

8. Rights of Ethnic Minorities

8.1 Background

Before the British occupation and annexation of the Burmese territories, the area we know as Burma today was a series of autonomous indigenous nations. Many ethnic groups were separated by geographical boundaries such as steep mountains and wide rivers, resulting in sharp linguistic divides and a large number of distinct ethnic groups in a small territory. Burma officially has over 134 different ethnic groups, speaking more than 100 distinct languages and dialects. (See Section 8.5: Official List of Ethnic Minority Groups in Burma). Approximately 68 percent of the population belongs to the predominantly Buddhist Burman ethnic group, over 20 million people, or approximately 32 percent of the total population belong to an ethnic minority group. Although all together, they occupy approximately 55% of the land in Burma, this land is mainly located along the border regions. The geographical marginalization of the ethnic minorities of Burma is also paralleled in the country's politics and history.

For the purposes of Colonial administration, Burma was divided into two zones: the centrally located "Ministerial Burma", a predominantly Burman region, and the "Frontier Areas", located in the mountainous regions situated along Burma's present-day international borders where most of the ethnic minorities were based. On one hand, the local systems of governance in Ministerial Burma were destroyed. The British imposed their own administration and system of governance in the area. However, they also invested resources there. While the Frontier Areas retained their systems of governance and some autonomy, they were exploited by the British for their natural resources and given very little in return, particularly in terms of health, education, economic development, or political voice at the national level.¹ This legacy endures to this day.

Burma had some indication that independence would be forthcoming from Britain and a number of Burman leaders and leaders from various key ethnic groups made preparations for the new nation in advance. Perhaps the most important document to lay the foundations for the new nation was the Panglong Agreement; signed by General Aung San, a prominent Burman leader, and Chin, Kachin and Shan leaders. For General Aung San,

*"The essential prerequisite is the building of one unified nation. In concrete terms it means we must now bridge all gulfs now existing through British machinations between the major Burmese race and the hill peoples, the Arakanese, the Shans and unite all these peoples into one nation with equal treatment unlike the present system which divides our people into 'backward' and 'administered' sections."*²

The Panglong Agreement was the key document in attempting to build this unified nation and in creating a federal Burma. The constitution which emerged after Britain granted Burma independence on 4 January 1948 fell short of the expectations of many. The territories of four ethnic groups, the Karen, Karenni, Shan and Kachin, were recognized and each was designated a separate state. Each recognized ethnic group was represented at the national level and two groups, the Shan and the Karenni, were allowed the choice to succeed after 10 years. Other groups, however, continued to feel marginalized. Perhaps these issues could have been resolved in the Chamber of Nationalities, had the Federal Union of Burma been

given a fair chance. However, a military regime took power in 1962 and the new constitution in 1974 stripped all ethnic minority groups equally of any autonomy. (For more information, see the Historical Background).

Fast-forward to the present: over the past decade, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) has come under increasing international attention, particularly due to its treatment of ethnic minorities, but also due to its non-democratic rule, the continued detention of Aung San Suu Kyi, economic mismanagement and its effect on the region, particularly in regards to the spread of HIV/AIDS and illegal drugs. In an apparent attempt to deflect some of this international criticism and regain some international credibility, particularly in the eyes of their fellow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and United Nations (UN) officials, in 2005 the SPDC launched its “Seven-Point Roadmap to Democracy” and resumed the National Convention and the constitution drafting process. The National Convention (NC) had been operating since 1993 but was often suspended until it finally adjourned in 1996, having accomplished very little and certainly nothing concretely democratic.³ The resumption of the National Convention is not the first time the SPDC has used the NC and the pretence of democratic principles to assuage international condemnation. The NC was last revived in 2004, following the Depayin massacres. Only ethnic minorities who had signed ceasefire agreements with the SPDC were invited and their concerns were not allowed on the agenda. Delegates were only permitted to discuss the agenda that was set by the SPDC and discussion of any matters outside this agenda was not tolerated. (For more information on the National Convention, see Chapter 11: Freedom of Opinion, Expression and the Press).

Prior to NC sessions in 2005, the SPDC arrested leaders of several ethnic groups and increased military offensives in the border areas.⁴ Before the Convention opened for the year, the leaders of 11 ethnic political groups had signed a statement indicating their lack of faith in the NC process. There were two sessions of the NC in 2005 and during both, it was expected that representatives from ethnic political parties under ceasefire agreements would be present and remain silent, following the SPDC’s prearranged agenda. The SPDC arranged for rallies in support of the NC, threatening civilians with fines for failure to attend.⁵ In response an Ethnic Nationalities Conference was held in 2005 to commence work on drafting an alternative constitution.

There have been a number of meetings to draft alternative constitutions over the years, particularly along the Thai-Burma Border. In 2006, the Federal Constitution Drafting and Coordinating Committee (FCDCC) put out a draft of a Federal Constitution. The FCDCC is made up of MPs, and other members of the Burmese democracy movement in exile, including representatives of women and youth groups. The seminar for the draft constitution was held in territory controlled by the Karen National Union (KNU) in Karen State. The draft of the Federal constitution contained 14 chapters and 197 articles and was designed to build democracy in Burma through a genuine federal system. In addition, the National Reconciliation Program (NRP) has been helping ethnic groups draft their own state constitutions in the event that federalism is realised in Burma. Arakan, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Mon and Shan groups have reportedly commenced work on the drafting process.⁶ In July 2006, the Chin Community in Germany (CCG), and the Chin Forum, organized the Chinland Constitution Consultative Meetings in Frankfurt. Over 100 representatives attended including guests from Germany, Thailand, the United States, Sweden, India, Canada and Japan. One of the main issues discussed was the fifth draft of the Chinland Constitution.⁷

National Convention proceedings in 2006 followed the same pattern as previous years. The SPDC ‘invited’ several ethnic groups and exerted pressure for them to attend so they could show the international community they had the support of the ethnic minority groups. Ironically, some of the delegates chosen did not even have the support of their own ethnic groups. For instance, P’Doh Aung San, a former member of the KNU who has not only faced numerous allegations of corruption, but has also been implicated as having been closely involved with the *Dam Byan Byaut Kya* (Guerrilla Retaliation Units) execution squads, was invited as a representative of the Karen ethnic minority.⁸ Needless to say, very few Karen support Aung San and he cannot be considered representative of the Karen people.

Meanwhile, those who did partake in the NC were barred from contributing anything of substance. In 2006, the NC worked on drafting a new constitution, though many groups gave up any hope of a democratic constitution emerging from it, let alone one that responds to the needs of the ethnic minorities. Ethnic leaders and international actors, most of whom have dismissed the NC as a sham, continued to call on the SPDC to engage in tripartite dialogue with members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and ethnic minority groups but there was no move in this direction by the SPDC in 2006.

The SPDC’s attempts to placate the international community with the democratic motions of the National Convention seem to have failed. In September 2006, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) voted to have the issue of Burma placed on the permanent agenda. The SPDC protested, as did long-time supporters of the regime, China and Russia. In an effort to appear to have the support of both the government and the opposition, the SPDC demanded that ceasefire groups also issue formal protests to the UNSC resolution. The SPDC exerted pressure, often in the form of direct violence, against those ceasefire groups who refused to make such international statements and even went so far as to fabricate new groups to bolster the appearance of having the support of the country’s ethnic minority groups. For instance, on 7 October 2006, the “Rakhaing Peace Organization” (RPO) published a statement opposing the debate of Burma in the UNSC. The signature on the statement was that of Saw Tun Oo, the former chairman of the Communist Party of Burma in Arakan State (CPB-Arakan) who surrendered to the junta in 1997.⁹ It would thus seem that Saw Tun Oo acted at the behest of the SPDC.

8.2 Ethnic Politics, Armed Resistance, and Ceasefire Agreements

The groundwork for armed ethnic resistance was first laid by the British during World War II. The British used various ethnic groups in their campaign against the Japanese in the region, giving many groups their first formal military training. Ethnic minority groups were preferred for recruitment into the British armed forces, especially the Karen, Kachin and the Chin and it could be said that some of these groups never fully disarmed following the War.

When Burma was granted independence in 1948, the political structures they left in place left a bad taste in the mouths of many. The Karen ethnic group, who had been fiercely loyal to the British during the War, were among those disappointed. They had expected a reward for their loyalty; a reward that was never conferred. Thus the Karen's resistance began shortly afterwards. Certain other ethnic groups initially only began organising in order to defend their interests in the newly independent state and they only became militarised following the military coup in 1962.

The Burmese military regime has adopted a number of strategies to deal with these groups over the years. One such strategy, reportedly devised in the mid-1960's but not employed until the early-70's in the Shwegyin hills of Karen State, was dubbed the 'Four Cuts Policy' (*Pya Ley Pya* in Burmese).¹⁰ The four 'cuts' are said to cut off all lines of supply of food, funds, recruits, and intelligence to resistance groups from their supposed civilian support base. The direct and immediate result of this policy was state-directed violence against the civilian population. The SPDC has continued to employ the Four Cuts Policy as its principle instrument in its ongoing struggle against resistance groups. However, while the Four Cuts Policy was initially conceived to undermine armed resistance groups, the same tactics are still being employed, not to weaken insurgent groups, but rather to dominate and exploit the civilian population.

Throughout this report, and all previous editions of the *Burma Human Rights Yearbook* (and indeed the vast majority of other reports documenting human rights abuses perpetrated in Burma), this state-directed violence has been categorized thematically, however, it must be noted that these abuses are by no means discrete. It needs to be remembered that many of these abuses are closely related. For instance, forced relocation is intimately linked with forced labour, extortion, destruction of property, deprivation of livelihood and the denial of fundamental freedoms. By way of example: remote ethnic villages that are situated in areas beyond direct SPDC-control are often forcibly relocated by SPDC army units to areas that can effectively be controlled by the military. Once relocated into SPDC-administered relocation sites, these villagers are regularly exploited as forced labour and as a source of extortion. Their former villages are typically burned to the ground or sewn with landmines. Many are denied permission to return to their fields and plantations and are thus not only denied the freedom of movement but are also deprived of their livelihoods. For the purposes of clarity and ease of understanding, these abuses have been dealt with separately throughout this report, though the web-like and inter-related nature of human rights abuses in Burma must be kept in mind. Regardless of whether the regime employs direct violence, indirect economic deprivation or strategies of cultural assimilation, their effects remain the same: the repression of ethnic minority villagers and the manipulation and destruction of ethnic identity.

Public services to ethnic minority areas, such as health and education, are the lowest priority in a country which does not prioritise health and education at all. (For more information, see Chapter 9: Rights to Education and Health). For those who can withstand the economic pressures, the SPDC continues to enact laws and policies aimed at denying ethnic groups the rights of cultural expression and assimilating them into the mainstream Burman Buddhist culture. (For more information, see Chapter 10: Freedom of Belief and Religion). Economic and infrastructure development in ethnic minority areas almost invariably benefits the junta far more than it does the minorities living in those areas. In many cases, such development projects are conducted to the detriment of local peoples. (For more information, see Chapter 5: Deprivation of Livelihood).

Employing their strategy of divide and rule, the regime has actively encouraged minority groups to compete amongst themselves for available resources. In 1989, the former head of Military Intelligence, General Khin Nyunt began exploiting this advantage by offering ceasefire agreements to various armed ethnic resistance groups. The so-called ‘ceasefire groups’ are permitted to retain their arms but enter truce agreements with the regime whereby both parties agree to cease hostilities against one another. However, these agreements do not extend to cover the civilian population that happens to live in those areas, and the SPDC continues to use violence against them, often with the complicity, and in some cases, the assistance of the newly formed ceasefire group. To sweeten the deal further, the ceasefire groups are offered certain economic concessions and permitted some degree of limited autonomy within territories they are granted authority to control. However, no ceasefire agreement in Burma's recent history has ever led to a political settlement, and in the majority of cases, the ceasefire groups quickly adopt the same practices employed by the SPDC and also commit widespread human rights violations against the very people whom they claim to represent. For example, in Thaton District of Karen State, local Karen villagers have reported that they suffer far worse abuses at the hands of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), who entered into a ceasefire pact with the regime in 1994.¹¹

The SPDC maintains that as many as 17 armed ethnic groups have forged ceasefire agreements and “*returned to the legal fold*”. However, a number of these pacts have broken down and some of these groups have once again taken up arms against the regime. Perhaps the most striking example of this was the March 1995 ceasefire agreement between the SPDC and the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) which the SPDC violated within three months with fresh attacks in June 1995. By December that same year, the KNPP announced that they considered the ceasefire null and void. (For more information, see Section 8.6: Ceasefire Status of Ethnic Groups).

Please note that the pages which follow do not represent an exhaustive list of ethnic ceasefire and ethnic resistance armies. The list includes only some of the major and more influential groups or those that were active during 2006.

Arakan State

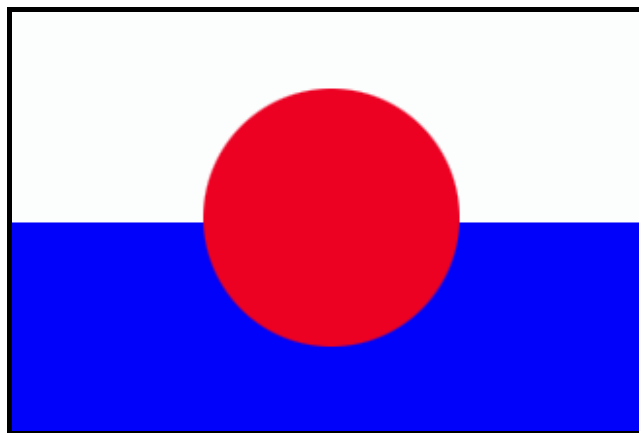
The Arakan Liberation Army (ALA) is the military arm of the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) and has been fighting the regime since 1968. On 22 October 2006, ALA troops opened fire on and burnt down the SPDC army camp manned by Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) #55 in Paletwa, Chin State while troops were away from the camp on patrol. There were no casualties. However, as a result, the SPDC troops harassed and interrogated nearby villagers. Villagers in the region are also worried that when the army rebuilds their camp, they will be called upon to supply forced labour.¹²

On 13 December 2006, ALA blockaded the road connecting Paletwa in Chin State to India's border. One trader heard that the ALP would shoot anyone who tried to use the road. In response, the SPDC set up their own roadblock, promising to stop traffic on the road for a longer period. SPDC army troops stationed in the Shinletwa army camp in Paletwa Township began blocking the road in December 2006 and threatened to arrest anyone on it until March 2007. The blockade affected trade to the area and primarily impacted upon the civilian population.¹³

Chin State

The Chin National Front (CNF) formed in 1988 following the country-wide pro-democracy uprising. Ceasefire negotiations between the CNF and the SPDC started in 1995 but did not lead to a signed agreement. In April 2006, the CNF sent a message to the regime indicating that they were willing to discuss ceasefire negotiations,¹⁴ though little progress was made during 2006.

In May 2006, authorities in Matupi used family lists and house registration information to attempt to identify local members of the CNF and to extort money from villagers. Families with absent members at the time were fined between 200 and 2,000 kyat. As their children were absent and fearing arrest, Mr. Cahlui and his wife Mrs. Namel fled the town and sought refugee status in India. SPDC army soldiers arrested Mr. Bi Khaw, Mrs. Khin Gwei and her mother, Mrs. Tlungluai, and Mr. Anthaw on the suspicion that they had connections with or were family of CNF members.¹⁵



The Chin national flag. [Photo: Jaume Ollé, 1996]

On 17 May 2006, three Chin National Army (CNA) soldiers were fired upon and pursued by 17 SPDC soldiers of LIB #266 and 15 police personnel from the Hakha police station in Siarpi village area, Hakha Township. The CNA collects an annual tax on the Chin people and was collecting the tax from the village when they were fired upon. No one was killed; however, the Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) chairman of the village was tortured by the SPDC soldiers for providing the CNA troops with a meal while they were in the village.¹⁶

Kachin State

Kachin Independence Organization (KIO)

The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and their armed branch, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), signed a ceasefire with the SPDC in 1994 and went from being considered one of the most powerful ethnic resistance groups in the country to being a group who submitted to the regime. In 2005, encouraged by the SPDC, a small group led by Colonel Lasang Awngwa calling themselves the Kachin Solidarity Council (KSC), broke away from the KIO and surrendered to the SPDC, accepting the junta's offer of security and territory. In return they promised to refrain from joining with other armed groups against the SPDC. By November 2005, some members had returned to the KIO.¹⁷

In return for signing the ceasefire agreement, the KIO was given control over significant areas in Kachin State including the border area with China, and was permitted to engage in certain areas of economic activity including jade mining operations and the leasing of part of Mai Ja Yang town to Chinese businessmen for casinos.¹⁸ In August 2006, tests on the Malii Hka hydroelectricity power plant concluded. The plant was a joint project between the KIO and the SPDC and touted to provide more electricity to Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin State, at a lower rate.¹⁹ In 2006, the KIA was reported to have signed an agreement with a Chinese company named Hai Nan Chang for 20,000 acres of sugarcane plantation.²⁰

On 15 June 2006, the 77-year-old president of the KIO, Lamung Tu Jai, was reported to have died of "*natural causes*".²¹



The flag of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO). [Photo: Jaume Ollé, 1996]

The KIO sent observers to the first National Convention in 1993, and was a full participant in when it resumed in 2004. The Kachin National Organization (KNO), a group of Kachin's in exile, has denounced the participation of Kachin ceasefire groups in the NC proceedings.²² In October 2006, however, the KIO did take a stand against the SPDC, refusing to condemn the move to place Burma on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and taking a neutral stance on the issue. As a result, the regime cracked down, focusing mainly on restricting the KIO's economic activity and freedom of movement. KIO vehicles were not permitted to enter SPDC-controlled areas of Kachin State. Timber, gold and other trade from KIO areas was restricted through a blockade on the KIO's major trade route, cutting off supplies of things like fresh produce, rice and fuel to KIO markets in Laiza. KIO members were reportedly telephoned and harassed, their vehicles detained and their movements restricted.²³ By the end of October, half of the 30 or so gold-mining operations in the N'Mai Hku area had to shut down and many businesses were suffering.²⁴

On 2 January 2006, troops from IB #68, led by Hla Myo Aung, killed six KIA members while they were eating dinner in Muse in northern Shan State. Following the incident, Commander Hla Myo Aung was awarded a hero's medal for his actions.²⁵

In January 2006, SPDC troops shot and killed 20 KIA soldiers in the KIA's 4th Brigade area.²⁶

On 11 February 2006, SPDC troops arrested four KIA members for crossing a junta-controlled area in Mansi Township, Kachin State. KIA members had routinely travelled in this area in the past without incident.²⁷

In April 2006, SPDC troops attacked the KIA's 2nd and 8th Brigades. On 20 April 2006, SPDC soldiers stormed four KIA 4th Brigade outposts near Mongko in northern Shan State.²⁸ A total of 13 KIA soldiers were captured in the raid. On 21 April 2006, a further 14 KIO members were detained by SPDC troops in the Maijaya region of northern Shan State.²⁹

On 29-30 June 2006, KIO bases near Wine Maw were attacked by SPDC army forces. Two KIO soldiers were injured and five were captured. Both bases are close to the area under the control of the SPDC-allied New Democratic Army-Kachin (NDA-K) faction led by Zahkung Ting Ying.³⁰ Another report claimed that 4 KIO soldiers were killed and nine, including Deputy-Commander 2nd Lieutenant Loon Swe, were captured. On 6 July 2006, the KIO met with the NDA-K in Myikyina, to discuss the return of the prisoners, however the NDA-K had already handed them over to the SPDC.³¹

In December 2006, the regime caused local residents even more concern when it launched an extensive 12-battalion military exercise in the KIA-controlled Samar region. Ten battalions under Military Operations Command (MOC) #3 and two battalions stationed at the #904 gun station practised artillery firing drills with 120 mm, 105 mm and 76 mm field guns from 14 December 2006 until 22 December 2006. Five days into the exercise, the KIO submitted a formal complaint with the SPDC and requested that the military exercise be ceased. Exiled Kachin groups expressed concern over the potentially destabilising impact of the military exercises.³²

New Democratic Army-Kachin (NDA-K)

The KIO has suffered a number of splits over the years. In 1989, the New Democratic Army-Kachin (NDA-K) was formed when two KIO officers, Zakhung Tingying and Layawk Zelum, broke away and signed a ceasefire pact with the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC; the junta as it was known prior to 15 November 1997). The NDA-K is based in Pang Wa, on the Sino-Burma border, where they control the area known as Kachin State Special Region-1. In 2005, there was an internal coup among the leadership of the NDA-K. The coup leaders were quickly overthrown and the group soon went back to supporting the SPDC.³³

On 24 May 2006, fighting between two NDA-K factions occurred in Kanpaite, Kachin State. The faction led by Layawk Zelum launched a surprise attack on Zakhung Tingying's opposing faction. Zakhung Tingying and Layawk Zelum are reported to command 300 and 200 troops respectively. The small scale fighting was thought to be an attempt to seize Kanpaite, then under the control of Zakhung Tingying. The fighting drew SPDC Infantry Battalions (IB) #74, 121 and 236 into the area.³⁴

In October 2006, NDA-K members attended the National Convention.³⁵

Karen State

Karen State has endured a long and turbulent history of ethnic resistance. The Karen first took up arms against the regime in 1949, less than two years after the country gained independence. The Karen's struggle for self-determination has continued, largely unabated for almost 60 years. This has placed the Karen in the esteemed position of waging one of the longest continuously running insurgencies in history. The main Karen opposition group is the Karen National Union (KNU), with its armed wing the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA). The KNU has been widely considered as one of the stronger resistance groups opposing the military regime, which had, at one point in its history, advanced as far as Insein on the outskirts of Rangoon and seriously threatened to take the capital. However, over the years, the KNU has suffered a number of splits, the most devastating of which came in December 1994 with the formation of the splinter group, the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA).

Almost immediately following the split, Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Secretary-1 of the SLORC, forged an alliance with the DKBA, granting them financial and material support in exchange for their help to destroy the KNU. Less than a month later, a joint force of hundreds of SLORC and DKBA soldiers launched a major attack on the KNU headquarters at Manerplaw. The DKBA soldiers knew the way through the extensive minefields surrounding the headquarters and the weaknesses of key defensive positions, and ultimately, Manerplaw fell. Less than a month after that, another KNU stronghold at nearby Kaw Moo Rah, was also overrun.

The DKBA went on the offensive, launching at least 12 significant attacks on KNU territory over the next three years, including attacking refugee camps in Thailand where they killed more than 20 people. It would seem that their deal with the junta has paid off, for since that time, the sphere of DKBA influence has expanded to the point where they now have a presence in six of the seven Karen Districts, and are mostly free to conduct their business without interference from the military. They have, however, embraced many of the same

policies used by the junta and are also guilty of committing widespread violations of human rights against the same people that they claim to be working for the benefit of. (For more information see Section 8.4 Abuse of Ethnic Minorities by Ceasefire Groups below).

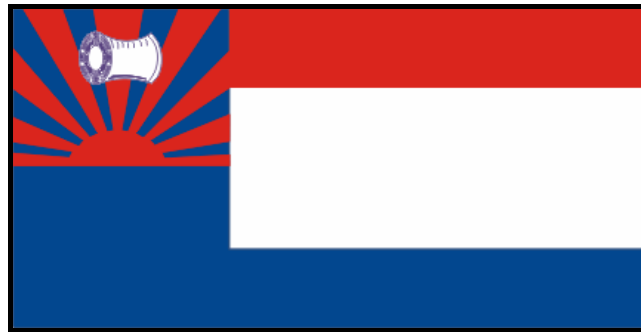
Karen National Union (KNU)

In January 2004, the KNU established an informal verbal ceasefire with the SPDC, referred to as a “*gentleman’s agreement*”. However, despite this ceasefire, sporadic clashes still occurred between the SPDC and KNLA soldiers. Moreover, the SPDC continued to use violence against Karen villagers. Many KNLA soldiers reportedly could not bear to stand by and do nothing as their people suffered under the widespread perpetration of human rights abuses, yet their hands were tied by orders to observe the ceasefire and not to engage with SPDC forces. The SPDC thus used this opportunity to strengthen their grip on the areas they controlled in addition to expanding their influence and establishing new camps in areas that they were never previously able to access without coming under attack by the KNLA. Then, in November 2005, SPDC army units commenced launching military assaults on undefended Karen villages in northern Karen State, shelling them with mortars and firing upon them with machine guns and assault rifles.³⁶ Within months, the offensive spread from Toungoo District into adjacent Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts.³⁷ According to the independent aid organization, the Free Burma Rangers (FBR), approximately 25,000 villagers were displaced by the attacks and the human rights abuses that accompanied the increased militarization of the region.³⁸ Some groups have argued that the SPDC used the ceasefire as the vehicle from which they launched the continuing Karen offensive.³⁹

This offensive, unlike so many of those in previous years, continued throughout the rainy season. The pattern observed in previous offensives is that ordinarily, the SPDC army soldiers withdraw from the hills at the onset of the rains which typically commence around May each year. Travel in the hills becomes exceedingly difficult as the steep hillsides are quickly turned into slippery and treacherous slopes. The SPDC army soldiers thus return to their bases in the plains and along roadsides from where they continue to demand extortion and forced labour from local villages. Not long after the rains stop around October, the soldiers return to the hills where they resume hunting the internally displaced to force them out of the hills and into areas where the military can maintain a presence and therefore control. This cycle has repeated itself almost annually over the past decade, particularly in northern Karen State where the topography is more mountainous and more heavily forested. In southern Karen State, where the terrain is much flatter and far more open, the SPDC has been much more successful in exerting their control over the population, and as such major military offensives are less common. This is in spite the fact that the KNLA also operates in these areas. It must be noted that the primary target of the current offensive, like the vast majority of those before it, is not the armed resistance of the KNLA, but rather unarmed civilian villagers.⁴⁰

Dozens of additional SPDC army battalions were moved into northern Karen State to reinforce battalions already stationed there. In October 2006, the Free Burma Rangers (FBR) estimated there to be 60-70 SPDC army battalions operating in the offensive area covered by Toungoo, Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts.⁴¹ Meanwhile, the Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG) stated in November that their field researchers had identified 27 SPDC army battalions operating in Toungoo District alone. These were organized into 54 operational columns and comprised of an estimated 3,780 SPDC army soldiers. Ordinarily, there are only 12 SPDC army battalions stationed in Toungoo District at any one time.⁴²

SPDC army forces mounted regular patrols through the hills of northern Karen State in search of internally displaced persons (IDPs), their settlements and their food supplies. Any IDPs that they found have been either captured and forcibly relocated to SPDC-controlled relocation sites, or simply shot-on-sight, while any IDP hiding sites or hidden food caches discovered by the soldiers have been ransacked and then destroyed. The soldiers eat what they can, carry off what they are able, and destroy the rest. Few villagers have much left in the way of food and starvation hangs ominously over the heads of many. Moreover, fields and plantations and IDP sites alike have been sown with landmines for the purpose of discouraging the villagers from returning lest they step on one. Many villagers from the region have reported that aside from threats to their physical security, their greatest concern is the lack of food.⁴³ (For more information, see Chapter 5: Deprivation of Livelihood). Facing the very real possibility of being shot if seen, IDPs therefore do what they can to avoid all contact with SPDC army units. Many must regularly move from place to place whenever an SPDC army patrol draws near, fleeing deeper into the forest to avoid detection.⁴⁴ (For more information, see Chapter 13: Internal Displacement and Forced Relocation). The ongoing offensive in northern Karen State has expanded to become the largest military offensive in the region for the past decade.⁴⁵



The Karen national flag. [Photo: Jaume Ollé, 2001]

However, in spite of the continuation of heinous abuses of human rights, the somewhat obvious dissolution of the ceasefire and the insincerity of the SPDC, the KNU leadership insisted on attempting to reopen negotiations. Finally, in July 2006, in the face of increasing atrocities committed by the SPDC in Karen State, the KNU declared they would make no agreement with the junta until the attacks against Karen civilians ceased.⁴⁶ However, in late September 2006, the KNU sent a four-person delegation of military officers to resume talks with the junta.⁴⁷ The delegation travelled to Rangoon and met with Major General Ye Myint of Military Affairs Security. At the meeting, the KNU was told that the “gentleman’s agreement” had been nullified and a new round of negotiations would be required, albeit this time with military personnel from the KNLA, rather than with officials from the KNU leadership.⁴⁸ In late December 2006, Thai military officials agreed to mediate talks between the junta and members of the KNU Central Committee in Rangoon,⁴⁹ however no formal agreement was reached and the offensive in Karen State continued into 2007.

In July 2006, Brigadier General Htain Maung, commanding officer of the KNLA 7th Brigade and the Tactical Commander of General Headquarter (GHQ) Battalions, Colonel Ner Dah Mya, son of General Bo Mya, declared they would not heed the commands of certain KNU leaders, whom they accused of corruption.⁵⁰ Many worried the disagreement would lead to another split in the KNU and some speculated the discord came as a result of the SPDC’s

attempts to cause internal divisions. The KNU issued a statement confirming that the SPDC had made overtures towards certain group members, urging members to remain united.⁵¹ On 21 August 2006, the KNU and the two dissenting commanders held a formal meeting to resolve their differences.⁵² However, it would seem that these matters were never fully reconciled (see below).

Signalling what many have referred to as the end of an era, on 24 December 2006, General Bo Mya, former KNU president and commander of the KNLA, died at the age of 79 from complications arising from diabetes.⁵³ KNU officials stated that their cause would not die with their leader.⁵⁴ Bo Mya was widely respected and many groups from both sides of the conflict expressed their condolences, including members of the DKBA, the SPDC and the Royal Thai Army (RTA) who attended his funeral service at the KNLA #202 battalion headquarters in Pa'an District.⁵⁵ Some reports maintained that as many as 10,000 people attended the funeral,⁵⁶ though those in attendance put this number closer to approximately 5,000 mourners.⁵⁷ Controversy arose when Colonel Ner Dah Mya, son of the late leader, invited the SPDC to attend his father's funeral. Colonel Myat Htun Oo accepted the invitation, upsetting many high-ranking KNU officials who, in protest, boycotted the service.

Within days of the death of General Bo Mya, Htaing Maung led a number of KNLA officers in ceasefire negotiations with the SPDC without prior consent from the KNU Central Committee. Htain Maung and his followers were warned repeatedly to cease all negotiations, and failing to comply were ultimately ejected from the KNU on 30 January 2007. The following day, Htain Maung announced the creation of the newest Karen splinter faction, dubbed the Karen National Union / Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council (KNU/KNLAPC), of which he is chairman. On 11 February 2007, a peace ceremony is held in Kawkareik, Karen State to celebrate the ceasefire agreement reached with the KNU/KNLAPC and their "*return to the legal fold*".⁵⁸

On 2 March 2006, a bomb exploded near an electrical transformer in Ward 20 of Toungoo town. On 8 March 2006, another bomb exploded near No. 1 Basic Education High School in Ward 19, also in Toungoo. There were no casualties in either explosion. The state-controlled *New Light of Myanmar* declared that the bombers were Saw Gay The Mu, Saw Nay La and Saw Baw Shwe He. The report maintained that Saw Baw Shwe He is a private in the KNLA 5th Brigade (operating in Papun District). KNU officials denied any involvement in the bombings, claiming that they were observing the ceasefire. Local villagers also doubted the reports. One villager was reported to say: "*I think it is a plot by them [SPDC]. I think they want to propagandise that the KNU did it ... Outsiders could never enter [Toungoo]. ... There are so many checkpoints, which are saturated with members of the police, USDA (Union Solidarity Development Association) and the intelligence*".⁵⁹ Other groups supported this speculation. In June 2006, KHRG stated that "*It appears far more likely that the SPDC are planting the bombs themselves in order to strike terror into the hearts of the people living there so that they may be lulled into the belief that continued military rule is necessary for the stability of the nation, and to justify offensives against villagers in Karen State*".⁶⁰

Between 1 January 2006 and 31 December 2006, the KNU reported a total of 1,383 clashes with the SPDC and their allied ceasefire proxy armies, in which they killed a total of 372 soldiers and wounded 1,098. Over the year, 39 soldiers surrendered to the KNU,⁶¹ including two ethnic Arakanese who surrendered in March 2006, who cited discrimination as the cause of their desertion from the SPDC ranks.⁶² Over the year, the KNU reported 24 of their own troops killed in battle and a further 20 wounded.⁶³

Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA)

In May 2005, the SPDC began pressuring the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) to disarm and completely surrender to the SPDC.⁶⁴ However, the group continued to cooperate with the regime and retain its arms. An unnamed DKBA official was reported as saying that the group was, “*very likely to merge with the KNU if the junta keeps pressuring it to disarm*”.⁶⁵ Despite some statements made by certain DKBA leaders, who expressed their concern over division among the Karen, 2006 did not see any reconciliation between the two main Karen groups. The year 2006 saw a continuation of hostilities between the DKBA and the KNU, which on occasion resulted in armed clashes. The DKBA also continued to act on behalf of the SPDC and was responsible for committing a large number of human rights abuses in Karen State (For more information, see Section 8.4 Abuse of Ethnic Minorities by Ceasefire Groups).

In many cases, the DKBA operates in the same manner and to the same end as the SPDC, controlling and manipulating villagers through detention, interrogation and torture. The DKBA takes Karen villagers as porters and extorts funds from villages and farmers, as well as using them to obtain information about the movements and activities of KNU and KNLA members.⁶⁶

On 4 March 2006, Chan Naung and Yer Phoo, both 18-year-old Privates from DKBA #901 Battalion were both shot in the head by SPDC army soldiers from IB #18 near Three Pagoda Pass. The M-16's and pistols of the two dead men were reportedly taken from their bodies after the incident, though why two 18-year-old privates were armed with pistols is unclear; it are normally only officers who are issued with sidearms. SPDC Southeast Command ordered Major Hla Min, commander of IB #18 to pay compensation to the DKBA for the deaths. The SPDC reported the incident to be a case of mistaken identity, claiming that they were fighting KNU troops at the time, however, the area is heavily controlled by the DKBA and the KNU does not have any troops in the area.⁶⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Soe Moe, DKBA #901 Battalion commanding officer, also found the event highly suspicious and doubted it was a case of friendly fire. According to him, it seemed clear that the SPDC troops were attacking DKBA positions.⁶⁸

Despite these tensions, in June 2006, DKBA Brigades #333, #777 and #999 in Thaton District and in parts of southern Papun District were operating together. According to KHRG, the SPDC had given the DKBA 200 million kyat to participate in joint operations in the area.⁶⁹ In December 2006, the highest concentration of DKBA troops was found in Thaton District, which has allowed the SPDC to redeploy its troops to greater effect elsewhere. During 2006, units from 11 different DKBA battalions were reported as having been active in Thaton District with a total of approximately 650 soldiers.⁷⁰ The close relationship between the SPDC and the DKBA was particularly evident in December 2006, when SPDC officials for the first time joined approximately 5,000 people attending Karen New Year celebrations in DKBA #999 Brigade Special Battalion headquarters at Shwe Ko Ko in Pa'an District.⁷¹

Karen Peace Force (KPF)

One of the more marginalised groups of armed Karen, the Karen Peace Force (KPF), was formed in 1997 and operates out of the Three Pagoda Pass Township in southeastern Karen State where it is reported to have several profitable business ventures. The KPF is believed to field approximately 300 soldiers.

In 2005, the KPF obtained permission from the SPDC Southeast Command, which operates in the area, to operate gambling halls in Three Pagoda Pass Township. It was estimated in October 2006 that the KPF was able to collect up to 300,000 baht per month, even after paying kickbacks and bribes to SPDC township officials. It was speculated that the junta approved the operation not only to secure cooperation from the KPF and a good income through taxation, but also to occupy people so that they don't turn to politics. According to one local resident:

"The regime does not care what happens to the residents. ... They have allowed residents to gamble so that they do not get interested in politics. ... Moreover, food, health and education of children are at stake when daily workers spend money on gambling. It is not good for the residents. ... In reality, it is not improving the life of residents'. They are getting sucked deeper into gambling".⁷²

God's Army

God's Army was originally formed and led by Saw Shaw Pyar, a former KNU official. Though, in 1997, the group came under the leadership of twin boys Luther and Johnny Htoo. Legend has it that when their village was under attack by the military, most of the Karen soldiers defending it fled in fear. This roused the twins, said to be nine-years-old at the time, to rally a few villagers to stay and fight, armed with little more than a few pistols and grenades. The legend states that though they were hopelessly outnumbered and outgunned, the boys led the villagers to victory, killing many SLORC soldiers in the process. Rumours quickly spread of their supernatural powers, which among things, maintained that they were impervious to bullets.

In 1999, the group joined forces with the Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors (VBSW) and seized control of the Burmese embassy in Bangkok. Not long after, in January 2000, God's Army troops took over a hospital in Ratchaburi, Thailand. A siege ensued and all ten of the God's Army soldiers were killed by Royal Thai Army (RTA) commandos. After that, the group has had a rather low profile and the twins moved to live in refugee camps in Thailand.

The State-run *New Light of Myanmar* reported that on 17 June 2006, Johnny Htoo surrendered to SPDC army officers of the Coastal Military Command in southeastern Burma along with eight of his comrades and all of their weapons. Many, however, doubted the report, labelling it as "*just a story made by the military junta*".⁷³ Nothing has been reported of him since his alleged surrender.

Karenni State

The Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP)

The Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) was formed in 1957 and has survived a number of separations and splits in the years since. Those who left the party in 1995, 1999 and 2002, formed various splinter groups and signed ceasefire pacts with the SPDC.⁷⁴ On 21 March 1995, the KNPP itself signed its first ceasefire pact with the regime, although it lasted only three months. In June, the SLORC used the ceasefire to move more troops into the region which they then used to launch a new offensive against the KNPP and their armed wing, the Karenni Army (KA). By March 1996, all of the main KNPP bases had fallen to the SLORC. Since that time, the KNPP has resumed active armed resistance against the regime with several clashes reported to have occurred during 2006.

From December 2004 until May 2005, the SPDC launched an intensive attack against the KA headquarters with artillery back up and support from troops from the Karenni ceasefire factions: the Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front (KNPLF) and Karenni National Solidarity Organization (KnSO).⁷⁵ During one of these engagements on 15 February 2005, the SPDC was accused of using chemical weapons against the Karenni. A number of SPDC army defectors reported that they had to wear gloves and facemasks while transporting ammunition boxes emblazoned with a skull and crossbones. KA soldiers reported that SPDC bombings produced yellow clouds of smoke, which produced blisters, lung irritation, diarrhoea, vomiting, and difficulty breathing in those who inhaled it, symptoms which lasted up to eight months for some soldiers. According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), the symptoms experienced by the soldiers who had inhaled the fumes were consistent with exposure to some sort of chemical weapon.⁷⁶

In February 2006, the KNPP was fighting SPDC troops in eastern Burma, in what the KNPP said was an attempt by the regime to pressure them into accepting the terms of the failed 1995 ceasefire agreement.⁷⁷ The terms offered by the regime remain unchanged from the 1995 agreement and the KNPP to date have proven reluctant to sign.

In May 2006, the SPDC officially labelled the KNPP a “terrorist group” and encouraged the Thai military to help eradicate the group.⁷⁸



The Karenni national flag [Photo: *Jaume Ollé*, 1996]

Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front (KNPLF)

The Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front (KNPLF) was formed when approximately 200 members of the KNPP broke away from the group in 1978. Once a communist anti-government force, the KNPLF signed a ceasefire with the junta in June 1994.⁷⁹ Immediately, the SPDC pitted the KNPLF forces against the KNPP, promising the former lucrative income through control of border-tax gates, the tin and wolfram mines in Mawchi, and taxes on logging, if it could wrest control of these operations away from the KNPP and act as a village security force in the name of the SPDC.

Much like the DKBA in Karen State, the KNPLF often serve as a proxy for junta forces, searching for KNPP units and interrogating local villagers for information on their whereabouts and activities. In June 2006, Karenni women reported being detained and tortured with other pregnant women by SPDC troops after KNPLF forces informed the junta that their husbands were involved with KNPLF activities.⁸⁰

On 7 June 2006, it was reported that a group of three armed KNPLF members crossed into Thailand in search of a village headman they believed to have contacts with the KNPP. The soldiers, based in the Huay Pu Luang area near the Thai-Burma border crossed into the Thai village of Huay Pu Kay village in Mae Hong Son province where they were reportedly accompanied by a Thai national during their search. Eyewitnesses reported that the soldiers carried weapons concealed under their clothing. The village headman, Maung Htan, learned of this and went into hiding out of fear for his safety, from where he was reported to have said: *"They think I have contacts with the organization here [KNPP]. They used to send some people to call me but I didn't dare to go. I'm sure they'll do something to me"*.⁸¹

Furthermore, according to KHRG, the KNPLF were also used by the SPDC during their attacks on civilian villagers in eastern Toungoo District in Karen State in late-2005 and 2006.⁸²

Moreover, on 15 January 2006, clearly at the behest of the junta, the KNPLF released a press statement condemning the UNSC resolution to put Burma on its agenda stating that, the KNPLF, *"will make a harmonious effort in collaboration with the government to handle the internal affairs of our nation."*⁸³

Karenni National Solidarity Organization (KnSO)

In October 2002, KNPP battalion commander Bo Ta Neh, along with approximately 100 men broke away from the KNPP and surrendered themselves to the SPDC. Similar to the policy used with the KNPLF, the SPDC has used the KnSO against their former comrades in the KNPP as well as in the ongoing military offensive in northern Karen State.⁸⁴

Mon State

New Mon State Party (NMSP)

Much like the Karen, Mon resistance has been organised since a very early stage by an administrative political group, the New Mon State Party (NMSP), with active resistance being carried out by its armed wing, the Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA). However, unlike the Karen, the NMSP signed a ceasefire pact with the regime in 1995 in return for the right to retain arms in Mon State, some economic assistance and logging and fishing concessions. The NMSP holds territory in 12 areas in Mon State although 2005 and 2006 saw an increase in the SPDC militarization of the southern part of the state.

According to reports by the *Kaowao News*, the NMSP previously received monthly payments from the SPDC of 4.1 million kyat.⁸⁵ Though all payments ceased in July 2005 after the group spoke up in favour of federalism at the National Convention proceedings.⁸⁶ The payments were partially resumed in September 2005, although economic concessions to the group were withdrawn and movement restrictions on NMSP members were strictly enforced.⁸⁷

In January 2006, the NMSP elected their first woman to the Central Committee. Mi Sar Dar, 41, is also in charge of the Mon National Education Department (MNED) and chairperson of Mon Women's Organization (MWO). In August 2006, she was suspended from her post for three months after purchasing a rubber plantation worth 20 million kyat without first properly consulting other party members.⁸⁸

In February 2006, explosives destroyed part of a gas pipeline near Kwan Hlar village in Mudon Township. Soldiers from Southeast Command arrested 11 village leaders including the chairman and the secretary of Kwan Hlar village. They were all released in mid-May, after being forced to sign a statement indicating that the NMSP member Nai Ong Janah caused the gas explosion. One million kyat was demanded for the release of each village leader. NMSP denies responsibility for the explosion and insists that Nai Ong Janah was not involved.⁸⁹

In April 2006, 82 representatives from Mon communities in Burma and abroad held the third annual Mon National Conference. Participants came from Europe, USA, Canada, Australia, Malaysia and Thailand. The main subject for debate was the continuation or cessation of the ten-year-old ceasefire agreement.⁹⁰ All the same, on 29 June 2006, the party celebrated the 11th anniversary of the signing of the agreement in Moulmein, although the celebrations were on a much smaller scale than those in the previous years.⁹¹

On 8 August 2006, NMSP celebrated the 59th Mon Revolution Day with a call for the SPDC to engage in a tripartite dialogue.⁹² In September 2006, NMSP's Central Committee held public consultations and a debate on whether to participate in the National Convention (NC) proceedings.⁹³ Party members continued to be divided on the issue of the ceasefire and on participation in any form at the NC.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, a three-person delegation attended the NC, again with the status of observers.⁹⁵ Although complying with the regime's wishes that the NMSP attend the NC, the party refused to oppose the addition of Burma to the UNSC, to the widespread support of the Mon people in Burma and abroad.⁹⁶ The NMSP made a firm decision in October 2006 not to break the formal ceasefire agreement with the military regime, despite being urged to reconsider their position by the Australia-based Mon National

Council (MNC), and other exiled Mon groups.⁹⁷ The NMSP's political stance was not welcomed by the junta and the military responded with intimidation similar to that used on other ceasefire parties. On 8 October 2006, three SPDC army officers attempted to enter the NMSP-controlled territory without seeking prior permission from the NMSP. It was reported that one officer from Southeast Command, one from Military Operation Management Command (MOMC) #19, and another, a military officer commanding 30 soldiers (possibly a captain or lieutenant), planned to survey uncultivated land in NMSP-controlled areas. One unnamed NMSP spokesperson was reported to have said: *"I don't think we should allow them to enter our central administrative area. If they do not listen to us, we should start a civil war again. This is the only way we can stop them."*⁹⁸

On 14 October 2006, food support to the NMSP's central administrative area was cut off. In November 2006, the NMSP began a public campaign in the border areas to garner support for their political stance and raise awareness of the issues facing the Mon.⁹⁹ The campaign continued for three weeks in Ye Township of Mon State, Yepyu Township of Tenasserim (Tanintharyi) Division and Three Pagodas Pass Township of Karen State, though at its completion, the food support had still not resumed.¹⁰⁰

In mid-December 2006, an NMSP office in Wae Ka Lung village, Thanbyuzayat Township was served written orders by the SPDC army Southeast Command to vacate the premises immediately, alleging that the NMSP members from the office were *"frightening villagers with guns"*. The NMSP denied the claims but were forced to comply with the orders. The SPDC established themselves in the village soon after it had been vacated by the NMSP, although ironically, local villagers have reported that they have far more to fear from the SPDC than they do from the NMSP. In 2005, the NMSP office located in Pa Nga village was also ordered to close for the same reason.¹⁰¹



The Mon national flag. [Photo: Eugene Ipavec, 2006]

Mon Armed Group (MAG)

Led by Mon resistance fighter Chan Done, the Mon Armed Group (MAG) operates in Southern Mon State.¹⁰² The party was formed when the NMSP signed a ceasefire agreement with the junta in 1995. Approximately 100 soldiers left the group to continue fighting the regime. When the group first formed, it was originally known as the Mon National Warrior Army (MNAWA) and led by Nai Hloin and his brother Nai Bin, it operated primarily in northern Tenasserim (Tanintharyi) Division. In 2005, an SPDC offensive caused the brothers to flee to Thailand and Chan Done and Nai Sook Gloin took over as leaders of the movement.¹⁰³

Myeik-Dawei United Front (MDUF)

On 12 March 2006, five men who claimed that they were members of the is small and largely inactive opposition group, the Myeik-Dawei United Front (MDUF), surrendered to officers of the SPDC Southeastern Command in the border town of Three Pagoda Pass. The MDUF is also sometimes referred to as the Mergui-Tavoy United Front (MTUF). The group was led by two men identified as U Zee Yin and Thang Chung. They surrendered two pistols to the regime and in return were resettled on 30 acres of land on the outskirts of Three Pagodas Pass town where they were free to conduct business. The MDUF, however, denied that any of their members had surrendered to the regime.¹⁰⁴

Also, on 24 March 2006, another five members of the MDUF surrendered to the SPDC in Three Pagoda Pass. Two women were reportedly included in this group. A local source maintained that *“These people were sent to Rangoon recently. If they stayed in Three Pagoda Pass it would have become unsafe for them”*.¹⁰⁵

Shan State

As the largest ethnic minority state in Burma, and as one of the most ethnically diverse, there are a number of groups working out of Shan State. Recognising this threat, the regime has maintained a fairly consistent military presence in the state since taking power. In 2005, there was a particular crackdown against Shan activists by the regime. In February 2005, a number of Shan leaders were arrested on charges of on charges of *“treason, ‘discrediting the nation’, disrupting the National Convention, flouting stringent censorship laws and for economic offences”* after making comments against the National Convention.¹⁰⁶ Those leaders who were arrested included:

1. Khun Tun Oo, Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) chairman;
2. Sai Nyunt Lwin, SNLD secretary;
3. Sai Hla Aung, SNLD central committee member;
4. Sao Kyar Oo, SNLD member;
5. U Myint Than, Shan New Generation Youth (SNGY) member;
6. General Hso Ten, Shan State Peace Council (SSPC) chairman; and
7. U Shwe Ohn, United Nationalities League for Democracy (UNLD) chairman.¹⁰⁷

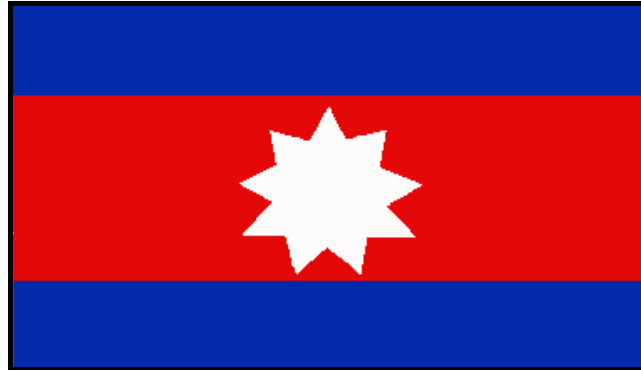
All of these leaders were sentenced to excessively long prison terms. General Hso Ten and Khun Tun Oo, for example, were sentenced to 106 and 93 years respectively.¹⁰⁸

United Wa State Army (UWSA)

The United Wa State Army (UWSA) is based in Wa territory in the northern part of Shan State. The UWSA was formed in 1989, after the collapse of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), and signed a ceasefire with the regime in May of the same year. The group is led by Bao Yuxiang and Kyauk Nyi Lai. The UWSA’s forces are based along the Chinese border from Kokang to Mongla and along the Thai border areas from Tachilek to Homong with their main area of control officially known as Special Region No. 2, Shan State.¹⁰⁹

Although the group profits greatly from its affiliation with the SPDC, villages remain largely undeveloped and lack basic healthcare and education. In return for supporting SPDC troops in their attacks against other ethnic minority groups, the SPDC has for a long time turned a

blind eye to the prolific drug operations based in Wa territory; the source of much of the UWSA's wealth, arms and power.¹¹⁰ There has been a lot of speculation over the past several years that the SPDC has been complicit in the drug trade and have received kickbacks from groups such as the UWSA for permitting such activities to transpire unpunished.



The flag of the United Wa State Army (UWSA). [Photo: Jaume Ollé, 1996]

In 2005, the UWSA publicly promised to cease their drug production and trade. They claim they have done so and are currently facing financial difficulty due to a loss of revenue in this area. Many doubt that the UWSA's involvement in the illicit drug trade has actually ceased. The Ethnic Youth Network Group (EYNG) released a report on 14 October 2006 claiming that the number of opium plantations in Shan and Karenni State had actually increased in size from 2005 to 2006, contrary to claims made by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) who maintained that heroin production had decreased.¹¹¹ On 9 November 2006, six UWSA members were detained and 290,000 methamphetamine tablets were seized in Tawkaw village, Hawngleuk village tract. On 11 November 2006, two more members were arrested after 60 kilograms of heroin was found in block form in two hotels owned by the UWSA.¹¹²

In 2005, the UWSA's privileged position with the SPDC deteriorated slightly when the SPDC revoked the group's right to possess unregistered motor vehicles and subsequently arrested 100 UWSA members who did not follow the new restrictions.¹¹³ The SPDC also shut down three UWSA-affiliated banks in 2005, indicted on charges of money laundering.¹¹⁴ In addition, the regime requested that Chinese officials introduce restrictions on the importation of timber and minerals into China from Wa territory. The restrictions began on 26 March 2006 and resulted in a severe cutback in income for the UWSA, as the cross-border trade had all but ceased. The SPDC tried to take advantage of the UWSA's financial crunch by demanding SPDC-controlled immigration, customs and schools into what was previously an autonomous region.¹¹⁵ It was also reported that the SPDC has been pressuring the UWSA to join them in attacking SSA-S troops in the region.¹¹⁶

In an attempt to make money elsewhere, the UWSA signed an agreement in July 2006 with the Chinese company, Hai Nan Chang. The agreement involves the Chinese using 33,333 acres of land in Pan San, Mai Pok, Mai Mao, Hnam Tit, Wen Kong and Pang Feng Townships for rubber plantations.¹¹⁷ The Chinese also expressed their support of UWSA's anti-drug activities by donating 10,000 tons of rice to assist farmers whose previous source of income was opium cultivation.¹¹⁸

The SPDC has continued to use the UWSA in its campaigns against the opposition Shan State Army – South (SSA-S). It was reported that both sides were believed to have suffered as many as 770 casualties from clashes during the two months of March and April of 2005.¹¹⁹ The combined forces of the SPDC and UWSA persisted in launching violent skirmishes against the SSA-S throughout 2006.

On 9 April 2006, the SPDC issued a formal “*invitation*” to the UWSA to disarm and “*exchange arms for perpetual peace*”. The UWSA offered no official public response, but one unnamed UWSA source was quoted to state that “*It will be impossible for us to comply*”.¹²⁰ Though, despite growing disunity between the two groups, representatives from the UWSA attended the National Convention proceedings in October 2006.¹²¹

Shan State Army-South (SSA-S)

When the Mong Thai Army (MTA) signed a ceasefire agreement with the SPDC in 1996, the Shan State Army-South (SSA-S) formed as one of the groups of MTA soldiers unhappy with the move. Whereas the MTA was known more for their involvement in the drug industry than they were for representing the people, the SSA-S became known as a legitimate representative of the Shan ethnic minority. Since the SPDC will only accept a complete surrender of arms from the SSA-S, no ceasefire negotiations have ever taken place between the two groups.¹²²

On 2 January 2006, approximately 40 soldiers of the SSA-S 241st Brigade and their commander, Sa Khun Kyaw, surrendered to the SPDC near the village of Namtee in Nam Kham Township of northeastern Shan State.¹²³ Following the surrender, the SPDC operations in northern Shan State intensified. Six SPDC Light Infantry Battalions (LIB) launched an attack against the SSA-C.¹²⁴ On 4 March 2006, 24 of the 40 men who had surrendered, including Sa Khun Kyaw, were sentenced to death by a martial court in Lashio prison on charges of drug-trafficking, murder, and the use of child soldiers. A spokesperson for the SSA-S denied all charges.¹²⁵

In April 2005, members of the 758th Brigade, led by Colonel Moengzuen, left the group and formed the independent Shan State Army – Central (SSA-C). Colonel Moengzuen supported the declaration of an independent Shan State and declared allegiance to the Interim Shan Government (ISG), leaving the SSA-S.¹²⁶ In April 2006, a delegation of 300 SSA-S soldiers was sent to central Shan State, allegedly to seek reconciliation with SSA-C. It was reported that the group was attacked by SPDC troops from LIB #520, 332, 574 and 576. SSA-S officials did not confirm or deny these attacks, nor did they comment on the number of fatalities, if any.¹²⁷

On 6 July 2006, the SPDC reported that 848 men from the breakaway 758th Brigade faction of the SSA-S, led by Colonel Moengzuen (aka Mein Sein), relinquished over 800 rifles, 55 hand grenades, 63 landmines and communications equipment to the SPDC in return for “*assistance for their livelihood*” and land.¹²⁸ Meanwhile, SSA-S spokesman Nam Khur Hsen confirmed that Moengzuen had left the group, but claimed he had taken only his personal bodyguard, around 35 people, with him. The SPDC has on many occasions forced local villagers into uniforms and participate in the surrender ceremony to give the impression that far more soldiers had actually defected. The SSA-S spokesperson also claimed that Colonel Moengzuen had been recently charged with illegally taxing Shan citizens of more than 90 million kyat, while the SPDC-controlled *New Light of Myanmar* carried a photograph

of Brigadier General Thaung Aye, commanding officer of the SPDC army Eastern Command, donating 30 million kyat to Colonel Moengzuen.¹²⁹ Then in a backflip on 2 August 2006, Colonel Moengzuen and 70 of his men withdrew from their base at Namhu Phra Htam in Laikha Township. The men rejoined the SSA-S while Moengzuen pled for amnesty through an intermediary.¹³⁰ However, these men later left the SSA-S and rejoined Moengzuen in his undisclosed location where he waited for reinstatement in his former SSA-S position.¹³¹ As a result of the defection from the side of the regime, SPDC troops tightened control in the Le Char area of northeastern Shan State and repeatedly engaged SSA-S troops in daily clashes.¹³²

The ongoing clashes between SSA-S troops and the SPDC army have made life very difficult for the villagers. On 1 December 2006, soldiers from LIB #514 demanded that four soldiers be housed in each village in the Wankeng village tract in Mongkerng Township to survey possible SSA-S activities in the area. The SPDC army soldiers threatened to kill ten villagers for every one of their soldiers killed while operating in the Township. The following day, the SSA-S ambushed SPDC army soldiers from LIB #514, killing seven, including a Major, and wounding ten more. Fear of being executed in retaliation then prompted 20 villagers to flee across the border to Thailand. Many more would also have made the trip if only they could afford it. One villager explained that one family with four children had to pay approximately one million kyat to make the journey. Very few villagers possess this amount of money.¹³³

In November and December 2006, the SPDC increased the number of battalions stationed in Shan State. IB #221, and LIB #570, 571 and 316 arrived on 27 November 2006, and almost daily fighting occurred throughout early December in the border area near Tachilek.¹³⁴ On 12 December 2006, the number of battalions in the immediate area rose to seven as LIB #360 and LIB #314 also arrived.¹³⁵ There were some reports that United Wa State Army (UWSA) troops fought alongside the SPDC army troops,¹³⁶ however the UWSA denied this.¹³⁷

Shan State National Army (SSNA)

The Shan State National Army (SSNA) was formed when military strategist, Colonel Kurn Yawd broke away from the Mong Tai Army (MTA) with approximately 2,000 men in 1995 and soon developed an ‘unofficial’ ceasefire with the regime without ever holding formal negotiations to that effect.¹³⁸

Over the past few years, however, they have been under increased pressure to surrender their arms to the SPDC, and in 2005 this pressure took the form of a consistent military offensive against SSNA troops. The SSNA 11th Brigade surrendered first in April 2005, followed soon after by the 19th Brigade. The remaining soldiers under the 6th, 9th and 16th Brigades loyal to Colonel Sai Yi broke the ceasefire pact completely in May 2005 and joined forces with the SSA-S to fight against the regime. In January 2006, Colonel Sai Yee was elected as Vice President of the SSA-S, solidifying the merger.¹³⁹

Shan State Army – North (SSA-N)

Following the collapse of the SSNA in 2005, the SPDC turned their attention and their attacks on the Shan State Army – North (SSA-N). In September 2005, the SSA-N withdrew from some of its territory, following orders from the SPDC. Attempts to negotiate with the junta failed and the military began to direct its firepower against the group. In October 2005, the SSA-N 3rd Brigade surrendered to the SPDC.¹⁴⁰

SPDC attacks against the SSA-N continued into 2006. On 10 February, SSA-N 3rd Brigade officers were fired upon by SPDC army soldiers while meeting with village headmen in the Mong Kher region in northern Shan State. No one was killed in the fighting. Following the attack, the SSA-N renewed efforts to negotiate with the junta.¹⁴¹

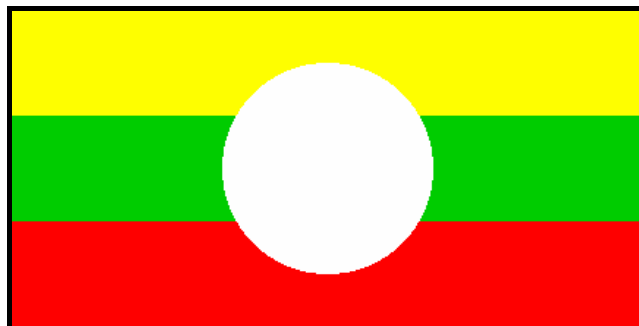
Shan Nationalities People Liberation Organization (SNPLO)

The Shan Nationalities People Liberation Organization (SNPLO) is a ceasefire group active in eastern Shan State. The SNPLO joined forces with the regime on 9 October 1994 and has reportedly become closely allied with the UWSA.

In late-2005, the group suffered a major split. Hkun Chit Maung split away from the SNPLO with approximately 100 men and established their base at Nawnghtao, Hsihseng Township, to the west of the Prawn River. The new faction was renamed the Pa'O Regional Nationalities Unity Organization (PNUO). His 100 troops were reinforced by additional soldiers from a fellow ceasefire group, the Pa'O National Army (PNA) and also received support and protection from the SPDC. The second faction, led by Hso Pyan, retained the SNPLO name with an estimated 250 men. Hso Pyan's faction based themselves to the east of the Prawn River. No large-scale battles have occurred between the two groups although there have been a number of small skirmishes and ambushes.

On 22 March 2006, veteran Kayan commander, Major Kyaw King, was executed by Hkun Chit Maung on charges of agitating against Rangoon.¹⁴²

In 2006, the SNPLO was quoted saying that year's season was to be their last in the production of opium. Karenni researchers, however, noted a subsequent increase in the production of poppies in the area. Farmers in Pekon, Hsihseng and Mawmai Townships in Shan State and Loikaw and Shadaw Townships in Karenni State pay a tax of approximately half a kilogram of opium per household to the SNPLO. The same farmers must also pay a tax of approximately 60,000 kyat per acre to SPDC army battalions based in Hsihseng.¹⁴³



The Shan national flag. [Photo: Ivan Sache]

National Democratic Alliance Army-Eastern Shan State (NDAA-ESS) / ‘Mongla Group’

A ceasefire group since 1989, the NDAA-ESS comprises members of both the Shan and Akha ethnic minorities and is closely allied with the UWSA. Other allies include the Kokang and the NDA-K. Also known as the ‘Mongla Group’, they consider the Burmese regime to be an ally and allows state officials to operate in their territory in the areas of immigration, customs and education. In October 2006, the NDAA-ESS attended the National Convention.¹⁴⁴

The NDAA-ESS, known officially as Special Region No. 4, is comprised of three brigades in eastern Shan State: headquarters with three battalions; the 369th Brigade with five battalions; and the 911th Brigade with seven battalions. All of their battalions are grossly understrength, each only fielding approximately 100-200 soldiers.

The NDAA-ESS claims to have the highest paid soldiers in the country, and business concerns, especially business coming from across the border with China, seems to be important for many group members. Special Region No. 4 gains a lot of income from Chinese tourists, particularly in casinos, and NDAA-ESS members have been hurt by the year long economic blockade imposed by China and encouraged by the Burmese regime. This makes the group somewhat vulnerable to economic pressure applied by the SPDC. However, one NDAA-ESS major claimed that “*All top members ... are not going to kowtow easily. ... Only a few who have business interests are humming and hawing*”.¹⁴⁵

Lahu Democratic Front (LDF)

The Lahu Democratic Front (LDF) was founded in 1989 in opposition to the military junta. According to reports, the organization’s chairman and founder, U Aye Maung died in his home on 22 June 2006 at the age of 65. He had been admitted to a hospital in Chiang Mai, Thailand to relieve pressure on his brain, but was suddenly discharged only hours before his death. In remembrance, one unnamed Lahu woman said “*He was a patriot. He made sacrifices in his revolutionary life*”.¹⁴⁶

Multilateral Resistance Organizations

Despite the frequent splits and splinters in the various armed ethnic resistance groups, political affiliations between different ethnic groups have let the creation of several multilateral resistance organisations.

The National Democratic Front (NDF) was the first such group to form in 1976 and comprised members of the Karen National Union (KNU), New Mon State Party (NMSP), Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), Karenni Nationalities Progressive Party (KNPP), Chin National Front (CNF), Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), Lahu Democratic Front (LDF), Palaung Liberation Front (PLF), Pa'O Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Wa National Organization (WNO). As with the majority of the multilateral resistance organisations, the efforts of the NDF were purely political and focused on the advocacy of a Federal Union of Burma and the equal rights and representation of ethnic minorities.¹⁴⁷

In 1989, the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB) joined the NDF in their advocacy efforts with a membership that also included members of a broader pro-democracy movement in Burma.¹⁴⁸

In 2001 the United Nationalities League for Democracy – Liberated Area (UNLD-LA) and the NDF founded the Ethnic Nationalities Solidarity and Cooperation Committee (ENSCC), which in 2004 was renamed the ENC. In 2005, the ENC commenced work on drafting a constitution for a democratic Burma. Unlike the constitution being forced upon the delegates at the National Convention, the constitution that emerged from the Ethnic Nationalities Council was founded on principals of federalism and ethnic minority rights.¹⁴⁹

Working in conjunction with the NDF, the Ethnic Nationalities Solidarity and Cooperation Committee (ENSCC) was formed in August 2001. Its stated goal was to facilitate tripartite dialogue between the SPDC, the pro-democracy groups and the ethnic minority groups. The ENSCC tries to coordinate between the ethnic minority groups in order to achieve a degree of unity between them and advocate for their collective concerns.

The NDF held their sixth annual conference from 20 April 2006 to 22 April 2006. Representatives from nine of Burma's armed ethnic resistance groups attended and spoke out against the ongoing violence, the National Convention and the Seven Point Roadmap To Democracy.¹⁵⁰

8.3 SPDC Campaign of Abuses against Ethnic Minority Villagers

The SPDC's use of naked aggression against civilian inhabitants of ethnic minority areas gained unprecedented international attention in 2005 and 2006 when the regime commenced its largest campaign in northern Karen State since the massive offensives in 1997. Principally targeting civilians, SPDC army forces fired upon Karen villagers on sight, forcibly relocated those they could catch and deployed thousands of landmines targeted against those that they could not, burned whole villages and destroyed villagers' food supplies. The attacks on villages and the perpetration of widespread human rights violations sent thousands of villagers fleeing for their lives. The Free Burma Rangers (FBR) estimated that by December 2006, approximately 25,000 villagers had fled their homes to hide in the forest where they hoped to avoid detection by SPDC army patrols.¹⁵¹ However, this number is in addition to the approximately 120,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) already living in hiding in Karen State.¹⁵² This offensive differed from previous offensives in that the attacks continued year-round, even during the rainy season when travel becomes difficult and the roads impassable to vehicles.

The 2005-2006 offensive in northern Karen State is a continuation of a pattern of state-directed violence against civilians which the SPDC has practised in ethnic minority areas of for decades. In its efforts to wipe out armed resistance and control ethnic minority groups, the SPDC typically targets ethnic minority villages, in direct contravention of not only the Geneva Conventions, but various other international treaties as well. (For more information specific to the Karen offensive, see Section 8.2 Ethnic Politics, Armed Resistance, and Ceasefire Agreements above).

Throughout the country, ceasefire agreements have proved to offer civilians little protection against violence and abuse. Quite often, the abuses have actually increased. Even when direct attacks and arbitrary killings are not occurring, the SPDC and their proxy ceasefire armies exploit ethnic villagers as forced labour, and abuse also them through the use of forced relocation, arbitrary arrest, extortion, land confiscation, destruction of property, rapes, beatings and torture.

Control and manipulation of ethnic identity by the military regime can be loosely grouped into three main strategies: direct violence, economic deprivation and cultural assimilation. Of these three, direct violence was perhaps the most obvious during 2006. Both ceasefire groups and SPDC army troops performed extrajudicial killings, arbitrarily detained villagers, beat and tortured civilians in ethnic minority areas across the country. For example, in Karen State during 2006, SPDC army soldiers shelled villages with mortars and fired into jungle areas where they suspected IDPs to be in hiding. (For more information, also see Chapter 2: Extra-judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions). The rape of ethnic minority women and their forced marriage to SPDC army officers has been widely documented, most thoroughly in Shan, Karen and Chin States. (For more information, also see Chapter 7: Rights of Women).

Economic deprivation was also quite apparent during 2006. SPDC army soldiers and ceasefire armies alike routinely razed villagers' crops and food supplies. Roads were blockaded and food deliveries were not permitted to reach their destinations, creating food shortages for those who had come to depend on them. However, perhaps the most

widespread means was through the use of extortion and forced labour. Villagers are regularly called upon to provide their uncompensated labour to assist the military, building new roads and army camps, portering supplies and running errands. The villagers are taken away from their farms and forced to work with little regard for the agricultural seasons. Many villagers were unable to harvest enough food to feed their families because so much of their time was taken up performing forced labour for the military. (For more information, see Chapter 1: Forced Labour and Forced Conscription). In addition, various forms of extortion have been employed by the SPDC and their proxies. These may range from the payment of bribes in Chin State to be permitted to engage in cultural activities to an intricate system of “*fees*” associated with forced labour that are demanded from villagers in Karen State. Such fees are extorted from the villagers under the ruse that the money will then be given to fellow villagers performing labour for the military. Villagers, however, are almost never paid for the labour and the money invariably ends up lining the pockets of military officers and corrupt civil officials. (For more information, also see Chapter 5: Deprivation of Livelihood).

Whenever soldiers burn villager’s fields and plantations, mount patrols in farming areas or set up camps near villages or their fields and farms, it has a direct impact on the economic life of the villagers. In Karen State, SPDC army soldiers not only burned paddies and destroyed rice storage barns, they also prohibited travel and closed roads, cutting off trading routes and villager’s access to markets. The use of villagers for forced labour also contributes to their economic deprivation since it takes people away from their usual occupations and income generation. (For more information, also see Chapter 5: Deprivation of Livelihood).

The third strategy used in the campaign against ethnic minorities is their cultural assimilation into the Buddhist Burman mainstream. Commonly referred to as “Burmanization”, one such tool used by the regime is the destruction of culturally important sites or buildings and the construction of more Burman-appropriate structures in their place. In Arakan State, the SPDC plans to start a plantation on historically important land, on the archaeological site of the last Arakanese Kingdom. In Chin State, Christian Chins are prevented from building churches or holding religious events. Many Christian sites in Chin State have been demolished and pagodas and temples built in their place. Similarly, Muslim Rohingya face difficulty constructing new mosques or even repairing old ones. (For more information, see Chapter 10: Freedom of Belief and Religion).

The regime has enacted laws and actively prevents the expression of culture among many ethnic minorities, from the wearing of traditional clothes or the performing of traditional ceremonies to the prohibition on learning their native language. The Rohingya, a Muslim minority in Arakan State, are prevented from following their marriage traditions and wearing traditional dress when performing marriage ceremonies. Furthermore, many Rohingya are prevented from marrying at all and must first apply for marriage permits from the regime. The cost of such permits are prohibitively high and are besides, often denied. In Mon State during 2006, students at several educational institutions were forbidden from wearing Mon national dress at school or for school ceremonies. Meanwhile, in Shan State, traditional Shan costumes were banned from religious celebrations organised by the state. All of these actions attempt to destroy ethnic cultural identities and force ethnic minority groups into the mainstream Buddhist Burman culture.

In addition to these attempts at cultural assimilation, the SPDC continued its campaign to further marginalize minority groups through the manipulation of demographics, ‘importing’ Buddhist Burman settlers into traditionally non-Burman, or non-Buddhist areas. In Arakan

State, the SPDC has confiscated land from the Rohingya, forced them to construct “model villages” on their own land, and then resettled the area with Buddhist Burmans from Rangoon. The settlers are given food by the junta, while the villagers, deprived of their fields and means of life, starve. A similar three year resettlement campaign remained underway in Shan State during 2006, forcibly resettling groups of ethnic Wa settlers into areas predominately inhabited by members of the Lahu ethnic group. Since 1999, the Lahu National Development Organisation (LNDO) estimates that approximately 125,000 people have been resettled in the border areas adjacent to Thailand's Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai Districts.¹⁵³ The UWSA claim this resettlement is part of a strategy aimed at providing Wa people with economic alternatives to poppy cultivation and that the resettlement is over.¹⁵⁴

Various strategies of direct violence, economic deprivation and cultural assimilation are being used by the SPDC and the allied ethnic ceasefire armies in the ethnic minority areas of Burma. By far the most extensively documented in 2006, were those abuses which occurred in Karen State, due not only to the large-scale military offensive underway there, but also due to the extensive documentation network in place among the Karen. That said, the longer list of incidences shown for Karen State does not necessarily mean that the situation there is far worse than in any other state or division. Put another way, this does not mean that fewer documented incidences from other parts of the country demonstrates that fewer human rights violations are taking place in those areas.

Please note that the incidences listed below do not represent a complete catalogue of the campaign of abuses perpetrated against ethnic minority villagers. Those that are shown below are included to help illustrate the deliberate and discriminatory nature of these abuses. Please refer to other relevant chapters for more information.



Internally displaced Karen children standing in front of their school in the forest in Nyaunglebin District, Karen State. SPDC army soldiers continued to deliberately target civilians throughout 2006, forcing many to flee their homes and adopt a life of uncertainty in the forest [Photo: KHRG]

Arakan State

There are approximately two million inhabitants of Arakan (Rakhine) State. The two predominant ethnic groups are the Buddhist Rakhine (Arakanese) and the Bengali-speaking Muslim Rohingya.

The Rohingya, for the most part, inhabit the northern region of Arakan State, near the border with Bangladesh. The Arakan Project, an independent NGO documenting abuses against the Rohingya, has characterised the area as one of acute poverty which is facing a “*chronic emergency*”, and the Rohingya as one of the groups facing the most discrimination in Burma.¹⁵⁵ Burmese military campaigns against the Rohingya prompted large refugee flows into Bangladesh in 1978 and again in 1991-92. Approximately 20,000 Rohingya refugees remain in camps in Bangladesh.¹⁵⁶

The Rohingya have no official status within Burma. Bangladesh, similarly refuses to claim them as their own and as such, the Rohingya are a stateless people. They are not permitted to travel out of Northern Arakan State and must request permission from SPDC authorities any time that they wish to leave their villages. A single travel pass can cost 1,000 to 1,500 kyat. (For more information, see Chapter 12: Freedom of Assembly, Association and Movement). Fishermen in the town of Sittwe have to pay 500 kyat each to the immigration, military intelligence (*SaRaPa*) and the regional administration (*DaKaSa*) if they want to go out to sea to go fishing.¹⁵⁷ This only allows them access to the fish. Though, they are still not able to access the markets and must rely on middlemen to get their goods to market, losing out on much of the profit margin. (For more information, also see Chapter 5: Deprivation of Livelihood).

Even when Rohingya are carrying valid travel permits, they are not immune to extortion from SPDC army soldiers. Many Rohingya procure travel documents to move from the economically depressed Buthidaung Township to look for work in Maungdaw Township. However, they are vulnerable to exploitation as they return home, carrying the money they have saved. Troops at any number of checkpoints along the road often detain people and destroy their travel documents, thereafter demanding a fine from the person and stealing their money.¹⁵⁸

Restrictions on movement also apply to those seeking medical care for cases where treatment is not locally available due to the extremely low quality of healthcare services in the region. Similarly for students wishing to continue to higher studies; education in the region is of extremely low quality and availability. (For more information, see Chapter 9: Rights to Education and Health).

The restrictions on movement, combined with the restrictions on business activity perpetuate a state of economic depression in the area. In 2005, Rohingya in northern Arakan State were unable to grow or buy enough food. According to Chris Lewa, coordinator of the Arakan Project, “*A major humanitarian disaster was averted thanks to direct food relief distributed by the [World Food Program]*”.¹⁵⁹ Ordinarily, the delivery of food by international humanitarian actors to the region is blocked by the regime. However, it is unclear how long the Rohingya can continue to rely on external aid for their daily survival. In March 2006, 126 students from an orphanage in Buthidaung faced starvation when they were unable to acquire enough rice. The state controls the flow of rice in the area and exerts strict restrictions on its transportation and sale in order to control the region’s markets. Although

rice is available cheaply nearby, people are unable to travel even short distances to get it. (For more information, see Chapter 5: Deprivation of Livelihood).¹⁶⁰

Since the 1990's, the SPDC has been engaged in an initiative to pit the two ethnic groups of Arakan State against one another, favouring the Buddhist Arakanese and further oppressing the Muslim Rohingya. Under the auspices of the Ministry for the Development of Border Areas and National Races, land and farms belonging to Rohingya are frequently confiscated and given to settlers brought in from other areas, usually from around Rangoon, but sometimes even foreigners from Bangladesh. Soldiers are often used to force Rohingya farm owners to sign over and vacate their land, on occasion utilising torture and imprisonment to secure their signatures on 'legal' documents, which is ironic in that land ownership documents do not exist in Burma and that the state retains ownership of all agricultural land.¹⁶¹ (For more information, see Chapter 5: Deprivation of Livelihood). The confiscated land is used to set up 'model villages', known locally as *NaTaLa* (Ministry of Border Affairs) villages. According to one report released in November 2006, villagers, often the same people who had been deprived of their land, were forced to provide uncompensated labour and materials towards the construction of the new villages and in some cases, also provided the new arrivals with food. In addition to the free land and food, the SPDC also provided new settlers with free rickshaws, sewing machines, tractors and bullock carts.¹⁶²

By August 2006, there were already 1,500 settlers placed in five model villages in Maungdaw Township.¹⁶³ By October, 140 Arakanese families from southern Arakan State were sent to Maungdaw Township as settlers. Until land could be provided for them, local Rohingya villagers were ordered to feed them. A local source said that by the end of November 2006, over 40 Rohingya families had been displaced from their land and that more settlers were slated to arrive in the Taungbro area in January 2007.¹⁶⁴

During 2006, the Rohingya faced increasing discrimination and cultural repression as the junta introduced measures which force couples to apply for permission before they are allowed to marry.¹⁶⁵ A marriage permit can cost anywhere from 1,000 kyat to 150,000 kyat and involves extensive paperwork and lengthy delays of up to several months. In order to acquire a marriage permit, the couple must appear before the *NaSaKa* dressed in formal Burman attire.¹⁶⁶ They must either follow cultural traditions not their own, or else not be married. In addition, laws were introduced in 2006 that require the registration of all births and deaths, under threat of monetary penalty. Families attempting to register new births within the timeframe stipulated by the regime were often delayed and prevented from doing so. If the birth is not registered within the first week, the family is asked to pay the equivalent of five gallons of kerosene, or about 18,000 kyat.¹⁶⁷

To add insult to injury, in August 2006, the SPDC announced plans to turn the ancient remains of the historic Kingdom of Arakan into a physic nut plantation. The third tier of the Mrauk-U palace is the planned site for the plantation.¹⁶⁸

Arakan State – partial list of incidents for 2006

Arbitrary Arrest

In December 2006, two Chin residents of Arakan State, U Yaung Chay and U Aung from Pyilong Gri village in Mrauk-U Township, were arrested on suspicion of having links with Chin resistance groups. The two were beaten and tortured in front of other villages and then

held without trial at the Thama Rit police station. Suspicion of collusion with armed resistance groups is often cause enough for torture and/or arrest by SPDC authorities. Evidence of any connection is rarely required or produced and innocent people are often detained without trial.¹⁶⁹

Freedom of Movement

On 5 May 2006, a group of 15 villagers from Sadamaw village, near Sittwe (Akyab), went to the Sittwe market without the appropriate travel pass. At the market, they were arrested by immigration officers and sentenced to six months in prison. They were later released after serving their terms.¹⁷⁰

On 8 September 2006, Mohamed Hussain, 37, from Bolati village, Pauktaw Township, was sentenced to two-and-a-half years imprisonment with heavy labour in Sittwe, for leaving his village without the proper travel permit.¹⁷¹

Freedom of Cultural Expression

On June 30 2006, 25-year-old Nami Ullah and 20-year-old Hasina Begum from Kon Tan village tract in Rathedaung Township were arrested while trying to cross the border to Bangladesh. The couple had been unable to gain permission to wed from the NaTaLa and planned to marry in Bangladesh instead. On 6 July 2006, the two were sentenced in the Maungdaw town courts to three years imprisonment.¹⁷²

On August 6 2006, police raided the wedding ceremony of 28-year-old Shuha, in Buthidaung Township in spite of the fact that the couple had secured a permit to marry. At 5:30 pm, police arrested approximately 50 people in attendance and beat them severely as the ceremony was going on. Participants of the event, including women and children, ran away for fear of further police harassment. Both the bride and the groom were arrested, although they were later released after the parents of the bridegroom paid a bribe of 30,000 kyat.¹⁷³

On September 11 2006, 24-year-old Shamshu Alam of Thapay Taw (Bassara) village, in Myint Hlut (Merulla) village tract of Maungdaw Township, had to pay 80,000 kyat to the NaSaKa before being granted permission to marry.¹⁷⁴

On September 15 2006, Shuna Meah, 27, of Myint Hlut village, Maungdaw Township, had to pay a bribe of 150,000 kyat to the NaSaKa of Myint Hlut camp for permission to marry. The bridegroom was also obliged to pay an additional 15,000 kyat for the wedding ceremony on 17 September 2006.¹⁷⁵

On October 1 2006, 35-year-old Morium Khatoon was sentenced to two years imprisonment by the Buthidaung court in lieu of her daughter. One year previously, her daughter, Khala Meah, had secretly married Ali Hussain after the couple had been unable to obtain a marriage permit. When Khala Meah fell pregnant, the couple fled to Bangladesh and her mother was arrested and sentenced in her place.¹⁷⁶

On December 8 2006, 25-year-old Mohamed Hussain and his wife, of Dunsay Village, Rathedaung Township, were arrested by the NaSaKa for marrying without permission. The couple were unable to acquire a marriage permit and were discovered after they had a child. Mohamed Hussain's family attempted to secure their release by offering a 40,000 kyat bribe, but the NaSaKa officials demanded more.¹⁷⁷

On December 10 2006, 25-year-old Abdur Rahaman and his wife, of Phone Nyo Hlake village in Buthidaung Township, fled to Bangladesh in order to avoid arrest for having married without a permit. They had sought a marriage permit through the official channels without success and married secretly.¹⁷⁸

NaTaLa Villages

On 1 April 2006, around 15 soldiers called 60-year-old Noor Mohamed, from Pach Khali village, Buthidaung Township, to their camp and asked him to sign a paper saying he was ‘voluntarily’ handing over five acres of his farmland to the military. When he refused, the soldiers subjected him to physical and mental torture for 13 days until he finally signed the paper.¹⁷⁹

On 13 April 2006, approximately 15 soldiers went to the home of 30-year-old Mohamed Salim, from Lanbow Bill village, in Buthidaung Township. He was taken to a nearby army camp and tortured until he agreed to sign over 16 acres of his farmland for new settlers.¹⁸⁰

On 4 October 2006, a group of 140 Arakanese families, all from southern Arakan State, were relocated to Maungdaw Township. Upon arrival, the settlers were sheltered in the middle school of Kyikan Pyin village where the Rohingya residents were ordered to feed them without compensation.¹⁸¹

On 16 October 2006, armed Arakanese settlers raided the home of 40-year-old Mohammed Zaker from Tan May village of Buthidaung Township. They broke a window and entered the home, looting it of its valuables before the owner could wake up. When Mohammed Zaker did wake up and raise the alarm, the thieves fled with his possessions. In the morning, he took the case to the NaSaKa. Despite the fact that Mohammed Zaker had seen the burglars and could identify them, the NaSaKa commander accused Din Mohammed, 35, of the same village, of committing the crime. Later, Din Mohammed was summoned to the NaSaKa camp and charged with the burglary. He was fined 100,000 kyat and gold weighing 24 *peh tha* (24.5 grams). Mohammed Zaker never had his belongings returned to him, nor was he compensated by the NaSaKa.¹⁸²

Chin State

Chin State is located in the western hills of Burma and is home to a population of approximately 500,000 people, with an estimated further 50,000 Chin refugees living in Mizoram State, India. Approximately 90 percent of Chins are Christian, marking them for particularly oppressive religiously motivated abuses by the predominantly-Buddhist regime. (For more information, see Chapter 10: Freedom of Belief and Religion).

The region falls under the area of operations of the SPDC Northwestern Military Command which stations no fewer than six battalions in the State at any one time. Economic conditions in Chin State continued to deteriorate throughout 2006 and Thomas Thang Nou, chairman of the opposition Chin National Front (CNF), was quoted to say: “*We predict a humanitarian crisis in Chin State this year*”.¹⁸³

All nine townships in Chin State possess hospitals, however, some reports maintained that during 2006, only two were operational. Most health facilities lack medical supplies and qualified doctors. During 2006, it was estimated that there was only one doctor for every

80,000 patients in Chin State. Chins themselves are unable to get the education required to become doctors and Chin State is not considered to be a desirable place for most trained doctors to practice.¹⁸⁴ According to one doctor, it can cost up to 18,000 kyat just for a routine check up in Chin State. According to the Chin Back Pack Medical Team (CBMT), approximately 80 percent of women in their twenties have gynaecological problems and around 60 percent of those in their thirties have problems with digestion. Tuberculosis is particularly common in Falam Township and there was a rise in the number of hepatitis cases in the area during 2006.¹⁸⁵ (For more information, see Chapter 9: Rights to Education and Health).

Although there are a number of schools in Chin State, teachers are for the most part, underpaid, and all education is provided solely in the Burmese language. Like in many other parts of Burma, local ethnic languages are prohibited from being taught and the Chin language is not permitted to be taught in schools. (For more information, see Chapter 9: Rights to Education and Health).



Karen villagers from Khaw Po Pleh village in Thaton District of Karen State working together to winnow their paddy harvest in January 2006. Working communally gets the job done faster before the SPDC army soldiers inevitably return to order the villagers to do more forced labour.
[Photo: KHRG]

Kachin State

There are an estimated 1.2 million people living in Kachin State, the majority of whom are Christian Kachin. The SPDC's persecution of ethnic minority Kachins has mainly focused on their religion and converting Kachins to Buddhism. To this end, the regime has set up several schools, known as *NaTaLa* (Ministry of Border Affairs) schools, providing free education and forcing Buddhist worship on Christian students who aren't otherwise able to afford education.¹⁸⁶

In 2005, the Kachin Women's Association – Thailand (KWAT) brought attention to the vulnerability of Kachin women to human trafficking when they published their report, *Driven Away: Trafficking of Kachin Women on the China-Burma Border*. The report documented 63 cases of human trafficking, involving 85 women and girls, mostly aged from 14 to 20 years old, between 2000-2004. About two-thirds of the women came from Myitkyina and Bhamo Districts in Kachin State and one third from northern Shan State.¹⁸⁷ According to a report released by Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), KWAT documented a further 50 cases of trafficking in 2006, mostly involving Kachin women from northern Shan State. Between March and September 2006, twelve women were rescued and returned home, some from as far away as the China-North Korea border. (For more information, see Chapter 7: Rights of Women).

Kachin State – partial list of incidents for 2006

In January 2006, a soldier from LIB #37 in Shwegu, eastern Kachin State, raped a Kachin woman at gunpoint. Holding a gun to her head, he forced her into the jungle where he raped her and then attempted to strangle her. She survived, and the local commander gave her family 50,000 kyat not to report the case. The woman became pregnant and had to have an abortion.¹⁸⁸

In April 2006, an unnamed village in Bhamo Township was ordered to cease construction on its church following an order from the Ministry of Religious Affairs which had issued an order prohibiting the construction of new churches or mosques.¹⁸⁹

At an undisclosed time in mid-2006, Captain Kyaw Win refused an unnamed church permission to build a reception hall for weddings, Christmas celebrations and other events. He instead ordered that the entire church compound be planted with physic nuts. The church group was told that failure to follow the order would result in confiscation of the land.¹⁹⁰ (For more information, also see Chapter 5: Deprivation of Livelihood).

On 29 July 2006, it was reported that SPDC army soldiers at checkpoints near Gan Dau Yang were extorting money from villagers at gunpoint. The SPDC reportedly also demanded money from churches in Japu, Dabak and Hkat Su villages, with promises that the SPDC would provide land on which they could build church compounds. No churches were built in any of these towns.¹⁹¹

Karen State

With an estimated population of between 3 and 6 million people, the Karen represent the second largest ethnic minority group in Burma and throughout 2006 they came under the most intensive and sustained attacks from the SPDC in the past decade. In late-November 2005, the SPDC launched its largest military offensive against the Karen since the massive offensive in 1997. As of December 2006, 40 percent of SPDC army troops nationwide were in eastern Burma, with the majority of that number stationed in Karen State.¹⁹²

Up until April 2006, the SPDC denied the campaign of violence in Karen State, despite increased refugee flows out of the country and documentation of increased troop movements, attacks on undefended civilian villages and the widespread perpetration of human rights violations; blaming these reports instead on the KNU. In April 2006, however, SPDC Information Minister Brigadier General Kyaw Hsan confirmed that fighting had occurred, condemning Karen “saboteurs” committing “atrocities”.¹⁹³ Kyaw Hsan said that the “aggressive tactics” of the KNU had forced the regime to boost security around the new capital at Naypyidaw near Pyinmana, despite the fact that Naypyidaw is located approximately 100 kilometres (60 miles) away from the nearest of the attacks, and that these attacks were directed against civilian villagers.¹⁹⁴

“All the incidents are the results of the well-planned underground plots of the KNU terrorist insurgents and their foreign masters, and the aboveground schemes from inside and outside the country to attack Myanmar.”

- SPDC Information Minister Brigadier General Kyaw Hsan.¹⁹⁵

Although the SPDC has claimed that the campaign is an effort to wipe out the armed Karen resistance of the KNU and KNLA, the majority of the violence has been directed at civilian villages. Most of the attacks were concentrated in the area where the three Karen districts of Toungoo, Nyaunglebin, and Papun Districts meet.

SPDC army soldiers have directly and deliberately attacked unarmed and undefended villages, firing upon civilians, shooting at farmers in their fields and shelling whole villages without warning from neighbouring hillsides. Most villagers flee their villages whenever SPDC army soldiers draw near and return only after the soldiers have moved on. After the troops leave, the villagers return to harvest their crops and reoccupy their homes if they have not been destroyed. When soldiers burn the village they leave no home for villagers to return to. When soldiers burn the fields, they leave no crops to harvest.

Knowing that civilians typically return to their villages after the troops have left, SPDC army soldiers often leave landmines in the village to target those who come back to their homes. In some areas, this practice has become so commonplace that villagers will only return to their villages with a KNLA escort who must first clear any mines that have been laid. In 2006, SPDC army soldiers planted landmines in front of village homes, in abandoned villages, in ricefields and farms and along pathways used by villagers, specifically targeting civilians. Than Daung Township in northern Toungoo District is extensively mined and there were at least 15 reported cases of landmine-related injuries and deaths in that area in 2006. Fear of landmines restricts the movement of villagers, which can be particularly detrimental when farmers are afraid to travel to their fields.¹⁹⁶ Some sources maintain that the SPDC army had laid more than 2,000 antipersonnel mines in a north-south line through Toungoo and Nyaunglebin Districts to stop communication between villagers living in the hills and those

in the plains¹⁹⁷. The Thai-Burma border is also reportedly extensively landmined to prevent or deter the flight of refugees.

Most landmine victims do not die immediately from their injuries. Mines are designed to maim rather than kill. The logic behind their deployment is that after one person steps on a landmine, two people are required to carry him, effectively disabling three combatants: the mine victim and the two who must then carry him. The majority of victims either bleed to death or die of shock. Ninety percent of mine survivors lose at least one limb, and eye injuries including blindness are quite common, affecting approximately 40 percent of landmine survivors. Hearing loss and diminished hearing are also common, occurring in approximately 21 percent of survivors.¹⁹⁸ Some groups maintain that in Karen State, prior to the offensive, there was one civilian landmine amputee every day.¹⁹⁹ However, some groups dispute this figure as being too high.²⁰⁰ The deployment of landmines in the region has only increased over the last two years, which means that this figure may increase within the foreseeable future. In fact, perhaps the greatest damage from these landmines will predictably occur once the offensive stops and currently displaced villagers return in greater numbers to the villages that are now being mined. Landmines remain an indiscriminate threat for many years as they lie in wait just below the surface for some unsuspecting villager to step on them. (For more information, see Chapter 16: Landmines).



A Karen villager from Nyaunglebin District dismantling his home following orders from the SPDC to relocate. Under the Four Cuts Policy, the SPDC targets civilians to ostensibly undermine resistance forces. The Policy has the additional effect of repressing the civilian population and threatening their livelihoods. *[Photo: KHRG]*

In SPDC-controlled areas, troops set up many new army camps, forcing local people to provide the materials and labour for their construction. Once these camps were established, soldiers mounted patrols from them and fired upon anyone they saw. In spite of the danger, villagers often remain in the area and attempt to return to their fields to harvest at least some of their rice, often at a great danger to their persons.²⁰¹ According to FBR, there were 33 new military camps established in Karen State in 2006. These camps were mostly placed along road corridors. In Nyaunglebin District, 17 new camps were established including three fixed camps, and 14 satellite camps. In Papun District, seven new camps were built including two fixed camps, and five satellite camps. Finally, in Toungoo District there were nine new camps established including two main camps, and seven smaller ones, bringing the total number of SPDC army camps in the district to over 50.²⁰²

Since early 2006, many villages located in areas newly controlled by the SPDC have been forcibly relocated. Over 6,000 people were forced to move to an SPDC-controlled relocation site in Kyauk Kyi Township, Nyaunglebin District.²⁰³ Often troops arrive in a given village and give the residents a few days to pack their belongings and move to a designated site. At other times, no advance warning is given at all, and villages must relocate immediately, carrying only what they can carry on their backs. If they are seen in the area after the deadline to move, they are told they will be shot.²⁰⁴ Herded into camps, villagers are constantly watched by SPDC army troops and all aspects of their lives are strictly controlled. Relocation sites are often fenced and villagers are not allowed to leave the area. The sites are typically grossly overcrowded and very little, if any, arable land is left available to the new arrivals. (For more information, see Chapter 13: Internal Displacement and Forced Relocation). Villagers are also often used as forced labour and are regularly the targets of extortion from soldiers.

At the relocation site in Plaw Law Bler in Nyaunglebin District, and at other similar sites, both male and female villagers have been forced to work clearing land and digging trenches for the construction of a new military base. Some villagers interviewed in late April said they had already been given orders that each person must clear at least 30 square yards of ground for the military camp.²⁰⁵ Similarly, in the Kler Lah relocation site in Toungoo District, SPDC officers used forced labour to further their own personal wealth. Large trucks were sent from central Burma to support the offensive, however, officers parked the trucks in Kler Lah, sold the remaining fuel for their own profit and then used local people, instead of the trucks, to transport supplies in the area. Sometimes private vehicles have also been commandeered, with the cost of the petrol being covered by the car's owner.²⁰⁶

In addition to the thousands of villagers that the SPDC used as forced labour under the offensive, FBR estimated that in the space of the year since the offensive began in November 2005 until the end of December 2006, the SPDC employed over 1,700 prisoners as porters, of which 265 were reported dead. It was clear from the bodies of many of them that they were executed. Others died from malnutrition, injuries and illness. Among the prisoner porters in Papun District alone, there are over 20 children under the age of 16. These boys were reportedly prisoners from Insein prison.²⁰⁷ Prisoners from jails around the country have been used as army porters in large numbers during the offensive in Karen State. One porter who was able to escape said he, and 150 other inmates, were taken from Myitkyina Prison in Kachin State to work in Toungoo District carrying supplies for SPDC army troops. He witnessed soldiers shoot and stab several other porters to death.²⁰⁸ Another porter said he saw 42 fellow prisoner porters beaten, shot and killed when they were no longer able to carry the heavy loads they were given.²⁰⁹ (For more information, see Chapter 1: Forced Labour and Forced Conscription).

Unseasonal rains during 2006 made life for the internally displaced particularly difficult. Many villagers were reportedly sick with malaria and dysentery.²¹⁰ Life in the jungle is especially difficult without permanent shelter during the monsoon season. Movement for the internally displaced, living in the forest, is often restricted by the movement of SPDC troops in the area, the location of SPDC camps, roadways, and landmines. However, most IDPs can manage to remain hidden from the SPDC army patrols that hunt them, either by moving regularly or by moving deeper into the forest further away from areas where the SPDC can maintain a presence.

Throughout 2006, the SPDC increased restrictions on travel. Many of the roads in the region were closed to all traffic except military. Villagers in the district were unable to travel on the roads to access markets and buy food. Many roads have been blockaded or mined, many with the intention of severing connections between villagers living on the plains and villagers in the hills. On 1 May 2006, the SPDC intensified its blockade on all travel routes used by the villagers in Nyaunglebin District.²¹¹ According to KHRG, approximately 800 civilians from Mone Township who had fled the SPDC to reside in the forest were without access to food supplies due to SPDC restrictions on movement and blockades of trading routes.²¹² Similar restrictions were also imposed in Toungoo District.

In mid-December 2006, the estimated number of displaced persons had risen to 25,000.²¹³ By 30 November 2006, Human Rights Watch (HRW) had documented 45 civilian deaths at the hands of SPDC troops in Karen State, not including the killing of the 265 prisoner porters discussed above.²¹⁴ In November 2006, the Ee Htu Hta internally displaced camp beside the Salween River on the Thai-Burma border housed approximately 1,700 people.²¹⁵ While many of these people did not wish to cross into Thailand, but rather to remain within their own country, some of those who did attempt to make their way into one of the refugee camps were refused entry by Thai authorities. In mid-March 2006, 600 Karen villagers fleeing human rights violations in Toungoo and Nyaunglebin Districts were denied entry to Thailand and remained in Ee Htu Hta.²¹⁶

Perhaps the most pervasive effect of the offensive in Karen State has been the decreasing availability of food in the region. Several elements of the military campaign contribute to the problem of food scarcity in Karen State and all of these elements combine to force people from their homes in hunger either into the control of the military regime or into the forests as IDPs. Either way, the issue of food security is only exacerbated.

Firstly, and perhaps most obviously, SPDC army units have burned large numbers of agricultural fields, plantations and farmlands, with the purpose of deliberately ruining that season's crop. The proliferation of new army camps, in addition to the deployment of landmines and the regular SPDC army patrols have prevented farmers from preparing, sowing or harvesting their fields. Secondly, SPDC soldiers have also looted and burned many villages and homes, along with all possessions and food contained therein. Over 87,000 baskets (1,800 tonnes / 4,000,000 lb) of unharvested paddy were abandoned, destroyed or stolen by soldiers in 2006. This paddy would have provided a year's supply of rice for over 5,000 villagers. Additionally, more than 10,000 baskets (210 tonnes / 460,000 lb) of harvested paddy and 1,000 baskets (21 tonnes / 46,000 lb) of milled rice were also destroyed, stolen or abandoned. Furthermore, 420 cardamom gardens, 30 betelnut gardens and 150 coffee gardens were destroyed or abandoned during 2006.²¹⁷

In addition to the destruction of food stores and fields, when SPDC troops burn and loot villages, the implements villagers rely upon for cooking and boiling water are often stolen or destroyed. It is often very difficult for villagers to replace these items as they are expensive for subsistence farmers to buy, and even more difficult for IDPs to acquire as they will be shot on sight while attempting to enter a village market.²¹⁸ (For more information, see Chapter 5: Deprivation of Livelihood).

The SPDC offensive has drawn increasing levels of international attention the longer it has continued and has been denounced both locally as well as internationally.²¹⁹ In May 2006, an international protest was organized by the Global Campaign for Solidarity and Democracy in

Burma and staged in Thailand, Japan, India, US, Canada, Britain, India, Belgium, Australia, Norway, New Zealand, Korea and Denmark to draw attention to the situation and demand that the SPDC ceases all attacks on civilian villages.²²⁰ Despite such widespread condemnation, the offensive has continued into 2007.

Karen State – partial list of incidents for 2006

Arbitrary Killings and Arrests

On an unspecified date in 2006, in Kyauk Kyi Township, LIB #60 Battalion Commander Maung Thein Soe accused Naw Ghay Paw of having connections with the KNU. She was arrested and detained in Kyauk Kyi jail for two months before being transferred to Toungoo prison. Police officers demanded 2,000 kyat from her upon her arrival. At the prison she had to pay 500 kyat to use the toilet, 200 kyat to take a bath and 500 kyat to get her meals. While detained in the prison, she was frequently tortured and verbally abused by the police and though she became quite ill she was not allowed to be transferred to the infirmary until her condition had become quite serious. Her legs were kept locked in shackles the entire time that she was detained in the infirmary. When she was eventually allowed to stay in the hospital her legs were kept in shackles.²²¹

On 11 March 2006, SPDC army soldiers from LID #66, led by Commander Aung Soe, captured, detained, tortured and killed two villagers: Saw Ah Poe and Saw Dah, from Ker Der Kah village in Toungoo District, for leaving their villages.²²²

On 20 March 2006, troops from LIB #366 shot and killed 17-year-old Saw Hsa Raw Say as he worked in his hill field near Plaw Mu Der village in Papun District. His friend, Saw Kyay Nu Wah who was with him at the time was also wounded but managed to escape with his life. It is quite common for SPDC army soldiers to open fire on Karen villagers as they work in their fields and can be easily picked off.²²³

On 15 April 2006, SPDC soldiers based in Pi Mu Ko camp shot 29-year-old Saw Wai Htoo while he was clearing his hill field. After the first shot, Saw Wai Htoo tried to flee, but he tripped and fell over a log. The soldiers rushed upon him, and stabbed and shot him numerous times. Other villagers also working in hill fields nearby heard the shots and were able to flee.²²⁴

On 15 April 2006, 39-year-old Saw Sein Htoo from Lay Ghaw village, Papun District was shot on sight by troops from LIB #364 while he was working alone in his ricefield. He died leaving a wife and three children.²²⁵

On 20 April 2006, soldiers from LIB # 364 shot and killed 17-year-old Saw Ree Htay and also wounded 18-year-old Saw Say Mu Wah while they were on their way to their ricefield beside the Saw Hta–Kyauk Kyi motor road. Saw Ree Htay left behind a young wife who must now struggle to support herself on her own.²²⁶

On 3 May 2006, soldiers from SPDC LIB #14 went into Saw Der village and they shot and killed 22-year-old Saw Thu Ler Taw. At the sound of the gunshots, the other villagers fled into the surrounding forest leaving their belongings behind. The soldiers then stole 200,000 kyat from Saw Thu Ler Taw and looted the possessions of the other villagers.²²⁷

On 31 May 2006, troops from LIB #361, #362, #363 and #370, all operating as part of MOC #10, based at Ler Mu Plaw, saw 40-year-old Htee Baw Kee villager Saw Yweh Mu working in his irrigated ricefield at Pwa Doh Hta, and shot him dead on sight. They then burned down his field hut and his paddy storage barn. The soldiers also burned a second field hut and storage barn nearby belonging to Naw K'Pru Paw.²²⁸

On 5 June 2006, troops from SPDC LIB #362 shot and killed Saw Yweh Moo of Ka Baw Kee village in Lu Thaw Township, Papun District, and burned his paddy field.²²⁹

On 29 June 2006, SPDC army troops opened fire on innocent villagers, one in Kawlawah Lu and another in Thay Baw Der village in Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District. Villagers in adjacent village tracts fled into the surrounding forests for fear of their lives.²³⁰

On 30 June 2006, soldiers from LIB #522 captured two villagers from K'Ba Hta village in Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District and took them with them as they left the village. The dead body of one of them, 38-year-old Saw Bi Aw, was found a week later on 6 July 2006. Before leaving the village, the soldiers burned 381 baskets (8,000 kg / 17,526 lb) of paddy and 28 baskets (700 kg / 1,543 lb) of rice belonging to villagers. They also stole cash worth 2,952,900 kyat, gold, tools, tarpaulins, and even the donations given to a religious organisation. The villagers ran for their lives with only what they could carry.²³¹

On 8 August 2006, SPDC army soldiers shot and killed 75-year-old female villager, Naw Ta Kee Lee from Ler Kla Der village in Tantabin Township, Toungoo District, as she was resting in her hut in her plantation.²³²

On 5 September 2006, SPDC army soldiers from IB #73 arrested Zee Pyu Gone villager Saw Htoo Per, his wife, children, and younger brother, and detained them at their camp in nearby Shan See Boh in Tantabin Township, Toungoo District on suspicion of having ties to the Karen resistance. Saw Htoo Per and one of his sons, Saw Baw Baw, were both killed by the soldiers in the camp.²³³

On 30 September 2006, Column #1 and #2 of LIB #567 and Column #1 and #2 of IB #240, all operating under Tactical Operations Command (TOC) #3 of MOC #16, fired upon civilian villagers in the Saw Tay Der and Hsaw Wah Der areas in Tantabin Township, Toungoo District, killing one villager.²³⁴

On 12 October 2006, two columns of SPDC army soldiers from IB #10 and IB #35, under TOC #662 of LID #66, "*cleared*" the area around Ku Ler Der and Der Doh to the north of Kler Lah in Toungoo District. The practice of clearing an area does not involve engaging with the armed resistance, but rather to direct deliberate attacks on civilian villages to depopulate the area and forcibly relocate all villagers into SPDC-controlled relocation sites; in this case: the Kler Lah relocation site. Soldiers also fired mortars into the plantations adjacent to Hsaw Wah Der village to flush out the villagers that were hiding there.²³⁵

On 22 October 2006, a group of SPDC army soldiers open fire on unarmed villagers as they were resting in their field hut near Htee Nu Hta village in Nyaunglebin District, killing one villager and wounding one other.²³⁶

On 25 October 2006, Saw Maung Maung Than, 40, Saw Chit Chit, 16, and Saw Ah Cho Moo, 15, were shot and killed by SPDC army soldiers from IB #73, in Ma La Gone, Toungoo District. A fourth villager, 15-year-old Saw Kwa La Moo was also wounded, but not fatally.²³⁷

On 26 October 2006, troops from IB #242 opened fired on a group of villagers as they were harvesting the paddy in their hill fields at Htee Nu Hta, killing villager Saw Tha Ghay Htoo and wounding another villager. SPDC army soldiers often target villagers at harvest time when they are working in the open fields and can be picked off at will.²³⁸

On 31 October 2006, a unit of SPDC army soldiers from IB #11, under TOC #661 of LID #66 shot and killed Kaw Thay Der villager, Saw Bu Htoo, without cause or provocation. They saw him while out on patrol and simply opened fire, killing him.²³⁹

On 1 November 2006, 47-year-old Saw They Shur was burned alive in his home in Play Hta village, Toungoo District. He was bedridden and too ill to move and therefore unable to flee along with the rest of the village as the SPDC army soldiers approached the village. He is survived by his wife and six children who must now struggle to survive without their father and primary breadwinner.²⁴⁰

On 4 November 2006, troops from SPDC IB #11, under TOC #661 of LID #66, fired 8 mortar rounds from their camp at P'Na Koh Soh beside the Toungoo-Mawchi motor road into areas in the surrounding forest where they believed villagers were hiding. The mortars were fired into the nearby villages of Hee Daw Khaw, Thaw Hta, and Sho Ser.²⁴¹

On 4 November 2006, SPDC army soldiers from IB #35 killed 45-year-old Saw Kyaw and 19-year-old Pa Ree Say wile on a search-and-destroy operation to burn all rice storage barns and fields in Toungoo District.²⁴²

On 8 November 2006, SPDC army troops, open fire on Thay Kee and Thay Hsa Kee villagers in the Saw Mu Plaw area of Papun District as they were harvesting their rice.²⁴³

On 14 November 2006, Saw Kyaw Thu, a 45-year-old villager from Htee Baw Kee village in Papun District, was shot dead by SPDC army troops from LIB #223 as he was working in his hill field.²⁴⁴

On 14 November 2006, a column of SPDC army troops from IB #11 and #14 attacked and destroyed Ber Ka Lay Ko and Oo Per villages in Toungoo District. Two days later, on 16 November, the same troops also set fire to nearby Htee Hsa Per and Thay Keh Lah civilian villages.²⁴⁵

On 28 December 2006, SPDC army troops from LIB #6, Column #1, led by Commander Min Tun Aung, captured 43-year-old Naing Taw Kaw from Htee Htaw Kaw village and 39-year-old Saw Pa Pee from Meh Ka Wa village, dressed them in military uniforms (presumably KNLA) and shot them both dead. It is likely that this was done so they could report having killed two rebels to their superiors.²⁴⁶

Looting and Theft

On 15 March 2006, SPDC army troops attacked and burned down Tee Khoh P'Hi Lu village in Mone Township. In all, 13 homes were burned as was a paddy barn belonging to Nya Ko containing approximately 100 baskets (2,100 kg / 4,600 lb) of paddy; and a barn belonging to village head Kaw Pya containing 13 (273 kg / 598 lb) baskets of paddy were destroyed.²⁴⁷

On 26 March 2006, SPDC army soldiers operating under LID #55 in Mone Township burned down 5 houses belonging to Saw Pah Ploh and various members of his family. The soldiers also stole and ate the family's pigs, chicken, and goats.²⁴⁸

On 15 April 2006, SPDC army soldiers from LIB #223 entered Klu Ghaw Kee village in Nyaunglebin District, destroyed 6 houses and ate the villagers' chickens, pigs, and goats. They also confiscated medicine valued at 100,000 kyat belonging to villager Pah Sein.²⁴⁹

On 16 April 2006, an SPDC army column comprised of troops from LIB #168 and #522, operating under MOC #16, left Play Hsa Loh where they were stationed to make a sweep of the surrounding hills for any IDPs. They arrived at Plo Baw Der that afternoon to find that the villagers had already fled ahead of them. In the absence of the villagers the soldiers ate their fill of the food the villagers were not able to take with them when they fled, stole that which they could carry, and destroyed everything else. The soldiers burned 30 baskets (750 kg / 1,650 lb) of rice that belonged to Maw Kwey Po. The following items represent a partial list of other food and belongings that were stolen by the soldiers:

1. Saw Ma Hen Sein, 2 baskets (50 kg / 110 lb) of rice, and 1 duck;
2. Saw Maw Heh Pwey, 1 tin (12.5 kg / 28 lb) of rice, and 3 ducks;
3. Saw Pey Key Lay, 1 tin of rice, and 1 pig (worth 35,500 kyat);
4. Saw Gay Lay, 8 viss (13 kg / 29 lb) of cooking oil;
5. Saw Ma Nu Sein, 2 big pots, 2 blankets, and 1 tin of rice;
6. Naw Hser Paw, 3 chickens; and
7. Naw Ma Thu, 4 viss (6.5 kg / 14.5 lb) of dried fish.²⁵⁰

On 28 April 2006, SPDC army troops from LIB #361 came to Tha Kah Der area, Papun District, and burned down two field huts and two paddy storage barns belonging to Saw Di Htoo. These troops also burned down the homes of the following villagers:

1. Naw Say Wah;
2. Saw Maw Cay;
3. Naw Hsu Bu;
4. Saw Kweh Kweh;
5. Saw Ti Paw;
6. Saw Myint Win;
7. Saw Soe Lay; and
8. Saw Joe Htoo.²⁵¹

On 18 May 2006, troops from SPDC battalions LIB #362 and #363 based in Papun District burned the following from Ter Po Plaw village:

1. 69 homes;
2. 12 field huts;
3. 14 paddy storage barns;
4. 898 baskets (18,860 kg / 41,300 lb) of paddy;
5. 48 baskets (1,200 kg / 2,600 lb) of rice;
6. 83 viss (133 kg / 300 lb) of salt; and
7. 34 viss (55 kg / 122 lb) of chilli.

Moreover, these same soldiers also killed and ate:

1. 4 buffaloes;
2. 42 goats;
3. 217 chickens;
4. 81 ducks; and
5. 30 pigs.

They also shot and killed (but did not eat):

1. 6 buffaloes;
2. 4 goats; and
3. 7 pigs²⁵²

On 22 August 2006, a combined column of SPDC army troops from LIB #522, IB #240 and IB #68 burned down the 3 homes of Maung Toe, Maung Soe Lwin and Naw May Khing in Kah Mu Law village, Nyaunglebin District.²⁵³

On 28 August 2006, Captain Kyaw Min Naing and Bo Kyaw Sein Min, accompanied by 15 of their troops from LIB #351, captured Pay Tu villagers Saw Kyaw Htoo, 40, and Saw Ba Nge. They were sent to MOC #2 Headquarters in Kyauk Kyi of Nyaunglebin District. The two men were accused of possessing weapons and radio equipment (ie: that they were KNLA soldiers) and were beaten badly during the ensuing interrogation. The soldiers then searched the homes of the two men and used this excuse to steal a quantity of jewellery. The following pieces of jewellery were taken from the houses:

1. 5 gold chains, weighing about 1 kyat (16 grams / 0.5 oz) each;
2. 3 pairs of earrings, weighing 1 kyat (16 grams / 0.5 oz) each;
3. 7 other gold chains;
4. 1 wrist watch gold strap, weighing 3 kyat (50 grams / 1.7 oz);
5. 1 gold ingot, weighing 5 kyat (82 grams / 2.9 oz);
6. 1 silver ingot, weighing 15 kyat (245 grams / 8.6 oz);
7. 3 silver coins;
8. 230,000 kyat in cash;
9. 6 silver ankle bangles; and
10. All of their new items of Karen clothing.²⁵⁴

On 10 September 2006, SPDC Operations Commander Toe Yi Soe of LID #101, ordered the villagers of Wah Kah Hta villages in Thaton District to search for a deserted SPDC army soldier. When the villagers were unable to locate the deserter, Toe Yi Soe demanded 100,000 kyat from the villagers as compensation. Villagers are often fined by SPDC army officers for events that are beyond their control.²⁵⁵

On 28 September 2006, SPDC soldiers from LIB #548 summoned all village heads from T'Nay Hsah Township in Pa'an District to a meeting. The villagers were ordered to register the members of their households, particularly children who had gone to Thailand to seek work. The initial registration cost 500 kyat and the required travel document cost 100,000 kyat.²⁵⁶

In October 2006, SPDC officials based in Myawaddy adjacent to the Thai border ordered village heads from all villages in the Meh P'Leh area to attend a meeting where they ordered them to buy tractors at a cost of 100,000 kyat each. The SPDC officials displayed these old and worn out machines to the village heads at the meeting and informed them that there was a company based in Pa'an town which was unable to use or sell the tractors, so the villages would be forced to buy them. The tractors had to be paid for by April 2007 at the latest. One village head said, "*We don't yet know how we can use those machines after we buy them*".²⁵⁷

On 20 October 2006, LIB #439 based at Shan See Boh, demanded 200 viss (520 kg / 720 lb) of chicken from each of the following villages in Tantabin Township, Toungoo District to celebrate the Tazaung Daing Buddhist festival of lights, in spite of the fact that many villagers in this area are Christian or Animist:

1. Shan See Boh;
2. Yay Shan;
3. Taw Gone; and
4. Zee Pyu Gone villages.²⁵⁸

On 5 December 2006, SPDC army troops from LIB #590 demanded money to buy bricks for the construction of a pagoda in Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District. Min Din Htoo, a villager from Myaung Oo, was forced to pay 200,000 kyat. From Paw Pi Der villagers Nga Zaw, Moe Zaw and Ngwe Min Hla, they took 600,000 kyat.²⁵⁹

Destruction of Property, Forced Relocation and Internal Displacement

In March 2006, SPDC LIB #240, #351, #439, #601 and IB #68 and #69 began to mount attacks on civilian villages east of Kyauk Kyi, starting with Kheh Der village tract in northeastern Kyauk Kyi Township and Kwih Lah village tract in the south. The soldiers subsequently encroached further into the hills, forcing villagers to flee from the following villages:

1. Kheh Der;
2. Mu Kee;
3. Day Baw Kee;
4. Ku Ghaw Soe;
5. Ko Lu;
6. Daw Daw Kee;
7. Khaw Taw Lay Ko;
8. Twee Thi Oo Kee;
9. Thaw Ngeh Der; and
10. Po Khaw Der.²⁶⁰

On 3 March 2006, 33 villagers from Ta Kwee Soe village in Toungoo District arrived in Mae Ra Ma Luang refugee camp in Thailand after their village had been attacked with artillery bombardments and small arms fire.²⁶¹

On 9 March 2006, three SPDC army battalions attacked two villages from Saw Ka Der village tract of Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District. Meanwhile, further south in Ler Doh Township, the military carried out similar attacks, forcing 1,153 villagers into hiding.²⁶²

On 9 March 2006, LIB #364, #366 and #368 attacked the Karen villages of Klaw Kee and Saw Ka Der in Mone Township. Saw Maw Sae Kya, 38, was killed during the attacks, and a total of 19 homes and two rice barns were burned.²⁶³ The soldiers then continued to nearby Maw La Kee village, where they burned down another seven houses. This attack brought the number of people displaced in Mone Township to 1,140. LIB #362 and #363 marched into Kwey Der village in Ler Doh Township, forcing more than 1,100 villagers into hiding.²⁶⁴

On 23 March 2006, troops from LIB #522 and LIB #567, under the command of Thet Wey, attacked the village of Nya Moo Kee. The village church and the house beside it were burned while other village homes were systematically ransacked and destroyed. The soldiers shot or stabbed holes in all of the pots and pans left behind by the villagers and slaughtered and ate all of the chickens in the village and four of its pigs. A dog was also shot and thrown onto the roof of a house. Two rice storage barns hidden in the forest were also discovered and destroyed. A total of 156 baskets (3,900 kg / 8,600 lb) of milled rice were lost.²⁶⁵

On 23 March 2006, LIB #66 troops forcibly relocated the village of Tha Yay Yuh in Toungoo District before burning the village to the ground.²⁶⁶

On 27 March 2006, LIB #240, #522 and #567, under the command of MOC #16, attacked Htee Day Kee Village in Kyaw Pya village tract, Mone Township. In the attack, SPDC soldiers killed 35-year-old Maung Saw Cha and 75-year-old Naw Wee Bu. A ten-year-old girl was also shot and wounded in the attack.²⁶⁷

In April 2006, three new SPDC-controlled relocation sites were established at the following locations:

1. Tha Pyay Nyunt, with over 1,000 people from Yu Loh and Ka Mu Loh villages;
2. Maw Keh Tha Per Ko, with 750-800 people from Maw Keh Tha Per Ko, Aw Ywa and Tha Ku La Ko villages; and
3. Ma La Daw, with 900 people from nearby villages.²⁶⁸

On 4 April 2006, Deputy Commander Zaw Htun of LIB #439 ordered villagers from Pa T'Lah, Noh Ghaw and Weh Ka Daw village tracts to relocate to the SPDC-controlled relocation site in Plaw Law Bler in Kyauk Kyi Township. SPDC army forces ordered all villagers to destroy their homes prior to relocating. They were given seven days in which to comply and told that if they had not left within this time, SPDC troops would return and burn the village to the ground.²⁶⁹

On 8 April 2006, SPDC troops from LIB #562 and #567 and IB #440 under the control of MOC #16 entered Yu Loh and Ka Mu Loh villages in southern Tantabin Township, Toungoo District where they forced the inhabitants of both villages to move to the SPDC-controlled relocation site in Play Hsa Loh village.²⁷⁰

The following villages in Toungoo District were told to relocate to Klaw Mee Der by 25 April 2006:

1. Yeh Loh;
2. Plaw Baw Der;
3. Ler Kla Der;
4. Hu Mu Der;
5. Kheh Der; and
6. Kaw Po Lo.²⁷¹

On 25 April 2006, SPDC army troops from LIB #44 entered Taw Awk Pay Der Daw in Mone Township and burnt down Saw Say Mu's barn containing 70 baskets (1,470 kg / 3,220 lb) of paddy. The troops then smashed the roofs of barns belonging to Saw Pler Mu and Naw Eh Ro. Ensuing rain soaked and damaged the paddy stored within the barns, rendering it inedible.²⁷²

In May 2006, troops from TOC #2, of MOC #16, actively restricted all movements of villagers and enforced blockades to prevent any movement of goods or people between the plains and the hills of Toungoo District. These blockades were believed to have been imposed to prevent any food or supplies reaching displaced villagers or Karen resistance forces operating in the hills.²⁷³

From 8-10 May 2006, a column comprised of LIB #362 and #363 patrolled northern Lu Thaw Township, Papun District burning and destroying everything they found. A total of 69 homes and twelve field huts were razed. The soldiers also looted a total of 96 baskets (2 tonnes / 4,400 lb) of paddy, 83 *viss* (133 kg / 292 lb) of salt, and 34 *viss* (54 kg / 120 lb) of chillies from the houses and huts before setting fire to them. All other contents were destroyed along with the buildings. A total of 1,796 baskets (37.7 tonnes / 82,600 lb) of paddy were burned. On returning to the area after the troops moved on, the villagers found the following livestock dead or missing. Some of them had been killed but not eaten by the soldiers, though most of them had disappeared, presumably taken away by the soldiers:

1. 10 buffalos were shot, of which four had been killed and left to rot, while the other six were wounded and left laying on the ground to die;
2. 92 goats had disappeared, of which only four corpses were found;
3. 30 pigs disappeared, of which the bodies of only seven were found dead but not eaten;
4. 217 chickens vanished; and
5. 87 ducks also disappeared.²⁷⁴

In the last week of May 2006, SPDC army troops from LIB #361, #362, #363 and #370, all operating as part of MOC #10, mounted operations to destroy villages and capture or kill villagers in the Ler Mu Plaw, Naw Yo Hta and Kay Pu areas. The soldiers set up a temporary base on a hilltop at Htaw Mo Pleh Meh with a 120 mm heavy mortar emplacement. Since 2 June 2006, MOC #10 began using this mortar to shell all villages and IDP sites within its 10 kilometre range. Villages as far away as Naw Yo Hta were fired upon. In addition to using their own smaller portable mortars, mobile units had the 120 mm mortar shell each village before they entered. All of the villages attacked in this way were undefended and unarmed civilian villages.²⁷⁵

In July 2006, SPDC army soldiers operating under four columns comprised of soldiers from LIB #20, #22, #507 and #552, burned and destroyed many plantations and fields in the Maw Nay Pwa area of Toungoo District. The following villages lost fields:

1. Hu Mu Der;
2. Ler Kla Der;
3. Klaw Mi Der;
4. Kheh Der;
5. Saw Po Lo;
6. Swa Loh; and
7. Thay Loh.²⁷⁶

On 10 August 2006, SPDC army troops from IB #16 destroyed the plantations belonging to Shan See Boh villagers, Naw Wah Gyi, Naw Bay and Maung Palah.²⁷⁷

In October 2006, SPDC army soldiers from IB #11, under Commander Han Moo Aung, moved from Tha Aye Hta to Thay Ku Der in Toungoo District with orders to set fire to every village in the Ho Kee area.²⁷⁸

In October 2006, there were over 1,450 displaced persons fleeing SPDC army attacks from a single river valley in Mone Township of Nyaunglebin District. SPDC army soldiers had moved through the area and fired upon their villages and IDP settlements with machineguns. The SPDC army soldiers continued to mount attacks and patrols, causing all those in their path to run for their lives. The villagers on the run came from the following 32 village tracts:

1. Ler Kla village tract, 8 villages;
2. Saw Ka Der village tract, 3 villages;
3. Htee Ler Baw Hta village tract, 4 villages;
4. Kwee Dee Kaw village tract, 6 villages;
5. Kyauk Pya village tract, 3 villages;
6. Thay Baw Der village tract, 4 villages;
7. Saw Tay Der village tract, 2 villages;
8. Kway Po Der village tract, 1 village; and
9. Yaw Kee village tract, 1 village.²⁷⁹

In October 2006, Naw N--- from Htee Chwa village in Pa'an District reported witnessing a soldier from LIB #547 sexually assault her buffalo. She was reportedly going to her field to fetch the animal when she saw the soldier in question approaching so she hid in some nearby bushes. It was then that she witnessed the soldier rape the buffalo. The villagers later reported the incident to the battalion commander who subsequently had the soldier transferred. At the time of the rape, the buffalo was already pregnant and Naw N--- quipped if the calf would be part human. After the calf was born and she saw that it was a buffalo after all, she named it "*Tatmadaw*" (Burmese armed forces).²⁸⁰

On 1 November 2006, SPDC army soldiers from IB #35, led by Commander Soe Tun, fired upon the civilian village of Klay Hta in Than Daung Township of northern Toungoo District with mortars and machineguns. The villagers fled and 20 minutes later the village was in flames. One of the villagers, Saw Ay Pwee, was killed, while two other villagers, Saw Baw Thoo and Naw Heh Ku Mo, were wounded and disappeared.²⁸¹

On 25 November 2006, troops from MOC #10 along with one TOC of MOC #15 fired upon villagers near Thaw Ku Mu Der. There were no casualties, however, the troops established six small camps in the area and shot at any villager attempting to return to their fields in the region.²⁸²

On 10 December 2006, SPDC army troops from IB #48 blocked all the roads going to the villagers' betelnut plantations and field huts in the hills to the east of Shan See Boh village in southwestern Toungoo District.²⁸³

Between February and mid-December 2006, 21 villages from seven village tracts were completely abandoned in Mone Township. In the remaining 7 village tracts some villages still retained a substantial proportion of their populations, while some lost over half their populations as villagers fled SPDC army attacks and did not return. The abandoned village tracts included:

1. Ler Kla;
2. Tee La Baw Hta;
3. Kwee De Kaw;
4. Kauk Pia;
5. Saw The Der;
6. Kwey Pa Der; and
7. Yaw Kee.

Villages with less than half their usual population included:

1. Saw Ka Der;
2. Klaw Kee;
3. They Nwe Kee;
4. Saw Kee;
5. Htee Koh;
6. Tha Wah Po;
7. Thay Baw Der;
8. Play Pa;
9. Play Kee;
10. K'Ser Kaw Htee; and
11. Saw Wah Der.

Four villages were burned along with many field houses and rice barns. Landmines were then placed on trails and in the remains of the villages themselves. Those villages that were burned included:

1. Nwa Hta, in Htee La Baw Hta village tract;
2. They Kwey Lu village, in Htee La Baw Hta village tract;
3. Tha Po Hta village (Kwee De Kaw village tract); and
4. Htee Say Day village, in Saw Ka Der village tract.²⁸⁴

During the growing season of 2006 (June-November), LIB #547, #548 and #549 forcibly evicted Burmese Muslims living in T'Nay Hsah (Nabu) village to a relocation site established next to Kler T'Ku village. The 200-odd households which comprised the Muslim community of T'Nay Hsah were ordered to relocate as soon as they finished harvesting their paddy in November. It was suggested that the SPDC planned to empty the Muslim section of T'Nay Hsah village and establish a new army camp in its place, large enough to accommodate the families of soldiers and officers.²⁸⁵

Landmines

On 1 April 2006, village leaders from numerous villages in Than Daung Township of Toungoo District met with SPDC commanders to discuss the issue of landmines. In the Kaw Thay Der area, villagers had been forced to cut back the bushes alongside the Kler Lah–Bu Sah Kee and Kler Lah–Mawchi motor roads and clear the area of landmines, in which 5 villagers were wounded. The wounded villagers were refused permission to go to Toungoo hospital, and were instead sent to the nearby Kler Lah clinic, which lacks the facilities to perform amputations or other surgery, and ironically is only capable of stabilizing landmine victims for transport to the better equipped hospital in Toungoo. In spite of this, one week passed before the mine victims were allowed to be transported to Toungoo hospital for treatment.²⁸⁶

On an unspecified date between February and April 2006, 28-year-old Kyaw Lu Shwe from Day Baw Kee in Kyauk Kyi Township, Nyaunglebin District stepped on a landmine planted beside his home. One leg was blown off, while the other was severely wounded.²⁸⁷

On 22 March 2006, soldiers from LID #66 ordered civilian villagers to clear any landmines from around Pa Ka Ku Lah village in Tantabin Township. One of the villagers, Saw Hu, was wounded when he stepped on a landmine, though the SPDC provided him with no assistance. His fellow villagers had to look after him and take him to the hospital for treatment. The SPDC maintained that Saw Hu's injuries were not the result of the labour that he had been "asked" to perform.²⁸⁸

On 5 May 2006, Saw Mu, a humanitarian relief worker with the Free Burma Rangers (FBR) was killed after he stepped on an SPDC-deployed landmine while distributing aid to Karen IDPs in Papun District.²⁸⁹



Karen villagers carrying a landmine victim to the Thai-Burma border to treatment in October 2006. The victim was a 20-year-old Karen woman who stepped on a landmine planted beside her paddy storage barn in Toungoo District, Karen State by SPDC army soldiers from IB #2. Her right foot was blown off in the blast and a local medic amputated what was left of her lower leg without anaesthetic. The journey to the border took two weeks to complete.

In May and June 2006, approximately 850 villagers were forced to carry supplies for the SPDC while also acting as human minesweepers along the Toungoo-Mawchi road in Toungoo District. Soon after, 55 households in Maung Pa Der village were forced to provide one person from each household to provide security for an SPDC bulldozer: Five men were forced to walk on the left side, five men on the right side, while three men rode atop the bulldozer itself and the rest were forced to walk in front of and behind the bulldozer to dissuade KNLA troops from attacking the bulldozer lest they hit one of the villagers.²⁹⁰

On 10 October 2006, SPDC troops stepped up their offensive in Mone Township in northern Nyaunglebin District. They planted landmines in many villages, in farms and on the trails leading to civilian villages. Three villagers subsequently stepped on these landmines: 24-year-old Saw Say Nay Mu from Ghay B'Leh Hta village, and two other villagers from Play Kee village tract.²⁹¹

On 3 November 2006, SPDC army troops attacked Nwa Lay Ko village in Nyaunglebin District. They laid many landmines before returning to their camp at Ko La Wah Lu. KNLA soldiers attempted to clear the mines, but were not able to find them all. When the villagers returned to their homes, some of them stepped on the landmines. The exact number of landmines laid by the SPDC in the village is unknown, and villagers remain at risk of stepping on them.²⁹²

On 7 November 2006, the KNLA removed nine SPDC-laid landmines from Nwa Hta village and three from Thay Kay Lu village in Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District which. Both locations were civilian villages²⁹³

On 2 December 2006, an SPDC landmine killed three and wounded a further eight in Mone Township, Nyaunglebin District. From the villagers from Baw Kwey Day (Ti Ko) village in Mone Township fled as SPDC army soldiers approached their village. While in the village, the soldiers planted a landmine beneath a fireplace inside a civilian villager's home. This was rigged to a pressure plate that was buried in the ground beside the fireplace. When the villagers later returned to the village with a KNLA escort, one of the resistance soldiers unknowingly stepped on the pressure plate which triggered the landmine. One man suffered massive head trauma and died instantly, another man lost both legs, also dying instantly and a third man died later while being transported to a mobile clinic. Eight others were also wounded in the blast, but not fatally.²⁹⁴

On 5 December 2006, troops under MOC #15 and LID #66 captured a number of Klay Soe Kee villagers in Toungoo District and forced them to act as human minesweepers, walking on both sides and in front of an SPDC bulldozer. Some of the villagers were also forced to ride on top of the bulldozer with the SPDC army soldiers as human shields.²⁹⁵

On 31 December 2006, the commander of MOC #16 captured 20 villagers from Play Hsa Loh village in southern Toungoo District, and took them with him to the nearby Tha Pyay Nyunt SPDC army camp. This group of villagers were used as human minesweepers and ordered to walk in front of the bulldozer the SPDC was using the road.²⁹⁶

Forced Labour

On 13 April 2006, 150 SPDC army troops ordered the inhabitants of Ma La Daw village in northern Nyaunglebin District to cut down all trees and vegetation from Wai Mi Hill and Wee Lee Hill to make way for a new SPDC army camp to be built there. Beginning in May, SPDC army troops from LIB #366, #377 and #399 began sending rations to the military camp at Ma La Daw. The troops forced villagers from Ma Law Daw, T' Kaw Pwa, Myaung Oo and Chu T'Lo to carry the supplies to the camp on their backs or by bullock cart.²⁹⁷

On 20 July 2006, commander Ko Ko from Southern Command Headquarters, ordered Saw Maung Kay, a Kler Lah villager living in Toungoo town, to return to Kler Lah and work together with LID #66 Division Commander Tin Aung. He was ordered to select 21 families from 12 nearby villages to relocate to Bu Hsa Kee. If these 21 families decided that they did not want to relocate, they had to pay other families to go in their place. At the time, the going rate for this was 15,000 kyat per person per month. Although finding others was difficult as few people were willing to go. The families that were selected from villages included:

1. Kler Lah, 12 families;
2. Peh Kaw Der village, 3 families;
3. Kaw Thay Der village, 2 families;
4. Kaw Soe Koh village, 2 families;
5. Wah Tho Ko village, 1 family;
6. Ler Ko village, 1 family;
7. Klay Soe Kee, 1 family;
8. Der Doh village, 1 family;
9. Maw Ko Der, 1 family;
10. Maw Pa Der village, 1 family;
11. Ku Plaw Der, 1 family; and
12. Gha Mu Der village, 1 family.²⁹⁸

On 17 August 2006, Major Min Kyaing Thant of IB #57 in Nyaunglebin District ordered villagers in Kyauk Tan, Them Seik, Tone Ta Dah, Shu Kin Thee, Po Peh Gone, Kaw Tha Say, Bawgata and Pa Deh Ghaw villages to complete fencing their villages within 2 days.²⁹⁹

On 9 October 2006, Bo Khin Maung Aye of LIB #507 under TOC# 3 of MOC #12 based in Tantabin Township, Toungoo District ordered 78 Play Hsa Loh villagers, including men and women, to carry rice from Tha Pyay Nyunt army camp back to Play Hsa Loh. The work had to be completed by 12 October 2006.³⁰⁰

On 16 December 2006, the TOC #16 commander, based in Tantabin Township in Toungoo District, set up his military camp at Tha Pyay Nyunt village and ordered villagers to cut bamboo and timber for the construction of a new military camp. Moreover, in order to send food supplies from Tha Pyay Nyunt to T'Mya Per Loh, K'Mu Loh and Play Hsa Loh areas, soldiers demanded villagers from the Maw Nay Pwa area to carry military supplies on a daily basis.³⁰¹

Karenni State

The SPDC is planning to construct a number of large-scale hydroelectricity dams on the Salween River. None of these proposed dams will be built in Karenni State, but will nonetheless greatly impact upon the lives of the Karenni people. In addition to having a significant impact on the environment, the dam projects, if completed, will also flood large areas of Karenni homeland. Three of these dams, namely, the Hatgyi, Dagwin, and Weigyi dams, will be built downstream in Karen State. Of the three, the Weigyi dam, at 168 metres high, is not only the largest, but also the closest dam to Karenni territory. Upon construction, this dam alone is expected to flood approximately 640 square kilometres of land in Karenni State, inundating at least 28 Karenni villages and towns, including the Karenni's historic capital. Put into perspective, the reservoir created will be roughly the same size as the island of Singapore.³⁰² The Karenni Development Research Group (KDRG) estimates that the Weigyi Dam project would directly impact on the lives of 30,000 people and indirectly contribute to undermining the Karenni culture, traditions, history and way of life. One villager from the Pasaung area was quoted to say, *"We rely on the Salween River for our livelihood: for farming, fishing and trading. The river is our life"*.³⁰³ In addition to the loss of land and traditional ways of life, many Karenni fear that the construction of the dam projects will involve large scale human rights abuses including forced relocations, the use of landmines, and increased militarization.³⁰⁴

Furthermore, in the first week of June 2006, a secretary from the Karenni Refugee Committee (KnRC) reported that 59 civilians from Demoso, Bawlakhe, Pasaung Townships, in central Karenni State were forced to flee from their homes to the Thai-Burma border due to food shortages caused by ongoing SPDC operations. The KnRC representative reported 200 new arrivals into the Karenni refugee camps over the past year, citing the expansion of military operations as the reason for the new arrivals.³⁰⁵

Mon State

"Teaching the Mon language is a barrier to national development and solidarity. The SPDC will not achieve its objective of rural development in the area because of the Mon language teaching."

- Public statement from senior SPDC official from Kyaik Mayaw Township.³⁰⁶

There are nearly two million people living in Mon State. After the Mon's most powerful political group, the New Mon State Party (NMSP), signed a ceasefire agreement with the junta in 1995, the Mon people expected peace and development from the military regime. Instead, human rights violations have continued over the years including the confiscation of over 10,000 acres of land. The land confiscation has impoverished former farmers, who have fled the country in the face of starvation. However, the exodus of the Mon has freed up more land and jobs for ethnic Burmans to resettle in the area, shifting the demographics away from an ethnic Mon majority in the area.

In 2006, Mon communities continued to see large numbers of Burmese migrants enter their midst looking for work and economic opportunities. The SPDC has created economic opportunities for ethnic Burmans in the region, such as three brick factories constructed on confiscated land and operated by Burmese-speaking workers. In addition, a military base in Mekanin village in northern Ye Township, was built for the sole purpose of relocating retired military personnel and disabled war veterans.³⁰⁷ The strategy discriminates against and

impoverishes local Mons, causing them to flee the country, and replaces them with ethnic Burmans enticed to the area with generous financial incentives. The population transfer has occurred fairly rapidly and has many local community groups worried about the preservation of the traditional way of life for the Mon in the face of increased Burmanization in their territory.³⁰⁸

The teaching of the Mon language is forbidden in Mon State. A teacher at a Mon National School in Khaw Zar sub-Township in Ye Township reported that SPDC army troops had threatened her for teaching the Mon language and forced her students into labour.³⁰⁹

To make up for the gap in education which is present in most ethnic minority areas, Buddhist monks in Mon communities have partnered with the Mon Literature and Culture Committees (MLCC) to provide self-funded summer schools for Mon students. The project allows many underprivileged Mon children who cannot afford school some basic literacy training and primary education they would otherwise be without.³¹⁰ In 2005-2006 the NMSP funded 376 schools in Mon State.³¹¹ Thanbyuzayat Township alone is home to approximately 6,520 Mon students taking summer school examinations, while there are an estimated 63,320 ethnic Mon summer school students throughout the state.³¹² On 31 May 2006, an SPDC order was issued to schools in Kawkareik Township of Karen State stipulating that the teachers were to only teach the Burmese language, effectively meaning that all Mon summer schools have to close down³¹³. (For more information, see Chapter 9: Rights to Education and Health).

At the university level, Mon traditional clothes were banned from the University of Moulmein (Mawlamyine) in June 2006. Approximately 160 students normally wore traditional Mon dress on Mondays at the school. However, the commanding officer of the SPDC Southeastern Command changed the dress code declaring that all students were obliged to wear the traditional Burman student uniform of the blue *longyi* on Mondays.³¹⁴

In October 2006, the Mon national emblem was removed from the longest bridge in Burma located in Moulmein. Although the SPDC claimed that the emblem was removed following astrological advice, the Mon people, however, felt it symbolized a larger and more calculated attack upon the Mon cultural.³¹⁵

To fight against the SPDC's various attempts at cultural assimilation, the Mon people have promoted Mon singing and theatre at the community level. Although local people often prefer Burmese movies and find them to be of better quality, Mon director Nai Htaw Rot has made several Mon films and has plans to add Burmese subtitles in the future so his films can be screened before a wider audience.³¹⁶ In September 2006, the Mon Literacy and Culture Committee (MLCC) promoted the Mon music band, "Gita Mon", in a concert in Rangoon in another effort to keep the Mon culture alive.³¹⁷ In November 2006, MLCC projects faced opposition from the regime and filming of an annual work on Mon culture was stopped for some time, despite having obtained all necessary documents and permission prior to commencing filming the project.³¹⁸

In April 2006, the leader of the same Mon music group who later sang in Rangoon was forced at gunpoint to sing a song in Burmese. Captain Aung Myeit Myo from IB #31 pointed a gun at Nai Zahan Mon and ordered him to sign in Burmese, during a Gita Mon performance at the Pagoda festival in Kawzar in southern Mon State, Burma.³¹⁹

Literature and journalism in the Mon language is heavily censored and subject to lengthy delays before permission is issued for their publication. Sometimes publication delays can last up to 6 months. Mon journals have to get permission from the regime prior to printing and many find it difficult to obtain such permission.³²⁰ Not only do these impediments make the promotion of Mon literature and culture difficult but it also effectively stops the spread of relevant information among the community.

A couple who fled Wear Kwao village in northern Ye Byu Township in early 2006 described the conditions in their village. According to the report, when SPDC army soldiers are out on patrol, villagers are routinely called upon to porter for them. While not on patrol, villagers must collect water from the stream, gather firewood and vegetables, and stand watch over the nearby railway line. Children as young as ten have been ordered to perform labour for the troops. Villagers who could not speak Burmese were tortured, occasionally by being harnessed to an ox and beaten with a wooden plank with nails protruding from it. Moreover, villagers were ordered not to leave their villages or else risk being shot. One woman said the troops extorted money from her family until they had nothing left and she was forced to flee for the Thai border or starve in the village.³²¹

Mon State – partial list of incidents for 2006

In January 2006, Captain Aye Tun, along with four of his soldiers closed the Mon National School in Yin Ye village in southern Ye Township. There were 40 students at the school, many of whom could not afford to attend the government school. One teacher, Kon Chan, fled to Thailand following the incident.³²²

In the mid-January 2006, the Toe Tat Ywa Thit village primary school in northern Ye Township was ordered to stop teaching the Mon language by the commanding officer of LIB #586. The Toe Tat Ywa Thit primary school taught both the Burmese and Mon languages. It was not an SPDC-administered school but rather was operated and supported by the local community who built it in 2001. The commander told the village headman that teachers would be punished if they continued to teach Mon. He is reported to have said, *“If someone would like to teach Mon language, they can teach in the forest where nobody will hear”*.³²³

In the second week of March 2006, SPDC and USDA authorities ordered the MLCC to stop conducting summer literacy classes in 12 villages in Chaung Zone Township. Committee members were threatened with imprisonment if the trainings continued and were forced to sign papers promising they would stop.³²⁴

On 14 March 2006, the Mon Summer Literacy School on Kala Gote Island was ordered to close. Captain Hla Kyaw of IB #3 came to the school twice with a detachment of soldiers. He told villages that if the summer classes continued he would arrest the administrative team, the teachers and all of the schools supporters.³²⁵

On 25 October 2006, 35-year-old Nai Htaw Maung of Toa Tate village in southern Ye Township attempted to kill himself by swallowing poison because he had been sentenced by local military authorities to perform regular village guard duty. Performing guard duty prevented him from working and earning a living, which led him to consider suicide.³²⁶

In October 2006, Nai Tun Oo and Nai Yought, from Yin Ye village in Kaw Zar sub-Township in southern Mon State, were brutally tortured by IB #31 because they did not

report a group of Mon resistance soldiers entering the village to collect rice from the villagers during their time on guard duty. According to a relative neither of them can work suffering as they are from pain in the bones.³²⁷

Sagaing Division

The Kuki are a Christian ethnic minority whose members are also found in parts of northeast India and the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. The Kuki are not recognized by the SPDC as a distinct ethnic group. They have never formed any armed resistance group in Burma. Many Kukis believe they face discrimination largely on the basis of their religion. (For more information, see Chapter 10: Freedom of Belief and Religion).

In December 2006 approximately 100 members of the Kuki ethnic group met together to discuss issues related to Kuki identity. The first Kuki National Seminar was organized by the Kuki Students Democratic Front (KSDF). It called particular attention to the effects of the SPDC's proposed Thamanti Dam project and associated hydroelectricity power plant on the Chindwin River, which, if the project goes ahead, will flood at least 50 Kuki villages in Sagaing Division displacing an estimated 3,600 Kuki villagers. Furthermore, it is believed that the dam reservoir will inundate an estimated 17,000 acres of Kuki farmland, destroying the livelihood of the Kuki people who rely on the cultivation of irrigated rice fields as well as either endangering or causing the extinction of many species of flora and fauna.³²⁸

Shan State

Shan State – partial list of incidents for 2006

On 10 June 2006, Lt-Col Aung Zaw Latt, Chairman of the Namkham Township Peace and Development Council announced that it was prohibited to wear traditional Shan attire during religious festivals organised by the state.³²⁹

Between August and December 2006, some 80 community schools located in the area known as Special Region No. 3 in SSA-N-controlled territory, in Kun Hing and Murng Paeng Townships, were banned from teaching Shan to the local communities. This edict was issued by LIB #360, based in Murng Paeng Township. On 8 August 2006, Captain Win Maung observed the teaching of Shan in a community school and ordered the 30 troops under his command to search for and destroy all educational materials printed in the Shan language.³³⁰

At an undisclosed time in mid-2006, the SPDC initiated a forced literacy program in Keng Tung town. Community leaders were required to select eight people from each of the town's quarters to attend the classes for one hour each night for a month. Many illiterate people could not attend the classes so often, as they must work to earn a living. Some community leaders were forced to hire people to fill their places at the rate of 300 kyat per night.³³¹

As a result of travel restrictions, many Shan scholars were prevented from attending the International Symposium on Dai-Thai studies in Yunnan province, a Shan cultural event in September 2006.³³²

8.4 Abuse of Ethnic Minorities by Ceasefire Groups

Many ceasefire groups in Burma are guilty of committing human rights abuses against, not only members of other ethnic minorities who live within their territories, but also against their own people; the same people that they claim to represent and protect. In signing a ceasefire pact with the regime, many groups have come to function as proxy armies of the SPDC. In return for “peace” and local autonomy, certain business concessions and material support, some ceasefire groups have aided the SPDC in their efforts to control the local population. Some of these groups have even fought alongside the SPDC during military offensives against resistance groups or local populations. However, this is not as one-sided as it would at first seem. By supporting the SPDC through militarization and oppression, ceasefire groups are able to expand their own zones of political and military control, and ultimately, villagers must fear not only the SPDC but the ceasefire groups as well.

DKBA – partial list of incidents for 2006

In early 2006, Boh Lweh, a DKBA battalion commander from #333 Brigade went to an unnamed village in Thaton District, and shot a 25-year-old man 30 times in the head with a slingshot and then demanded he porter for the army.³³³

On 3 January 2006, Maung Chit Htoo, battalion commander of the DKBA #999 Brigade Special Battalion based at Shwe Ko Ko, ordered the villagers from the Meh P’Leh region in T’Nay Hsah Township to provide recruits for his army. Representatives of several village tracts were summoned to a meeting in which he gave orders for how many people each village tract had to provide. The men would have to remain in the DKBA for the next seven years. There are nine village tracts in Meh P’Leh area. Two village tracts were ordered to pay money in lieu of recruits, but all other village tracts were ordered to provide villagers as recruits. If those chosen from each village were unwilling or unable to join, they were told to pay someone to take their place; but that person must be from their own village, not from anywhere else. Some of the young men of Ker Ghaw village entered the Buddhist monkhood to avoid being conscripted. The village tract leaders were given until 25 April 2006 to provide the number of recruits stipulated or they would be arrested by the DKBA. Many villages had already previously provided the DKBA with recruits who are still serving three and four year terms with the army and have not yet been able to return to village life. The cost of hiring a villager to serve as a recruit would cost around 15,000 Thai baht per year, a cost far beyond the means of most villages. The village heads said they had no choice but to comply and send recruits to the DKBA.³³⁴

On 16 February 2006, an unspecified DKBA unit in Bilin Township, Thaton District, demanded a pig worth 40,000 kyat, from Kaw Heh villagers, Pa Noe and Pa Na Da. Moreover, they forced the two to serve as porters for a month, on the accusation that they had connections with the KNLA. They threatened to send them to jail for a month, if they did not serve as porters.³³⁵

On 11 April 2006, DKBA #333 Brigade Officers Zaw Maung and Htun Loh demanded a total of 370 baskets (7,770 kg / 17,000 lb) of paddy from Tee Law Thi Hta, K’Ter Tee and Lay Po Hta village tracts.³³⁶

On 14 April 2006, DKBA #333 Brigade officers Zaw Maung and Htun Loh ordered three village tracts to provide them a total of 54 porters for one year starting immediately. It was

left up to the villages how often they want to replace these porters, but the officers said they must have 54 villagers on hand as porters every day of the year.³³⁷

In May 2006, DKBA troops in Thaton District initiated travel restrictions on local villagers, forbidding them to travel to their fields. The travel restrictions lasted for the duration of the planting season and then were lifted. As a result of the travel restrictions, most villagers in Hta Meh Kee village were forced to switch from planting rice to hiring themselves out as day labourers, earning far less than what they ordinarily would. Ultimately, many families could not acquire enough food and were forced to eat nutritionally-poor watery rice gruel.³³⁸

Throughout 2006, DKBA forces operating in Thaton District regularly obstructed teachers and students from going to school. Although they would typically camp outside villages in field huts, the soldiers would also occasionally stay within the village in the school; thus preventing any lessons from being conducted. In addition, DKBA troops regularly harassed non-Buddhist teachers, particularly Christians.³³⁹

On 10 May 2006, DKBA #333 Brigade officers Zaw Maung and Htun Loh ordered the people of Po Ma Heh, Noh Paw Htee and Po Gha villages to pay them 10 million kyat per village by 12 May 2006. Baw Kyo Leh village was also ordered to give 10 buffalos by the same deadline. This extortion was imposed as fines after two DKBA soldiers had been killed in a clash with the KNLA.³⁴⁰

In June 2006, a 2nd Lieutenant with the DKBA K'Saw Wah (White elephant) Special Battalion interrogated Htee Lah, a teacher from Lah Kyo Koh village. He was asked what his religion was, and upon answering that he was Christian, the 2nd Lieutenant stated that he wanted to kill him and issued numerous threats against him. The village head intervened and explained that Htee Lah had been requested to come to teach in their village. To this, the lieutenant replied that Htee Lah would not be allowed to return in 2007 to continue teaching.³⁴¹

In June 2006, following a KNLA ambush on a DKBA patrol in Bilin Township, the commanding officer of DKBA #333 Brigade fined a nearby village 1,000,000 kyat. The officer said that if they did not pay the fine, his soldiers would burn the village. The villagers had little choice but to pay the fine, despite the severe hardship that the payment of such a large amount would create.³⁴²

In June 2006, DKBA forces entered K'Wah Hta village in Thaton District and accused one of the villagers, Saw T---, of being a member of the KNU. The soldiers demanded payment of a 'fine' for his alleged affiliation with the KNU and detained him along with three other villagers. All four villagers were beaten so badly that their faces became bruised and swollen. They demanded that Saw T--- take them to the KNU camp. Although, as a mere villager, Saw T--- was unable to take them to the camp and instead fled from the patrol that took him. The three other villagers were unable to escape and as collective punishment for Saw T---'s escape, the soldiers returned to K'Wah Hta and fined the village one pig. Had the soldiers had any real evidence suggesting that Saw T--- was a member of the KNU; it is more likely that they would have either executed him or turned him over to the SPDC to face a similar fate.³⁴³

On 8 June 2006, Moe Kyo of DKBA extorted the following goods from villagers in Thaton District:

1. Saw Hser Paw, 3 bowls of rice (one bowl of rice is equal to 1.5 kg / 3.5 lb);
2. Naw Hta Mu, 2 bowls of rice;
3. Naw Dah, 2 bowls of rice;
4. Naw Kyi, 4 bowls of rice;
5. Naw Baw, 4 bowls of rice;
6. Naw Eh Say Moo, 3 bowls of rice;
7. Naw Htoo Moe, 4 bowls of rice;
8. Paw Say Blut Moe, 3 bowls of rice;
9. Maung Ta Doh Moe, 4 bowls of rice and 11 enamel plates;
10. Khin Win Kyi Moe, 1 bowls of rice;
11. Paq Lay Wah Moe, 3 bowls of rice, 1 enamel plate;
12. Saw Ku aye Moe, 4 bowls of rice;
13. Naw Mu Kyi, 2 bowls of rice;
14. Ma Pya, 4 bowls of rice;
15. Pee Thu Meh, 3 bowls of rice,
16. Ma Shwee Po, 3 bowls of rice, 2 chicken and 1 viss (1.6 kg / 3.6 lb) of jaggery;
17. Tu Lay Moe, 4 bowls of rice;
18. Eh Gay Htoo, 3 bowls of rice;
19. Ma Paw Moe, 3 bowls of rice;
20. Tee Po Lay, 4 bowls of rice;
21. Saw Arrow Moe, 3 bowls of rice;
22. Naw Hser Gay Moe, 4 bowls of rice;
23. Naw Kha Moe, 3 bowls of rice and 1 chicken;
24. Tha Mee Lay Moe, 2 bowls of rice;
25. Ma Pyone, 2 bowls of rice;
26. Kaw La Moe, 4 bowls of rice;
27. Naw Keh Moe, 2 bowls of rice;
28. Naw Tu Moe, 4 bowls of rice;
29. Naw Mee Wu Moe, 3 spoons, 1 plate; and
30. Naw Paw Say Moe, 2 chickens.³⁴⁴

On 27 June 2006, 40-year-old Saw Pah T'Pyeh from Klaw Hta village in Thaton District, died after stepping on a DKBA landmine deliberately planted on the path to his field hut.³⁴⁵

On 3 July 2006, DKBA troops entered Pa Paw village in Thaton District and questioned the following villagers about the KNU. The villagers were unable to satisfactorily answer the soldiers' questions and so were kicked and punched:

1. Saw Maung Di, 30;
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 Jorry, 42;
9. Saw Pu Ya; and
10. Saw Htun Thaung, 50.³⁴⁶

On 10 July 2006, Than Htun and Kyaw Min of the DKBA shot at a village woman and her two children, at Pa Htaw Kho Khee Plaw in Thaton District without warning or provocation. Saw Maung Maung, the 16-year-old son of the woman was wounded and suffered severe blood loss, but was able to escape along with the rest of his family.³⁴⁷

On 11 July 2006, DKBA troops led by Than Htun captured and tied up Ta Oo Ni villager, Saw Mya Oo, in his field hut in Thaton District. The soldiers questioned him as to the whereabouts of the KNLA. He was unable to provide the information they wanted so the soldiers beat him mercilessly, stopping only after they had fractured his skull.³⁴⁸

In August 2006, DKBA troops in Kyaik Mayaw and Kya Inn Seik Kyi Townships confiscated over one thousand acres of land from local people to make a rubber plantation.³⁴⁹

On 16 August 2006, Moe Kyo of the DKBA ordered one person from each household in Kaw Heh village tract in Thaton District to go and work on the Meh Si pagoda. They had to supply their own food, tools and all of the building materials. The villagers were not paid for their labour.³⁵⁰

On 27 August 2006, Kyaw Min of the DKBA based in Bilin Township, Thaton District, extorted these amounts from the following villages:

1. Htee Pa Doh Hta village, 200,000 kyat;
2. Klaw Hta village, 18,500 kyat;
3. Htee Pa Doh Khee village, 32,000 kyat;
4. Lay Kaw Hti village, 32,500 kyat; and
5. Pa Day Mu village, 380,000 kyat.³⁵¹

On 6 September 2006, at 10:30 pm, DKBA soldier Pa Ni Tho entered Ka Wa Hta village in Thaton District and beat the following villagers with the butt of his rifle:

1. Saw Kyaw Hser, 52;
2. Pa Maung Hla, 37; and
3. Maung Htun Mya, 55.³⁵²

On 26 September 2006, DKBA officer Pa Lay Htoo summoned village heads from numerous villages in Bilin and Pa'an Townships, Thaton District to a meeting where he demanded money from them that he claimed was to be used for the Karen New Year celebrations on 19 December 2006. He extorted a total of 1,780,000 kyat from the following villages:

1. Soo Kee, 10,000 kyat;
2. Ta Meh Kee, 10,000 kyat;
3. La Kyo Ko, 10,000 kyat;
4. Meh Baw Kee, 10,000 kyat;
5. La Kyo Kaw Htee, 5,000 kyat;
6. Htaw Klaw Po Kee, 4,000 kyat;
7. Htaw Klaw Kee, 50,000 kyat;
8. Wa Kheh Hta, 6,000 kyat;
9. No Ber Baw, 30,000 kyat;
10. Kwe Lay Tha Waw Pya, 50,000 kyat;
11. Ka Weh Hta, 5,000 kyat;
12. Ka Wah Hta Po village, 10,000 kyat;
13. Klaw Hta, 5,000 kyat;
14. Toh Tha Kee, 30,000 kyat;

15. Kwe Lay Pu, 20,000 kyat;
16. Baw Naw Kee, 5,000 kyat;
17. Nya Po Kee, 10,000 kyat;
18. Paw Po Kee, 50,000 kyat;
19. Ler Ka Ter, 50,000 kyat;
20. Ler Po, 30,000 kyat;
21. Thu K'Bee, 30,000 kyat;
22. Paya Raw, 70,000 kyat;
23. Lay Kay, 20,000 kyat;
24. Kaw Po Ko, 50,000 kyat;
25. Htaw Klaw Hta, 10,000 kyat;
26. Yo Kla, 140,000 kyat;
27. Htee Pa Doh Hta, 300,000 kyat;
28. Baw Naw Nee, 120,000 kyat;
29. Noh K'Neh, 60,000 kyat;
30. Htee Si Baw, 150,000 kyat;
31. Kaw Po Pleh, 100,000 kyat;
32. Mya Lay, 10,000 kyat;
33. Htee Hser Kee, 10,000 kyat;
34. Th'Waw Pya, 100,000 kyat;
35. Kaw Heh Hkaw Kla, 20,000 kyat;
36. Kaw Heh, 140,000 kyat;
37. Shwe Oak, 20,000 kyat; and
38. Kway Law, 30,000 kyat.³⁵³

On 2 October 2006, DKBA officer Po Soe demanded the following sums of money from villagers in Mya Lay and Pa New Kla villages in Thaton District:

1. Tee Kaw Li, 180,000 kyat;
2. Tee Kyaw Moo, 50,000 kyat;
3. Pa Thu, 100,000 kyat;
4. Tee Pa La, 100,000 kyat;
5. Win Zaw Oo, 100,000 kyat;
6. Tee Pa Cho, 100,000 kyat; and
7. Ma Thu Za, 100,000 kyat.³⁵⁴

For Karen New Year celebrations on 19 December 2006, the DKBA #999 Brigade Special Battalion ordered villagers in Pa'an District to supply labour, money and food towards the biggest celebration possible. Each village near Shwe Ko Ko, where the celebrations were held, was forced to pay 50,000 kyat to help finance the celebration.³⁵⁵

UWSA – partial list of incidents for 2006

On 27 March 2006, a group of 250 people returning from a Christian gathering were detained and interrogated by UWSA soldiers in Mongton.³⁵⁶

On 18 April, a group of 38 Christians were detained by the UWSA in Mongmai, north of the Wa capital Panghsang. The group was charged with giving sermons and the distribution of papers without official permission. Nineteen people were released soon after the arrest.³⁵⁷

Red Pa'O – partial list of incidents for 2006

In March 2006, farmlands cultivated for generations by villagers of Pa Hok village in Nam Zarng Township were confiscated by members of the Red Pa'O ceasefire group. Both Red Pa'O and White Pa'O ceasefire groups operate in Nam Zarng Township, although each has their own designated area of control. Both groups claim the land along the boundary between their two respective territorial regions. In order to resolve the dispute, both groups ordered that the land remain uncultivated for a year. The villagers who owned the land, however, continued to plant crops there in order to make a living. On 10 March 2006, Red Pa'O troops ordered these farmers off the land and confiscated it in the name of the SPDC. In April, with their food supplies almost gone, no fewer than ten families left the area for the Thai-Burma border for fear of starvation.³⁵⁸

8.5 Official List of Ethnic Minority Groups in Burma

The following list is the ‘official’ SPDC list representing the 134 recognized ethnic minorities from eight main ethnic families in Burma. Please note that some groups such as the Rohingya and the Kuki, for instance, are deliberately omitted from this list as they are not recognized by the SPDC as being native to Burma.

Burman

1. Bamar
2. Dawei
3. Beik
4. Yaw
5. Yabein
6. Kadu
7. Ganan
8. Salon
9. Hpon

Chin

10. Chin
11. Meithei (Kathe)
12. Saline
13. Ka Lin Kaw (Lushay)
14. Khami
15. Awa Khami
16. Khawno
17. Kaungso
18. Kaung Saing Chin
19. Kwelshin
20. Kwangli (Sim)
21. Gunte (Lyente)
22. Gwete
23. Ngorn
24. Zizan
25. Sentang
26. Saing Zan
27. Za How
28. Zotung
29. Zo Pe
30. Zo
31. Zahnyet (Zanniet)
32. Tapong
33. Tiddim (Hai Dim)
34. Tay Zan
35. Taishon
36. Thado
37. Torr

38. Dim
39. Dai (Yindu)
40. Naga
41. Tanghkul
42. Malin
43. Panun
44. Magun
45. Matu
46. Miram (Mara)
47. Mi-er
48. Mgan
49. Lushei (Lushay)
50. Laymyo
51. Lyente
52. Lawhtu
53. Lai
54. Laizao
55. Wakim (Mro)
56. Haulngo
57. Anu
58. Anun
59. Oo Pu
60. Lhinbu
61. Asho (Plain)
62. Rongtu

Kachin

63. Kachin
64. Trone
65. Dalaung
66. Jinghpaw
67. Guari
68. Hkahku
69. Duleng
70. Maru (Lawgore)
71. Rawang
72. Lashi (La Chit)
73. Atsi
74. Lisu

Karen (Kayin)

75. Kayin
76. Kayinpyu
77. Pa Le Chi
78. Mon Kayin (Sarpyu)
79. Sgaw
80. Ta Lay Pwa
81. Paku

- 82. Bwe
- 83. Monnepwa
- 84. Monpwa
- 85. Shu (Pwo)

Karenni (Kayah)

- 86. Kayah
- 87. Zayein
- 88. Kayan (Padaung)
- 89. Gheko
- 90. Kebar
- 91. Bre (Ka Yaw)
- 92. Manu Manaw
- 93. Yin Talai
- 94. Yin Baw

Mon

- 95. Mon

Rakhine

- 96. Rakhine
- 97. Kamein
- 98. Kwe Myi
- 99. Daingnet
- 100. Maramagyi
- 101. Mro
- 102. Thet

Shan

- 103. Yun (Lao)
- 104. Kwi
- 105. Pyin
- 106. Yao
- 107. Danaw
- 108. Pale
- 109. En
- 110. Son
- 111. Khamu
- 112. Kaw (Akha E Kaw)
- 113. Kokang
- 114. Khamti Shan
- 115. Hkun
- 116. Taungyo
- 117. Danu
- 118. Palaung

- 119. Man Zi
- 120. Yin Kya
- 121. Yin Net
- 122. Shan Gale
- 123. Shan Gyi
- 124. Lahu
- 125. Intha
- 126. Eik Swair
- 127. Pa'O
- 128. Tai Loi
- 129. Tai Lem
- 130. Tai Lon
- 131. Tai Lay
- 132. Maingtha
- 133. Maw Shan
- 134. Wa

8.6 Ceasefire Status of Ethnic Groups³⁵⁹

| Group | Ceasefire Status |
|---|------------------|
| Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) | --- |
| Chin National Front (CNF) | --- |
| Communist Party of Burma (CPB-Arakan State) | 1997 |
| Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) | 21 December 1994 |
| Kachin Defence Army (KDA) | 13 January 1991 |
| Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) | 1 October 1993 |
| Karen National Union (KNU) | --- |
| Karen Peace Force (KPF) | 24 February 1997 |
| Karenni National Defence Army (KNDA) | 1996 |
| Karenni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF) | 1994 |
| Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) | 1995 |
| Karenni Solidarity Organization (KnSO) | October 2002 |
| Karenni State Nationalities Peoples' Liberation Front (KNPLF) | 9 May 1994 |
| Kayan National Guard (KNG) | 27 February 1992 |
| Kayan New Land Party (KNLP) | 26 July 1994 |
| KNU Special Region group (<i>Nyein Chan Yay A'Pweh</i>) | 8 November 1997 |
| Lahu Democratic Front (LDF) | --- |
| Lahu National Organization (LNO) | --- |
| Myeik-Dawei United Front (MDUF) | --- |
| Mon Armed Group (MAG) | --- |
| Mon Army, Mergui District (MAMD) | 1997 |
| Mong Tai Army (MTA) | 2 January 1996 |
| Myanmar National Democracy Alliance Army (MNDAA; 'Kokang') | 21 March 1989 |
| National Democratic Alliance Army – Eastern Shan State (NDAA-ESS; aka 'Mongla Group') | 30 June 1989 |
| National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) | --- |
| National United Party of Arakan (NUPA) | --- |
| New Democratic Army - Kachin (NDA-K) | 15 December 1989 |
| New Mon State Party (NMSP) | 29 June 1995 |
| Palaung State Liberation Party (PSLP) | 21 April 1991 |
| Pa'O National Organization (PNO) | 11 April 1991 |
| Rakhine State All National Races Solidarity Party | 6 April 1997 |
| Rohingya National Alliance (RNA) | --- |
| Shan State Army - South (SSA-South) | --- |
| Shan State National Army (SSNA; aka SSA-Central) | 1995 |
| Shan State Nationalities People's Liberation Organization (SSNPLO) | 9 October 1994 |
| Shan State Progress Party (SSPP; aka SSA-North) | 2 September 1989 |
| United Wa State Army (UWSA) | 9 May 1989 |
| Vigorous Burmese Student Warriors (VBSW) | --- |
| Wa National Organization (WNO) | --- |

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