



KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

FEBRUARY, 2008

Karen Refugee Committee

Monthly Report

February, 2008 – Newsletter

61 years ago, on February 12th 1947, the little town of Pang Long, in the Southern Shan State was bustling with activity. For many of Burma's National leaders were congregated there. Included were the AFPFL (Anti Fascist Peoples Freedom League) Party leaders led by General Aung San (Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's Father) the Shan state chiefs, the Sao Phas, the Kachin Dawas, the Chin Chiefs together with other leaders and many observers. The purpose was to work for Unity among all ethnic Nationalities and to demand Independence from Britain in a collective voice.

The gathered leadership signed an agreement, the Pang Long Agreement, on the strength of which the United Peoples of Burma are to call for independence and Join other Free Nations of the world. But it was and still is a mystery why other prominent ethnic leaders from the Karen, Karenni, Arakan and Mon, never put their signatures to the Agreement.

One tacit understanding in the Agreement was that any ethnic State can have the choice of Separation, after (10) years of membership in the "Union of Burma". General Aung San was to remark that if any Ethnic State found it necessary to separate from the UNION, after living together, for 10 years, it would be the failure of the majority Burmese.

Burma achieved independence from Britain on the 4th of January 1948. But Burma's Architect for independence General Aung San didn't see the Day of Independence. He was assassinated on the 19th of July 1947,. It was quite ominous. With Independence, Burma joined other world free Nations as the UNION of BURMA, made up of seven Divisions and seven Ethnic States. The seven Divisions being the Rangoon, Irrawaddy, Pango, Taninthayi, Magwe, Mandalay and Sagaing. The Ethnic States are the Shan, Kachin, Chin, Arakan, Mon, Karen and Karenni States. The UNION was a diversity of Ethnicity, Customs, Traditions, language, Religion and Ways of living.

Post Independence Burma, enjoyed a short measure of Peace, stability and Good-Living under a Democratically elected Government. A Shan Chief, Sao Shwe Thike of Yawng Hwe was installed as the President of the Union of Burma, a fitting reward for the Shan, who lent great effort to help with Burma achieving independence. (But Saw Shwe Thike was later to be faulted and imprisoned for his Union Efforts. His family became exiles.)

Now there were distressing signs of dissatisfaction, suspicion, doubts resulting from inequality, broken-trusts and increasing Central Control. There were whispers and

then open provocative talks of the Agreement Allowance of Separation from the Union after ten years. There were dissenting voices and deeds. Trouble was brewing quite widely after 10 years of independence and living together. At the same time, calculating minds were of the opinion that a somewhat strong Force Handling by the Military was needed to help with stabilization of the country. In fact, a Temporary Care taker Government, headed by General Ne Win was installed in the early 1960 to help with stabilization, harmony and progress. But damage had been done. General Ne Win tasted Power and he liked it. He had the means to hold on to Power.

On March 2 of 1962, the Tatmadaw, under General Ne Win seized power. The Revolutionary Council Government was established. That Day saw the disappearance of the Union Spirit in Burma. It was to be the way of the Tatmadaw, Rule of Force all the way unto this day.

At one time, there was not less than 15 armed Groups involved in Resistance Movements. There were also peaceful Resistance moves, from the students, from the workers, farmers, from Political activists, and from even Monks. But all moves came to nothing, for the Power of the Gun and Friendly Support from strong Neighbours are always with the Tatmadaw.

Today after 54 years in Total Control and the Tatmadaw Leadership changing from the First line into the second line, there can be seen the move to continue into the Third and Even the 4th line of military leadership. Even now, the Tatmadaw Generals are set on the Road Map of the Draft Constitution Referendum, with the National convention to be called in May 2008. They are quite sure of the passage of the Referendum, and have already set the General Elections to be held in year, 2010- However, people have the Election of May 27, 1990, still fresh in their minds. That election, in fact was called by the Generals, promising to "go back to the Barracks after the Elections". In fact they were quite sure the party they fielded will win. What came out was that the opposition party led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi won a landslide victory. The military refused to recognize that Election outcome. They reneged their promise to go back to the "Barracks". The case with the Generals is simply "Heads I win -Tail - you lose".

People have no doubt that the same will happen again. With the Road Map, everything is set for the Military to be there with their Way. They have made sure for themselves to have 25 percent. Representation, with still others to contest for more Representation. There is the likelihood that military control over the country will continue in to the foreseeable future.

Meantime, the country and the People suffer. The suffering is sure to continue, for a long, long time, come what may.

K.R.C – Camps – Activities – Report.

February – 2008

- ❖ 1/2/08 Mr Joel from IRC visited KRC and during the meeting, rules and regulation applying in camp and compensation for a car accident-victim in Mae La camp were discussed.
- ❖ 4/2/08 Karen Refugee committee, in regular meeting, sharing informations and experiences among themselves with regard to the Karen Unity meeting they attended which was held in a certain place, in Thai-Burma border.
- ❖ 5/2/08 KRC Joint secretary attended a meeting at ATLANTA, Georgia state, USA. The difficulties happening within the Karen Refugees and the impacts of Resettlement were discussed.
- ❖ 7/2/08 Three KRC committee members hold a meeting with TBBC's Field Coordinator, distribution of food and of building materials in camps were discussed.
- ❖ 9/2/08 The secretary of KRC and Health Coordinator visited Mae La camp, for discussion on selection of AMI water sanitation staff.
- ❖ 11/2/08 A Team of Utah-University, US call on KRC for discussion of Karen resettled in U.S, and quarries on help provided for the resettlement.
- ❖ 12/2/08 KRC's chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary and social affair coordinator met with Rotarian Team in Mae La Camp and discussions on Refugee Affairs support and future, camps stability, harmony and conflict resolution.
- ❖ 13/2/08 KRC-CMP hold a meeting with the support organizations concerned. CBOs and camp committees, and sharing information on CMP activities during the, Three years period, from 2005 to 2007.
- ❖ 14/2/08 KRC met with Mae La camp leader for discussion of AMI water sanitation staff selection.
- ❖ 16/2/08 America Baptist Cooperation team meet with KRC, sharing information of how to provide necessary help for those Karen who resettled in U.S.

- ❖ 17 - 21/2/08 KRC- CMP visited Htam Him and Ban Don Yan camps, for providing Training on Accounting, Reporting, Distribution and Recording procedures.
- ❖ 18/2/08 KRC- Education Coordinator Visited Htam Him and Ban Don Yan camp for the evaluation of Education activities, and school materials provided.
- ❖ 19/2/08 The First secretary of KRC, Mr. James Bond a committee member visited Mae La camp to resolve a divorce case.
- ❖ 20/2/08 AMI representative call on KRC, for discussion on Vacant water sanitation staff replacement.
- ❖ 22/2/08 KRC's First secretary and TBBC, Field coordinator visit having discussions related to Donors access on food distribution and provide necessary suggestion in Mae la camp.
- ❖ 25-28/2/08 KRCs secretary, Health coordinator and CMP team monitored activities in Mae La Mat Luang and Mae La Oon camps.
- ❖ 27/2/08 KRC including six NGOs, ie- COERR, PPAT, HI, AMI and Shanti Volunteer, hold a bi-monthly meeting at KRC office, sharing informations on individual Group activities. Selection of local staffs in camps to be discussed, agreed and approvals, made between all concerned.
- ❖ 29/2/08 Mr. Alex a UNHCR Protection officer call on KRC and discussed close Collaboration among related organizations.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS February, 2008.

MAE SOT AREA	CAMP	No. of families	Over - 12 Yrs		6 - 12 Yrs		Under 5 Yrs		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
	Mae La	9,176	15,058	14,546	4,855	4,486	3,526	3,374	45,845
	Um Pheim Mai	4,868	7,936	7,563	2,058	1,875	1,788	1,587	22,807
	Total	14,044	22,994	22,109	6,913	6,361	5,314	4,961	68,652
NORTH	Mae Ra Moe	1,805	3,226	2,986	947	880	680	669	9,388
	Mae La Oo	2,331	4,114	3,898	1,450	1,282	869	816	12,429
	Total	4,136	7,340	6,884	2,397	2,162	1,549	1,485	21,817
SOUTH	Noh Poe	3,949	6,468	5,850	1,681	1,596	1,332	1,353	18,280
	Ban Dong Yang	858	1,434	1,489	383	388	311	311	4,316
	Htam Him	1,173	2,128	2,196	346	340	407	363	5,780
	Total	5,980	10,030	9,535	2,410	2,324	2,050	2,027	28,376
	Grand Total	24,160	40,364	38,528	11,720	10,847	8,913	8,473	118,845

We shall always be grateful to the Thai people and Government for their sympathy and understanding in allowing us safe refuge.

We are also indebted to the NGOs for their Supports and Services.

TBBC – Support in Food and Shelter Material. TBBC is also supporting with warm clothing for all the camps. TBBC is Supporting with Camps Management program to help with Administration, Management Stability improvements in all (7) Camps.

MSF – Support in Medical and Health facilities.

AMI – Support in Medical and Health facilities.

ARC – Support in Medical and Health facilities.

M.I (Malteser International) formerly MHD – Support in Medical and Health facilities.

ZOA (ABW aid) – Support in Educational facilities Teachers' Training.

World Education / Consortium – Support in Educational facilities, Teachers' Training and Education for Deaf / Mute / Blinds.

TOPS – Support in Educational facilities Nurseries.

ICS – Asia – Support in Educational facilities and school buildings.

COERR – Rice and Educational support. **EVI** – To be involved with Extremely Vulnerable people, care and support.

H.I – Support for Refugee Handicaps with Prosthesis and rehabilitation and also year – end sporting events for Handicaps.

NCA – (Norway Church Aid) has been providing **KRC** with administrative & organizational Support.

It has also supported with remuneration for **KRC** members and workers.

UNHCR – For Registration Process Protection and Ultimate Safe Repatriation. Now helping with Resettlement.

SMRU – Support with Malaria Control, Prevention and Treatment.

SVA – To support with Libraries in the camps.

PPAT – Parenthood Planning Association Thailand – Supporting with Family Planning and Preventive/ Education in Refugee Camps.

Address: P.O Box- 5, Mae Sot, Tak-63110, Thailand.

E- Mail: krc.academic@gmail.com.

Ø (055) Intl: +66 55 532 947.

Fax: (055) Intl: +66 55 546 869

Mobile: +66 878 498 250