

## 5. Forced Relocation and Internally Displaced Persons

### 5.1. Background

The policy of SLORC/SPDC, in the case of any form of armed resistance has amounted to “drain the ocean so the fish cannot swim”. In other words, they undermine civilian populations until they can no longer sustain themselves or carry out opposition movements. This is the fundamental idea behind the Four Cuts policy - to cut links of intelligence, food, money, and recruits between armed opposition groups and local civilians. The military uses forced relocations as a tool for primarily two purposes: 1) development projects, and 2) as part of its counter insurgency operations. Villagers are relocated to make way for development projects and also used as unpaid laborers on such projects. By moving villages, the SLORC/SPDC effectively deprives ethnic opposition groups of any local support. In the new sites, villagers are under complete military control and are used further as a rotating source of extortion money as well as forced labor in various projects.

People appear to be forcibly relocated in Burma on account of ethnic origin or based on what SLORC/SPDC perceives to be their political beliefs. Death threats, ill-treatment and other forms of harassment and intimidation often accompany relocation. In addition, people are forced to survive under harsh life-threatening conditions in the relocation sites, including overcrowding, lack of sanitation, and unsafe drinking water. In June 1997, 28 victims of forced relocation died of dysentery in the Pa Long relocation camp in Loikaw Township, Karenni State. It is believed that the illness was transmitted from the Shadaw relocation camp where an unknown number of people died from the same illness. (*Source: KNPP*)

Countless numbers of people in some areas have been given no choice but to leave their homes. These people are victims of relocation brutally enforced by the army. In areas where there is suspected opposition, some or even all of the civilian population are forced at gunpoint to move into relocation sites and are told that they cannot return until opposition groups surrender. They are also threatened with death if they do not obey. Their homes, crops and livestock are often destroyed. Some 100 villages between the Pon and Salween rivers in Karenni State were ordered to move to relocation sites beside SLORC/SPDC army camps at Shadaw and Ywa Thit.

The order stated that anyone seen in or around these villages after June 7, 1996 would be “considered an enemy,” an official euphemism for shoot to kill on sight. Such forced relocation of civilians is just one of the many clear violations of humanitarian law, the law of armed conflict, which the Tatmadaw commits regularly. Similarly “scorched earth” campaigns have been conducted in central Shan State and Pupan district of Karen State.

Forced relocations occur not only as a result of the four-cut campaign against civilians, but also because SLORC/SPDC needs space to build its infamous “infrastructure projects”. From the time SLORC/SPDC came into power in 1988, it implemented several infrastructure projects aimed at attracting increased international investment. The regime claims that these “development projects” are designed for the long-term benefit of all, because they create the infrastructure necessary for improving the livelihood of the community as a whole. However, civilians in the regions have suffered the loss of their native land for these supposed “development” projects. Forced relocation and other forms of human rights violations by Tatmadaw most commonly occur along the border areas where the army is engaged in military operations or regional development projects. Sadly, even when human rights abuses committed by the regime are known to foreign businesses, the companies turn a blind eye to the suffering and continue to invest. Prime examples include the Yadana Gas Pipeline and the Ye-Tavoy Railway in Southern Burma. Both of these projects are enormously important economically to the military regime. As of November 1997, Unocal, a partner foreign oil company of the Yadana Gas Pipeline stated on the homepage of its Web that, “no villages in the vicinity of the pipeline route have been relocated for the benefit of this project. Unocal would oppose any such relocations”. However, a half-page advertisement placed in the Bangkok Post English Newspaper, on April 17, 1995, paid for by the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT), unequivocally confirmed that at least 11 villages had in fact been relocated to facilitate the pipeline project. It stated that, “Myanmar has recently cleared the way by relocating a total of 11 villages that would otherwise obstruct the passage of the Gas Resource Development Project.”

## 5.2. KAREN STATE

### 5.2.1. Papun district

In February and March 1997, SLORC/SPDC began a campaign to forcibly relocate or obliterate all villages in the hills of Papun district, northern Karen State, and eastern Nyaunglaybin district, straddling the border of Karen State and Pegu Division. The main region affected extends approximately 50 km (30 miles) to both the north and

south of the town of Papuan in northern Karen State, and from the Salween River, 50 km (25 miles) east of Papun to Shwekyin townships, another 50-60 km (30-35 miles) west of Papun in Nyaunlaybin district of Pegu Division. This makes the total area of the region close to 10,000 square kilometers. These remote hilly areas dotted with small Karen villages averaging 10-20 families each, have always been difficult if not impossible for the SLORC/SPDC to control because the villagers always manage to flee before they arrive. As a result, SLORC/SPDC has been carrying out a campaign to both forcibly relocate those villages already close to their bases, where they can easily round up the population, and to obliterate all other villages without warning, hunting and killing on sight any villagers they find there.

There have been three main waves of village destruction, the first in March/April 1997. During the second wave in June, new patrols were sent out to burn all signs of habitation and food supplies and to hunt villagers hiding in the forest, to effectively "smoke" them out and shoot them to death. After the end of the rainy season in November 1997, the third wave took place. The newly-renamed SPDC sent out patrols to drive off the hiding villagers again and to burn and destroy the meager rice crops that many of them had managed to plant or harvest. In the areas south and east of Papun, most of the villages have been ordered to move. All villages in the Ka Dtaing Dtee area south of Papun have reportedly been ordered to move to Ka Dtaing Dtee, and villages east of Papun have been ordered to move to SPDC camps at Pah Heh (Pa Haik) and Toh Thay Pu. The worst hit areas are those which lie north, northwest and west of Papun, comprising the Yunzalin and Bilin river watersheds as well as the hills of eastern Shwekyin township, which lie further west and northwest of Papun, particularly in the upper Bilin river area. In these areas, many villages which are easily reached have been ordered to move to SPDC-controlled villages such as Meh Way, or to the Shwekyin-Kyaukkyi motor road where they are almost certainly used as forced labor to maintain roads. At least five villages (Wah May Kyo, Htee Muh Hta, Saw Oo Po, Saw Theh Kee, and Bweh Si Kee), were ordered to move to one such site known as Than Seit Min Lang.

Meh Way, a village of an estimated 200 households in the Bilin River valley, is one of the major relocation sites because it is just at the southern edge of one of the regions hardest hit by this campaign. At least 36 villages have been ordered to move to Meh Way. In early 1997, SLORC LIB. 546 established three military camps surrounding the people of Meh Way. After several thousand people were forced to move there and build huts in between these camps, they were then used for forced labor along with Meh Way villagers. They built and maintained these camps and were used as porters as well as human minesweepers with the search and destroy columns that went out to burn the villages and hunt villagers. Soldiers allowed each family in the village two tines (about 33 kg/ 72 lbs.) of rice per month.

The majority of the villages in these areas have simply been shelled and burned without warning. The shelters where villagers are hiding have also been burnt whenever they are found.

In the beginning approximately six SLORC/SPDC battalions were involved in operation, and now under SPDC the number has increased to at least 10 battalions. The battalions are regularly rotated in and out, so that altogether at least 23 different battalions have been involved at one time or another. The following is an incomplete list of troops that have been involved: Light Infantry Division 44 and 77; IB 19, 39, 57 and 59; LIB. 20, 36, 106, 107, 340, 341, 349, 350, 356, 391, 434, 546, 547, 548, 701, 703, 704, 706 and 710. These Battalions enter the area from Shwekyin and Papun, and some also operate out of camps at Meh Way, Pwa Ghaw, Toh Thay Pu, Pah Heh, Kyauk Nyat, Maw Pu, Kler Kyo, Baw Kwaw, Ler Mu Plaw and other locations.

The columns of 100 to 300 men move from village to village. On arrival near a village, the troops first shell it with mortars from the adjacent hills, then enter firing at anything that moves, proceeding to burn every house, farm/field hut, or other shelter found in the area. Paddy storage barns are especially sought out and burned in order to destroy the villagers' food supply. Village schools and churches are particularly targeted for burning. By the time the SPDC are finished, all that remains of a village is a flat plain of black ash. Any villagers seen in the villages, forests, or fields are shot on sight without being questioned or warned. The villagers generally hear up to a day in advance that an SPDC column is coming, so they flee further into the hills. Once the troops have destroyed their village and passed on, they survive in leaf shelters or small huts that they build in the forest where they try to continue tending their fields. Rice from those paddy storage barns that have not been destroyed is generally shared. Most live on plain rice with some jungle leaf soup, as well as salt if they are lucky enough to have it. SPDC troops simply shoot and eat all livestock that has been left behind.

In the region, 105 villages were ordered to relocate, 18 villages were completely burned down, and 10 others were partially burned. The population of these villages average about 100. This list is by no means complete, and right now the SPDC military patrols continue to burn villages and shoot villagers in the area. While sixty-two civilians were reportedly killed in the area, the true number is almost certainly twice that. Many more have also died of disease and hunger while in hiding. In 1997, at least 1,500 villagers from the area managed to escape to refugee camps in Thailand. This is a difficult and dangerous undertaking because of SPDC camps and patrols along the way as well as the landmines that are placed along many of the paths. (*Source: KHRG*)

### 5.2.2. Forced Relocation in Kya-ein-seik-kyi

Major Zaw Lin Htun from LIB. 356 called on the village headmen in Kya-ein-seik-kyi Township and Ye Township on September 22, 1997, and ordered eleven Mon villages and another eleven Karen villages to relocate by October 15, 1997. These villages were part of the joint-controlled area of NMSP and KNU. Villagers were threatened with death if they failed to comply with the order. Villagers were told to move to Taungbauk and Wai Thali villages. The name of the villages ordered to relocate thus far are: Bo Kadaw, Wai Thali (West), Kyettuyway Taung, Baydari, Kayoke Hmaw, Tanta Pyet, Kyauk Kya, Pha Kapo, Kyaukpo, Ayoe Kalain, Kunthee Khan (all Mon villages) and Shwe Pohut, Htee Pa Htaw, Kyeik Taung, Thara Gon, Taung Kalay, Tavoy Pauk, Chee Naung Chee, Saw Maw Sakan, Agar, Yele, and Htee pale (all Karen villages). (*Source: Alert*)

### 5.2.3. Pa-an District

The situation in Pa-an District of central Karen State continues to worsen, particularly in the eastern parts of the district close to the Dawna mountains and the Thai border. By February 1997 the villages of Ta Ku Kraw, Kwih Pa Taw and Noh Law Bler (comprising a total of over 150 households), were forced to move, and Ta Ku Kraw was burned. Villagers were ordered to move to Naw Deh, where some went and now live in makeshift shelters with no way to survive. However, most of them fled into the forest where they are now hiding and struggling to barely survive. Then, in February and March 1997, SLORC/SPDC ordered the villages of Tee Hseh Ker, Naw Ter Kee, Bee T'Ka, Kaw Per Nweh Ko, Kwih Sgheh, Tee Baw Blaw, Ler Dah and possibly several more to move. Even though Bee T'Ka, the largest of these, has over 300 households it was given only three days to move to Taung Zone army camp, and the villagers were told that anyone seen there after March 6 would be shot on sight. The village was quickly abandoned as the villagers fled to the homes of relatives or to the forest. Later in March, the KNLA used the absence of the villagers as an opportunity to make a heavy attack against SLORC/SPDC troops near the village. SLORC/SPDC suffered significant casualties, and sent word out for the villagers to come back and act as a human shield around them. However, most villagers were frightened and ignored the call. They remain scattered throughout the area.

A similar situation exists slightly further north, where SLORC/SPDC troops ordered Noh Ray Tee Per and Ta Wih Koh villages to move to Dta Greh in March with an early April deadline. The troops also burned 16 houses and shot one villager dead in Tee Wah Klay village on March 21, 1997. Villages around Tee Wah Klay have yet to be given forced relocation orders. Most of the people from Tee Wah Klay, Per

Way, Thay Mo Pah Kee, Day Law Pya, and Meh Pleh Wah Kee, as well as those from the relocated villages of Noh Ray Tee Per and Ta Wih Koh, have fled into the forests. They fear that the SLORC/SPDC troops who regularly patrol there will hurt them. Most of the villagers live in hiding in the hills, and medics who have visited them report that many children have already died of stomach illnesses and malaria. As of April 1997, at least 16 children had died of illness just in the villages surrounding Noh Ray Tee Per.

Just south of Tee Wah Klay area in the western part of the Dawna Range, the eight villages of Naw Ter Kee, Pleh Wah Hta, Taw Ghoh Hta, Noh Kheh, Pa Wih Kee, Paw Tee Hta, Paw Tee Wah, and Kyaw Law Kloh have also been forced to move. Starting in November 1996 everyone in these villages was ordered to stay inside the village together with their livestock - an impossible demand to put on subsistence farmers - or be shot on sight. Then in January SLORC/SPDC began forcibly moving them to Thu K' Bee.

The situation for villagers in these areas of Dta Greh township is increasingly desperate and unstable. They have little or no food, no medicine, and face the constant threat of discovery and arrest by SPDC patrols. Many are in hiding in the hills of the Dawna Range. The KNLA has been using the range as a base area to launch attacks on SPDC units in the plains to the west. The KNLA has planted these hills heavily with landmines, making flight difficult and dangerous for the villagers.

SLORC/SPDC military units responsible for the forced relocations and other abuses have included Light Infantry Battalions LIB. 547, 548, 549, 338 and 357, and Infantry Battalions IB. 28, 36 and 97. The troops are regularly rotated to prevent them from becoming too familiar or friendly with the villagers. For example, LIB. 547, 548 and 338 have now been redeployed elsewhere and IB. 28 has been replaced by troops from LID. 99. (*Source: KHRG*)

#### **5.2.4. Forced relocation in newly SLORC/SPDC - occupied Dooplaya district**

In February 1997, SLORC/SPDC mounted a mass military offensive against large areas of Dooplaya District which were strongly or partly controlled by the Karen National Union (KNU). Dooplaya District lies in central Karen State, from Kawkareik and Myawaddy in the north to Three Pagodas Pass in the south. Troops from six different Light Infantry Divisions were involved in the offensive, which led to the capture of most KNU-held areas and the flight of over 10,000 civilians to Thailand. Many more were trapped inside their villages and home areas by the rapid advance of the SLORC/SPDC troops.

SLORC/SPDC claimed to have brought “peace” to the area, however, SLORC/SPDC troops in the newly-occupied areas just 10 or more kilometers further inside were already restricting the movements of villagers, forcing them to work on military access roads, and looting villages. As part of the clampdown, an increasing number of villages throughout Dooplaya are now being forced to relocate. At first, small villages, particularly if they were in remote areas, and villages from which most of the population had fled were ordered to relocate to larger villages. Since then, people living on the outskirts of many villages have been ordered to move their houses into the center of the village. Now, since the beginning of the rainy season in May/June, SLORC/SPDC troops in southern Dooplaya have begun entering stable, established villages which are not close to Army camps and ordering them at gunpoint to move to SLORC/SPDC-controlled locations near Army camps or along main roads. Five of these relocation sites are Ku Du Gweh (a.k.a. Meh Pra), Taung Zone (a.k.a. Lay Noh), and Anand Gwin (a.k.a. Noh Chut Neh), which are along the Thanbyuzayat - Three Pagodas Pass road, and Kaneh Kamaw, and Beh Hla Mu (a.k.a. Ker), which are north of Ye near the Ye - Thanbyuzayat road. At least one village has been ordered to move to Three Pagodas Pass village at the Thai border.

The troops generally order the villagers at gunpoint to move within 3 to 6 days, and in some cases stay in the village to watch the villagers dismantle their houses to ensure that they move to the designated site. Once at the relocation sites, the villagers get no food or help from SLORC/SPDC, but they still have to give food and money to the troops. They are not allowed to work freely in their fields. They are only allowed to leave the relocation site in the morning and must return by evening, which makes it impossible to get any work done if fields are located any distance away. They are not allowed to sleep at their field huts, and even while working in their fields with valid movement passes some villagers have been arrested, beaten, or taken as porters. All of this is happening during the rainy season, which is the crucial rice-growing season. The SLORC/SPDC restrictions have prevented most villagers from growing a crop sufficient to feed their families for the next year. Heavy rains have worsened the situation so that many crops have been damaged or wiped out. Since villagers cannot expect support from SLORC/SPDC, when their rice runs out they will starve or be forced to flee.

Villagers report that even villages that have not been ordered to move are disintegrating because so many people have fled fearing torture and other abuses. People particularly want to avoid repeated demands for guns, and the detention, beatings, and torture associated with this. One villager interviewed in this report fled his village after witnessing many of the villagers being severely beaten, only to find himself in a new village where he was used every day for forced labor building fences around an Army camp. He decided to return to his home village, where they were just receiving

orders to relocate. He finally risked fleeing the area altogether. Many villagers in Dooplaya are facing this same situation. However, Thai authorities are currently denying new refugees asylum stating that refugees must go back home because “there is no more fighting”. However, there is presently no possibility of refugees returning to Dooplaya District. Given that conditions are unsafe, residence suffer numerous indignities, and that current SLORC/SPDC activities in the region are only likely to increase, Thailand can expect a steady flow of refugees from Burma for the foreseeable future. (*Source: KHRG*)

### 5.3. Relocation in Karenni State

In 1996, a massive relocation in Karenni State took place. As many as 75,000 people have been affected by SLORC/SPDC’s mass relocation orders in Karenni State where the local population is between 200,000 and 300,000. The only areas that remain unaffected by the relocation orders are in southern and central Karenni, where the Karen Nationalities People’s Liberation Front (KNPLF) operates. The KNPLF signed a cease-fire agreement with SLORC/SPDC in 1994 that still holds. In other areas, civilians were ordered to move to various relocation sites. The primary intention of this mass relocation was to cut off all possibility of civilian support for the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP). SLORC/SPDC broke a cease-fire agreement with the KNPP in June 1995.

Some villagers were marched at gunpoint to relocation sites without warning but most were issued written orders to move within just seven days or be “considered enemies”, in other words, shot on sight without question. Thousands of villagers went to the relocation sites as ordered, others, particularly those far from SLORC/SPDC bases, fled into the forests surrounding their villages. Over 3,000 escaped to Karenni refugee camps in Thailand after several difficult and dangerous days, sometimes weeks, of walking during the 1996-97 rainy season.

Since relocations, SLORC/SPDC has still not allowed people to resettle in their home villages or provided them any assistance. The situation throughout Karenni State grows increasingly critical. Witnesses state that never before in history has the situation been so terrible in Karenni State as it is now. Even people from villages and towns who have not been ordered to move are facing severe restrictions. For example, in Shadaw, the villagers have been forced to build a fence around the entire town. Every town is now surrounded by checkpoints, many modes of transport have been cut and people are not allowed to go anywhere without military permission.

The SLORC/SPDC provides nothing whatsoever at the relocation sites, and villagers

were only able to bring very little food with them when they arrived at the relocation sites. On arrival at most of the relocation sites, the villagers were to hand over whatever rice they had to the SLORC/SPDC. Rice was then rationed out to them at varying rates. For example, at Maw Chee, the villagers received eight milk-tines per person per week (only 1/2 the amount required to feed the average adult). Even at this rate of distribution, the rice only lasted the first 1-2 months. In June 1996 at Shadaw and Ywathit relocation sites, SLORC/SPDC allowed many villagers one last chance to return to their villages for seven to ten days to collect food. Many villagers used this opportunity to escape into the forest. Then about one month after the June 1996 deadline for relocation, SLORC/SPDC troops launched an operation to tour the villages, burning and destroying all that remained of them. A similar operation was mounted again in January 1997. Some villages were totally burned down. For example, of the 98 villages between the Pon and Salween rivers that were ordered to move in 1996, sources reported that sixty to seventy were completely burned. In other villages the troops destroyed the best houses and rice barns and killed the villagers' livestock and cattle. Some villages were not destroyed but landmines were laid. In Baw Ghu Der Township, stepping on these mines later killed some villagers, both men and women.

At Nwa La Bo camp, SLORC/SPDC officials ordered each relocated family to grow three acres of beans, then harvest them and gather them in the camp to be distributed among the villagers. However, as soon as all the beans were gathered, the military loaded them onto trucks and took them away. At some of the camps, the Catholic Church tried to help the villagers with rice, medicines, blankets, etc. In almost every case, the SLORC/SPDC has confiscated or blocked all aid, demanding that rice and supplies be handed over to them for distribution. Of course, the materials never reach their intended destination.

When people first arrive in the relocation sites, nothing is prepared for them. They are the ones who must clear the area designated by the SLORC/SPDC in order to build houses. In Shadaw, after the villagers had finished clearing the site, troops decided that the area would be better used growing beans for the army, and ordered the people to clear and settle another place altogether.

Thousands of Karenni villagers are now living at SPDC-designated relocation sites including Shadaw, Ywathit, Daw Tama Gyi, Baw La Keh, Daw Tama, Tee Po Kloh, Kay Lia, Mar Kraw She, Maw Chee, Phasaung, and Nwa La Bo, in Karenni State.

In most of the relocation sites in Karenni State, many people are dying of diseases. The water supply is totally inadequate and usually contaminated. In late 1996 and early 1997, every day as many as three to four die, mostly children, mainly from

malaria, dysentery and respiratory diseases. The sites have no clinics. Even where there are clinics, no medicines are available and people are prevented from going and buying them. In June 1997, 28 victims of forced relocation died in the Pa Long relocation camp in Loikaw Township, Karenni State, from dysentery. It is believed that the illness was transmitted from the Shadaw relocation camp where an unknown number of people died from the same illness. (*Source: KNPP*)

In most sites the SLORC/SPDC troops order the people to work for them. They have to cut bamboo and wooden posts to build barracks and fences. In Shadaw, Daw Tama Gyi and Tee Po Kloh sites, people are forced to do road construction work. They are also forced to build fences around some of the relocation camps, to dig trenches, and to do labor as sentries. The sites are concentration camps. People are like inmates and must get a pass at the sentry post in order to go in and out. Landmines have been laid around the camps. Military defenses are especially prevalent at Shadaw, Maw Chee and Ywathit sites, where SLORC/SPDC fears retaliation by the KNPP. SLORC/SPDC have built military posts inside the relocation sites and have arrested people staying there under suspicion of having had contact with opposition groups. (*Source: KNPP*)

## **5.4. Forced Relocation in Tenasserim Division**

### **5.4.1. Yadana Gas Pipeline Project**

The Yadana Pipeline Project is a joint-venture involving TOTAL, a Paris, France-based Oil Company. Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), is a company wholly owned and operated by SLORC/SPDC and UNOCAL Corporation, a California, USA-based Oil Company. The pipeline project involves the development and production of natural gas from the Yadana natural gas field located in the Andaman Sea, approximately 43-miles south of the Burmese shore. The pipeline is to run from the Yadana field to the Thai border. The joint venture project specifically includes a 251-mile pipeline offshore of the Union of Burma and a 39-mile onshore pipeline across Burma. Hundreds of thousands of villagers have been affected by the pipeline project by being relocated either to work directly on the project or on other infrastructure projects which will support the pipeline project including new roads and a railway line. SLORC/SPDC's LIB. 273, based in Kanbaw village is responsible for general pipeline security as well as security for the base camp itself.

Since construction began, many villages in the region have been relocated in order to continue laying pipeline into Thailand. In February 1997, SLORC/SPDC LIB. 273 relocated five villages in Kywe Thone Nyima village tract, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim

Division, including Mae Taw, Cha Bone, Chaung Phyar, Mae Yaung, and Mae Than Taung villages. These villages lie just ten to fifteen kilometers north of the Yadana Gas Pipeline. (*Source: ABSDF*)

#### **5.4.2. Forced Relocation Between the Tavoy - Mergui-Kathaung Road and the Tenasserim River**

Between September 1996 and January 1997, almost every village between the Tavoy-Mergui-Kawthaung road in the west and the Tenasserim River in the east, from Palauk in the north to Tenasserim town in the south has been ordered to relocate on one or more occasions. The area measures about 120 km north to south and 30 km east to west. At least 35 to 40 villages, ranging in size from 20 to 150 households each, have been affected by the SLORC/SPDC relocation orders. The affected area is almost entirely populated by Karen people, dotted with some Burman villages along the coastal reaches of main rivers. The majority of the villages ordered to relocate are Karen, however, several Burman villages have been ordered to move into the center of their village, rather than to the outskirts. Villagers are generally given between 24 hours and a few days to move. They are ordered to destroy their own homes by removing the floor, walls, and roof. If even one person fails to follow these orders, SLORC/SPDC soldiers burn down the entire village. Several villages have already been completely or partially burned, including Pyi Cha, May Way, Wah Tho, Ku The, Wa Thu Lo, Ka Weh, Wah Lo, Noh Aw, and Ta Po Kee. The troops have even been known to burn down previously SLORC/SPDC-run schools.

Villagers have been ordered to move along the roadside of the Tavoy-Mergui-Kawthaung road and the Boke-KapYaw-Kyay Nan Ding road or to Burman villages on the lower Tenasserim River. SLORC/SPDC does not compensate the relocated villagers for their losses. They do not receive land, building materials, or any other assistance.

#### **5.4.3. Other relocations in Tenasserim Division**

The SLORC/SPDC offensive against the Karen in the Mergui-Tavoy District began in February 1997. Thousands of villagers fled their homes for safety on the Thai-Burma border. However, some villagers chose not to leave their homes. As a result, the following four villages remain: 1) Seik Ku, 2) Hsar Mu Taw, 3) Kyauk Twin, and 4) Par Thar Yay Bu. Since the offensive began, SLORC/SPDC continues to order these villages to provide able bodied men and women to be used as porters and forced labor. In September 1997, the SLORC/SPDC sent forced relocation orders for all remaining villagers in the four villages to move to Thauung Thone Lone village. (*Source: KNU*)

An order of relocation was issued by Lt. Col. Win Htein, commander of IB.25 based in Tavoy, Tenasserim Division, on December 21, 1997. See Phyone, Myee Kanbaw, Kami, Nyaungdon, Hnin Payoke, Kyethaein, and Thabyu Chaung, Pynthadaw villages located on the east side of Gamong stream in the Myee Kanbaw village tract were ordered to move to the west side of Gamong stream. The commander called on the village SPDC leaders and issued an order of relocation. He warned the villagers to cooperate with the military and inform the activities of the KNU in the region, otherwise, the villagers would face another relocation order. An order was issued after the continued fighting between the SPDC troops and the KNU in the region.

Since early January 1997, SLORC/SPDC troops have increased their patrols into the relocation areas to hunt out and execute villagers in hiding, re-issue orders to move, and burn villages which have not cooperated. Battalions involved include Infantry Battalions 280, 101, 17, 103, 19 and 433. The overall operation seems to be aimed at clearing out the entire civilian population between the coastal plains and the Tenasserim River 50 km to the east, using newly displaced people to build military roads into these areas so SPDC can set up Army posts throughout the region. This makes it more difficult for Karen soldiers to operate in the area, and provides SPDC with positions that they can use as a springboard for attacks on the southern Tenasserim River valley in the future. According to villagers doing the labor, the SPDC is in a great hurry to finish these roads. Those still hiding in the area say that once the roads come, they will have to flee. Over 1,000 have already fled the villages and relocation sites to reach areas along the Tenasserim River to the east, which are under Karen National Union control. Many have scattered among existing villages and depend upon the charity of villagers who live along the river. Very few have made it to Thailand, but since there are no refugee camps for them in this part of Thailand anyway, they are likely to end up on construction sites, doing bonded labor or sweatshop labor. (*Source: KHRG*)

## 5.5. Relocation in Shan State

Forced relocation in Shan State is not new. All kinds of human rights abuses including massive forced relocations were committed by the Burmese Army under the pretext of driving away the Chinese Nationalist KMT in 1950. The situation worsened after the military seized power in 1960 as resistance forces sprang up all over Shan State. In their attempts to crush the forces of the opposition, the BSPP Army devised its strategy of "Four Cuts", aimed at cutting the food, funds, intelligence and recruits local civilians had been providing the resistance armies. These often involved forcing whole village tracts to move to strategic sites which could be closely guarded.

Throughout the past thirty years, large areas of Shan State have been repeatedly disrupted in this way. However, the massive forced relocations begun by the SLORC/SPDC in central Shan State in 1996 and 1997 was totally unprecedented in scale.

In early January 1996, the Shan Mong Tai Army (MTA) led by Khun Sa surrendered to the SLORC/SPDC military regime. However, large numbers of ex-MTA troops refused to surrender, and instead began moving north from the former MTA areas along the Thai-Burma border to join the other Shan resistance groups, the Shan State Army and the Shan State National Army, who had cease-fire agreements with SLORC/SPDC. These ex-MTA soldiers regrouped themselves into a new army (the Shan United Revolutionary Army -SURA). By late January 1996, these breakaway Shan troops had crossed to the north of the Salween River, and began heading further north to the area of Larng Kher. SLORC/SPDC attempted to block their passage. By February SURA troops had penetrated central Shan State, and began operating as a guerrilla force there. The SLORC/SPDC responded with drastic measures in early March, embarking upon a systematic program to relocate all villages in suspected rebel areas to towns or sites along main roads and near SLORC/SPDC army bases. SLORC/SPDC's aim was to prevent the villagers from providing any support to the rebels and thereby force the Shan soldiers to surrender.

Beginning in March, 1996, the SLORC/SPDC troops ordered village after village in eight townships — Larng Kher, Murng Nai, Nam Zarng, Lai Kha, Murng Kerng, Kun Hing, Kee See and Murng Su — to move, turning once thriving farming communities into depopulated “free-fire” zones. Altogether 21,993 households in 605 villages of eight townships were forcibly relocated during 1996. With an average household containing at least five people, it was estimated that well over 100,000 people were affected by these forced relocations in 1996. The area from which people were relocated covered approximately 5,000 square miles.

Most of the villagers are too afraid to disobey relocation orders and move to the relocation sites. Unless they have relatives in the area they can stay with, they must build their own huts, sometimes sharing them with other displaced families. In most cases, the land close to the relocation sites is too arid to plant, or is already claimed by other villagers living in the area. People survive by selling their possessions and finding work as day laborers for a cheap wage. Many of the children are seen begging on the street.

Some people decide to hide near their villages in the jungle. Those who choose the jungle do so because they are either afraid they are too poor to survive in the relocation sites, or, particularly with aging people, they simply feel too insecure to leave their

homes. Thus, they stay close to their farms, secretly planting their old fields, or rely on stores of rice hidden nearby. Because they cannot stay in their old villages, they construct makeshift huts among clumps of trees, or in thick bush, where they are not easily visible.

Others who decide to seek food and shelter elsewhere because of both the difficulties of surviving in the relocation sites and their fear of SLORC/SPDC troops, move to other parts of Shan State. Sometimes they have relatives there or believe they can find work. However, most seek refuge in Thailand. Some of the relocated villagers travel straight to Thailand after receiving relocation orders without ever going to relocation sites. Others have come to Thailand desperate after trying to survive as long as a year or more in hiding near their villages or in a relocation site.

### **5.5.1. 1997 Relocation in Shan State**

In March 1997, SLORC/SPDC began relocating previously untouched villages in seven out of eight townships already affected by the 1996 relocations. They also moved preexisting relocation sites closer to towns, to bring villagers under further control. The only exception was Murng Su Township. Relocations were not continued after 1996 because SURA troops were not operating there.

In May 1997, the SURA began operating further south-east, so the relocation program spread south-east to the township of Murng Pan. Then in December 1997, relocations began to the east of the Salween to Murng Paeng, and from January-February 1998, the area of relocation spread to western townships of Loi Lem and Ho Pong. The SPDC still does not provide for relocated villagers, and continues to use them for forced labor. SPDC uses them as porters for road-construction, and forces them to work on nearby army camps building barracks and fences. From these areas in Shan State, 33,964 households from 873 villages were relocated during 1997. With each household containing an average of five people, this means that some 169,820 people were affected by forced labor in 1997. The affected areas now total approximately 7,000 square miles.

### **5.5.2. Forced Relocation in Kunhing**

In 1996, relocation began in March, with villages between the Nam Pang and Salween Rivers and south of the Kunhing -Murng Paeng road. Villagers were ordered to move to three main relocation sites. In May, most of the villages south of Kunhing and west of the Nam Pang were ordered to move into four main sites.

Between March and May 1997, SLORC/SPDC began clearing the area south of

Kunhing. All of the relocation sites from 1996, as well as remaining villages that had not been relocated in 1996, were ordered to move north to the town of Kunhing, or just east of the town, on the Kunhing - Murng Paeng road.

Villagers in the Keng Kham area were ordered to move by May 9, 1997. They were given three days to do so. SLORC/SPDC used some of the villagers as porters during the move.

### **5.5.2.1. Conditions in Relocation Sites**

In 1996, at the relocation sites of Wan Lao and Sai Khao, south of Kunhing, villagers were allowed to return for five days at a time to farm their fields. Following the March 1997 relocations to Kunhing, villagers were strictly forbidden to travel farther than three miles from their sites. However, during the rice-planting season beginning in August 1997, some farmers in areas closer to Kunhing were allowed to return to their fields for seven days at a time to plant and then harvest rice. Afraid they would be shot anyway, farmers reportedly harvested in haste, simply cutting the paddy and putting it in bags, not leaving it in the fields to thresh.

During 1997, villagers relocated around Kunhing were forced to cut thousands of pieces of bamboo, weave roofing, cut hardwood for posts and build bases for SLORC/SPDC troops at Kunhing and Kali. They also had to build fences around the bases, and man check-points along the main road.

### **5.5.3. Relocation in Murng Pan**

In 1996, relocation began in mid-March in the tract of Nong Hee, carried out by troops from SLORC/SPDC LIB. 247. They moved villages from Nam Zarng and Murng Nai. Most of the villages north of the Nam Zarng - Kunhing road were forced down to sites along the road, or to sites near the army base at Ton Hoong Long.

In April 1996, SLORC/SPDC IB. 55 of Murng Pan, ordered villagers in Loi Lat tract southeast of Nam Zarng to move to Wan Nong Koong Mong. Villagers were given between 3-5 days to move.

In 1997, beginning in March, all the relocation sites north of the main Nam Zarng - Kunhing road were moved to existing sites along the road, such as Kho Lam and Hai Neng. The relocation site of Wan Nong Koong Mong was itself relocated to Nam Zarng.

### **5.5.3.1. Conditions in the Relocation Sites**

In 1996, SLORC/SPDC provided nothing for those living in the relocation sites. In the Kho Lam site, it was reported that as many as 40 people had died of illness in the first month of relocation. Most of the time, villagers were forbidden to return to their fields. Villagers in Ton Hoong relocation site were forced to work for the SLORC/SPDC soldiers at the nearby army bases building barracks. At Kho Lam they were forced to clear forests and grow beans for the troops of LIB. 510 stationed nearby.

In 1997, villagers relocated to Kho Lam cleared the sides of roads, dug ditches, fetched water, and gathered firewood for troops at the nearby army base. Although permission was granted for villagers from nearby villages to return to farm their fields, the fact that even those with permission were shot on sight meant that few dared to farm openly.

### **5.5.4. Forced Relocation in Laikha**

Relocation began in Laikha in March 1996. During 1996, 80 villages were moved to six main relocation sites, mostly along the Laikha - Murng Nawng road.

In March 1997, the SLORC/SPDC began relocating villagers staying in the relocation sites of Tard Mork (northeast of Laikha) down to relocation sites along the main Laikha - Murng Nawng road. On April 4, SLORC/SPDC troops fired shells into Tard Mork relocation site, killing three people and injuring another three. The villagers were then ordered to move again by April 8. On April 10, large sections of Tard Mork relocation site were burned down with some people being burned alive.

On June 27, 1997, SLORC/SPDC began ordering villagers in the relocation sites along the Laikha - Murng Nawng road to move to the town of Laikha itself. By July 3, all the villagers from the relocation site of Wan Thi had been moved to a site east of Laikha, and on July 7, all the villagers from Wan Sarn and Zalai Khum relocation sites were ordered to move to the same site.

By mid-July, all of the approximately 180 villages in the area east and northeast of the town, totaling about 40,000 people, had either been moved into the town or into the site of Parng Phone, where there is a large military base.

#### **5.5.4.1. Conditions in the Relocation Sites**

Following the mass re-relocation to Laikha in July 1997, eyewitnesses reported scenes of social chaos. Countless people were begging in the streets, camping in

temples, and under trees by the roadsides.

SLORC/SPDC also forced those who were being relocated to work. Villagers had to stand guard at quarter-mile intervals along the Laikha - Murng Nawng road and watch for Shan soldiers. At each point, two people guarded together for a week at a time, both day and night.

After being relocated to Laikha, villagers who had fields close to the main Laikha-Murng Nawng road were charged 180 kyats in return for written permission to work their fields.

### **5.5.5. Forced Relocation in Kee See**

In 1996, relocation in Kee See was carried out between March and July. Written relocation orders were sent to villages, instructing that they move within five days. Villages to the northeast of Kee See were relocated down to the Kee See - Murng Su road. Villages to the south of Kee See were relocated to sites close to the town or also along the Kee See-Murng Nawng road. Villagers around Murng Nawng were relocated to Murng Nawng itself or to sites along the Murng Nawng-Laikha road as well as the Murng Nawng - Kunhing road.

In March 1997, Wan Zing relocation site to the south of Murng Nawng was ordered to move to Laikha, and many of the houses in the site were burned down. In May, Parng Peng relocation site was moved to Laikha before being burned down. Other relocation sites around Murng Nawng, namely Nam Mong, Wiang Kao and Nong Aye, were also relocated to the town of Murng Nawng in May 1997.

#### **5.5.5.1. Conditions in the Relocation Sites**

In 1996, there were reports of villagers relocated to sites around Murng Nawng having to beg for food because they could not find work. Villagers in the relocation site in Murng Nang were forced to work for the nearby army camp. In Wang Zing relocation site, all the rice was confiscated from the villagers by the SLORC/SPDC and rationed out at the rate of two condensed milk cans per person.

In 1997, those relocated to existing relocation sites, such as villagers from Wan Zing who were relocated to the site of Parng Nim near Kho Lam, found it more difficult to survive due to the scarcity of land and food.

According to an order issued by SPDC commander of LIB. 242 on December 1, 1997, villagers relocated to Murng Nawng were not allowed to travel to farm their

fields farther than within a radius three miles from the town. If they wanted to go farther they had to ask for a pass that was good for just seven days, and could only take enough food for that period. Villagers relocated to Kee See were also not permitted beyond three miles of the town. SPDC troops in the area of Wan Khem deliberately destroyed field fences so that stray animals could enter and trample the villagers' remaining crops.

Since December 1997, villagers relocated to Murng Nawng have been forced to split rocks in the jungle in five days' shifts to build a wall around the military base, as well as dig trenches. They also must guard the motor roads in the area at half-mile intervals, two people at each spot for five days at a time.

### **5.5.6. Forced Relocation in Murng Kerng**

In April 1996, villages to the east of Nam Teng River were relocated by the SLORC/SPDC to sites along the main road north of Murng Kerng. Following the surrender of some SSNA troops in September 1996, some villagers were allowed to return home. However, in mid-November, when resistance activities by the SURA continued, the SLORC/SPDC once again ordered villagers to return to relocation sites.

In 1997, starting in April, SLORC/SPDC began ordering all the villages east of Murng Kerng that had not been relocated in 1996 to move to sites to the north and south of town. Several villages in Yang Loi tract several miles east of the town were burned to the ground. SLORC/SPDC troops also spread straw over the villagers' fields that were close to town and burned their rice seedlings. Village tracts to the very north of the township were also relocated in June to the town of Bang Kay Too on the main road.

On May 23, 1997, SLORC/SPDC troops of LIB.514 from Murng Kerng forced the people of several village tracts such as Wan Yab, Ton Pek, H Nar, Loi Yang, Nar Taed, Tong Zu, Ham Ngai and Ho Khai to move to Murng Kerng town. People in Wan Phen and Nar Phen also had to move to Kaesee town.

On June 1, 1997, Captain Naw Win, head of Murng Kerng Township LORC, issued a written order forcing all the people in the rural areas of Murng Kerng to move to the motor roads of the township. No one was permitted to cultivate his or her farms or fields. The relocation had to be completed within eight days beginning June 1, 1997. Any villages or houses that failed to move were burned down.

Following increased fighting between Shan and SLORC/SPDC troops in November

1997, and the defection of large numbers of local Shan militia to the Shan resistance, tracts to the west of Murng Kerng were also relocated to the town.

### **5.5.6.1. Conditions in the Relocation Sites**

In 1996, villagers relocated to sites along the main road north of Murng Kerng were forced to build the road as they went. It was forbidden to transport rice along the road north of Murng Kerng. No one was allowed to purchase more than one Pyi of rice at a time, to prevent them from supplying the Shan resistance.

Since 1997, villagers relocated along the road north and south of Murng Kerng have been forbidden to go back to their fields if they are located outside of a five miles radius from the town.

### **5.5.7. Forced Relocation in Murngnai**

In March 1996, soldiers from SLORC/SPDC IB.247 and IB.516 ordered villages in the area of Keng Tong (in the east of the township) to move to several relocation sites near military bases. Villages east of the Nam Teng river were ordered to move to three main sites; Wan Nong Koong Mong, Na Kan and Na Loi.

In early 1997, the relocation sites of Na Loi, east of Murng Nai, and all the villages in the area, were forced to move to the town of Murng Nai. In June, relocation sites around Keng Tong were also consolidated into two main sites. Villagers were given five days to move. In July 1997, the site of Wan Nong Koong Mong was moved to Murng Nai.

On July 28, 1997, Major Khin Than Aye of IB.64 ordered the leader of Mai Hai village tract, Shan State, to move all the villages, altogether 416 household, to Murngnai, Shan State. The movement was to be completed on July 31, 1997. On August 1, 1997, Major Khin Than Aye ordered Captain Maung Hla and 50 troops to take 30 laborers to go and finish dismantling the houses in Mai Hai village tract. The troops carried away the timber and corrugated iron sheets from the dismantled houses with 15 trucks to the base of IB.64. Later the materials were taken to be sold in Namzarng and Taunggyi.

#### **5.5.7.1. Conditions in Relocation Sites**

In 1996, rice was taken from the villagers in Keng Tong relocation site and rationed back in portions to last five days at a time. In 1997, rice was also confiscated from the relocated villagers in the Keng Tong area and given back at the rate of two tines

per day.

### **5.5.8. Forced relocations in Larng Kher**

In 1996, relocation began in March, and was carried out by SLORC/SPDC IB. 99 stationed at Larng Kher and IB. 55 from Murng Ban. Villagers were given between three and six days to the site of Nong Long, north-east of Larng Kher. SLORC/SPDC threatened to kill those that did not comply.

In 1997, ten more villages close to Larng Kher were ordered to move to Nong Long or Larng Kher itself.

#### **5.5.8.1. Conditions in the Relocation Sites**

At the relocation site, a barren patch of wasteland, nothing has been provided for villagers. Villagers must even build their own makeshift huts.

In 1996, villagers from fields up to two and a half hours' walk away were allowed to return to farm them for seven days at a time with written permission. Towards the end of the year as Shan resistance activity continued in the area, permission was denied.

During 1997, villagers with fields farther than about three miles from the relocation site were forbidden to go and tend them.

During 1997 and early 1998, large numbers of villagers in the Larng Kher area, including those who were forcibly relocated, have been ordered to work on the Larng Kher - Wan Hart road leading south from the town. To pave the road, villagers must split rocks. About 2,500 people are being forced to work this road each day.

### **5.5.9. Forced Relocation in Murng Su**

Relocations were conducted in May 1996 by SLORC/SPDC troops from Kunhing and Murng Su. The relocation program was not continued in 1997 because SURA troops were no longer operating in the area.

#### **5.5.9.1. Conditions in the Relocation Sites**

The relocated villagers at Murng Zarnng were allowed, if they asked and received permission to do so, to return to work in their fields for five days a week. One condition that SLORC/SPDC imposed was that they had to regularly present

themselves to the military authorities to have their names checked. Similarly, villagers relocated to Murng Ord were allowed to return to work their fields if they had a pass from the local military camp.

### **5.5.10. Forced Relocation in Murng Pan**

There was no forced relocation in this area in 1997. However, when the SURA began operating in Murng Pan, the SLORC/SPDC responded by ordering outlying villages to relocate to the town and in along the main road. On May 26, 1997, SLORC/SPDC ordered 47 villages in Murngpan Township to move from their villages. Villagers were given 12 days to move without being given specific places to reside. The soldiers who gave the orders said that it was to prevent villagers from offering support to Shan resistance troops in the area. Village tracts that were ordered to move include Ta Tae, Nar Law, and Nawng Yarng. This relocation of 47 villages affected over 2,000 houses, totaling at least 10,000 people in the area. On July 8, 1997, a group of unidentified rebels attacked a police check-point at the western gate of Murngpan. As a result, all the villagers in the village tracts of Tong Zu, Huay Zoi, Nar Wawn, Nam Maw Kung, Nawng Lur, Nawng Kwai, Woe Lai and Mark Khur Zae, were forced to move to Murngpan, Shan State.

#### **5.5.10.1. Conditions in the Relocation Sites**

Nothing was provided for the villagers in the relocation areas. Since relocations began in May 1997, villagers have not been allowed to travel outside of a radius of three kilometers from Murng Pan to cultivate their fields. Some of the villagers who were relocated to the town ended up buying plots of land to the west of town that had been confiscated by the army earlier in 1996.

### **5.5.11. Forced Relocation in Murng Paeng**

Many of the villages in the Murng Bu Long area were relocated by the SLORC/SPDC in 1993-94, when there was fighting between MTA and the local Lahu militia. However, the villages were later allowed to return to the area.

On December 22, 1997, following movement by Shan troops in the area, 24, villages, both Lahu and Shan, were ordered to move again to Murng Pu Long and Murng Leng. They were given only seven days to do so. (*Source: SHRF*)

## 5.6. Other Incidents of Forced Relocation

- At the beginning of 1997, the Coastal Region Military Command declared Pawa village tract, Mergui district as a free fire zone and ordered its troops to shoot on sight and kill anybody found living there. People in the whole village tract had to leave their villages. (*Source: MIS*)
- On January 20, 1997, 150 SLORC troops led by Major Aung Zaw Htun from IB. 44 from Khun Hing in Shan State arrived at Wam Oi village and told the village headman Loong Zai Long that all villagers must move immediately to Hai Pai village tract on the same day. The villagers were accused of being supporters of the armed ethnic group. The village headman requested to give them three days to move, but they were ordered to move within a day. All 57 houses consisting of 297 people, had to move to new place. On the next day, Major Aung Zaw Htun sent his troops to Wan Nam Oi village to catch all the livestock left behind and burned down all the houses in the village. (*Source: S.H.A.N*)
- On January 20, 1997, Some SLORC troops from the LIB. 406 came and displaced some 100 Mon families living at Mae Taw in Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division by burning down some houses and plundering, despite the cease-fire agreement between NMSP and SLORC (*Source: MIS*)
- On February 20, 1997, LIB. 406 ordered Chabon, Taungkhon, Chaun Phya, Danikyar, Mae Thantaung, Kyauktayan Deminzeik, altogether six villages in Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division, to vacate their villages and relocate in strategic hamlets by February 20, 1997. On the following weeks many of the people from these villages started to leave family by family for relocating or fleeing to refugee camps. (*Source: MIS*)
- From February 11 to July 31, 1997, 55 villages consisting of 1,926 families with the population of 19,649 were forced to relocate from their villages in Thaton district, Karen State. (*Source: KIC*)
- From February 11 to July 31, 1997, 57 villages of 2,761 houses with the population of 14,374 were forced to relocate from their villages in Taungoo district, Karen State. (*Source: KIC*)
- From February 11 to July 31, 1997, 227 families from three villages in Mone township, Nyaungglaybin district, Karen State were driven out from their villages.

(Source: KIC)

- In February 1997, Takutayaw, Kwee Phet Htaw and No Lawba villages in Pa-an district, Karen State were ordered to move to Naw De village. Takutayaw village was burnt to ashes. (Source: HRDU)
- In February, 1997, troops from SLORC Infantry Division 66 arrived at the several Karen and Tavoyan villages in Ban Chaung area, Thayet Chaung township on an offensive against the KNU forces. They forced villages in Ban Chaung area to relocate in strategic hamlets immediately. (Source: MIS)
- In February 1997, five villages in Kywe Thon Nyima village tract of Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division were forced to move by the SLORC. The villages, Mae Taw, Chan Bone, Chaung Pya, Mae Yaung and Mae Than Taung lie just 10-15 km, north of the Yadana gas pipeline. (Source: KHRG)
- On March 9, 1997, SLORC troops from IB. 64 ordered villagers from Wan Nong Dee, Wan Thi village circle, Laikha township, to move immediately to Laikha. (Source: S.H.A.N)
- In March 1997, Htee Seekho, Naw Tekee, Bee Takut, Kaw Pa New Kho, Khwee Shell, Htee Baw Palaw, Ledah and others villages in Pa-an district, Karen State were ordered to move to the military bases in Thaug Zong. They were given only three days for relocation. Troop said after March, anyone found in the villages would be shoot without further inquiry (Source: HRDU)
- On April 16, 1997, operation command commander of LIB. 535 and IB. 28 in Toungoo district, Karen State held a meeting in Baw Gali village and told villagers of Peh Gaw Doe, Maw Koe Doe and Doeko villages to move to Baw Gali village by May 15. He instructed the villagers to give him a list of Gaw Theh Doe villagers who have contact with resistance, and threatened to burn down all the villages in the area if any gunfire was heard. (Source: KIC)
- On April 17, 1997, in Elin township of Thaton district, Karen State, the SLORC troops instructed Waw Kee, Ler Kaler and Near Poekee villages to move to Ta-ut-kee, and To-ter-kee and Htee-mor-kee to Galawta. SLORC LIB. 92 instructed Meh-nor-kee, Tort-poe-ta, Meh-wata, Paw-hgay-kee, Kaw-htee-ta, Nort-keh and some other villages to move to Pa-let-no. People from these villages had no time to build their houses in new site as they were forced to build

many tiers of fences for the SLORC military camps. Houses, huts, orchard farms and fields were destroyed by burning, and the people were subjected to arbitrary arrests, torture and forced labor. (*Source: KIC*)

- On April 20, SLORC troop from IB. 64 led by Major Khine Than Aye, came to Pa Lai village, Nar Kharn village tract, Marngnai township, Shan State. They arrested the village headman and raped his wife and daughter. After that, Major Khine Than Aye ordered the village headman to tell his villagers to move to Nar Kharn on the next day. (*Source: SHRF*)
- On April 22, 1997, the SLORC troops forcibly moved villagers from Kaw Pote, He Poe Doe, Kyo Ko Doe, Poe Mu Doe, Nor Oo Lo and some other villages in Pa-pun district, Karen State to Haw Hsay Doe village area. (*Source: KIC*)
- In April 1997, seven villages of Wan Phar Wawng, Wan Nawng Kern, Wan Zalai Loi, Wan Ho Nam, Wan Nawng Wo, Wan Kung Parng and Wan Nam Maw Long, all in Laikha township, Shan State, were relocated and burned down by SLORC troops. (*Source: UN report*)
- In May 1997, villages in eastern, northern and western parts of Pa-pun district were ordered to move as mentioned below.
  - ◆ All villages in Mae Thu circle to Mae Waing village;
  - ◆ All villages in Mae Waing circle to Mae Waing village;
  - ◆ All villages in Malay Kyauk circle, and Kae-ko, Hsaw Meeta, Pwaypar, Pwa Wehta and Mae To Traw villages to Malay Kyauk village;
  - ◆ All villages in the western part of Mae Chota to Kwee Tama village;
  - ◆ All villages in the eastern part of Mae Chota to Mae Chota village;
  - ◆ Villages in the vicinity of Wawmu to Wawmu village;
  - ◆ All villages in Lay-koi-ti circle to Lay-kor-ti village;
  - ◆ All villages in Nat Kutta circle to Nat Kutta villages;
  - ◆ Taw-men-ta, Po Leh and Po Kay villages to Bler Bher village;
  - ◆ Teetha Bluta, Wa Thokla and Has Law Tet villages to Baw Thota village;
  - ◆ Ka Pee Kee, Nolar and some other villages to No Paw Tee village.

The SLORC troops burned down all the villages, rice barns and all other property of the villagers. (*Source: KIC*)

- On May 5, 1997, LIB. 547 forcibly moved villages near Meh Waing and Meh Thu villages in Pa-pun district, Karen State and banned the villagers from going out of the village limits. Then the troops burned the houses and the rice barns.

(Source: KIC)

- During the month of June 1997, SLORC troops under the Division 44 led by Captain Aung Zaw Htun received an order from one of the tactical command commanders Tin Htut in Taunggyi, to move all the villagers in Kaeng Tawng, Murngnai township, Shan State, out of the area. People were ordered to bring all rice and paddy in their possession to the military bases before they were forced to move away. On July 7, 1997, Commander Tin Htut again issued an order to call back all the people of Kaeng Tawng to return to their villages. SLORC troops rationed out the paddy which they had confiscated earlier, to the villagers who came back, at the rate of one basket per person for ten days. By July 24, about 15 houses had returned to Kaeng Tawng. (Source: SHRF)
- Between June 27 to July 3, 1997, SLORC troops of LIB. 515, led by Major Than Htun, forced 17 villages consisted of 510 houses and over 2,550 people in Wan Ti village tract to move to a relocation site, east of Laikha town, Shan State. Five days were given for relocation, and houses and property of those who failed to move in time were burned. (Source: SHRF)
- From July 8 to 12, 1997 LIB. 515 led by Major Than Htun forced eleven villages comprising 350 houses and 1,750 people in Wan Sarng village tract to move to the relocation site, east of Laikha. (Source: SHRF)
- On July 15, 1997, Major Soe Win, commander of LIB. 706 ordered Ulo village, Kmulo village and Mahlataw villages in Mom township, Pegu Division to move to Thabwaynyunt camp. People had to leave all their farms and animals behind. (Source: HRDU)
- On July 25, 1997, a force of combined troops from SLORC LIB. 332 and LIB. 502 came and ordered the Lisaw village of Nawng Tao, 15 miles east of Murngpan town in Shan State, to move, accusing the village of allegedly being shelter for rebel troops. Villagers were ordered to move within three days. Due to the heavy rain, they could not carry much of their property and animals. Many were left by the end of three days. After three days, some Lisaw villagers tried to take some properties that they had left in the village. But the SLORC troops found out and arrested them, and raped five girls in the village. (Source: SHRF)
- In July 1997, 70 houses from Seikku, 40 houses from Hsar Mu Taw, and 70 houses from Kalit Kyi, Tavoy township, Tenasserim Division were ordered to move to Taung Thone Lone, then to Mitta village. (Source: KIC)

- On August 25, 1997, SLORC troops of LIB. 427 came to Tha Wa village in Karenni State and drove out the villagers. These villagers had been already forced to leave their village on 18 August 1997 but came back to their village at that time. This was a second time they were forced to leave their village. The villagers had to move to Mae Kyar village this time. (*Source: KNPP*)
- On August 25, 1997, SLORC troops from LIB. 261 under the command of Lt-Col. Khin Maung Htay burned down 25 houses including the church of Hu Muu Ka Lah village. (*Source: KNPP*)
- On August 26, 1997, SLORC troops of LIB. 102 under the command of Major Win Htwe burned down the church of Kwa Kee village and 54 houses of Htee Sar Beh Htee village in Karenni State. (*Source: KNPP*)
- On September 22, 1997, Major Zaw Lin Htun from LIB. 356 called on the village headmen at Wai Thali village, Kyar-ein-seik-kyi township, Karen State and told them that eleven Mon villages and eleven Karen villages had to move by October 15, 1997. He warned anyone would be punished if they fail to comply with the order. All the villagers were ordered to relocate at Taung Pauk and Wai Thali villages. The names of the villages were Bo Kadaw, Wai Thali (west), Kyattuwaya, Baydari, Kayoke Hmaw, Tanta Pyet, Kyaukkyia, Phakapo, Kyauk Po, Ayoe Kalain, Kyunthee Khan, Shwe Pohut, Htee Pa Htaw, Kyauk Taung, Thra Gon, Taung Kalay, Tawei Pauk, Chee Naung Chee, Shwe Maw Sakan, Agar, Ye Le and Htee Parle villages. (*Source: Alert*)
- SLORC troops ordered Kawa, Kyon Wai, Paw Nan Mu, Don Plaung, Mae Sakit, Htee Pho Wai, Kyunchaung, Keekhaine, Law Wah Phalo, Mae Sali, Kyaukme, Yatheta, Htee Wah Doh and Thephyuchaung villages in Kyar-ein-seik-kyi township Karen State to relocate to Kyon Wai and Phaw Nan Nu villages by October 16, 1997. Villagers were threatened with death if they did not obey the forced relocation order. (*Source: ABSDF*)
- All the villages on the east side of motor road in Ye township, Mon State were ordered to move by October 16, 1997. Taung Kalay, Kyauk Kywe, Payo Kalo, Tanta Pya and Htee Nesakee villages were ordered to move to Pyar Pyat village while Wah pathe, Thutaw, Thaw Kyaw, Wut Taya, Htee Tae and Chaung Ngakwa were ordered to move to Bae Lamu village. (*Source: ABSDF*)
- In the first week of September 1997, Seik Pyone, Kalet Kee, Seik Ku and

Samuhtaw villages in Mitta village tract, Tenasserim Division were ordered to relocate to Mitta village by the IB. 25. (*Source: ABSDF*)

- On October 10, 1997, the SLORC LIB. 707 and 708, led by tactical operation No. (2) commander Lt-Col. Thein Maung destroyed villages in Htantapin township, Karen State. The effected villages were Bu-kee, Ho-kee, Kee Dawkaw, Shooko, Thaythudai, Hatoe Pai and Tha Ayekee. The troops burned all the houses, churches and barns belonging to the villagers. They took away chicken, pigs, buffaloes, cows and shot at anybody on sight. They have also carried out the same method of atrocities in Thantaung township. (*Source: KIC*)

(Also see under “personal Accounts,” interviews 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 38, 44, 56, 56, 57, 59, 64, 77, 82 and 85)

## 5.7. Villages Ordered to Move in Karen State

This is a partial list of villages which were ordered to move to relocation sites, according to villagers in the area and a written SLORC order document. Many of the villages listed were never formally notified of any order to move, and many included in the written order never even received a copy of it. Many of these villages also appear in the list of burned villages because they were subsequently burned and destroyed. This list is not complete. Sources are listed as: “**Order**” = SLORC written order included in this report; “**Int**” = Interviews included in this report; “**IS**” = Independent source apart from KHRG; “**FR**” = KNU Field Report.

No.	From	To	Source
<b>Papun District</b>			
1.	Baw Thay Hta	Papun	Order
2.	Meh Wah Der	May Ner Nweh	Order
3.	B’Naw Kleh	May Ner Nweh	Order
4.	Dweh Lo	May Ner Nweh	Order
5.	Kler Oo Der	May Ner Nweh	Order
6.	Paw Muh Der	May Ner Nweh	Order
7.	Meh Yeh Kee	B’Lu Kee	Order
8.	Maw Hta	Kaw Boke	Order
9.	Kay Hta	Kaw Boke	Order
10.	lower Baw T’Keh Kee	Kaw Boke	Order
11.	upper Baw T’Keh Kee	Kaw Boke	Order

No.	From	To	Source
12.	Pway Hta	Kaw Boke	Order
13.	lower Oo Tu Kloh	Kaw Boke	Order
14.	upper Oo Tu Kloh	Kaw Boke	Order
15.	Meh Taw Kee	S'Tah Lay	Order
16.	Kyo Ko Deh	S'Tah Lay	Order
17.	Lay Ain Zu	S'Tah Lay	Order
18.	Baw Th'Kee	S'Tah Lay	Order
19.	Saw Bweh Der	S'Tah Lay	Order
20.	Kyaw Mu Pu	Paw Hta	Order
21.	Pa Moh Hta	Paw Hta	Order
22.	Kyaw Mo Lay Ko	Paw Hta	Order
23.	Kyaw Nyo Hta	Paw Hta	Order
24.	Hteh Hta	Paw Hta	Order
25.	Baw Kee	Paw Hta	Order
26.	Du Wah Po Kaw	Paw Hta	Order
27.	T'Law Doh	Toh Nyo	Order
28.	Paw Dee Der	Toh Nyo	Order
29.	Law P'Lah Lay	Toh Nyo	Order
30.	Thay Ko Mu Der	Toh Nyo	Order
31.	Kyaw Law	Toh Nyoq	Order
32.	Bpa Tha	Meh Paw Mu Hta	Order
33.	T'Nya Kee	Meh Paw Mu Hta	Order
34.	Kaneh Lay	Meh Paw Mu Hta	Order
35.	Kaneh Khoh	Ma Mu Der	Order
36.	Pa Ee Kaun	M'Taw	Order
37.	Hsain Ta Mot	M'Taw	Order
38.	Wah Tho Klah	M'Taw	Order
39.	Pyi Ma	M'Taw	Order
40.	Myay Ta Pyay	M'Taw	Order
41.	Tha Mu Kyu Law	M'Taw	Order
42.	Tha Ko Law	M'Taw	Order
43.	Noh Pa Doh	Tha Ku Law	Order
44.	Noh Law Su	Ku Sit middle school	Order
45.	Bo Baw Ko	Ku Sit middle school	Order
46.	T'Ree Bpeh Ko	Ku Sit middle school	Order
47.	Ka Leh Hta	Nga Ain Zu	Order
48.	Maw Lu	Nga Ain Zu	Order
49.	Tee Baw Ka Hta	Nga Ain Zu	Order
50.	Tee Gaw Hta	Ner Ku Hta	Order
51.	Oo Reh Kee	Ner Ku Hta	Order

No.	From	To	Source
52.	Ka Wah Kee	Ner Ku Hta	Order
53.	Meh Kee	Ner Ku Hta	Order
54.	Ner Ku Kee	Ner Ku Hta	Order
55.	T'Kaw Kyo	Kyun Bpin	Order
56.	T'Pa Ko	Kyun Bpin	Order
57.	Der Kee	Kyauk Taung	Order
58.	Kyeh Ree Kyo	Kyauk Taung	Order
59.	Theh Hta	Kyauk Taung	Order
60.	Tee Baw Law	Kyauk Taung	Order
61.	Naw Wih Hta	Kyauk Taung	Order
62.	Bo Leh	Kyaun Ywa	Order
63.	Bo Leh Hta	Kyaun Ywa	Order
64.	Pah Kyat	Kyaun Ywa	Order

#### **Bilin River area**

65.	Meh Thu Kee	Meh Way	Int, IS
66.	Leh Wah Ko	Meh Way	Int, IS
67.	A'Meh Po Kee	Meh Way	Int, IS
68.	Kyaw Day	Meh Way	Int, IS
69.	Htoo Lay Ko	Meh Way	Int, IS
70.	Wah Law	Meh Way	Int, IS
71.	Noh Po Law	Meh Way	Int, IS
72.	Wah Tho Law	Meh Way	Int, IS
73.	Lah Kyaw Pa	Meh Way	Int, IS
74.	Kloh Kee	Meh Way	Int, IS
75.	Doh Meh Kee	Meh Way	Int, IS
76.	Du Baw	Meh Way	Int, IS
77.	Shwe Tee	Meh Way	Int, IS
78.	Meh T'Koh	Meh Way	Int, IS
79.	Meh Si Hta	Meh Way	Int, IS
80.	Meh Kaw Law	Meh Way	Int, IS
81.	Meh Gha Law	Meh Way	Int, IS
82.	Ker Kaw Law	Meh Way	Int, IS
83.	Ler Htoo Po	Meh Way	Int, IS
84.	Lay Hta	Meh Way*	Int
85.	Naw Po	Meh Way*	Int
86.	Baw Wah Der	Meh Way*	Int
87.	T'Kaw Hta	Meh Way*	Int

No.	From	To	Source
88.	Maw Thay Tha	Meh Way*	Int
89.	Dta Baw Kee	Meh Way*	Int
90.	Ko Reh Kee	Meh Way*	Int
91.	Nya Mu Kee	Meh Way	Int
92.	Po Kwa Saw Kee	Meh Way	Int
93.	Toh Ber Kee	Meh Way	Int
94.	Baw Law Kee	Meh Way	Int
95.	Toh Baw Saw Kee	Meh Way	Int
96.	Kaneh Der	Meh Way	IS
97.	Noh Lay	Meh Way	IS
98.	Wah Ka Der	Meh Way	IS
99.	Kay Mu Der	Meh Way	IS
100.	Ner Kee	Meh Way	IS

#### **Shwegyin township**

101.	Wah May Kyo	Than Seit Min Lang**	Int
102.	Htee Muh Hta	Than Seit Min Lang**	Int
103.	Deh Oo Po	Than Seit Min Lang**	Int
104.	Saw Theh Kee	Than Seit Min Lang**	Int
105.	Bweh Si Kee	Than Seit Min Lang**	Int

\* first forced to move to a temporary Army post at Dta Baw Kee, then on to Meh Way

\*\* a site along the Shwegyin - Kyauk Kyi motor road

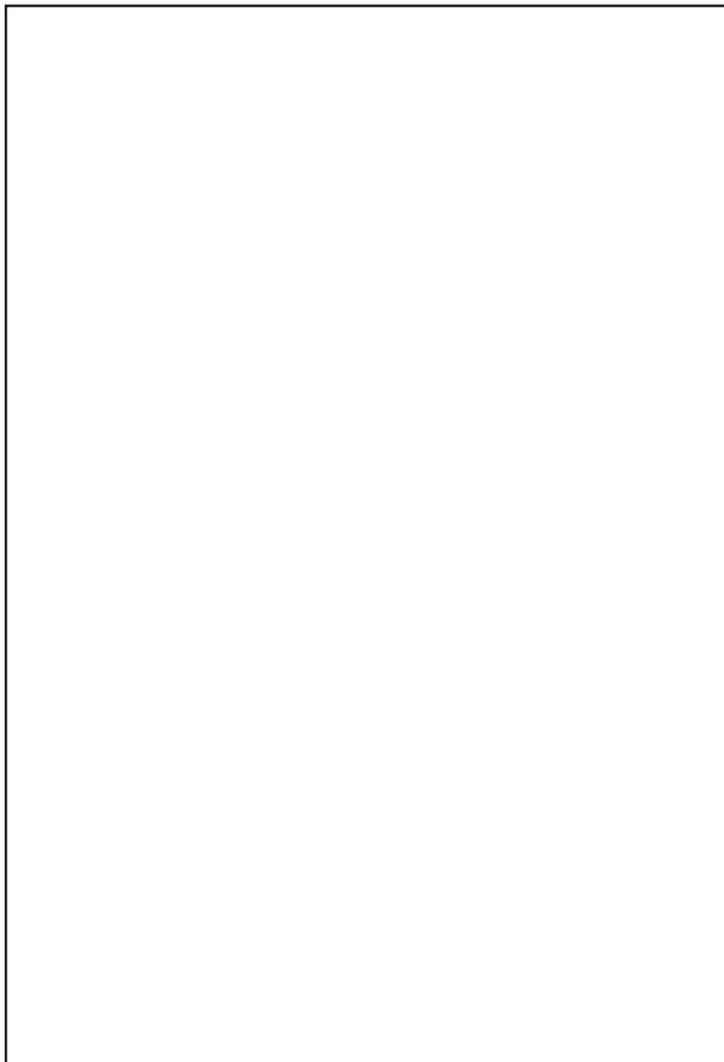
#### **Additionally:**

All villages in Baw Thay Hta area were ordered to move to Papun. (*Independent source*)

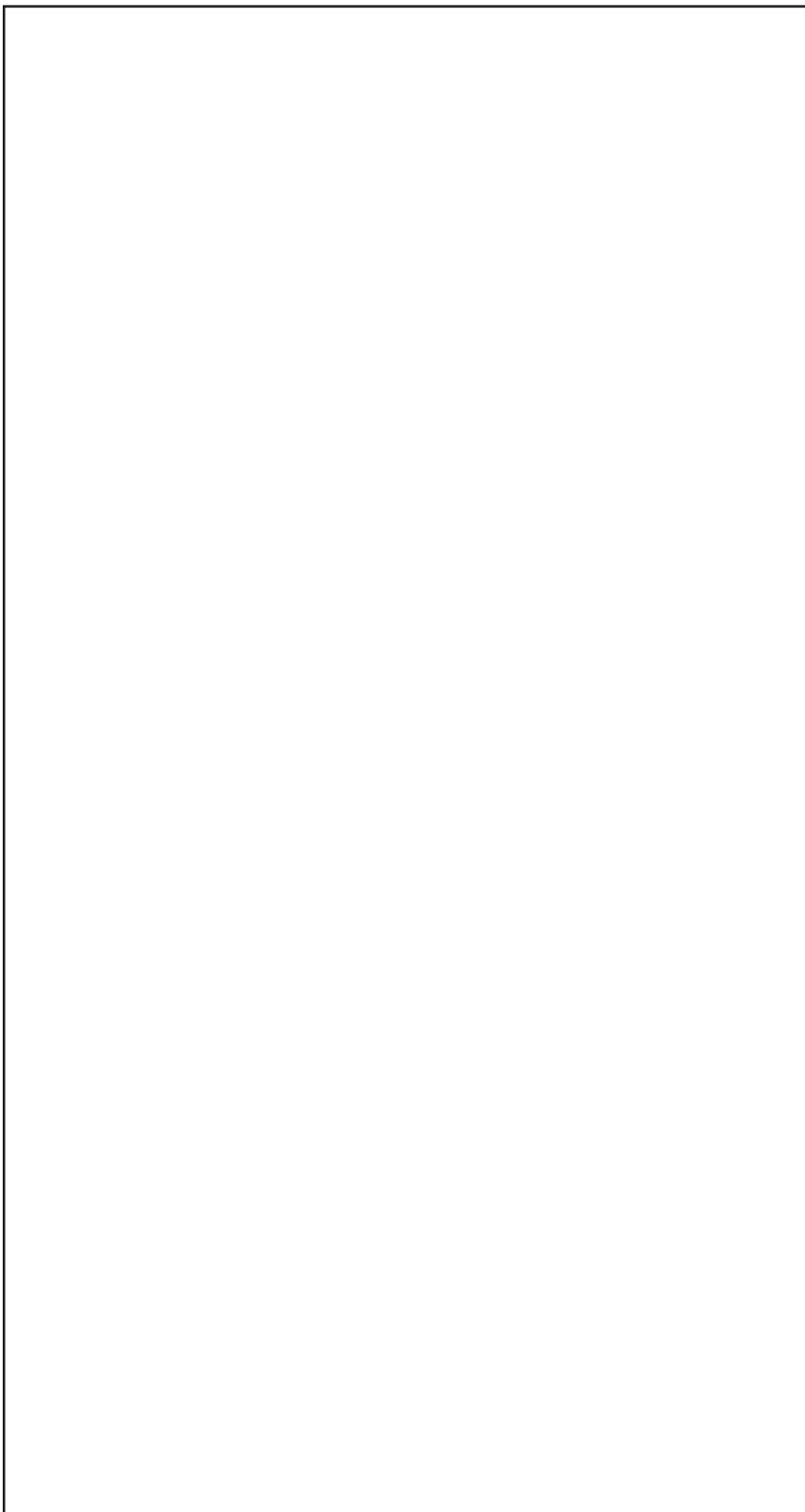
All villages in Kalaw Hta area were ordered to move to Kalaw Hta and Toh Pu (just west of Papun; there is an SPDC Army base at Toh Thay Pu) (*Independent source*). All villages in Ka Dtaing Dtee area of southern Papun District (Ka Dtaing Dtee is on the Yunzalin River south of Papun) were ordered to move to Ka Dtaing Dtee. (*Independent source*)

According to KNU Field Reports, all villages in the Meh Way river valley area are supposed to be forced to Meh Way village; other villages in the Bilin River valley

area are to be forced to relocation sites at Nah Ko Hta, Lay Kaw Tee, Ko Thwee Hta, Meh Kyo, Mah Lay Ler, Kwih T'Ma, and Wah Mu; all villages in the Baw Kyo valley to relocation sites at Baler Per, Baw Tho Hta, Te Law Thu Hta, Noh Paw Tee, and Baw Kyo Leh; all villages in the Yunzalin River valley to relocation sites at Way Mo, Way Sha, Ku Seik, Mat Taw, Meh Ku Hta, and Meh Mway Hta; and all villages in the Thee Roh valley to relocation sites at Paw Hta, Paw Mu Hta, and Meh Bpa.



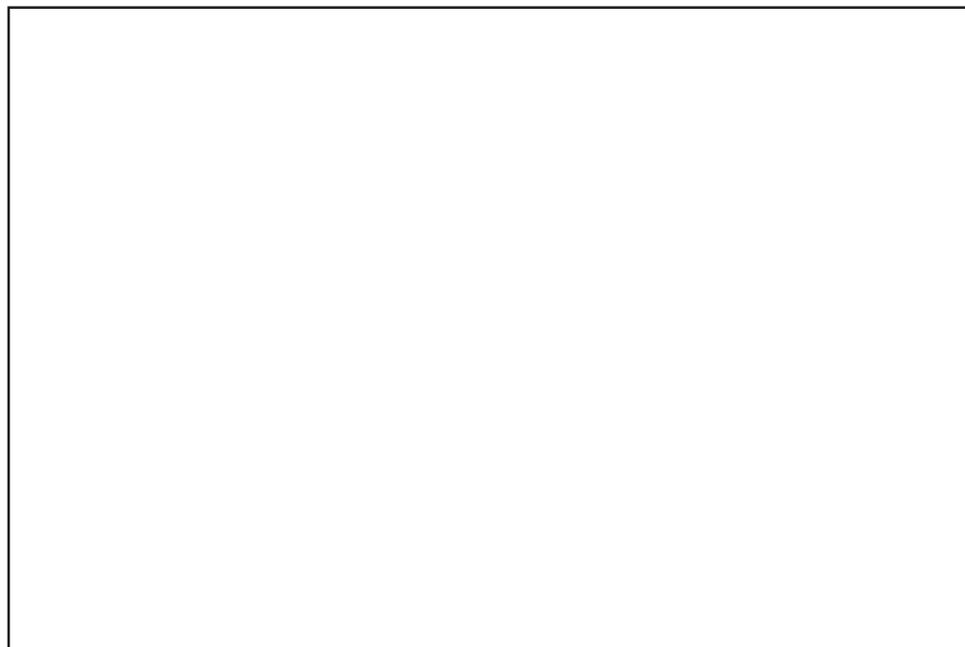
*A Child salvaging brick from a house after relocation in Mandalay. (Photo by N. Dunlop)*



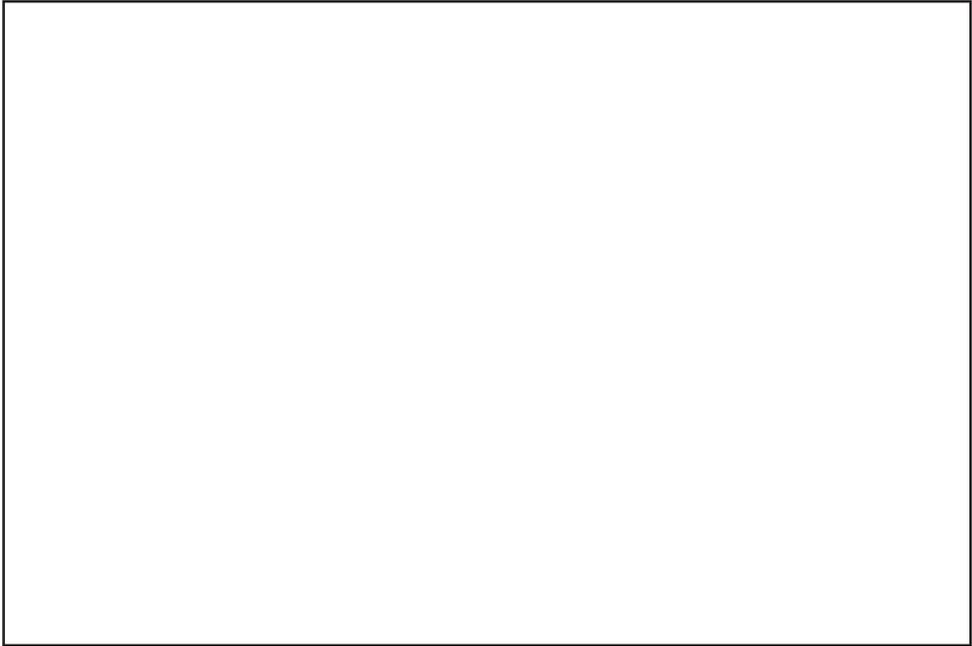
*Forced relocation site outside of Mandalay. (Photo by HRDU)*



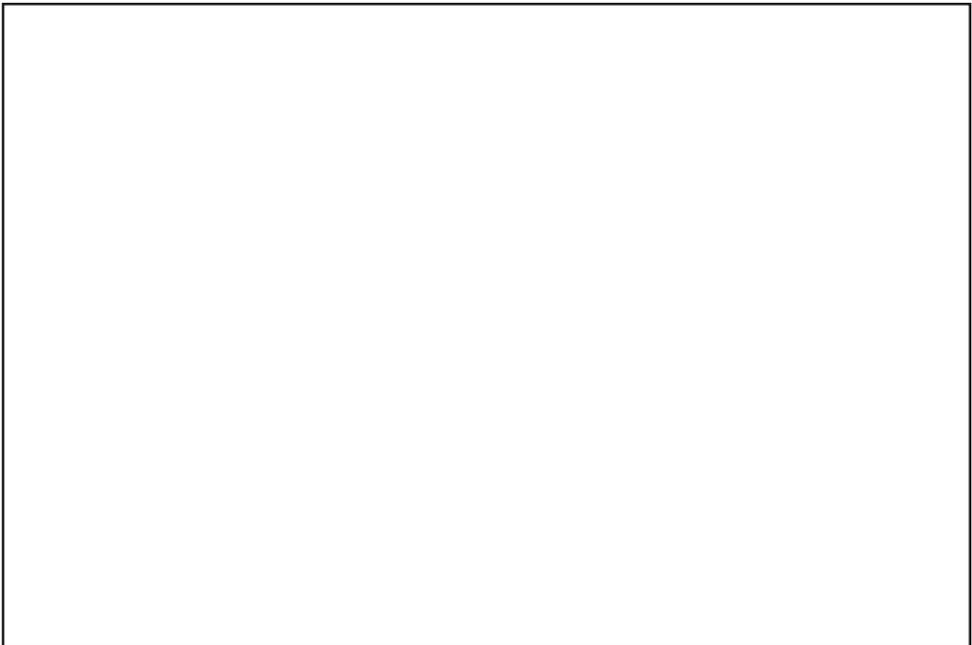
*Villagers from several destroyed villages in Karen State living in hiding in the forest.*



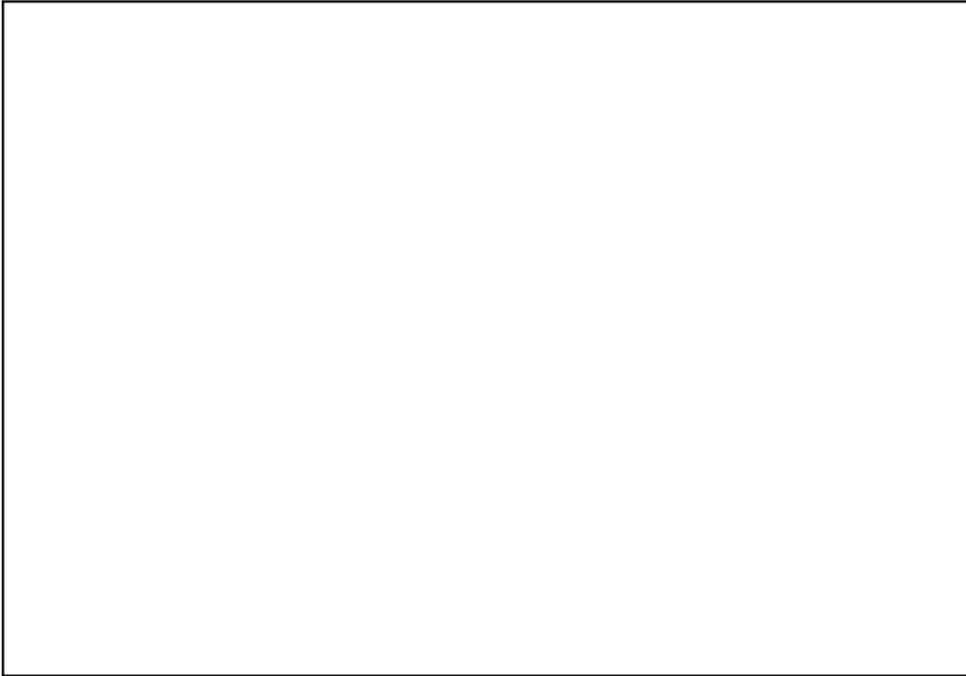
*Karen villagers hiding in the free-fire zones in Tenasserim Division rather than go to the relocation sites. (Photo by KHRG)*



*Houses burned and destroyed in Wah Thu Lo village as SLORC tried to force the villagers to move to Ka Pyaw relocation site. (Photo by KHRG)*



*A family hiding in free-fire zone in Tenasserim Division after the relocation order. (Photo by KHRG)*



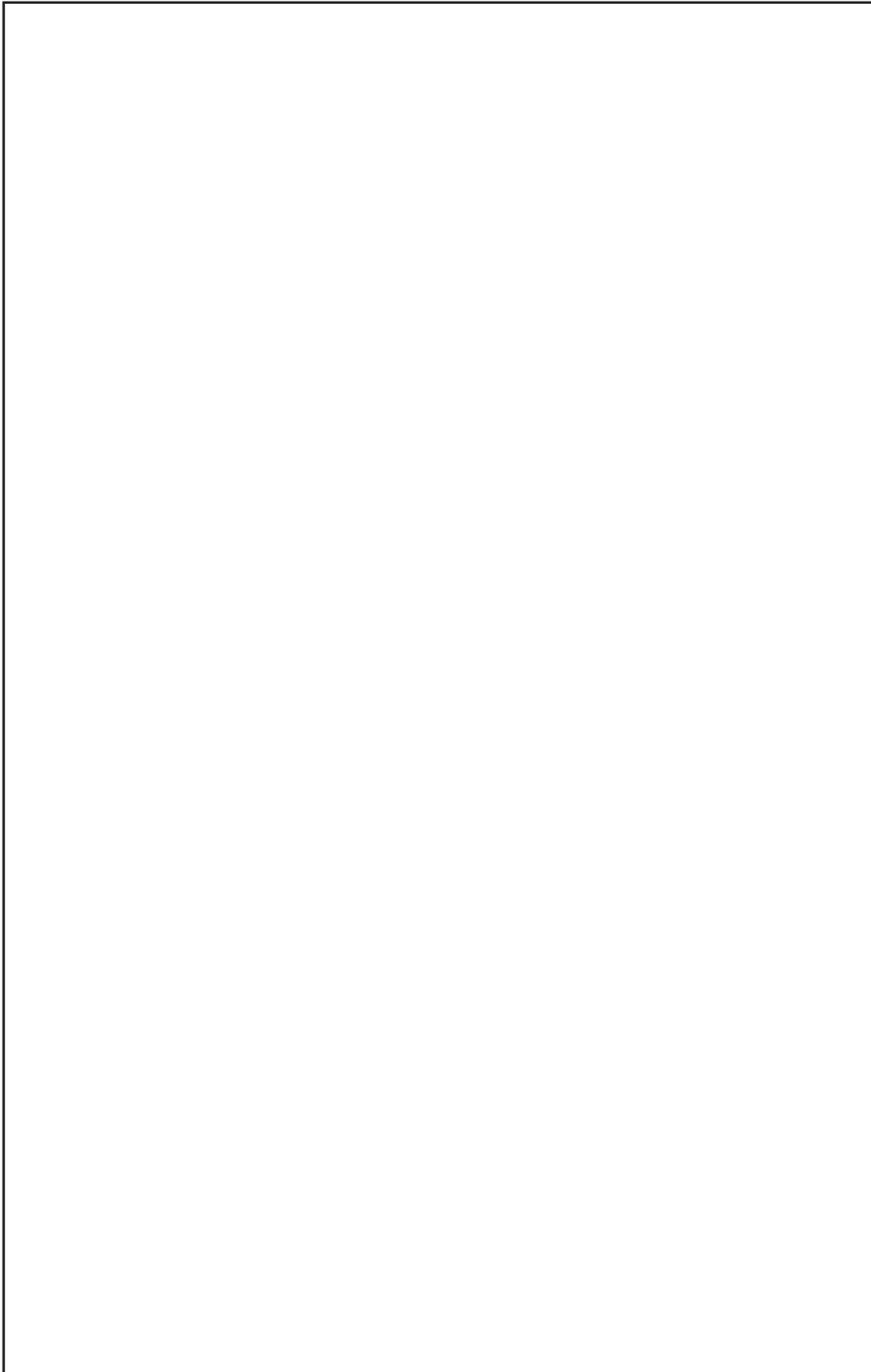
*Lahu women in front of their house which had been ordered to relocate in Kunhing township, Shan State. (Photo by KNPP)*



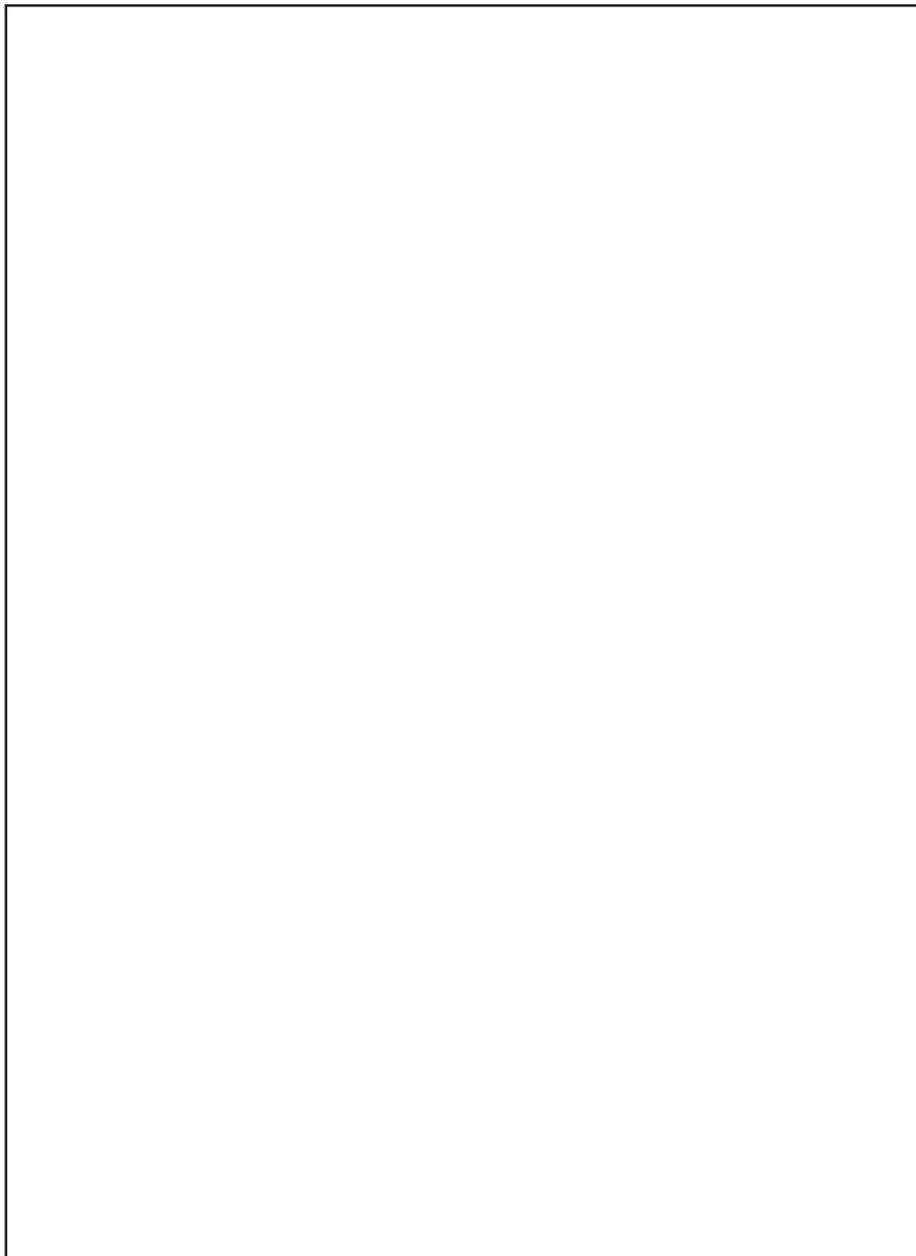
*SLORC relocation site near Baw La Keh. The sign read in Burmese, "New Nam Peh Section, Baw La Keh District". (Photo by Karenni Source)*

---

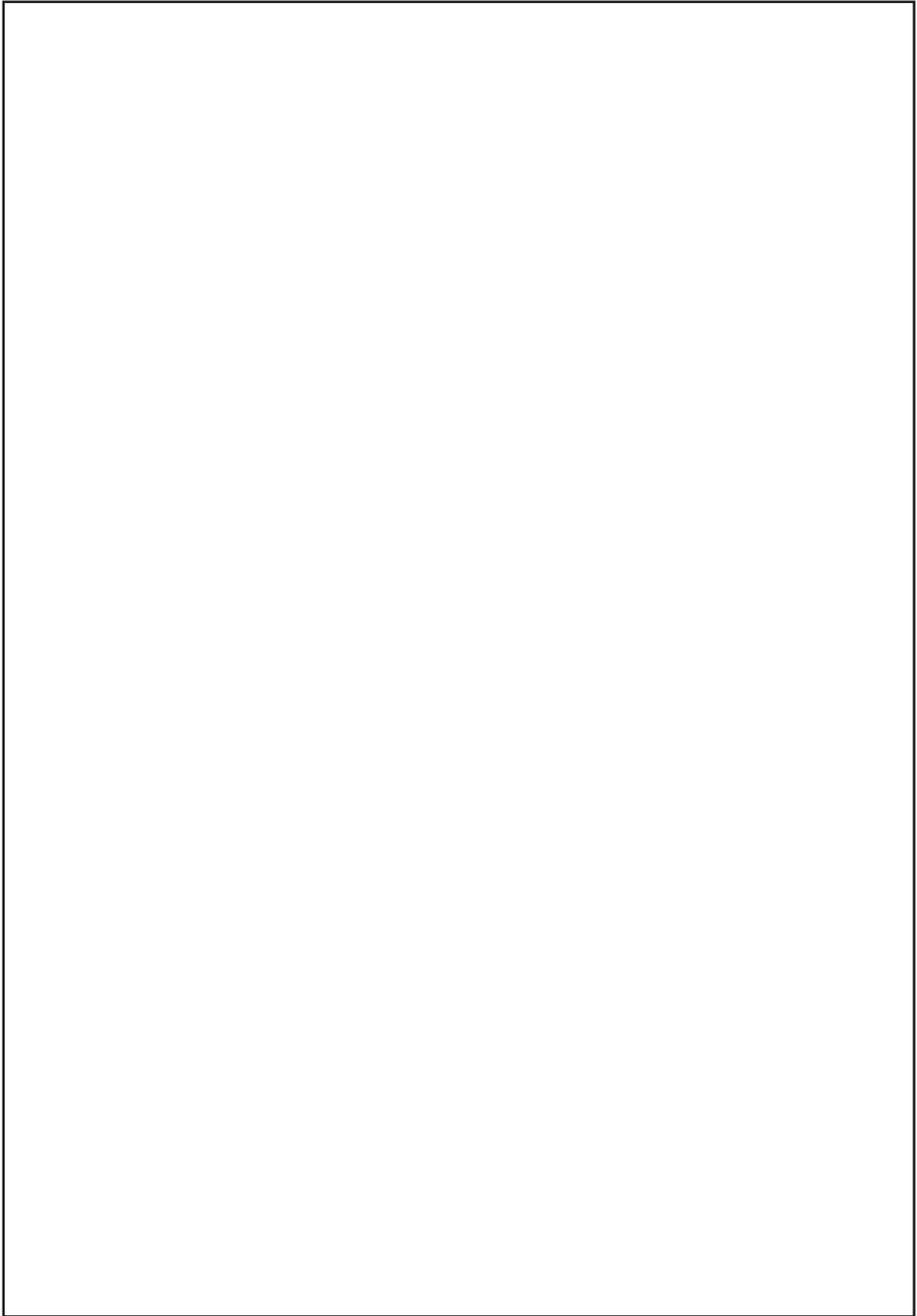
**FORCED RELOCATION IN SHAN STATE 1996-1998**



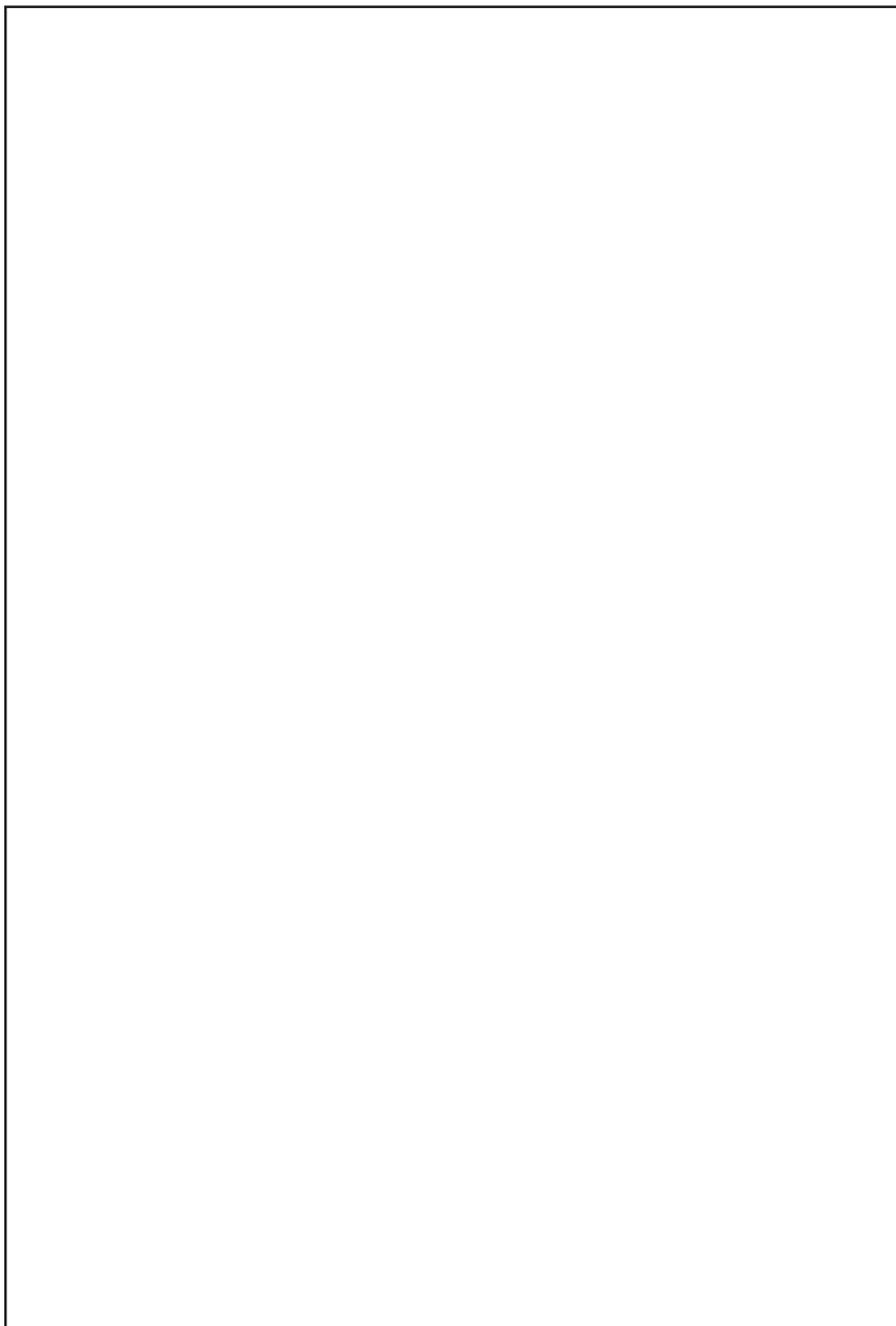
**VILLAGES FORCIBLY RELOCATED IN LAIKHA TOWNSHIP (1996-1998)**



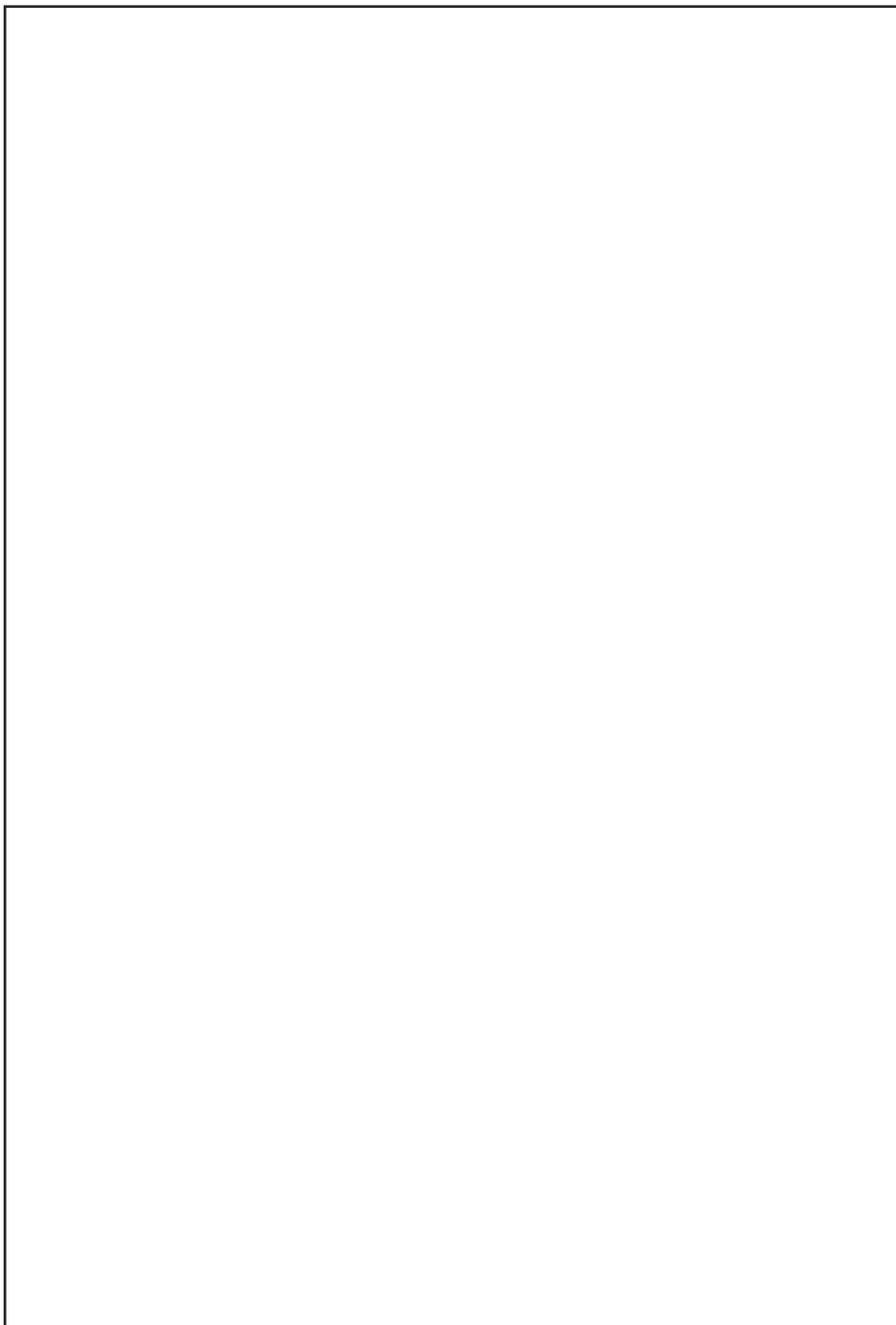
**VILLAGES FORCIBLY RELOCATED IN KUN HING TOWNSHIP (1996-1998)**



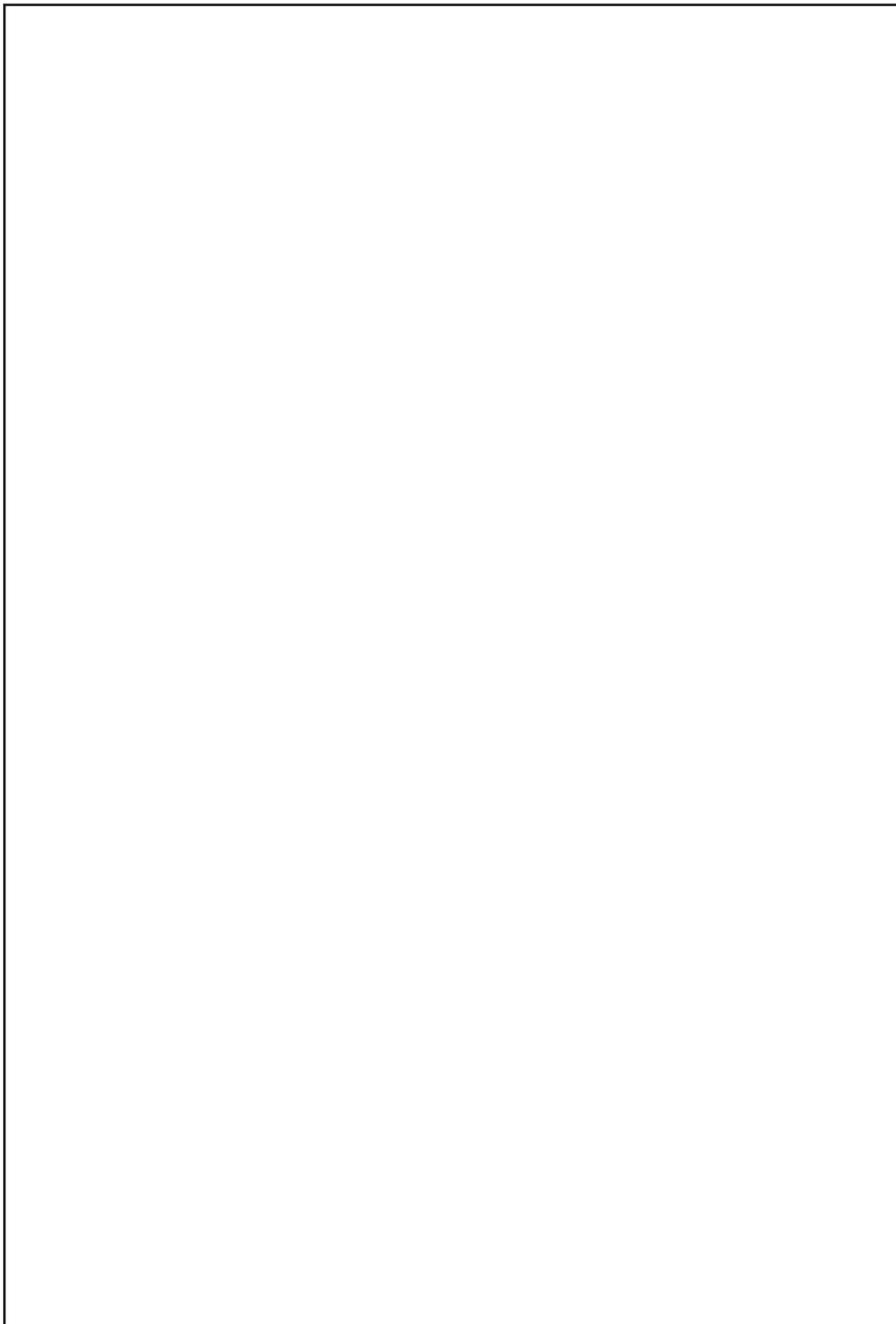
**VILLAGES FORCIBLY RELOCATED IN NAM ZARNG TOWNSHIP (1996-1998)**



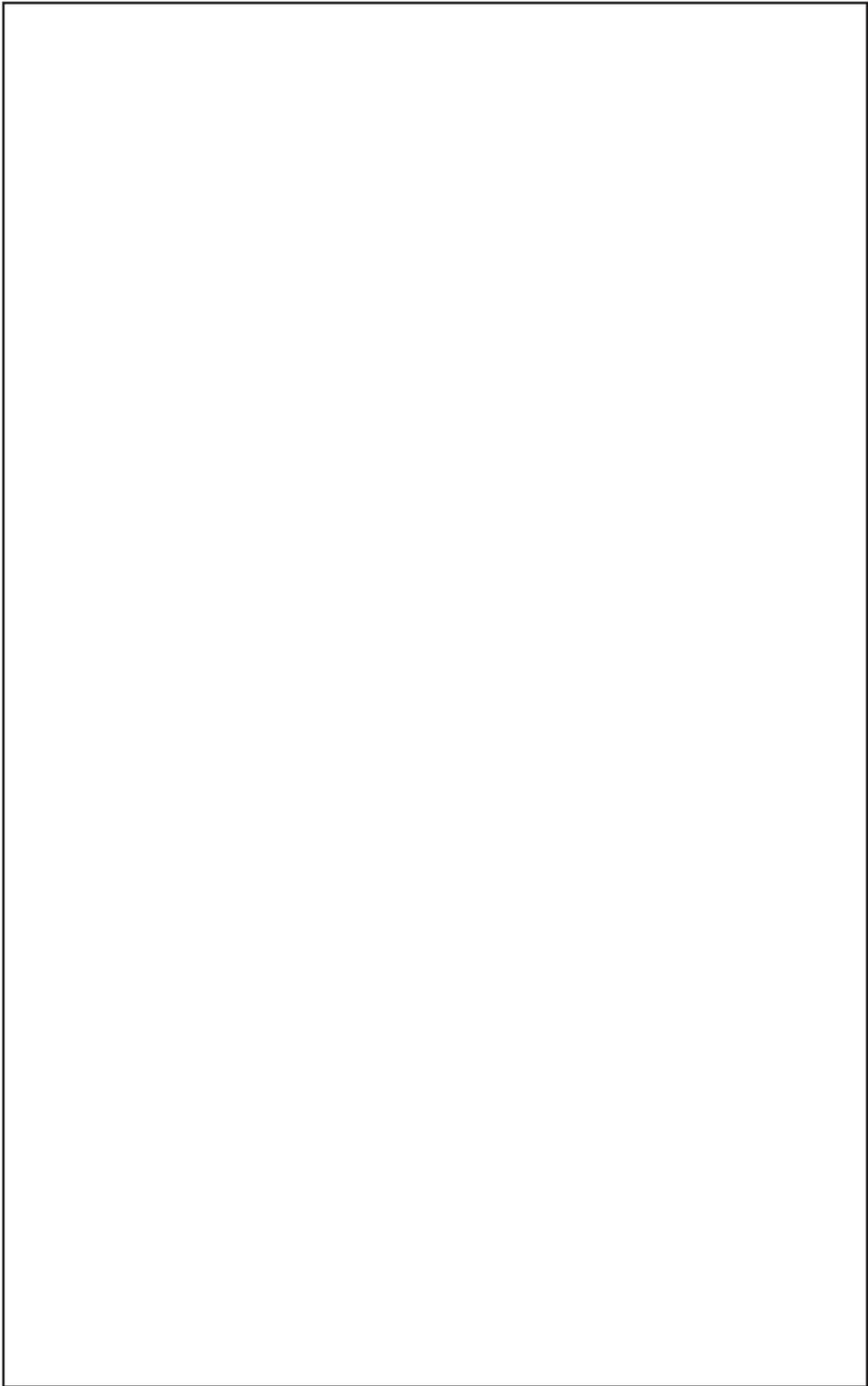
**VILLAGES FORCIBLY RELOCATED IN NORTHERN KE SEE TOWNSHIP (1996-1998)**



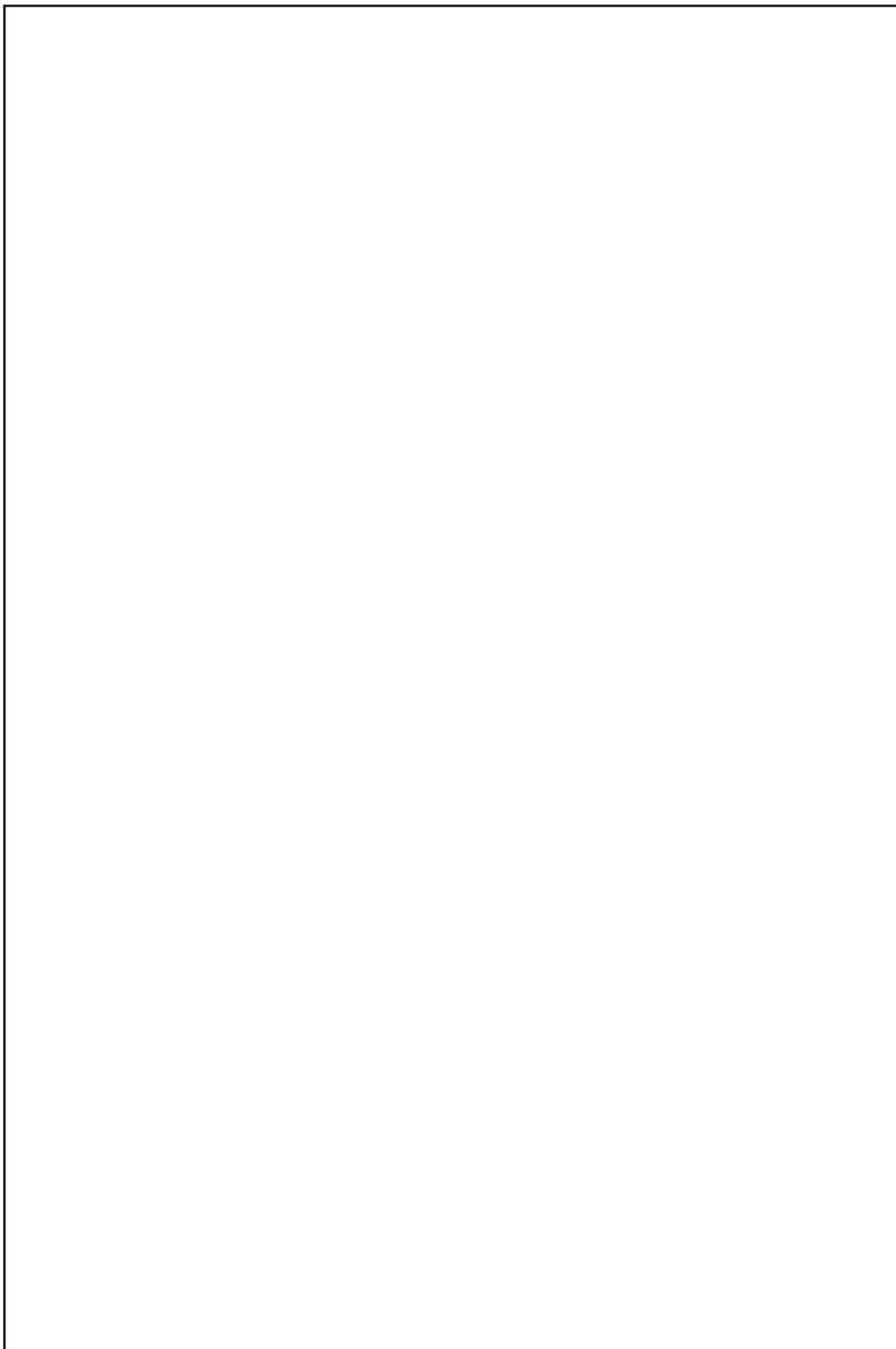
**VILLAGES FORCIBLY RELOCATED IN SOUTHERN KE SEE TOWNSHIP (1996-1998)**



**VILLAGES FORCIBLY RELOCATED IN MURNNG NAI TOWNSHIP (1996-1998)**

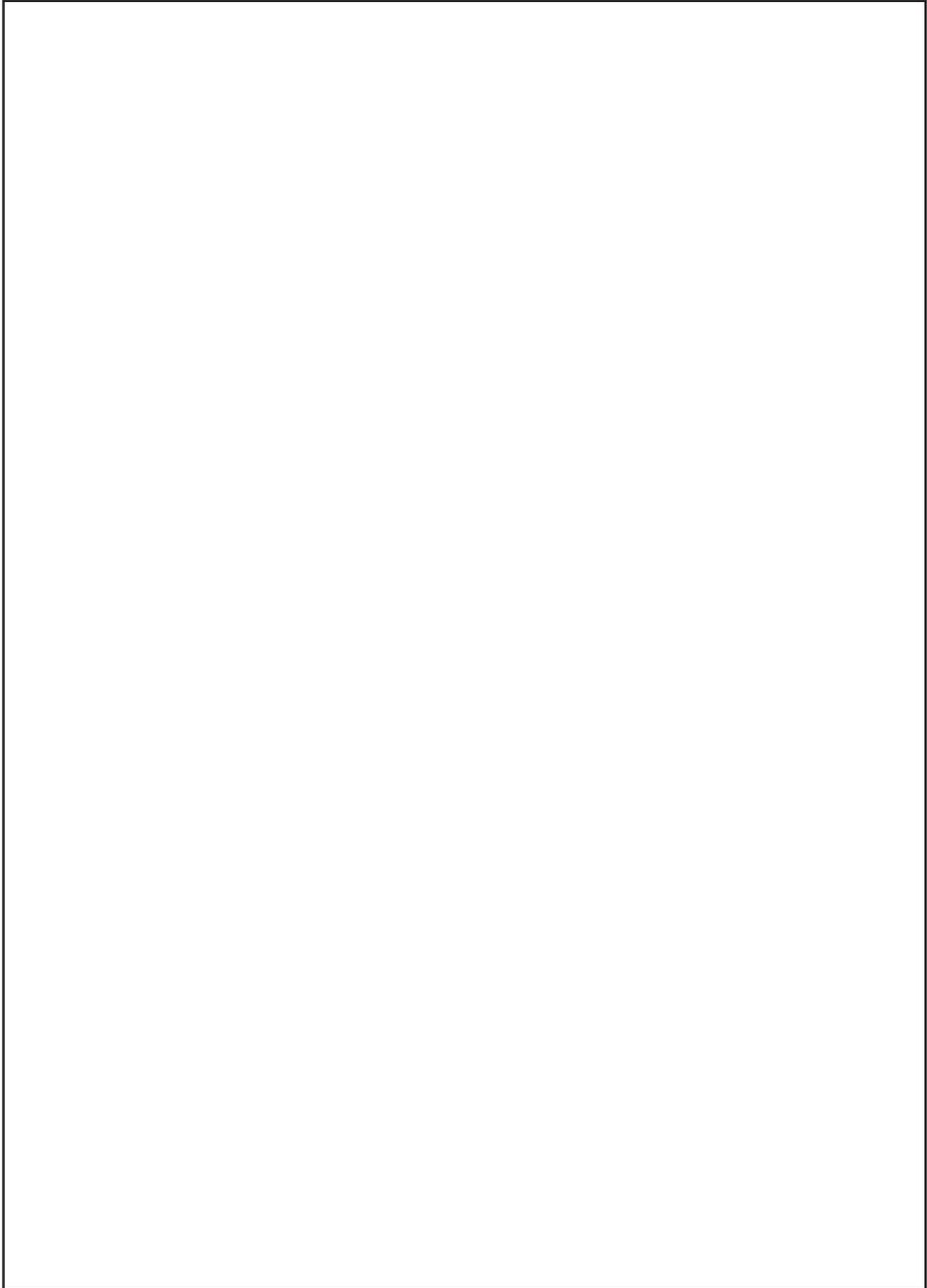


**VILLAGES FORCIBLY RELOCATED IN LARNG KHER TOWNSHIP (1996-1998)**



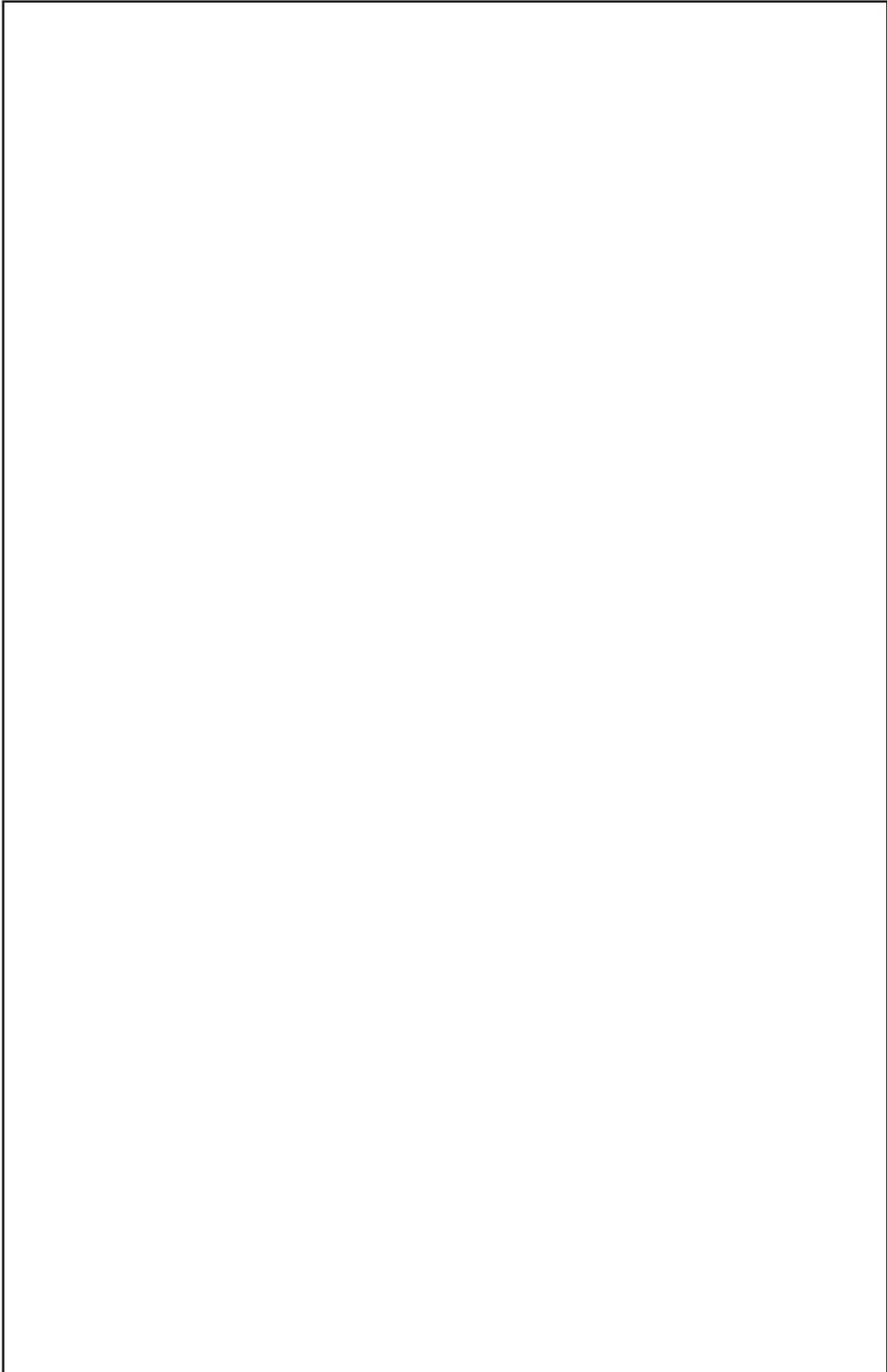
---

**VILLAGES FORCIBLY RELOCATED IN  
MURNG KERNG TOWNSHIP (1996-1998)**



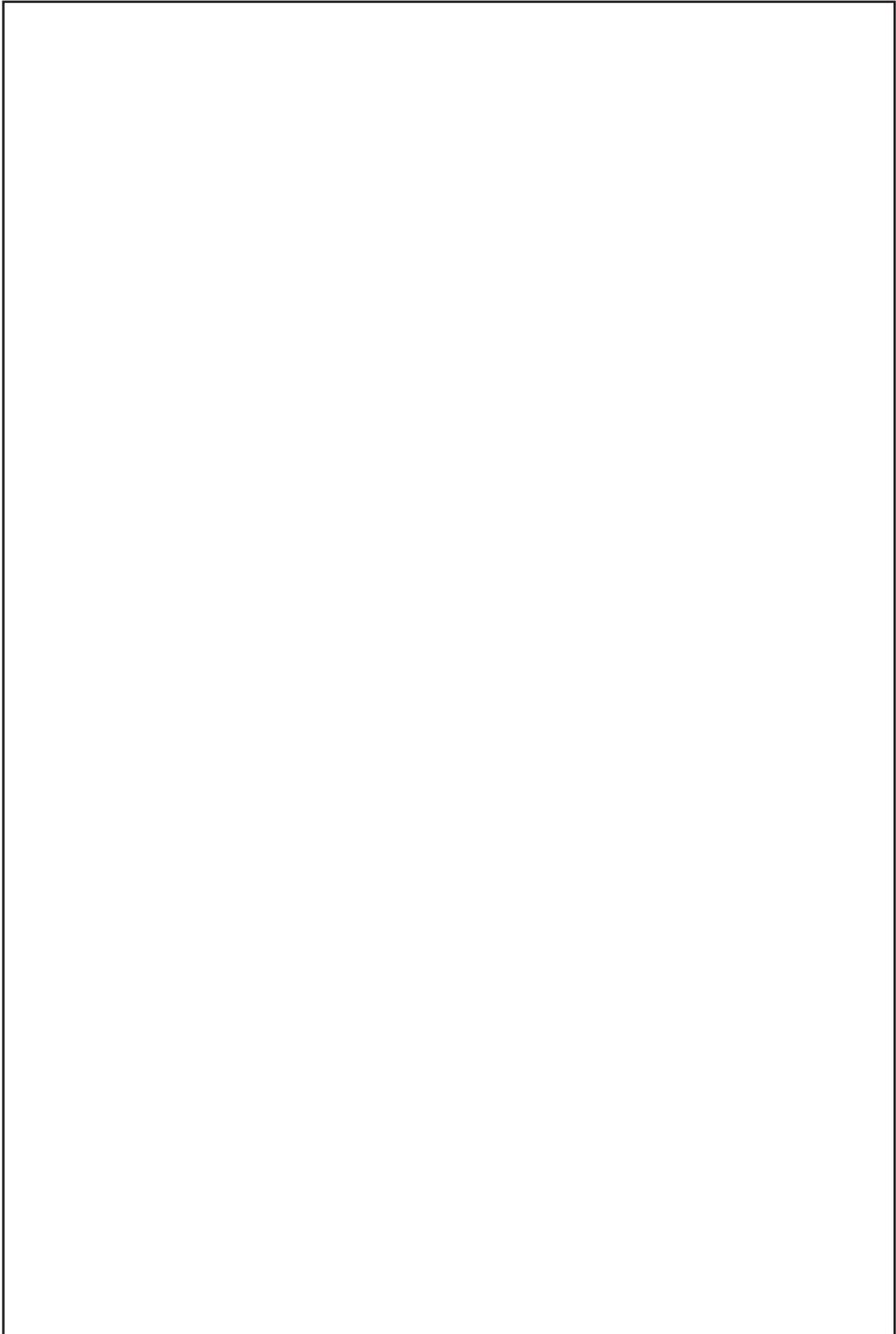
---

**VILLAGES FORCIBLY RELOCATED IN  
MURNG SU TOWNSHIP (1996)**



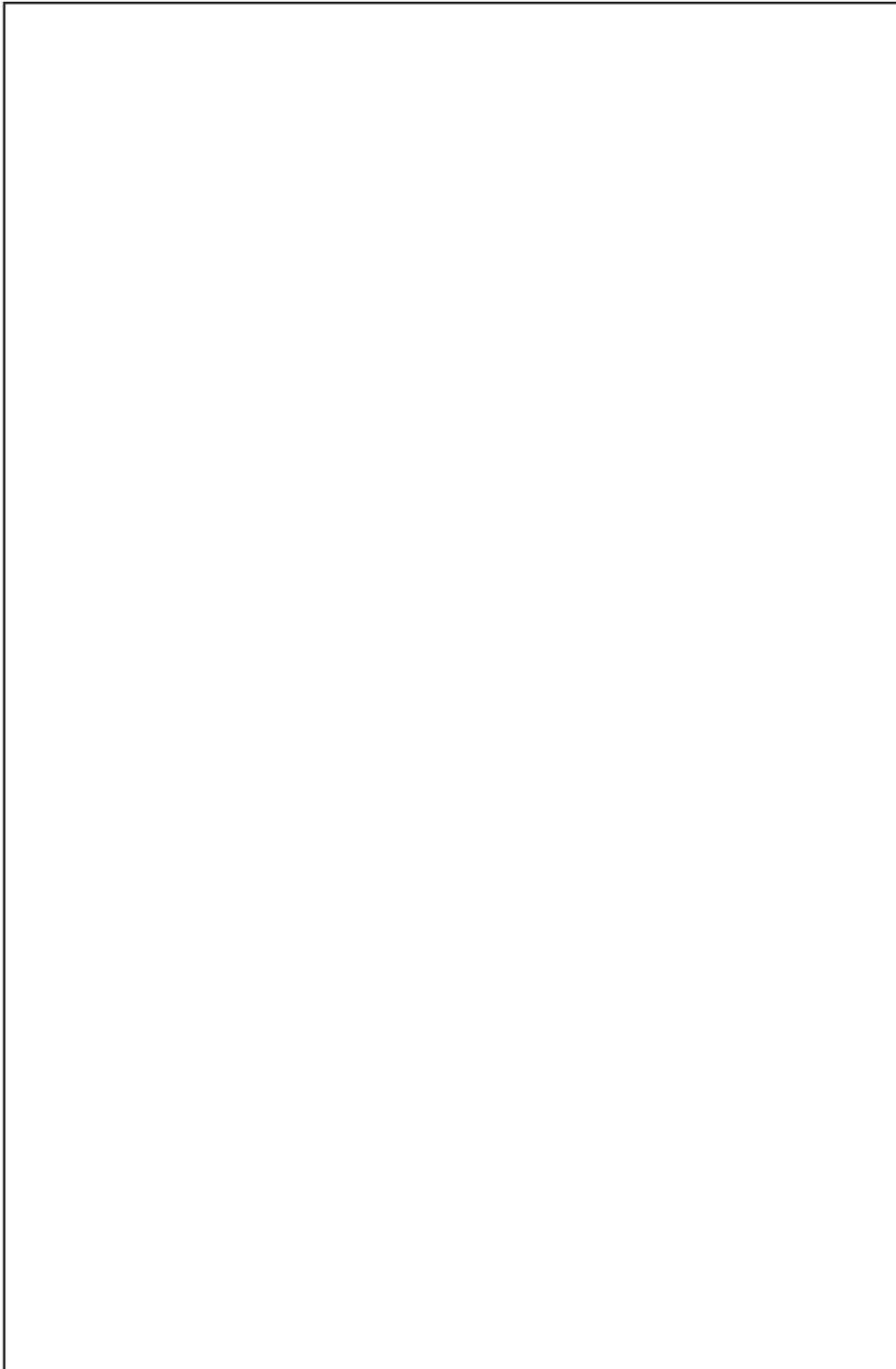
---

**VILLAGES FORCIBLY RELOCATED IN  
MURNG PAENG TOWNSHIP (1997-1998)**

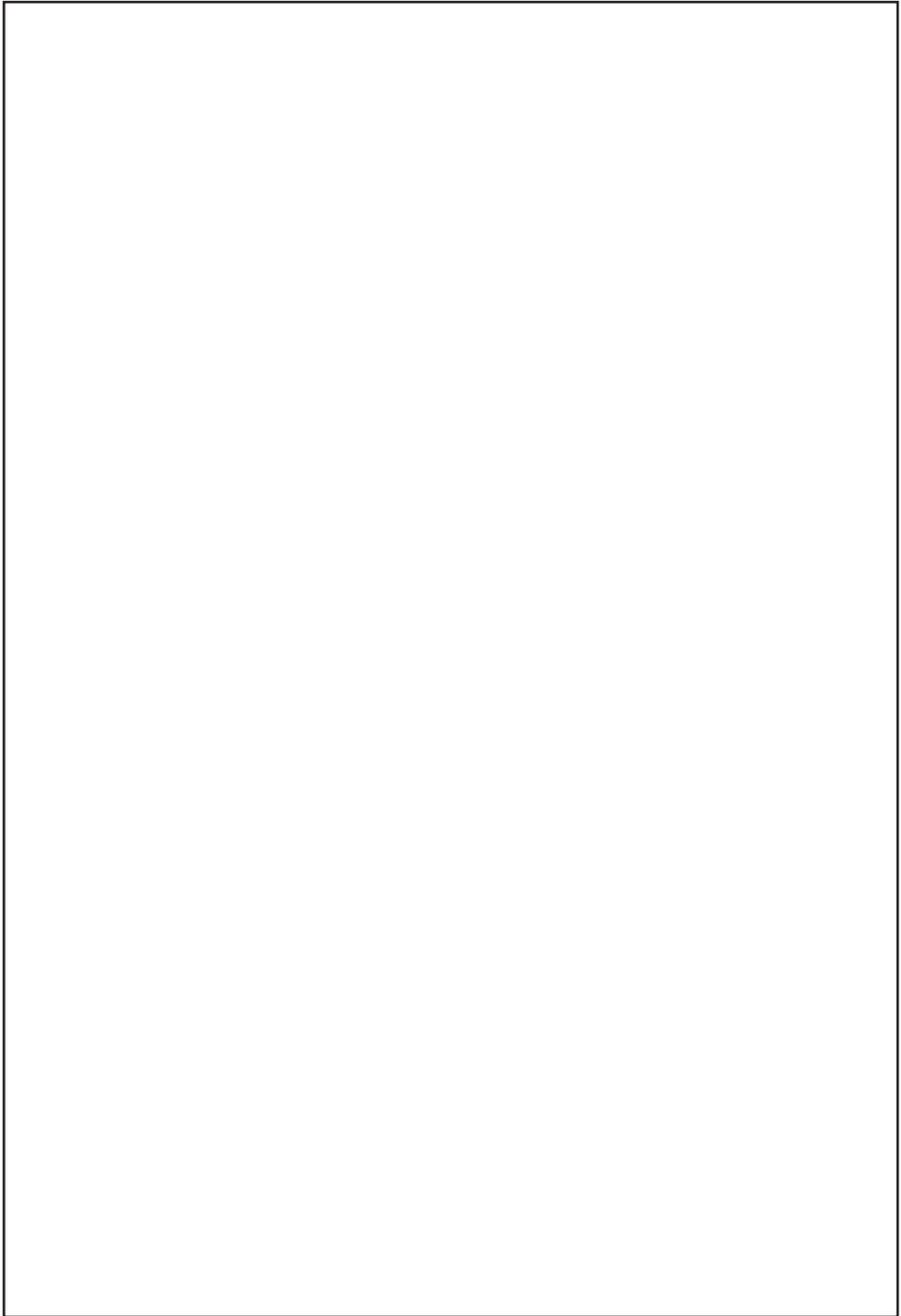


---

**VILLAGES FORCIBLY RELOCATED IN HO PONG  
AND LOILEM TOWNSHIPS (1998)**



**VILLAGERS FORCIBLY RELOCATED IN MURNG PAN TOWNSHIP (1997-1998)**



---

**ROUTES OF EXODUS TO THAILAND**

