

8. Torture, and other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment and Punishment

SLORC tactics of deterrence, including torture and other cruel and degrading treatment, are widespread. At least six departments of the SLORC security forces have been implicated in torture and ill-treatment by former detainees, including political prisoners. The six departments are as follows: 1) SLORC's army or Pyithu Tatmadaw (People's Defense Forces); 2) the People's Police Forces; 3) the Directorate of Defense Services Intelligence (DDSI); 4) the Special Investigations Department (SID); 5) the Criminal Investigation Department (CID); and 6) the Bureau of Special Investigations (BSI). The activities of DDSI, SID, CID, and BSI are coordinated by the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB), under the direct control of the SLORC. The DDSI is also commonly known as the MIS or Military Intelligence Service; the MIS is most consistently identified as using torture as part of its interrogations.

Twenty primary detention centers, where brutal interrogation proceedings and other methods of torture take place, have been identified throughout Rangoon and in seven other divisions and states across Burma. The detention centers include the secret DDSI interrogation center at Ye Kyi Aing camp, right outside of Rangoon, and over fourteen other military intelligence centers located in Rangoon.¹

Political opposition activists often endure particularly severe treatment while in detention. These activists must endure both physical and emotional torture during the often prolonged periods of detention following arrest while they are isolated from public scrutiny and protection.

8.1. Torture in Detention

SLORC's use of cruel and unusual torture techniques have been well-documented by survivors of such techniques and human rights groups. SLORC's

1 - These include the following: the DDSI and BSI headquarters; Insein prison and its annex; Yankin township military registration camp; Sanchaung police station; Mingladon DDSI interrogation center; Kyeikkasan old race field; Hmawbe Ye Nyunt training camp (all in Rangoon Division); Bassein township MIS office (Irrawaddy Division); Special Branch II office, Police station No.8 and Mandalay prison (Mandalay Division); Tharawaddy and Pegu township prisons (Pegu Division); Regiment 31 Headquarters, Thanbyuzayat township and Moulmein MIS office (Mon State); Pa-an township MI-5 office (Karen State); Regiment 59 Headquarters, Maw Chee township (Kayah State); Myitkyina central prison, No.8 (Northern Command) army headquarters; and Special Branch II office (Kachin State).

methods of torture include beatings rigorous enough to cause permanent injury; shackling of the legs or arms, both in prison cells and in work camps; burning victims with cigarettes; applying electric shocks to the victim's genitals, finger tips, toes, ear lobes, and elsewhere; suffocation; stabbing; rubbing of salt and chemicals in open wounds; forcing victims to stand in unusual and uncomfortable positions for extended periods of time, including "riding the motorcycle," which entails standing with arms outstretched and legs bent and the "helicopter" in which the victim is suspended by the wrists or feet from a ceiling fixture and then spun around; deprivation of light and sleep; denial of medicine, food, exercise, and water for washing; employing the "iron road" in which iron or bamboo rods are rolled up and down the shins until the skin is lacerated; ordering solitary confinement with extremely small and unsanitary cells for prolonged periods; and using psychological torture, including threats of death.

Prison punishment is often very similar to the cruel treatment endured during an interrogation period. Prisoners are severely beaten, placed in solitary confinement, transferred to other cell-blocks, and denied contact with the outside world. Political prisoners are often sent to police dog cells, intended for dogs, where they are subjected to beatings and placed in leg-irons made of chains or of an iron rod thrust between the feet.

8.1.1. Solitary Confinement

An iron rod, about 1½ to 2 feet long is often placed horizontally between the shackled legs of prisoners in solitary confinement, forcing them to stand or lay with their legs astride. Prisoners are locked in tiny cells during their confinement. Normally, small chamber pots are placed in each cell. The pots are never emptied, so the smell becomes unbearable and the cell damp and wet. In the worst case of solitary confinement, prisoners are forced to stand with both arms tied above their head; they are forced to urinate and defecate while standing. Small daily food rations of soup made from rice, are slid through the iron bars from outside of the cell. No blankets or mats are provided; prisoners are forced to sleep on the concrete floor. Most days, prisoners are taken out of the cell, forced to stand in the standard position, with their legs splayed apart, and beaten. Solitary confinement usually lasts for at least one month and may continue for up to three months. In some cases, political prisoners are forced to remain in solitary confinement indefinitely.

8.1.2. Beatings

The SLORC uses many forms of beatings to intimidate and torture prisoners and detainees. Soldiers use typical as well as unusual implements to beat their victims, including their fists, combat boots, rifle butts, leather-coated pipes, wooden sticks, sticks made from three interlaced pieces of cane, solid bamboo sticks, about 3 to 4 feet in length, and hard plastic water pipes. Victims often sustain serious permanent injuries including paralysis and even death.

SLORC beatings are designed to physically harm and to humiliate their victims. The following are a few of the typical types of beatings: the prisoner is beaten while he/she stands and embraces a post and both hands are held firmly by another person; the prisoner is beaten while laying prone on the ground; the prisoner is beaten while being forced to stand with both legs chained; the prisoner is beaten while being forced to crawl along the ground; the prisoner is shackled, a long iron bar is placed in between their legs, and they are forced to crawl while being beaten; prisoners are beaten while being forced to do continuous squat-jumps. Authorities do not hold back during these beatings; they strike victims in the face, chest, abdomen, and back; they also jump on the backs of prisoners while they are being forced to crawl on the ground. Prisoners are routinely seriously wounded; they suffer severe internal bleeding, fractured skulls, broken bones, and paralysis.

SLORC uses various methods of psychological torture along with their beatings. For example, a SLORC officer might hit his victim if he is afraid and force the prisoner to reply in a demeaning manner. The prisoner is forced to reply: "I am afraid of you, *'shint.*" *'Shint'* is a Burmese suffix used for politeness by females; the term is not meant to be used by men. When a prison officer asks, "What is your name?" a prisoner must reply, "My name is "Ma" [name], *shint.*" Ma is a Burmese prefix for the names of younger women; it never used by men. The use of these terms is meant to degrade the prisoners. Some prisoners, infuriated by what they are being forced to do, refuse to answer the officers in that way; they are severely beaten by the officers until they comply with the orders. Some prisoners are beaten until they fall unconscious, when they awake, they are beaten again. They have been reports that some prisoners, who can no longer stand the torture, knock their heads against the stone wall to fracture their skulls and render themselves unconscious. When prisoners sustain fractured skulls or severe bleeding from the head, they are finally sent to the hospital. However, once at the hospital, the prisoners still do not receive adequate medical attention. If they cry out in pain, they are often beaten for being noisy. Prison officers are not charged with any crime in these cases, even if a prisoner suffers permanent paralysis or gangrene; the SLORC authorities protect their

security forces at all costs. (*Source: ABSDF*)

8.2. Ill-treatment during Forced Portering and Labor

Local civilians are arbitrarily seized by the military and forced to serve as porters during military offensives lugging heavy army equipment and supplies; porters have been held in army custody for periods between a few days to a month or more. Porters who have managed to escape have given consistent and horrific accounts of extrajudicial executions, beatings, and lack of food and medicine. When porters become exhausted from being overworked, underfed, and sometimes beaten, they are subjected to torture and sometimes beaten to death and left in the jungle. Female porters, mostly ethnic women living in combat areas, are subjected to gang rapes and other sexual crimes.

8.2.1. Other Ill-treatment During Forced Labor

The use of forced labor on SLORC's infrastructure projects is widespread across Burma. During the past eight years SLORC has increasingly forced hundreds of thousands civilian laborers to build railway lines, airports, dams, quarries, and roads without compensation. Conditions at work sites are often harsh, in many cases soldiers use inhuman and degrading treatment to keep laborers working; forced laborers are often shackled in chains and receive inadequate food and medicine.

8.2.2. Ill-treatment in the Ethnic Areas

Ethnic people living in areas of counter-insurgency operations are subjected to harassment, abuse, and ethnic persecution by SLORC troops. Troops systematically force nearby civilian villagers to relocate in order to deprive ethnic armed forces of potential logistical support. Civilians found in their villages after relocation deadlines are shot on sight. Moreover, civilians are routinely tortured by SLORC troops for allegedly having contact with ethnic armed groups or for being "sympathizers."

8.3. List of Incidents

8.3.1. On February 2, 1996, Captain Aung Kyaw Htoo, IB. 60, arrested and

- tortured the following villagers: Saw Kalu and Saw Tin Htwe from Pallsi village; Maung Kauk Kway from Htwar No Gon village; Saw Bo Sein from Ye Twin Gon village; Saw Sein Sein and Saw Du Ree from Ye Le village; and Maung Pe and Phar Shwe He from Thay Maw village, Nyaunglaybin district. Shortly thereafter, Saw Kalu, Maung Kauk Kway, Saw Bo Sein and Saw Sein Sein were killed by the troops. (*Source: KHRG*)
- 8.3.2.** On February 17, 1996, IB 24 company commander Than Shwe severely beat villager Saw Han Yin, a thirty-five year-old man from Theh Ko village, Thaton district. (*Source: KHRG*)
- 8.3.3.** On March 29, 1996 SLORC Division Commander Ae Rei, Lieutenant-Corporal Khin Nyunt, Corporal Tin Thaung, LIB 101, Division 77 and DKBA members Than Sein, Saw Father, and Kyaw Hla Sein arrested villagers from Mi Chaung Ai in Thaton district. The troops arrested and tortured Saw Aung Kyi, age 45 and Saw Ba Tin, age 25. Saw Aung Kyi was severely beaten and he was stabbed in the mouth with a knife. Saw Ba Tin was also tortured and was eventually choked to death. (*Source: KHRG*)
- 8.3.4.** On April 8, 1996, a group of soldiers led by Division Commander Myint Soe, IB 549, entered Naw Law poli village, Htee Tha Saw village tract and severely beat two village headmen, Senel Garal and Naw Kar la. The troops also slaughtered one pig and four chickens and stole four buffaloes from the village. (*Source: KHRG*)
- 8.3.5.** On April 11, 1996, Kyi Sein, Commanding Officer Company 1, Column 2, IB 51, slapped Ma Khin Lay, a 43 year-old woman from Ee Su Kee village, Thaton district and threatened her with his pistol. Another villager, Ma Htoo, a thirty-year-old woman and her child were tied hanging upside down; SLORC soldiers then burned their faces with fire. Ma Thet, a 24 year-old woman, (father's name U Maung Aye) and her child were also tied upside down; they were also severely tortured, including having their faces burned with fire. The SLORC soldiers never accused the women of anything; no reason was given for the torture. (*Source: KHRG*)
- 8.3.6.** On April 18, 1996, LIB 549 Company 4 Commander Myint Soe traveled to Naw Law Paw Leh village, Leik Tho township. He arrested and tortured the village headman and two village secretaries. He stole a pig, four chickens, and a buffalo from the villagers. (*Source: KHRG*)
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- 8.3.7.** On April 23, 1996, SLORC Strategic Commander Major Aung Naing Htun threatened Baw Gali villagers that he would kill anyone he did not like. He tortured village headman Saw Maung Kaw and villagers Maung Kawai and Saw Kar Day Pho. (*Source: KHRG*)
- 8.3.8.** On May 5, 1996, a combined column of LIB 344 and LIB 439 led by Maung Maung Soe, traveled to Ta Yeh Blo village, Taungoo district. The troops captured three villagers, Saw Ah Lo Kee, a 20 year-old man, Naw Win Kyi, a 25 year-old woman, and Naw Ra Sheh Lo, a 20 year-old woman. Saw Ah Lo Kee was executed and the other two women were severely tortured, including being beaten and having boiling water poured on their bodies. The troops then stole rice from the village. (*Source: KHRG*)
- 8.3.9.** On May 19, 1996, one column of IB 234 troops entered Ko Tha Kyaung village, Tee Loh area, Karen State. The troops arrested two men, Aung Thaynown and K'Lah. They tortured the two men before taking them along with the column as porters. (*Source: KHRG*)
- 8.3.10.** On May 25, 1996, a military column from IB 234 entered Hu Mu Der village, Karen State. The troops captured villager Saw Po Keh and beat and tortured him. (*Source: KHRG*)
- 8.3.11.** On June 1, 1996, Division commander Pan Zan from IB 234 arrested Sa The Mu and Saw Na Klo from Tamulo village in Nyaunglaybin district and brutally beat them for no reason. (*Source: KHRG*)
- 8.3.12.** On October 13, 1996, SLORC troops from No. 66 and No. 515 ransacked the village of Phak Phaet, Wan Zarm tract, Murngkerng township; they looted all of the houses in the village. Nang Oo, a 28 year-old woman, begged them not to pillage her house, instead, the troops severely beat her in the head with their rifle butts. They stole her bed, blankets, clothes, shoes, and cooking oil. (*Source: SHRF*)
- 8.3.13.** On October 26, 1996, SLORC troops No. 66, Laikha, seized a 20 year-old male villager named Zai Long at Kung Mark Ki Nu village, Murng Khun village tract, Murngkerng township. The troops tied both his hands to a yoke and forced him to carry their supplies for 14 days, untying his hands only when they gave him a meager food ration. After 14 days, Zai Long became too weak to bear the weight of his load; he begged the soldiers to release him. They beat him and left him bleeding in the forest. Zai Long managed to get back to his village where he

was sent to the hospital. (*Source: SHRF*)

- 8.3.14.** On February 27, 1997, SLORC's IB 51 entered Toe Teh Kee village. The troops summoned all the villagers and ordered them not to leave the village. They arrested men and women villagers, beat them, poured boiling water on them and immersed them in water for no apparent reason. (*Source: KIC*)
- 8.3.15.** On May 2, 1997, Intelligence Officer Captain Tin Ngwe from LIB 230 arrested Saw Maung Kyaw, a 38 year-old man from Mayangone village, Thaton district. The SLORC officer beat the man and left him seriously injured. No explanation was given for the attack. (*Source: KIC*)
- 8.3.16.** On May 3, 1997, Captain Tin Ngwe arrested U Par Kya, a 40 year-old man from Mi Chaung Ain village. The SLORC Captain took the prisoner to see Major Thet Tin Win at Naunggadoke camp. At about 5p.m., Major Thet Tin Win took U Par Kya and villagers from Mi Chaung Ain to the cemetery and forced them dig a large pit in the ground. U Par Kya was forced to lie down in the pit and was shot dead in front of the other villagers. Next, Major Thet Tin Win stabbed with a knife U Par Kyi, a 50 year-old man and U Par Leh, a 40 year-old man, both from Naunggadoke village. The Major dragged the two into the village and summoned the villagers to look at the two. (*Source: KIC*)

(See also under "Personal Accounts," interviews 1,3, 8, 9, 10, 20, 22, 23 25, 27, 46-50, 53, 61, 62, 74, 77, 80, 81, 82, and 84)

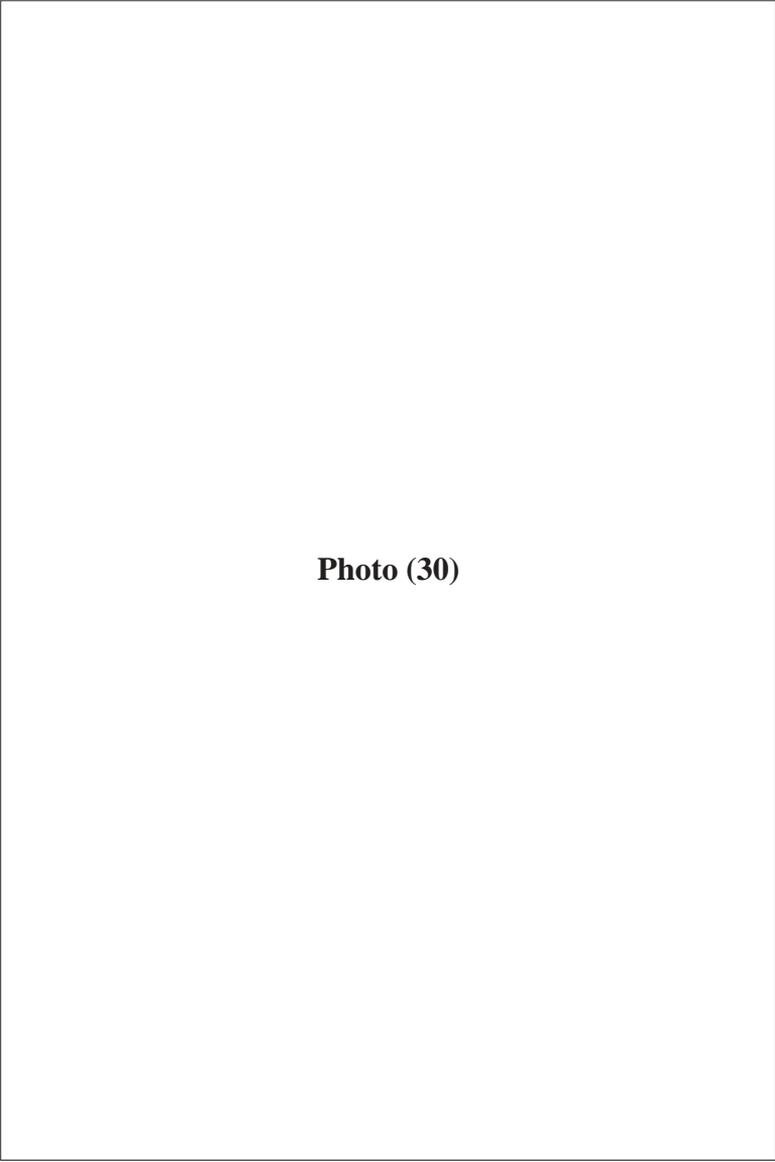
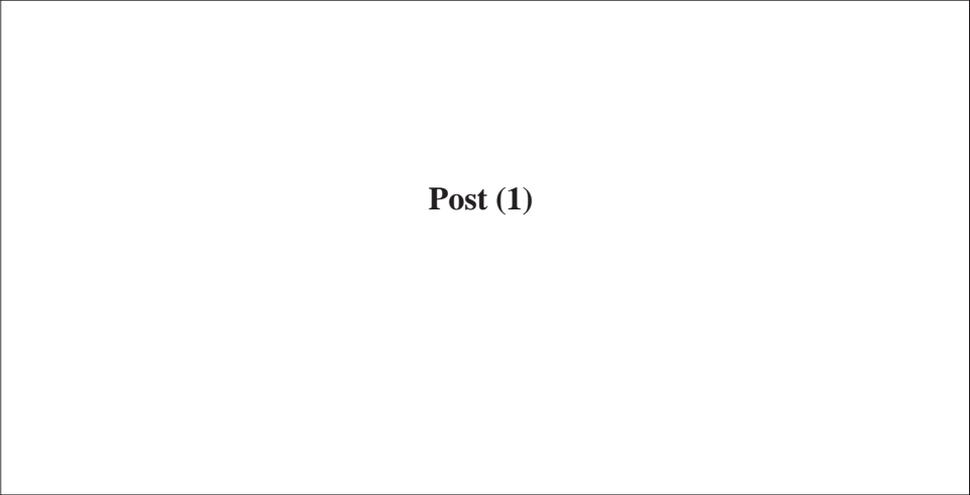


Photo (30)

(Photo by Burma Initiative)

A 24-year-old porter from Thayet Chaung township, Tenasserim Division, showing scars he received after carrying SLORC's 120 mm mortar shells for several weeks. His group of over 70 porters included 11 women and one 75-year-old man. SLORC rounded up thousands of civilians for its offensive against the KNU.



Post (1)

Position (1)

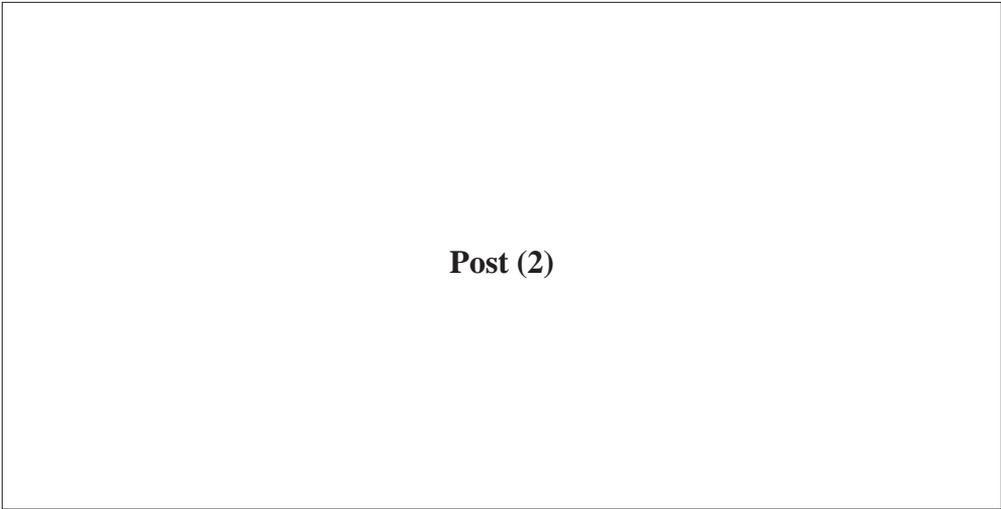
SLORC prison officials have a series of “positions” that prisoners must take at different times during their detention. This position is for counting the prisoners and for inspection of prisoners.



Post (3)

Position (3)

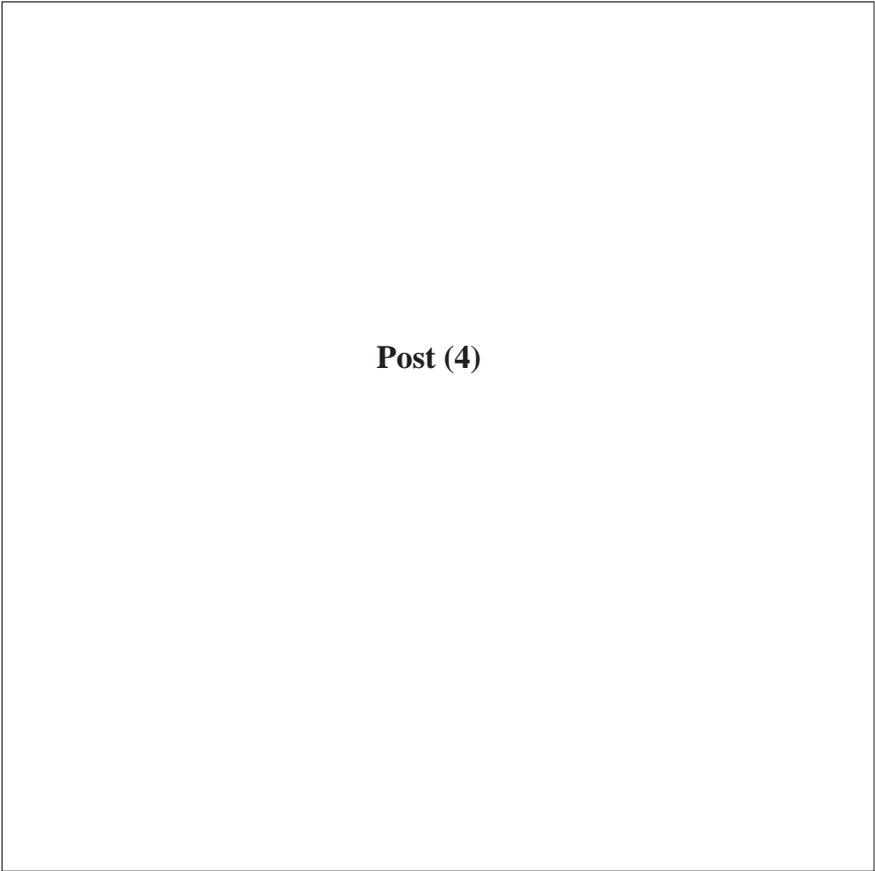
This position is for walking by and standing in front of the prison officials.



Post (2)

Position (2)

This position is an emergency position used when prison officials pass by.



Post (4)

Position (4)

This position is used during punishment. The prisoners are always beaten and kicked while in this position.

9. Freedom of Belief and Religious Discrimination

9.1. Background

Since its inception in 1988, the military regime in Burma, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), has tried to present itself as the preserver and protector of Burmese culture, including Buddhism. The regime's propaganda, laws, and actions, however, make a cruel mockery of its pious facade.

On August 8, 1990, in commemoration of the second anniversary of the democracy uprising, more than 7,000 monks and novices walked through the streets of Mandalay, solemnly and peacefully accepting alms from the people. Soldiers confronted the monks and opened fire, killing two monks and two students and wounding seventeen others. One novice monk disappeared. Following this massacre, the Monks' Union Sangha Sammagi of Mandalay, led by Ven. U Yewata, declared "pattam nikkujjana kamma" (overturning the bowl) against the military. This refusal to accept alms is used as a rebuke to laypeople. According to Vinaya, the rules of conduct for Theravada Buddhist monks, a layperson who has committed any of eight offenses should be ostracized. These eight offenses are: striving for that which is not gained, striving for that which is not a benefit, acting against a monastery, vilifying and making insidious comparisons about monks, inciting dissension among monks, defaming the Buddha, defaming the Dhamma, and defaming the Sangha (the order of monks). If a layman acts in any of these ways, the Sangha believes it should refuse all contact with him.

This powerful religious boycott, which began in Mandalay, spread like wildfire across Burma, causing alarm and trauma to the SLORC. By October 1990, the religious sanctions against military families had reached Rangoon. Throughout the country, monks were refusing alms from military personnel and their families and refusing to attend religious services organized by SLORC. Although the purpose of the boycott was compassionate -- to help the evil doers repent for their deeds, to forsake their wrong ways, and to return to the true path -- the military leaders did not accept the reproach.

SLORC retaliated against the monks' boycott by staging a massive clampdown on the Sangha. Monasteries were surrounded by armed troops with monks were trapped inside. Electricity, water, and communication lines were cut and monks were prevented from going on their daily alms rounds. After maintaining the blockade for one week, armed troops entered monasteries and arrested

the leaders. People living near some of the monasteries were also forced to move and their homes were destroyed. More than 350 monasteries were raided and more than 3,000 monks and novices were arrested. Twenty monasteries were seized and expropriated.

Most monks were accused of possessing anti-SLORC literature, including articles by the NLD, Aung San Suu Kyi's party which won the election in May 1990. Three young monks were arrested for allegedly having written inflammatory poems in their diaries and notebooks. In a crude attempt to smear the Sangha Sammagi movement, some monks were even charged with gambling, illegal possession of jade or heroin, and rape. When General Khin Nyunt, the head of Military Intelligence, explained these arrests on State radio, however, he only accused the Mandalay monks of working with the defunct Communist Party of Burma.

On October 20, 1990, a decree was passed (SLORC Order 6/90) banning all independent Sangha organizations -- historically important agents of political change in Burma. Another decree (SLORC Order 7/90), passed the following day, authorized army commanders to bring monks before military tribunals for "activities inconsistent with and detrimental to Buddhism." These tribunals, whose procedures fall far short of international standards on fair trials, can impose punishments ranging from three years in prison to death.

9.2. Treatment of Buddhist Monks in Detention

The persecution of monks and the desecration of monasteries and pagodas have continued unabated throughout Burma. There have been reliable reports of torture of monks in prison, and those released from prison have reported seeing stacks of hundreds of monks' robes in the prison, clear evidence that many monks are not only being detained, but also disrobed -- an affront to any Buddhist monk.

A former prisoner has described how monks are treated in the notorious Insein Prison, in Rangoon:

It is estimated that there are nearly 200 Buddhist monks in Insein prison alone. The monks have asked to wear robes in prison, but the prison authorities took off their robes and now the monks only wear white prison uniforms. In addition, the monks are not referred to by their monk names, only ordinary names. When the prison authorities call them, they do not use the word U, which is a respectful prefix to a name. The monk Meggin Sayadaw is over 70 years old,

but the warden calls him, “Hey, Shwe Tha Aye” in a very rude way.

Notwithstanding their treatment, all the monks are very patient. They have been staying in prison in accordance with all the traditional principles of a Buddhist monk. They do not eat dinner (Buddhist monks are not allowed to eat after noon) and early morning meals are not provided. This means that they can only eat one meal a day (lunch). No monks in prison are allowed to preach the Buddhist Dhamma and the prisoners are not allowed to pay obeisance (with palms raised together on the forehead) to monks.

9.2.1. Death of Buddhist Monks in Detention

The following Burmese monks died in custody, most of them in the concentration camps where they were sentenced to hard labor since 1988:

- Ven. U Sandawara, Weyanbonthar Monastery, Mandalay, Secretary of the Sangha Samaggi, died in Swunpayabom concentration camp. (*Source: SAIN*)
 - Ven. U Vimala, Masoeyein Monastery, Northern Mandalay, Member of the Sangha Samaggi, died in Sunpayabo concentration camp. (*Source: SAIN*)
 - Ven. U Weyawdana, Hti Lin Monastery, Mandalay, died near Myittkyina in Kachin State. (*Source: SAIN*)
 - Ven. U Okktama, Mandalay, Vice President of the Sangha Samaggi, died in Swunpayabom concentration camp. (*Source: SAIN*)
 - Ven. U Teza from Saku Monastery, died in Mo Koug jail, Kachin State. (*Source: IA*)
 - Ven. U Arthapa from Payagyi, Maha Myatmuni Monastery, Mandalay, died in Mandalay jail. (*Source: IA*)
 - Ven. U Pyin Nyaingda from Payagyi, Maha Myatmuni Monastery, Mandalay, died in Mandalay jail. (*Source: IA*)
 - Ven. U Tiloka from Masoeyein Monastery, Northern Mandalay, died in Par Kant Camp, Mokoung, Kachin State. (*Source: IA*)
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- Ven. U Zawana from Eindawya monastery, Mandalay died in Myitkyina jail, Kachin State. (*Source: IA*)
- Ven. U Pyinya Thiri, Myadaung Monastery, died in Katha jail, Mokaung, Kachin State. (*Source: IA*)
- Ven. U Zawtika from Anauk Htilin Monastery died in Katha jail, Mokaung, Kachin State. (*Source: IA*)
- Ven. U Dhamma Wara Thiri from unknown monastery, died in Par Kant, Mokaung, Kachin State. (*Source: IA*)
- Sayadaw U Tiloka (Abbot) from Shwephonepawint Monastery, Rangoon died in Insein prison. (*Source: IA*)
- Ashin Pyinnya Nanda from Maha Nandi The Na Monastery, Payagyi, Maha Myatmuni died in Myitkyina labor camp. (*Source: IA*)
- Ashin Zawana from Nanda from Maha Nandi The Na Monastery, Payagyi, Maha Myatmuni died in Myitkyina labor camp. (*Source: IA*)
- Ashin Teza from Eindawya Monastery, Mandalay died in Mokaung jail, Kachin State. (*Source: IA*)
- Ashin Teza from Pagan Monastery died in Myitkyina jail, Kachin State. (*Source: IA*)
- Ashin Rewata from Pagan Monastery died in Myitkyina jail, Kachin State. (*Source: IA*)
- Ashin Kaw Wida from Pagan Monastery died in Myitkyina jail, Kachin State. (*Source: IA*)

The following monks have been sentenced to life in prison:

- Ven. U Kawiya, Phayagyi Monastery, Mandalay. He is a member of Galonni (Galonni was originally an active Buddhist association opposed to British imperialism, which was reestablished in 1988 in Mandalay as an organization of monks and laypersons). Ven. U Kawiya is an extremely effective speaker and during the Democracy summer of 1988 he spoke almost every day at Maha Muni Pagoda. (*Source: SAIN*)

- Ven. U Kalyana, Mandalay, Member of Aung San Kyei Ni (Aung San Red Star) Association. (*Source: SAIN*)

9.2.2. Monks Currently in Detention

While about 100 monks are still believed to be in detention, SAIN has also learned the identities of two monks in prison in Myin Chan, near Pakkoku. They are Ven. U Zawtika, from Yelei Village, Nwa Hto Biyi Monastery, and Ven. U Thondhaya.

U Kyathara, a Buddhist monk also known as U Kyaw, was arrested in late May 1996 for putting up a poster calling for dialogue between the SLORC and the NLD in front of Sule Pagoda in Rangoon. He was sentenced to seven years in prison on August 15, 1996.

9.3. SLORC's Control over Buddhism

After the monk's boycott in 1990 in Mandalay, SLORC banned all independent monks' associations. The only Sangha organizations recognized are the Sangha Mahanayaka Committees, with senior monks given the task of establishing rules maintaining discipline and generally overseeing all Sangha affairs. In addition to the State Sangha Mahanayaka Committee, there are local Sangha Mahanayaka Committees. Whereas the members of the Sangha Mahanayaka Committees are all elderly and learned monks, they should be highly respected and venerated. However, it is well known that the committees are controlled by SLORC and they are no longer held in the same esteem by the people. The regime, of course, wishes to include as many senior monks as possible within the ranks of the committees; monks are pressured to join, even though they are reluctant to do so. Until a monk joins, his monastery is kept under strict surveillance. He may be subject to vilification by SLORC propaganda and attempts to ostracize him. Once he relents and joins the committee, the pressure eases. SLORC may then shower his monastery with lavish gifts, but the monk loses his independence and the respect of the people.

In a further attempt to gain legitimacy and respect, SLORC organizes elaborate ceremonies to award titles to monks. In the past, these titles were granted only to very learned monks and carried great honor. Now, however, they are viewed as either a reward for submission or bait with which to lure senior monks under SLORC control.

SLORC has also infiltrated many monasteries in an attempt to monitor any dissent or resistance. A monk from Masoeyein, a famous monastery in Mandalay, reported that another monk had confessed to being a SLORC agent. After graduating from the university, this monk had agreed to become a monk in order to spy on other monks for SLORC. After the army massacred monks in 1990, however, he regretted his role and confessed to the other monk.

SLORC has formed Sangha organizations in the villages, townships, and districts. All monks are required to obey the orders of the organization, whether or not they belong. Buddhist monks cannot do anything without the permission of SLORC. For example, new buildings in the monasteries or even extensions to old buildings can be constructed only with the authorization of the township or district Sangha organization. (*Source: Burma Relief Center*)

9.3.1. Violation of the Ordination Procedures

In 1996 SLORC perpetrated another deed which displays the regime's interference in and complete lack of understanding of the Buddha Sasana. In September 1996, Lieutenant-General Myo Nyunt, Minister of Religion, sent a letter to the senior monks' council demanding that all those who wished to be ordained receive approval from the SLORC. Furthermore, on September 29, official Myanmar television reported that SLORC was accusing the NLD of trying to divide the "loyalty of the Sangha" by sending its members to various monasteries to befriend the monks. It was further announced that SLORC had issued Order 85 banning the ordination of any NLD member. The Sangha Mahanayaka Committee was instructed to contact all levels of LORC offices if any NLD member sought ordination. The Order also restricted members of other political parties and their families from being ordained. (*Source: IA and Inside Source*)

9.3.2. Prior Permission Required for Religious Ceremonies

Permission from SLORC is needed to hold even traditional religious ceremonies. The Kengtung and Tachilek Township LORC in Shan State, for example, has ordered that permission be obtained before any religious ceremony can take place in the township; the people have traditionally celebrated their novitiate and ordination ceremonies with a procession through all the wards. Getting permission for this type of ceremony now requires a registration fee of 200 kyats. It is also necessary to supply information such as who will lead the procession, how many people will attend, what music will be played, the type

of band to play, and a tentative route for the procession. SLORC knows that it is very difficult for the people to know these details beforehand. Many have complained privately that this order has greatly restricted religious ceremonies in the township. (*Source: ABSDF*)

9.3.3. Compulsory Recital Groups of Religious Verses in Sagaing Division

In early 1996, Northwest Military Commander, General Hla Myint Swe, ordered the 28 townships in Sagaing Division to form a "Recital Group" of religious verses. According to his Order, participation in a group is a compulsory duty of every township in Sagaing Division.

Every township group was required to recruit at least 5,000 members and wear the yogi (brown color, traditionally symbolic of Buddhist religion). The responsible persons at the township levels were hard-pressed to recruit their required quota. "People were forced to join these traditionally voluntary and religious groups by force," said one resident from Sagaing, the capital city of Sagaing Division.

In February 1996, the district-level competitions for reciting religious verses by township groups were held in Sagaing Division. One eyewitness revealed her experience that every participating group was asked to donate 5,000 kyats as a fee for the competition. The competitors were required to spend their own money on transportation, food, and lodging in Kalay where the competition was held. (*Source: ABSDF*)

9.3.4. Thai Buddhist Monk Escapes from SLORC's Harassment

Rev. Konokpon Sukhum, a Thai Buddhist monk doing a religious mission inside Burma, was put under house arrest and harassed by SLORC troops in Mae All village in Shan State. Mae All village is situated in the triangle area of Thailand and the Burmese Shan and Karenni States, formerly controlled by Khun Sa's MTA. Reverend Sukhum, originally from Thailand and a monk of 16 years had previously performed many religious missions in Mae All village.

He was arrested and interrogated on May 5, 1996, for allegedly spying on SLORC troops on behalf of the U.S. FBI. He was put under house arrest until May 10 when former MTA troops rescued him and sent him to Mae Hong

Song, Thailand. He is currently in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

According to Reverend Sukhum, the Burmese Abbot of the Mae All village monastery is being detained by the same troops in the village. SLORC is forcing Buddhist novices in the area to enlist into the army and to undergo military training. Buddhist monks are also being harassed in Shan State. Meanwhile, SLORC is forcing the local Christians to convert to Buddhism and to build monasteries in Phe Khong and Mow Bye townships in Karenni state where the majority of villagers are Christian. (*Source: ABSDF*)

9.3.5. Ancient Pagodas Destroyed in Sagaing to Make Way for Reservoir Construction

A total of 25 ancient pagodas were destroyed in early 1996 to make way for reservoir construction in Monwya township, Sagaing division.

One person from each household in Twin Chaung, Kan Pyar, Dan Pin Tel, Thegyi Gone, Ain Tai, and Thasi village groups were ordered to destroy the 25 pagodas because they stood in the prospective reservoir's storage capacity area. The villagers did not want to destroy the pagodas given their devotion to Buddhism, but they also did not dare disobey the local SLORC. All the Buddhist relics enshrined in the pagodas were taken to Thazi. However, no systematic account or lists of the relics were made. Many local people suspect that SLORC troops would take the relics for their own benefit. (*Source: ABSDF*)

9.4. SLORC-instigated Unrest between Buddhist Monks and the Muslim Community

In May 1996, anti-Muslim literature, widely believed to have been written by the SLORC was distributed in four towns in Shan State, leading to violent incidents. In October, 1996, anti-Muslim leaflets were distributed in Rangoon and other cities, urging Buddhists to boycott Muslim shops and not to marry Muslims. The leaflets accused Muslims of wanting to expand their territory, predicting that once the State of Islam takes control of the Burmese nation, Burma will become like other Southeast Asian countries, where Buddhism once flourished but has been forsaken for Islam.

Monks took to the streets in Mandalay on March 16, 1997, burning mosques and hounding Muslims of Bengali origin. Within a week the trouble had spread to other cities, including Rangoon, Mandalay, Monywa, Moulmein, Kyaukpyu,

and Magwe division. Security was stepped up around key Buddhist and Muslim sites in five cities. Curfews were imposed in Mandalay, Moulmein, and other cities. Three Buddhist monks in Mandalay died of gunshot wounds and about 100 monks were arrested during the wave of communal violence, according to the All Burma Young Monks Union. Exiled Burmese monks and political groups accused SLORC of instigating the mid-March incidents as a pretext to crack down on dissidents and monks who have played an active role in Burmese politics. (*Source: ABYMU*).

9.4.1. List of Mosques Destroyed, Damaged, or Looted in Burma (February-March 1997)

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Mandalay area: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kaindan Mosque 2. Waukhan Mosque 3. Thanlan Mosque 4. Kyungyan Hlwa Daung 5. Jame Mosque, Amarapura 6. another mosque, name unknown, in Amarapura 7. Payagyi Mosque 8. Panset Mosque 9. Aledaung Mosque 10. Ashechore Mosque 11. Anauk Choke Mosque 12. Dunan Mosque 13. Seinpan Mosque 14. Panlathan Mosque |
| Pakokhu: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Surti Mosque 2. Bengali Mosque 3. another mosque, name unknown |
| Pegu Division: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Surati Mosque, Prome 2. Kharkahr Mosque 3. Shwekyarbin Mosque 4. three mosques damaged in Pegu, no names given |
| Rangoon: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yankin (Kanbe) Mosque 2. Pazungdaung Mosque (twice) 3. Eidgah Mosque 4. 48th Street Mosque & school 5. Myinigone Mosque |
-

6. Sanchaung Mosque
7. two mosques in Kyimyindaing
8. Ayethakar quarter Mosque in Ahlone township
9. Wartan Street Mosque
10. Bangarlisu Mosque, Thein Pyu Road
11. No.7 Quarter Mosque, South Okkalapa township
12. Muslim school at Tharketa township. (*Source: IA*)

9.5. SLORC's Disrespect for all Religions

At least one-third of Burma's population -- about fifteen million people -- belong to ethnic minorities. In addition to the large ethnic groups -- the Mon, Karen, Shan, Kachin, Chin, and Arakan, within which there are dozens of sub-groups -- there is also a significant population of immigrants of Chinese and South Asian origin. The ethnic minorities tend to have large Christian or Muslim minorities within them. The degree of integration among ethnic minorities differs greatly, but in general depends on geographic location; those minorities based in remote highland areas are least integrated and mostly Christian. The coincidence of ethnicity, religion, and armed opposition has meant that allegations of religious persecution and racial discrimination are often combined.

Many of these other religious groups have been persecuted under the military reign of the SLORC. Burmese people cannot enjoy the freedoms guaranteed under Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which clearly states the all people have the right to practice according to their own religious choice.

In Chin State, the military has forced Christian villagers to remove crosses from hilltops and to replace them with pagodas. There are many cases of Christians being forced to convert to Buddhism by the SLORC. In 1994-95, SLORC lured Chin children from their Christian parents with promises of education in Rangoon. When the parents tried to communicate with their children or to learn of their whereabouts and well-being, they were denied all access. Later they discovered that instead of having been placed in schools, their children were being converted to Buddhism in Buddhist monasteries, with their heads shaven and dressed in novices' robes.

9.5.1. Religious Discrimination against Christianity in Naga Hill

In early 1996, Sagaing division SLORC chairman and commander of

Northwest command, General Hla Myint Swe, issued an order to promote Buddhism to native Naga people; the soldiers were told to forcibly convert Naga people in the area from Christianity to Buddhism.

One village chief said that SLORC forced the villagers to construct Buddhist monasteries and sent abbots to each monastery in Pansat, Kokailong, Kutki, Phongtharet, Leyon, and Ngakyan villages in Sumra Naga hill tract. These abbots, protected by SLORC, are organizing the local Christian people to be converted into Buddhism. In these regions local Christian people are forced to cut down and carry the bamboo and wood used for the construction of the monasteries.

Soldiers from Light Infantry Regiment 229 and 222 deployed in these regions were asked to marry local Naga girls; once married to the soldiers the girls were forced to convert to Buddhism. After they converted to Buddhism, they were sent on trips to big cities like Rangoon and Mandalay where they were provided good clothing. The army uses these material gifts to persuade Naga girls to convert to Buddhism.

Native Naga people who convert to Buddhism are provided 500 to 1000 kyats by the army. If a person remains a faithful Buddhist for six months following conversion, the army provides for the person's food supplies and clothing. Funds for these benefits are provided by the Ministry of Home and Religious Affairs, whose goal it is to propagate Buddhism among hill tribes.

In addition to paid benefits, converted Buddhists in these regions are freed from the requirements of portering and forced labor. Only Christian people are required to work, usually on sanitation or construction projects. Often such work must be performed on Sundays, the Christian Sabbath.

The army authorities required Christian youths to work during the week before Christmas in order to prevent their participation in Christmas functions in the region. They ordered them to carry army supplies to Leshi town - a ten-day journey on foot. By the time they returned, the Christmas holiday had passed. Three Christian youths who refused the order were badly beaten by the soldiers. (*Source: ABSDF/West*)

9.5.2. Religious Discrimination in Karenni State

There are four central wards in Shadaw town in Karenni State, one of which is called "Mother Mary Ward." The name is derived from the Roman Catholic

faith, the religion of the majority of residents in the ward. To the distress of local Catholic residents, SLORC has ordered the name of the ward changed to "Aung Chan Tha Ward." (*Source: ABSDF*)

Most of the Karenni people are Christians. The SLORC authorities and their local authorities, by intimidation and threat, force the Karenni people to construct Buddhist pagodas all over Karenni State, despite the fact that there are no Buddhists in the region to worship at the pagodas. Many of the Christian crosses erected in towns and villages have been destroyed. Some pastors have been arrested and tortured. Many Christian churches were destroyed and bibles were burned during SLORC's massive relocation operations in Karenni State.

9.5.3. Religious Discrimination against Muslims in Northern Arakan

Muslims have been denied the right to freedom of religion. Muslims in northern Arakan State cited religious persecution as one of the factors which drove them to seek refuge in Bangladesh in 1992 and in 1996. Mosques in the region were destroyed or otherwise closed down. Muslim children are not permitted to attend Madrasahs (Koran schools). SLORC has built Buddhist pagodas in the region and Muslim students are required to study Buddhism in the schools. Parents of the students do not speak out against the program as they fear their children's expulsion from school.

In September 1996, a 600-year-old mosque in the old capital, Mrauk-Oo, was demolished by the army despite appeals by the local Muslim community. In October, 1996, anti-Muslim leaflets were distributed in Rangoon warning all Burmans to be especially vigilant against the "threat of Muslim dominance." The leaflets required "patriotic Burmese" not to eat at Muslim restaurants, buy from Muslim shops, or employ Muslim workers. The leaflets were not signed by any organization, but people believed they were designed by SLORC to stir up religious and racial tension to distract attention from the student demonstrations which had begun during the same month, October 1996.

During 1996, 50 army personnel were deployed to a hill near the village of Nanragone, Buthidaung township where they are erecting a Buddhist pagoda. Nanragone is a Muslim village, no Buddhist residents live there. Nevertheless, the SLORC has ordered the destruction of one hundred Muslim houses around the proposed site for the construction of the new Buddhist pagoda. No compensation was paid to the owners of these houses and no arrangements have been made for their relocation. Most of the residents have therefore traveled to Bangladesh to seek asylum.

The Buddhist pagoda most recently under construction in Northern Arakan State is located in Shujah village, north of Maungdaw township. Since mid-1996, the SLORC commander of border area surveillance, Captain Naing Win, has been forcibly collecting money from Muslims in the area as donations to the project. Those who fail to fulfill the demand are subject to various kinds of humiliation and torture by the SLORC.

9.5.4. Muslims Targeted during the SLORC's Offensive against the KNU 6th Brigade

In February 1997, Muslims in the KNU's 6th Brigade were particularly targeted by the SLORC during its offensive against the KNU. Burmese troops torched mosques and several Muslim religious schools during the offensive. About 4,000 Muslims in Kyaikdon, Pa Klaw Nee, Mae Ha Htee Hta, and Sakhantit villages in the KNU 6th Brigade were forcibly relocated by SLORC troops to Patein in Kya-Ein-Seik-Kyi district where there are virtually no basic utilities, including water. On March 3, 1997, SLORC troops forcibly removed corrugated iron roofings from the mosque in Kyaik Don. At the same time, soldiers scattered religious books on the ground, ripping them to pieces, and then burning them.

9.5.5. List of Muslim Mosques Destroyed During the Offensive

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| • Kyaikdon, Duplaya district: | inside of mosque and Muslim school destroyed |
| • Gaw Bay, Duplaya district: | mosque destroyed |
| • Naw Bu, Duplaya district: | mosque destroyed |
| • Day Nga Yin, Duplaya district: | mosque destroyed |
| • Kyaung Don, Duplaya district: | mosque destroyed |
| • Kaninbu, Duplaya district: | mosque and Muslim school destroyed |
| • Pa Glaw Ni, Duplaya district: | mosque valuables looted, placed in Buddhist temple, then wooden mosque dismantled. (<i>Source: IA</i>) |

(Also see under "Personal Accounts," interviews 5, 6, 19, 20, 26, 40, 51, 86, and 87)

Photo (32)

Church in Tee Khu Thaw village, Kyone Do township, central Karen State, was burned down and destroyed by the SLORC's LIB 546 troops commanded by Major Tin Aye and DKBA troops in November 1996. (Photo by KORD)

Villagers in front of the Roman Catholic Church in Ler pa Doh village, burned by the SLORC troops in November 1996. (Photo by Karen Sources)

Photo (33)

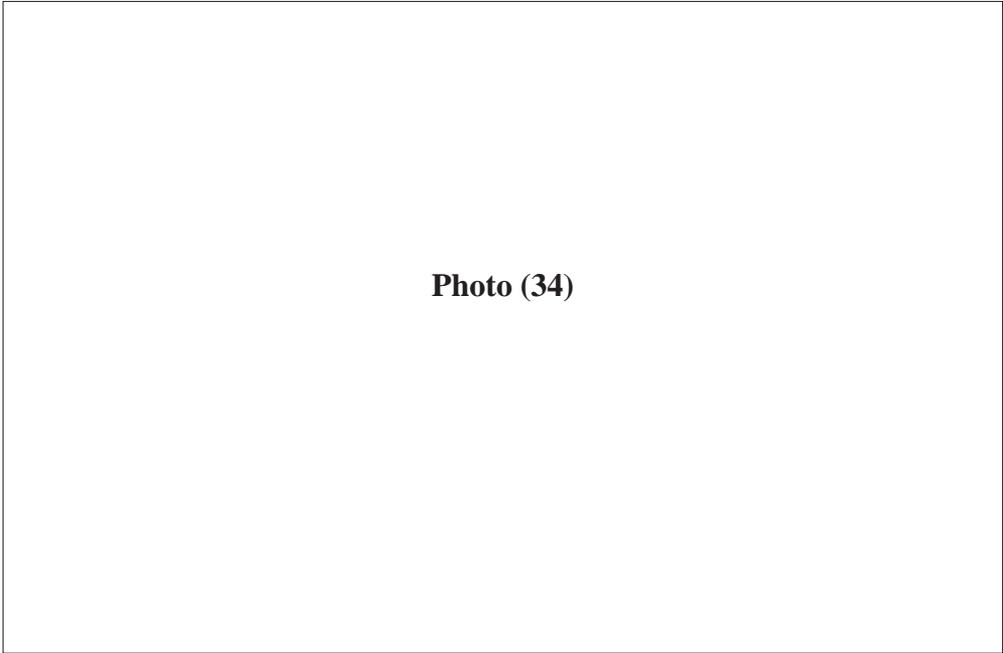


Photo (34)

This 72-year-old monk fled his temple in one of the “free-fire zones” to KNU-held territory along with these two young nuns.
