nut gardeners from Ma-Gyi village and asked them to help me. They said had two relatives who would travel to Yapu village and suggested that I go with them. We left early the next morning.³⁷²

Interview #12

Source:	HURFOM
Names:	Nai Ha Lae
Ethnicity:	Mon
Religion:	Buddhist
Sex:	Male
Age:	26
Family status:	Married, one child aged 4
From:	Pauk-Pin-Kwin, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Date of Interview:	10 May 2006

I don't remember the date of the first time I was used as porter by the army. But it was in 2004, I think. At that time, they gathered all porters, about twenty people from my village. The troops took us to Kone Pae village which is about two miles from my home Mu Hae village. They ordered us to carry bullets, rations and shells. How heavy was it? Oh, I am not sure how to measure it in kilograms but I think it was about 28-30 viss (45 kgs/95 lbs)

They forced us to walk faster and faster. I was kicked from behind by a soldier several times because I was walking too slowly. The distance was so very far because it took a whole day's walk; we started in the morning and we didn't set up camp until the evening. My body was so seriously sore but I dared not tell them.

Each time, the portering has taken about 20 to 35 days. The sixth time I went it was in February 2005, it was for about 45 days, I had to carry soldiers' rations. At that time, I was seriously sick but the only medical assistance I received was Burmese traditional medicine. It did not help make me well again. I thought I would die. Finally, I could not walk so they left

me. Fortunately, I met a hunter from the nearby village and he took me to his hut and cared for me. After five days, I went back to my village.

Since then whenever I have been called to serve as a porter I have paid the army about 5,000 – 8,000 kyat. This was the same amount that would be paid to recruit another porter. I owed a lot of money for that. My wife was very depressed. My son was suffering from malnutrition, and he was slowly starving because there was not enough income to feed him. I felt so very sad. Life is very hard living in my village. Most of the villagers are faced with poverty; we were not allowed to work on our farms which were situated outside the village. Most of the under aged children are facing starvation because their parents can't earn money.

Including the last time, I have been forced to serve as porter seven times by the Burmese Army, each time I served was when they launched offensives against the Mon armed rebel group near my village.

On the 21 April 2006, a troop from the Burmese Army came and called villagers from each household to gather at the square in the middle of village. Then they announced that each household must send one man to serve as a porter with the army. They divided the village into four parts; each part contained 30 households which had to rotate porter duty. My house was from one of the first parts that had to go. I claimed that I was the one who paid for porter fees very often and they must concern for me. But the sergeant denied my request and he ordered me to pay another 8,000 kyat if I did not want to serve as a porter. I told my wife and my wife said that there was no more money to pay them. So, we decided to leave my village. We left secretly with three other households. We traveled for a day before we met a group of traders who we traveled with the following day. Finally, we reached this place, the Loh-Loe Refugee Camp, near the Burma-Thai border.³⁷³

Interview #13

Source:	HURFOM
Name:	Nai Hla Maung
Ethnicity:	Mon
Religion:	Buddhist
Sex:	Male
Age:	38
Occupation:	Cultivator
Family status:	Married, with 3 children
From:	Kyone-Ka-Nyar, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of Interview:	10 May 2006

The reason I had to run away from my village was because I could not continue working as a porter. Similar to me, many Kyone-Kanya villagers were often portered by the Burmese military. I am not a native from here; I got married with a woman from this village

I have been portered four times from this village. The first time was in May, 2004. I lasted for 45 days before becoming infected with malaria. The army left me along the way because I was so sick. When I got back home I was in so much pain because I had to carry so much weight on my back.

In 2004, September, I was taken again by the military; the troops were after a Mon rebel group. I had to carry 30 viss (48kg) to 35 viss (56kg) of rice. Because I walked too slowly a soldier hit me in the head with the butt of his rifle, I fell over, and my head was covered in blood. That trip took twenty two days. There was so much fighting along the way. One porter whose name I did not know was shot. He died. During one battle I managed to escape, I just ran and ran. Finally I reached Nat Kyat Zen village.

The army still comes to my village for porters. But my back hurts so much I cannot go. I paid the army seven to eight thousand kyat every month so I could stay at home. The troops based outside the village destroyed all the fruit trees in my garden. I can't grow anything. We are poor my wife and children and I. we have to live poor lives. There is nothing I can do.

The last time I was portered by the military during April, I had to follow the troops to Kan Nee Village carrying 28 viss (45kg) of bullets. There were 28 people in our group. I escaped on the way but I was lost and it took seven days to get to Thailand.³⁷⁴

Interview #14

Source: Burma Issues
Date Reported: December 2006

I was arrested in November 2005 and sentenced to two years imprisonment. Before I was arrested I was living at a Buddhist temple. Because I did not follow the rules of the temple, the local authorities warned me to obey the rules or I would be arrested. When I broke the rules a second time, I was arrested. Before I finished my prison sentence the SPDC took me out of Toungoo prison and sent me to the frontline in Saw Hta area, Muthraw (Papun) District, to be a porter.

When I arrived to the frontline I realized the Burmese army was cruel to the porters and that they tortured and killed them. I think there were 2,000 people in prison but the SPDC took 990 to be porters. Some people were happy to be taken as porters, because they thought they could escape. Others could bribe the prison authorities so that they could stay in prison and were not sent to be porters.

One SPDC battalion took us from Toungoo prison to Kyauk Kyi SPDC military camp. Day after day they forced us to carry at least 64 milk tins of rice (15 kilograms) and other food items. When we were portering the soldiers forced us to wear army uniforms so that the KNU would think we were soldiers. The days were longer when other porters became too weak to carry their loads. I saw the SPDC kill seven porters because they were too weak to continue.

When I reached the frontline I was assigned to the LIB #368. When I walked with them I saw two SPDC soldiers step on landmines. The soldiers were injured. Afterwards we had to carry the soldiers, as well as our loads. The soldiers set up landmines in the same places where the soldiers were injured. When the other porters came toward us, they stood on the landmines and died. In addition to carrying the load we also had to clean their dishes after breakfast, lunch and dinner and wash their clothes. We carried our loads to the Saw Hta on the banks of the Salween. It took six days and five nights. While portering I got sick but they did not give me any medicine to take. When we were portering the soldiers made us wear SPDC uniform so the KNU would mistake us for soldiers. I ran away when the soldiers fell asleep. I fled along the valley and was very thirsty. I came to Saw Hta village and asked for water, but they

didn't understand Burmese language. At the same time I saw two Burmese soldiers and I ran north until sunset. At ten o'clock in the morning I met some people in a hut and asked for a meal, after the meal I went to a KNU checkpoint and they sent me to a KNU military camp. I appreciated that if no one had met me in the jungle I would have starved of food and die.

First KNU asked me some question as they thought that I was a soldier, I explain to them and said that "I am not a soldier I am a prisoner SPDC forced me to be porter to carry for them". I met information collector and I gave my life experience that I was in prison and porter in frontline.³⁷⁵

Interview #15

Source: FTUK
Ethnicity: Karen
Sex: Female
From: Mu Theh village (relocation site), Nyaunglebin District
Age: 20

On 1 August 2006, MOC #16 Operations Commander Than Soe ordered LIB #323 Battalion Commander Kyaw Kyaw Oo to inform the *[Mu Theh]* village headman that his soldier was wounded because of him. The village head said he knew nothing about it, but the commander argued and continued to blame the village head. He then told him that the villagers must build a fence *[alongside the road]* from the *[army]* camp to relocation site for their *[SPDC]* security. On 2 August 2006, the villagers began to fence the car road for SPDC MOC #16 Operations Commander for the distance of about one mile *[1.6 km]*. We had to build the fence on both sides of the road, so to finish it one person from each house had to go. For the families who are free, two people or three people could go. There are a total of 72 households in the village and 60-70 went to do that *[build the fence]* every day. Half of them were women. It took us nine days to fence the road. I myself went for three days, my mother went two days and my younger brother went four days.

During the three days of labour, I had to slice bamboo, cut down small trees and carry small logs. I had to cut down over 200 small trees that were about *[as round as my wrist]*, and five cubits *[2.3 metres / 7.5 feet]* long. Some of the trees that I had to cut were an hour away, but some of them were half an hour away. After we cut down the trees we had to carry them where we had to make the fence. We had to put in posts for the fence. The space between the posts had to be one hand span *[23 cm / 9 inches]*. Then we had to weave four small pieces of split bamboo *[between the posts]*. Then we had to tie the split bamboo with sliced bamboo strips *[filaments]* and then tie in four more pieces of dried split bamboo one cubit *[46 cm / 1.5 feet]* in length between each space *[this last piece becomes a spike]*. There were different types of bamboo that we had to cut down, three different kinds of small size of bamboo *[in Karen: Wah Thaw Keh, Wah Min, and Wah Bway]* and one type of big bamboo *[in Karen: Wah Klu]*. They didn't give us any of the tools to do it. We had to take our own food, so do not think that they ever pay us for this. We didn't want to do it but we had to because we afraid of them and so we had to go. When we went to work there were two or three people *[soldiers]* who came to guard us every day. On the days that I had to go to work, there were five or six people guarding us. If we didn't make the fence as they liked, they would get angry and shout at us and force us to pull it down and build it again. I had to do that one time, and although I was angry I could not do anything.

We had to make the fence for nine days and after that we prayed to the *[animist]* spirits for two days. After that they forced us to also fence the village. They came and measured it and said that each house must build 20 cubits *[9 metres / 30 feet]* of the fence. I did that with my older brother and we finished it in one day. Small families could not finish it in the same day. It took them one or two days longer to finish it. After that, they forced us to build a new fence next to the first one. They measured it and said that each house has to build 30 cubits *[13.7 metres / 45 feet]* of the fence. When we finished making the fence for the village, we had to go to make the fence for their military camp inside our village and they build three *[concentric]* fences. I had to go to do that for three days and my younger brother and my mother had to go to do that also but I forget how many days they had to go for. For the military camp above our village they forced us to cut bamboo for them and to carry it to the camp. They forced us to cut logs that were three hand spans *[70 cm / 27 inches in circumference]* and seven cubits *[3.2 metres / 10.5 feet]* long. Each house had to cut two logs for them to build their bunkers. If the logs were not enough, they forced us to go and cut more. We had to cut them three *[separate]* times. Doing labour for them doing fencing, cutting bamboo and logs and carrying them, took more than one month. All of the tools we used and the food we ate had to be supplied by ourselves.”³⁷⁶

Interview #16

Source: FTUK
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Sex: Male
 Age: 48
 From: Mu Theh village, (relocation site), Nyaunglebin District

Beginning in July 2006 until now we have had to do labour for the SPDC military every month. I had to go to carry the loads *[portering]* for them twice. The first time was on 20-6-06. There were 30 people who had to go with five women among them. We had to start carrying the loads from Mu Theh to Than Boh, a distance of 20 furlongs *[4.4 km / 4 miles]*. We left in the morning at 7:30 am and arrived at Than Boh in the evening at 5:30 pm. We had to carry the loads for the Military Operations Command #16. He told us to carry the loads of food and bullets. I carried chillies weighing about seven viss *[11.2 kg / 25 lbs]* and he paid me 3,500 kyat. From Ler Doh to Poh Khay Koh we normally hire porters for 7,000 kyat to carry the loads *[villagers often hire itinerant labourers to go in their place so that they can still tend to their own livelihoods]*. It took two days to finish: one day to go and one day to come back. The second time was on 1-7-06 when Operations Commander Than Soe who lives in Mu Theh military camp forced 15 people to carry rice for him to Saw Mi Lu. People carried their loads for him from Mu Theh to Saw Mi Lu and it took two days: one day to go and one day to come back. Each person had to carry one big tin *[12.5 kg / 28 lb]* of rice and there were five women among the 15 people *[porters]*. He didn't pay any of the people who carried the rice and helped us with nothing. We had to take our own food.

On 2 August 2006 the SPDC Military Operations Command #16 Operations Commander Than Soe and LIB #323 Battalion Commander Kyaw *[Kyaw]* Oo said that we must go to make the fence along the car road for our security to Mu Theh. The length of this road is about 1,500 yards *[1.6 km]*. We had to build the fence on both sides *[of the road]*, so we had to build a total of 3,000 yards *[3.2 km]*. The village head came and told us about this, so two people or three people from each house went so we could finish it sooner. In my house, two people went to do it for two days and one person continued to do it for seven days. After that

he [Kyaw Kyaw Oo] forced us to build a fence around the village and to prevent the outside people [KNU/KNLA] from coming into the village. They measured the ground and said that each house had to build 30 cubits [13.7 metres / 45 feet] of the fence. My son and I finished it in one day. Then they ordered that we give them logs to repair their bunkers. Each house had to give them two logs that were three hand spans [70 cm / 27 inches in circumference] and seven cubits [3.2 metres / 10.5 feet] long. There were 144 logs but they said that that it was not enough so we had to cut more. We had to do it three times. In all, we had to cut 288 for them [this does not add up and perhaps should instead equal 432]. My family is big so we could finish cutting it for them in two days. After that they forced us to make a fence for their military camp in the village. We had to build two [concentric] fences and they made one more fence around [their camp], so they had three fences around their camp. We had to this labour for them for a whole month.”³⁷⁷

Endnotes

- ¹ Source: *No Rest from Forced Labour*, The Arakan Project, 31 May 2006.
- ² Source: "Burma: Events of 2006," *HRW World Report 2007*, HRW, January 2007.
- ³ Source: *Shoot on Sight: The Ongoing SPDC Offensive against Villagers in Northern Karen State*, Burma Issues, December 2006.
- ⁴ Source: *No Rest from Forced Labour*, The Arakan Project, 31 May 2006.
- ⁵ Source: *The Ongoing Oppression of Thaton District: Forced Labour, Extortion, and Food Insecurity*, KHRG, 7 July 2006.
- ⁶ Source: *Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar*, Report of the Special Rapporteur to the UN Commission on Human Rights, Sixty second session, Agenda Item 9, 7 February 2006.
- ⁷ Source: "Burma Defends Record on Forced Labor," *Irrawaddy*, 18 December 2006.
- ⁸ Source: "Human Rights Watch Catches on to New Strategy for Forced Labour", IMNA, 29 April 2006.
- ⁹ Source: "SPDC Prohibits Headmen from Resigning from Their Posts," *Rhododendron News*, CHRO, July-August 2006.
- ¹⁰ Source: *SHRF Monthly Report*, SHRF, February 2007.
- ¹¹ Source: "Prisoners Forced to Work in Arakan Wearing Fire Service and Army Uniforms," *Narinjara News*, 19 October 2006.
- ¹² Source: *Surviving in Shadow: Widespread Militarization and the Systematic Use of Forced Labour in the Campaign for Control of Thaton District*, KHRG, January 2006.
- ¹³ Source: *Oppression by Proxy in Thaton District*, KHRG, 21 December 2006.
- ¹⁴ Source: *Surviving in the Shadow: Widespread Militarization and the Systematic Use of Forced Labour in the Campaign for Control of Thaton District*, KHRG, January 2006
- ¹⁵ Source: *Surviving in the Shadow: Widespread Militarization and the Systematic Use of Forced Labour in the Campaign for Control of Thaton District*, KHRG, January 2006
- ¹⁶ Source: "FBR Report: Villagers Forced to Porter for Burma Army," FBR, 25 May 2006.
- ¹⁷ Source: *No Rest From Forced Labour*, The Arakan Project, 31 May 2006.
- ¹⁸ Source: *Shoot on Sight: The Ongoing SPDC Offensive Against Villagers in Northern Karen State*, Burma Issues, December 2006.
- ¹⁹ Source: *Setting up the System of Repression: The Progressive Regimentation of Civilian Life in Dooplaya District*, KHRG, 7 September 2006.
- ²⁰ Source: *Surviving in the Shadow: Widespread Militarization and the Systematic Use of Forced Labour in the Campaign for Control of Thaton District*, KHRG, January 2006
- ²¹ Source: *No Rest From Forced Labour*, The Arakan Project, 31 May 2006.
- ²² Source: *Ibid.*
- ²³ Sources: *Setting up the System of Repression: The Progressive Regimentation of Civilian Life in Dooplaya District*, KHRG, 7 September 2006; *Oppression by Proxy in Thaton District*, KHRG, 21 December 2006.
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