

Displacement and causes of displacement in Mandalay Division

Documents

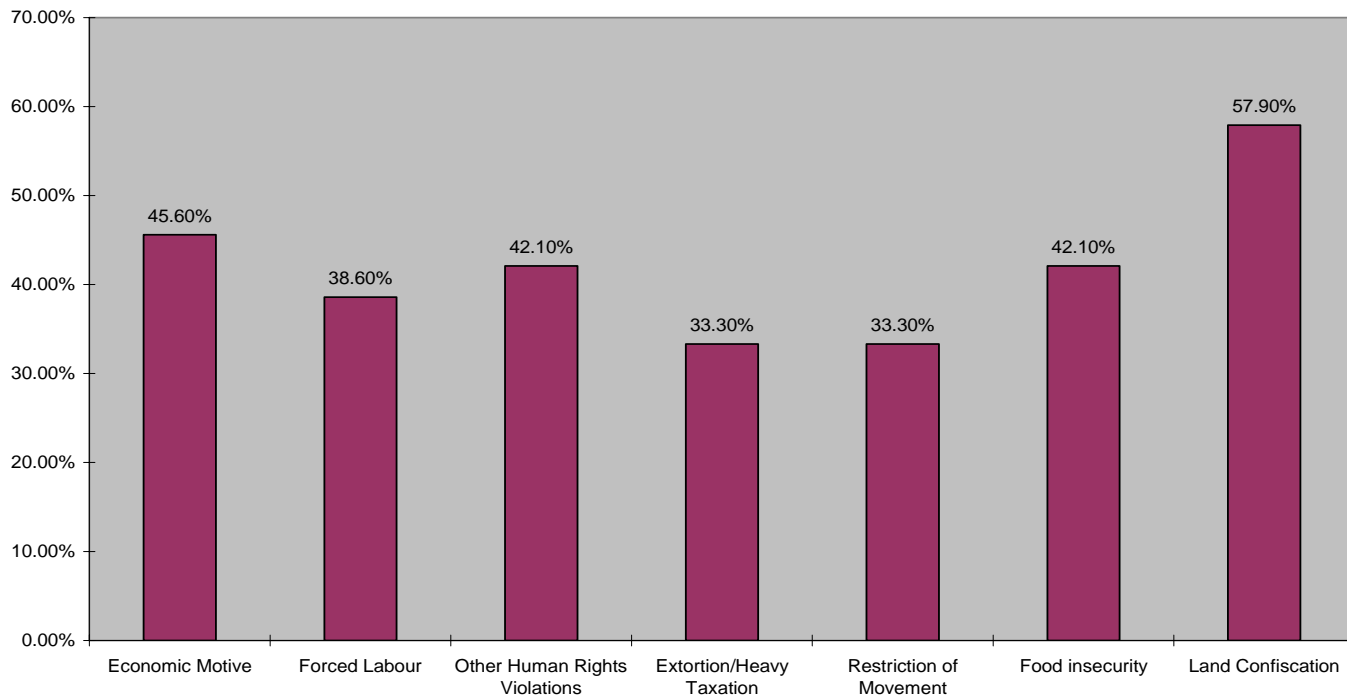
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Survey results (56 respondents)

7) Mandalay Division (percentage)



Forced relocation/eviction

The move to Pyinmana

Burma: Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2006

-- US State Department, 6 March 2007

f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

In November 2005 the government ordered most civil servants to relocate without their families to its new administrative capital Nay Pyi Taw near Pyinmana, Mandalay

Division, and would not allow them to resign their jobs in lieu of moving. At year's end many civil servants were forced to live separately from their families in Rangoon, due to lack of family housing and schools.

Two more villages forcibly relocated for Burma's new capital

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 22 October 2006

Two more villages were forcibly relocated to make way for the expanding new administrative capital Kyappyay/Kyetpyay Naypyidaw of Burma's military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), according to local residents.

The villages, Boo Kweh with more than 200 houses and Thayet Mawkhon with more than 100 houses, were forced to relocate for government offices and buildings supporting military administration mechanism.

Although the authorities promised to rebuild the homes for villagers, it is still not known where they are to be relocated, a villager told DVB.

Previously six villages were relocated to build Ayela Airport for the capital, but the authorities still haven't given a single pya to the villagers for their confiscated farmlands. Moreover, the displaced villagers are in trouble as they were relocated along the motorways where they could not make a living for their families.

Land grabbing for Burma's new capital

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 11 September 2006

A Burmese civil servant admitted that the ruling military government's plan to make the new administrative capital Kyappyay Naypyidaw populated by allocating 8000 plots of land for new buildings, involved confiscation of lands from local farmers living between Pyinmana and Lewe.

"Yes. There is a plan to allocate plots of land measuring 80x80, 100x100, 120x120 (feet?). The price has not been fixed. They haven't said it yet," the civil servant from the capital's municipal department said. "There are 4000 plots on the way to Lewe and 4000 plots to be created at the areas adjoining the army and civilian lands. Application forms are not sold, but you could apply for them at Naypyidaw Municipal (office)."

When asked who originally owned the lands, the civil servant said: "There are various kinds in this matter. They are paddy fields of the villages. Some of them are paddy fields. I don't know about that".

But when asked how many acres of paddy fields had been confiscated, the civil servant refused to answer the question.

According to a local resident in nearby Pyinmana, the majority of the people are neither interested in the government's project nor applying for the plots.

Army bases built around Burma's new capital

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 21 January 2006

The constructions of new buildings, arsenals, bunkers and barracks for artillery, supply and logistic and infantry battalions in charge of the security for Burma's new capital Kyappyay near Pyinmana in the central of the country, had started at nearby Ywadow Village.

The buildings are said to be constructed by a company called Original, according to a staff of the company working at site. Similarly, a new artillery battalion has been increased to guard the nearby Paunglaung Stream Hydroelectric Plant and Dam which was designed to supply the new capital with water and electricity.

A local resident told DVB that the junta is planning to finish off the relocations of 40 ministerial departments to the site by March 2006. Then, around 40 villages situated between Bodi-kone and Ayla Airport are likely to be relocated so that new foreign embassies could be built from the end of March. But Indian officials recently told DVB that they are not likely to move their embassy from Rangoon.

Burma's military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) decided, rather suddenly, to move the country's capital from Rangoon to Kyappyay at the end of 2005, triggering assorted speculations, including some outlandish ones, among observers, civil servants and opposition groups. But the real motives of the junta are still unknown.

Farmlands confiscated to build the new Burmese capital Kyappyay

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 19 January, 2006

Many Burmese farmers living around the new capital Kyappyay near Pyinmana in central Burma, are facing untold miseries and some died from sorrow, because their vital farmlands were confiscated without receiving any compensations and their villages were forced to be relocated.

The main villages forced to relocate were, Kway-le-gyi, Kyauk-saung-aing, Lan-thabye-kone, Kyet-su-aing and Kyanfokkone, and the villagers have been resettled near Kyappyay on a sugarcane plantation without having the means to support themselves and their families.

Some farmers who lost all their farms had to move to the suburb of Pyinmana and sell snacks and do other menial jobs in order to feed their families. The farms of the villagers are being used for the construction of accommodations for senior civil servants, ministerial buildings and residents for ministers, which are being built by a company

named ACE, according to local residents.

A local resident told DVB that two farmers named Kyi Shein and Nyunt Sein recently died from anxiety and sorrow, after 40 and 50 acres of their farmlands, were confiscated by the Burmese authorities without receiving compensations.

Relocation of the Capital from Rangoon to Pyinmana

-- *Human Rights Yearbook, Burma, 2005* -- Human Rights Documentation Unit of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma.

Erratic civil planning has also required the resettlement of urban communities to rural 'satellite towns.' Most notable in 2005 was the relocation of Burma's capital from Rangoon to Pyinmana District, Mandalay Division, 400 km. north of Rangoon. In conjunction with the move, villagers and farmers have been forced off their land to make way for the building of new administrative offices, residential homes and military barracks. Many were forced into the suburbs of Pyinmana. (Source: "Burmese Junta Grabs Land From Farmers to Build Offices at Pyinmana," DVB, 9 November 2005). The move to Pyinmana has also resulted in the destruction of people's property. On 18 November 2005, the authorities ordered the destruction of 100 households along the U Razat and Maung Khin roads in Pyinmana to widen a road leading to the new capital. The U Razat and Maung Khin roads connect the train station and Kyetpyay, where the new capital is being constructed. The authorities also destroyed the living quarters built for railway workers situated on the new Pyinmana – Kyetpyay road. (Source: "100 Homes Dismantled by Burmese Authorities for New Capital," DVB, 21 November 2005). On 6 December 2005, it was reported that 500 more homeowners lost their homes for road widening projects associated with the Pyinmana move. (Source: "More Homes Destroyed and Relocated at Burma's New Capital," DVB, 6 December 2005)

The sudden relocation of Burma's capital from Rangoon to Pyinmana in southern Mandalay Division beginning on 6 November 2005 introduced forced displacement and relocation in areas previously untroubled by such practices. Forced relocation connected with the move affected residents of both Mandalay and Rangoon Divisions. Land developed for the new capital's infrastructure was expropriated from villagers previously residing in Pyinmana District who were forced to relocate elsewhere. The SPDC initiated a vigorous development program on confiscated land involving the construction of new infrastructure including mansions for senior generals, regime offices, national HQs for ceasefire groups and the USDA, bunkers, tunnels, a large military hospital, apartments, airstrips, a golf course, two luxury hotels and two large supermarkets (source: "UN Takes Big Step to Address Myanmar (Burma) Issues," *Thai Press Reports*, 7 December 2005). Civil servants working at regime ministries in Rangoon were ordered to transfer along with their departments to the new capital.

Following the initial transfer of civil servants on 6 November, the SPDC forbade the resignation of those required to move and stated that anyone caught abandoning their post

would be charged and imprisoned under Article 5(j) of the 1950 Emergency Provisions Act for treason and insubordination (source: “Burmese Civil Servants Kept Within Barbed Wires at New Capital,” DVB, 23 November 2005). At the time of the initial arrival of relocated civil servants, infrastructure was still incomplete and regime employees were deposited in a large hall with provisions for only two days, although there were no adequate sources of supplementary food in the vicinity. Although communication lines out of the new capital complex were limited, some relocated workers managed to contact family members in Rangoon from whom they asked for food. One of those relocated said, “There is nothing to eat, drink and nothing to buy. Just nothing.” (Source: “SPDC's Leaders Take to the Hills,” *Asia Times*, 23 November 2005). In relation to the transfer, one civil servant said, “Government servants who refuse to move there are told they will be fired and therefore cannot expect any pension” (source: “Civilians to Be Moved for New Capital Site in Central Burma,” SHAN, 24 June 2005).

The land used for the capital was confiscated from thousands of villagers (source: “Burma's Rulers Take the Road to Mandalay,” *The Independent*, 8 November 2005). By October 2005, hundreds of residents living in the area around Ayelar and Leway, two towns south and southwest of Pyinmana respectively had been forcibly displaced. The confiscated land was to be used for the construction of an airport for the country's new capital. The regime ministries of Forestry, Energy, Agriculture and Irrigation, and No.1 Industry and Irrigation received orders in June to resettle on the same land. (Source: “Civilians to Be Moved for New Capital Site in Central Burma,” SHAN, 24 June 2005). In mid-November, the authorities relocated, dismantled and destroyed 100 homes in Pyinmana in order to widen a road leading to the new capital at nearby Kyappyay region renamed Naypyidaw Military HQs. The majority of homes earmarked for relocation and destruction, situated on U Razat and Maung Khin Roads which connect the train station and Kyappyay. Moreover, the authorities also destroyed some living quarters and bungalows built for railway workers situated on the new Pyinmana-Kyappyay Road. Plans were also underway to remove a further 5,000 villagers from the area by the start of 2006. (Source: “Burma's Rulers Take the Road to Mandalay,” *The Independent*, 8 November 2005). ...

Towards the end of the year, the regime unexpectedly announced the relocation of the capital from Rangoon to Pyinmana. On 6 November 2005, the junta abruptly began moving Ministries from Rangoon to 400 km. north of the capital in Pyinmana Township. In conjunction with the move, reports began to emerge in late 2005 of land confiscations within the area. Villagers and farmers have been stripped of their land in order to make way for the building of new administrative offices, residential homes and military barracks. Villagers were only paid a small amount of money for the confiscated land. Some farmers were also reportedly forced to move to the suburbs of Pyinmana. (Source: “Burmese Junta Grabs Land From Farmers to Build Offices at Pyinmana,” DVB, 9 November 2005). Without land to farm and engage in business trades, the ability of residents to maintain stable livelihoods has been seriously undermined.

The move to Pyinmana has also resulted in the destruction of people's property. On 18 November 2005 the authorities ordered the destruction of 100 households along the U

Razat and Maung Khin roads in Pyinmana to widen a road leading to the new capital. The U Razat and Maung Khin roads connect the train station and Kyetpyay, where the new capital is being constructed. The authorities also destroyed the living quarters built for railway workers situated on the new Pyinmana – Kyetpyay road. (Source: “100 Homes Dismantled by Burmese Authorities for New Capital,” DVB, 21 November 2005). It was reported on 6 December 2005 that 500 more homeowners lost their homes for road widening projects associated with the Pyinmana move. The junta provided no assistance or compensation to homeowners who lost their homes due to the activities in Pyinmana. Rather, homeowners were threatened with arrest if they refused to leave their homes by set deadlines. (Source: “More Homes Destroyed and Relocated at Burma's New Capital,” DVB, 6 December 2005).

Other land confiscations occurred in Mandalay Division in connection with the construction of the Tada-U International Airport. Since 2004, the local authorities have confiscated nearly 2,000 acres of land from Thabetse and Khandu villagers in Sinkkaing Township. On 19 November 2005 the local authorities confiscated another 400 acres of farmland. In an attempt to give the appearance of legitimacy, affected farmers were forced to sign an agreement accepting compensation of 5,000 kyat per acre for land valued at 500,000 kyat per acre. (Source: “Lands Grabbed from Burmese Farmers in Mandalay Sinkkaing,” DVB, 15 December 2005).

100 homes dismantled by Burmese authorities for new capital

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 21 November 2005

Burmese authorities relocated, dismantled and destroyed 100 homes in Pyinmana in order to widen a road leading to the new capital at nearby Kyappyay region named Naypyidaw Military HQs.

The majority of homes earmarked for relocation and destruction, situated on U Razat and Maung Khin Roads which connect the train station and Kyappyay. Moreover, the authorities also destroyed some living quarters and bungalows built for railway workers situated on the ‘new’ Pyinmana-Kyappyay Road.

A Pyinmana resident told DVB that the authorities ordered him and other residents to dismantle up to the length of six feet of their homes facing the new road on the 18th November and they had to carry out the order by the 20th. He added that no help had been given to them by the authorities to help them move their homes and they have to destroy their homes at their own costs.

Moreover, local residents are ordered not to use their motorcycles anymore on the ‘new’ road as it is designated for the use of cars only. He added that 35 homes have been built for ministers and plots of land have been reserved and set aside for the building of US, UK and Chinese embassies.

“On the north of Pyinmana, at a place called Taitchaung, situated on the border of Pyinmana and Tatkone, they built a parade ground,” he continued. “There are reports that they are going to carry out the Resistance Day (March 17) parade there. There are also many residential homes for army officers. Another thing, I heard that the SPDC is holding their quarterly meeting at Pyinmana. I also heard that the referendum due for February is to be held in Pyinmana.”

According to unconfirmed reports, the authorities arrested some military officers and civil servants who are still remaining in Rangoon. Ten army officers up to the ranks of lieutenant-colonel and colonel have been detained and some have gone into hiding, for discussing the move to Pyinmana. Moreover, 17 civil servants from Transport Ministry and two from News and Information (Propaganda) Ministry resigned from their positions and gone into hiding.

Burma's generals build their 'Xanadu'

-- Larry Jagan, *Asia Times*, 22 July, 2005

BANGKOK - For months Rangoon has been rife with rumors that the country's military rulers were planning to retreat to the hills in central Burma for fear of a foreign invasion from the sea.

But according to the blueprints for the new military complex, it is actually going to replace the inland port city of Rangoon, with its famed shimmering pagodas, as the country's capital.

"This is typical of [military ruler] Than Shwe's pretensions to be the new Burmese monarch. Like the Burmese kings who ruled before him he is building a new palace-capital for posterity," said Thailand-based senior Burma analyst Win Min.

But according to diplomats and government officials in Rangoon, the real reason for the relocation inland to Pyinmana, 400 kilometers to the north, is for safety from possible outside intervention.

Burma's military rulers have faced ever-tightening international sanctions since 1997, when the US stopped new investments in the country. On Tuesday, the sanctions were renewed for another year when the US Senate voted overwhelmingly in favor of this action.

The military's headquarters, government ministries and the new parliament are all scheduled to be moved to the new inland location - many people in Burma are already calling it "escape city" - within the next 12 months.

"It's one of the biggest constructions I have ever seen," a Western diplomat in Rangoon told Inter Press Service (IPS), referring to the new complex on an area measuring 10

square kilometers.

Mansions for the senior generals, government offices and national headquarters for the country's ethnic groups are being built. The national headquarters is to be 30 meters high, according to the architectural plans.

Although a new parliament is under construction, it is unclear from the plans whether there are plots allocated to the political parties, particularly incarcerated leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, said the government official.

Bunkers, tunnels, a large military hospital, apartments, a huge airstrip and a golf course are being built, said eye-witnesses.

The plans have been in the pipeline for several years and construction started on it nearly two years ago. "The planned retreat is essentially strategic," said an Asian diplomat who regularly deals with Rangoon.

The US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 reinforced the generals' fear that Washington might attack Burma, according to analysts. Burma's military strategists have long argued that the country's defenses were vulnerable to an attack from the sea.

Burma's generals are said to suffer from a siege mentality. "Than Shwe has a bunker mentality, and when he's completely secure he'll launch his offensives," said Win Min.

Analysts believe that the move inland is also intended to give the regime better access to the frontier areas, especially those of the Chin, Karen, Kayah and Shan, where most ethnic groups that have ceasefire pacts with Rangoon are strong.

"Although the ethnic organizations have ceasefire agreements with the junta, the top generals remain highly suspicious of them and want to be in a better position to control them if they need to," Win Min told IPS.

But now, according to the plans, the whole military and government administration is to be relocated to Pyinmana. Even foreign embassies are likely to have to follow the government when it is finally transplanted into the hills.

Several ministries are scheduled to move to the new capital in the next few months, according to diplomats.

Civil servants have been panicky about the shift. "The civil servants do not want to move. There's no infrastructure such as schools for their kids," said Win Min.

The lack of accommodation for families at Pyinmana means only bureaucrats who are single are likely to be transferred in the first phase. As a result, many young public servants are desperately trying to find marriage partners to help postpone their reassignment to the new capital.

Thousands of villagers have been uprooted and relocated to make way for the construction of the new capital. Over the past 18 months at least 10,000 people are said to have been removed from the site.

At the beginning of May, another 3,000 residents were ordered to vacate their villages. More than 5,000 villagers are scheduled to be relocated at the start of next year.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has received complaints of extensive forced labor and relocations. In a recent report, the ILO representative in Rangoon said there had been allegations that villagers were forced to construct camps and facilities for several army battalions and an air defense squadrons deployed on the site.

"At least 14 villages had to provide 200 workers each on a daily basis for the work," according to the ILO report. Typically, the Burma government dismissed these allegations as baseless.

The construction work involves several prominent Burma companies, including Htoo Trading owned by the wealthy magnate and arms dealer Te Za, who is reputed to be very close to Than Shwe.

"The delay in the reconvening of the National Convention and the drafting of the constitution may actually be related to the completion of the new capital at Pynmana," a Western diplomat in Rangoon told IPS.

A political roadmap announced in August 2003 calls for the reconvening the National Convention to draft a new constitution; a national referendum on the draft of the constitution; holding a general election to produce parliament representatives; and formation of a new democratic government

Civilians to be moved for new capital site in central Burma,

-- Chai Sayam, *S.H.A.N.*, 24 June 2005

Hundreds or more residents in the vicinity of a new Burma government capital and military center in central Burma will be uprooted while an airport planned by the military leaders is constructed, according to sources from the area.

The area around Ayelar and Leway, the two towns south and southwest respectively of Pynmana, soon to be the government-cum-military base of Burma, has already been charted by the survey department, they said.

Five of the government ministries, namely, Forestry, Energy, Agriculture and Irrigation, No.1 Industry and Information, have already received orders to be resettled by October in the area specified by Rangoon, four miles outside Pynmana.

"Government servants who refuse to move there are told they will be fired and therefore cannot expect any pension," explained an unhappy government source. "We know there are ready-made lodgings for us there but no one bothers to suggest how we can expect to generate extra income to support our families. In addition, we keep hearing malaria is rampant there."

The War Office, a source was told, would be located in an excavation at the foothills of the Pegu Yoma range, west of Pyinmana. "I was told the generals are merely fulfilling the ideas initiated by generals Aung San and Kyaw Zaw (now in exile in China) during the 1940's," he said. "One officer observed that it would also be easier for the leaders to flee to China (from Pyinmana) in the event of an invasion."

According to the June 14 issue of Irrawaddy, the order to move to Pyinmana was issued by the government the previous day.

Other relocations (rural)

Forced relocation and land grabbing in central Burma

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 9 September, 2006

The authorities of Meikhtila Township in central Burma and regional military officers have ordered local residents of 200 households to move their homes within 21 days from 25 September, on the pain of being prosecuted for encroaching on army-owned lands.

The order was issued on 25 August with the signature of Khin Maung Soe, the township chief administrator, and it was the second time the 'notice letter' was issued, a local resident told DVB.

"The ward authority members came to give us that letter, but people from the ward couldn't accept it. Last time, we accepted it. This time, we told them that we could not accept their letter and sent them back."

He added that the first notice letter only told residents to move out but they are very incensed by the second as it includes the threats of forced relocation and prosecution. Residents have decided to stay put and local Buddhist monks volunteered to protect them and intercede for them.

The army claims that the land belongs to nearby army-owned textile factory and accused the residents of being squatters. The residents insisted that their land doesn't belong to the army as they can prove they bought the land with contracts long before the army built the factory.

A similar attempt of land grabbing was made by an army officer some years ago at the same place, but he was told to give up his claim by his superiors after some investigations.

Forcefully relocated settlers said causing trouble in Burma's Arakan

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 24 December 2005

Local people in Buthidaung and Maungdaw Townships of Arakan State, western Burma near Bangladesh, are suffering because of bullying tactics by Border Areas Development (BAD) officials and township authorities of Burma's military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

This is the result of the authorities forcefully resettling illegal squatters from **Mandalay** and Magwe Divisions in central Burma in villages of Buthidaung and Maungdaw Townships. Local people are also forced to provide cash and food for the new settlers, and the authorities are not taking any action in case of disputes between the locals and the new settlers.

"I have just received news today that the authorities have brought former convicts and squatters from Central Burma to Maungdaw and resettling them in (Nyaung Kyaung) village of Arakan State's Maungdaw Township," said the chairman of the Human Rights and Democratic Party in exile, Hla Aung, said the authorities are violating human rights. "The local authorities collected contributions and have built some 200 homes there. Each household is required to contribute at least 5,000 kyats to the building funds and 2,000 kyats to feed the settlers. We have learned that people are already facing economic hardship in Maungdaw Township especially since rice production is not good because of bad weather this year.

Villagers forcibly relocated in central Burma

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 13 January 2005

Villagers at Yamethin District, Mandalay Division in central Burma have been forced to relocate their villages.

The township authorities and Dam and Canal Department are forcing the villagers from Inkhon or Koetesu Village, Letpan Group in Tatfone Township to relocate, in order to build a new reservoir.

There were around 200 households in Inkhon Village and the authorities have been refusing to give them compensation except new plots of land to build their new homes and some expenses for relocation.

The authorities also confiscated farmlands of Inkhon villagers and more than 2000 acres of paddy-fields from villages in Paesekone groups for the building of the reservoir.

Land confiscated by Burma junta to build airport

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 10 June 2004

The military authorities at Le-Way Township, **Mandalay** Division in central Burma have confiscated 200 acres of land from the local people and building a new airport on them.

The responsibility of the construction of the airport has been taken up by Asia World Company at Ayela in Le-Way Township.

The lands were confiscated from subsistence farmers who are facing many kinds of difficulties as they have no proper farms to make their living.

The construction of the airport started in 2002 and some villages in the surrounding area were also forcibly relocated and destroyed from last March.

The forced relocations were personally supervised by the chairmen of Yamethin and Le-Way township authorities.

The new plots given to the farmers are too small and unfertile for the farmers to grow enough food to feed their families.

The authorities also failed to help the farmers and villagers rebuild the relocated monasteries and schools.

Other relocations (urban)

Karaoke Fascism: Burma and the Politics of Fear

-- Monique Skidmore, 2004 (extracts)

The lack of facilities and infrastructure that initially confronted the newly relocated residents of the New Fields meant that the toll on the physical and psychological health of the residents was significant. There were no bridges and insufficient roads connecting the townships to the cities from which they had been evicted. Residents speak of the sorrow and pain of loss of former neighborhoods, felt most acutely in the months and years following their sudden departure. Many of the residents of the poorest Mandalay townships lived their lives in the shadow of major Burmese Buddhist monuments, such as the Mandalay Hill Pagoda. They lived in streets full of relatives, and among long-established friendships and fictive kin relationships. Like almost all Mandalay residents and many people throughout Burma, the people of the New Fields count distances according to measurements of the old Mandalay Fort. Inside the Fort lie the ruins of the Mandalay Palace. The last Burmese monarch, King Thibaw, was removed from the ornate wooden palace by British imperial soldiers. The palace burned to the ground during fighting between the Japanese occupying force and Indian and British troops seeking to recapture the Fort in 1945. It is now the headquarters of the Burmese military

in Mandalay and the beautiful entrances over the encircling moat are overshadowed by propaganda signboards extolling the virtues of the blood and sweat of Tatmadaw men that is sacrificed to the "unity" of the nation. The walls of the Fort are almost the only remaining structures. In the middle of the nineteenth century, King Mindon Min ordered the eight-meter-high walls to be built around the palace. Now that the palace has burned to the ground, it is only the walls that intimate the past wealth of the monarchy. The formidable fired brick walls are three meters wide at the bottom and narrow to one and a half meters at the top.

Five bridges and three gates provided entry through each of the four walls. The palace was a miniaturization of the Buddhist cosmology, where the gates symbolized the portals to the other three "countries" that exist in this *loki* (mundane world). Atop each of the original gates is an ornate wooden pavilion with a tiered roof called a *pyatthat*. Smaller versions of the pavilions adorn the corners of the wall and lie equally spaced between the main *pyattat*. Each wall is two kilometers long. The distance between large *pyattats*, is about 400 meters. This distance in Burmese is called a *pya* (or *da pya*), and it is the way in which Mandalay people have come to describe distances: "Is it a long way?" "No, just a *pya*." A *pya* means roughly the length of a street. It is a little longer than the most common distance in Burma, *da khaw deh*, or hailing distance, derived from the distance between which two people in the paddy fields can call to each other.

The harshness of relocation is expressed somatically by older residents as back and joint pain related to sleeping on wooden pallets or on the ground while weaving bamboo walls to construct a house. Any savings were quickly spent on creating the house and weatherproofing it for the coming monsoon season. Money for mattresses and other relative luxuries was spent instead on food now that families were not receiving incomes. Residents speak of mist falling in the paddy fields, and according to the humoral medical traditions of Southeast Asia, this cooling influence can cause weakness and sickness.

Residents felt as if they had been moved a great distance. The distance between the Mandalay walls is considered about as far as one would wish to walk. Any farther is a long way. A short distance is considered to be the same as a length of bamboo. To walk a long way would be to walk for as long as it takes a pot of rice to boil (about thirty minutes). Such distances require a bicycle or other form of transportation. Very few people could afford the transportation costs to continue to work in the city. The longer commuting time was also something people could ill afford, now that child minding could not be performed by members of the extended family who had previously lived together in the same compound. The inhabitants of the New Fields conceptualize the Fort, its *pyattat*, and the towering form of the Mandalay Hill pagoda as the spatial, hierarchical, and cosmological dimensions of their worldview made manifest. Living in the shadow of Buddhist monuments, surrounded by more than half of all the monks who live in Burma, is exactly as a Buddhist should wish, with multiple opportunities for making merit ever present. All this changed when city dwellers became peri-urban shantytown inhabitants.

The geography of the townships is panoptic in that the central roads open out into the township square which is lined with official buildings, the preeminent one being that which houses the township peace and security office. In Rangoon there was no sacred geography outside of the suburbs immediately surrounding the Shwedagon Pagoda, but in Mandalay, the city was divided into quarters and a hierarchical system of Sayadaws, monks, local leaders, deputy leaders, and assistant leaders ruled the city and its surrounding districts from key political and strategic monasteries (Myo Myint 1987: 177-78). The Taikdaw monastery was one such Buddhist political stronghold, surrounded by 20 smaller monasteries and 33 resting buildings for Buddhist pilgrims (Chaturawong 2002: 25-28). In these ways, the structure of the Buddhist hierarchy mirrored the Palace hierarchy and the two forms of power were inscribed upon the landscape of central Burma from the epicenter of the royal palace and its monasteries outward to villages like Aung Pin Le (Lehman 1987).

At night, Mandalay Hill is illuminated by fairy lights. It can be seen for almost fifty kilometers on a clear evening, and it is a beacon on the hill for hundreds of thousands of Burmese who attend, until the early hours of the morning, the annual Taunbyon Nat pwe (festival). Taun-byon is a village about thirty kilometers from Mandalay and is located deep in the terrain of the *Nats*. Residents in the New Fields know that they are much farther away from the heart of Burmese Buddhism than their previous neighborhoods and they view the new landscape as in need of Buddhification. *Nat* spirits inhabit the area around Mandalay and reside in trees remaining in the paddy fields, and malevolent spirits also inhabit other features of the landscape such as canals.

Through the elaborate cycle of *Nat* festivals that occur throughout the cool and hot seasons, a series of negotiations of identity occur where village and peri-urban residents reposition their relationship with their local environment and with larger polities (Brac de la Perriere 1992b, 1998). This includes the relationships that residents of the New Fields have with their local Nat-infested environment, and the sundering of these Buddhists from their place in the sacred cosmography of Mandalay. Minor *Nats* are believed to be everywhere in the densely populated spiritual landscape of the New Fields. Certain routes must be avoided and at night residents wrap bright yellow fabric or plastic around themselves and their bicycles to ward off bad spirits. Pregnant women return to the safety of their homes as dusk falls. (pp 151-154)

(For another study of displacement as a sociocultural process rather than simply a spatial movement, see [Sovereignty, Survival and Resistance: Contending Perspectives on Karen Internal Displacement in Burma](#) by Kevin Heppner, Karen Human Rights Group, 1 March 2005)

Relocation for tourism projects

-- Extract from *Housing, Land, and Property Rights in Burma*, Nancy Hudson-Rodd, School of International, Cultural Community Studies, Edith Cowan University, Mt Lawley Campus, WA. Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE), October 2004

Villagers and residents living in ancient towns, now tourist sites such as Mandalay, Pagan, and Amarapura in Upper Burma were relocated for the purpose of renovating these cities as tourist attractions. Since 1988, Burma's tourism infrastructure expanded rapidly. From 1988 to 1995, the number of hotels increased from just 19, with a total of 800 rooms to 256, with a total of 4,000 rooms. There is now a surplus of hotel accommodation in Rangoon and it is speculated that people with close ties to opiate growing or opiate exporting organizations continue to invest in hotel construction for the purpose of "whitening" foreign currency that cannot be shown to have been legally earned (USA Embassy, 1996: 19).

In Mandalay, people who lived in traditional wooden homes were forced to convert these structures into modern, two-storey buildings. Residents were forced to leave their homes in Mandalay to accommodate new commercial ventures and construction of hotels. If residents could not afford this re-construction, they were displaced to satellite towns. Liberalized border trade since 1992 has led to Yunnanese transactions dominating the Mandalay Commodity Exchange, the largest in Burma, which handles 70% of total border trade in non-rice products (DFAT, 1997: 135). The presence of Chinese (20% of the population) merchants is notable with Mandalay known as the yuan zone. Easing of foreign trade restrictions and increased trade with China has brought a boom-time atmosphere with building of hotels, office buildings and department stores. Hsue Hgnet (2003) writes about dramatic streetscape changes in contemporary Mandalay.

"Like the new buildings replacing the old ones, new developments have made the native residents of old Mandalay leave their long-residing homes, departing from this block from that block, this win, that win.....Whenever these Mandalay-thas who have moved away meet among themselves they reminisce about their cherished past...this quarter, this festival, this home, this Win and its residents" (Hsue Hgnet, 2003: b). Long-time residents have been forced out of their homes to make way for development of buildings not fully used. Residents occupy spots on the edge of the city in new satellite towns pushed out from the centre as modernisation continues. These residents travel along muddy roads with few transportation links each day to work in the city centre arriving exhausted back home in their new houses. The four lane tracks linking new satellite cities with the centre are transformed into pools of mud and water and bicycles are means of movement.

The changing ownership of property is described by Hsue Hgnet, (2003: 186) with reference to Theikpan Street symbolising change bridging the old and the new Mandalay, the rural and the urban. Theikpan Street runs into the new satellite town where 60 by 40 foot land plots emerge from small rice fields into new thatch roofed huts. Hsue describes a large commercial development by the Mandalay Municipals Department built in 1992 at a cost of Kyats 58.2 million opened as a super market specialising in Chinese-made

goods. The Ar-Thar-Wadi super market paid a rent of Kyats 950,000 a month to Municipals. The super market closed after 1 year of operation not supported by local residents. The space is to become a five star hotel.

On Theikpan Street: hotels, stores, karaoke bars, country spirit shops, petrol station, and name-changing service for motor-car driving licenses. There was a heroin bust on this street. ...There are several unoccupied beautiful buildings, companions who agree to sleep for a night at the price of about kyats 10,000, men who blackmail kyats by stopping bicycles under the dark shade of the trees, a sedan car carrying bags of cash to buy a telephone and two storey building built on 100 by 100 feet plots of land, old bicyclists who buy four cans of rice after receiving a day's wage (Hssue Hgnet, 2000:189).

Mandalay is recognised as a major international distribution centre for illegal drugs, a centre of gambling and of prostitution and investment from the profit of these activities which allows for the purchase of real estate. Tourists do not visit these satellite towns but are attracted to a Mandalay of restored royal palaces, seeking a Myanmar cultural experience.

Displacement by mining in Mogok

-- Extract from *Capitalizing on Conflict*, EarthRights International, Karen Environment & Social Action Network, 2003.

Large scale mining around Mogok is primarily located in two zones. The first includes southern Mai Shu, Lu Po, Sai Linn Yun, Nam Saw Lin, and around the Nam Sue Chung River. The second includes the area around Baw Pa Run and Baw Ma villages. As outside investors have moved into this areas, their large-scale mining operations have increasingly displaced local people, whether they were involved in the mining industry or not. The main strategies and forces behind this process include the following:

Fees

The use of forced labor (*loh ah pay*) was widespread prior to 2000, especially for infrastructure projects such as the construction of the road from Bum Da to Pyauk Khon. Since then, its use had declined noticeably. The levying of arbitrary fees continues, however. As is common throughout much of Burma, military units regularly require households to contribute money to different "development funds" and/or join organizations. Each month, households are informed that they must give money to the United Nations Development Program, a women's affairs committee, veteran's organizations, and so on. In one instance, soldiers threw a SPDC calendar into an informant's house and then demanded the next day that he pay for it. Around Mogok, LIBs #417 and #418 routinely extort money in this fashion. In exchange, households receive membership cards which make it somewhat easier to move about town without having to pay additional fees on demand. Households and/or miners that

fail to pay upon demand experience problems with military personnel later. Over time, these fees consume what little capital an average household was able to amass, making families extremely vulnerable to other crises, such as illness or accidents. (pp 48-49)

Land seizures

...

If the *Tatmadaw* battalion or division intends to develop an unoccupied site to generate income for themselves (the practice is called *Tak Taw* in Burmese) they can simply plant a flag in the area which indicates that no one else is permitted to mine there. Around Mogoke, soldiers from LIBs #417 and #418 are then posted to the site to prevent anyone else from approaching it. If the land is already occupied, military units have been known to simply begin excavating it with heavy equipment. If a significant number of gems are found, the military will seize the entire property, including the owner's home who is then forcibly evicted without any compensation. Small open areas, which are used as seasonal gardens, are often seized in this same fashion as well.

In some cases, entire villages have been forcibly moved, again without compensation. During June-July 2001, 100 households in Bal Lone Gyi and 70 households in Bal Lone Lay were relocated by LIBs #417 and #418 to allow the Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited Company to assume control of the area. In both cases, the villagers had to pay the costs of their transportation to the new site. The villagers were denied permission to disassemble their old wooden homes and reconstruct them in the new location. A barbed wire fence was also built to prevent the villagers from harvesting food from their home gardens and fruit trees. (pp 50-51)

On the Road to Mandalay: A Case Study of the Sinonization of Upper Burma

-- Mya Maung, *Asian Survey*, Vol XXXIV No. 5, May 1994 (extract)

According to the official census of 1993, Mandalay's population is over 653,000, with only 2,670 aliens. The unofficial estimates of the total population of Mandalay, however, are as high as 1 million because of a large number of unregistered illegal aliens. The majority of the alien population comprises foreign-born Chinese who reportedly have become Burmese nationals overnight by acquiring National Registration Cards (NRCs) in the black market. According to reports, many Chinese families from Yunnan Province have crossed over the border to settle in a number of villages inside northern Burma. This virtual takeover of central Mandalay actually began with two devastating fires in 1981 and 1984 that destroyed sections of the downtown areas. In 1984, when Burmese businesses and residents could not finance the reconstruction of shops, buildings, and homes according to the specifications mandated by the military government, they were forced to sell their real estate to rich ethnic Chinese investors and merchants. Since then,

Mandalay's native Burmese residents have gradually moved away from the center to the peripheral areas of the city.

After 1989 and especially during 1990, the SLORC forced a massive relocation of Burmese Mandalayians to new satellite towns in the name of the City Beautification and Development Program. Its ostensible purpose was to attract foreign tourists and investors. However, the Khmer Rouge-style relocation of over one million of the urban population from the central cities to satellite towns across Burma points to the real purpose of subjugating and dispersing the concentration of political dissidents at central cities. The program was launched intensively prior to the May 1990 multiparty election that was won in a landslide by the National League for Democracy (NLD), the opposition party of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who was put under house arrest in July 1989. Forced relocation was part of the SLORC's nationwide campaign to face-lift major cities. Besides Mandalay, Pagan (the famed ancient city of architectural wonder and a main tourist attraction that houses thousands of Buddhist temples and pagodas built by Burmese kings), and Amarapura in Upper Burma were also targeted.

[...]

In the 1990s, after the forced relocation and subjugation were completed, a different process of population relocation and restructuring of Mandalay took place. Real estate prices in central Mandalay have escalated to levels never seen before. The price of a small plot of land measuring less than 50 square feet at key sites in central Mandalay has climbed up to K50 million -- \$500,000 at the black market exchange rate of US\$1 = K100. Aggressive and wealthy Chinese investors, ethnic Chinese Kokang and Wa drug warlords, and military "robber barons" have made wholesale acquisition of real estate and homes. By offering exorbitant prices to the Burmese landowners, they sharply accelerated the relocation process.

In effect, the Chinese takeover of Mandalay and northern Burma replicates the economic consequences of the British colonization of Burma, which included a massive importation of Indian and, to a lesser degree, Chinese man-power and capital. The striking difference between the two types of colonization is that in the case of British Burma the takeover was imposed by an imperial power that deposed native rulers after waging and winning three hard-fought Anglo-Burmese wars. In the "open-door economy" of present-day Myanmar, the Chinese colonization of Mandalay and the northern states of Burma occurred without wars and was welcomed by a Burmese government, the SLORC. The similarity between the two cases is that both the SLORC and Great Britain came to power through force without the democratic consent of the people of Burma.

By 1993, the new satellite towns built by the SLORC on the outskirts of Mandalay, such as Pellhpyu Goan, Kanthah-yah, Myaye Nandah, Myaye Kan-thah and Mya-mahlah, have become the centers of Burmese culture where the relatively poor ethnic Burmese of Mandalay have been congregated. In contrast, the central quarters of Mandalay have been transformed into a thriving business center of alien culture with modern homes, hotels, shops, and high-rise buildings teeming with rich Chinese businessmen (*lawpans*), ethnic

Chinese drug warlords (Kokangs), and other Asian merchants. Only a handful of native-owned business establishments such as printing houses, shoe shops, and cheroot factories are left, dwarfed by the towering buildings and offices of foreign enterprises.

The economic plight of the majority of the native residents of Mandalay stems from the fact that most of them earn their livelihood as artisans in traditional cottage industries—making furniture, artworks, antiques, cheroots, gold leaves, tapestries, carpentering, masoning, precious stones polishing, embroidering, weaving, tailoring, and so on. Low wages in these professions relative to the skyrocketing prices of domestic and imported consumer goods have been pushing their standard of living below subsistence.

Human Settlements Sector Review, Union of Myanmar

-- UN Habitat, 1991 (extract).

The squatter clearance and resettlement programme (Mandalay)

The programme has a target of 25,000 new plots. Between 1985 and 1988, 5000 plots within the MCDC boundary were developed and occupied. The location of these is in conformity with the 1978 structure plan, which recommended the designation of 1600 acres for 13,000 plots. Of these, 6000 were to be reserved for relocated squatters. Under the current Government, 2500 plots have been completed within the boundary. Land outside the boundary but adjacent to the earlier schemes is being developed and incrementally occupied for a further 10,000. Also, in the same south-west zone, land has been set aside for 7500 additional plots. Beneficiaries are a mixture of relocated squatters and public servants.

The layouts follow the grid pattern adopted for the town as a whole. All occupants are required to construct their own dwellings. Water-supply provision is currently by tubewell, with an average provision of one point per 80 plots. Plot sizes are standardized at 40' x 60', with a single advance payment required for squatters of K 4000. This is an increase in the original price, fixed in 1986, of K 1800. Payment conditions for public servants are as for Yangon. Unlike the areas in Yangon, the land is not subject to flooding. Taking advantage of the land conditions, the most recently developed areas have graded and surfaced road construction only on the main access routes. Elsewhere, road reserves have not had topsoil removed. Reserves are simply pegged out, and there are no constructed roadside drains.

In the earlier phase, there is already a flourishing small- business sector based on furniture and construction-component manufacturing. A part bamboo/part teak two-storey dwelling costs around K25.000 to construct.

No budgetary allocations were required. The two special committees set up to identify new development areas and to undertake implementation responsibilities established a self-financing system for land development using the advance payments. Subdivision planning and survey work was carried out by MCDC and SLRD. A formal tendering procedure was followed, with five firms bidding for the most recent land development contract.

All squatters in Mandalay are not automatically relocated to the new resettlement areas. Following a fire in 1989, some squatters have been temporarily accommodated on nearby monastery land, pending a decision on final rehousing arrangements. Others with claims to land rights have been allowed to rebuild on the original site in accordance with a new plot layout. In comparison with Yangon, the general impression is that the Mandalay operation is more flexible and there is less of an atmosphere of urgency in clearing and resettlement. Farmers previously working the land acquired for the schemes were promptly compensated, while it is reported that in Yangon the bulk of the compensation payments have yet to be made. (pp 86, 88)

Burma army forcibly relocates thousands from Pagan

-- Reuters, 28 June 1990

Burma's military authorities, who have evacuated hundreds of thousands of people from major cities, are forcing thousands more to leave Pagan, an ancient landmark and the country's most popular tourist attraction, visitors said yesterday.

No official reason was given for the latest expulsion, which precedes the opening of the ancient city to direct tourist flights from Thailand next month.

"The main strip of the town has just been emptied," one foreign business-woman said.

The army government, which has ruled Burma under tough martial law since crushing street protests in 1988, has in the name of progress forced up to 500,000 people out of Rangoon and Mandalay into fields outside the city. Others have been jailed for dissent or forced into portering arms for government forces fighting in remote insurgent areas.

Government officials have said the relocation, begun in 1985 but accelerated during army rule, would ease congestion in the cities and give good housing to slum-dwellers and vagrants.

The new towns, most of them located 20 to 30 km outside Rangoon and other cities, have basic facilities. But residents said they were forced to leave their homes at short notice and lost most of their wealth in moving. They said they would return to the city if a new government relaxed restrictions.

During the monsoon rains the main streets are turned to mud and most houses are awash. The only concrete buildings are government offices and some schools. Other public buildings have not been finished.

The army, which held multi-party elections last month that were won overwhelmingly by the opposition, has said it would continue its public works programme until a new government is formed. It has given no timetable for a transfer of power.

Visitors to Pagan, on a sprawling plain littered with hundreds of Buddhist pagodas 450 km north of Rangoon, said most of its 4,000 inhabitants had been forced to leave in recent months.

They said most of those expelled made their living from tourists visiting the ancient city.

Tour operators in Bangkok said they would begin direct flights from Thailand to Pagan and Mandalay next month.

Tourism in Burma, once a favourite stop for backpackers, has dwindled to a trickle since 1988 due to government restrictions on individual travellers.

Pagan: The New Earthquake

-- *Burma Review* 1990 (month?)

In 1975 a severe earthquake struck Pagan, Burma's foremost historical site and ancient capital from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. Some famous monuments were destroyed and others severely damaged. Now a man-made earthquake has struck effecting the lives of all Pagan's inhabitants. Between April and June 1990 the entire population of Pagan, 5,200 inhabitants whose families for generations have lived within the ancient city walls, were forcibly deported to a new site over three miles south in an arid area with no supplies or services. Villagers were forced to dismantle their houses and then earth moving equipment bulldozed what had remained standing. No official reason was given for this arbitrary removal of the people of Pagan which was ordered by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), the military junta which has ruled Burma since September 18, 1988.

The first notice given by the SLORC was to the families of the south quarter of Pagan on April 4, 1990, ordering them to dismantle their houses and vacate the site by May 5. Army elements came and began removing house roofs. On May 28 families in the north part of the city were asked to state where they wished to be relocated. All of them reportedly answered that their intention was to remain at the present place. They were then informed by loudspeakers carried by car through the streets that they must immediately dismantle their houses for relocation on 'New Pagan', to the south and inland from Thiripyitsaya village.

Four people who tried to organize a meeting between the population and the authorities were immediately arrested and have since been sentenced to four months' imprisonment in Myingyan jail. Army elements again came and forced people to dismantle their own houses. School buildings were also destroyed. The only buildings left on the site were the most objectionable and out of harmony with surroundings, the concrete official or governmental structures. To date there has been no compensation for anyone (although it is said that every family may receive 250 kyats and 2 kg of nails in the future!). A few

lorries requisitioned by the army have been used to transport the dismantled houses to the new site, but many families have had to camp for days, even weeks, awaiting transportation, and this while the rainy season gets underway.

Pagan with its two thousand plus monuments spread out from the eastern bank of the Irrawaddy River over an area of sixteen square miles in Burma's arid central plain presents an unforgettable panorama. Pagan is one of the greatest historic centers of the Theravada Buddhist faith, ranking alongside Angkor in Cambodia and Borobudur in Java in religious and cultural significance. One of Pagan's main merits has been that as a historic site it has remained a living one. The inhabitants of Pagan have continued to maintain and cherish the constructions and traditions of their ancestors. The village had a strong cultural identity with very active traditions, festivals and social life in each quarter, and nearly all the houses, built in the traditional Burmese style and with local materials (bamboo and wood) were in perfect harmony with the ancient monuments of the city.

The relocation of people at gunpoint has become a feature of SLORC rule since their takeover of power in September 1988 and brutal suppression of the pro-democracy movement that called for the end of Ne Win's twenty-six year rule and of his Burma Socialist Program Party. SLORC is determined to prevent any mass pro-democracy demonstrations in the future and has fortified Rangoon, the capital city. The population of several Rangoon suburbs has already been forcibly relocated to form so-called satellite towns in inhospitable areas..."

Other threats to human security

Land confiscation

(See also the section on forced relocation/eviction, above)

Land grabbing for Burma new capital

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 11 September 2006

A Burmese civil servant admitted that the ruling military government's plan to make the new administrative capital Kyappay Naypyidaw populated by allocating 8000 plots of land for new buildings, involved confiscation of lands from local farmers living between Pyinmna and Lewe.

"Yes. There is a plan to allocate plots of land measuring 80x80, 100x100, 120x120 (feet?). The price has not been fixed. They haven't said it yet," the civil servant from the capital's municipal department said. "There are 4000 plots on the way to Lewe and 4000 plots to be created at the areas adjoining the army and civilian lands. Application forms

are not sold, but you could apply for them at Naypyidaw Municipal (office).”

When asked who originally owned the lands, the civil servant said: “There are various kinds in this matter. They are paddy fields of the villages. Some of them are paddy fields. I don’t know about that”.

But when asked how many acres of paddy fields had been confiscated, the civil servant refused to answer the question.

According to a local resident in nearby Pyinmana, the majority of the people are neither interested in the government’s project nor applying for the plots.

Farmlands confiscated to build the new Burmese capital Kyappyay

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 19 January 2006

Many Burmese farmers living around the new capital Kyappyay near Pyinmana in central Burma, are facing untold miseries and some died from sorrow, because their vital farmlands were confiscated without receiving any compensations and their villages were forced to be relocated.

The main villages forced to relocate were, Kway-le-gyi, Kyauk-saung-aing, Lan-thabye-kone, Kyet-su-aing and Kyanfokkone, and the villagers have been resettled near Kyappyay on a sugarcane plantation without having the means to support themselves and their families.

Some farmers who lost all their farms had to move to the suburb of Pyinmana and sell snacks and do other menial jobs in order to feed their families. The farms of the villagers are being used for the construction of accommodations for senior civil servants, ministerial buildings and residences for ministers, which are being built by a company named ACE, according to local residents.

A local resident told DVB that two farmers named Kyi Shein and Nyunt Sein recently died from anxiety and sorrow, after 40 and 50 acres of their farmlands, were confiscated by the Burmese authorities without receiving compensations.

Lands grabbed from Burmese farmers in Mandalay Sinkkaing

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 15 December 2005

Burmese authorities and troops at Sinkkaing Township, Mandalay Division in central Burma, confiscated lands from local farmers causing them untold miseries and difficulties.

Nearly 2000 acres of farmlands and paddy fields have been confiscated from Thabetse and Khandu villagers since 2004. Farmers were forced to give up their lands by signing an agreement and accepting compensation money. Some of them had to do as told out of fear but more than 400 acres are still used by the military authorities without giving compensation to their owners.

But on 19 November, the district authority declared officially that the lands are to be confiscated, a local farmer who doesn't want to be identified told DVB.

"Those who did not come were picked up by the police. They gave 5000 kyat per acre. Of course, we are not satisfied as we want to work on our own lands. In the real market, each acre is worth 500,000 kyat," said the farmer.

The authorities also told the farmers that the lands were confiscated for the new Tada-U International Airport which is 10 miles away

Burma junta grabs lands from farmers to build offices at Pyinmana

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 9 November 2005

Burmese military authorities have been confiscating homes, farmlands and paddy fields belonging to the villagers of Kyappyay area, Pyinmana Township in central Burma.

The authorities are planning to build offices for government departments recently moved to the areas, army barracks, residential homes for civil servants on the confiscated lands and only a small amount of money was paid to the villagers as compensations through the local authorities who keep some of them for their own use.

A local resident of Pyinmana told DVB that the new administrative town is still under construction and the civil servants who were forcibly relocated from Rangoon are camping out in the open with no proper facilities such as drinking water. Another resident told DVB that some farmers have been forced to move to the rundown suburbs of Pyinmana.

Meikhtila authority grabs lands from Burmese farmers

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 12 October 2005

Maung Nyo, the village authority chairman of Htamonkan, Meikhtila Township in central Burma, has been confiscating lands from farmers and extorting money from them.

Villagers reported the lawless actions of Maung Nyo to higher authorities, but no action has been taken against him so far.

Former Hatmonkan authority chairman Thein Aung told DVB that Maung Nyo grabbed acres of land from the farmers and sell them on to property developers to build residential homes.

“In October 2003, I myself reported the illegal activities of Maung Nyo to Meikhtila Township and District authorities. On 24 May 2004, I reported the matter to Agriculture and Forestry minister Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin. There is no progress to this day. Htamonkan village chairman U Maung Nyo keeps no records and calls no (public) meeting, and appointing an ignorant person like him as the chairman of village authority is very damaging to the villagers and it slows down the progress and development of the village.”

Maung Nyo also forcibly collected 600 kyat from each household with the excuse of getting so-called ‘Form – 10’ but the forms never turned up, and demanded further 1000 kyat and built a cheap clinic for them.

Land confiscated by Burma junta to build airport

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 10 June 2004

The military authorities at Le-Way Township, Mandalay Division in central Burma have confiscated 200 acres of land from the local people and building a new airport on them.

The responsibility of the construction of the airport has been taken up by Asia World Company at Ayela in Le-Way Township.

The lands were confiscated from subsistence farmers who are facing many kinds of difficulties as they have no proper farms to make their living.

The construction of the airport started in 2002 and some villages in the surrounding area were also forcibly relocated and destroyed from last March.

The forced relocations were personally supervised by the chairmen of Yamethin and Le-Way township authorities.

The new plots given to the farmers are too small and unfertile for the farmers to grow enough food to feed their families.

The authorities also failed to help the farmers and villagers rebuild the relocated monasteries and schools.

Forced labour

Intervention by the ILO with the SPDC

-- International Labour Organisation, 18 February 2005 (para 13)

According to the allegation, extensive forced labour was being used by the army in Pyinmana and Lewe townships (Mandalay Division) for the construction of camps and facilities for army Battalions 603, 604, 605 and an air defence battalion. At least 14 villages in the area had to provide 200 workers each, on a daily basis, for this work. In addition to labour, each village had to provide roofing and construction materials and transport for the project.

Relocation of the capital of Myanmar

-- Report of the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, March 2006 (E/CN.4/2006/34)

In November 2005, the Government announced that it had commenced its relocation of several ministries from the capital in Yangon to what it purports to be a “command and control centre” currently under construction near Pyinmana, in southern Mandalay Division. The Special Rapporteur is concerned by reports of forced relocation of villages and the alleged use of forced labour in the construction of this compound. It has also been brought to his attention that civil servants who refused to move might be criminally charged and that no resignations or retirements were reportedly permitted. forced labour in the construction of this compound. It has also been brought to his attention that civil servants who refused to move might be criminally charged and that no resignations or retirements were reportedly permitted.

Robbery, extortion, arbitrary taxation

Extortion in Thazi Township

-- *Human Rights Yearbook, Burma 2001-2002*, Human Rights Documentation Unit of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma

Since October 2001, SPDC administrative officers have been extorting money from the villagers in Thazi township, Mandalay Division, according to three traders on the Thai Burma border, speaking on condition of anonymity. The SPDC Village tract (3) administrative committee and Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) officers of Thazi township led by village Chairman U Ba ordered all the villagers to clean the village without payment every Saturday evening. Any villager unable to participate in the cleaning, has to pay 200 kyat to the Chairman.

Burmese farmers oppressed by local authorities as ever

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 24 April, 2005

[...]

At Warka Village, Malaing Township in Meikhtila District, the authority chairman U Aung Thein has been making money for himself by taxing toddy palm trees for the first time in the village history. He collects 20 kyat for each tree and each farmer grows more than 1000 trees, according a local resident.

Other farmers have been forced to grow summer paddy for the authorities at the most unproductive time of the dry season and take part in other “voluntary” activities, in the name of the nation. Some farmers have been fined, their lands confiscated or imprisoned when they failed to obey the orders.

Compulsory (and frequently ruinous) cropping and marketing policies

Burmese farmers forced to grow unproductive rice again

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 3 October 2005

Burmese authorities in **Mandalay** and Irrawaddy Divisions have been forcing local farmers to grow wetland paddies out of season at the wrong places again, causing unnecessary difficulties to the farmers and their families.

At Meikhtila District, Mandalay Division in central Burma, farmers were threatened in September with prosecutions if they do not follow the order. The district is known to be a very arid region and farmers could only grow rice during the rainy season where they could get enough water from dams and reservoirs.

A local farmer from Kokkosu Village told DVB that the costs of growing wetland paddies are very costly and the farmers only concentrate on cash crops such as tomatoes, wheat and corns. He added that the authorities are forcing farmers to destroy all these crops and grow wetland paddies when it is already the late monsoon season.

A farmer at Pantanaw Township in the Irrawaddy delta region told DVB that many farmers are still unable to recover from last year's drop in the prices of crops and the destructions of crops by insects, and they have received no help from the state for their losses.

Kokkosu farmer suggested that the so-called experts of the government should stick to what they know and let the farmers get on with their lives by allowing them to grow whatever could be grown on suitable lands.

“They just want us to eat rice without curry,” he said.

Burmese farmers forced to grow rice in central Burma

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 2 September, 2005

Burmese farmers living around Tada-U International Airport, Mandalay Division in central Burma have been forced to turn their dry-land farms into wetland paddy fields by the local authorities.

Farmers from 10 villages including Sagaing-ywa, Thinbawkan, Ngazinyaing, Zeechaung were ordered by the township authorities to start the uselss project in June but they provided neither fertilisers nor water to the farmers and their farms, and all the young paddy plants were destroyed completely in July, a farmer told DVB.

From time immemorial, the local farmers have been growing wheat and yellow beans which thrive in the arid conditions of the region, but the authorities are still forcing them to grow rice again.

Similarly, the authorities at nearby Magwe Division, Allen Township have also been forcing local farmers to turn their farms into wetland paddy fields with similarly disastrous consequences.

Natural disasters, fires

Scores killed and thousands left homeless by floods in Burma

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 12 October 2006

At least 57 people have been killed and thousands forced to abandon their homes as the worst floods in recent memory wreaked havoc across Thailand and Burma on Thursday, according to a report by AFP from the region.

The floods affected mostly Shan State, Mandalay and Sagaing Divisions in central Burma and more than 10000 had fled to emergency shelter.

According to yesterday issue of the state-run newspaper Kyemon (Mirror), 10 people were killed and 3 are still missing at Kyaukpandaung Township in Mandalay Division. Today's issue of state-run New Light of Myanmar described the damages done by the floods, region by region but didn't say how many people were killed.

Local residents at Kyaukse District in Mandalay Division told DVB that the situation there is very dire due to the rising levels of Rivers Zawgyi, Panglaung and Myit-nge.

“There were some who died from collecting driftwoods and being reckless,” a local resident told DVB. “I have been in Kyaukse for nearly 20 years. That is the first time I have seen it. Old people said that they have seen nothing like it before.”

The situation in Sagaing Division Monywa and Mandalay Division border regions are said to be very bad as floodwaters inundate main roads making it impossible for the vehicles to travel. More than 600 households were relocated.

Due to the rising level of Warkhingyi Stream situated between Kyaukpandaung and Nyaung-U, buses carrying Buddhists pilgrims and tourists have stopped tour operations to the ancient city Pagan (Bagan).

Similarly, more than 2000 households were relocated at Taunggyi, Yasauk (Lawk Sawk) plateau regions in southern Shan State. Taunggyi-Loilem road had been closed and communication and telephone lines to some areas were unavailable, according to local residents. At Kutkhai Township in northern Shan State, more than 100 people died after a local authority-owned goldmine they were working in, collapsed.

Flash floods kill scores and left thousands homeless in Burma

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 2 October 2006

At least 20 people were feared dead and 3000 left homeless due to flash floods which occurred on 29 September at Mandalay in central Burma while the victims were fast asleep.

According to a local resident, the floods affected mostly poor wards such as Mya Nanda, Aung Pinle, Tun Tone, Kanthaya and the local people are finding it hard to survive. “People in lower grounds are finding it hard to even cook rice, making it harder to survive. Drinking water is hard to come by. As they are day labourers, it is worse. Now that they could not go to work, the people are collecting donations and distributing them at the monasteries in the wards. They (flood victims) are mainly porters and victims of forced relocations,” a resident said. He added that although it is hard to say the exact number of the dead, at least 22 corpses were retrieved including those who were electrocuted by the falling power lines.

Local residents said that the majority of those affected by the floods are people who were forcibly relocated when Sagaing-Mandalay Motorway was constructed and those who didn’t get a new place to live after their homes were destroyed in recent fires.

Fire break out in central Burma

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 7 February 2006

There has been an increase in fire breaking out in central Burma.

On 6 February, a major fire broke out at Mandalay Southwest Township destroying more than 70 homes and leaving over 200 families homeless.

According to local residents, there was no casualty but estimated 200 million kyat worth of properties were destroyed. 60 fire engines tried to extinguish the fire but their efforts were hampered by shortage of water and narrow streets.

On 5 February, a major fire broke out at Mindat Village, Mindon Township in nearby Magwe Division, destroying 56 homes and leaving 200 people homeless.

On 1 February, a school was burnt down at Kyaw Taing Sin Village in Pauk Township

Floods in central Burma causing destructions and fear

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 27 July 2004

The level of Burma's main river Irrawaddy has been rising rapidly due to torrential rains and homes along the river and their inhabitants are in danger of being inundated by the rising level of water.

The people of Mandalay who live near the river have been moving out of their homes and taking refuge on higher grounds including the famous Mandalay Hill.

They are also building flood barriers and the local authorities are protecting and watching the barriers full-time and forcing people to carry earth to build the barriers.

Schools and universities have also been closed down and the old bridge which connects Mandalay and nearby Sagaing had also been closed.

The neighbouring towns along the river also suffered the effects of severe flooding.

Recently, several people were killed when the level of Irrawaddy rose and inundated the surrounding areas of Myikyina, Kachin State in upper Burma.

Observers say that the floods are caused by the destructions of forests in upper Burma, especially in Kachin State and global warming which caused glaciers in northern Burma to melt faster than before.
