

# **EarthRights International Burma Project**

## **Report on Forced Labor in Burma**

**June 4, 2003**

### **Summary**

The following nineteen recent interviews with villagers from eastern Burma confirm the continued use of forced labor in their communities during 2003. The interviews show the use of forced labor and portering coordinated by high-ranking military officers in some areas of Burma; some orders originate from battalion commanders and a local strategic commander. The interviews also illustrate that it is ultimately the military that issues these orders for forced labor even if they often use village heads as intermediaries in giving and enforcing the orders. These interviews are redacted and abridged to ensure the security of those interviewed and their families. EarthRights International keeps the interviews in their entirety on file.

The interviews were all conducted in 2003. Eight date from the end of May 2003. The interviews have been separated into five sections: 1) Yadana and Yetagun Pipeline Region, 2) Forced Labor on Rice Fields, 3) Other Accounts of Forced Labor, 4) Prisoner Porters, and 5) Update of *Entrenched*. A list of the seventeen interviews is also included as well a narrative update “Yadana and Yetagun Pipeline Region Update” with excerpted interview portions that accompanies the Pipeline Region interviews (#004, #005, #008, #009, #010, #011, #012, and #015).

In five interviews (#003, #006, #007, #013, and #014), villagers from the same area document how they were forced to work by the military on rice fields for sometimes up to six days a week during 2003. Villagers in this area have been unable to adequately attend to their own land since they have had to work in government rice fields since the beginning of this year. Since many villagers have not been able to work on their fields, they will not be able to produce a harvest this year. In May 2003, this led to an increase in refugee flows to Thailand as villagers from these communities fearing for their food security fled to Thailand.

Villagers continue to describe the threat of punishment made by the military if they fail to comply with orders for forced labor. Villagers also described how these threats may materialize into actual punishment. One villager (#017) told how several dozen men and women from her village, who had not paid for the construction of a nearby road or who had not complied with forced labor orders to work on the road, were arrested several days before she left. They were then beaten. At the time of the interview, in late May, they were still being held at a military base. Families of those arrested were told by the military they would be released only after the family paid a sizable amount of money to the government. The military made examples of them for not complying adequately with forced labor orders.

The Burmese military also continue to warn villager either directly or through village heads not to talk with others, especially foreigners, about the forced labor they do for the military. They are threatened with punishment for speaking. Some villagers report the presence of undercover military and government officials when talking to outsiders about forced labor. The fear of punishment by the military leads some villagers in these areas to not talk freely to outsiders about forced labor while inside Burma (*see* #010, #012, #013, and #015).

In addition, according to ERI's latest information, forced labor in the area where we interviewed village heads during the winter of 2002-2003 for our report entitled *Entrenched: An Investigative Report on the Systematic Use of Forced Labor by the Burmese Army in a Rural Area* (visit [www.earthrights.org](http://www.earthrights.org)) continues unchanged. Interviews #018, #019, and #020 confirm that the pattern of abuse described in *Entrenched* was continuing as of mid May 2003. In brief, this information includes written orders signed by various commanders given to village heads in the area demanding forced labor and forced payment dating from January to April 2003. One village head in the area re-interviewed in mid May describes in detail how several villages in his area were coordinated by the strategic commander and his battalion commanders to work improving a road in the region from December 2002 to late April 2003. The village head stated his village was given a section of the road to work on while the other villages were given their own sections. The villagers received no compensation. He states: "They are already planning to have villagers who didn't help on this road work on another one after the rainy season."

Unfortunately, the situation concerning forced labor has not changed in this area of Burma. EarthRights International urges the ILO to continue to maintain its strong pressure on the Burmese military to eradicate the use of forced labor in Burma and bring those responsible for the practice to account for these abuses.

## **Section 1: Yadana and Yetagun Pipeline Region Update and Interviews**

### **Yadana and Yetagun Pipeline Region Update**

Interview #004  
Interview #005  
Interview #008  
Interview #009  
Interview #010  
Interview #011  
Interview #012  
Interview #015

## **Section 2: Forced Labor on Rice Fields**

Interview #003  
Interview #006  
Interview #007  
Interview #013  
Interview #014

## **Section 3: Other Accounts of Forced Labor**

Interview #016  
Interview #017

## **Section 4: Prisoner Porters**

Interview #001  
Interview #002

## **Section 5: *Entrenched* Update**

Interview #018  
Interview #019  
Interview #020

**Section 1**

**Yadana and Yetagun Pipeline Region Update**

**and**

**Interviews**

## Yadana and Yetagun Pipeline Region Update

### Introduction

Eight recent interviews with villagers from six different villages in the Yadana and Yetagun pipeline region document continued forced labor in the area into 2003 (#004, #005, #008, #009, #010, #011, #012, and #015). These villages scatter the pipeline area. Seven of the eight villagers live within about twelve miles of the pipeline route itself; all the villagers live in an area greatly effected by the pipeline and its security since it was first initiated in the early 1990s.<sup>1</sup>

The Yadana and Yetagun gas pipelines were built in the 1990s, and have been associated with forced labor and other human rights abuses since the outset.<sup>2</sup> The pipelines were constructed by international consortiums led by Total (France), Unocal (U.S.), and Premier Oil (U.K.). Militarization and ongoing security patrols can be directly linked to the construction and presence of the mammoth projects. Militarization in Burma leads to human rights violations, and despite warnings about, knowledge of and benefiting from the abuses in the pipeline area, the companies deny any responsibility for the suffering of the people in the area.

This update illustrates that abuses—particularly forced labor—are still happening in the pipeline region.

Villages receiving support from Western companies—Total, Unocal, and Premier—that have built the pipelines are not immune. One villager who receives a partial salary from Premier Company said:

*. . . my family survives by growing rice. I cannot help them with my salary because it is not even enough for me. [One person in my family] . . . often has to go for forced labor. . . . He has had to go almost every week, at least once a week, since the beginning of this year (2003). It is for LIB xx. (#010)*

Forced labor also continues to be linked to two battalions—Light Infantry Battalions (LIBs) 273 and 282 that were created to provide security for the Yadana and Yetagun gas pipeline in 1995 and 1996.<sup>3</sup> These battalions are known locally by villagers as “Total” battalions. In the interviews, these two battalions are specifically mentioned in association with forced labor (#008, #011) and violence (#005, #008). Other battalions also associated with forced labor in the area in the interviews—and previously linked to pipeline security included LIBs 406, 408, 409, 410 (see #008, #009, and #012).

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<sup>1</sup> See generally, Tyler Giannini, et al., EarthRights International, *Total Denial Continues: Earth Rights Abuses along the Yadana and Yetagun Pipelines in Burma* (May 2000). The specific village names have been withheld from this submission for the protection of those who were interviewed. All interviews remain on file with EarthRights International.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

There is also forced labor associated with a new pipeline, called the Kanbauk-Myi Ka Lay pipeline (#008). This pipeline is not led by an international consortium and should not be confused with the Yadana or Yetagun pipelines.

## **Forms of Forced Labor**

The forms of forced labor documented in these interviews include building, cleaning, and repairing roads or bridges (#004, #008, #009, #011, #012, and #015):

*In our village, we also have one road that links to xx village. . . . Foreigners constructed it a few years ago and the condition of the road is level with pieces of rock. Now we have to maintain the condition of the road. [Three people I know] are in charge of looking after the road. The village head told [them] to do this. [They] do not get any payment, having to do it free, but by doing this [they] don't have to go for forced labor work. It just started this year because the foreigners complained that they saw cow dung on the road, and they want us to look after some small damage on the road. We have to check the road condition once a week and if there is small damage, [the villagers] try to fix it and fill the holes in the road. [The villagers] get pieces of rock along the road provided by the company that built the road (Total). (#009)*

*I know this [i.e. clearing the road] happened in February/March [2003] at the time people were cutting the land for farming. I don't know how many villagers went, but a lot of people. My cousin xx told me foreigners saw them and asked what they were doing, and they said, "We have to do forced labor cleaning the road." The foreigners didn't say anything. The foreigners' truck looked like it was from Total Company. (#012)*

Forced labor also included supplying materials and repairing police and military camps (#004, #005, #008, #010, #012, #015). One elderly man states:

*Twice this year I had to clean LIB 410's camp. Both times were before the water festival and were about a month apart. Ten people from the village went, and it took a day each time. We cut bushes around the camp. They separated the older people from the group, and we cut bamboo pieces to tie things. (#012)*

Villagers were also forced to build a pagoda and attend pray meetings (#008) as well as be guides for soldiers (#009, #015). All those interviewed talked of the forced participation in the people's militia (*pyi-thu-sit*)(#004, #005, #008, #009, #010, #011, #015):

*The people's militia duty started almost two years ago and continues. Now three people from the village have to go every three days to be a guard. They rotate, so it takes about two months before it is each person's turn again. (#009)*

Fees associated with forced labor also continue in the region (#012, #015):

*The last time we cleaned the road was sometime in 2003. I didn't have to go work because I paid money to the village head—1000 kyat each month. If you pay 15,000 kyat for the whole year, you don't have to go at all. (#015)*

Several villagers report that the practice of forced portering continues (#004, #005, #008, #011). One villager reports an end to portering but states that forced labor continues (#012).

### **Quartering Soldiers**

Families also have had to continue to quarter (or house) troops that stay in the villages in the pipeline region (#004, #008, and #011). This presents particular fear for women:

*I am afraid whenever the soldiers come in to our village; I worry that they will do something to us, especially as I am a woman. Last year [2002], two Burmese soldiers came and stayed in my house for about a week. . . . During that time, every night I was awake and afraid. (#004; see also #008, #011)*

### **Knowledge of Order No. 1/99**

Knowledge of a ban to end forced labor is present in the pipeline region to some degree (#004, #005, #008, #015), but villagers' hopes that it would be enforced have been dashed; all villagers who report knowledge of the ban on forced labor say it has not changed the practice in the area (#004, #005, #008, #015). One said, "Two years ago, I heard that forced labor would stop, but nothing changed." (#004) Another said:

*I saw a paper hanging on the video shop wall that talked about no forced labor in our village, but I didn't read it closely. . . . The notice paper was stuck on the wall, but forced labor kept going on. Since that paper came out, though, I noticed that they change some words in the forced labor orders to "a-ku-a-nyi" (help). People still cannot refuse to go, however. (#005)*

Other villagers still have not heard of the ban on forced labor: "I never heard of the 1/99 law in my village, and I never heard people talk about stopping forced labor in our village." (#009, see also #011)

### **Covering Up Forced Labor**

Through the years, the companies have provided tours for various groups—including the media and international observers. Efforts continue by the Burmese military to cover up the use of forced labor in the area—giving it alternative names (for example *a-ku-a-nyi* or help)(#004, #005):

*After I heard that forced labor would stop, sometimes when we worked clearing the road, if some official came we were told to stop or hide from the work place. It was the village head who told us to hide but I don't understand why. (#004)*

*I have seen the paper written about no more forced labor. . . . But nothing has changed even though the paper came out. Some villagers are hanging those papers in front of their house, and the soldiers order them to take it down. I haven't seen any changes even after the paper come out. (#008)*

Villagers are also warned when foreigners will visit the village—and warned not to speak of forced labor or there may be retaliation:

*Sometimes foreigners come and check the village. But when the foreigners come we cannot say anything either. The soldiers will come and tell us the day before foreigners come. They tell us through the village head or sometimes directly in the meeting. (#010)*

*[In xx] . . . two foreigners and one . . . translator came and told me that, "we are not people from the government or from Total Company. We want to ask you questions about whether you have to do forced labor or portering and how your work is." They told us to say whatever we wanted to say. I replied, "some times we have to do forced labor, and sometimes we have to pay money." I said there was no portering, but forced labor. They talked with me for about a half hour and wrote down what I said. Then they left. My cousin xx told me they went to xx after and said the same things there. We did not say everything we knew clearly to these foreigners because we had been warned by the soldiers in advance. Before they came, in late xx the [military] . . . said, "If people come and ask you anything, then say there is no forced labor because this is the country of Burma and not the country of foreigners." When the soldiers told us this we were then afraid because what they meant was that the foreigners will eventually leave and then we will be in trouble. I have never heard of Order 1/99, but six years ago we had a meeting where a foreigner told us that in these thirteen villages we were free from forced labor and portering. However, they did not say what we were supposed to do if we had to do it. Since then we have not had to do portering, but still forced labor. (#012)*

*Seven or eight months ago, in late 2002, a group came in three trucks with red crosses on them. I learned that this was the ILO group. They asked people about forced labor. The Total security manager came with them. . . . They were not accompanied by the military. . . . Before the group came in the morning the village head went around to the villagers. He said that today the investigators are coming so don't speak about everything because we don't want our village to be in trouble. Intelligence, police, and the xx village secretary followed the group, but they were in civilian clothes. xx from military intelligence was with them, xx village secretary, intelligence officer xx, and police officer xx. This group came from xx village. The plain clothes officers from each village were separated to cover each village the ILO visited. For example, when the ILO group was about to finish at xx village, about two of the officials would ride on their bike and get in to another village xx before the ILO group came in. . . . The ILO group stayed in xx for xx to xx minutes. They did not go to people's houses,*



*but asked people questions along the roadside and tea shop. However, when they talked to a person a plain clothes officer was going around them, so they did not speak truly because they saw the face of this officer. I saw this happen. . . . They did not ask me anything. (#015)*

## **Conclusion**

Despite the attempts by the companies and the military to showcase the pipeline region as a model project, evidence continues of the use of forced labor in the region linked to the military presence that would not be there for it not for these projects.

Interview Number : 004(2003)R  
Interview Date: March xx, 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: Female  
Age: 40  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: Day laborer, housemaker, mother, farmer  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: Married  
Children: xx  
  
Township: Ye  
Village Tract: n/a  
Village: xx

Keywords: forced labor, social and economic rights, food security

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When the gas pipeline project started ten years ago, our village had to move near the roadside. . .  
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In [my village], we work on a plantation, do farming and work as day laborers to earn some other money. . . . Most people who live in the village grow rice, work on a plantation, work as day laborers, and some cut cane (rattan). Almost everyone farms. Even though we farm, most people do not get enough to eat. Every year my family does not have enough rice for the year.

Compared to when we lived in our old village, it is worse. There, we could get vegetables and food easily around the village, and most of our time we spent working on our own business. But since we moved here, it has become harder for us to get food because we have to go very far away to find food. We cannot leave our children at home alone, and we don't have people to take care of them. My husband mostly spends his time outside and does not have many chances to stay at home and take care of our children. He has to work on the rice fields and work as a day laborer when a job is available. He also has to do forced labor, such as cutting bamboo for the soldiers and police, building/repairing soldier/police barracks, cleaning and building roads. He also has to serve in the people's militia for a week every two months. Sometimes he has to go for standby portering, too. We don't have enough income for our family. Sometimes I have to go and work outside to earn some income. If people ask for cleaning land or helping harvest, I do it to make some money. I also have to do forced labor around my village because sometimes my husband cannot go and my son is still a child.

Two years ago, sometime in the hot season, I had to go to repair the road outside of my village. The place is near xx, and it is in Ye Pyu township. My husband was not at home when we received the order. He was working in our paddy field. The order came from our village head; he called a meeting and told us about it. He told us we had to go, and it would take about two to three days. He told us we had to bring our own food and tools with us. I had no choice. My husband was not home, so I decided to go because I knew I would have to go another time anyway in rotation. I knew that if I didn't go that time I would definitely have to go the next time because it is a rotation. Twenty people went, including the village headman. Four women were in the group. At that time, my second to last daughter was two years old. I had no choice; I just had to leave her with my older daughter.

At the worksite, we had to collect and level the ground with pieces of rock, dig out the canal beside the road and cut bushes on both sides of the road. We had to work for two miles; it took us about a week. We had to go and get more food from our house because we didn't have enough. We had to work under the scorching sun. We could take a rest because the soldiers did not guard us, but we tried to finish as quickly as we could because we didn't want to spend too much of our time. The village head did not tell us that we would get payment for this work. It wasn't only this time that we didn't get any payment for work.

Now in our village we still have to work for the military. We have to clean the village roads, cut bamboo for the nearby police station, serve as a militia every two months, and sometimes be a standby porter.

The last time that my husband had to go to cut bamboo was this hot season [early 2003]. He had to cut 25 bamboo pieces (around five meters long) and send them to the nearby police station. It took him a day to finish it. These bamboo pieces are used for repairing camps. Some other villagers also had to work on it. The village head divided up the work so that some had to cut bamboo and some had to repair the camp to finish the work.

The last time that my husband had to work to clear the road was sometime in November 2002. It took him two days to finish it. The village headmen set up that each household had to clear one *palom* (1/4 mile). We had to cut down bushes five meters away from both sides of the road. No one told us that we would get money for this either.

My husband has already gone two times this year (since the beginning 2003) for the people militia. In the people militia, you have to go and stay at xx, and every day go out and provide road security around the area. It is done on a rotational basis. Each time four people have to go. The people have to bring enough of their own food and money for seven days. This system started almost two years ago, and we still have to do it. If we cannot go, we have to pay 6,000 *kyat* to get a replacement. We cannot pay this amount of money, so my husband has to go every time when our turn arrives.

For the standby portering, my husband had to go one time in the rainy season of 2002. He had to go to an area west of [my village]; it took him three days. He had to carry food and supplies for the soldiers. The village head ordered him, so he had to go. About six people had to go at the same time. I don't remember the battalion number of the soldiers. That was not the first time that my husband had to porter. He had to porter several times in the past several years and

sometimes it took him a day but sometimes about a week. The most worrisome time for me was when he had to go to Nat-E-Taung to porter. It took longer than a week, and I was afraid that he would not return, because several times I had heard about the portering situation in that area. I was afraid that the soldiers would kill my husband if he could not continue to carry his load or that he would be killed in the fighting with opposition groups. At that time, our baby was too young, and I was so worried that he was in danger. I didn't want him to go, but we didn't have money to pay for a replacement. Even if we could borrow money, no one would want to go in this dangerous situation. Luckily, he got home safely that time.

My family condition is not going well now. Only my husband and I work for the whole family. We have to spend money for many reasons. Sometimes we have to pay fees to the government. My family's expenses are about 2,000 *kyat* a day, but we get only 1,500 *kyat* a day if we both work together. In our village, a man can get about 1,000 *kyat* each day for work, but women can only get 500 *kyat* a day. Neither of us can get work every day, because of the reasons that I told you about above.

Militia and police are based in our village all the time, but the soldiers just come one or two times a month. It depends on the situation around the village. If the situation is not good, for example if they hear the opposition groups are in the area, they will come often. Last year they came and lived in our village but not this year.

I am afraid whenever the soldiers come in to our village; I worry that they will do something to us, especially because I am a woman. Last year [2002], two Burmese soldiers came and stayed in my house for about a week. About 20 of them were in the village, and they lived in separate villagers' houses. That time they came to the village to repair the road. I don't remember their names or their battalion number. They came to us and told us that they would stay with us. We could not refuse, and we dared not to refuse. I was afraid when they lived in my house, and I asked my husband not to go anywhere and just stay with us. We have daughters, and we didn't know what they were going to do to us. They did not eat at our house, and every morning they left early to their worksite. They came back at around 6 p.m. Luckily, nothing happened while they stayed with us. During that time, every night I was awake and afraid.

I never heard about the 1/99 law. I never saw people come to our village to talk about it. Two years ago, I heard that forced labor would stop, but nothing changed. I heard this from villagers talking to each other. I never saw a signboard or anything. At first when I heard that there would be no more forced labor I was so happy. But it was just for a short time because we still have to do it. In some cases they also change the forced labor order to say "*a-ku-a-nyi*" (help), but it is still forced labor. After I heard that forced labor would stop, sometimes when we worked clearing the road, if some official came we were told to stop or hide from the work place. It was the village head who told us to hide but I don't understand why.

The last thing that I want to say is that we have to live in the situation where sometimes we have enough for our family but sometimes not. I want to see my children go to school and be educated. We don't even have a health care system in our village, and I want to have it in the village. And I want my story to be heard, and this will help change our life.

Interview Number : 005(2003)R  
Interview Date: March xx, 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: Female  
Age: 38  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: Housemaker, mother, farmer  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: Married  
Children: xx

Township: Ye  
Village Tract: n/a  
Village: xx

Keywords: forced labor, violence, social and economic rights

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Our village had to move from the old place ten years ago when the gas pipeline project started in the area. We had to move near the roadside, close to a place called xx. . . . My family survives by growing rice and a few vegetables.

When we were in our old village we didn't have to worry about getting food and vegetables; we could get them any time easily. Since we moved to the new place, we have to buy everything with money. We have to go very far from our village to look for vegetables.

[Our village head] does not have to do forced labor. After retiring, the villagers agree to give the village head one year free from any kind of forced labor. . . . [My family has previously] had to do forced labor. I myself had to work on railroad construction five years ago.

[. . . While our village head] didn't have to worry about forced labor, [he] still had to worry for many reasons. [The village head] was often hit, kicked, and beat by military officers. I remember the hardest time that he suffered. He lied for one of his villagers who was helping the opposition group. He did it because he didn't think that the soldier knew about it. Later he realized that the soldier was an informer, so he had to tell the truth. . . . He was captured on the way to collect his paddy. The villager accused of working for the opposition group was with him at that time. They were both captured for a week, but no one dared to try to get them back. It happened five years ago during the harvest time. . . . Later he came back with an injury on his head because the Burmese soldiers beat him many times. He did not go to the hospital; he just stayed at home and tried to heal his wound, because we don't have a clinic in our village.

Most of the time, if soldiers asked for forced labor, they would write to [our village head] to go and see them. After that, they ordered him to come back and talk to the villagers. Sometimes the soldiers came to our house and ordered directly. Whenever a soldier came to our house, I was afraid that fighting would occur. And whenever the soldier ordered [our village head] to meet them I was worried for him that he would say something wrong and get beat by the soldiers. Most of the time when the soldiers came to our house they did not yell at me, but I was still afraid of them. If they came in to the house I would come downstairs; if they came when my husband was not at home, I would just walk away and try not to talk with them. The soldiers said I am not a nice woman.

I saw a paper hanging on the video shop wall that talked about no forced labor in our village, but I didn't read it closely. I never saw anyone come to the village to talk about no more forced labor, and my husband never told me about it either. The notice paper was stuck on the wall, but forced labor kept going on. Since that paper came out, though, I noticed that they change some words in the forced labor orders to "*a-ku-a-nyi*" (help). People still cannot refuse to go, however.

Last January 2003, [a villager] was shot by IB 282. . . . His name is xx. . . . He was shot while fishing. . . . I saw his wound. . . . We were told that the soldier shot him, and [his wound was made worse] when the soldier stepped on it. I saw some small cut on his xx, too. He was kept at the militia office for a night without any medicine. In our village, we don't have a clinic or a doctor. He had to wait for a night to go to the hospital in Tavoy. We could hear his painful sounds during the nighttime, but we could not do anything about it.

Now we are doing farming. One of my children goes to school, but the rest stay at home. I hear about forced labor going on all the time. . . . Currently [March 2003] in our village people have to work cutting bamboo and fencing the military/police camps. Villagers are also forced to be in the militia and, sometimes, to act as standby porters. . . .

Interview Number : 008(2003)R  
Interview Date: April xx, 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: Female  
Age: 48  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: Housewife  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: Married  
Children: xx  
  
Township: Ye Pyu  
Village Tract: n/a  
Village: xx

Keywords: forced labor, social and economic rights, violence

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There are about xx households in my village. . . . now I just work on my field. . . .

Our current village headmen name is xx. People usually don't want to be headmen in my village because they are afraid of soldiers in the area. They worry that if the soldiers order something they might not be able to get it. Currently I am not sure, but I think LIB 273 or 282 lives in our village. There are about 20-30 soldiers (one section). They keep changing, every two or three months. Since mid-2002, I only saw two main battalions, LIB 273 and LIB 282. Before that, there were other battalions in our village, like LIB 406, 409, 410, and Ya Khaing Tat (an "Arakanese battalion").

Before, the soldiers had their own outpost/base in our village. . . . Moreover, the villagers had to build the outpost buildings, cut bamboo to make a fence, and dig a communication channel. In the summer, villagers had to carry water and look for firewood for the soldiers at the outpost. Every year, villagers have to repair the fence around the outpost. The last time that we had to work repairing the military outpost fence was last year (2002). We haven't had to build the fence yet this year, and we aren't sure if we will have to, because since 2002, the soldiers haven't stayed at the outpost. They live in villagers' houses and at the temple compound instead. Sometimes they will go out to patrol, but three or four soldiers will stay in the village while the others go out to patrol. They go out to patrol if they hear any news of activity by the opposition group.

Our villagers don't like soldiers living in their houses, but we have no choice. One time a soldier came and lived in my house in 2001 or 2002, I can't remember exactly. The troops called themselves Ya Khaing Tat. . . . They lived in our house for five days. They stayed for two days, went out for one

day, and came back to stay for another three days. I was afraid while they stayed in my house. I did not let my husband go anywhere during that time. They cooked for themselves, and they brought their food. However, often they stole our vegetables and ate them. Once I told their officer about it, and later I heard the officer yelling at them about stealing my food. They told me that they would buy my chicken to eat. I agreed to sell one chicken. I still haven't got paid for the chicken. Nobody likes soldiers to stay at their house because those things happen very often. As for me, I am lucky because usually soldiers do not stay in our house, except that one time. . . . Before I left the village to visit here, I knew some people that had soldiers staying in their house like xx and xx. No one in the village wants the soldiers to stay in their house, but they have no choice. Sometimes it takes them about a month to leave.

Because the soldiers live in the village, we (the villagers) have to provide/share food for them whenever we (villagers) come back from fishing, hunting or killing our own animals like pigs or cows. No one gets any money for it. Moreover, people have to ask for a permission letter from the soldiers if they want to go out to fish or hunt or work on their plantation. We have to pay 50-100 *kyat* each time. When LIB 410 and 408 stayed in our village two years ago, they ordered the village headmen to write the permission letters. In the past I've had to get a permission letter myself in order to go to my plantation that is only one mile away, but now we don't have to get a permission letter.

Last year, villagers were forced to build a pagoda near the military outpost. Even Christian villagers . . . had to help build it. Every time that the grass or bush grows, villagers have to go and clean them. Currently, every evening, villagers, except the Christians, have to go to the pagoda and pray. This was an order from the LIB 273, and if people don't go, they get punished.

Right now villagers are also working on building a bridge across the xx. This project started in the rainy season of 2002. At that time we set the posts. Now that the water level is low, we are working on building the floor of the bridge. About four to five villagers and two to three soldiers have to go every day on a rotational basis. Villagers also have to look for wood. The government provided some wood, but the rest the villagers have to provide. While villagers work on the bridge, some soldiers stand guard with their guns.

Over the past year, our villagers have had to do many forms of forced labor for the soldiers. We've had to build the military outpost, porter for the soldiers, construct the railway, and dig the route for the Kanbawk-Myi Ka Lay gas pipeline.<sup>4</sup> Currently, we are forced to porter, maintain the Kanbawk-Myi Ka Lay gas pipeline, serve as people militia, build the roads and bridges, and sometime clean bushes around the military camp and pagoda.

Serving in the people's militia is a big thing for people in the village now. . . . People who fail to go have to pay 1,000 *kyat* a day to hire a person. What those 30 people have to do is they have to watch around the village, follow and carry supplies for the soldiers while they are patrolling for both the [Kanbawk-Myi Ka Lay] pipeline and the railway, and villagers themselves have to guard the railway. This started since LIB 406 came in year 2002, and it continues with the LIB that is based in our village. Currently LIB 273 and 282 are most often in the area, but the groups change often. Right now, LIB 273 is based in our village, so now every time when villagers have to do something, the order comes from LIB 273. . . . I know my husband's brother xx has to do it.

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<sup>4</sup> Editor's Note: The Kanbawk-Myi Ka Lay pipeline runs in a roughly north-south direction and should not be confused with the Yadana and Yetagun pipeline which run roughly west-east in this region.



We often have to porter now in our village. Villagers have to follow the soldiers while they patrol in the area, for example when they patrol for the railway and the [Kanbauk-Myi Ka Lay] pipeline security. The porters are the 30 people who have to serve as militia. The portering takes one to seven days, depending on the situation in the area. The last time that I remember that people had to porter was in December 2002. I do not remember the people's names.

In the rainy season of 2002, I also saw villagers burying sections of the [Kanbauk-Myi Ka Lay] pipeline that had been exposed because of the rain, and cleaning the route for the pipeline. I did not have to go for this work . . . , but I saw people working when I was going to my paddy field. At first, I did not know what the villagers were doing, but I saw one of the villagers who I know and asked her, "What are you working for?" She replied that it was for the soldiers. She said they had to cover the exposed pipe and clean the bushes around the area. I also asked her if she got paid for the work, and she said no. I saw two-three people working in small groups, about 20 people altogether. I saw this two times when I went to my paddy field. I saw that they had to work the whole day, and they had to bring their own food and tools. I know it because I saw them when I went to my field, and again after I came back from the field. I also saw soldiers around the area while people were working. I assume that the soldiers were providing security for the pipeline. Relating to this, in 1996, I also saw a foreigner helicopter land in our village football field and saw a few foreigners come to the village. The soldiers did not allow people to say anything about this.

In February 2003, one villager was beaten by a group of soldiers because he was traveling at night. He was on duty delivering a letter to another village and came back late. It was around 8 pm. He was stopped by the group of soldiers. I don't remember, but I am sure the soldier was with LIB 273 or LIB 282 because only these two battalions are in the area now. The villager's name is xx, and he is xx years old. People know the soldiers beat him because it happened near one of the villager's paddy field, and at that time the villager was in his hut, but he could not do anything about it.

I never heard about forced labor law 1/99, but I have seen the paper written about no more forced labor. . . . But nothing has changed even though the paper came out. Some villagers are hanging those papers in front of their houses, and the soldiers order them to take it down. I haven't seen any changes even after the paper came out.

Interview Number : 009(2003)R

Interview Date: April xx, 2003

Interview location: xx

Name: xx

Gender: Male

Age: 21

Place of Birth: xx

Occupation: Daily labor

Religion: xx

Ethnicity: xx

Marital Status: Single

Children: n/a

Township: Ye Pyu

Village Tract: n/a

Village: xx

Keywords: forced labor, social and economic rights, violence

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. . . I have been here [in Thailand] since the water festival (early April 2003). In our village, there are about xx households. xx is our village headmen. . . . Now about twenty soldiers from LIB 410 are based near our village. I only know one of the officers, his name is xx. Currently in my village, LIB 410 soldiers come every evening to get people for the village militia. They divide villagers into groups to guard from one area to another. If something happens, for example if they hear that the opposition group is coming near the village, then the whole LIB 410, LIB 408, and LIB 409 come to the village.

We have to work for the soldiers in the people's militia, cutting wood and carrying logs for charcoal, repairing the roads, and being guides for the soldiers.

The people's militia duty started almost two years ago and continues. Now three people from the village have to go every three days to be a guard. They rotate, so it takes about two months before it is each person's turn again. They also have to be a guide when soldiers need them. As for my house, we don't have to do it. . . . Instead, we have to work on other projects. The village head arranged this. Some other people have to carry wood for the soldiers (to make charcoal) instead of serving in the people's militia. The people who have to do militia duty do not get any money. I know it because there are many people that I know that have to do this. Those people are xx, xx and xx. If people have money, they will hire someone to go for them for about 1,000 *kyat*. Most of the time people don't hire a replacement, instead they ask somebody to go this time and next time he/she will do it. xx coordinates the people's militia (*pyi-thu-sit*) in the village.

[If a villager owns] a bullock cart, two days a week [they] have to carry logs from the jungle to the military camp for the military's charcoal. It is about one mile away from the camp and in one day,

[they] can only carry five or six loads. Sometimes only one bullock cart but sometimes two bullock carts have to go. Each time it takes almost the whole day. . . . [and they] have to do it almost every week. The head of the arrangement for bullock carts is xx. So he will tell people who has to go and if he cannot find people, he himself has to go. It started sometime in the beginning of 2002. The soldiers said it was for the military; the villagers do not get any payment. Sometimes I hear that the order comes from a high officer in the battalion who orders the other soldiers to send charcoal. . . .

Last year (during 2001-2002), LIB 410 confiscated xx's paddy field. . . . The soldiers are growing paddy on the land. The owner does not have a chance to grow on his own land; instead, he has to go to another place and grow rice. His land is in a very good location, it is flat land, and the soil is very good to grow paddy. The landowner did not get any compensation when the soldiers confiscated his land. Every year we also have to provide taxes for the soldiers, two baskets of paddy for each acre of paddy field. My house has about four acres, so we have to pay eight baskets. The last time that we had to pay the taxes was in January 2003.

The last time that we had to work on the road between the soldiers' outpost and our village was in late 2002. The order came from the LIB 410 commander through our village head. I myself had to go twice, and each time took me one day. One person from each household had to go. We had to dig and level the road with our own tools. We did not get any payment for the work.

In our village, we also have one road that links to xx village. . . . Foreigners constructed it a few years ago and the condition of the road is level with pieces of rock. Now we have to maintain the condition of the road. [Three people I know] are in charge of looking after the road. The village head told [them] to do this. [They] do not get any payment, having to do it for free, but by doing this [they] don't have to go for forced labor work. It just started this year because the foreigners complained that they saw cow dung on the road, and they want us to look after some small damage on the road. We have to check the road condition once a week and if there is small damage, [the villagers] try to fix it and fill the holes in the road. [The villagers] get pieces of rock along the road provided by the company that built the road (Total).

I never heard of the 1/99 law in my village, and I never heard people talk about stopping forced labor in our village.

Soldiers once tortured xx and his friend xx. They were accused of working with the rebel group. . . . About four-five soldiers came and arrested xx in the summer of 2001. . . . They did not tie him with a rope at the time, but half way to the battalion, they started to tie xx and his friend. It was LIB 410 and I remember the officer that arrested xx was xx. According to xx repeating the story, they beat [him] until he was throwing up blood, they hit him with a big stick and questioned him about working with the KNU [Karen National Union]. At first, xx did not say anything because they *were* helping the KNU, but later, because he could no longer bear the torture, he confessed. It took him about ten days to get released. He was released because xx and the village headmen tried very hard for it. In order to be released, xx and his friend had to promise the soldiers that they would do [various kinds of work]. However, the soldiers told them that they couldn't ask help from villagers, and they could not say that the soldiers ordered them. . . . It took xx and his friends about two months . . . even after they got help from some villagers too. . . .

Ever since that time, xx cannot sleep well, and he is afraid of things. The oppression does not stop there; sometimes the soldiers ask him to work with them by being their guide to show them where the

GNU will be. The last time when xx went with them the soldiers clashed with GNU soldiers and about three to four GNU soldiers died. Now, because of that, the GNU also suspects xx. So now xx lives more in danger, and he is more afraid of both the Burmese who already tortured him and the GNU who suspect him of showing the way for the Burmese soldiers.

Interview Number : 010(2003)R

Interview Date: April xx, 2003

Interview location: xx

Name: xx

Gender: xx

Age: xx

Place of Birth: xx

Occupation: Villager

Religion: xx

Ethnicity: xx

Marital Status: Single

Children: n/a

Township: Ye Pyu township

Village Tract: xx

Village: xx

Keywords: forced labor, social and economic rights

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I have lived in xx village. . . . [Part of my salary comes from Premier Company. . . .] The salary is not enough for us; it is even worse for a person who has a family.

. . . my family survives by growing rice. I cannot help them with my salary because it is not even enough for me. [One person in my family] . . . often has to go for forced labor. . . . He has had to go almost every week, at least once a week, since the beginning of this year (2003). It is for LIB xx.

Whenever the villagers have to do any kind of forced labor, my brother has to go. He has to [carry things] and some times clean around battalion xx and the clinic. . . . If a family has a bullock cart, they only have to do the forced labor that requires the cart, such as carrying heavy loads. [Other villagers] have to go to clean the battalion or serve in the people's militia. . . . Whenever turns for forced labor come I do not have go, only my brother has to do it. I never heard about 1/99 forced labor law.

Sometimes, my brother has to work for soldiers for their own business, such as carrying bamboo. This is not through the village arrangement; it is to keep good relations with the soldiers. If they ask us to do such kind of work, we have to do it to keep good relations—but there is no payment.

Sometimes I go to the military camp just to visit my friends. . . . The soldiers' families live in the outpost compound, and their children go to school nearby the village. They have up to grade two in the camp but after grade two they have to go to a nearby village. Most of the soldiers' kids go to xx school. . . .

Sometimes foreigners come and check the village. But when the foreigners come we cannot say anything either. The soldiers will come and tell us the day before foreigners come. They tell us through the village head or sometimes directly in the meeting.



Interview Number : 011(2003)R  
Interview Date: April xx, 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: Female  
Age: 39  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: Daily worker  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: Married  
Children: xx  
  
Township: Ye Pyu  
Village Tract: n/a  
Village: xx

Keywords: Social and economic rights, forced labor

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. . . Since . . . three years ago, our family situation has gotten worse. We don't have anybody that can go in to the field and work for us. . . . I usually just ask my daughter to stay at home, and I go out working as a day laborer. . . . Sometimes we don't have enough and my brother and sister help me.

LIB 282 stays in our village; there are about ten soldiers. They live in people's houses. We have to work doing forced labor such as portering, repairing roads, being in the people's militia and some small work as needed.

Most of the time my house does not have to go for forced labor as people know that I am a widow. It is an arrangement by the village and that is why I can still survive. Otherwise, if I had to do every order of forced labor, my family would starve.

In February (2003) an order came from the soldiers through our village headman that one person from each household had to help on the road. Villagers had to dig the canal along the road and level the ground. People didn't ask me to go but since everybody had to do it, I also went out and helped them where the road crosses in front of my house.

Our villagers have to porter for the soldiers. It happens every year whenever the soldiers receive news of opposition activities. Sometimes they do not hear anything, but villagers still have to porter and go with the soldiers. Since the beginning of this year, three persons have had to go with the soldiers every three days. They have to go outside around the village, to [our] old village, and sometimes to a Mon village. Mostly, the village headman arranges this when the order comes from the soldiers.

Last year (2002), we had to make baskets for the soldiers to carry rocks. We had to cut bamboo, cut it into pieces and make it into baskets. It took us three days on a rotational basis. They used those

baskets to store rocks in places along the road between xx and xx. I don't know what the rocks are for, but probably to fix the road in the rainy season.

My family does not have to go for the people's militia, but I just heard about other villagers having to do it. I heard that if people don't go they have to pay 3,000-4,000 *kyat*. I'm not sure if this is for each time or what.

Last year (2002) our villagers had to go and work for LIB 282 in xx, south of xx. About ten villagers had to clean the area around the outpost. I know this because I was in the village at that time.

LIB 282 is based in our village now, and they stay in villagers' houses. I am always afraid of soldiers staying in my house. If they come to my house or if many soldiers move into the village, I always go to other people's houses and sleep there. If the soldiers stay at a person's house, they usually take chickens and vegetables without asking. Now if they come they usually stay at xx and xx's house because they live near the main road.

I never heard of 1/99, or stopping forced labor. I just heard sometimes that the military doesn't like people to use the word porter. They order people to call it as emergency help or "*A-yay-bor-loh-ah-beh*". . . .



Interview Number : 012(2003)R  
Interview Date: May xx, 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: Male  
Age: xx (elderly)  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: Farmer  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: Married  
Children: xx  
  
Township: Ye Pyu  
Village Tract: xx  
Village: xx  
  
Keywords: Forced labor, social and economic rights, environment, children's rights

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I have been in Thailand for two weeks. . . . The situation in the village right now is not bad, but not good. There are xx households in the village. The chairperson of the village is xx. Most of the villagers are farmers. . . .

Once or twice a week the military come into the village. Sometimes it is a longer time between visits. They do not live in the village, but their base is xx miles away. It is under the control of LIB 410. Usually four to ten soldiers come. The battalion commander's name is xx.

We have to work for the military. Twice this year [2003], I have had to go with other villagers to clean LIB 410's military outpost and clean around the military hospital. I am also forced to contribute food to the military whenever they come into the village. If they take food from a local shop, we have to pay for it. The orders for this work come through the village head. The village head calls a meeting, and he says that, "tomorrow you will have to go in the early morning to work for the government." We cannot refuse to go. The village head receives the orders for this work in two ways. Either the village head goes to the military outpost to receive the orders, or the soldiers come directly and tell him.

Twice this year I had to clean LIB 410's camp. Both times were before the water festival [April 2003] and were about a month apart. Ten people from the village went, and it took a day each time. We cut bushes around the camp. They separated the older people from the group, and we cut bamboo pieces to tie things. I was amongst this group along with xx, who is older than me, and xx who is the same age as me.

I also had to clean around the military hospital cutting bushes. About 20 people had to do this for one day. The oldest in this group was about my age and the youngest ten to fifteen or old enough to hold a knife.

My village also had to clean the road to Ye cutting down bushes. I didn't have to go because I am an old person, and I only live with my wife, so the other villagers arranged for me to do lighter work.

I know this happened in February/March [2003] at the time people were cutting the land for farming. I don't know how many villagers went, but a lot of people. My cousin xx told me foreigners saw them and asked what they were doing, and they said, "We have to do forced labor cleaning the road." The foreigners didn't say anything. The foreigners' truck looked like it was from Total Company.

Whenever the soldiers come to the village, the village head needs to arrange food for them and then collects a contribution from everyone afterward. It is about 100 kyat each time. There are about xx households in village. We have to pay this every time the soldiers come into the village. If the soldiers come into the village it is because they are patrolling in the area.

The week before I came here the village called a meeting [around early May]. . . . I myself had to do [work near the pipeline route]. . . . It did not take that long, but we could not refuse to do it.

[There is also logging of Pwe and teak trees happening in the area right now—and some people are saying that Total workers or trucks are associated with the logging in some way. . . .]

[In xx] . . . two foreigners and one . . . translator came and told me that, "we are not people from the government or from Total Company. We want to ask you questions about whether you have to do forced labor or portering and how your work is." They told us to say whatever we wanted to say. I replied, "some times we have to do forced labor, and sometimes we have to pay money." I said there was no portering, but forced labor. They talked with me for about a half hour and wrote down what I said. Then they left. My cousin xx told me they went to xx after and said the same things there.

We did not say everything we knew clearly to these foreigners because we had been warned by the soldiers in advance. Before they came, in late xx the [military] . . . said, "If people come and ask you anything, then say there is no forced labor because this is the country of Burma and not the country of foreigners." When the soldiers told us this we were then afraid because what they meant was that the foreigners will eventually leave and then we will be in trouble.

I have never heard of Order 1/99, but six years ago we had a meeting where a foreigner told us that in these thirteen villages we were free from forced labor and portering. However, they did not say what we were supposed to do if we had to do it. Since then we have not had to do portering, but still forced labor.

Interview Number : 015(2003)R  
Interview Date: May xx, 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: Male  
Age: 32  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: Trader  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: Married  
Children: xx

Township: Ye Pyu  
Village Tract: xx  
Village: xx

Keywords: Forced labor

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I came to Thailand. . . .

LIB 408, 409, and 410 are based near xx village. . . . The village head's name is xx. There are about xx households. The majority of the villagers are xx, and some are xx. Most of the villagers work on beetle nut, lemon, or cashew nut plantations, or grow rice on the high land.

Even though villagers work on the plantations they cannot earn as much as they should get because a long time ago the soldiers confiscated their land. A few years ago the villagers were able to go back and work on their land. However, one month after I came to Thailand I heard LIB 409 is taking the land back because the price of the fruit is now high. I did not see this myself, but friends who come back and forth across the border told me this. I know that my friend xx had his land taken away. He has two acres of land where he planted beetle nut, lemon, and cashew nut. The soldiers asked him to move sometime this April and take even the posts of his house away. He did not get any compensation for this and was directly ordered by the soldiers to do this. I don't know the LIB 409 battalion commander's name, but his nickname is xx . . . . He said he would take out all the bad people in the battalion. I also heard that xx's wife asked an informer to find out who has good land in the village and when they found this out they took the land.

Because we live close to the three battalions, battalion officers come in every day and ask for beetle nuts, cashew nuts, coconuts, leaves to make roofs, and bamboo. At night they come to

drink and watch videos. Sometimes they have problems with the villagers, but the villagers always lose these disputes. Sometimes they will just patrol the village.

Seven or eight months ago, in late 2002, a group came in three trucks with red crosses on them. I learned that this was the ILO group. They asked people about forced labor. The Total security manager came with them. . . . They were not accompanied by the military.

The group came at xx or xx in the xx. Before the group came in the morning the village head went around to the villagers. He said that today the investigators are coming so don't speak about everything because we don't want our village to be in trouble.

Intelligence, police, and the xx village secretary followed the group, but they were in civilian clothes. xx from military intelligence was with them, xx village secretary, intelligence officer xx, and police officer xx. This group came from xx village. The plain clothes officers from each village were separated to cover each village the ILO visited. For example, when the ILO group was about to finish at xx village, about two of the officials would ride on their bike and get in to another village xx before the ILO group come in.

The ILO group stayed in xx for xx to xx minutes. They did not go to people's houses, but asked people questions along the roadside and tea shop. However, when they talked to a person a plain clothes officer was going around them, so they did not speak truly because they saw the face of this officer. I saw this happen. . . . They did not ask me anything.

The village has to clean the jungle along the car road, sometimes we have to cut bamboo and find leaves for roofs. The last time we cleaned the road was sometime in 2003. I didn't have to go work because I paid money to the village head—1000 kyat each month. If you pay 15,000 kyat for the whole year, you don't have to go at all. The orders to work came from the village head, but I do not exactly know where he gets the orders from because I do not live close to him and I pay money, so I do not have to go.

Mostly the villagers had to cut overgrowth on the road. They had to clean the road if it was overgrown or before any officer comes from the township because the officers are afraid the opposition group will sabotage them otherwise. We had to do this on the Ye-Tavoy road between mile markers xx and xx. I myself saw the villagers cleaning the road. The people serving in the militia did not have to go.

Sometimes, when the soldiers ask for bamboo, leaves, or posts, the village head asks the militia group to do it because all they have to do is guard the village at night. There are about 30 militia in the village. The leaves are for the military. Sometimes they build a pig, chicken, or oxen farm with them. Sometimes they send these items to the commander *Sa Ka Ca* (Operational Command Headquarters). When the truck comes to drop off food, they put them on the truck to send to *Sa Ka Ca*. The village head told me this. The militia also provides security for the railway, as well as, guarding the village.

Every month we have to pay money as a fee for village expenses. For example, if an officer comes to eat we have to reimburse the restaurant owner or if there is a sports day we have to pay

for this out of this fee. It ranges from 200 to 800 kyat per month depending on the expenses for the month.

Villagers also are guides for the soldiers. Whenever the news is not good—like when an opposition group is active—then the military asks for someone to be a guide. Sometimes the militia goes, but sometimes it is the villagers. Usually two people go, and they do not get compensated. I cannot say how often they go each month because it depends on the situation. These guides are usually people who go hunting in the area. The last time they asked for a guide that I know of was in March—the month I left.

As a trader I have been to many different places around my village. . . . The most difficult problem for these villages is to feed the militia. The (*Ka Ya Ca*) Coastal Region Military Command division commander ordered that every village is required to have a militia. The militias are hard to feed and pay. Each militia member gets between 8000 and 9000 kyat per month.

I have heard about Order 1/99. The first time I heard about it was June/July 2002, about two or three months before the ILO group came into the village asking about forced labor. I heard about it from the Township Peace and Development Council. They hung a poster in the tea shop. On the poster, they wrote down that the military cannot ask for forced labor or portering. When you help you have to get paid. It was hung by the village head. The villagers were happy about the poster when they first saw it, but then since nothing changed they didn't pay attention to it. The poster did not say what to do if there was forced labor. Under the poster it said this order came from Department of Home Affairs Minister Tin Hlaing.

Now I am working in Thailand, and I don't know what the future will be. But maybe my wife and my father in-law will go back if the situation is a little better. For me, I will have to wait for a while to get back until the current officials change. So now I just have to wait for the new person to come in and ask them about the situation in the village.

## **Section 2**

# **Forced Labor on Rice Fields**

Interview Number : 003(2003)R  
Interview Date: March xx, 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: Male  
Age: 43  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: Farmer  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: Married

Family Information (Name and Age(s):

Father: n/a  
Mother: n/a  
Spouse: n/a  
Children: xx

Township: xx  
Village Tract: xx  
Village: xx

Keywords: forced labor, social and economic rights, children's rights

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These days we don't have time to go back to the old land. I myself only have two days a week to work for my family. I cannot go to my field and work like I did before. The situation is getting harder and harder for us. Since February (2003), we have been ordered by soldiers to make rice fields . . . around xx village. The orders come from strategic commander xx, who is based in xx village. The village has worked on this project for about two months already, but we haven't finished the work yet. The village head told us that we have to work on it. The strategic commander ordered the village head during a required meeting. My section leader told me personally.

My section leader told me that I have to work every Monday to Wednesday, clearing the land and digging the ground to make the rice fields. We get one day off to go back to our plantation lands, but then we have to work again on Friday and Saturday. It is by order and we can not refuse to go. If we don't want to go, we have to pay 7,000 kyat a week. We have to bring our own tools and eat our own food. No one told us that we would get any payment for the work. Instead, the strategic commander told us that if we don't do the work, next year we can not buy rice in the town. Most of us do not grow paddy; we usually sell our plantation fruit. Now we

have to cut down people's land around the village in order to grow rice. The people do not get any compensation for the land. I know of a villager whose land was taken without any compensation, his name is xx. He had more than one acre of land. He is not the only one though; a lot of land has been taken.

We have to cut down cashew nut trees and other trees around the area and dig out the roots. Then we have to dig the ground to make the fields. When we finish digging one place, we have to go to the next place to cut down the trees, burn, and then dig the ground. The workplace is around the village so we just live in our houses, wake up in the early morning and go to the place. One person from each household has to go. In my house, I go sometimes and my wife goes sometimes. We don't have any children who can do it. Some households have their children who can work; at the work site we can see children above thirteen years old working everyday. Women and old people also have to join.

We have to go five days a week. Each day, the village head and soldiers tell us the area and what each group has to finish by the end of the day. Everyone just tries to work hard because if they finish early they can go home. If we don't finish the job, we cannot go home. It is not only for one day because as soon as we finish at one workplace, they setup another one and it is waiting for us. A soldier watches us while we work. At least one soldier watches, and he has a gun. About ten soldiers a day also work on digging the land, too.

The work conditions are very poor. The ground that we have to dig is too hard to dig. I already lost one of my hoes. I cannot get any replacement for my hoe; I just have to buy a new one by myself. The weather is too hot now, and the sun is shining very hot. The conditions are worse for women and children. While we are working, we can take a rest only when the leader tells us that we can break. During the last two months [early 2003], I worked on the paddy project for four weeks and my wife worked for four weeks (five days each week). My wife went the last time before I came here.

Now the situation is even harder because in the first month we worked close to the village. Now we have to go further and further from the village. There are more and more trees and plants to cut down, and more roots to dig out. It is harder for us that we have to go further. Now it takes us about half an hour to get to the work place.

We have to work for the soldiers five days per week. Now three villages, xx, xx, and xx, are working on the project. But we also heard that other villages around the area will have to work on it too. They did not say if the rice is for us or for soldiers; we don't know.

We also have to do other work for the soldiers. I have to go as a standby porter to drive a boat for the soldiers, to deliver food and supplies to the frontlines. The last time that I had to drive the boat was in November 2002. On a rotational basis, one person from the village has to go and stay at the military base as a standby porter. This person has to carry water, sometimes cook, and if the soldier needs to send supplies to another place, they have to drive the boat. I myself don't have a boat, so I have to drive the boat. The people who have a boat usually don't have to be a standby porter, but they have to give out their boat. Similarly, people who have a bullock cart have to give it to carry supplies and things for soldiers.

We also have to repair the road, build the bridge by carrying sand and pieces of rock, cut bush along the road, level the road and dig a canal along the road. The last time that I had to dig a



canal was in early 2003, and it took me half a day to do it. The village head set up a place for each person to do it. We could not refuse, and we did not get any payment either. Even more difficult was when we had to carry pieces of rock from the river to the roadside. I didn't have a bullock cart so I had to carry by myself. It is too heavy and sometimes the distance is far. If I have to do this it takes me at least one day. Each time the village head set up the distance and width of the road to fix. The last time that I had to carry rocks was sometime this summer [2003].

In February (2003), I also had to go and help build a school. My friend also had to go; the section leader told us to go. It took me one day and it was on a rotational basis. I had to carry wood, bamboo and sand.

There were several times that I had to pay money to the section leader; sometimes I didn't know what it was for. Sometimes we have to pay for the soldiers' food fee. That happened whenever the soldiers came and took villagers' animals for food (like chickens and pigs).

I never heard about the 1/99 forced labor law. I just have to work hard for my family in order to survive. Now I don't know what to do here in Thailand, and I have to worry for our security so I plan to go back. I cannot think of what I should do when I go back because I will not have a chance to work for my family anyway.

Interview Number : 006(2003)R  
Interview Date: March xx, 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: Male  
Age: 38  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: Farmer  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: Married

Family Information (Name and Age(s):

Father: n/a  
Mother: n/a  
Spouse: n/a  
Children: xx

Township: xx  
Village Tract: xx  
Village: xx

Keywords: forced labor, social and economic rights

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In the village, I have to work for my family and also for the military. I have to porter, grow plants for the military's benefit and pay money for the military's food. I have had to porter for the soldiers many times. The last time that I had to go was sometime in July or August 2002. I had to go with IB xx, it took me about nine days. Twelve villagers from our village went with me. The order came through the village head xx; it was my rotation turn. I had to carry one basket of rice (32 kg) and one soldier's backpack. We had to go with second battalion commander xx, and there were about 30-40 soldiers. It was too heavy for me, and the food they gave us was really bad. They gave us spoiled rice that smelled bad. We were not allowed to take a rest even when we were tired. Moreover, the soldiers shouted at us and beat us. They said that we walked too slow for them. A soldier hit me twice on the face. I don't know his name, but he complained that I could not start the fire. It was hard for me to do it because it was rainy season and the wood was wet. Other people, including his officer, saw it but didn't say anything about it. I remember the people that went with me. Their names are xx, xx, xx, xx, and other people. I didn't want to go, but I had to go because I didn't have 7,000 *kyat* to pay someone to go for me.

The last time that I had to grow chili plants for the military was in mid March 2003. The order came through the village headmen after they had a meeting with military officers at the strategic command post. We had to clear a field on land owned by xx. She did not get any compensation for it. The field was big enough to plant one *tin* of chili seed; it took us half a day to clear the land. One person from each household had to do it. I can't tell how many acres but maybe about the same size or smaller than a football field. We haven't planted the seed yet, only cleared the land. We have to wait for the beginning of the rainy season to plant. We did not get any payment for clearing the land and no one told us that we would get payment. Moreover, the commander also said they will only give us half a *tin* of chili seed and the other half *tin* we villagers will have to provide.

Last week (mid March 2003) I heard that we will have to work on digging paddy fields. Some of the villagers in xx have already been doing it. I heard this from the village head after he had a meeting with strategic commander xx. I heard two or three times from my village head already. We don't know yet for sure if we are going to have to do it. We heard that some of the villagers in xx fled their village because they can't do that heavy work anymore. I don't want to do it but I have no choice. If the whole village has to do it, then I will have to do it, even though everyone knows it is very hard work.

Not only do we have to work for the military, but we also have to pay money for the soldiers' food. Every time soldiers come to our village they take people's pigs, chickens and any kind of food that they need, they take it all. After they leave, our village head counts how much the soldiers took and divides how much we should pay for it. For this reason, I have a debt of more than 7,000 *kyat*.

About two years ago, some of the villagers told me that there would be no forced labor in our village. They told me that the Burmese in town would not order us to do anything anymore, but nothing has changed yet. I didn't see any paper about it; no one came to talk about it either.

Interview Number : 007(2003)R  
Interview Date: March xx, 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: Female  
Age: 38  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: Housemaker, mother, farmer  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: Married

Family Information (Name and Age(s):

Father: n/a  
Mother: n/a  
Spouse: xx  
Children: xx

Township: xx  
Village Tract: xx  
Village: xx

Keywords: forced labor, economic and social rights

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Now we only have two days per week to work for our family. My husband cannot go to our field and work for the family like before. Since the Burmese soldiers ordered us to move, I have had to go back to my old plantation land, which is more than one hour's walk from the place where I am living now. Sometimes we do not have a chance to go back to look after it, even though it's not far from where we live. The Burmese soldiers did not let us go back; they claimed that we would make connections and support opposition groups. It is even worse for me, as a women, to go back because I am afraid of the soldiers. So usually my husband goes to the field.

In early February (2003), we were ordered by soldiers to make rice fields around xx village. The orders come from strategic commander xx; he is based in xx village. We have been working on the fields for two months already; we are not finished yet. The village head told us that we have to work on it. xx ordered the village head while the village leaders attended a meeting. My section leader told me. xx village head's name is xx.

Our section leader told me that we have to work every Monday to Wednesday, clearing the land and digging the ground for the rice fields. It was by order and we can not refuse to go. If we don't want to go we have to pay 7,000 *kyat* a week. We have to bring our own tools and eat our own food. No one told us we would get any payment. Instead, the strategic commander told us that if we don't do it, next year we cannot buy rice in town.

My husband and I decided that we would rotate going so that he would have a chance to work on our plantation land. I cannot work every week anyway, because it is too hard for women like me. It is really hot. We have to cut down the cashew nut and other trees, dig out the roots, and then make the fields. When we finish digging one place, we have to go to another place, cut down the trees, burn, and then dig the ground. The worksite is around the village so we just live in our house, wake up in the early morning and go to the place. The weather is too hot now and the sun is shining very hot. For women and children, the condition is too terrible for them. While we are working, we can take a rest when the leader told us that we can break. We try to finish as quickly as possible so we can go home and work for ourselves.

In the last two months, I went there for four weeks (a total of twenty days), and my husband went there for four weeks. The work is very hard, especially for women, but I have no choice. I want my husband to have time to go and work in our plantation land too. Otherwise, we would not have food to eat.

Now three villages, xx, xx, and xx are working on the rice fields. But we also heard that other villages around the area will have to work on it too. They did not say who will get to eat the rice. We don't know if it is for the soldiers or who. All we know is that if we don't work for it we might not get rice from town next year. We also heard that villages around that area would have to do the same like us too.

We have to do other work for the military. We have to repair the roads, build the bridge, carry sand, pieces of rock, cut bush along the road, level the road, and dig a canal along the road. The last time that I had to dig the canal was in early 2003; it took me half a day to do it. The village head set up a place for each person to work. We could not refuse and we did not get any payment. Harder than that was when we had to carry pieces of rock and sand from the river, and bring it to roadside. We don't have a bullock cart, so my husband did it for our family.

I have had to give money to the section leader several times; sometimes I don't know what it is for. Sometimes we have to pay for the soldier's food fee, like when the soldiers come and take villagers' animal for food like chickens and pigs.

I never heard about 1/99 forced labor law. Now we are in Thailand, and we don't even know what to do. My husband and I discuss our future, and now we think we might go back to our village since we cannot do anything here in Thailand. We don't want to work for the Burmese in our village, but we have no choice.

Interview Number : 013(2003)R  
Interview Date: late May 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: M  
Age: 28  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: n/a  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: xx

Family Information (Name and Age(s):

Father: n/a  
Mother: n/a  
Spouse: n/a  
Children: xx

Township: xx  
Village Tract: xx  
Village: xx

Keywords: Forced Labor, Social and Economic Rights

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I arrived in Thailand yesterday. It took six days to travel here. I came because during the dry season I was forced to make rice fields for the military and I did not have time to clean the area on my own land where I grow rice. Now it is too late to do this so I came to Thailand to look for work to send money home. I came with about forty others from my village, mostly men. Most of them were in the same situation as me. They were not able to work on their land because of the work we had to do for the government so they had to come to Thailand to look for work. Some of the men came with their family as well. . . .

We worked on the rice fields for about three and a half months from early 2003 to April when we stopped working on them. . . . Now, if we want to use the rice fields we will have to clean them again. The other villages in the area that were making rice fields for the military also stopped making theirs, too.

The rice fields were built on land confiscated from xx villagers who received no compensation for it. It was xx acres of land total. . . . We cut down those and other trees, burned the land, and then made the rice fields.

Each household in my section had to send a worker. In my family, I am the only person who can work. . . . I had to work on the terrace four or five days a week. Then in the remaining two days I worked [on a plantation] . . . where I could make 1000 or 2000 kyat, which paid for our food and medicine.

. . . In the beginning we had a guard (soldier). If it was hot and people tried to rest they could not do this in front of the soldiers. Once when we did not finish the amount we should have, the soldiers cocked their guns. This frightened everyone.

We also had to clean the road every two or three months, or whenever the water ditch was blocked. It took us only one day because each household had to send one person. The village head gave us the orders and then the section leaders monitored us.

A few days before xx, foreigners came and asked us about our situation. . . . However, no one dared speak truthfully about their situation because they were followed by military intelligence and their translator was Burmese. They stayed for half a day.

The military asked for porters two times in one month before I left. . . .

Two days before I left, the military asked for xx porters. . . . They asked the village head. . . . They cannot refuse the orders. . . .

The porters carry supplies for the soldiers up to xx and carry sick and wounded soldiers back when they return. . . . If they are delivering food they sometimes use a boat, but when they are carrying wounded soldiers they worry about an ambush so then they let the villagers deliver the supplies and carry the soldiers.

I have never heard of order 1/99, but when the foreigners came in xx and asked about the state of the village they mentioned something about a law against forced labor. However, no one dared to speak out then.

Interview Number : 014(2003)  
Interview Date: late May 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: Female  
Age: 44  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: Daily worker  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: xx

Family Information (Name and Age(s):

Father: n/a  
Mother: n/a  
Spouse: xx  
Children: xx

Township: xx  
Village Tract: n/a  
Village: xx

Keywords: Forced Labor, Social and Economic Rights, Children's Rights

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I arrived in Thailand about one month ago. I came because in my village I was forced to work and I often got sick. My xx-year-old daughter goes to school—xx standard—so I would go instead of her so she would not have to work. I could no longer take all this work.

I came to Thailand with over 100 people from xx. About 80 came to this village. . . . It took us eight days to make it here. We had to avoid the soldiers on the way. We came because we were forced to work in our village and could not make enough money in Burma.

At the beginning of this year we were forced to build rice paddies for the military. At first we had to work every day except Sunday . . . , and later it was reduced to three days per week. When I left they were still working in the fields.

. . . . The orders were from the strategic commander to the village head. The village head then told the section leaders. The section leaders would then come to each house and tell us when to work. They said the orders came from the strategic commander. The strategic commander's name is xx. Each household in xx had to contribute one person so we sent about xx people. No



one could refuse and the military gave no compensation. No one wants to do this work, but everyone is afraid, so no one has not gone. The only people who were paid were the workers that were hired by households who did not want to send anyone. A male day laborer makes 1000 kyat per day and a female 700 kyat.

. . . The land had previously been owned by villagers who grew cashew nuts, beetle nuts, and farmed on it. It was confiscated by the military and they were given no compensation for it. The strategic commander said . . . It will develop the village.

First we cleared the area of trees and bushes including the plantation trees. Then we burned and cleaned the area. . . . [Then we dug the fields.] The sun is very hot and it is difficult to dig the ground there. We had to bring our own tools. We could take a rest, but if the soldiers saw us we could not rest. The villagers who worked terracing ranged in age from ten to 50. Sometimes pregnant women worked, as well, because their husbands couldn't. Most of those who went were women because the men in the household needed to make money. . . .

Every day I had to work I would wake up at 4 am and make food for the kids and myself. My daughter would then go to school and my xx-year-old [young] son stayed with his grandmother. I would go to work at 6 am. I would have lunch with the kids at noon and then work again until 4 pm. . . . I also sometimes get sick and then my daughter would not go to school and would go instead of me. To survive I would go into the forest and look for . . . [a fruit that grows in the jungle], and then sell it in the village. That is how I made just enough money for food and sometimes medicine. . . .

We also had to gather bamboo leaves for the soldiers' barracks. The orders came from the village head at different times. Sometime it would be two or three times a month and other times once every three or four months. Each house had to give two bamboo and one pack of leaves. Sometimes I would go get this and sometimes my daughter. We sent it to the military outpost and were never compensated.

Once every two or three months the village head told us we had to repair and clean the road of bushes and jungle. We cleaned the road between xx and xx. Sometimes my daughter would go and sometimes myself. My daughter also had to cut trees for the strategic commander's farm.

Also, we have to pay money for when the soldiers eat in town. Sometimes it is 50 kyat, but the amount differs. I often do not have money and ask the section leader to wait until I do, which he does.

I have never heard of Order 1/99, but I heard from a friend that he heard something on a law about forced labor on the BBC. However, I don't know anything about it. . . .

Now that I have left Burma I feel very worried about my future.

## **Section 3**

### **Other Accounts of Forced Labor**

Interview Number : 016(2003)R  
Interview Date: late May 2003

Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: Female  
Age: 36  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: n/a  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: Married

Family Information (Name and Age(s):

Father: n/a  
Mother: n/a  
Spouse: xx  
Children: xx

Township: xx  
Village Tract: n/a  
Village: xx

Keywords: Forced Labor, Social and Economic Rights, Children's Rights

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I came to Thailand because I cannot feed my family. If I work and earn 100 kyat I can only have 50 kyat. You have to always pay the military. We could not afford to pay the military. . .

My husband and I could not afford to pay the money the village head asked from us each month so we moved in with my [relative], so we would count as only one household and pay less. We paid 1000 or 2000 kyat each month. The money was collected by the village head. He said it was to repair roads with, but he took the money himself. . . . [He also gave some to the Division Head.]

The village head sometimes said the money was to pay for a road from xx village to xx, but this road was finished xx or xx months ago. . . The road was built by villagers from my village. They were given no compensation. . . If they could not pay the village head told them they would have to move to another village.

I worked on the road five times for ten days each time. The section leader came house to house to tell us to work. There were usually 20 or 30 villagers who worked with me. They did not take either the youngest [children] or oldest [elderly] to work on the road. The last time I worked on the road was the cold season last year [late 2002]. We worked from 6 am to 6 pm with a half-hour lunch. We were watched by a section leader or the xx of the village. If you could not do a lot of work then you were beaten by them with a cane or scolded. If you refused to work you were beaten or fined.

When I worked on the road my oldest child attended school, but the xx others [young children] stayed at home and had to take care of themselves. Before I left each morning I prepared food for them to eat. After I returned from work each night I had to cook, clean, and take care of the kids. It was very hard to care for the kids when I had to work on the road.

I also worked building a barracks for xx during harvest time of [late] 2002. I went for three days at a time. The section leader told me when to go. We went to the military camp and sharpened bamboo sticks that were used to build a blockade. We were not paid, and each family had to pay the military xx to xx kyat. Each family went every three months.

After the road project was complete we worked on a local road. Many people are moving away from my village because they can not tolerate it anymore. . . .

I have never heard of Order 1/99. However, I do remember my father attending a meeting after which he told me there would be no more forced labor, but this never happened. I don't remember when it was. . . .

I don't want this kind of government anymore.

Interview Number : 017(2003)R  
Interview Date: late May 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: Female  
Age: 30  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: n/a  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: xx

Family Information (Name and Age(s):

Father: n/a  
Mother: n/a  
Spouse: xx  
Children: xx

Township: xx  
Village Tract: n/a  
Village: xx

Keywords: Forced Labor, Civil and Political Rights, Children's Rights

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. . . The village head asks my family for 5,000 kyat per month, but the amount varies from family to family depending on how much they can pay. The village head collects the money for the soldiers and sometimes for himself. No soldiers live in the village and there is no military base there, but they come and go often, especially to collect money. Xx—where there is a military base—is nearby. The money being collected is for an automobile road being built from xx to xx.

The road is being constructed by villagers from my village. They started sometime this year [2003] sometime, and they are still working on it. If a villager can pay a contribution each month to the village head they don't have to work. If they can't pay they have to work on the road for one month. They work from 6 am to 6 pm while being monitored by low-ranking soldiers. They are paid xx kyat each day they work on the road. This is very little, just enough to buy tea. If we refuse to work we either have to move to another village or are beaten. I did not work on the road myself, but my xx-year-old mother had to work carrying soil. The villagers have to provide their own tools (baskets for soil, knives, axes, shovels, etc.) . . . I saw ten or so children who had to work because their parents were gone to xx or some place. They were about

twelve or thirteen years old and had to work the same like the adults. I left the village so I would not have to pay.

. . . In May 2003, [several dozen] villagers were called to the military base in xx who had not paid for the road construction or had missed going to work on the road. There were about xx women and xx men ranging in age from around xx to 40. There were more women than men because the men had fled the village when they heard the order to go while most of the women had thought that the military would be pitiful towards them. Four of the villagers called to the base were xx, xx, xx, and xx. . . .

My relatives were amongst this group so I went to xx to see them. I saw each of them get hit with a stick. . . . One villager asked, “Why did you call me here and beat me like this?” The soldier replied, “You did not pay and can not work that is why I beat you—as an example.”

All of those ordered there were still locked up [when I left in late May]. . . . The soldiers told the families that their relatives will be released after the family pays xxx [a lot of] kyat [i.e. each person imprisoned requires xx kyat to get out]. The families cannot get food to them. The military feeds them, although they often do not get enough curry. Some of those locked up are sick, but others are ok.

I have never heard of Order 1/99.

## **Section 4**

### **Prisoner Porters**

Interview Number : 001(2003)R  
Interview Date: March xx, 2003  
Interview location: xx  
Name: xx  
Gender: xx  
Age: 37  
Place of Birth: xx  
Occupation: Gem Miner  
Religion: xx  
Ethnicity: xx  
Marital Status: Married  
Prisoner Number: xx

Township: xx  
Village Tract: xx  
Village: xx

Keywords: Forced Labor (prisoner porter) and Civil and Political Rights

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Police arrested me in xx on July xx, 2001 when I visited the xx Company. The name of the company is xx. I went there for my personal business and did not know what would happen. The police came to the place for a drug search because it was on their list about drug trafficking. The owner of the shop is xx. The police did not arrest him because he paid the money.

The police captured heroine at his shop and arrested everybody from the place. They released 20 to 30 people after money negotiations. I did not know how much they had to pay but I'm definitely sure that they paid in order to be released. The police took sixteen of us to the police station because we could not pay any money at that time.

Among the sixteen, there were two students from the college school. After two weeks, the two students were released with six other people. These people had to pay the police for leaving the police station. Then the police let three more people go after they paid for the punishment and in the end, only three people were sentenced to jail because we could not pay. I was sentenced to prison for five years.

In February 2003 they took us to xx. We had to porter; we had to carry rice and backpacks from the military camp to the saw mill. The load was over thirty pounds. Some prisoners had to carry ammunition.

I saw the soldiers shout at and beat the prisoner porters when they could not carry their loads. The soldiers threatened to kill us if we couldn't carry the load. Three of us ran away and one lost his way; only two of us arrived here.



Interview Number :	002(2003)R
Interview Date:	March xx, 2003
Interview location:	xx
Name:	xx
Gender:	xx
Age:	31
Place of Birth:	xx
Occupation:	Gem Miner
Religion:	xx
Ethnicity:	xx
Marital Status:	xx
Township:	xx
Village Tract:	xx
Village:	xx
Prisoner Number:	xx
Keywords:	Forced Labor (Prisoner porter), Civil and Political Rights, Violence/Torture (cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment)

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Police arrested me on April xx, 1998. I was arrested in xx section/xx town. I went to my friend's house to fix my motorcycle; I did not know that the police would come. The police knew that the house owner uses drugs (heroin) so they came to his house. When the police came to the house, they found a small amount of heroin in the house and arrested all the people there. The name of the owner is xx and the friends who visited him were xx (Chinese-Burmese), xx (Burmese), and me. I did not know that my friend uses drugs, but the police also took me to the police station. They told me to go with them for a few minutes. When I arrived to the police station, they asked me for 500,000 kyat. I could not give all the money so I gave 100,000 kyat to the police. They took the money but did not let me go. They sent me to court instead. The police kept me at xx town for one month for money negotiation. After I could not give the money, the police sent me to xx prison. When I arrived to the court, the judge asked me to pay 1,000,000 kyat and I did not have money so they sent me to jail. Before they sentenced me to jail, they tested my urine. They asked me to pay 400,000 kyat for testing. If I could pay this amount of money, they would say that I did not have a sign of using drugs. Because I could not pay, they said that my urine showed I had used drugs, and then they put me in jail.

According to the law, if they find drugs in any area, they can arrest people who live within fifty feet of where they find drugs. They charged me in using drugs for five years and six years for finding the drugs in the house. After they charged me eleven years in prison, they asked me for 1,000,000 kyat to let me go. I could not give the money so I had to go to prison. Before I went to prison, I had to stay in jail for eight months. During the eight months, I had to go to court twice a month.

When you are in prison if you can pay 30-40,000 *kyat*, you do not have to work. If you can not give the money, you have to work whenever they ask you. In the prison, prisoners had to make perfume sticks, farm, make plantations, sew and roll paper.

To get a promotion, police in the area have to bring twenty cases every month and if they do not have enough cases, they arrest people on the way or people who quarrel with each other. The police can change a simple case to a drug case and they used to do this for getting money and in order to have more cases in the area. Some children quarreled and the police charged them for using drugs. The police change a case from another reason to a drug case. Police arrested my uncle when he traveled in the train after they put heroine in his bag. This happened to many people and they could not do anything about it.

When I was in prison, my parent visited me sometimes. Sometimes the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) visited the prison and before they came, the head of the prison taught us to say good things to them. We had to tell the ICRC that we had good food (meat three times a week) but we did not get any meat and we didn't have good health. If we told the truth, they frightened us.

The people who looked after the prison were xx, xx and xx. They were all officers. Most of the cases in the prison are drug cases; many people are charged in drug cases even though they were not involved.

In the prison people died almost every day. Most of the people died of TB and lung disease. Because we did not have good food, we were not healthy and many people were sick. We only have breakfast and dinner each day. At breakfast, we had bean soup and rice and at dinner, we had rice, fish paste and vegetables.

## PORTERING

After I stayed in prison for four years, the police . . . took 220 prisoners from the prison in February 2003. At first, we knew that we had to do agriculture work. The police took us to xx and when we arrived there, we knew that we had to porter. After we left the prison, we stopped one night at xx, one night in xx and then to xx. When we arrived at xx, LIB xx took us from xx prison and we had to follow LIB xx, carrying rice for the military. The prisoners had to go different places and only 40 prisoners came together to the place where I had to go. I learned from the soldiers that I had to porter for six months. If I portered for six months, they would reduce my time in prison.

Two porters had to carry one bag of rice. One bag of rice has three tins. We had to carry rice from xx military camp to the old sawmill. When we arrived at the old sawmill, twenty prisoner porters had to go with the other soldiers to another place. I did not know where they went. We stopped at the old sawmill for two nights. Besides carrying rice, we also had to carry backpacks for the soldiers. Some prisoner porters had to carry ammunition (heavy weapons) for the soldiers. From the saw mill to the top of the hill, only twenty prisoners carried rice for the soldiers. The soldiers themselves had to carry rice from the old sawmill to the top of the hill too.

I saw the soldiers shout at the prisoner porters when they could not carry their loads. Soldiers beat most of the porters because they could not carry these heavy things. Porters were threatened

by soldiers that if they could not carry the load, they would be shot dead. All prisoners stayed in prison and did not have experience carrying heavy loads like this so they could not walk fast. The load was over 30lbs. After I carried rice to the top of the hill twice, I ran away on March xx, 2003. Three of us ran away and one lost his way; only two of us arrived here. Before we ran, four prisoners ran away already the same day that we came back to xx.

After I ran from the xx, it took me three nights and four days until I met some hunters and they took me to xx who sent me here. If I hadn't seen people, I would have died of hunger.

## **Section 5**

### ***Entrenched Update***

Three interviews conducted in mid-May 2003 provide an update of ERI's report *Entrenched: An Investigative Report on the Systematic Use of Forced Labor by the Burmese Army in a Rural Area*. Village heads in this area confirm that the systematic pattern of forced labor and other abuses continues unabated in the region. In fact, one leader describes in detail how villagers confronted the SPDC with Order 1/99, Burma's law forbidding the use of forced labor, only to be dismissed and ignored. (#020)

The three major forms of forced labor included in these interviews are transporting military rations, constructing a road, and providing materials for the military. Building, repairing and cleaning military camps, providing security for the roads, and forced labor fees are also described. All types of labor remain routine, and continue from January through mid May 2003 with no signal of relief in the immediate future. As one interviewee described: "They are already planning that the villagers who didn't help on this road will have to work on another road after the rainy season."

### **Transporting Rations**

*"Continuing today (mid May 2003), villagers have to carry military rations from xx to xx twice a month. Forty people go at one time.... We also have to send ten people twice a month to carry rations to xx and xx camps...."* (#018)

*"When we carry the rations to the camp in our village, it takes the entire day.... Two people have to carry one bag of rice that weighs 48 kg. From our village, we have to send the rations out to other places bit by bit."* (#018)

### **Constructing Roads**

*"From December to April (2003), ten villages had to send ten-fifteen people each day to work on the road."* (#019)

*"On February xx, 2003 each village had to send six-seven people to make a water canal on their section of the road (where they are responsible for security).... On March xx, 2003 we had to go again to re-dig the canal because of the rain. We had to send fifteen people to work on it."* (#019)

### **Providing Materials**

*"On April xx, 2003, each village in the tract had to send 50 shingles to xx military camp. We didn't get any payment for the shingles."* (#019)

*"On February xx, 2003 the military officer in xx demanded xx shingles and xx bamboo for the military camp. We didn't get any money for these things."* (#018)

### **Other**

*"We have to send two daily workers to xx military camp every day. The workers have to clean around the camp, cook, or do whatever the soldiers ask. We just send people in rotation, and they don't get paid."* (#019)

**The full texts of interviews #018, #019, #020 have been completely redacted for security reasons.**