



**កម្ពុជា អភិវឌ្ឍន៍ និង
ការងារ
បណ្តុះបណ្តាល និង
ការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍**

MON RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

APRIL

2003

Aim and Objectives of Mon Relief and Development Committee

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Aim:

Provide temporary shelters, basic needs and development assistance to refugees and the displaced persons who become homeless and helpless situation due to the oppression of Rangoon military regimes in Mon territory along Thailand-Burma border.

Objectives:

1. To help the welfares of the refugees in border areas and IDPs who are displaced inside the country, with foods, shelter and possible protection.
2. To coordinate with local Mon people in developing the grassroots community in the fields of health, education, literacy, agriculture and other rural development projects.
3. To empower the local community for the participation of decision making processes for their own lives and communities.
4. To struggle for the human rights.

The Organization of Mon Relief and Development Committee

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Nai Wongsala Pala | - Chairman |
| 2. Nai Kasau Mon | - General Secretary |
| 3. Nai Dung Htaw | - Member |
| 4. Phra Htaw Son | - Member |
| 5. Nai Glae | - Member |
| 6. Nai Chit Nyunt | - Member |
| 7. Nai Tay Jae | - Member |
| 8. Nai Jon Dae | - Member |
| 9. Nai Chan Done | - Member |

Monthly Report of Mon Relief and Development Committee (April 2003)

Meaning of assistance to Mon returned refugees

Even after 7 years of spontaneous repatriation after NMSP-SPDC ceasefire in 1995, the returned Mon refugees still on the half way of repatriation and resettled voluntarily in NMSP controlled area, in where the geographical situation is much different in their native villages or the original places they fled from.

There are mixtures of the refugees who fled to the border areas over 20 years ago and who just arrived to the Mon refugee resettlement sites just recently. However, all of them had to flee because of the systematic persecution by the Burmese Army and the government authorities. The condition of the refugee flux always related to the civil war in the country, racial discrimination and gross human rights violations in the country.

The refugees want to return their homes only under the condition of 'dignity'. When they were at the home villages or native places, they have their own lands, houses, business and occupations and other properties. They want to return homes peacefully, in human dignity, without fear of any oppression. To return their homes with dignity and proper arrangement, there must be peace in Burma.

In the current situation, the Mon returned refugees who have remained in the Mon resettlement sites, still face lack of the condition to return their homes safely and in dignity. Most refugees who fled from their native homes since about 20 years or between 10-20 years lost their properties at their homes by somehow. If they returned homes now, they could not have any lands and properties at their homes.

The situation of the returned refugees have not much differed from the refugees in the camps in Thailand except they get access to the limited agriculture lands and some small livelihood. Therefore, the returned Mon refugees are still remaining the needy people among many thousands of displaced people from Burma.

MRDC has taken care for the group of these returned refugees to not face food-shortage problems and ensure for the nutrition of them. Based on the humanitarian principle, MRDC has conducted needs assessment for these refugees every year to know their ability how they could support themselves; and presented the findings to the donor agencies how the conditions of the refugees, what the estimation of their needs and why they need.

Last year, among the returned refugees in three sites, the refugees in Halockhani resettlement site faced the most difficult situation due to the armed fighting in their areas. Although the refugees in other two sites: Bee Ree and Tavoy resettlement sites did not face any harmful situation of armed conflict, but they could not produce sufficient foods for the whole population. When MRDC requested food assistance from donor agencies, they have agreed to provide rice for 66% of the total need of Halockhani refugees, and 33% of the total need of Bee Ree and Tavoy resettlement sites' refugees.

In the consideration for assistance to these refugees, the donor agencies also tried to estimate how much the returned refugees could produce their own food supplies and how much income they could raise from various types of livelihood. Traditionally, the Mon people are familiar with lowland crop cultivation and they could not produce much crops in the mountainous areas as they did in the lowland paddy farms.

Since late 2002, BBC (Burmese Border Consortium) and MRDC has arranged sending in of rice supplies to those resettlement sites. Transportation of sending in supplies into Bee

Ree and Tavoy resettlement sites is more difficult than Halockhani areas because these two areas are far from the main border points, but it does not mean these sites are deep far from the border.

As all sites are inaccessible during the rainy season, MRDC arranged to send in all supplies during dry season (in the period from January to May) and stocked the supplies in the stores set in the resettlement sites. The assistance remained only 33% of the total needs of rice in Bee Ree and Tavoy resettlement sites and so MRDC did not have to set large stores to keep rice. However, MRDC has managed to have enough rooms in Halockhani resettlement site.

In the Mon resettlement sites, they are also inaccessible from the international NGOs to provide various types of service they needed in the site. They have provided just limited amount of food supplies. If compared with the local Mon communities in Mon State, the conditions of the returned refugees do not become as normal village community or they are still likely in the camps. Because of inaccessible service from the international NGOs, they are not well treated as refugees in camp. However for their survival and nutrition, they still require food assistance besides the food they could produce.

IDPs issue in Burma is a cruel humanitarian crisis

'Humanitarian crisis' has been a popular word for some international organizations with intentions to help the general needy people in Burma, who receive low health care service and sanitation, pure water, low education, employment and suffering of HIV/AIDS. It is true that there are many problems in Burma and but they are not occurring automatically or because of the national disasters and lack of national resources. Most problems or humanitarian crisis are created by the successive ruling regimes in Rangoon.

Similarly, the problems of Internally Displacement and IDPs are also created by Burmese Army's commanders and soldiers of many army battalions, which operates military offensives against the ethnic armed group along the border area.

These IDPs have been suffered double or triple or many times if compared with the normal civilians in rural villages, in cities or in towns in various parts of Burma who are in need of education, pure water and better health care. Since many years of civil war in Burma, they have never received any possible health care and education like the people in towns or in the rural villages under the control of the government. They are treated inhumanely by the troops of Burmese Army who reached into their areas.

No international NGOs get access into their areas to help them who are greatly suffered. The current INGOs in Burma just base in the areas where the regime has firm control and they could not get access only in the limited areas permitted by the SPDC authorities or commanders of Burmese Army. Among them, ICRC could get more access into conflict area under the close watch by the authorities, army and military intelligence in Burma.

The suffering of the IDPs is cruel. This suffering has been protracted. Their homes and their villages are destroyed and their properties are looted. They do not know how to receive pure water and sanitation. They hide in the jungles of Karen State, Kayah (Karenni) State, some parts of Mon State, various parts Tenasserim Division and southern part of Shan State. In jungles, they again suffered by malaria, malnutrition, diarrhea and other diseases. The number of IDPs could probably reaches to one million in the whole Burma.

Additionally, the young daughters of their beloved and the wives are gang raped by the members of Burmese Army, including the commanders. Burmese Army is using rape to win war on the ethnic armed force accordingly the recent reports of 'Licensed to Rape' and Refugee International's 'No Safe Place': Burma's Army and the rape of the ethnic women. They are not only suffering from food-shortage problems due to displacement, but they are also suffered from various human rights violations committed by the Burmese Army.

Except the ethnic humanitarian organizations, no organization are accessible to the displaced persons' areas and helped them with emergency need. If compared with the civilians in cities and towns, they are the most suffering group of people in Burma and the most needy people. Some international organizations, but not all, want to ignore with this issue and try to engage with the regime to provide humanitarian assistance to less needy people under the firm control of the regime and legitimize the rule of the army. They are also ignoring the democratically elected people representatives in 1990 elections to consult with and include their advice in helping the most needy people.

By the way, the IDPs issue is the cruel humanitarian crisis in Burma and it seriously needs the help of the international community to consider for humanitarian assistance to those needy people and to stop their severe and protracted suffering, because they are humans. Their suffering is not much different from the Kurd ethnic people in the recent Iraq; ethnic Kosovans under the ethnic cleansing program of Serb Army in Kosovo; and East Timorese people under the oppression of Indonesian army before their Independence.

The international community must need to keep putting pressure to the Burma's regime for the genuine ceasefire in the whole country to reduce the suffering of IDPs in various parts of Burma. Then the international humanitarian agencies must get access to help those needy people.

THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF THE THREE RESETTLEMENT SITES
(April, 2003)

No.	Camp	Number of Family	Over 12 years		5-12 years		Under 5 years		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
1	Bee Ree	668	1196	1300	409	415	168	197	3685
2	Tavoy	620	1045	1042	398	396	189	191	3261
3	Halockhani	922	1578	1647	477	491	271	315	4779
	TOTAL	2210	3819	3989	1284	1302	628	703	11725

THE MATERIALS RECEIVED
BY THE MON RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
(April, 2003)

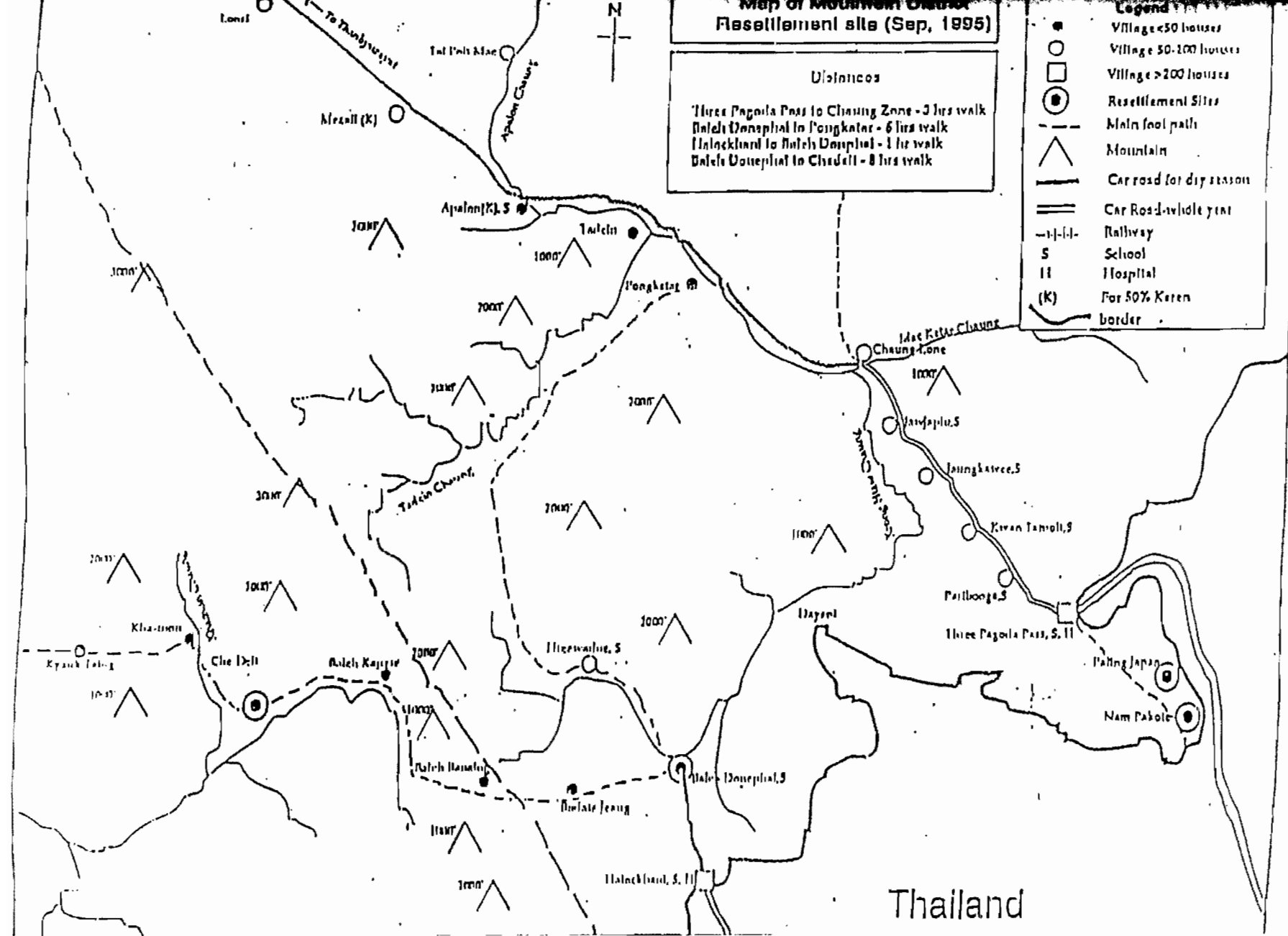
No	Organization	Rice (Bag/ 50 kg.)	Fish Paste (kg.)	Salt (kg.)	Bean (Kg.)	Remark
		5150	-	-		
	TOTAL	5150	-	-		

Map of Mountain District Resettlement site (Sep, 1995)

Distances

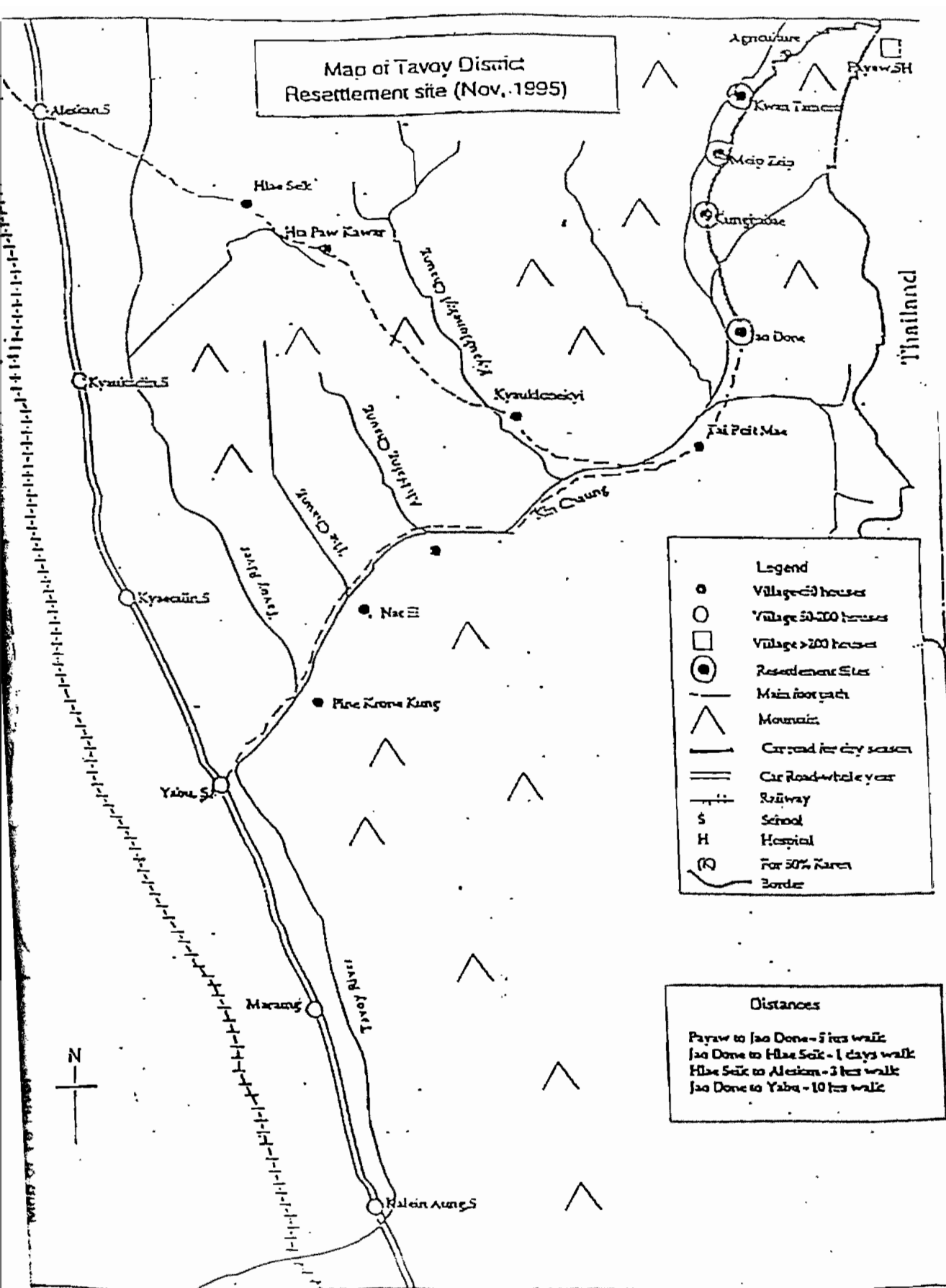
Three Pagoda Pass to Chasing Zone - 3 hrs walk
 Naleh Deneplai to Pongkatag - 6 hrs walk
 Hloeklaid to Naleh Deneplai - 1 hr walk
 Naleh Deneplai to Chedell - 8 hrs walk

- ### Legend
- Village < 50 houses
 - Village 50-200 houses
 - Village > 200 houses
 - ⊙ Resettlement Sites
 - Main foot path
 - △ Mountain
 - - - Car road for dry season
 - == Car Road - all year
 - | -| -| Railway
 - S School
 - H Hospital
 - (K) For 50% Karen border



Thailand

Map of Tavoy District Resettlement site (Nov., 1995)



Map of Ye Hlwar Resettlement site (Nov, 1995)

