

4. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment

4.1 Background

“Burma’s prisons have become institutions whose primary function is to deliberately and systematically shatter the identity of political activists and other civilians deemed threatening to the rule of the regime.”¹

“Four (villagers) were used to pull an ox-cart as part of a torture, and like an ox, a small piece of wood with nails was used to make the men walk. Nai Agoh, Nai Apin and two others were tortured in this manner. Many were tortured simply because they could not speak Burmese and they could not explain where the rebels were hiding.”²

History’s testimony is riddled with examples of torture, and whilst much progress has been made, torture, as a severe form of state sanctioned violence, continues to be utilised around the world. Nowhere is this more real than in Burma where authorities employ a spectrum of techniques, on a cross section of society, in order to exploit and suppress its victims and establish its position as the dominant state administration.

The United Nations (UN) has gone a long way towards establishing a definition of torture via Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 7 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the 1985 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). Article 1.1 of CAT defines torture as:

“Any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.”³

Although Burma is a signatory to the UDHR it has failed to sign both the ICCPR and CAT. Regardless, the widespread recognition of torture as a cause of extreme human debasement has meant that the prohibition of torture has attained *Jus Cogens* status in international law. As such each country is compelled to respect this fundamental right regardless of treaty ratifications.

Domestic legislation does, the authorities claim, prohibit the grievous hurt of citizens by officials and as such, it is argued, ratification of CAT would be superfluous. Articles 330 and 331 of the 1957 edition of the 1861 Burmese Penal Code, which remains in force, outlaw “hurt” or “grievous hurt” for the purpose of extorting a confession or information for the detection of an offence, but not specifically ‘torture’, inflicted during interrogation. These

articles provide for up to seven or 10 years imprisonment respectively. Articles 323 and 325 of the Penal Code would appear to prohibit “hurt” or “grievous hurt” of detainees and prisoners outside the context of interrogation, with penalties of up to one year and seven years respectively. In addition, Article 166 of the Burmese Penal Code prohibits public servants from unlawfully injuring anyone while discharging their duties, and provides a penalty of up to one year for this offence.

Throughout 2006, countless reports from inside Burma continued to demonstrate torture to be a widespread, state-sanctioned, and unchecked reality of everyday Burmese life, both inside and outside of SPDC prisons.



Photo taken by a Free Burma Rangers' relief team showing the dead body of a Karen man tortured and subsequently killed by the SPDC in northern Karen State in 2006 [Photo: FBR].

4.2 Torture during Detention

Whilst it is often difficult to obtain up to date information regarding the treatment of detainees, at least until the time that they have been released, and feel confident enough to talk about their experiences, it is clear that torture in Burma's prisons remains rife. In February 2006, a representative from Human Rights Watch (HRW) asserted as much in stating: *"We are very, very confident that torture continues. It's an instrument of policy. This is not a country where it happens by chance, committed by a few rotten apples."*⁴ In the same month, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, reiterated concerns raised in previous years, regarding the continued *"reports of torture and ill treatment of those held in pre-trial detention and of political prisoners"*.⁵

Based upon countless interviews, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) issued a report in December 2005, which found that political prisoners in Burma are generally arrested in the night by members of the SPDC's military intelligence apparatus. The suspects are not informed of the charges against them, but hooded and handcuffed before being removed to an interrogation centre, the location of which neither they nor their family are informed of. Prisoners are then held incommunicado for a period ranging from days to months, creating a situation in which the detainee can be tortured without fear of repercussions on the part the authorities. AAPP assert that the majority of torture which political prisoners endure occurs during this period.⁶

The Burmese police force is also reported to frequently torture detainees during pre trial detention. In 2006, numerous persons arrested on petty offences have been reported dead or missing only a few days later, with the police often citing suicide as the cause of death and the victim's relatives denied any redress or even a post-mortem. In light of such practices, the Asian Human Rights Commission asserted, in 2006, that, in Burma, *"the only techniques known are to arrest, detain and beat up."*⁷ In one instance, on 14 March 2006, Maung Ne Zaw, was stopped, illegally detained and beaten on the side of the road in Kachin State by Special Anti-drug Squad police. He died in detention on 2 May, because, according to his mother, he had failed to obtain proper medical treatment, following the assault. The authorities denied requests for a post mortem, and the doctor on duty vaguely asserted he had died of either cerebral malaria or HIV or some other disease. Maung Ne Zaw's mother faced constant harassment from officials for attempting to pursue the case and was eventually forced to flee her home for the Thai border.⁸

Meanwhile, the junta remains of the position that torture does not occur in interrogations or imprisonment. When Amnesty International raised these concerns in December 2003, the Attorney General insisted, without a hint of irony, that such complaints could not be taken seriously as there would be no witnesses, given that the detainees are held incommunicado. When AI asked about complaint procedures, they were informed that officers higher up would investigate, and the Chief Justice confirmed that at least in principle, Section 342 of the Penal Code which provides offences for those engaging in *"wrongful confinement"* could be used by the courts. However, in practice, these protections are not made available.⁹

Whilst the majority of torture is carried out during pre trial detention, it is not unusual for prisoners to be assaulted and tortured throughout their sentence. Furthermore, reports suggest that the SPDC is continuing to utilise a strategy of torture by proxy in employing 'criminal' prisoners as thugs to beat political prisoners.¹⁰ International law is very specific on the fact that the State is still implicated in torture regardless of whether it physically carries out the treatment. Article 1 of CAT makes the point that torture is still relevant to those incidents

where the “suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of, or with the consent or acquiescence of, a public official”.¹¹ On 2 January 2006, three political prisoners, Ko Aung San Myat, Ko Thiha Tun and Ko Han Win Aung, were attacked by a gang of five non-political prisoners in Insein Prison and, according to sources, the prison authorities made no effort to intervene, punish the gang, or put systems in place to prevent such incidents taking place in future.¹² Gangs such as the ‘Scorpion Gang’ in Insein Prison reportedly receive privileged status and have strong connections with SPDC officials.¹³



These two photos show former political prisoners recreating forms of torture which they have been forced to endure in SPDC prisons. Tying or hanging people during physical torture creates a sense of helplessness and degradation. Hooding of detainees is also common and again creates a heightened sense of vulnerability. Often those in custody are forced to remain in strenuous positions without adjustment, or act out specific actions. Some of these positions include various squatting stances, simulated motorcycle riding, and mimicking an airplane. (For more information see Section 4.5: Methods of Torture). [Photos: AAPP]

4.3 Torture of Villagers in Ethnic Minority Areas

Members of ethnic minorities, in Burma, continue to be particularly at risk of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, living as they do in areas of heightened militarization. In areas where armed ethnic groups remain active, the SPDC often targets villagers as a component of their campaign to suppress such resistance. In May 2006, the UN raised serious concerns about such targeting of ethnic minority civilians, via a joint statement released by six Special Rapporteurs, stating that they were “*deeply concerned about the widespread violence that has continued to spiral for the last six months in the Thandaung and Papun Townships of Karen State as well as Kyaukgyi and Shwegyin Townships of Pegu Division.*” where “*unlawful killings, torture, rape and forced labor*” occur with alarming regularity.¹⁴ During 2006, there have been instances of entire villages being rounded up in town halls or temples,¹⁵ subjected to electric shock treatment,¹⁶ made to crouch in stress position in the sun¹⁷ or forced to watch as the village headman is tortured,¹⁸ as well as numerous reports of villagers being assaulted and mistreated whilst detained at army camps.

The use of torture by the SPDC in ethnic areas serves a variety of interconnected purposes. It is utilised to garner compliance with military orders and generally cow the population, to interrogate or punish suspected insurgent supporters and sympathisers, and also as a means to extort goods, funds, and services from villagers.¹⁹ As the SPDC encourages its soldiers to be self sufficient; the arbitrary arrest of villagers, alongside the threat of torture, provides an easy means for soldiers to extort funds in return for the individual’s release. This is particularly acute in areas in close proximity to military barracks or fighting, where soldiers will often carry out raids on villages for the purpose of extortion. Although such acts will often be undertaken in the name of intelligence gathering for the purpose of counter insurgency, the frequency with which the raids terminate after the acquisition of a commodity, cash or even forced labour, indicates the more likely motivation.

As such, the cessation of counter insurgency operations in an area does not ensure a reduction in such abuses. In ethnic areas where ceasefire agreements are in place and the SPDC asserts near total control of the local population, torture remains prevalent. Whilst Thaton District, under the strongest SPDC control of all seven Karen Districts, has seen a decrease in shootings, villagers remained vulnerable to arrest and torture by both the SPDC and the SPDC aligned Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) throughout 2006. In areas such as this, the village head occupies a particularly precarious position serving as a conduit for the demands of the SPDC. Village heads are required to go to army camps when summoned, thus increasing their vulnerability, and are held directly responsible when demands are not met; frequently detained at the camp until a ransom is paid for their release. They are oftentimes beaten or more severely tortured. Their torture is then held up as an example to their peers.²⁰

4.4 Torture during Forced Portering and Forced Labour

Forced labour in Burma continued unabated throughout 2006, particularly in rural areas, with villagers conscripted for tasks such as the construction and maintenance of army camps, building of roads and clearing of bushes along the sides of these roads, as well as the portering of military equipment. (For more information see Chapter 1 Forced Labour and Forced Conscription). In 2006, reports from inside Burma continued to indicate a widespread correlation between such forced labour and torture. The U.S. Department of State reported that, in 2006, “*Persons forced into portering or other labor faced extremely difficult conditions, beatings, rape, lack of food, lack of clean water, and mistreatment that at times resulted in death.*”²¹ The Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) supported such an assertion in their 2006 report on the effects of militarization on Karen Women, stating “*Women taken for forced labour are...subject to increased likelihood of abuse. Women forced to work as messengers, guides, sentries or porters, or labour on construction projects, are beaten, mistreated, and sometimes raped.*”²²

The situation for porters and guides is particularly difficult; often isolated from their community and regularly required to carry heavy loads, deprived of food and water, and beaten. As an instance, on 19 June 2006, a patrol from SPDC LIB #516 conscripted three villagers from Tin Paet village, Nawng Hee village tract, Nam Zarng Township to serve as the patrol’s guides. 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.²³ Furthermore, porters are frequently employed as human minesweepers walking in front of SPDC troops to ensure the path is safe.

In addition, human rights organisations have reported an increase in the use of forced prison labour in Burma in 2006. KHRG report 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 2005.²⁴ Their legal entitlements are less clear than other types of porters and the junta seemingly believes that abuse of their rights will draw less condemnation. The living conditions, food supplies and general treatment of forced prison labourers are widely reported to be far worse than those for their ‘free’ civilian counterparts. It is common for convict porters to carry loads of between 33 and 44 kgs. The work is more dangerous and health provisions are non-existent. The military view the prisoners as expendable labour and there were countless reports of their torture, beating and killing in 2006.²⁵ 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.²⁶ Instead, escaped porters report that soldiers will torture and kill convicts when they become tired and weak, often doing so in front of others as an example.²⁷

The forced employment of villagers as sentries also leads to a heightened risk of torture. Forced to watch over their village at night whilst sustaining their livelihoods during the day; sentries are severely punished if they fall asleep, or fail to notice insurgent activity in the area. On 19 January 2006, a Buddhist shrine was vandalised near Maungdaw, Arakan State, which led to a mass arrests of Rohingya villagers, particularly those who were on sentry duty that night. Many were assaulted and some were badly tortured, including having hot water poured down their nostrils.²⁸ The ILO has also highlighted the link between people who have complained about being subjected to forced labour and consequently counter sued and tortured.²⁹

4.5 Methods of Torture

Physical Torture

Although torture always maintains a fundamentally psychological character, certain methods are designed primarily to inflict pain and discomfort upon prisoners. The most common form of torture used in prisons and interrogation facilities in Burma is physical beating. According to former political prisoners interviewed by AAPP in 2005, victims of such practices “*are punched, slapped, kneed and beaten with a variety of implements including rubber or wooden batons, truncheons, rifle butts, rubber cords, bamboo sticks and plastic pipes. Political prisoners have also been beaten with thick books, chair legs, broomsticks, sandals, belts and other common objects.*” Other forms of physical torture include deprivation of “*food, water, sleep, light and the use of the toilet.*” Prisoners are also placed in various types of constraints over prolonged periods of time. Often those in custody are forced to remain in strenuous positions without adjustment, or act out specific actions. Some of these positions include various squatting stances, simulated motorcycle riding, and mimicking an airplane. Torture victims have also reported being suffocated. Repeated tapping on a specific location on the victim’s head, known as ‘tick- torture’, is also used by the SPDC. Prisoners have also been burned with cigarettes, hot wax, lighters and electric rods, and the SPDC has used electric shocks of increasing intensity against prisoners. Pencils or bullets are placed between victim’s fingers, which are then squeezed. The regime also employs a technique known as the ‘iron road’ where an iron or wooden bar is run firmly up and down the victim’s shins in order to shear off flesh often leaving deep wounds and lasting scars.³⁰

Reports emanating from 2006 suggest not much has changed, since AAPP issued their report. Beatings remain frequent, often involving the use of bamboo sticks,³¹ electric torches³² and gun butts.³³ During such beating, victims will often be tied up, in some cases upside down, leaving them unable to protect themselves from blows.³⁴ Evidence also demonstrates the use of shackling³⁵ and leg stocks³⁶ that can leave physical damage. Electric shock treatment also appears to remain prevalent.³⁷ Reports also indicate the covering of victim’s heads with plastic and/or submersion in water to temporarily cause suffocation.³⁸ In ethnic border regions, the removal of body parts,³⁹ being set on fire, and the insertion of lit objects into the victims’ body,⁴⁰ have also been reported in 2006.

To compound the effects of physical torture few incidents conclude with the victim receiving medical treatment for their injuries and in some cases, both inside and outside of prisons, they are physically restricted from visiting a hospital.⁴¹

Psychological Torture

Immediately upon being taken into custody, political detainees are often blindfolded causing disorientation and distress. Keeping political prisoners in incommunicado detention heightens their sense of vulnerability often impacting the mental health of the prisoner, as they fear the authorities are able to do to them as they wish. Whilst in detention, psychological torture normally comes in the form of continual threats not just upon their person but also threats made against friends and family members.⁴² In some instances, prisoners are made to watch the torture of other prisoners, serving as an example to utilise compliance,⁴³ a technique also applied in the ethnic border regions of Burma. As a result, prisoners and ‘free’ villagers alike, live in a continual terrorised state with daily threats and fear of violence.

Solitary confinement in dark and damp cells is a further form of psychological torture whilst *“food and water deprivation and other forms of ill treatment have continued to be regularly used by SPDC authorities”*.⁴⁴ Tying or hanging people during physical torture creates a sense of helplessness and degradation that are as devastating psychologically as they are physically. Torturers also play on the specific phobias of detainees as a means to inflict psychological distress.⁴⁵ In some cases psychological torture will be met with resistance that can then result in physical punishments. On the 24 January 2006, prisoners staged a protest in the Kalaymyo Jail in Sagaing Division against a prolonged water shortage and the authorities reacted by severely beating 80 prisoners and killing two.⁴⁶

One particularly malicious form of psychological torture is that of informing prisoners of their impending release before rescinding the offer on the day they are due to be free. Political prisoners have at times been brought to the prison gate, sometimes in view of their family, where they are then rearrested.⁴⁷

Sexual Torture

The SPDC has been reported to have used various means of sexual torture against both men and women. The use of rape as a means of torturing detainees is rare and no incidences were reported in 2006. However, the threat of rape has in the past been reported to be frequent. In addition, victims have been forced to strip naked in front of others whilst being taunted and threatened. Prisoners’ genitals may also be burned, beaten or electrocuted.⁴⁸

4.6 Prison Conditions

After continued interference in its operations by the junta, throughout 2005, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) made the decision, in December 2005, to suspend its prison visits within Burma. The ICRC became increasingly wary of the presence of the junta affiliated Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) who insisted on accompanying ICRC staff during their prison visits.⁴⁹ (For more information see Chapter 12 Freedom of Movement, Association and Assembly). In their absence, the USDA has made efforts to present it self as assuming the functions of the ICRC: visiting political prisoners as well as their families and donating supplies to prisoners, in moves which it presents as steps towards national reconciliation. However, their assistance programs have not been systematic, and it has been reported that conditions and the standard of healthcare deteriorated in 2006. The ICRC had previously provided 50 percent of medicines within Burmese prisons.⁵⁰ A lack of adequate healthcare and close proximity to illness and disease means outbreaks of fatal disease remained a serious issue. Between December 2005 and January 2006, 12 prisoners in Sittwe Prison, Arakan State, died as a result of a cholera outbreak reportedly associated with spoiled food supplies and poor sanitary conditions within the prison.⁵¹ Likewise prisons deaths occurred as a direct outcome of being denied medical treatment. On the 11 January 2006, political prisoner, Khin Maung Lwin, 38, who had been in jail since 1998, died a day after arriving at Putao hospital. Had SPDC authorities allowed him to move when he first made the request then his death would likely have been averted.⁵²

The prison health care system and the general condition of prisons in Burma patently qualify as ‘other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’. AAPP have gone further and asserted that conditions actually meet the legal criteria for torture, due to their purposeful aggravation, and the degree of suffering arising from this aggravation, stating, “*Burma’s prisons have become institutions whose primary function is to deliberately and systematically shatter the identity of political activists and other civilians deemed threatening to the rule of the regime.*”⁵³ (For more detailed information on Conditions of Detention see Chapter 3 Arbitrary Detention and Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances).

4.7 Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment – Partial List of Incidents for 2006

Arakan State

Buthidaung Township

In April 2006, the young son of a villager from South Buthidaung passed away. The father was unable to afford the fee charged to remove a person from the SPDC's family lists. As a result he was detained for two days during which time he was assaulted. His wife was eventually forced to pay a fine of 20,000 kyat in order to secure his release.⁵⁴

Maungdaw Township

On 19 January 2006, a Buddhist shrine was vandalised in Nga Khu Ya near Maungdaw. As a result, NaSaKa arrested local Rohingya villagers en masse. Detainees were assaulted with some severely tortured whilst in the NaSaKa camp. Hot water was poured down the nostrils of some of the villagers.⁵⁵

On 9 February 2006, Mohammed Ibrahim, 35 and Noor Boshor, 30, two sentries (forced), from Wabag village of Kyi Kan Pyin village-tract (Khawarbill), were arrested by a NaSaKa patrol after allegedly sleeping whilst on duty. That night they were taken to NaSaKa headquarters, locked up and severely beaten. They were subsequently forced to pay 6,000 kyat to secure their release. A village elder commented that NaSaKa takes it for granted that if they don't beat up the accused, they won't get money from them.⁵⁶

On 18 May 2006, a teacher, Mohamed Khalek, 35 years old, was arrested by the junta on charges of smuggling rice to Bangladesh. He was severely tortured in front of his family members, so as to extort money from them. They subsequently paid 150,000 kyat in order for the torture to stop. He was then taken to the NaSaKa camp at Aley Than Kyaw, Maungdaw Township for questioning where he underwent medical treatment. He had been distributing rice with the UNHCR and it is thought that the Bangladesh charge is false.⁵⁷

On 3 October 2006, it was reported that NaSaKa forces from Nga Ran Chaung Outpost under NaSaKa Area #2, in the north of Maungdaw Township, intruded into Bangladesh and conscripted a group of Bangladeshis to carry fruit and vegetables picked from the area back to their camp stationed near the border. After arriving at the camp they were then struck ten times each with a stick, as "wages" for their portering, before being returned back across the border.⁵⁸

On 9 October 2006, Maulana Mohammed Shafique, 27 years old, principal of a Madrasah (religious school) and a religious leader, from the KhanYaung Chaung (Khayoung Khali) village of Maungdaw Township, was arrested by NaSaKa, on the allegation that he had been communicating with villagers working in foreign countries and receiving financial support from them for the school. He was detained at NaSaKa Camp #6 for three days, and reportedly endured mental and physical torture, before being sent to the Maungdaw police station on 12 October 2006. He was later sentenced to two years imprisonment by the Maungdaw Court.⁵⁹

Ponna Kyunt Township

On 4 October 2006, 14 villagers from Ponna Kyunt Township, were arrested after they assaulted a soldier who they had caught stealing a cow. Villagers reported that those charged had been tortured whilst detained by the military.⁶⁰

Rathidaung Township

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.⁶¹

Sittwe

On 27 July 2006, in the Owan Ta Bin Quarter of Sittwe; Ko Tun Lin Kyaw and his friend (unnamed) gave themselves up to the Sittwe Police at Police Station #1. They had been on the run since the 25 July, following a quarrel with the police that resulted in one police officer sustaining a serious eye injury. The police had subsequently held their family members hostage in order to secure their surrender. From the time that they submitted themselves, military personnel were reportedly taking them from the police lock up, on a daily basis, to IB #20 base for interrogation. It has been reported that they were being subjected to severe forms of torture. The police refused to deny these allegations when questioned.⁶²

Around 18 September 2006, Ko Maung Shwe, arrested for theft, died at the police station in Sittwe following interrogation. He was from Renar Byin Block under Wra Gri Mrauk Tract in Akyab. Police officials reported that they found his body in the custody room on 18 September and announced he had hung himself. The Arakan State High Court ordered a report by the second in charge at the station, Aung Kyaw Oo, into the cause of death.⁶³

Chin State

On 17 January 2006, it was reported that U Haakha, the brother of a member of the Chin National Army (CNA), continued to live under the constant threat of torture at the hands of the SPDC. For the previous 30 months he had been the target of regular torture, captivity and extortion by Burmese SPDC troops based in southern Chin State. During the first week of June 2004, under orders from Captain Aung Kyaw Than of LIB #34, U Haakha was visited by an SPDC Corporal and Private (both names unknown), Police Corporal Sein Kyaw Hla and Constable Hla Shwe Maung. U Haakha was repeatedly tortured with a round bamboo stick suffering severe trauma to the head. The soldiers then tied him to a pole in his house and he was left there overnight. In the morning the corporal demanded 150,000 kyat from the victim, claiming he would be shot dead otherwise. Relatives and villagers gathered 50,000 kyat, falling short of the amount demanded. The corporal accepted the money on condition U Haakha pledged in writing that the rest of the money would be handed to him the next month. The corporal returned the next month and confiscated newly harvested paddy from the victim as a substitute for the remaining 100,000 kyat. Then, again, in August 2005, U Haakha was picked up by Captain Aung Kyaw Than and taken to the military camp in Sami village, where he was punched three times in the jaw, resulting in the loss of a tooth, and locked up

for a further 7 weeks. A further 300,000 kyat was demanded but U Haakha was only able to pay 100,000. Since being released U Haakha has been obliged to report to the camp every 2 months and on the 7 December was told to return with his brother or otherwise face the consequences. At the time, U Haakha explained to the Chin Human Rights Organisation that he did not know what to do.⁶⁴

On 21 May 2006, troops from the SPDC LIB #268, led by Lt. Colonel Win Bo, entered the village of Thlanrawn and seized the village headman, Mr. Sial Hre, 52, Mr. Bawi Nawl, the 18 year old son of the village headman, Mr. San Lian, 44, and Van Nei Thang. They were accused of failing to report the presence of the CNA after they had entered the village. Mr. Sial Hre was hung upside down from his house and severely punched and beaten with the butts of the soldiers' guns. The other three villagers were tied up with their hands behind their backs and beaten in a similar manner. The torture lasted two hours, after which time the remaining villagers were rounded up into a nursery school and detained. The following day, SPDC Colonel Tin Hlah arrived and warned the villagers that unless they told him what he wanted to hear, the four men would continue to be detained and come to more harm. In addition, he threatened that if in the future the villagers failed to disclose the activities of the CNA they would all be killed and the village burned down. The tortured villagers were eventually released and it was left to their families to pay their hospital expenses. All four were later discharged from hospital, although Mr San Lian, after suffering an internal blood clot, was unable to eat and Mr Sial Hre continued to suffer from severe nerve pain.⁶⁵

On 24 May 2006, Mr Lalkaithianga, a cross border trader en route from Lentlang village, Falam Township, northern Chin State, was arrested after allegedly selling cattle illegally in Mizoram, India. He was taken into custody by Myint Myint Lin and Kyaw Chin Lun, police officers from Rih Town #2 police station. During detention he was tied and hung upside down and beaten. In addition, Myint Myint Lin reportedly forcefully tore the victim's jeans, put the torn pieces into the victim's mouth and then set fire to the material. After two days, Mr Lalkaithianga was bailed by two friends for 30,000 kyat. Mr Lalkaithianga injuries meant he would be out of work for a long time despite having to support three children.⁶⁶

Irrawaddy Division

On 16 July 2006, Saw Stin Pho of Ta Khun Seik Village, Einme Township, was one of 17 people arrested and detained at Pathein Military Headquarters on suspicion of being connected to an alleged sympathizer of the Karen National Union. He died three days later, on 19 July, from injuries resulting from torture during interrogation by Military Security Affairs (MSA). MSA are reported to have given 400,000 kyat in compensation to his wife, Naw Htoo Bae Sae, and their six children. MSA later released the other 16 persons, all of whom were said to be severely traumatized as a result of the harsh interrogation methods.⁶⁷

Kachin State

On 14 March 2006, Maung Ne Zaw, was stopped, illegally detained and beaten on the side of the road in Kachin State by Special Anti-drug Squad police. He died in detention on 2 May, because, according to his mother, he had failed to obtain proper medical treatment, following the assault. The authorities denied requests for a post mortem, and the doctor on duty vaguely claimed he had died of either cerebral malaria or HIV or some other disease. Maung Ne Zaw's mother faced constant harassment from officials for attempting to pursue the case and was eventually forced to flee her home for the Thai border.⁶⁸

On 2 November 2006, SPDC Lieutenant Myo Thura, along with 10 soldiers from LIB #144, arrested and assaulted a number of villagers from Pan Khar village, Laow Homg tract, Namkham Township, in relation to drug production in the area. Long Pha, Kyar Pha and U Aik Ngo Kharan of Lishawl, were also arrested in conjunction with the case; the latter receiving a serious injury to his eye whilst in detention. All suspects were brought to the Laow Homg village head's house and interrogated and tortured. The following day, Kon Aye Htan (a.k.a. Kyaw Min), his wife Daw Nang San and Aung Kyaw Moe were also arrested, beaten and likewise brought to Laow Homg. After days of interrogation during which time various forms of physical torture were reportedly employed, all were released on 6 November.⁶⁹

Karen State

Mergui/Tavoy District

On 8 August 2006, troops from SPDC IB #561, under Sergeant Tin Htun, seized and questioned Ta-kweh-swhe-plaw village head, U Bi Bay, near Tone-ma-kha village, after finding him in possession of 100,000 Thai baht. He was severely assaulted by the troops during his interrogation.⁷⁰

Nyaunglebin District

On 13 March 2006, a 30 year old male Karen villager was arrested by SPDC troops while he was returning from his hill farm in Nwar Lay Koh village, Mone Township. Other soldiers heard gunfire, but dared not risk going to see what was happening. When his body was found, it had had its eyes, ears and mouth removed.⁷¹

On 28 April 2006, Warrant Officer Than Htay and Sgt. Yeh Min went to arrest villagers from Way Sweh, Gko Nee and Noh Nya Lah Villages in Mone Township pursuant to orders issued by LIB #599 Battalion Commander Yan Naing to all Kyun Bin Seik camp officers. A number of villagers were arrested purportedly upon suspicion of having contact with the KNU, detained and then severely tortured, being heavily beaten on the back and head. On 30 April 2006, the soldiers demanded a 2,500,000 kyat ransom for the villagers and released all upon payment, apart from Maung Htay who was sent instead to Kyaw Pya army camp. The other villagers arrested were:

1. Nay Lay, Way Sweh village;
2. Sho L'Moh, Way Sweh village;
3. Saw Maung Htay, Gko Nee village;
4. Naw Kri Heh, Gko Nee village;
5. Nay Ger Htoo, Gko Nee village;
6. Naw T'Kaw Paw, Nga Pway Taw village;
7. Saw Bpin Tun Pa, Nga Pway Taw village;
8. Blaw Wah, Nga Pway Taw village; and
9. Saw Pway Moo, Noh Nya Lah village.⁷²

On 3 August 2006, LIB #351 Battalion Commander Than Tate arrested Saw P--- in the Hteh Htoo relocation site. He was tied up and accused of having contact with the KNU. SPDC soldiers not only beat him up but they kept him in water overnight, where he was bitten by leeches. He was then placed in a cell for a month, before the SPDC demanded 300,000 kyat for his release, which was gathered by the village head.⁷³

On 10 September 2006, LIB #351 Battalion Commander Than Tate arrested Maung Min Oo from Hteh Htoo relocation site, reportedly telling him *"I am arresting you because you came back late and the time is over according to a specific time I set up."* He had failed to return to the village when the time stipulated on his recommendation letter had expired. Than Tate then locked him in mediaeval-style leg stocks for a week and fined him 10,000 kyat before releasing him.⁷⁴

Papun District

On 26 February 2006, in reprisal to a KNU attack upon the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) camp based in Meh Mweh Hta, SPDC soldiers threatened the villagers of Wah Klu Ko and arrested a 17 year old girl along with the village head. The soldiers covered the two villagers' faces with a plastic sheet and tied their hands behind their backs. They were then detained incommunicado for the next three hours.⁷⁵



In this photo, a local village head prepares a stack of money he has gathered from his villagers to comply with another DKBA extortion demand in May 2006. After this photo was taken he took the money to the camp; when he returned his face was swollen, and he told the villagers he had been beaten five times in the face by the DKBA non-commissioned officer because he delivered the cash two days later than ordered. [Photo and Caption: KHRG]

Thaton District

In early 2006, DKBA Battalion Commander Boh Lweh, of Brigade #333 shot 25 year old Saw B--- 30 times in the head with a slingshot before demanding he porter for the DKBA.⁷⁶

On 29 January 2006, troops from DKBA Brigade #666, led by Bo Than Tun entered Noe-ta-la-aw village and arrested 39 year old villager Saw Par Bu. He was interrogated for information concerning the KNU and afterwards beaten with a rifle butt. The same troops later visited Naw-ka-toe village and interrogated Naw Nor Ket, aged 50. When she was unable to provide them with any information she was struck five times by the soldiers' rifles. Following this, DKBA troops interrogated the village head, Naw Aye Aye, 40 and Naw Mu Lay, who were forced to stand in baskets, and repeatedly squat and stand up again. They were beaten when unable to continue.⁷⁷

On 8 March 2006, U Kyaw, from Kyauk-kaw Pagoda road, Thaton Township, was badly beaten by Company Commander Thein Aung of SPDC IB #255, whilst on his way to the Naw-ka-to market. No justification was forthcoming for the attack.⁷⁸

On 11 March 2006, SPDC LID #66, led by Commander Aung Soe, captured Saw Ah Poe and Saw Dah from Ker Der Kah village before torturing and killing the pair as punishment for leaving their village.⁷⁹

On 31 March 2006, a convict porter was tortured and killed after fleeing an SPDC patrol he was serving. He was initially tortured by IB #255 troops who discovered him and later by soldiers under the command of Commander Aung Lwin Oo. He was eventually killed and buried at 8 pm outside the village of Dt'Maw Daw.⁸⁰

During June 2006, DKBA forces entered Gk'Wah Htah village and accused Saw T--- of involvement with the KNU. Saw T--- and three other villagers were detained and beaten heavily, causing severe swelling to their faces.⁸¹

On 6 June 2006, DKBA troops led by Pa Ker Ler came to Kwee-lay village, Bilin Township, and tied up villagers Pa Ta Kwee and Maung Soe Naing, while another, Pu Loe Pa, was beaten.⁸²

On 14 June 2006, SPDC battalion commander Kyaw Min arrived at Ta-eu-ni village calling for Seik-ywa-shwin villager Saw la Noe, who promptly ran away. The troops responded by beating Naw Peh Say, 15, around the head with the butt of a pistol and consequently broke two of her teeth. The troops then looted her house.⁸³

On the night of 2 July 2006, DKBA troops led by Tin Win came to upper Naung-ka-ton, lower Noh-ta-lar-aw, Ta-maw-daw and Ta-roi-wah villages in Pa-an Township to question Saw Ta Ku, Saw Myint Kyaw and Naw Kru Kyi of upper Naung-ka-ton village regarding KNU activity. Unable to answer their questions the troops proceeded to kick and tread on the heads of the villagers. Another villager, Naw Thein May, was slapped a number of times and her head was smacked against the post of a house before the soldiers looted belongings from her house.⁸⁴

On 3 July 2006, DKBA troops assaulted 10 villagers from Pa-paw villagers, punching and kicking them, when they were unable to answer questions about the KNU. The villagers assaulted were:

1. Saw Maung Di, 30 years old;
2. Saw Pa Ta Lay, 60;
3. Saw Thway Kyaw, 40;
4. Saw Nga Lone, 25;
5. Saw Sein Win, 40;
6. Saw Htoo Hla, 45;
7. Saw Po Pay, 25;
8. Saw Pu Ya;
9. Saw Jorry, 42; and
10. Saw Htun Thaung, 50.⁸⁵

In July 2006, Saw K---, 42, from G--- village, Bilin Township, was captured after fleeing DKBA soldiers who had arrived at his village. He was accused of having knowledge of a KNLA camp and consequently bound to a post under his house. Whilst being interrogated the victim was punched and kicked in the face and chest.⁸⁶

In July 2006, Naw K---, 50, from K--- village, Bilin Township, reported to KHRG, how five of her fellow villagers had been interrogated by DKBA soldiers and then punched and beaten

after not being able to answer questions. She also reported how they wrapped the head of a Gkwee Lay Bpoo villager in plastic and tortured him.⁸⁷

On 14 September 2006, DKBA troops led by Saw Moo Hta interrogated 20 year old Saw Joe Joe in Thoo-ka-bee village. During the interrogation, Saw Joe Joe was slapped and kicked by the troops.⁸⁸

Toungoo District

On the evening of 11 January 2006, troops from SPDC LIB #48, led by Bo Htun Nay Lin, arrested and beat 26 year old Saw Poe War, and his wife, Naw Seh Heh, 22, both from Mar-lar-gon village.⁸⁹

On 15 February 2006, the mutilated body of an unidentified person was found in Bla Khi area. According to the Committee for Internally Displaced Karen Persons, the victim's throat had been slit and left hand cut off, suggesting the victim had been tortured prior to their death.⁹⁰

In March 2006, a villager from Play Hsa Loh, Tantabin Township, was killed by SPDC troops in revenge for the fact that an SPDC soldier had been injured by a landmine. SPDC troops reportedly cut off his arms and legs and left him by the roadside to bleed to death.⁹¹

Karenni State

On 4 January 2006, Saw Naw Gay, aged 29, was found beheaded in the jungle. He had been arrested along with 8 other villagers by SPDC and Karenni National Solidarity Organisation troops in Pahawkoe village, western Pasaung, on 17 December 2005. The villagers had reportedly been tortured and used as human mine sweepers. There were no reports on the whereabouts of the other villages.⁹²

On 20 February 2006, troops from IB #102 and #54 arrested four villagers from Kaylyar including the village secretary. They were accused of giving information to insurgents whom had attacked the troops the previous day. The troops masked the village secretary's head with a plastic bag then tied his hands behind his back and beat him with the butt of a gun.⁹³

In the last week of March 2006, troops from SPDC IB #102 arrived at Lawkukhu, Prusoe Township, and arrested the village's fire-watch guard. Each family in Lawkukhu is required to take fire-watch guard duty during the summer in order to regulate fires in the village. The guard on duty had struck a piece of iron used to inform villagers not to make any fires after that time. As the signal coincided with the SPDC troops arriving in the village, it was interpreted as a signal to insurgents. The troops severely beat the villager before removing him to their camp where he was detained for one night.⁹⁴

Mandalay Division

On 18 January 2006, Ko Aung Myint Oo suffered severe injuries after being assaulted by the police, in Meikhtila, Mandalay. Deputy Superintendent Aung Than Htay and around 13 other officers are reported to have savagely assaulted the young man using objects they found lying along the roadside, including sticks, rakes and bricks. He was beaten until he fell unconscious. The victim had suffered a stroke three months prior to the incident. The judge in the local court instructed the police to admit the victim to hospital. The officers ignored his

instructions. However, the prison warder was also so shocked by his injuries that he refused to accept Aung Myint Oo. The police then took him to an out patient clinic, where they referred him onto a hospital as his injuries were so severe. He was finally admitted to hospital where he was treated for broken ribs and severe injuries to his face and body. The police forcibly removed him from the hospital a week later despite the protestations of the hospital staff. When his family attempted to pursue the case, they were harassed and intimidated until they agreed to drop the action.⁹⁵

On 25 March 2006, Wai Phyo Naung (a.k.a. Naung Nuang) a 19 year old porter at Kaingdang market, Mandalay, was arrested. It was originally reported he was arrested for loitering, but later it was said to be under allegations of drug trafficking. He was taken to Police Station #6 where he died in custody the following day. The police initially refused to comment on the case, but later claimed that Naung Nuang had committed suicide. However, a post mortem report revealed signs of torture and beating.⁹⁶

On 18 July 2006, Phyo Wai Win, 20, a first year science student at Myingyan College was reportedly attacked by a gang of more than 10 men brandishing rods and swords and later received 25 stitches in hospital. The All Burma Federation of Student Unions has alleged that the victim's attackers were hired by relatives of the chairman of the Myingyan District Peace and Development Council, Major Tun Win, who had fought with Phyo Wai Win in 2005. The authorities failed to take any action against his attackers. Furthermore, the Myingyan College rector ordered students not to demand legal action over the incident.⁹⁷

Mon State

Following a gas pipeline explosion on the 1 February 2006, the secretary of Kwan-Hlar village, Nai Rae Jae, was arbitrarily arrested and heavily beaten by military officers in the Southeast Region Command detention centre, Moulmein. According to *Kaowao News*, Nai Rae Jae was subjected to electric shocks, with unconfirmed reports that he lost his memory as a result. One family member who visited him in detention, in April, stated at the time that Nai Rae Jae is often *"dizzy and disorientated due to his beatings and torture... all of his face and some parts of his body have turned black and blue, and he is covered in bruises"*. He was also reported to be very unresponsive. The source added that the victim had not been questioned about the pipeline, but instead asked about his relations with Nai Yekha, a Mon political prisoner, who was serving a sentence of life imprisonment in Insein prison.⁹⁸

In March 2006, it was reported that Nai Awin, aged 40, and Nai Azan, aged 49, from Kabya-Kyi and Kywe-Thone-Nyi-Ma villages, Yebyu Township, were killed by SPDC troops in Tin-Tha new village, Khaw Zar sub-Town. They were accused of supporting a Mon splinter group, ordered to lead the troops to the rebels and severely tortured through beatings and electric shocks. Unable to locate the rebels, the soldiers then shot them dead.⁹⁹

On 6 September 2006, in three separate instances, two families and a youth leader were detained and tortured by LIB #31 of Khaw Zar sub Town in connection with the Mon Splinter group led by Nai Chan Dein. Captain Tint-Lwin arrested and tortured Mi Ei-Mart, a 52 year old woman, and four of her family's members from Dot-Pound. Mi Ei-Mart and her son had to be admitted to hospital when they were eventually released the following day. On the same day, Nai Moe Aye, a youth leader, was arrested, beaten and tortured resulting in severe head injuries. Later that day troops from the same LIB led by Captain Tint Lwin raided Kyone-Ka-Nya village and arrested Nai Nya-Saung, the village headman, his wife and three children. During questioning they wrapped Nai Nya-Saung's head in a plastic bag before assaulting him.¹⁰⁰

In October 2006, two political prisoners in Moulmein Prison staged a hunger strike in protest at being housed with the criminal prisoners. In response, the prison warden beat the two political detainees. After other political prisoners heard of the beatings, they staged their own protest, refusing to return to their cells. The warden then employed criminal prisoners to beat the political prisoners housed with them.¹⁰¹

On 2 October 2006, soldiers from the LIB #31 entered the village of Kwan Tamaung (also reported as Yin-ye)¹⁰², Khaw Zar Sub-Township and beat two villagers for failing to report the presence of Mon rebels inside the village, on the night they were forced to work as sentries. They were beaten with bamboo sticks and kicked in the face. The back, hands and ribs of one villager, Mai Yein, were broken, leaving him unable to work.¹⁰³

On 9 November 2006, in Khaw-Zar sub Town, southern Ye Township, four villagers on guard duty along with a 14-year old villager were reportedly arrested by soldiers from LIB #31 and subsequently detained for two days, during which time they were reported to be tortured. They had been accused of stealing a soldier's gun.¹⁰⁴

On 23 November 2006, SPDC LIB #31 troops, seized five villagers from a plantation near Yin-ye village, Khaw Zar sub Township, southern Ye Township. Those persons were;

1. Nai Wan Tin, aged 45;
2. Nai Tin, 70;
3. Nai Win Khaing, 30;
4. Nai Khon Bhar, 40; and
5. Nai Tun Myint, 40.

It was reported that each of the five were assaulted, with Nai Wan Tin being stabbed in the neck. All were prevented from visiting the hospital.¹⁰⁵

Following a military battle, on 4 December 2006, between SPDC troops and a Mon splinter group in an orchard plantation near Khaw Zar sub town, SPDC LIB #31, led by Lt. Col. Myo Swe, arrested, detained, interrogated and tortured approximately 100 civilian villagers, half of whom were women and 15 of whom were children. The torture included electric shock treatment of the men and assaults upon the women. Approx. one to two weeks later, following the interrogation, SPDC officers extorted large sums of money for the release of the villagers. On 13 December 2006, San Shay, a plantation owner who had been arrested close to where the battle had taken place, was released after he paid 500,000 kyat. Villagers reported that he had suffered terrible injuries, and that he fled the area after his release.¹⁰⁶

Pegu Division

On 5 February 2006, Aung Cho Oo, 27, was arrested by the SPDC in respect of the May 2005 bombings in Rangoon. On 21 February 2006, SPDC Information Minister Brig. Kyaw San announced that Aung Cho Oo was a member of both the ABSDF and the Network for Democracy and Development (NDD) and that he had confessed to providing security information to Thein Win, an exiled labour rights activist, to carry the bombings out. Both organizations denied any involvement in the bombings and whilst Aung Cho Oo had previously been a member of NDD, he had never been a member of ABSDF. In August 2006, Naing Ko, of the Bangkok-based Federation of Trade Unions Burma (FTUB) reported that 15 people, including the parents, other family members and friends of Thein Win, had been arrested on charges of maintaining unlawful contacts with exiled organizations and tortured with the use of electric shocks. They included Chaw Su Hlaing, Thein Win's

pregnant sister. Chaw Su was released after hospital treatment, along with her father, one brother and three others, whilst the other nine persons remained in Toungoo prison, Pegu Division. International labour rights groups have accused the junta of torturing Thein Win's family and associates for the purpose of extracting confessions about his illegal activities, in his absence.¹⁰⁷

On 2 March 2006, it was reported that SPDC LID #99 troops guarding railway tracks in Nyaunglebin Township had assaulted local villagers who crossed the tracks after 6 pm. *"They decreed that no one must cross the tracks between 6 pm and 6 am. Within Nyaunglebin Township at Madauk, they told people with loud speakers not to cross and those who do will be shot on sight without question. But they didn't say that at other places and when people crossed the tracks they were beaten up by the soldiers."* reported one local resident.¹⁰⁸

On 19 March 2006, police officers assaulted the family of a man they were seeking to arrest for causing a disturbance when forced to guard a security checkpoint overnight, at Daik-U, Pegu Division. The accused, Naing Too, had played the guitar to entertain his fellow forced sentries and to keep them awake. He had later resisted attempts to arrest him, wounding one police officer in making his escape. As a result, the police savagely and publicly beat up his family members with sticks, including his 70 year old father, Tun Shwe, his mother Yin Myint, younger brother Zeya San and his wife Ni Ni Mar, before detaining the entire family. The matter was reported by neighbours who witnessed the beatings. *"The old man was handcuffed and his longyi fell off and he was dragged out onto the street stark naked,"* one local resident told DVB, *"Then, they all beat him up mercilessly with sticks, kicked him with their feet. There is nothing to salvage from his face...they then arrested four of them and like kidnapping they said that they will be exchanged with Maung Naing Too".*¹⁰⁹

During early June 2006, soldiers responsible for railway line security in the Yetashe Township reportedly beat Maung Soe Lin Aung, 23, to death. In May another man had been hospitalized after being heavily assaulted by the troops when found on the wrong side of the tracks.¹¹⁰

On 19 June 2006, Ma Nyo Kyi, 23, from Shwemyaing ward of Myohla town, Yetashe Township, was arrested by Police Deputy Superintendent Zaw Lwin and another officer whilst returning from a shopping trip. Both she and her eight-month-old baby were taken into custody for the night. When her family visited Ma Nyo Kyi, the next morning, the police explained that she had been found hanging in her cell. However, the doctors who had declared her dead reported finding severe injuries on her head and back.¹¹¹

On 10 August 2006, it was reported that SPDC troops responsible for security of railway tracks in Daik-U had assaulted a university student forced to do sentry duty throughout the night. The student had refused to clear rubbish and brushes from around the tracks whilst on guard duty. As a result he was assaulted by the troops.¹¹²

On 1 September 2006, Mya Thein, along with his wife and daughter, all active supporters of the NLD, from Phaungweh Village, were arrested; purportedly for being well known gamblers. The police demanded 350,000 kyat for their release but the family were only able to pay enough to secure the release of Mya Thein's wife and daughter. Subsequently, Mya Thein was assaulted, being kicked in his ribs which broke and pierced his liver. He was admitted to Daik-U hospital, and later transferred to Pegu Hospital as his condition failed to improve.¹¹³

Rangoon Division

On 2 January 2006, three political prisoners interned in Insein Prison; Aung San Myat, Ko Thiha Tun and Ko Han Win Aung, were beaten up by a group of five criminals in view of prisoner officer Win Maung and other prison guards.¹¹⁴

On 4 March 2006, a recently released inmate, from Insein Prison, anonymously reported that prison staff were extorting money from inmates and bullying or torturing those who could not afford to pay. Furthermore, payment was required to receive medical treatment at the clinic, to be allowed to shower, and to access the toilets regularly.¹¹⁵

On 17 March 2006, Ko Thet Naing Oo, a former political prisoner, was beaten to death in a Rangoon market by police and members of the auxiliary fire brigade.¹¹⁶ (For more information see Chapter 2 Extra-judicial, Summary and Arbitrary Execution.)

On 8 June 2006, Khin Mar Lwin, 24, from Ohbo Ward, Kyimyintaing (Kemmdine) Township, Rangoon, was arrested and tortured by the local police chief, Nay Myo, after being accused of stealing by a local house wife. Khin Mar Lwin was severely beaten and according to a family member suffered a broken eardrum and bruising over her entire body. Another relative claimed she had been sexually assaulted. She was released after it became apparent she was innocent. Nay Myo, SPDC officials and members of a junta affiliated women's organisation reportedly attempted to cover up the incident by offering Khin Mar Lwin 200,000 kyat. The police denied any wrongdoing.¹¹⁷

On the 21 August 2006, Moe Zaw Htet was arrested whilst on his way to work and subsequently detained at Ywama police station, Insein. The charges against him were not declared. Moe Zaw Htet was reported to have suffered severe head and hand injuries whilst in the care of the police. He informed his wife that he was being tortured during interrogations.¹¹⁸

Sagaing Division

On 24 January 2006, five prisoners in Kalaymyo Prison, Sagaing Division, reportedly took the prison director hostage. In response, prison guards overpowered the prisoners, severely beat them, and placed them in solitary confinement. Two died of injuries in their cells and two days later the other three prisoners died despite belatedly receiving medical treatment. Twenty seven other prisoners not directly involved in the hostage taking were also beaten, many severely.¹¹⁹

On 20 February 2006, Nyunt Aung, an NLD Monywa Township youth leader, was severely beaten whilst serving a jail term in Kalaymyo Prison, resulting in his arm being broken. The incident happened during a jail riot, which, according to staff, he was not even involved in. Seventeen other prisoners were also left seriously injured and 2 reportedly died in the incident.¹²⁰

Shan State

In June 2006, Ah Meu, responsible for collecting taxes for the SPDC and a Lahu militia group, heavily assaulted an Akha woman. The woman had told him that she had paid her taxes the day before and was consequently beaten with his gun and kicked once she was on the floor. She reported the incident to the police, who referred the case to the militia leaders. No action was taken against Ah Meu who was merely ordered to pay her medical bills, orders he subsequently ignored.¹²¹

Murug Kerug Township

On 3 March 2006, Zan-Da, a 20 year old villager from Nawng Khio village in Murug Khun village tract, was shot in his leg at point blank range by an SPDC soldier from LIB #514. He had been sleeping outside his house in order to guard his rice sacks which were to be moved in the morning. When he heard someone approaching he shone a torch in the direction of the footsteps. An SPDC soldier then ran at Zan-Da, and shot him in his right thigh at point blank range, breaking the bone in his leg. The soldiers refused the villagers permission to leave the village and his wound had to be treated on the spot by his fellow villagers.¹²²

Murug-Nai Township

On 3 May 2006, SPDC troops from LIB #576 arrested Lung Ma-La, 55, at his sesame farm in Ton Hung village tract, Kaeng Tawng Sub-Township. He was detained, interrogated and severely beaten whilst at the base of LIB #576 at Pa Saa village in Nawng Hee village tract. Village elders subsequently secured his release but his ordeal reportedly left long term internal and external injuries and he is thought unlikely to recover to normality again.¹²³

On 24 May 2006, SPDC troops entered Paang Khaw village in Ton Hung village tract and seized a villager tending his farm. Zaai Thaak, 20, was taken into a hut on the farm, accused of being a Shan soldier and forced to answer questions about the Shan soldiers in the area. Unable to provide information, Zaai Thaak was then beaten on his back with a stick resulting in him losing consciousness. Zaai Thaak was only relieved of this torture after an SPDC soldier, who had arrived late, confirmed that Zaai Thaak was not a Shan soldier, but a farmer whom he occasionally drank with.¹²⁴

On 9 June 2006, SPDC troops from LIB #576 arrived at Long Sur village in Ton Hung village tract and shot at 2 villagers, Mae-Tha and Ma-La, both 40, who were working on their paddy fields. Whilst Mae-Tha was able to escape to a nearby forest, Ma-La was captured by the troops. He was interrogated about Shan soldiers and beaten by the SPDC troops for some time until he lost consciousness. The troops then left the unconscious body of Ma-La at the farm and continued on their patrol.¹²⁵ Upon reaching the Ho Ha village in Kun Mong village tract, the same patrol arrested Zaai Awng, 30, a Palaung villager, who was said to be slightly mentally disabled and did not respond to the soldiers when they interrogated him. He was assaulted by his interrogators before being tied up and taken away by the troops. At the time of this report (August 2006) no one in the village had heard any information on the whereabouts or condition of Zaai Awng.¹²⁶

Nam Zarng Township

On 19 June 2006, a patrol from SPDC LIB #516 conscripted 3 villagers from Tin Paet village, Nawng Hee village tract, Nam Zarng Township 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. 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. The villagers were threatened with death if they informed anybody what had happened.¹²⁷

Kae See Township

On 6 August 2006, SPDC IB #131 troops apprehended a 20 year old man in Kung Mong village, Murng Khun village tract, Kae-See Township, and questioned him about the movement of Shan soldiers in the locality. Unable to answer their questions he was forced to walk around the village with a cow bell tied to his neck whilst being beaten with a stick. He was beaten and interrogated in this way for half an hour, leaving him with heavy bruising and sprains when the soldiers finally left.¹²⁸

Kunhing Township

On 17 January 2006, Ti-Ma and Naang Poi, husband and wife, from Ka Li village, Kun-Hing Township, searching for their cattle in the forest, encountered a patrol of approximately 30 SPDC troops from IB #246, led by Commander Min Kyaw. Villagers from Ka Li, claimed to have witnessed the couple being interrogated and repeatedly beaten for half an hour. The incident culminated with the couple being taken away by the soldiers and they have been missing since (as reported in mid 2006).¹²⁹

On 9 July 2006, SPDC LIB #524 troops, led by Capt. Naing Kyaw Oo, entered the temple of Loi Khu village in Wan Paang village tract, Kun-Hing Township. Unable to answer the soldiers' questions as to the whereabouts of Shan soldiers, the villagers were beaten with sticks, with 7 men and 3 women in particular suffering severe injuries.¹³⁰

Also on 9 July 2006, another patrol of 12 SPDC troops from SPDC LIB #524, led by Lt. Hpyu Myint, came to, and assaulted several villagers of Naa Khu Naa Pe village in Wan Paang village tract, whilst interrogating them about Shan insurgents. Villagers were slapped, beaten and kicked by the troops for not answering their questions. Four villagers were particularly severely beaten and Lung Laai Kham, 56, was beaten so severely around the waist that he could not stand up for several days.¹³¹

Between the 19 and 22 July 2006, the village headman of Wan Paang tract, Lung Mae-Tha, 56; the secretary of Wan Paang tract, Lung Tin Awng, 55; the village headman of Nam Khaam, Lung Pan-Nya; the village headman of Waeng Naang, Lung Long; and the village headman of E-Kaw village; were each arrested and detained at the base housing SPDC troops of LIB #524. All were reportedly tortured during their interrogations. Lung Pan-Nya and the village headman of E-Kaw village had not been seen by their fellow detainees and are believed to be dead. All others have now been released.¹³²

On 5 August 2006, a patrol of about 40 SPDC troops from IB #246, led by Commander Zaw Lwin, arrested 5 villagers of Nam Khaam village, Wan Paang village tract, Kun-Hing Township. The five men arrested and their ages were:

1. Lung Pan-Nya, 58;
2. Lung Ta, 59;
3. Lung Zit-Ta, 53;
4. Lung Kaw-Wi, 62; and
5. Pi Saang Aw, 49.

The villagers were detained in a lockup in the military base and were taken out at night to be interrogated about the activities of Shan soldiers in the area, with their interrogators often inebriated. During interrogations, the villagers were beaten with sticks and even shocked with electricity, sometimes leading them to lose consciousness. The interrogations continued right through August. On 1 September 2006, Lung Pan-Nya, was accused of being an agent of Shan soldiers and taken to the Nam Pang river at night where he was beaten to death and dumped into the water, about 2 miles southeast of Kun-Hing town. The four others have since disappeared, and are also believed to have been killed.¹³³

Larng-Khur Township

On the 8 July 2006, in Terng Kwaang village in Nawng Long village tract, Zaai Ti, 19, encountered 15 SPDC IB #99 troops when returning home from the Buddhist monastery. The troops interrogated him about the presence of Shan soldiers in the area. Unable to answer their questions, he was arrested, tied up and severely beaten until he lost consciousness. He was later discovered by his father, unconscious and still tied up.¹³⁴

On 18 July 2006 (reported as “about 10 days later” than the previous incident) Zaai Wan, 17, was assaulted by SPDC troops from IB #99 when returning home from a friend’s house. He sustained serious injuries to his head after being struck by the troops with an electric torch. SPDC troops from IB #99 are reported to have a reputation for entering Terng Kwaang village at night and assaulting any person found on the streets.¹³⁵

Muse District

On 14 April 2006, students Sai Naw Sai and Sai Than Win were beaten up by the police and hospitalised after a fight over motorcycle parking ticket in Muse. *“The police stepped and stomped on Sai Than Win’s chest and then hit him with the hilt of a sword on his head. And then they tied both of them with flag mast ropes around their necks. They released them only after protests from spectators,”* one family member reported. On 20 April it was reported that Sai Naw Sai had suffered head and chest injuries and was still unable to walk or speak, whilst Sai Than Win had a critical eye condition. On that day they were summoned by the District and Township Peace and Development Council as part of investigations into the incident.¹³⁶

On 20 July 2006, Sai Yi Kyaw, 30, Sai Yi Sai, 33, and Sai Pau, 22, three farmers from Pansine Township in northern Shan State’s Muse District were severely beaten by TPDC Secretary Tin Oo, during an inspection of their fields. One eyewitness reported, *“[The secretary] shouted at them saying “why aren’t your paddy fields producing good yields? You haven’t done what I told you to do.” Then he started punching and kicking them”*.¹³⁷

Tenasserim Division

Yebyu Township

On 1 February 2006, a refugee who had recently fled the area of Wear Kwao in northern Yebyu Township reported that, *“four (villagers) were used to pull an ox-cart as part of a torture, and like an ox, a small piece of wood with nails was used to make the men walk. Nai Agoh, Nai Apin and two others were tortured in this manner. Many were tortured simply because they could not speak Burmese and they could not explain where the rebels were hiding.”*¹³⁸

During April 2006, SPDC LIB #299 troops surrounded Wear Kwao (Pauk-Pin-Kwin) village, northern Yebyu Township, and rounded up civilians suspected of being rebel sympathisers before torturing them in public. They were beaten with gun butts and kicked all over their bodies. One 68 year old man was beaten over the head and then made to crouch for a prolonged period of time in the hot sun (along with a 1000 other villagers). According to one unnamed witness, who fled the incident, several other villagers were forced to lie on their fronts before being beaten. Individuals who couldn't speak Burmese received particularly brutal beatings, especially when they were unable to answer the soldier's questions. When the soldiers became tired they forced the villagers to beat each other up. The soldiers were reportedly attempting to force the villagers to confess information regarding the whereabouts of a Mon insurgent group.¹³⁹

Unknown Location

On 14 January 2006, two Burmese students, Maung Maung Oo and Chit Thein Tun, members of the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF), were taken into custody from Moreh, Manipur in north-east India, by the SPDC, in relation to the bombing at Nanthphalon Market in Tamu on 8 January 2006, which had killed one person. Both men had escaped from Burma in 1988 after the student uprising. On 22 February 2006, the Minister for Information claimed at a press conference that the men had confessed to their involvement in the bombing. On 14 May 2006, it was reported, by a representative from the India-based Burmese Solidarity Organisation (BSO), that the two men had been held incommunicado since their arrests in places unknown, where they had been tortured and summarily sentenced to death without access to lawyers. The imposition of the death penalty was confirmed by AI on 18 May 2006.¹⁴⁰

Endnotes

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