

4. Forced Portering and Labor

4.1. Background

Forced labor is reportedly also taking place in all parts of Burma, including those areas where a cease-fire has been agreed upon. Forced portering and forced labor as practiced in Burma are in contravention of international standards on forced labor. The 1930 Convention concerning forced labor (ILO Convention NO.29) requires the suppression of the use of forced labor or compulsory labor in all its forms. The Convention defines forced or compulsory labor as “all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily”.

Burma has been a party to ILO Convention since 1955, but still continues to use forced labor. Since 1964, ILO Committee of Experts for the Application of Conventions and Recommendations has addressed the practice of forced labor in Burma. Following the lodging of a representation by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, in January 1993, the ILO Governing Body had urged the SLORC/SPDC, in November 1994, to ensure that the relevant legislation, in particular the Village Act and the Towns Act, would be brought into line with the Forced Labor Convention, as had already been requested by the Committee of Experts, to ensure that the formal repeal of power to impose compulsory labor be followed up in practice and to ensure that those resorting to coercion in the recruitment of labor be punished. At the International Labor Conference in June 1996, the Committee on the Application of Standards noted the persistent failure of Burma to implement the Convention and 25 worker-delegates lodged a complaint against Burma under Article 26 of the ILO Constitution. On March 27, 1997, the ILO established a Commission of Inquiry chaired by Sir William Douglas (Barbados), to investigate a complaint brought by workers' delegates to the 1996 ILO Conference. The complaint addressed SLORC/SPDC's continued and active use of forced labor in Burma and its apparent unwillingness to repeal legislation allowing the use of forced labor. The commission's mandate is to consider whether, and to what extent, the alleged violations exist or existed and to make any recommendations it deems appropriate. The Commission held its first meeting in June 1997 to establish its rules of procedure. In September 1996, following an investigation of the forced labor practices in Burma, the European Union Commission revoked benefits under the Generalized System Preferences.

Laws which permitted the use of forced labor were promulgated by the colonial rulers. To date, neither of the two most prominent forced labor laws has been repealed. Following independence in 1948, successive Burmese governments have continued the practice of forced labor, citing legal authority the "Village Act of 1908" and the "Towns Act of 1907." The two laws require that laborers be a) otherwise not employed, b) physically fit, and c) paid a reasonable fixed wage that is agreed upon beforehand.

4.2. Portering

The most notorious form is front-line porterage, whereby the army raids villages and towns for porters to carry its supply and ammunition for offensives in the border regions.

Given the lack of good roads and other infrastructure throughout Burma and the ruggedness of much of the terrain, the Tatmadaw, very often moves its troops and supplies on foot. Civilian forced labor is always used to do this. Even in many cases where mules or trucks could be used, SLORC/SPDC troops are in the habit of using civilians because it saves trouble and expense. Porters are conscripted in a variety of ways depending on the circumstances. The best known form is 'operations porterage', which occurs whenever SLORC/SPDC mounts a major military operation. These operations involve up to 20,000 troops at a time, and on average two to five porters are required for each soldier in order to carry all the required ammunition, rations, heavy weaponry and other supplies. To capture the required number of civilians, SLORC/SPDC troops, police, local authorities and sometimes even the fire department begin surrounding public places, such as crowded markets, railway stations and video cinemas, rounding up all able-bodied men and piling them on trucks to be taken to holding cells in local police and Army jails, from where they are combined with other captured groups and sent on to frontline units. Local town authorities swoop on houses in the middle of the night using any excuse, such as an unpaid local tax or an unregistered houseguest, to arrest all the occupants and send them off as porters. Troops surround rural villages and storm them to capture anyone who will be able to carry a load. People are often sent to be porters halfway across the country from where they were captured. Families of those captured are not notified in any way. Local authorities are assigned a numeric quota of how many porters they have to round up, and in their desperation to get the number they often take women, small children and people as old as 70. They often take 2 or 3 times as many people as required, then make money by accepting bribes to release all those they don't need.

Once at the frontline, operations porters are assigned to units and given a load to

carry over the mountains. The soldiers generally carry nothing except their personal weapon and a small personal kitbag, while each porter is forced to carry 30 to 50 kilogram loads in woven bamboo baskets which rip the flesh off of their shoulders and backs. They generally have only the clothing in which they were captured. They are given little or no food, often just one or two handfuls of rice per day, and are often forbidden to drink water en route because the soldiers say it will slow them down. They are not paid in any way. They are often sent in front of the column as human minesweepers and used as human shields; in some cases they are even forced to switch clothing with the soldiers in order to draw enemy fire. In battle, they are forced to stay with the soldiers, and many are wounded or killed. Those who are wounded or fall sick are generally not treated but simply left behind. Medicines are reserved for the soldiers. While carrying loads, if porters are slow they are usually kicked, prodded with bayonets or beaten to keep them moving, and if they collapse and cannot continue they are left behind, often after being beaten unconscious. In especially sensitive areas, they will be executed by cutting their throats, kicking them down a mountainside or tying them and throwing them in a river in order to prevent them from giving information if found by resistance groups. Soldiers open fire on any porters trying to escape, and if captured after escaping they are tortured or executed in front of the others as an example. They are usually kept as porters for the duration of the operation, which can be three months or longer. Many escaped operations porters testify that by the time they escaped, half of the original porters had died. Even if the operation ends, they are just told they are free to go and given no assistance to get home, even if it is halfway across the country. They generally have no money for the trip, and even if they go they face the possibility of re-arrest along the way for having no travel papers, so many end up as internally displaced people far from home or as refugees.

4.3. Other Military Forced Labor

Villagers must also do what is known as ‘permanent portering’; their village must provide a certain number of porters to each local Tatmadaw unit at all times on a rotating basis. For example, if a village has 50 households and is located within an hour’s walk of three Army camps, they will have to send about five porters to each of these camps. These porters are not paid, must take all their own food, and are kept at the camp for five to seven days, after which they must be replaced by rotation. This form of portering occurs in both conflict and non-conflict areas. When not busy carrying supplies for the troops, these villagers are used for other camp labor. Troops on the move or on patrol will also capture villagers seen on the path or in their fields and use them as porters, even if it is only to carry their personal bags. In towns, being arrested and sent to be a porter is often used as a punishment by local authorities,

whether for non-payment of a tax, having an unregistered house guest, or simply because the local ward chief has a personal grudge against the civilians.

There are many forms of military forced labour besides portering, and all of these forms are on the increase as SLORC/SPDC expands its Army and establishes new Army camps throughout the country in both conflict and non-conflict areas. Many townships which used to have three Army Battalions now have ten or more, and many villages which used to be within walking distance of one small Army camp now have to do forced labour at three or four camps at once. Whenever a new Battalion moves into an area, the nearby villages are forced to collect and provide most of the building materials for the camp, then at least one person per household (sometimes more) is forced to go to do forced labour building the barracks and bunkers, digging trenches and erecting fences. Once the camp is established the villagers must go on rotating shifts to constantly maintain the Camp buildings and defenses; usually one person per ten households must go for five days, then replacements must be sent by rotation. They are not paid and must take their own food. When additional labour is required on an ad hoc basis, written orders are issued to the village and the entire village must drop all their work and attend. Villagers must also stay at the Camp on standby to carry messages to other Army units and to carry written orders to nearby village leaders.

In many areas rotating labor must also be sent as Army camp servants; women are often specifically demanded for this labor cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, carrying water, cutting firewood, sewing, etc. The women doing this labor in the camps live in constant fear of rape, and are often forced to massage or sing to the Army officer before being raped at gunpoint. They are then threatened that they will be killed if they tell anyone.

In areas where there is any possibility of conflict, villagers must do sentry duty at Army camps; often most or all of the soldiers sleep, leaving only unarmed villagers as sentries with orders to wake them up if anything happens. Villagers must also clear roadsides of scrub and trees for anywhere from five to 100 meters on each side of military supply roads in order to decrease the chance of ambush. In such areas, villagers must stand sentry along roads and railways, with two to four villagers posted every 200 meters along the route. If anyone is seen on the road, they are supposed to send a signal up the line by beating on bamboo sticks. If they do so, the troops come and usually beat them - either for sending a "false" signal, or for sending a "true" signal but not capturing the intruder. In the morning in and near conflict areas, village women and children are often specifically forced to sweep roads with branches to detect landmines. Once this is done, men are sometimes forced to drive bullock carts, weighted either with stones or with women and children, over the road in case

there are still mines. If a mine explodes, the village is then punished for allowing the mine to be laid.

In areas where bullock carts are the main form of transport, a specified number of bullock cart owners must be on standby at all times for immediate use if required by the local Army unit. In areas where boats are used, boat owners must be on standby. In areas where there are motor vehicles, these and their drivers can be commandeered at any time for military use without compensation. Once taken, the car, cart or boat is often not returned or returned seriously damaged. (*Source: KHRG*)

4.4. Military Commercial Interests

Another form of forced labor is work on commercial projects for the army such as rice farms, paddy, fishpond and tree-planting operations, which the local farmers have to build up and maintain. The required land is reportedly confiscated from local people.

In many areas, particularly where there is no conflict, the main activity of local and regional military units is making money for themselves. This is done mainly through direct extortion of the local population, but also through forced labor. One means is by extorting 'fees' from villagers to avoid forced labor (though often after collecting 'porter fees' the Army still takes the villagers as porters), and other means involve setting up commercial projects and then using the villagers as forced unpaid labor on them. Many Army units confiscate all the best farmland around their camp, then force the local villagers to do forced labor growing rice or cash crops for them. The villagers usually have to provide or pay for the seed, then do all the labor involved in farming, then after the harvest the crop is simply taken by the Army officers and disappears. The villagers receive nothing. In some cases these crops appear to have been sold on the local market for personal profit of the local Army officers, while in other cases they are handed over to SLORC/SPDC authorities at higher levels, apparently to meet export demands. In forested areas, villagers are also regularly ordered to cut and haul prime quality hardwood logs to local Army camps or sawmills, where other villagers or sawmill owners are then forced to cut the logs into timber without compensation. The timber then disappears to market with all profit going to local military officers, while orders are issued forbidding the villagers to cut any trees for their own use. Many military officers nationwide have also established brick-baking kilns at Battalion camps. The villagers are forced to cut and deliver all the wood required to bake the bricks, while the rank-and-file soldiers are forced to bake bricks for 8 or 10 hours a day in addition to their normal military duties. The officers then sell the bricks on the market for five *kyats* each and pay no

compensation to anyone.

Other similar projects have included large-scale fish farming, sugarcane and rubber plantations. In these cases, thousands of acres of land are confiscated at a time, and then villagers are forced to do labour over several years digging fishponds or clearing land and planting rubber trees. These large scale projects are generally coordinated by SLORC/SPDC authorities at the State or national level, and the produce may largely be intended for export, particularly as ‘counter-trade’ goods (‘counter-trade’ is the process whereby foreign companies buy agricultural goods from SLORC/SPDC agencies in order to convert their Burmese currency profits into exportable agricultural produce). Ironically, many of these forced-labour farming and other projects have been showcased in the SLORC/SPDC-controlled media and to international agencies as ‘community income generation projects’.

4.5. Infrastructure Development and Maintenance

Forced labor also occurs on infrastructure and “development” projects such as construction and maintenance of roads, railways, bridges, airports, hydroelectric schemes and tourists-oriented projects. During 1996, the SLORC/SPDC introduced an initiative to use military personnel for infrastructure. This initiative and the increasing use of heavy construction equipment resulted in a decline during 1996-1997 in the use of unpaid labor in physical infrastructure projects, especially for irrigation projects and railway building. Nonetheless, there were credible reports that the use of forced labor remained widespread throughout the country. The military regime has claimed that the infrastructure projects in the remote regions is part of their Border Areas Development Program and that it will improve access to markets, schools, and health care. However, there has been little indication that road construction has facilitated social development, and the existing schools and hospitals in the region remain woefully understaffed and under-equipped. The regime frequently claims that these projects are being undertaken for the villagers’ benefit, admonishing villagers to uphold their responsibilities to their district and the nation by participating in them. In fact, as these infrastructure projects are implemented almost entirely with forced labor, rather than improving their living conditions, they cause greater hardship for local people. Villagers in the construction areas must not only contribute labor, but also provide most of the materials and support the costs of construction, under threat of retaliation should they fail to provide adequately. Moreover, children are often recruited for forced labor, or left behind when their parents are put to work. (*Source: KHRG*)

4.6. Prison Labor

Convicts are regularly used for forced unpaid labour as porters, on major infrastructure projects, tourism development projects, and at rock quarries. They include both criminal and political prisoners, though most political prisoners are not used for forced labour because SLORC/SPDC is afraid they will escape from the work-site. Prisoners serving relatively short sentences are preferred to prisoners serving longer sentences because it is thought they will be less likely to attempt escape. Thus, those doing forced labour are often those who are in jail for ‘non-crimes’ such as curfew violations, selling goods without a SLORC/SPDC license, or cursing at a SLORC/SPDC soldier. In many cases when used as operations porters, convicts are held and continued to be used as porters well after the expiration of their prison sentences. Convicts doing forced labour are generally treated much more brutally than ordinary civilians and are routinely used in very dangerous work, such as blowing up rock faces or digging at cliff-sides, in which many of them are killed. They are beaten and otherwise abused on the slightest provocation, given far from adequate food, and medical treatment is virtually nonexistent for them should they fall ill.

SLORC/SPDC Home Minister, Lt-Gen. Mya Thin said in his meeting with the prison department in July 1997, “Convicts serving sentences are also members of the Burmese public and constitute a ‘considerable labor force’ that should be used effectively instead of being left idle”. He also thanked the prison department for “the participation in national projects therefore, constitutes a milestone in history” according to *The Nation*. July 24, 1997.

4.6.1. Labor camps for prisoners exist at the following sites:

- Kabaw Valley (Western Burma)
- Ywangan - Hanmyinmo Road (Sagaing Division)
- Taungzun/Moplin Quarry (Mon State)
- Pinlaung-Pyinmana Road (Shan State)
- Aungban - Loikaw road (Shan - Karenni State)
- Ngwetaung rock Quarry (Karenni State)
- Phasaung Rock Quarry (Karenni State)
- Shwenyaung- Namsan road (Shan State)
- Myitkyina Sumprabom road (Kachin State)
- Myitkyina- Shibwe Lawkhaung road (Kachin State)
- Rangoon - Mandalay Highway construction
- Yezin - Htonbo Quarry (South of Mandalay)
- Mergui - Kawthaung road (Tenasserim Division)
- Kawthaung Airport Extension (Tenasserim Division)

- 30-Miles camp, Ye-Tavoy Railway construction (Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division)
- Zimba camp, Ye-Tavoy Railway construction (Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division)
- Bokpyin camp, Tenasserim Division
- Lampi Island Marine Park, (Tenasserim Division)
- Tuntay camp (near Rangoon)
- Tuntay Piggery (near Rangoon)
- Phaunggyi Piggery (near Rangoon)

4.6.2. Situation in Kabaw Valley Prison labor camp

Kabaw Valley prison labor camp, situated in Sagaing Division near the Indo-Burma border is becoming notorious for harsh working condition and cruelty by the prison authorities.

Under the guise of Kabaw valley Development Project designate by the SLORC/SPDC, the prison labor force is being used in land reclamation, road building, prison labor camp construction and city planning.

There are more than 1,000 prison laborers in Yesagyo, Wetsu, Myothit and Tanan camps along the Kabaw valley. One more new prison labor camp has been under construction since 1996 between Mawleiklay and Indaing which is expected to be completed in 1999. In these camps in the valley, the main works are the building of a quarry and working in farmland and plantation.

Firstly, selected prisoners from all over the country are sent to Monywa prison in Sagaing Division. Among these, most aged between 20 and 30, are criminals and drug addicts. A few are over 50-60. They are sent to camps by riverboats to Kabaw valley. 200 persons in a batch, they are placed in rows and columns on the upper deck of the boat. They are not allowed to stand or to lie, overlapping thigh to thigh and hurting the rib bones of each other. Even worse, they are not allowed to go to the toilet, but given plastic instead. Two meals are served in a day, packed in a plastic bag.

At Kalaywa jetty, they embark and are put onto trucks, similarly in sitting position, The trucks have no roofing, sitting in ten rows, 50 persons per truck, then travel for two nights. They are not allowed to move nor get off for pain relief throughout the journey.

On getting to the camp, they are herded in. Anyone who could not move due to

long and painful journey are beaten and forced to run. Then they are sent to respective work sites. One the next day, they have to start to work, ignoring poor health and handicap.

The prisoners are kept in two barracks in 500 x 500 yards surrounded by barbed wire guarded by armed security. 500 persons sleep in a row on a long double platform.

Health care is insufficient. Malaria, dysentery and diarrhea are rampant in the camps due to the unhygienic drinking water and lack of mosquito nets. Hospitalization in time is the exception and rare for prisoners. Very lucky prisoners are sent to Mintha and Tamu hospitals by cart. But many also die in hospital due to lack of medicine at the hospitals. From January to July, 1997, 48 prisoners died in Mintha hospital, of which, 13 prisoners died of AIDS.

4.6.3. Establishment of Win Saung - Porter Battalions

As a result of the increase in the prison population since SLORC/SPDC's coup d'etat, and in order to cope with the shortage of prison facilities, SLORC/SPDC has established six new Win Saung battalions (porter battalions). These Win Saung battalions are mainly used to create a ready supply of porters in the frontiers; prisoners are kept ready for porter duties while working at the army battalions. According to eyewitnesses, the treatment of prisoners at prison battalions is barbaric, as one might expect. Only those prisoners who can afford to pay bribes (from 50,000- 70,000 *kyats*) can avoid going to these labor camps. Currently, one porter battalion has been established in Myitkyina, Loikaw, Thaton and Mergui townships, two have been established in Pa-an township. (*Source: ABSDF*)

4.7. The following is the partial list of 1997 forced labor projects:

Arakan State

Kyauktaw – Buthidaung motor road

Sittwe – Kyauktaw motor road

Chin State

Kale - Phalam motor road,

Haka - Than Tlang road

Haka - Matupi road
 Matupi - Mindat road
 Extension of football ground to Students' Sport Festival, Haka

Pegu Division

Buddhist temple in Kyaukkyi township,
 Pa Thee Dam construction, Taungoo

Karen State

Pitakai-Papan motor road
 Nabu-Daw Lun- Pa-an motor road
 Daw Ku Lee motor road, Loikaw township
 Kyaikdon - Kyar-ein-seik-kyi motor road
 Kyaikdon - Kyone Doh - Kawkareik bullock-cart road renovation
 Wah Lay - Kyo G'Lee - Tee K'Pler - Kyaikdon bullock-cart road renovation
 Saw Hta - Htee Hta Baw road
 Kyaikdon - Saw Hta - Lay Po Hta road

Tenasserim Division

Marine National Park on Lampi Island, Mergui township,
 Zawel- Sa Ku motor road, Tenasserim township
 Ye-Tavoy railway
 Tenasserim-Theintaw motor road, Tenasserim township
 Moe Taung- Lay Nya- Bokeyyin motor road, Tenasserim township
 Taung Thonlone- Seik Phyone motor road
 Tenasserim - Moe Taung new motor road
 Tavoy-Kanchaniburi motor road
 Huayphak - Chaungchi motor road
 Seik Mon - Murngtaing motor road
 Manawtone - Theinkhun - Tenasserim truck motor
 Phaungdaw - Pha Tha Yebyu motor road

Mon State

Khawza - Magyi road, Ye township,

Shan State

Murngsert- Murng Ton motor road
 Langkhur-Wan Hart motor road, Lankhur township
 Wan Hart- Zalawng motor road, Lankhur township
 Zalawng-Sop Taeng motor road, Lankhur township
 Wan Hart-Mawkmai road, Lankhur township

Mawkmai-Sai Khao road, Lankhur township
 Marnngpan-Kan Kan village motor road, Marnngpan township
 Murnngpan - Ta Sarng motor road, Murnngpan township
 Murngsert-Keng Tong, Murngsert township
 Munrgkai-Loilin motor road, Murngkai township
 Kunhing-Parkaw motor road, Kunhing township

Mon State

Ye- Tavoy railway construction
 Ye - Magyi truck road
 Kya-ein-seik-kyi - Yaungbauk truck road

Chin State

Haka - Gangaw motor road,
 Haka - Tan Tlang motor road
 Haka - Matupi motor road
 Matupi - Mindat road
 Stadium construction, Haka

Irrawaddy Division

Road along the Hgawun River
 Bassein-Thalatgwa-Morton Point motor road

Magwe Division

Kanthagyi-Kyaungdawya motor road

Sagaing Division

Airbase at the site of an old World War II airfield, Kalemyo

4.8. Incidents of forced labor by region

4.8.1. Karen State

4.8.1.1. Kya-ein-seik-kyi - Taungbauk truck road

This truck road is about 15 miles long and situated inside Karen State. It connects Kya-ein-seik-kyi and Taungbauk, Mon village. The construction was started before the end of 1996 and reached a standstill in May, 1997. In the whole process of construction, the villagers from many Mon villages were constantly conscripted as forced laborers to build the embankment of the road.

The whole construction project is monitored by IB. 32, based in Kya-ein-seik-kyi and Taungbauk village, The villagers from Taungbauk, Htipauklo, Weithalee, Pharkapo, Bokadaw, Lakepoke, Kalortort Chaung, Badargyi, West Weithalee, Tadarpyat, Kyaukpon, Kyaukpya and other villages were constantly forced to build the embankment of this road. The villages are around the construction area and some are situated on the bank of Zami river.

About 500 villagers were asked by the military construction work to participate every day in. The bigger villages such as Taungbauk and Weithalee had to provide at least 50 villagers per day to work in the construction. Due to the population numbers of a village, the village headmen had to arrange to send the villagers according to the instruction by the battalion. Even a small village with 40 households had to provide about ten villagers every day. Hence, each men or women from each family had to work in the construction about ten days within one month.

The road passes through the rice-fields and rubber plantations owned by villagers from Taungbauk, Htipauklo, Weithalee and Bokadaw villages. Although the road runs along the former cart path, the embankment was extended and the land along the route was confiscated. Besides for the width of embankment, about ten feet of the land on each side of the route were also confiscated to get earth from these spaces and fill it on the embankment. All the land was confiscated by the military without compensation. The width of the embankment is about 15 feet and the height is about five feet at the highest place while about three feet at the lowest place. (Source: HRFOM)

4.8.1.2. Kawkareik - Myawaddy motor road

SPDC troops have constructed a compound at Thingan Nyinaung which is on the road between Myawaddy and Kawkareik in Karen State since November 1997. The compound is a big one surrounded by a tall fence of barbed wire and a minefield outside. This compound is to be the detention compound for the Burmese people repatriated from Thailand.

SPDC is building a new Kawkareik- Myawaddy road and more than 20,000 people are needed for its construction. So, it is planned to use the repatriated refugees from Thailand in that project as forced laborers before they are allowed to go back home. It is learnt that they will be allowed back home only after the construction is finished. (Source: ABSDF)

4.8.2. Tenasserim Division

4.8.2.1. Ye-Tavoy railway Construction in 1997

To counter the mounting international pressure against the use of forced labor in the Ye-Tavoy railway construction, SLORC/SPDC has claimed that civilians would no longer be used as unpaid laborers in the railway construction projects across the country. They replaced soldiers from local battalions to work with available payment. The battalions from LIB. 401 through 410 have received payment from SLORC/SPDC but at the same time, thousands of villagers have still been forced to work in the construction. From September through October, 1996, the villagers were conscripted again by these local military battalions. From October 1996 up to the beginning of 1997, the conscription of massive numbers of villagers were stopped for a while. However, villagers from some village tracts were also forced to do many jobs supporting the construction such as collecting materials to build camps for soldiers in the work-sites along the roads, gathering fire-wood and water, etc..

In February 1997, the conscription of forced labor resumed again. SLORC/SPDC had hurried to complete another section of construction from Ye to 9-Mile section, the end point of Mon State. This section of road was also built with prisoners' labor from mid 1996 to mid 1997. At the same time, the military tried to complete all bridges from Ye to Yebyu.

Besides building the embankment, the villagers from all village tracts along the road were forced to work cutting trees to get fire-woods in making bricks for bridge construction, to gather rail bed stones from the streams and forest and crush it to the required size and bring it to the embankment. And some were forced to cut hardwoods for rail sleepers.

Almost the construction of railway embankment was completed for the whole route, at the beginning of 1997, and as a next step SLORC/SPDC has planned to complete building of bridges along the road by the end of 1997. It is estimated that 26 bridges are being built across big rivers and small streams along the route. Local military troops are forcing the villagers to prepare work each bridge such as filling dirt and wood beside the stream or river banks and make it strong.

For each bridge, a lot of bricks are needed. A total of 26 bridges need many hundreds of tons of bricks and SLORC/SPDC local troops could not bring them from the brick-making factories far from the area. Thus the bricks kilns are built close to each bridge. In the process of making bricks, huge amounts of firewood are needed to be used to burn the earth to make good quality bricks. To get enough

firewood, the villagers in Natkyizin and Yebyu village tracts have been forced to find it in forests since the beginning of 1997.

According to a village from Paukpingwin, in Natkyizin village tract, each family from this village tract has to provide at least four *kyins* of firewood per month. They were instructed to provide the firewood from February through May 1997. The villagers are to bring their firewood from forest to the railway and put it beside the road. At the same time, about ten oxen-carts of each village were asked by the military to transport the firewood to the designated area. If one person of a family has to get one *kyin* of firewood and bring it to the designated places, he may have to spend at least seven days. Thus, all family members have to hurry to get the set quota of firewood or they will have to face punishment. For the villagers who could not provide firewood have to hire substitute workers or buy it from other villagers. One *kyin* of firewood costs about 1,000 *kyats*.

While some villagers from the same village track are finding firewood, some villagers from another village tract are making rail sleepers. The villagers from Yapu village tract who do not have to find firewood are forced to provide rail sleepers. The military need high quality hardwood to make sleepers. These villagers are instructed to bring total of about 2,5000 pieces of sleepers. A sleeper measures six inches by six inches and six feet long.

At the same time, the villagers from both village tracts were forced to collect stones for rail beds without any payment. In April 1997, the military conscripted the villagers to find rail bed stones in the area. Every morning, the villagers had to travel to stream and collect the big stones. Then they crashed it into the needed pieces and brought it to railroad embankment. Whole family members including mother, sons and daughters had no time to work in their farms, plantations and fishing. They have considerably no income for the whole dry season.

However, since November 1997, villagers from Kalong Hta, Oaktayan, Yange, Ayekani, Wonpho, Sanchi and Dudaung villages in Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division have been forced to work at the Ye-Tavoy railway construction. Between five persons to twenty persons from each village are conscripted for working 7-10 days at the construction sites. Most of the work is repairing the railway route, cleaning the wood along the railway route and replacing the decaying railway piles. Some are forced to dig rocks for the construction of the railway. When the local people are unable to go and work for the forced labor, they have to find substitutes at the cost of 300 *kyats* per day.

In the Eindayaza-Natkyizin section of the Ye-Tavoy railway construction, troops

from LIB. 407 led by Battalion Commander Second Lt. Kan Win forced the local villagers from Sinku, Mintha, Kyatkettaw, Phaya Thonesu, and Natkyizin villages to provide forced labor.

Each forced laborer is required to work two days per week and has to provide one foot high and 10 feet wide pile of gravel or small rocks for making concrete. If one fails to provide the quota, he is not allowed to go back home. The troops from LIB. 407 collect the piles of gravel and small rocks provided by the laborers and then sell them to Total oil company. No money is given to the laborers. In addition to free labor, the troops also forcibly use the 50 bullock carts from the village every day without payment.

In 1997, the construction of this section was used with about 500 prison laborers. The prisoners with tackled iron chains are used to work to carry stones, crush them and lay on the embankment. (*Source: HRFOM and ABSDF*)

4.8.2.2. Tavoy-Mergui-Kawthaung Highway

On February 23, 1996, SLORC/SPDC Secretary-2, Lt-Gen. Tin Oo summoned local authorities and military commanders from Tenasserim Division and told them of the plan to construct a new highway from Tavoy to Kawthaung via Mergui. The project is in two sections- the first is between Mergui and Tavoy which involved the upgrading of an existing road which has already been completed. The second section from Mergui to Kawthaung is still being built in 1997 and no road has ever existed between these two towns. The highway is to be part of the planned development of the Rangoon-Tavoy-Mergui-Kawthaung Union Highway.

A 260-mile-long new motor road to link Mergui and Kawthaung was started in February 1994. SLORC/SPDC did not put the road's whole length under construction at the same time but divided the road into three main sections, and constructed one section after the other. The three sections are namely Section (1) from Mergui to Tenasserim, Section (2) from Tenasserim to Bokepyin and Section (3) from Bokepyin to Kawthaung. Of the ten townships in Tenasserim Division, six are required to provide labor for the Mergui-Kawthaung part which is still under construction. These six townships are Mergui, Palaw, Kyunsuu, Tenasserim, Bokepyin and Kawthaung.

Along the highway, each household is ordered to dig three earth ditches and three rock ditches during their two-week-long period at the work site. If a household cannot fulfil its quota, it is forced to pay 3,000 *kyats* to hire a substitute laborer or pay a fine of 6,000 *kyats* to the local authorities. Villagers must supply all of their

own food and tools, except for concrete and nails which are provided by the military. Villagers living near the work-site are required to provide both “voluntary” labor as well as pay taxes for the construction of the road. Sometimes people located over 50 kilometers from their assigned work-site are forced to walk two days to perform their rotating shifts. The laborers work for periods of ten days hauling dirt, building embankments, breaking rocks and digging ditches.

In addition to the thousands of forced laborers conscripted from towns and villages in the region, SLORC/SPDC has constantly used hundreds of chain gangs to work on the motor road construction since November 1995 till present. At the construction site between Bokeyyin and Thae-kwet village alone, there has been a chain gang of 1,200 people seen daily working as slave labor on the motor road construction. By June 1997, only 800 of the chain gangs were seen working on the motor road construction, whereas many of the 400 who also disappeared may have died from sickness without medical treatment or because of bad accidents under the inhumane and appalling working conditions or may have been subjected to arbitrary execution on their exhaustion or unsuccessful escape attempts from the labor camp. (*Source: ABSDF, MIS*)

4.8.2.3. Forced Labor in Marine Park

A villager who escaped from Burma said he was among 150 villagers rounded up each week by the Burmese military to work without food or pay at a marine national park on Lampi Island, off Burma’s southern coast.

Civilians have been used as forced labor for the building of the Marine Park since May 1997. The construction was halted during July because of the heavy rain, but resumed since October 1997. About 400 Burmese prisoners are also used as forced labor in the project as well as villagers from 17 villages including East Aungba, Kyagyi All, Ma Bein, Kantaw, Theall, Mithwe Phaung, Salong and all villages in Aungba village tract, Kawthaung township, Tenasserim Division. Between five to fourteen villagers, depending on the size of villages, are demanded for the construction.

About 150 soldiers from LIB. 224 led by Major Htun Hla Aung are taking care of security on the island and forced labor. Three helipads have been constructed and the pier and some buildings are still under construction until the end of 1997.

The marine park is one of the two environmental projects the Burmese government is developing in the Mergui Archipelago, a chain of about 800 islands in the Andaman Sea. The other is the Myinmolekat Nature Reserve. 80,000 villagers from the islands have been forcibly relocated to make way for the parks. There are reports

that villagers who protested were killed. Soldiers killed 40 villagers and arrested 200 on Lampi Island at the beginning of 1997. (Source: ABSDF)

4.8.2.4. Tenasserim - Moe Taung new motor road

SLORC/SPDC has constructed a new motor road to link Tenasserim town with Moe Taung on the Thai-Burma border to use it as a trade route with Thailand with the consistent use of unpaid forced labor and prison laborers since the dry season on 1994 till now. Civilians were conscripted in the whole year of 1997 from the towns and many villages in Tenasserim township. In this road construction, on a daily basis, at least about 500 villagers and prisoners are used to build the embankment, lay small crushed stones, crush rock and build bridges. Every village in Bokeyyin and Tenasserim township is asked by forces to provide at least three to five villagers to work in this construction. Sometimes, when the troops come into a village, they arrest the villagers suddenly and then send to the construction sites, without a demanding order. The villagers who are sent by a rotation basis by their village leaders have to provide manual labor for one or two weeks period and when other villagers come, they are able to return from the work-sites. The villagers who are arrested and sent to the construction are used in the construction for several weeks and when new substitute arrested villagers do not arrive, they can not return home. Some villagers have to work in this construction up to two months.

This road is estimated to be around 50 miles long. The construction of the rough route was reportedly completed in January 1996. SLORC/SPDC also required the local population to contribute and lay stones at a rate of two 100-cubit-feet *kyins* per household for the motor road construction. There are a total of more than 10,000 households in Tenasserim township. Those households that could not or did not contribute to work had to hire their own substitute labor paying 1,600 to 1,900 *kyats* per *kyin* of stone. The cost of buying stone is from 1,000 to 1,300 *kyats* per *kyin* but transportation cost 300 *kyats* and laying the stones costs 250 per *kyin*. So, each of the many households in Tenasserim township had to pay total 3,500 to 4,000 *kyats* for the gathering and laying stone alone. (Source: MIS and HURFOM)

4.8.2.5. Bokeyyin - Ban Saphan motor road

The construction of a motor road between Bokeyyin in Burma and Ban Saphan in Thailand started at the beginning of 1997. The construction is monitored by the Construction Corporation from Kawthaung and has forced the local people to work in the construction. Ten villagers from each village in Kawthaung township, Tenasserim Division have been conscripted to work in the construction. They are needed to stay one month in the site. If anyone fails to go and work there, he is required to pay

10,000 *kyats* to hire a substitute. Villages along the road such as Laynya, Pyigyi Matai, Nam Koke, Yadanapon and Mine Kalu villages are most effected by the forced labor demands. There are also about 500 prison laborers being used at the construction. The security for the construction was taken care of by the IB. 224 and 341. (Source: ABSDF)

4.8.2.6. Forced labor in military run-business projects

The SLORC/SPDC military in Tenasserim Division has normally conscripted and used many of the rural inhabitants as hard laborers on their private economic businesses without pay, with their own food, their own working tools and their own transportation. People are not given compensation for sickness, injury or death of any laborer. Any laborer who cannot come and work as required are subjected to a fine of 150 to 300 *kyats* per day. SLORC/SPDC local military units across Tenasserim Division, including all the ten LIBs from LIB. 401 to 410 and other battalions such as IB. 25, 265 and 280, have been making money from such economic businesses being run without investment but simply with the labor of those effectively subjugated and enslaved men, women and children living in their respective areas of control.

Agricultural projects

SLORC/SPDC's respective local battalions across Tenasserim Division have been running their own private agricultural business projects -- growing rubber, coconut, oil palm, rice and various other seasonal plantation amounting to thousands of acres. To get ground for such a plantation, the military has either forcibly seized the local farmland without giving compensation to the owners or taken the land and had it cleared by means of unpaid forced labor.

All the many agricultural business projects of the military, the forced laborers are made to do everything through the entire cultivation process. On the rice cultivation projects, the forced laborers have to do the entire work from ploughing the fields through cutting and gathering the crop. They are required to work in continually-rotating turns for nearly all the year round. The military just receives the ready crops and sell them to make money. On the rubber, palm oil and coconut growing projects too, the forced laborers have to do the entire work from clearing the ground, turning over the earth planting the seedlings, building fences round the plantations with their own fencing materials, and serving as farmhands till the plantations are cultivated. The military has been selling the cultivated plantations and making new ones by similar means of unpaid forced labor. A cultivated rubber plantation of five to ten acres currently sells for more than 500,000 *kyats*. The local military, especially commanders

and officers, have been making a fortune by selling those cultivated plantations at good prices.

The SLORC/SPDC LIB. 403, 404, and 405, the three battalions alone, own hundreds of acres of rubber, coconut, rice and other plantations in Tavoy and Thayet Chaung townships, all cultivated by means of unpaid forced labor conscripted from the many villages around. These three battalions jointly own a rubber plantation of some 180 acres in Taung Byauk and Winwa village tracts by taking over the land and cultivating it by similar means of unpaid forced labor since the last quarter of 1995. The two battalions 404 and 405 have jointly owned a rubber plantation of some 100 acres along the 4-mile-long truck road from Sonsin Hpyar village to Thea Chaunggyi village, cultivated with unpaid forced labor since 1993. The LIB. 405 also has a dry-season onion plantation at The Chaunggyi village in Thayet Chaung township, cultivated with unpaid forced labor. The LIB. 403 has a paddy field of some 100 acres between Saw Phyar and Kyauk Hlaykar villages, cultivated by similar means.

LIB. 404 conscripted and used more than 200 villagers living at the ten villages of Taung Byauk village tract in Thayet Chaung township to clear some 150 acres of land in May 1997 for its continuing rubber growing project. The forced laborers, mostly women and children, are made to work without payment, with their own food, working tools and transportation as always. Because of the appalling conditions of hard labor, many of the laborers suffered sickness, but had to provide their own medical treatment. Among the laborers, Ma *Kyin Aye*, a 19-year-old girl from Winkpaw village in Thayet Chaung township, Tenasserim died from a serious sickness when she was working at the rubber plantation projects by the SLORC/SPDC's LIB. 404 in Thayet Chaung township during May 1997. She was conscripted along with 200 villagers from Taung Byauk village tract to clear a large area of land for the plantation. Another girl, Ma *Htoo Aye*, a 13-year-old girl died of a poisonous snake bite while doing land clearing work there on May 14, 1997. No compensation was given for the death of these two forced laborers. (*Source: MIS*)

U Ba Khin, a 51-year-old man from Kyetyettwi village in Launglon township, Tenasserim Division died on June 12, 1997 of serious illness. He was conscripted together with 500 villagers to work on a private rice cultivation project of the SLORC/SPDC military. He was sick at the time of conscription, but was not exempted by the military. Due to his serious sickness, he quickly became exhausted and suddenly collapsed while working there and died. (*Source: MIS*)

In February 1997, SLORC/SPDC LIB. 104 confiscated more than 1,000 acres of rice fields on Pyingyi island in Launglon township, Tenasserim Division and more than 700 acres in Tabea and Ka Nyon Kyun villages in the same township, without

giving any compensation to the more than 300 local farmers. The land was confiscated for an experimental modern-method rice cultivation project of the military in the region. The local battalions conscripted and used more than 500 local people from the Pyingyi island to work as unpaid hard laborers on this experimental project.

Charcoal and brick making projects

They have also been doing charcoal and brick-making businesses by means of unpaid forced labor. For this, the respective local battalions require many villages under their respective control to contribute a large amount of firewood regularly. So the villagers have to provide laborers to cut trees and carry the cut wood to those charcoal and brick kilns. Each village, based on its population, is required to contribute 10 to 50 *kyins* of firewood per month. (one *kyin* = a woodpile of 6 ft x 6 ft measurement) The villages in each township are estimated to have to contribute a total of more than 1,000 *kyins* of firewood per month. (Source: MIS)

In May 1997, 30 villagers from each village of Paukpin Kwin, Nat Kyi Sin, Three pagodas, Chattaw, Mintha, Kywethone Nyima and Sinku villages were ordered to work for the military-run brick making industry at the base of Military Command HQ.8 in Kanpauk, Tenasserim Division. (Source: ABSDF)

Timber project

The SLORC/SPDC military has also required many villages to contribute three to five tons of sawed wood per village regularly, but usually using the justification of collecting building materials for the construction or repairs of their encampments, local school building etc,. The villages have to provide laborers as well as oxcarts to fell trees and manually saw them into the prescribed sizes, and transport the finished pieces to the designated locations The SLORC/SPDC just sells the readily sawed wood and makes money. A village in each township is estimated to have to contribute a total of more than 200 tons of readily sawed wood per month to the military. Out of 47 village tracts in Thayet Chaung township, Taung Byauk village tract alone, composed of ten small villages, is normally required to contribute more than 30 tons per months. The laborers have to work without payment, with their own food, working tools and transportation. They are not given any compensation when they are sick or injured. If and when they cannot come and work as required, they are subjected to fines or to ill-treatment by the military. (Source: MIS)

Forced laborers at military bases

The SLORC/SPDC military in Tenasserim Division has daily conscripted a total of

more than 3000 people from the hundreds of villages in the ten townships to serve as general laborers at its many local encampments. These forced servants have to do whatever may be instructed at whim by the encampments' officers and soldiers.

From Thayet Chaung township alone, more than 600 people from a total of 47 village tracts are daily conscripted and used. Out of the 47 village tracts, Taung Byauk village tract alone, has to provide 20 people per day. In Yebyu township, each village tract has to provide 15 to 20 people per day. Out of some ten villages of Mintha village tract, Hsinku village alone has to provide two to three people per day. Any household which fails to serve accordingly is subjected to a fine of 200 to 300 *kyats* per day, or 2,000 to 5,000 *kyats* at a time.

The military has used these forced servants in their hands to do whatever it may instruct them at any moment. People from Yebyu township say they have to daily carry water, collect firewood, grow vegetables, catch fish, serve as messengers and so on for the several local encampments of the LIB. 40, 407, and 408 battalions. People from Thayet Chaung township say they are normally also given clothes to wash and often have to provide relaxing massage, run and get liquor for the local encampments of the LIB. 403, 404, and 405. They are even made to dance, sing, etc. by those encampment officers when drunk. Several village tracts in Tavoy township such as Khin Sheh, Yun Maw, Shanmatwin, Shinmuhti, Kahnaingda, Taung Thonlon, Pakarri, Myitta, Hamyingyi and Zalun as well as several village tracts in the Lunglon township, such as Kadetgyi, Yebyu, Kyettettwin, Thabye Shaung, Ya Bea, Kyauknimaw, Ahtet Kyaukwut, Ka Nyaw Byin, Ti Sit, Sit Pyea, Ka Nyon Kyun and Good Inn have been experiencing similar gross abuses of power by the local SLORC/SPDC military. (*Source: MIS*)

4.8.3. Chin State

Since taking power in the bloody military coup in 1988 in Burma, SLORC/SPDC has been carrying out its infamous "national development programs" which primarily include repairing bridges, building roads throughout the country. The programs are basically aimed at beautification of the out-look of the deteriorating conditions of the country. Through this cosmetic changes, SLORC/SPDC expects to attract tourists to Burma. However, the program is being implemented at the cost of local inhabitants. The roads are being built and the bridges are being repaired with forced laborers. The materials required for the constructions were also forcibly collected from the people of projected sites. In addition, people are fined for being unable to contribute the labor. A person per household is ordered compulsory for unpaid labor. Ironically this has become an official rule in Burma under the SLORC/SPDC regime.

4.8.3.1. Kale - Phalam motor road

On 28 December 1996, U Khin Latt, President of Tun Zan township in Chin State of SLORC/SPDC came under the order of Phalam-based SLORC/SPDC regiment 268 and Tetai-based regiment 269, the order being to build 100 miles long road connecting Kale Town and Phalam Town. He then passed the order to the villages viz, Hai Tuu, Tui Ton, Tan Twon, Phon Tong and Phai Tun which happened to exist along the projected road to send a person per household for the construction.

The people who are living in Tun Zan township are also included in providing free labor for the same. Most of them are local ethnic Chin nationalities. Under the dead-cold weather severed by freezing winds at the mountainous site, inexperienced road builders are forced to carry rocks and dig the ground. Moreover, they have to work at their own expense. Some of them do not even have rice to eat. Therefore, they survive with boiled maize and work at the road construction site. The rocks are being collected from the three-hours-away Manipur Streams. Each household is ordered to dig six ditches of 10 x 10 x 1 foot big ditch. The construction is still going on till date. The completion of the project is scheduled in April. Therefore, people of that area are not even allowed to go to harvest their fields. A group of 300 people in six groups works for the construction in rotation. Students under 16 years of age, three female and two male teachers of No.8, No.9 and No. 10 of Tun Zan Township State High School are also ordered to provide free Labor for the construction. The question remains unanswered with regards to whom the road will benefit. According to the local inhabitants of the projected regions, the road surely will benefit the army for better communication which will help hunt down dissidents operating in the area. (*Source: ABSL*)

4.8.3.2. Haka - Gangaw motor road

This road is being upgraded to be ready for the Students' festival. The township LORC claimed that it allocated wages for the laborers on this project, but then decided on its own that all the villages would "donate" all these wages to the Students' Sport Festival fund. Most people believe the money is actually being pocketed by local authorities and that no one working on this road is paid. In January 1997, the villagers were ordered to provide 22,500 *kyins* (one *kyin* = 10 x 10 x 1 feet) of crushed stones. Any household failing to provide their quota is fined 135 *kyats* per *kyin*.

4.8.3.3. Students' Sport Festival in Haka

The students' Sport Festival was scheduled to be held in Haka in December, 1997,

but postponed to March 1998 due to delays in the preparation. This is the biggest students' Festival ever held in Chin State. People in Haka were forced to extend the football ground and to build a stadium and roads. Residents of Haka with homes along the main road leading to the Festival ground were ordered to repair and repaint their houses, and all buildings deemed to be in poor condition had to be removed. (Source: CHRO)

In each township of Chin State, students are also forcibly enlisted to take part in the sports competitions and undergo intensive training, which forces them to miss their regular class. The Matupi Township Education Department called students back to school on 1 June 1997. They selected some students and sent them to Haka to attend a sport training for the upcoming Festival to ensure their participation. Altogether 110 students from each township of Chin State were sent to Haka town in 1997. They had to attend gymnastics classes for the opening ceremony of the Festival. They were told that anyone who was absent, would not be allowed to take his or her examination and would be expelled from the school for three years. Students had to follow army discipline and had to attend the training until mid-day without any food and regular school classes. They had to practice "tinbauk" (a Burmese sport in which the participants use heavy clubs) training, as well as gymnastics and sword dancing (a traditional martial art). Twelve students from Ton Zan township escaped from the training and were expelled from their school. (Source: IA)

4.8.4. Arakan State

Two new battalions of SLORC/SPDC have been reinforced in Buthidaung township, Arakan State since October 1997. With the arrival of more armed forces in the region, the army has ordered all local village chairmen to supply increased forced labor as well as materials for household use including firewood. The village chairmen have to supply porter or forced labor for Military Intelligence, Police, local LORC, Riot Police and Special Branch police. (Source: RSO)

4.8.5. Irrawaddy Division

4.8.5.1. Forced labor in Thabaung township

For the joint services maneuvers of SLORC/SPDC Divisions 22, 33, 55 and 77 in the cold season of 1996-97, in all the village tracts within Thabaung township, villagers had to construct, at the own expense, temporary camps, barracks, stores, houses and furniture. The villagers also had to construct a road along the Hgawun River. To

provide soil for the road, each household had to dig a pit of a specified size. While they were engaged in work connected to the military maneuvers, the villagers were unable to carry out their own work, which resulted in a considerable drop in income for many of them. Because of lack of nutrition and the unhealthy conditions of the surrounding areas, many villagers engaged in the forced labor projects suffered from various diseases. In addition, whole villages had to move in order to make room for the military maneuvers. (*Source: UN report*)

4.8.5.2. Bassein-Thalatgwa-Morton Point motor road

Each household in 33 village tracts had to provide one and a half baskets of rock for the road building project from Bassein to Thalatgwa to Morton Point, Irrawaddy Division. A household that could not provide rock had to pay 2,000 *kyats* to the village LORC. The people who went to break rocks were not given any medical care and many came back from their forced labor sessions with various illnesses. Thirteen people, including two women, were arrested on January 15, 1997, because they refused to take part in a forced labor project. U Chit is reported to have fallen sick and died at the labor site. U Khin Maung Win, Maung *Kyin* Hoke and Maung Nyo also died while providing forced labor. Daw Ni, 60 years old and unable to provide with labor or money, was arrested on January 6, 1997 and sent to Bassein prison on January 8, 1997. (*Source: UN report*)

4.8.6. Karenni State

Human rights violations by the SLORC/SPDC troops of LB. 102, LB. 261 and LIB. 426 continued in Karenni State. Troops have been forcing hundreds of local people of Mawchee township and prisoners from different parts of Burma to act as porters without payment since the end of July 1997. About one hundred villagers of Dee Maw So town, Dee Maw So Township, were arrested and tied up, and then loaded to Phasaung town. Those who were seized were forced to carry supplies and ammunition from Phasaung town to the area, where they have been operating military offensive against innocent Karenni people. Many of those forced to act as porters have been subjected to torture and ill-treatment if they could not carry loads of supplies and ammunition. Others who were seized as porters have been extrajudicially killed if they attempted to escape or were unable to carry their loads. Those who were seriously sick were left to die beside roads.

Conditions of the porters are often harsh, in many cases amounting to cruel, inhuman treatment. The porters have been subjected to ill-treatment, receiving inadequate food. The Porters are receiving only one meal per day while they are forced to

carry heavy loads. The porters are forced to walk through rocky areas and mountainous areas. Those who are sick are also forced to continue to carry their loads. So far about 50 porters have died of sickness, tiredness and starvation. Most of them were shot dead by the military (SLORC/SPDC) according to Zaw Win, private soldier of LIB. 102 and one sergeant (requested not to use his name) of LIB. 261, 27 years old who have recently surrendered to the Karenni Army and some porters who escaped to the Karenni controlled area. Prisoners Mg Sein, Thaug Htay, Win Kyaw, Than Naing and Maung Naing were among the dead. (Source: KNPP)

4.8.7. Magwe Division

4.8.7.1. Kanthagyi-Kyaungdawya road

Forced contributions towards road and bridge construction projects in Pwintbyu, Magwe Division began in early 1997. In Pwintbyu, landowners were made to contribute money towards the construction of the Man Bridge. The landowners were assessed at the rate of 200 *kyats* per acre owned. The whole township had to contribute to the construction of the Kanthagyi-Kyaungdawya road. The contribution were assessed 250 *kyats* per acre. All the households in the township, including the poorest, had to contribute 360 *kyats* each to the building of Slain road. Every household had to contribute between 45 and 70 *kyats* once every two weeks for years for the Natyegan road construction. Farmers were forced to sell two baskets of split beans per acre to the authorities at specific prices. Those who refused to sell were made to stay under the hot sun for hours as punishment. Those who complained about their treatment were beaten. (Source: HRDU)

4.8.8. Mon State

Besides the large infrastructure projects, under the instruction of SLORC/SPDC, SLORC/SPDC local authorities in Mon State have constructed or repaired shorter roads in each village or between villages by means of forced labor and forced monetary contributions from the local populace, but under the SLORC/SPDC-composed slogan of “Self-help” local areas development.

4.8.8.1. Ye-Magyi truck road

This road is divided into two sections. The first section is from Ye to Khawza village

and the second is from Khawza to Magyi village, the edge of Mon State. This road runs along the sea coast area in the southern part of Ye town and passes through several Mon villages.

In 1995, under the supervision of IB. 61 and LIB. 304, the first section of the 10 mile-long truck road was completed by forcing the villagers nearby to contribute unpaid labor. In 1996, some part of the road was destroyed by flood and the local troops collected cash from the local villagers to repair it. When they had actually repaired it, the troops asked unpaid labor from the village again.

The remaining section is shorter than the first one and it is only five miles long. The construction of this section was started since mid 1996 and the military defined the route along an old cart-track. In enlarging the width of the road, the military confiscated many acres of rice farmland along the route without compensation.

Since early 1997, under the supervision of SLORC/SPDC local LIB. 304, several Mon villages such as Hangan, Khawza, Yinye, Yindein, Thabya, Kyonkanya, Mitawhlagyi, Mitawhlagale, Magyi, Taungkhon, Kyauktayan, etc., had been suffering from the consistent conscription of forced labor. Villagers were conscripted by the military to contribute unpaid labor. At least 30 to 50 villagers from each village had been working to build the embankment since January 1997. They had to work on the construction at least one week in a month. The main work-duty was to dig the earth from outside of the route and fill it in the defined embankment up to three feet in height. If they hired a substitute laborer, they had to pay 200 *kyats* per day.

The laborers were required to contribute and lay stones at a rate of two to three 100-cubit-feet *kyins* per household on a compulsory and unconditional basis. To get the stones, the laborers had to gather them from the forest or break them from the rocky hills miles away from their villages and the truck road. Those households that did not own an ox cart had to hire one at their own expense to transport the gathered stones onto the truck road and those households that could not meet their quotas themselves had to hire their own substitute laborer having to pay 550 to 600 *kyats* per *kyin* of stone.

At the end of 1997, almost the embankment of the whole road from Ye to Magyi was completed. (Source: *HRFOM*)

4.8.9. Sagaing Division

4.8.9.1. Airbase in Kalay Myo

SPDC is constructing an airbase at the site of an old World War II airfield, eight miles south of Kale Myo in Sagaing Division. The military has confiscated the poor local farmers' farmlands surrounding the old airfield and ordered the farmers to destroy their paddy fields.

The local people -- one member from each household -- are also forced to contribute volunteer labor for the airbase construction. In December 1997, the military forced over 3,500 villagers -- including 2,000 from Htaunkkyant Village, 500 from Kyarbin Village, and 400 from Thayargon Village -- to contribute volunteer labor in the airbase construction work.

Furthermore, over 100 inmates from the Ngwetaung and Phasaung rock quarry work camps, which were opened last year, are also recruited to work at the airbase, said the locals. (*Source; HRDU*)

4.8.10. Shan State

4.8.10.1. Forced Labor in Lankhur township

Since mid-November 1996, SLORC/SPDC IB. 99 and LIB. 525 had been forced people in Lankhur township, Shan State, to split stones for the construction of 18-mile-long Langkhur-Wan Hart motor road, 20-mile-long Wan Hart- Zalawng motor road, 20-mile-long Zalawng-Sop Taeng motor road, 15-mile-long Wan Hart-Mawkmai road and 20-mile-long Mawkmai-Sai Khao road, all in Lankhur township. Each person from every house in the four village tracts in Wan Hart area had to go and work every day. Any house which failed to provide a worker had to pay 200 *kyats* for one day as a fine.

Wan Tang, Pha Long Nar Lin, Loi Sur and Kao Kong villages in Wan Taeng village tract; wan Hart, Mark Keng Mon, La Yoi, Kub Keng, Nam Mon, Ten Put, Ho Kun, Ho Ta and Sawng Ke villages from Wan Hart village tract; Na Kong, Lao Main Hung, Khum Oot, Keng Yai, Ter Niu, Nam Sai, Ho Nar Tai and Kun Kharn villages in Nar Kong village tract; Mark Oon Lao, Harn Long Mong, Nar Mot, Nar Wawn Wan Mong, Wan Ern, Ter Long, Hart Sai Long, Ter Ha Yurng, Parn Long and Mark Pin Warn villages in Mark Oon Lao village tracts, altogether about 2,500

people of Shan State were forced to work every day. Civilians from other region were also reportedly forced to provide labor for the construction projects in their region. Each house had to make 3-4 piles of gravel. Each pile was six feet square wide and one foot high. House with fewer family members had to work until they finished at least three piles, and houses with more members with more people had to finish four piles a day. They had to provide their own food and many people from villages which were 7-8 miles away from the work sites, like Kun Kharn village, could not walk there every day, so they had to sleep near the sites under makeshift huts. SLORC/SPDC soldiers provided 400 *kyats* every ten persons to buy a three-pound hammer for use in splitting rocks, but such a hammer was nowhere to be found in the area. Thus people just had to bring their own axes and tools to work with.

Since January 1997, people in Larnghkur township, Shan State have been ordered to split rocks to pave the motor road to Wan Hart. Even the civil servants are not spared. Each person has to finish seven pitches (enough to pave a ten-foot-square area) and anyone who could not go had to pay 300 *kyats* for one pitch. People had to stay overnight and work at the site until they finish their quotas. Villagers of Wan Nawng Long had to provide two bicycles and a tape recorder to the troops overseeing the work sites. (*Source: S.H.A.N*)

4.8.10.2. Forced Labor in Murngpyak

Since the beginning of 1997, civilian population in all village tracts in Murngpyak has been forced to work for the SLORC/SPDC army without pay. They have to build military camps, dig trenches, build roads, make lamp post etc.,. The SLORC/SPDC troops issued an order that anyone who fails to perform his portion of work would be punished harshly. The people had almost no time to earn their living. (*Source: SHRF*)

4.8.10.3. Forced Labor in Kunhing

On July 4, 1997, SLORC/SPDC troops under the Division 44 led by Major Aung Zaw Htun forced the villagers who had been forced to relocate in Kunhing in 1997 to work for the army without any payment. The male villagers had to cut bamboo and build four layers of fences around the military camp and had to dig trenches, about two yards deep and one yard wide, between the layers of the fences. On the way to the gate of the camp, they were forced to build 2-3 checkpoints of which the outer ones were manned by People Militia and the inner one by the SLORC/SPDC troops. Every three hours, the villagers had to report the army about the armed Shan soldiers; even if there was no one, they still had to report about it, all day and all

night. (Source: *SHRF*)

4.8.10.4. Forced Labor in Murngpan

Since March 1997, people in Murngpan township in Shan State have been working on road construction sites between Marngpan and Kan Kan village. Villagers in the area have to take turns so that the work continues every day; anyone who fails to take his turn has to pay 500 *kyats* for each day. The work is mostly gathering rocks and stones to the roadsides. The villagers receive no wages for their labor and have to provide their own food.

Tolagyi- mini tractors with trailers — also have to take turns to serve at the two military base every day; two tolagyis at LIB. 332 base and two tolagyis at LIB. 520. During the daytime, they have to carry stones, sand, bathing water for the troops, and in the evening, they have to run the electric generators to provide electricity for the military bases. SLORC/SPDC troops give neither fuel nor money to the owner, but fine 5,000 *Kyats* from anyone who fails to provide the forcible service. (Source: *SHRF*)

4.8.10.5. Forced Labor in Larngkhur and Murngpan

Since October 1997, people in Larngkhur and Murngpan townships in Shan State have been forced to split rocks into gravel at a place between Murngpan and Ta Sarong, one of the Salween river crossing points, by the commander of SLORC/SPDC IB. 6. Thirty people from each township have to work together for five days at a time after which another group of 30 has to take their place and continue the work. They not only have to work without pay but also have to provide their own food and tools. The troops appoint some people to monitor the road construction. Though the troops have said that the gravel is to be used to pave the Murngpan-Ta Sarng road, but when there is enough gravel to be loaded on about five trucks, they take them down to some big cities in Burma (other than Shan State) to be sold, mostly to the Chinese who are building houses. It is said that cases like this are happening in several other townships like Murngnai, Namzarng, Kunhing, Loilem, Laikha and Murng Kerng. (Source: *SHRF*)

4.8.10.6. Forced to guard road near Thai border in Murngton

On May 5, 1997, SLORC/SPDC Major Shwe Myint from IB. 65 ordered the villagers in the Murngton and Murngsart area in Shan State to make huts at regular intervals along the road from Murngton to BP1 (the Thai border crossing point at Nawng Ook). Four people at a time had to take guard in each hut for a day and a

night at a time. They had to report if they saw any SURA troops crossing the road or entering the area. If they failed to report this, they would be punished, SLORC/SPDC said. (*Source: SHRF*)

4.9. Individual Incidents in 1997

- Since mid-November 1996, SLORC IB. 99 and LIB. 525 had forced people in Lankhur township, Shan State, to split stones for the construction of 18-mile-long Langkhur-Wan Hart motor road, 20-mile-long Wan Hart-Zalawng motor road, 20-mile-long Zalawng-Sop Taeng motor road, 15-mile-long Wan Hart-Mawkmai road and 20-mile-long Mawkmai-Sai Khao road, all in Lankhur township. Each person from every house in the four village tracts in Wan Hart area had to go and work every day. Any house which failed to provide a worker had to pay 200 *kyats* for one day as a fine.
- Wan Tang, Pha Long Nar Lin, Loi Sur and Kao Kong villages in Wan Taeng village tract; wan Hart, Mark Keng Mon, La Yoi, Kub Keng, Nam Mon, Ten Put, Ho Kun, Ho Ta and Sawng Ke villages from Wan Hart village tract; Na Kong, Lao Main Hung, Khum Oot, Keng Yai, Ter Niu, Nam Sai, Ho Nar Tai and Kun Kharn villages in Nar Kong village tract; Mark Oon Lao, Harn Long Mong, Nar Mot, Nar Wawn Wan Mong, Wan Ern, Ter Long, Hart Sai Long, Ter Ha Yurng, Parn Long and Mark Pin Warn villages in Mark Oon Lao village tracts, altogether about 2,500 people were forced to work every day. Civilians from other region were also reportedly forced to provide labor for the construction in their region. Each house had to make 3-4 piles of gravel. Each pile was six square feet wide and one foot high. Houses with fewer family members had to work until they finished at least three piles, and houses with more members had to finish four piles a day. They had to provide their own food and many people from villages which were 7-8 miles away from the work sites, like Kun Kharn village, could not walk there every day, so they had to sleep near the sites under makeshift huts. SLORC soldiers provided 400 *kyats* for every ten persons to buy a 3-lb. hammer to use for splitting rocks, but a hammer like that is nowhere to be found in the area. Thus people just had to bring their own axes and tools to work with.
- On 28 December 1996, U Khin Latt, President of Tun Zan township in Chin State of SLORC came under the order of Phalam-based SLORC regiment 268 and Tetain-based regiment 269, to build 100 miles long road Connecting Kale Town and Phalam Town. He then passed the order to the villages viz., Hai Tuu,

Tui Ton, Tan Twon, Phon Tong and Phai Tun which happened to exist along the projected road to send a person per household for the construction. The people who are living in all the colonies of Tun Zan township are also included to provide free Labor for the same. Most of them are local ethnic Chin nationalities. Under the dead-cold weather severed by freezing winds at the mountainous site, inexperienced road builders are forced to carry rocks and dig the ground. Besides, they have to work at their own expenses. Some of them even do not have rice to eat. Therefore, they survive with boiled maize to work at the road construction site. The rocks are being collected from the three-hours away Manipur Streams. Each household is ordered to dig six ditches of 10 x 10 x 1 foot big. The construction is still going on till date. The completion of the project is scheduled in April. Therefore, people of that area are not even allowed to go to harvest their fields. A group of 300 people in 6 groups works for the construction in rotation. Students under 16 years old, three female and two male teachers of No.8, No.9 and No.10 of Tun Zan Township State High School are also ordered to provide free Labor for the construction. The question remains unanswered with regards to whom the road will benefit. According to the local inhabitants of the projected regions, the road surely will benefit the army for better communication which will help hunt down dissidents who are operating in the area. (*Source: ABSL*)

- A villager who escaped from Burma said he was among 150 villagers rounded up each week by the Burmese military to work without food or pay at a marine national park on Lampi Island, off Burma's southern coast. About 400 Burmese prisoners also are used as forced labor in the project, The marine park is one of two environmental projects the Burmese government is developing in the Mergui Archipelago, a chain of about 800 islands in the Andaman Sea. The other is the Myinmolekat Nature Reserve. 80,000 villagers on the islands have been forcibly relocated to make way for the parks. There are reports that villagers who protested were killed. Soldiers killed 40 villagers and arrested 200 on Lampi Island at the beginning of 1997. (*Source: ABSDF*)
- Since January 1997, people in Larnghkur township, Shan State have been ordered to split rocks to pave the motor road to Wan Hart. Even civil servants are not spared. Each person has to finish seven pitches (enough to pave ten foot-square area) and anyone who cannot go has to pay 300 *kyats* for one pitch. People have to stay overnight and work at the site until they finish their quotas. Villagers of Wan Nawng Long have to provide two bicycles and a tape recorder to the troops overseeing the work sites. (*Source: S.H.A.N*)

- On February 1, 1997 Township Law and Order Restoration Council chairman of Leshi township, Sagaing division, Naga hill tract U Mya Han sent a letter to the commander of 222 Burma Regiment mobile column Major Aung Swe Oo to call civilian porters to carry ration for 1000 soldiers. Therefore Major Aung Swe Oo ordered the villagers from the following villages to come to Leshi town without failure.

Name of the village	Number of porters
1. Summra village	130
2. Kuki village	125
3. Phontharet village	85
4. Pansat village	115
5. Ngachan village	100
6. Kokailong village	108

- These porters have to carry ration from Leshi to the places where the soldiers are deployed inside Leshi township. But as there is no car road between Leshi and Summra and it takes two days to do the job. The villages were informed that they would not get any wages and for food they have to arrange by themselves from their homes. Villagers are busy at hill-side cultivation at the moment and due to that the village chiefs requested the army to reduce the number of porters. But Maj. Aung Swe Oo replied that if the villagers could not fulfill the number of porters that had been asked, the villagers would have to supply ration for 1000 soldiers. Thus they had to send their full quota of porters to the said place. Due to this forced porterage the villagers from respective villages had to leave Summer season hillside cultivation. (*Source: ABSDF-WB*)
- In February, 1997, SLORC IB. 34 ordered four Karen villages of Shazzbo, Zeebyergon and Tawgoo in Pysinmana district, Karen State to send 25 men per month to serve as porters. In addition, the troops forcibly demanded 1,000 to 2,000 *kyats* from each household. (*Source: KIC*)
- On February 16, 1997, soldiers from LIB. 431 and IB. 104 drafted 30 villagers from Pyatha Chaung, Karen State as porters, 25 people whom were women, following a clash with KNU troops near the village. The porters were ordered to carry the soldiers' backpacks, and the women to wash the soldiers' clothes and cook for them during the fighting and marching. SLORC troop also draft another batch of porters between Pyatha Chaung and Phaungdaw village, comprising 10 women and a 60 years old Karen man. (*Source: ABSDF*)

- From March 15 to April 10, 1997, the operation command No.3 of the SLORC southern command had been sending ammunition and food supplies from Toungoo to Nor Soe, a front line camp every day. The troops seized more than 2,000 civilians, including children, women and the aged, from villages on the plains as well as in the hills, and forced them to carry ammunition and supplies to Nor Soe and other front-line camps. In addition to being used as beasts of burden, the civilians were also used as mine sweepers. (*Source: KIC*)
- In March, troops from Division 77 demanded 70 porters from each village in Shwekyin area of Nyaung Lay Bin district, Karen State. If a villager could not supply enough, they forcibly seized the villagers, including women and children. (*Source: KIC*)
- On March 17, 1997, SLORC IB. 35 seized several villagers, including women and children from Baw Gali village and Gaw Thedoe village in Toungoo district, Karen State. Troops forced them to serve as porters and min-sweepers. On March 18, a woman, Naw Kreh-kre, aged 29, of Gaw Thedoe village was seriously wounded by a land mine in Thakwe Soebu Hsakhi area. On March 25, 1997, SLORC IB. 26 seized and forcibly took away 105 villagers for portage from Mee Daing daw village, Nyaung Lay Bin district, Karen State. (*Source: KIC*)
- On March 30, 1997, troops from IB. 39 forcibly seized and took away 186 people, including four women, of Mae Daing Daw village, Nyaung Lay Be district, Karen State, for portage. (*Source: KIC*)
- During the first fortnight of May 1997, the SLORC Division 33 conscripted at random a total of more than 5,000 civilians from the towns and villages in Yebyu, Tavoy, Launglon and Thayet Chaung townships in Tenasserim Division as front-line porters for its over 2,000 troops from Division 33 to continue the offensive operation against the KNU and the ABSDF. (*Source: MIS*)
- On May 12, 1997, villages in Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division were ordered to send forced laborers for work in military bases of IB. 60 and LIB. 351 in the township. Between 15 to 30 laborers, both male and female, depending on the size of village, were ordered to go and work at the military bases without pay. If a village failed to provide the laborer quota, it was required to pay 600 *kyats* per person. These people had to work three days with their own food and tools at the road construction, digging rock, and doing other animal husbandry agricultural projects of the military bases. (*Source: HRDU*)

- Between May 16-30, 1997, SLORC Division 66 recruited at random a total of more than 2,000 civilians from Tavoy, Tenasserim as porters. Out of the 2,000 recruited persons, only those who could pay a ransom of 8,000 to 12,000 *kyats* to the military were released. (*Source: MIS*)
- In May, 1997, SLORC IB. 45 and LIB. 333 ordered Ban Kong village group in Mung Hsat township, Shan State, to build roads and bridges going to all military camps stationed at the border. "Everybody is forced to give labor without fail," said the order. All the work was to be finished in August, 1997. Fearing the punishment, the villagers had to obey the order and did what the soldiers asked them to do. In doing the labor, no money or even food was given to them. They had to bring along food and working tools with them. (*Source: LPHRC*)
- Since May 1997, 4, the Township LORCs in Tavoy, Thayetchaung and Launglon have continuously been requiring more than 270 villages of the three townships to perform a round-the-clock duty of watching against armed group. Based on their population and number of households, the villages are required to provide 12 to 36 people each per day to be on duty. The villagers have to keep the SLORC constantly informed of the situation concerning the armed groups. To perform the duty, households in each village have to provide people in turns rotated continually. Any house which cannot provide people at its duty shift is subjected to a fine of 300 to 500 *kyats* per day, or to do other hard labor for three to five days. (*Source: MIS*)
- On June 8, 1997, SLORC troops from Murngpan-based LIB. 520, led by Major Than maung, arrested the following 17 villagers at Ter Hung village, Ton Hoong tract, Murngnai township. They were Loong Kang Kya, 52 (2) Sai Lao, 27, (3) Sai Pan, 22 (4) Sai Tong, 31 (5) Sai Kaw Li Ya, 37 (6) Sai Suzata, 24 (7) Sai Wa Ling, 32 (8) Sai Tae Za, 19 (9) Sai Nung, 20 (10) Sai Sawya, 17 (11) Nang Poi, 38 (12) Nang Hla Khin, 27 (13) Nang Seng Hawm, 22 (14) Nang Thun Nae, 21 (15) Nang Seng Zing, 19 (16) Nang Thuay, 18 (17) Nang Si Non, 17. They were forced to carry military things from Zkaeng Tawng area all the way to Murngpan. When they reached Murngpan, the soldiers let the nine male villagers go and sleep in the town while they detained the seven women and the headman Loong Kang Nya at their base. The women were gang-raped all night and told to return to their village and move to a new place. (*Source: SHRF*)
- In Tavoy district, Tenasserim Division, forced labor for military purpose is widely used by SLORC. From Taung Thone Lone, 24 men were ordered to porter for 10-day periods. Two people were required from each section. In Hein Da, 18

men were ordered for the same work, two men from each section. If the village cannot provide enough porters, it is fined 2000 *kyats* for each absent porter. This money is given to the LORC village chairman, which is then it is passed on to the SLORC army commander. In addition, porter fees are collected from each house in Taung Thone Lone and Hein Da. The fees range between 200 to 300 *kyats* and are paid to the LORC village chairman. Finally, on June 15, 1997, twenty-five KNU soldiers from the Fourth Brigade, Tenth Battalion, Second Company surrendered to the SLORC. On June 16, General Maung Aye arrived to Taung Thone Lone village to preside over a welcoming ceremony. He gave the twenty-five soldiers a welcoming gift of 500,000 *kyats*. However, according to Taung Thone Lone villagers who later escaped to the Thai-Burma border, the money did not come from the treasury of the SLORC. Instead, it was collected from businessmen and ordinary villagers. (*Source: KNU*)

- Human rights violations by the SLORC troops of LB. 102, LB. 261 and LIB. 426 continued in Karenni State. Troops have been forcing hundreds of local people of Mawchee township, and prisoners from different parts of Burma to act as porters without payment since the end of July 1997. About one hundred villagers of Dee Maw So town, Dee Maw So Township, were arrested and tied up, and then trucked to Pasaung town. Those who were seized were forced to carry supplies and ammunition from Pasaung town to the area where they have been operating military offensive against innocent Karenni people. Many of those forced to act as porters have been subjected to torture and ill-treatment if they could not carry loads of supplies and ammunition. Others who were seized as porters were extrajudicially killed if they attempted to escape or were unable to carry their loads. Those who were seriously sick were left to die beside roads.
- On June 28, 1997, 17 villagers were seized by SLORC troops at the village of Ho Thi, Laikha township, Shan State. The villagers were forced to carry ammunition and other military equipment. (*Source: UN report*)
- On July 4, 1997, SLORC troops under Division 44 led by Major Aung Zaw Htun forced the villagers who had been forced to relocate in Kunhing township, Shan State in 1997, to work for the army without any payment. The male villagers had to cut bamboo and build four layers of fences around the military camp, as well as dig trenches between the layers of fences. (*Source: UN report*)
- On July 13, 1997, all the villagers from Huayphak and Chaungchi areas in Mon State were forced to build a road from Huayphak to Chaungchi. Some villagers

from Chaungchi were also forced to build a road from Seik Mon to Murngtaing. (Source: *HRFOM*)

- On July 17, 1997, SLORC troops from LIB. 351 and IB. 60 came to Aung Soe Moe village in Kyaukkyi township, Pegu Division and arrested the villagers at random. All villagers arrested were taken to the military base and asked 6,000 *kyats* for their release by the troops. On July 21, the village had to pay 12,0000 *kyats* as ransom for 20 mothers of children. (Source: *HRDU*)
- In July 1997, troops, led by Tint Lwin Oo, from SLORC IB. 55 came to Ber-gor-doe in Taungoo district, Karen State and ate as well as destroyed the villager's livestock and food supply. They seized all women in Kee-pla-doe and Cor-say-ko villages, including young girls and nursing mothers, and forced them to carry supplies to Koe-mor-doe village on July 27, 1997. (Source: *KIC*)
- During early and mid-July, SLORC troops ordered the villagers who had been relocated along the road from Ka Li and around Kunhing town to cut thousands of bamboo, weave 100,000 sheets of thatch for roofing, cut hardwood to use as posts and build new military bases at Kunhing and Ka Li, Shan State. The villagers are not allowed to take any food with them to prevent them from giving food to members of the resistance. They were instead instructed to eat to their full before they went to work all day. All the rice and paddy which the villagers had managed to bring from their old villages were confiscated and kept at the military bases, and rationed back to them once a week, but not their good nutritious rice. The soldiers took the villagers' rice for themselves and rationed out poor quality rice from their supplies. (Source: *S.H.A.N*)
- On August 9, 1997, troops from LIB. 701 seized 90 villagers, including women and children, from Baw Galeet and Gor Theh Doe village in Toungoo district, Karen State, and forced them to carry supplies to Bu Has Kee village on the next day. (Source: *KIC*)
- One person from each household of every ward in Matupi township, Chin State were ordered to do unpaid labor in Matupi-Mintut motor road construction since August 1997. Every household that fails to provide the quota have to pay 500 *kyats* to the local SPDC. (Source: *FTUB*)
- In September 1997, villagers from Seikku, Hsar Mu Taw, Kyauk Twin and Par Tha Yaypyu were ordered to provide labor without any pay, to construct a motor

road from Phaung Daw to Pha Thar Yebyu, Tenasserim Division. (*Source: KIC*)

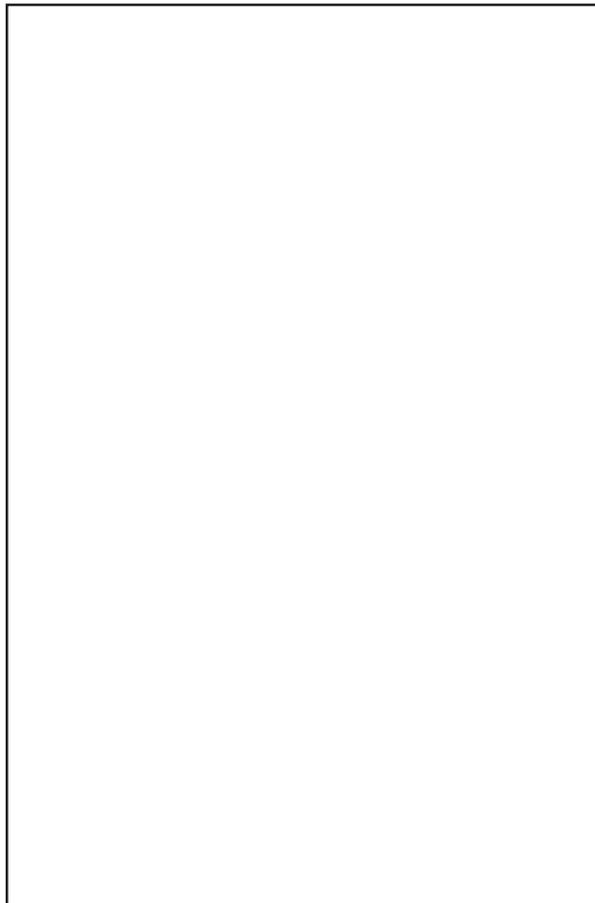
- On September 21, 1997, Lt. Kyaw Zaw Lin from IB.25 stationed at Thuka border gate between Thom Pa Pun in Thailand and Taung Thonlon in Burma arrested the travelers at the gate including U San Thein and seven of his friends who were on their way back to Kanbauk, Tenasserim Division. About 30 civilians were arrested and taken as porters with the military column. U San Thein and other porters contracted malaria and could not carry on with the portage. Lt. Kyaw Zaw Lin beat them up and left two of them behind without medical assistance. Both were taken to a nearby village when the villagers found them, but U San Thein died later. (*Source: ABSDF*)
- Since October 12, 1997, SLORC troops led by Major Soe Phyu, commander of LIB. 515, have ordered the villagers who had been forced to move to the town of Laikha during the months of August-September to work without pay. Each day, 50 men between the age of 18 and 45 have to go and work along the Laikha-Murngkerng and Liakha-Pang Long motor roads. They have to cut and clear the shrubs on both sides of the roads. In addition, they also have to work at the military base in the town, clearing the compound, digging trenches and building three layers of fences around the base. The villagers have to provide wood and bamboo for the fences. Moreover, growing green vegetables, chilies, potatoes and Soya beans etc., without pay for the SLORC troops of LIB. 515, 442 and IB. 55 has become a routine job for the villagers in Laikha. (*Source: SHRF*)
- Since October 1997, Tactical Command (1) Commander Soe Thein has ordered the civilian population in the village tracts of Ho Parng and Ka Li, Kunghin township, Shan State, to repair the 26-mile-long motor roads between Kali-Kunghin-Pha Larng. In addition, the villagers have to cut and gather fire-wood for the army. Each village tract has to provide 1,000 Waa (Waa is pieces of about 2-foot-long firewood piled up properly into an armspan-wide and armspan-tall stack). The firewood is to be used in constructing a SLORC Pagoda in Kunhing. The site for the construction of the pagoda is in Quarter 2, and almost all the residences in the area have been demolished to make way for the site. (*Source: SHRF*)
- In October, 1997, to clear the KNU 4th brigade area and also to build the Bone Ti to Tavoy motor-road, the following troops that were under the command of Tactical Command 3 of LID. 66 were sent into the area. LIB. 5, LIB. 6, IB. 14 arrived Ka-htee-ha village on October 10, 1997. IB. 205 troops led by Lt-

Col. Win Htein arrived at Thukha border camp, IB. 104 troops led by Lt-Col. Thein Htay arrived at Minthamee, Ka-laud-don, Ahmoe border camps. Troops from LIB. 202 and IB. 280 under LID. 22 also arrived at that area. The total strength of these troops was about 1000 and were accompanied by about 500 forced porters. (*Source: KIC*)

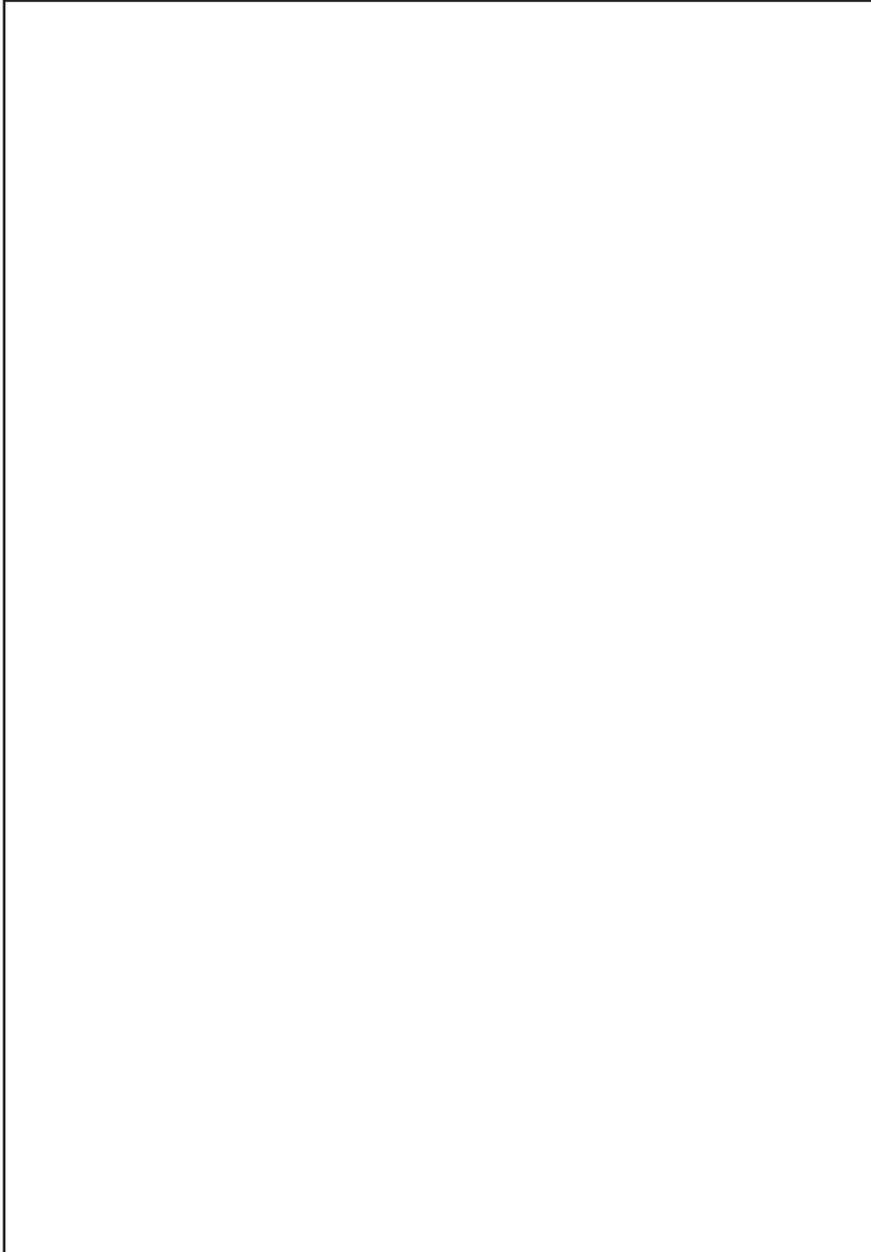
- SPDC has claimed that civilians would be no long used as unpaid laborers in the railway construction projects across the country, and instead the military soldiers would be used. However, since November 1997, villagers from Kalong Hta, Oaktayan, Yange, Ayekani, Wonpho, Sanchi and Dudaung villages in Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division have been forced to work at the Ye-Tavoy railway construction. Between five to twenty persons from each village are conscripted to work 7-10 days at the construction sites. Most of the work is repairing the ruining railway route, cleaning the wood along the railway route and replacing the decaying railway piles. Some are forced to dig the rock for the construction of the railway. When the local people are unable to go and work as forced laborers, they have to find a substitute for 300 *kyats* per day. In the Eindayaza-Natkyizin section of the Ye-Tavoy railway construction, troops from LIB. 407 led by Battalion Commander Second Lt. Kan Win forced the local villagers from Sinku, Mintha, Kyatkettaw, Phaya Thonesu, and Natkyizin villages to provide forced labor. Each forced laborer is required to work two days per week and has to provide a one foot high and 10 ft wide pile of gravel or small rock for the concrete within to two. If a laborer fails to provide the quota, he is not allow to go back home. Troops from LIB. 407 collect the piles of gravel and small rock provided by the laborers to sell them to the Total oil company. No money is given to the laborers. In addition to the free labor, the troop also forcibly use the 50 bullock carts from the village every day without pay. (*Source: ABSDF*)
- SLORC troops have constructed a compound at Thingan Nyinaung which is on the road between Myawaddy and Kawkareik in Karen State since November 1997. The compound is a big one with a tall fence of barbed wire and a minefield outside. This compound is to be the detention compound for the Burmese people repatriated from Thailand. SLORC is building a new Kawkareik- Myawaddy road and more than 20,000 people are needed to construct it. So, it is planned to use the repatriated refugees from Thailand in that project as forced laborers before they are allowed to go back home. It is learnt that they will be allowed back home only after the construction is finished. (*Source: ABSDF*)
- In December 1997, people in Mai Sert in Shan State were ordered to pay 200-300 *kyats* per household for the repairment of the motor road between Mai Sert

and Mai Pyin, according to the order by the township LORC. In addition, they had to provide one person for a week to work as unpaid laborers on the construction. People had to bring their own food and instruments. They were also ordered to provide meat for the military guarding the construction of the road. (*Source: WPLHRC*)

(See also under “Personal Accounts,” interviews 5, 7, 9, 10, 14, 16, 19, 24, 27, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 71, 73, 74, 76, 77, 79, 81, 82, 83, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102 and 103)

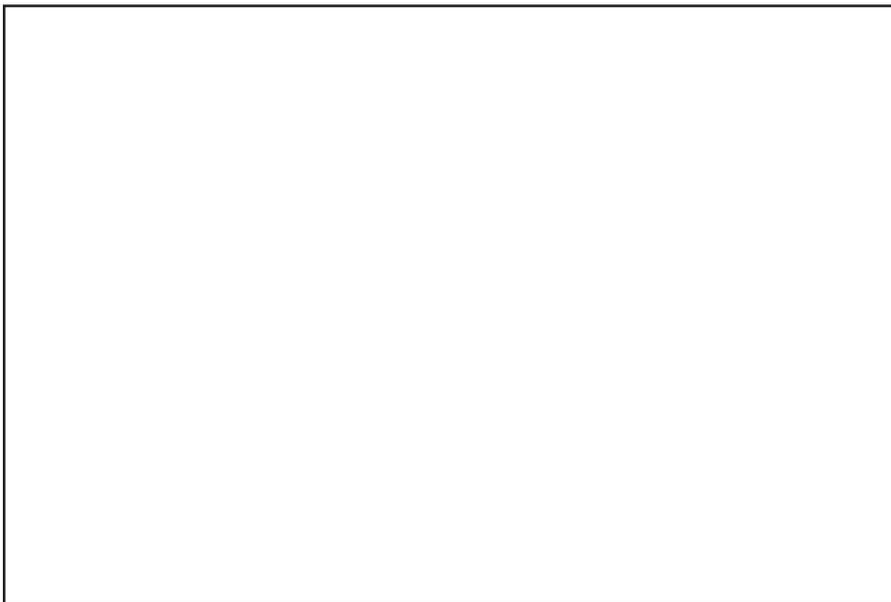
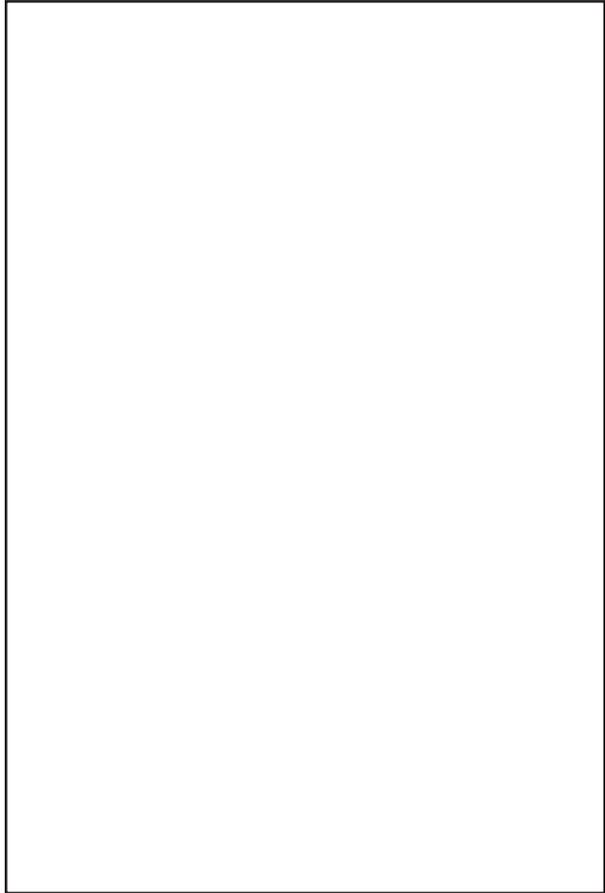


Prison labor- a prisoner working in prison labor site, outside Mandalay prison. (Photo by N. Dunlop)



Civilians seen at the forced labor site in Hopone township, Shan State. (Photo by KNPP)

Prisoners are used for a construction of a road along Mandalay Palace wall in Mandalay. (Photo by N. Dunlop)



Civilians working on the Rangoon-Mandalay Highway motor road in Pegu. (photo by N. Dunlop)