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ကော်မတီ
ပရဟိတသမဂ္ဂအဖွဲ့အစည်းများ၏
လုပ်ငန်း

MON RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

OCTOBER

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 (October 2003)

Agriculture and Livelihood in Resettlement Sites

Like previous years, some refugee families in Mon resettlement sites: Tavoy; Bee Ree and Halockhani, try to grow paddy to get some rice products in hilly areas. The traditional low-land Mon farmers in the resettlement sites have tried to produce paddy as much as possible.

Agriculture lands in the mountainous areas is very limited. In the 'slash and burnt' method of paddy cultivation in the mountainous, the farmers have to abandon one space of mountain slope or a hill in every three years, because they could not fertile soil from the lands. As they have to shift the farms from one place to another, at the end, they could not find lands that close to their sites or village sections.

Even they could grow paddy after three years of cultivation, however the crop product is not good. A lot of grasses are getting taller than the paddy plants that make the farmers hard to clear all of these unnecessary grasses in their farms. At the end, the farmers had to abandon their farms that close to their campsite but could not find new farms in the new places where they have to work for many hours and the security condition is not so good.

Those resettlement sites are in the ceasefire zones controlled by New Mon State Party, which agreed ceasefire with the regime in mid-1995. But the areas outside of these resettlement sites are still in conflict zones and the fighting is in the on-going situation in there. Therefore, the farmers from resettlement site cannot go very far from their sites and some farmers had to abandon high land paddy cultivation.

In 2003 paddy-growing year, only 25% of the total families in Tavoy resettlement site have paddy-growing farms, while many farmers could not find new farms that are far from the site, because the security condition in the surrounding area is not good. About 30% of total families in Bee Ree resettlement site have paddy-growing farm in the surrounding area and some farmers abandoned their farms that close to the site after they could not produce crops. Only 20% of the total families in Halockhani resettlement site have paddy-growing farms and most families do not have lands because the area has a very steep mountains in the surrounding.

The farmers said that there is small amount of rain in this rainy season and their paddy plants do not get available water to absorb. Some paddy plants have not grown well and could not produce good grains. In some places, the land soil became unnecessary to keep water and grounds drought.

Paddy grains are eaten by the groups of small birds is another problems added by the local farmers. Before the harvest, the group of birds with thousands in number come to the farms and eat paddy grains as much as possible and fly away. It is not easy for farmers to catch these birds. If the farmers are in the farms, they could drive them out quickly. If not the birds can eat as they liked.

Wild animals attack especially by pigs and monkeys are another problem explained by farmers. Those animals do not eat the paddy grains, but they destroyed some parts of plants when they get into the farms. The farmers tried to catch, but it is also difficult. Those animals also come by group and destroyed some parts of paddy farms and then leave away. If they came as group three times or four times, the whole farm would be destroyed.

One type of small insect attacks is dangerous and the paddy plants have slowly drought and at the end, it became as hay. The small insects go inside of the plants and eat the poles of plants. Then the plants became drought and fall down onto ground. Those paddy plants could not produce any crops.

Currently, as the harvest season is not arrived yet, MRDC could not estimate the amount of paddy that could be produced in each resettlement site. Anyhow, the produced amount of

paddy provides less than three months food for the whole population and the families in these sites always tried to find another livelihood for survival.

In this rainy season, the refugees in Halockhani resettlement site has totally lost their seasonal work of selling bamboo shoots to Thai traders. Thai forestry department closed this business and no one in the site cut the bamboo shoot for sale. No trader has not come and bought the bamboo shoots. The refugees lost a lot of income. However, as they received 66% of the food of the total needs, food scarcity is not so worth like last year.

In Bee Ree resettlement site, the refugees could involve in small business of cutting bamboo and logging. The men cut a lot of bamboo and sell to the traders from Ye Town, in southern part of Mon State, for their income during rainy season. They built bamboo rafts and sent these bamboo to Ye Town. Small logging concession in the area is done by local businessmen from Ye Township area and the men can involve as day-labourer.

In Tavoy resettlement site, the refugees have no any works in rainy season to earn some income. Only about 10 men get works in a small logging business which is done by a Tavoyan businessman. Both men and women in the communities did not have any work.

The refugees are possible growing vegetables in their house surrounding or gardens. The farmers also grow chilli, casava and sesame in farms just for their homes use. Development fund also help the refugees to grow more crop trees for long-term plan of earning regular income. But many of them still dared to create fruit or rubber plantations, because they do not trust the ceasefire situation. Their complaint is that if the ceasefire is collapsed they would lose all their lands and houses, and additionally, they did not know where they would have to flee.

The required food assistance for 2004 for all resettlement sites is much dependent on the combination of paddy crop production and the livelihood of the refugees.

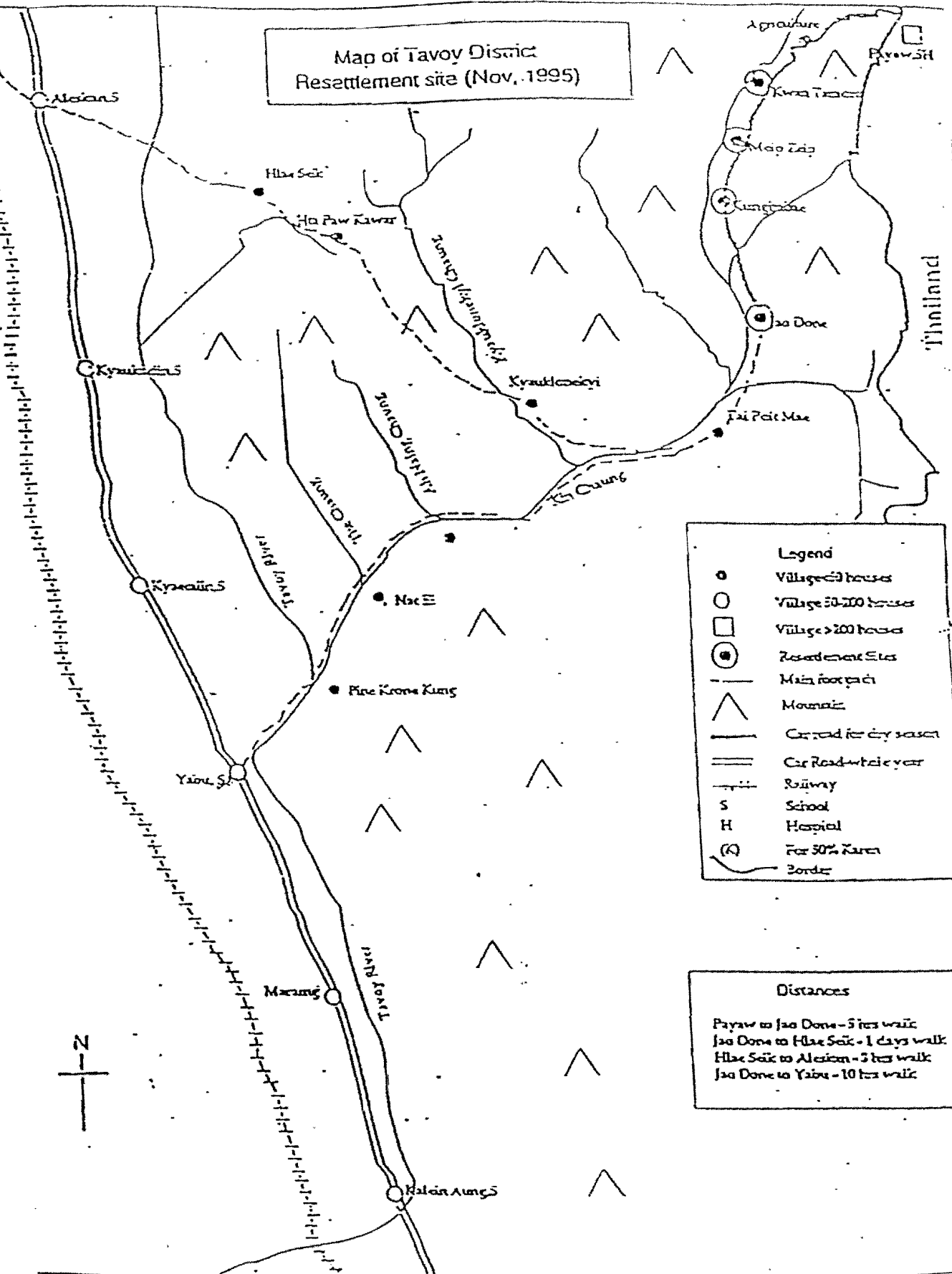
THE REFUGEE POPULATION OF THE THREE RESETTLEMENT SITES
(October, 2003)

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	945	1509	1457	920	781	275	341	5283
	TOTAL	2233	3750	3799	1727	1592	632	729	11821

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

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

Map of Tavoy District Resettlement site (Nov. 1995)



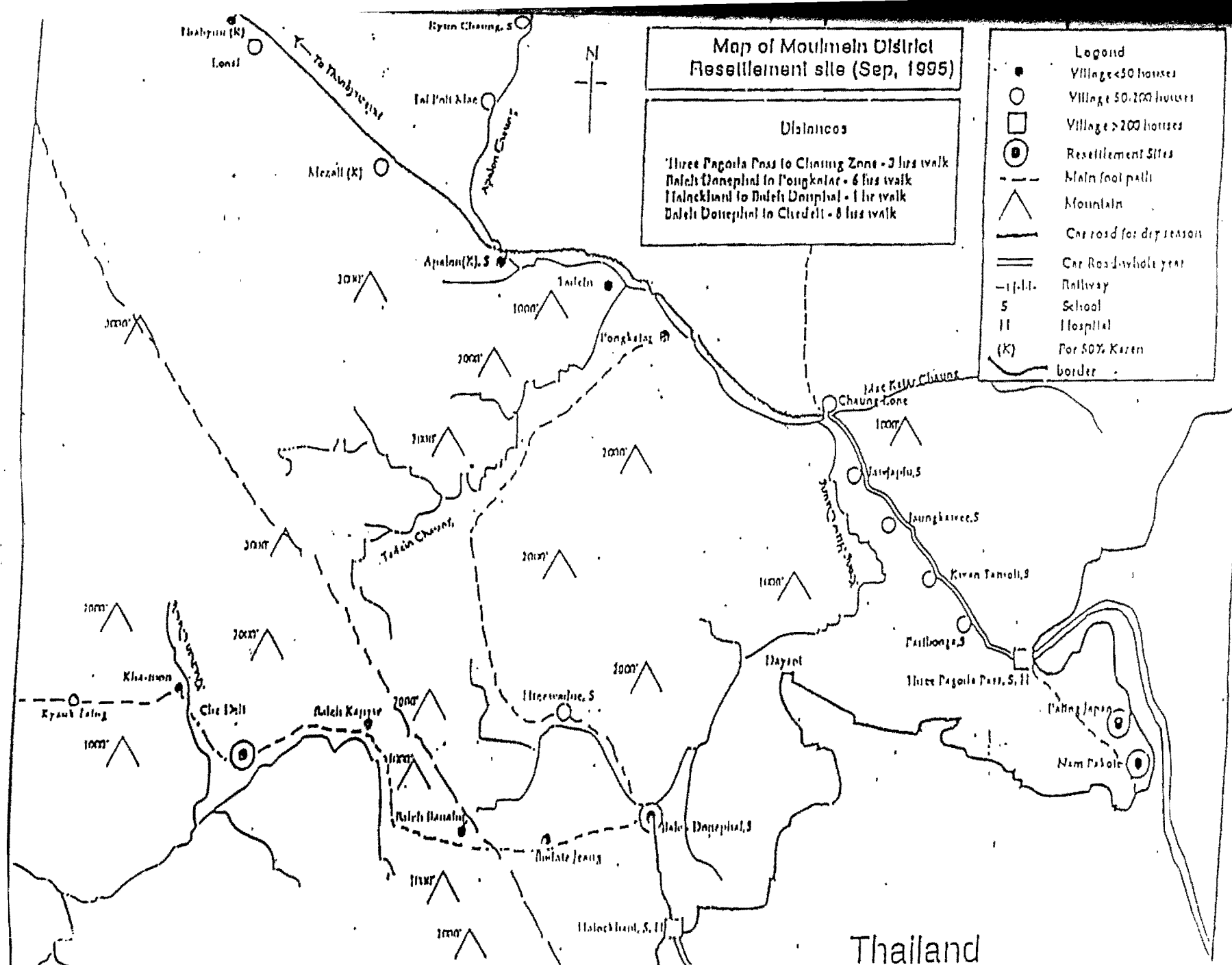
Map of Moulemein District Resettlement site (Sep, 1995)

Distances

Three Pagoda Pass to Chining Zone - 3 hrs walk
 Bulei Dorephat to Pongkalar - 6 hrs walk
 Halackland to Bulei Dorephat - 1 hr walk
 Bulei Dorephat to Chedelt - 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 - whole year
- +|-+|-+ Railway
- S School
- H Hospital
- (K) For 50% Karen
- ~ border



Thailand

