

PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

Notes: Names of people and places have, in some cases, been withheld or changed when deemed necessary to protect the victims, their families, or our information sources; however, the original source documentation contains complete and accurate information. Most of the events described took place in 1997, however, some events occurred in early 1998.

The following keywords describing human rights violations (HRV) have been used to index and cross-reference the report; the keywords appear at the beginning of each interview.

Assembly:	Freedom of assembly and association
Child:	Rights of child
Detention:	Arbitrary detention and enforced or involuntary disappearances
Displacement:	Internally displaced persons
Execution, Killing:	Extra-judicial, summary, or arbitrary executions
Expression:	Freedom of opinion and expression
Forced labor:	Forced labor and slavery
Judicial:	Judicial system and unfair trial
Livelihood:	Rights of livelihood (i.e., pillaging, extortion)
Minorities:	Protection of minorities
Movement:	Freedom of movement
Refugee:	Situation of refugees
Religion:	Freedom of belief
Relocation:	Forced relocation
Repatriation:	Forced repatriation
Slavery:	Forced labor and slavery (i.e., portering)
Torture:	Torture and other cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment
Women:	Discrimination and violations against women

Interview 1: HRV: Refugee, Relocation, Livelihood, Women, Child

Name: Maw Reh
 Sex: Male
 Age: about 50-55
 Ethnicity: Kayah, farmer
 Religion: Buddhist/Animist
 Marital status: Married with seven children
 Address: Daw Tama village, Shadaw Township, Karenni State
 Date of interview: January 20, 1997
 Place of interview: Karenni refugee camp (2), Thai-Burma border
 Source: KHRG

[Maw Reh arrived in a Karenni refugee camp in November 1996 after staying in Shadaw relocation site, hiding in the forest near his village, and being arrested by SLORC.]

I left my village sometime in October. I don't remember which day but it took me 13 days to arrive here. The SLORC didn't order me to leave [when he fled from hiding in the forest in October] but if they found people in the village they would torture them. So I was afraid of that and I ran away.

They gave the order letter dated May 31, 1996 to move all of us. They gave us only seven days to leave. We had just finished planting our paddy and we had to leave it all behind. If we didn't leave by the deadline, the SLORC would kill us. So we all hurried to Shadaw [relocation camp] at once. It was three hours' walk. A lot of people moved there. Some fell over on the way. Some of our things were left behind. We all had to stay in one place there. When we arrived there, some people fell sick and died. We were too afraid of the SLORC to stay there. They didn't give us any rice to eat [after two months], so some people tried to go back to their villages. And when we went back, we had to hide in the forest because we were so afraid of the SLORC. Then we came back to that place [Shadaw relocation camp] because we couldn't hide for very long. We couldn't do anything. We didn't know what was the best thing to do.

I stayed at the relocation site for two and half months. At first they gave us some rice. But after two months, the SLORC didn't give us any more food. So we escaped from there and went back to our own village. We were afraid to stay in our village because nobody stays there now. The SLORC had come and burned down the houses and the rice barns. All of the houses. Most of the rice was destroyed but a little remained. We had made pits in the ground to hide it. We also hid some of the

rice in caves. We were afraid of the SLORC soldiers and we hid. If the soldiers saw us, they would kill us. So we had to hide in the forest. Not too far from our village, in the valley. We couldn't hide on the mountain. It was a little distant from our village but we took some rice along from our village. We used to go back to our village to get some more rice. If the SLORC had seen us, they would have tortured us.

We stayed there for one month and then we came here. The whole family together. Lots of people were hiding in the forests. There were 30 houses in our village. Only some stayed in Shadaw. We decided to come here because we were too afraid of the SLORC. They came often and checked around everywhere. We saw some soldiers in our village, but whenever we saw them we ran back to hide in the valley. Sometimes they went past and sometimes they turned and went back. We always felt afraid to go back to the village. When they saw us, they tortured us. The SLORC soldiers nearly cut my throat. It happened while I was going back to my village to get some food. I got a pass from them and went. But then they arrested me and brought me back to Shadaw.

They arrested me in my village, at the lake when I went to fetch water. They pointed their guns at me. They were going to kill me. I begged the soldiers, "Please don't kill me. I still have many children and they need me." I said this in Kayah language and they didn't understand. Fortunately one person from Daw Tama saw me, helped me and explained for me. I showed the pass to the soldiers but they didn't care about it. They didn't hit me but they tied me up for the whole day and all night. They tied my hands behind my back and I couldn't sleep. At that time, I couldn't run away. They didn't only tie my hands, they also tied my feet. They made me sleep with them in the forest for two nights. They kept me among the soldiers at the army post. I was tied all the time. I couldn't sleep at night. I sat beside the fire. They gave me some food but I couldn't eat. I was in agony. I thought that I would die. Then they took me back with them to Shadaw and they showed me to the people there [as an example].

Two of my daughters died. When we moved to Shadaw, my two daughters didn't feel well and so they didn't follow. They died behind. When I went back to the village, I saw that they had died. Nobody had a chance to dig a grave or make a coffin for them. They were sick because they were always hiding in the forest, they couldn't get any medicine to treat themselves and they died from fever. Their names were Vu Meh and Pleh Meh. Vu Meh was 25, she was already married and had a child. Pleh Meh was 20. She was so beautiful and well-built. Her skin was white. I feel so much sorrow about her. I wish she was back with me. They died about two days apart from each other.

We spent 13 nights on the way to get here. I came with the whole family. My two

sons, my wife and I. There were four of us. I was too afraid of the soldiers to leave my children behind [he means his two youngest children; his older children are married and live separately, so he no longer counts them as 'children']. I crossed the Salween River by boat. I don't remember exactly when I arrived here but we have received rice three times in the camp since then [rice is distributed once per month in the refugee camp, so he has been there for over two months].

I did not know the reason why SLORC ordered us to move out from our village. I only know that I had to run, because they ordered us to move and they only gave us a few days. If we didn't move during that time limit they would kill us. Before, they used to come to our village sometimes but they didn't beat anyone.

Interview 2: HRV: Refugee, Relocation, Livelihood

Name:	Soe Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	over 40
Ethnicity:	Kayah, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Married with six children
Address:	Daw So Kyar village, Shadaw Township, Karenni State
Date of interview:	January 21, 1997
Place of interview:	Karenni refugee camp(2), Thai-Burma border
Source:	KHRG

I arrived here during October. At first I went to Shadaw [relocation site]. But I had not enough to eat and I was afraid of the SLORC.

In my village there were about 70 houses. In June, the SLORC sent us a written letter to move. When I saw the order I went to Shadaw. The SLORC said that all the villagers must go within seven days. They said: "Stubborn people are not as hard as bullets!" We were afraid and we left. We couldn't carry everything, so we carried first all the useful things like pots, rice, blankets, etc.. Some of our things were left behind. The SLORC only gave us one week to carry our belongings. If we took more than one week they would make problems for us. When we arrived in Shadaw, we had not enough food and we felt sick. Even the clothes and the blankets were not enough. All my paddy was left behind and it was destroyed by the SLORC. Most of our animals were killed by the SLORC. Only very few remained. When I got back to my village, I could only see the bones of our animals. They killed our animals and destroyed our rice barns. I felt so depressed and decided to come here.

I have no idea why the SLORC forced us to move out. When SLORC ordered us to go, we just went. Shadaw was not a good place to live. It was so dirty. We couldn't eat or even sleep. We could only live on the ground. There were so many sick people. Many died. Every day two or three people died. They died of fever, dysentery and cold. I arrived in Shadaw in June and I came here in October. You can guess how many months! I couldn't build any house. There was no bamboo, no trees, not even leaves to make a roof. Every material was very far away to get. The SLORC only gave us 200 shingles of leaves to make a roof [enough to cover a roof about seven feet square, and even these were probably demanded from local villagers]. But some people could do it, some people have some money and they could buy the materials to build their house. But not me. So I went to stay with my relatives in Shadaw [village]. I didn't stay in the new place [the relocation site] because there were too many sicknesses, and the SLORC forced the people who lived there to work for them. During the first month I was also included in doing work for them. I had to build a fence for the army camp. I couldn't do this for long, so I went to my relatives and stayed there.

We had to cut bamboo, make a fence around ourselves [surrounding the relocation camp], clear a place to grow beans [for the Army], clear the roadsides of the car road and also repair it. They forced each family to cut 100 bamboo for them. Each bamboo had to be 15 feet long. It was for the old army camp but the SLORC ordered us to rebuild it. There were two fences, one around the camp and one around us.

At first, the people built shelters around Shadaw town. Then they went and stayed under the houses, in the kitchens, and under the trees in Shadaw town. But the SLORC prohibited that and forced them to stay together in one place. The new place was very close to the army camp. I myself stayed there. The place inside the fences was full of people. I don't know how many. Maybe 1,000 or 2,000. SLORC didn't allow them to stay around the town. Many people were so depressed and some escaped from there. Sometimes they seldomly allowed us to go out.

The relocation place was a flat area. It used to be untouched bush. Nothing was ever planted there before. First we had to clear an area where we could stay. Then SLORC decided that we had to clear another place to live, and they used the first place to grow beans. The bean field was a little far from the new place. I had to clear the new place, too. But then after one month, the SLORC forced us to move to a new place near their camp and clear it again. As soon as we arrived we also had to cut bamboo and build a fence. My relatives saw me. They had pity on me and asked me to stay with them. They were already living in Shadaw town. When I left Shadaw [to flee to the refugee camp in October], they had already planted beans in

the big place. Some people managed to build a house, but some couldn't and they were trying to flee.

There was not enough food, so we went back to our own village to bring back some food. Sometimes they allowed us to bring food if we had nothing to eat. Only one person per family was allowed to go. If one time was not enough, we could go a second time. I had to buy a pass for two *kyats* to go back to the village. If our village was far, they would allow us two days, but if the village was close they would allow only one day. If we stayed over the permitted time and the SLORC found us along the way, they would do to us whatever they wanted. My village was very far. If we started walking at 6 a.m. we got there at 12 noon -- at least 6 hours' walk. They allowed us two days. But when we arrived in our village, SLORC had destroyed everything and it was so depressing. Everything in the village was completely ruined. Before we left, we had hidden some rice in the caves, so we tried to get some rice from the caves. A little rice remained there, so we could eat. Some rice was also left in some rice barns because the SLORC hadn't found them.

My village was not burnt down, but if we tried to stay there the SLORC would burn it down. They did this when they see people staying there. More than ten villages had already been burnt down. Some villages were destroyed - they destroyed the walls and the roofs of the houses.

At first, they gave six milk tins [of uncooked rice] for six days [this was less than half what an adult needed], but after one month they didn't give anything. When the priest saw the people at that place, he said to the soldiers: "You called the people together here. Why don't you give them enough food to eat? If you don't give enough food to them, I will try to give some myself." The SLORC told him: "You can give, but you have to give it to us first." The priest didn't believe them, so he said: "If I give the food to you first, it will not go to the people." So the priest refused to give it any one. The people became really depressed and tried to escape from that place. But some had a little money and could stay there.

Before, there were some wells beside the stream but they were very dirty. So we dug new ones to fetch water. There were many wells, more than 10. SLORC said that they put some chemicals in the wells to prevent diseases. Many people died when they drank the water.

Some people had malaria, others had dysentery. But almost all the people who died, died of dysentery [possibly cholera, or dysentery combined with something else; the symptoms were vomiting and diarrhea]. Adults died, children died - but mostly children aged 7 to 9. I know about one child - his mother died and his father sent him

to the priest. He was only two weeks old. There was a small clinic but when we got sick, we couldn't get enough medicine. We didn't need to pay for the medicines but they were not very effective, so some people went outside to get good medicines to cure their diseases. Some went to the priest and tried to get medicine from him. In other places, you had to pay 35 or 45 *kyats* for one injection. I knew the priest, so if my children got sick I went to get medicine from the priest. No one died in my family. They did not get sick often. Only once, one of my children felt seriously ill. I got medicine from the priest and he got better.

I saw people being beaten but I didn't see anyone being killed. Sometimes they arrested people on the road, then they brought them back to the new place and beat them. They were beaten because they were found outside without a pass or with an expired pass. These people were caught and beaten. I saw three people like that. All three were men. They beat them with a bamboo stick and kicked them all over. Their faces were swollen and not nice to look at.

I escaped at a place on the other side of the gate. I broke the fence and escaped. Some other people also broke the fence and escaped.

The whole town of Shadaw was surrounded by a fence. The SLORC soldiers had checkpoints, day and night. We escaped through the fence. It was a new fence. After we arrived, the SLORC soldiers forced us to surround the town with a fence. My wife and my children escaped together with me at about 11 p.m. Five other families also used the same hole in the fence. But there were other holes in the fence too, so many that I could not count them. Many families escaped that way. Two weeks after we escaped from Shadaw, we arrived near here. At Tee Cha Ker mountain, we met SLORC soldiers. They shot at us but we ran away and hid in a valley. Later we started trying to come here again. The whole journey took about 15 days. Here, it is better than under SLORC control. There are problems, but we can stay in our house. Under SLORC, we cannot!

Interview 3: HRV: Refugee, Relocation, Livelihood, Torture, Killing, Arrest

Name:	Kay Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	27
Ethnicity:	Kayah, farmer
Religion:	Christian (Baptist)
Marital status:	Single

Address: xxxx village, Deemawso Township, Karenni State
Date of interview: January 28, 1997
Place of interview: Karenni refugee camp (2), Thai-Burma border
Source: KHRG

[Kay Reh's village was forced to move to Tee Po Kloh relocation camp in June 1996. He was arrested there in August with 11 others, tortured and detained for three months at three different army camps before escaping to a refugee camp. Five of the twelve men arrested died under torture.]

I arrived here around the end of November, because I was afraid of the Burmese. I was in jail before I came. One and a half months in IB. 54 prison and then another one and a half months in LIB. 530 jail. Altogether three months. They suspected me of being a company commander for KNPP.

They arrested me when I was building my house in Tee Po Kloh [relocation camp]. On August 28, 1996, about 70 or 80 soldiers from LIB. 429 from Baw Ker and eight MI's [Military Intelligence officers] from IB. 27 came to the front of my house and shouted: "Is there anyone in this house?" The MI's were wearing uniforms like those the Burmese soldiers wear. At that time I was eating in the kitchen. They called me out, pointed their guns at me and blindfolded me with a towel. Then they tied my hands and my legs to my neck with ropes like a pig, abused me and took me to their camp on foot [the camp of LIB. 429 Battalion near Tee Po Kloh].

When I arrived there, they interrogated me. They asked so many questions, like: "Where have you hidden the guns?" "Whom do you know?" "Who are your relatives?" "How many relatives do you have?" So on and so on, like that. When I replied that I didn't know, they handcuffed me, punched me, slapped me and tortured me.

They arrested twelve of us and said that we were especially important for investigation. The others were from other villages such as Tee Po Kloh, Daw Ta Dar, and Daw Ku. We were treated as dangerous prisoners and we were accused of being UG [underground agents] of KNPP. So they tied us to twelve poles, interrogated us and tortured us.

Five of us died from their beatings in Tee Po Kloh. They beat us with green bamboo. They hit all over our whole bodies, including our heads. They poured water in our nostrils and our mouths. They tied plastic bags over our heads [so that we could not breathe]. They also sawed my legs with a hand-saw until they were bled. I still had some scars from that. They didn't give us any food or water. Some soldiers gave water to a few prisoners that they pitied. I fell unconscious, I did not know for how

long. When I was lying face down, a soldier pulled me up by the hair and blood came out from my mouth and nose, and then I tried to sit by leaning my back against something. A soldier asked me, "What are you doing?" and I answered: "I only see God!" Five prisoners from our group died because of their torture. Only seven remained. From my village, two of us were arrested at the same time but the other one died of their torture. He was hit with a big wooden stick when they captured him. He died at the army camp in Tee Po Kloh - altogether five people died there. They caught us in Tee Po Kloh, took us to their camp and killed us.

They tortured me for one day, from 3 p.m. until 3 a.m. the next morning. Then they stopped torturing me because five of us had already died. Instead they put us out in the hot sun without any shelter around, and finally put us all in sacks like pigs. They tied shut the top of each sack and loaded us into a truck to take us away.

They took me to the IB. 54 Battalion lockup in Loikaw. They had arrested more people, because altogether there were 64 prisoners in four cells. They still tortured me in the jail. They called out of the cells those they wanted to beat. They hit us on the back and on the chest and they rolled bamboo on our shins. There were 64 prisoners and four cells in the jail, inside the army camp. We didn't do any labor because we were not allowed to go outside the jail. In our cells, I didn't see anyone with chains. They put seven people in a small cell. I couldn't lie down and it was difficult to breathe. The food was only one small plate of plain rice without curry, and the water was very little too. They only let us drink a little amount of water at 7 p.m. Three or four prisoners died in the jail. They were suffering from serious diseases and some of them didn't have any muscles left on their legs. There was no medical care and no clinic, and they became so emaciated that they died. All the prisoners were accused of being KNPP sympathizers. They were all Karenni. I felt sick. I caught a cold because there was no blanket. I couldn't sleep at night. We just slept in a sitting position because the cell was so narrow.

Then they transferred us by truck to another jail, LIB. 530 Battalion jail, because new prisoners were going to arrive there. That jail was about eight miles east of Loikaw. LIB. 530 jail was a little better because we had a little chance to breathe fresh air. It was bigger than the other one. There were 27 prisoners in my cell. Then they divided us into two groups and put one group in another cell, so it was a little more comfortable for us and more spacious. The food was the same. I was beaten there too. We were tortured by the jail wardens when they were drunk with village rice liquor. They punched me, kicked me, pulled our ears and walked on our stomachs with their boots while we were lying face up. We didn't wear prisoners' clothes. I didn't have to work. Only the prisoners who were not suspected, because they were not Karenni, had to work. Some were Burmese and some of them were

soldiers. They had shackles on their legs when they were going out of the jail to work. They were from SLORC and were punished because they didn't obey the rules of the Army.

When I was in that jail, I was in charge of distributing the food to others in my cell. There were three doors and they only opened one of the doors when they gave the rice. No one except me could touch the rice pot. Two soldiers pointed a gun at us when they were passing the rice pot to me. I took it. Then when we gave the rice pot back, I told my friend: "Survive or die, I will fight them to escape from here. Otherwise, we will surely die in this jail! I will hit the soldier with the gun and you will take on the soldier with the rice pot." The soldier who opened the door had no gun and I gave him the rice pot. Then the soldier who had a gun turned his back. I punched him and he fell down. My friend punched the other soldier and he also fell face down. While we were running, the other soldiers shot at us. There were two fences around the jail but they were opened in the daytime for the officers to go in and out. Only the door of our cell stayed closed, and it was only unlocked when the soldier came to give the rice pot for dinner. Only the two of us escaped. First, we hid in the long grass and bushes outside the jail fences while the soldiers were chasing us. I hid there until 9 p.m. Then we moved again and reached xxxx village. I slept one night in the paddy fields. I dared not leave in the daytime and departed at 7 or 8 p.m. Finally I carried on to my village. I stayed there for 8 days and came here.

Last June [1996] they ordered the villagers from xxxx [his village] to move. They said that it was ordered by the gentlemen from the Army to the Township LORC Chairman and then passed on to the Village Tract LORC Chairman. The villages were Daw Put, Daw Pet, Daw Law Ku, Daw Pru, Daw Bya, Tee Theh Kloh, Daw Ta Kleh, Daw Lyah Ku, Daw Ku Siu and Daw So Ku. About 11 or 12 villages moved to Tee Po Kloh. The people were gathered inside a fence, a bit outside of Tee Po Kloh village. They kept the people in a separate area. There was about one furlong [220 yards] between Tee Po Kloh village and our area. The army camp of battalion LIB. 429 was about three furlongs [660 yards] away, in a separate place not inside the same area. They just guarded the fence from the gates [they posted sentries at the gates in the relocation camp fence]. This fence had only three gates, where they watched for strangers. The fence was built by the villagers when they arrived in Tee Po Kloh. We had to get permission from the soldiers if we wanted to go out. We didn't need to pay for the pass.

The SLORC ordered: "No one can say 'This is mine' or 'I am the owner'. If someone says, 'This is my bamboo!' SLORC will come and arrest them." [This is apparently a threat against local villagers who protested that those who were relocated were stripping the area of bamboo.] "Everyone can cut and get whatever they need

to build a shelter,” they said. So it was not so difficult to get bamboo, but it was really difficult to get wooden posts because there were no trees. The people could only build small shelters. People could not go outside of the fences, and neither could the animals. When the situation was bad, if someone went outside the fence they considered him a stranger and shot at him. We had to build the shelters according to SLORC restrictions. They told us how many bamboo would be enough for each family. Then you could only count them and cut them down according to the amount they said.

They didn’t allow us to go back to our village to get food. All our livestock were left behind, such as cattle, goats, chickens, ducks, etc. That’s why we needed to buy rice from somewhere else.

In Tee Po Kloh I saw a lot of sick people. Some died. There was no clinic. There was no school in the new place but there was one in the old Tee Po Kloh village. I can’t say whether the children can still go to school or not because it depends on their teachers.

Before I was arrested, the people had to do many things that the army ordered them to do, but I don’t know what happened when I was in jail. For example, twelve people had to go to the army camp every day to build their bunkers and trenches. They had to put big logs on top of the bunkers.

Twice I arrived back at my village. They didn’t burn the village and they didn’t lay land mines, but they took all the materials from our houses such as floorboards, walls and roofs, and even firewood. They killed all the livestock for their meals and took everything that looked nice for themselves. I had more than ten heads of cattle. As for the whole village, the villagers owned about 300 cows and buffaloes. They didn’t get the chance to sell them, nor to look after them even for a short time. The SLORC soldiers reported that they were going out on patrol to look for enemies. They didn’t, they just went to shoot and kill all the villagers’ animals for their food. I lost all, except two bullocks that I used. We could just take a few things along by cart when we first moved from our village to Tee Po Kloh. Later, they didn’t allow us to go out there again. The two bullocks are still alive.

About 30 people escaped from Tee Po Kloh after they heard about my arrest. Now I can’t think of what to do.

Interview 4: HRV: Relocation, Refugee, Child

Name: Klaw Reh
 Sex: Male
 Age: about 30-35
 Ethnicity: Kayah, farmer
 Religion: Christian (RC)
 Marital status: Widower, one daughter aged 10
 Address: Daw Mi Ku village, Shadaw Township, Karenni State
 Date of interview: January 21, 1997
 Place of interview: Karenni refugee camp (2), Thai-Burma border
 Source: KHRG

[Klaw Reh's wife died along with their unborn child along the way, while the family was fleeing Shadaw relocation camp for the Thai border.]

I don't remember exactly when I arrived here, but I think two months ago. SLORC sent a letter to order us to move. When we received the order, I called my family and we went to Shadaw. I stayed there for two months. In Shadaw, they forced me to cut bamboo. Each family had to cut 100 big bamboo for the army camp and also three wooden posts for lights along the road. The bamboo were for building fences in the camp and for [army camp] buildings.

I could only build a tiny house for my family. The SLORC only gave 100 shingles of roof leaves [enough to cover a roof about 5 feet square, and even these were probably demanded from local villagers]. In the rainy season the rain leaked through the roof. And we had to find the bamboo ourselves [to build the houses, in addition to the bamboo for the Army]. We stayed in a big place and there was a fence around it. I received 30 milk tins of rice per week for my family. For about two months. After that, no more. When we had no more food, SLORC allowed us to go and get some in our village. My daughter got sick. She was coughing.

I escaped from Shadaw through the fence with my wife and my daughter. My wife was well. When we escaped from Shadaw, she was well. She was about four months pregnant. First we went back to our village. It was still in good condition. We spent one night there, but not in the village, we hid in the jungle. But when we got near Tee Cha camp, my wife became sick. She became very tired and had pain in her belly. She died during the night. I stayed the night near her. In the morning, I buried her at that place. Then I continued the journey with my daughter to come here. I saw many villagers on the way here. I also saw four villages on the way. Three of them had been burned down by the SLORC. Only one was not burned

down but nobody was staying there. I didn't meet any SLORC on the way. Here I feel safer because it is not under the SLORC. But I don't know anything about the future.

Interview 5: HRV: Refugee, Relocation, Arrest, Forced Labor

Name:	Nga Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	28
Ethnicity:	Kayah, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Single
Address:	Daw Tama Gyi village, Demawso Township, Karenni State
Date of interview:	January 21, 1997
Place of interview:	Karenni refugee camp, Thai-Burma border
Source:	KHRG

[Nga Reh's village, just north of Baw La Keh on the west side of the Pon River, is being used as a relocation site.]

I arrived here about two months ago. My village was not ordered to move but SLORC soldiers arrested many people. I was very afraid of them. And we had to do a lot of 'loke ah pay' [forced labor] for them. So I left my village.

Other villages were ordered to move to Daw Tama Gyi. I don't know whether they received an order or not but I know that the SLORC soldiers forced the other villages to stay together in Daw Tama Gyi. It was at the beginning of the rainy season. I saw more than 300 people. They were from four villages, Daw Kaw, Daw Par, Daw Ta Kya and Daw Hei Kleh. They had to stay in a separate place near Daw Tama Gyi, only for the new people. They built shelters there. It was very difficult for them to find bamboo and to build houses. The SLORC didn't give them anything with which to build a house. There was no fence around the place but many SLORC soldiers were always checking and guarding the new people. They were not allowed to go out freely.

The food was not enough. Each family received only three milk tins of rice per week. The people could do nothing. They just boiled the rice to make a rice soup. The water was not good. It came out of a pipe from Daw Ku Kay village. I saw a lot of sick people. Some died from disease. Most of them had fever. The SLORC soldiers forced them to work every day, to clear the car road and to make fences for

the security of their camp. They were making a new car road. I saw some cars on it. People could not run away from Daw Tama Gyi.

I was arrested when I was in my house in my village. That happened about three months before the new villagers arrived to Daw Tama Gyi. SLORC forced me to build a fence for their camp. I could not do it. They ordered us to go every day and sometimes I was absent. So they called me and they beat me three times on my back with a bamboo stick. Even before the new people came, we had to do labor all the time. Building the fences, working on the car road. We had to do work for the SLORC every day. We didn't get paid for it. We had no chance to work on our farms. The SLORC ordered us to work for ten days and then we had only one day for ourselves to grow our paddy and other things. The new people also had to do the same work all the time for the SLORC. They did not have any land [to farm].

I was afraid of the SLORC, so I came here with two of my brothers: an elder brother and a younger one. We came here on foot. We climbed the mountains and we crossed the Salween river by boat. We didn't meet any soldiers on the way. We saw two villages on the way: Daw Kraw Aw and Daw Mu Kya. Both had been burnt down by the SLORC. SLORC soldiers are not good to the people. That is why I came here. What will happen, I don't know!

Interview 6: HRV: Refugee, Relocation

Name:	Baw Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	19
Ethnicity:	Kayah, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Single
Address:	Daw Law Ku village, Demawso Township, Karenni State
Date of interview:	January 21, 1997
Place of interview:	Karenni refugee camp (2), Thai-Burma border
Source:	KHRG

[Baw Reh spent several months in Tee Po Kloh relocation camp.]

I arrived here on January 16, 1997. First I went to stay in Ngwe Daung, then I came over here. Daw Law Ku villagers had to move to Tee Po Kloh. I think it was in July [around mid-June]. They gave us only three days to move. My family moved together to Tee Po Kloh. It was one day's walk away. We had to make three trips.

Some people had to carry their things by themselves and some used bullock carts. It was in the hills but a cart could be used on the way. In Tee Po Kloh, we received a plot of land to build a house. It was pretty big. I could even grow things there if they would let me, but the SLORC didn't allow us to grow vegetables. This area used to be farmland. The Tee Po Kloh villagers didn't receive anything as compensation for it. Eleven villages moved to Tee Po Kloh, including Daw Law Ku, Daw Pet, Daw Preh Tu, Daw Lyah Ku, Daw Put, Tee Theh Kloh, and etc. I don't know how many people there were. In my village, there were 26 houses. Everybody moved to Tee Po Kloh. I don't know why the SLORC ordered us to move. They didn't burn our village down but the villagers didn't go back.

The place was not fenced [later there was a fence]. The soldiers had a camp in Tee Po Kloh. I think it was SLORC LIB.421 but I am not sure. Each person received only four or five milk tins of rice for one month [this is only enough for two days]. If it was not enough, they allowed people to find food outside, but just for a limited time, between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. We could go back to our village but we had to get a pass. It was free. The validity of the pass depends on the village. If the village was very far away they allowed two or three days, but if the village was near Tee Po Kloh they allowed less time. If we overstayed, we would be tortured by the soldiers. I saw people being beaten because the SLORC suspected them. They arrested them, beat them, and put them in jail. Sometimes they even killed them. No one from my village was killed but some Tee Po Kloh villagers were.

We got water from the well [the existing village well]. It was enough for everyone but it was not clean. Many people got sick. I don't know from what diseases. Some people died, especially children. There was no clinic. The only possibility was to go to the city hospital [at Demawso town].

Some people escaped from there, mainly single men. I stayed in Tee Po Kloh for seven months [actually less than that]. The situation was getting worse and worse because there was not enough food. People who owned animals sold them to get money to buy food. My family already sold our two cows and our buffalo.

We also had to repair the car road, the road from Demawso to Tee Po Kloh to Daw Tama Gyi. I worked there for three days. They called one person from each family. They fixed a period of time. Each village had to finish one section of the road within three days. In Tee Po Kloh, there was nothing to do [to earn money]. I went to Ngwe Daung to do farm work with my relatives. They had a farm in Ngwe Daung [near Deemawso]. I went alone. I worked there for about four months [actually less than that]. I couldn't stay there for a long time because SLORC soldiers might come into the village and arrest people. From Ngwe Daung I came here on foot. It

was nine days' walk. I saw some soldiers on the way but they didn't do anything. I saw some villages and almost all of them were burnt down. All the villages I passed were empty.

My family is still staying in Tee Po Kloh. I would like them to come here, but if I call them SLORC will torture all the villagers in Tee Po Kloh. Because my family is registered with the village. Also, it would be very difficult for me to go back there. Now I have no plans. I don't think this refugee camp is very good, but I don't know where else I could go. So I will stay here.

Interview 7: HRV: Refugee, Relocation, Forced Labor

Name:	Koo Ni Reh
Sex:	Male
Age:	24
Ethnicity:	Kayah, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Single
Address:	Daw Law Ku village, Pruso Township, Karenni State
Date of interview:	January 21, 1997
Place of interview:	Karenni refugee camp (2), Thai-Burma border
Source:	KHRG

[Koo Ni Reh spent seven months in Mar Kraw She relocation camp.]

SLORC told us to move to Mar Kraw She village, beside the road which goes to Phasaung town. Only my village had to move there. It had 20 houses. The other villages like Tee Theh Ku, Daw Ku Li and Law Pya Leh had to move to Kay Lia and Daw Ter Kleh had to move to Tee Bya Nge. They threatened us, "If you want to die, don't move. If you don't want to die, you must move to that place." We were afraid that if we went to any other places the SLORC would kill us. And if we didn't go to do their 'loke ah pay' [forced labor], we would be killed.

When we were ordered to move, we could carry all our belongings except our cattle. Later the SLORC allowed us to go and look after them during the daytime but in the evening we had to be back in the new place. The SLORC didn't burn down my village, but nothing is left there except for some animals. The troops often pass through the village.

My family moved and they relocated us beside Mar Kraw She village. It was not a

good place because each family only received a very tiny plot of land 12 feet by 12 feet. We could only build a small shelter, only big enough for sleeping. They didn't give any roofing leaves, so we had to get them from the Mar Kraw She villagers. We went by ourselves to cut the bamboo and trees to build shelters. We had to go back to our village to get them. They didn't order us to build a fence around the new place, but they ordered us to build a fence around their Army camp. They ordered us to cut bamboo and make a fence, to cut trees along the road and clear the car road.

There were a lot of sick people. There was no clinic there. When people were sick, they went to see the priest and he gave them some medicine. From July until December we didn't receive any rice. After that, I don't know as I wasn't there any more. When we had no rice to eat, we wanted to go back to our village. But then the SLORC saw us [leaving] and they asked: "Who gave you permission to go back to your village?" We were afraid of them and we couldn't do anything anymore. For seven months, the SLORC didn't give any rice to us. That's why I ran away. I escaped through the fence. I knew if they saw me they would beat me. They only allowed us to go out from 7 a.m. until 4 p.m. If we came back later than that, they would torture us.

I arrived here this month, on foot. I am the only one from my village. In our village, many people would like to come here, but they have no way to come because they are afraid of the SLORC soldiers. If the soldiers saw us coming here in groups, it would not be easy for us. My family wants to come here very much but they cannot, because the names of every family are already on their list. If you want to come here, you must lie to them.

Interview 8: HRV: Refugee, Relocation, Killing, Child

Name:	Sai Long
Sex:	Male
Age:	24
Ethnicity:	Shan, Buddhist
Marital status:	Married with one daughter
Address:	Meh Steh village, Soe T'Cheh township, Karenni State
Date of interview:	January 21, 1997
Place of interview:	Karenni refugee camp (2), Thai-Burma border
Source:	KHRG

I have been staying here for about ten months. I came to the refugee camp because

the SLORC forced me to move out of my village and because of SLORC oppression. In the past I used to live in Meh Steh village. The SLORC burnt down the houses in my village and so I went to another place called Pan Yone [previous site of Karenni Camp 2 refugee camp].

On January 3, 1997, when the Burmese came here, I was staying in my house. The fighting started at 2 a.m. At first, I heard a big explosion and I saw sparks coming out. I didn't see the soldiers. I don't know how many they were and what kind of guns they had. They didn't warn us. They came quietly into the camp. I suddenly heard shooting. I just took my child and ran to escape. I started running along the narrow path between the houses. My wife was behind. I only knew that the bullets flew very close to my house. Near my house, three shells [by other reports, apparently M79 grenades] exploded. We shouted and my wife cried out in tears when she saw her father running. The firing stopped when she cried like that. But she was hit and fell down. She fell near the door of our house. The shell exploded in front of our house. She was wounded on her legs, stomach and arms and soon after she was bleeding. Her name was Naung Kyin and she was 19 years old. I was also hit on my right elbow and my child got a small wound on her foot.

The attack lasted about 15 minutes: shooting and explosions. I didn't see the Burmese after the fighting [he was hiding]. After the attack, I had to wait for a long time for someone to carry my wife because I myself couldn't walk. I also had an injury on my leg, so I just looked for some other people to carry her after the fighting stopped. I waited for two hours and then some people carried my wife to the hospital, and soon after she died there.

I cannot think or guess why the Burmese attacked this camp. Now my wound is healing, but I can only bend my elbow a little bit. As for my daughter, she can walk again now. I have no other place to stay, so I can't think or decide whether I should stay or not stay now. I don't dare to stay in Camp 2 anymore. I want to stay with my parents-in-law who moved to Camp 3 on the Thai side [away from the disputed border, further into Thailand].

Interview 9: HRV: Refugee, Relocation, Livelihood, Women, Killing

Name:	Saw Ler Wah
Sex:	Male
Age:	about 30
Ethnicity:	Karen

Date of interview: January 27, 1997
Place of interview: Karenni refugee camp (2), Thai-Burma border
Source: KHRG

Buko was not a relocation site. The villages in that area were ordered to move to Maw Chi relocation site. Shortly after the relocation, SLORC burnt down half the houses of Buko, about 30 houses, and 50 houses in Kwachi. Now in Kwachi village, some villagers were even rebuilding their houses. The villagers had returned to live in the village but with only a few belongings and were always ready to run. Actually, only the villages close to Maw Chi moved to the relocation site because SLORC could destroy them anytime. But the villages further away didn't move.

Many people stayed in the forest, two or three families together. They managed to harvest a little paddy this year. The SLORC operation took place in the rainy season. At that time the villagers had already planted their paddy, but since they had to go into hiding they could not take care of their fields. Although weeds grew in the fields, they managed to harvest some paddy, but obviously the harvest was not good. Their paddy could last them for another 2-3 months, then they would face a big shortage of rice. Especially in Buko area, where paddy cultivation had always been difficult and the farmers needed a lot of paddy seeds. In that area it would be harder to survive. If SLORC came again during the field clearing season [February to April], they would face big problems for the next harvest. The villagers found vegetables in the jungle and they also managed to grow some, like cucumbers. They had eaten all their animals like chickens and pigs, and most of their cattle and buffaloes had already been sold. Also, during its operations SLORC killed and ate any cattle they found.

In the forest there were many illnesses. The worst was malaria, but also worms, respiratory disease, diarrhea, dysentery and skin diseases. I heard about two children from the same family who died the same day because of malaria and anemia. They came from Maw Chi relocation site.

SLORC deliberately burnt down the villages they thought were important for the rebels. They also burnt down the best houses in other villages, and all the rice barns they could find. Some villages were not burnt down but landmines were laid.

After the relocations, SLORC moved into Ler Mu Ko township and Bwe Ghaw Ko township and searched the area. They passed through Baw Ghu Der township and also burnt down some houses and put landmines there, but this was not a special operation. Some people were killed, including women, because they stepped on landmines. The SLORC didn't search for the people in the jungle.

In Mawchee relocation site, the people needed permission from the SLORC to go back to their fields, to work and bring rice to the relocation site. The pass cost five *kyats* and was valid from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. So the villagers could go back, but it was dangerous because of the landmines -- not only SLORC landmines, also KNPP landmines. Some had died because they stepped on landmines.

SLORC gave eight milk tins of rice per person for one week [less than half what was needed to survive]. The rice brought back by the villagers from their villages must be given to the rice bank, and the SLORC redistributed it to the people at the same rate -- eight tins per person per week [i.e. no one could get more than that no matter what]. It was very difficult to get salt and medicine. They could not go to Mawchee to get salt. At present they must go to Toungoo, which is far. In the relocation site people died from diseases because there was no health care. There was only one clinic in Mawchee. There was not enough medicine and people needed to pay for it. There was no school.

There were three SLORC bases in Mawchee and one inside the relocation site. There were about 1,000 people in Mawchee relocation site. The people were ordered to build a fence around the relocation area. In Phasaung too, there was a fence around the relocation site and the people were ordered to build it. SLORC ordered the people to work: to guard the area, to build their bunkers and fences, and some people had to serve as porters. According to the villagers, SLORC was rebuilding the Toungoo/Mawchee road and clearing the area for logging, but I didn't see or hear about any road building going on right now.

They also threatened people. Recently KNPP destroyed a water pipe for the mine generator [Maw Chi is an important mining area] and the SLORC forced the people from the Maw Chi relocation site to rebuild it. About 40 to 50 people fled the relocation site and went to stay in other villages away from the SLORC.

Interview 10: HRV: Refugee, Relocation, Refugee, Forced Labor, Livelihood

Name	Ko Chai
Age	37 years old
Address	Thein Khun village, Tenassarim township
Occupation	Farmer
Nationality	Shan
Religion	Buddhist
Name	U Maung New

Age	40 years old
Name	Ko Seinn
Age	30 years old
Date of Interview	January 1997
Source:	ABSDF

(Three persons were interviewed together as they were from the same village with the same story)

We lived in Thein Khun village in Tenasserim township. Our village was ordered to move no later than October 27, 1997 by the local SLORC troops. That was why I fled to Thailand. I knew that it would be very difficult to survive under their conditions after the relocation.

The mistreatment by the SLORC soldiers is getting worse year by year. We have been forcibly used as unpaid forced labor till now for at least five years.

On the first week of October, 1996, a column led by Captain Zaw Myo Htut arrived at our village and ordered the entire village to move by October 27. No assistance or arrangement was provided by the SLORC. They did not tell us why we were being forcibly relocated nor where to relocate. They just ordered us to get out of our village immediately. Some of us moved to Tavoy or other towns where our relatives lived. Many of our villagers just ended up wandering around the region. I decided to go to the border because I did not want to live under SLORC rule. We had to abandon everything; all our belongings, our houses, farms, animals and rice barns. I, myself, left five acres of farmland behind, and, to make matters worse, had been in debt since last year because I could not take care of my farm due to the frequent forced labor demanded of me. Because I did not have the required 250-300 *kyats* it would cost to hire a substitute, I had no choice but to work for the SLORC. Earlier this year, I borrowed some money to subsidize the cost for cultivating this season's crop. Because of SLORC's forced relocation orders, I had to abandon everything I had worked so long and hard for.

Interview 11: HRV: Refugee, Incursion

Name:	Naw Tha Muh
Sex:	Female
Age:	19
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	No religion

Marital status: Single
 Address: Huay Kaloke refugee camp, Thailand
 Date of interview: February 1, 1997
 Place of interview: Huay Kaloke refugee camp, Thailand
 Source: KHRG

[Naw Tha Muh was in Huay Kaloke refugee camp when it was attacked by a combined SLORC/DKBA force on January 28, 1997. Note that as a shopkeeper in the market, she was much better off than most refugees.]

On January 28, 1997, the DKBA came into the camp. I don't know the exact time because I had no watch. It must have been past 10 p.m. After I had watched television, I went to bed. My house was in the market [her house is also a shop selling mainly clothing]. I was sleeping when my mother woke me up, and the first thing I heard was jungle boots running ti...ti...ti... and chasing the people who were running here and there. They came across the football field. I didn't know what was happening. Just then, DKBA soldiers kicked the door hard with their boots and said: "Open the door!" I didn't open it and went to the back of the house, but the DKBA soldiers were also at the back of the house. When I came face to face with them, they asked me: "Where are you going?" I didn't answer and went back to the front of the house. My mother was so worried for me. She said "Don't run anywhere!" Then the DKBA soldiers turned their guns on us and said: "All of you! Go back to the front of the house." At that time there were some guests staying with us. There were seven in the house, all females, and we didn't say anything, so the DKBA didn't do anything to us.

Seven soldiers came to my house. My mother had hidden one bag and they didn't find it, and they didn't find the money we had hidden either. They only saw the box with a little money in it. They took all the money from the small box. They also opened my handbag and took the money as well. Altogether, they took some coins, 2,000 *Baht*, and mostly clothes, also shoes, small knives and a flask. They put the clothes from the shop into bags. The plastic bags were from my shop too, and they carried them out themselves [they didn't use porters].

My mother told a DKBA soldier who looked about 20 years old: "Child, take everything you want but please do not burn our house down!". But the soldier pointed his gun at her and said: "Do you want to die, old woman?" A girl who was in my house begged the soldier: "Please don't do anything to Grandmother! She is old!" (They also took the *tehku* [sarong] and clothes off an old man in my house and searched for something they expected to find on him, like gold or money, but they didn't find anything.) They took everything they wanted and then they moved to another house, my friend's house.

The DKBA came into the camp, group by group, house to house, simultaneously. I heard that the same was going on at the other houses too. 40 *baht* was taken from my auntie's house. Her husband was kicked with boots. They ordered everyone to get out of their houses. No one was allowed to take anything out. Then they started burning the houses.

The DKBA went to the biggest shop and pointed their guns at Uncle [an older man]. They demanded the key and money. They took a lot of money from him, about 500,000 *kyats*, plus the gold rings, chains, and bracelets which belonged to others. These had been given to uncle as guarantees for money borrowed from him. They also used his telephone.

They took everything they wanted such as clocks, watches, cassettes, radios, clothes, and they even searched for things in the brassieres of the girls and the women. They expected to find things such as gold and money. They took off earrings, bracelets and chains from two girls. One was Karen and the other Chinese. Then the soldiers questioned a 50-year-old man who was insane, and hit his head with a rifle butt. He was hurt and blood streamed down his head. The question was only: "Are you a soldier?" And the mad man only answered: "What?" Only for this!

I also heard that Nya Nya Say's father got kicked in the chest when DKBA demanded gold and money from him. Nya Nya Say was a student. I saw that they took two motorcycles from others, but people said that seven motorcycles were taken altogether. They left some motorcycles in the paddy fields because there was no road through the fields and they were unable to push them further. For some others, they didn't have the key to start the engine, so they just broke the dashboards and lights and destroyed the motorcycles on their way back. They also took the telephone.

After the soldiers went out, they started to set the houses on fire. I said to my mother: "Mother, the DKBA are burning the houses!" She thought they wouldn't burn them but then she saw the other shops burning.

I went down to my motorcycle to move it away from the fire and also because I was afraid that DKBA would take it. They took the motorcycle from an Indian house, but I had kept the keys for ours inside and they hadn't seen it because it was kept at the back of the house. My mother helped me to pull it. Then they saw me pushing the motorcycle. Two DKBA soldiers came towards me to ask or do something to me. They said: "Where are you going?" I thought they would take the motorcycle, but another DKBA soldier called them. They turned back. They didn't have a chance to do anything to me. I don't know why. Maybe because we had been

selling goods for a long time and they knew us. They didn't do anything to my mother either. When some soldiers pointed their guns at her, the others disapproved. They left her. I noticed they didn't speak rudely to her. They only asked: "Do you have money?" and didn't harm her. As for other people, they beat them when they demanded money.

I rode down to the Thai checkpoint. But I didn't see any Thai soldiers at the checkpoint. No one was there. Then I went to the other Thai gate and tried to wake them up. Only one policeman awoke. I told him that the DKBA were burning the houses and looting things from the refugees. But he didn't seem to understand, and he asked me: "What is DKBA?" "The DKBA means the Buddhist soldiers", I said. Then he understood but he didn't do anything or say anything. So I got angry and immediately rode to another police gate at Mae Pa [a larger Thai village very near the camp]. The police told me: "We already know and we have contacted the other posts." On my way to Mae Sot, we saw one or two cars with people in them between Mae Pa and Huay Kaloke. Maybe they were coming around to look at the fire. I didn't see any soldiers, just civilian cars. I went to call my teacher in Mae Sot. When we arrived back at the camp, we saw that the people were everywhere in disorder and that the houses were in flames.

My mother had taken as many things as she could and put them down into the well when the DKBA started burning the houses. My house was also burnt down by DKBA. My mother told me that they came inside the houses, searched for things to light the fire with, then set fire from inside the houses. I didn't see that because I was making for the Thai checkpoints.

Altogether I saw about 20 DKBA soldiers but other people said that there were over 100. They were all in camouflage. They had soldiers' boots and long guns like G3s and G4s which the SLORC uses. Others had black uniforms which the Burmese wear. They were shooting up and down, in the air, not at the people. Nobody died. Some of them spoke Karen but most spoke Burmese.

At the time when the camp was already on fire, a 20-year-old man came to help us carry things out of our house and helped to save a patient in another house. Before he reached the house, he met a SLORC soldier who asked him: "Where are you going?" The man answered in Karen: "I am going to help a patient there", and the SLORC soldier replied: "I am not Karen. Don't talk to me in Karen. Just take off your watch from your wrist and give it to me now!" So the man gave it to him. I am sure he was a Burmese soldier. People said that the Karen DKBA soldiers had put soot on their faces and that the Burmese didn't. I couldn't recognize them because their faces were all the same. They all looked black in the dark.

At last the DKBA returned to their own camp when they saw the fire engines coming to the camp to extinguish the fire. They must have thought that these trucks were from the Thai Army.

When I came back to Huay Kaloke camp, all I saw were the houses in flames, the people disorganized and the Thai fire engines not doing anything to the burning houses. They were parked still at a distance, and the Thai policemen were also staying still at a distance just looking around. Actually I am not sure, police or soldiers. They didn't have any guns. They wore brown uniforms like the Thai police. Maybe they were firemen. I also saw some people from Mae Pa standing on the road. The firemen extinguished the fire only when everything was already burnt down. The houses were burning continuously for about 3 hours.

I don't feel angry with the DKBA. I don't want to kill them. We can understand each other because we are Karen. I just hate the Burmese, SLORC. Only a few DKBA came and they did nothing to me. The Burmese soldiers tried to shoot my mother but the DKBA soldiers stopped them from killing her. They also stopped them from harming me when I was trying to push my motorcycle. The DKBA soldiers helped me escape by calling away the Burmese soldiers. [Note: At this stage of the events she was not actually sure which soldiers were which.]

My mother has practically nothing left, just a few things. She has no gold. They already knew that we didn't have any gold. We only had some money. I remember that we invested about 50,000 *baht* in this shop. Later on we increased it up to 70,000 *baht*, maybe more, but less than 100,000 *baht*. That included the shop and the clothing. All burnt down.

I don't miss anything in particular, because many times my house has been burnt down. This is the fourth time that my house has been burnt down during my lifetime. I only want a better life. There is only one thing that I regret most: my family album of photographs.

Even when my mother was expecting me, our house was burnt down in Old Wankha. But my first experience was when I was 5 or 6 years old and we were living in the new Wankha camp. At that time, my father was a trader. We also had a shop then and everything was burnt down. I can remember my house being destroyed. It was set on fire during the fighting between the KNU and the Burmese. The second time was when we were living at Wankha on the Thai side and I was about 12 years old. We had a shop there too and it was burnt down by the Burmese soldiers. But that time we didn't lose the clothing because we took it all out ahead of time. The third time was at the new market in Huay Kaloke last year. It was an accident: an Indian

family's carelessness with their stove in their kitchen [most of Huay Kaloke market was burnt down in March 1996 because of this accident].

Now we are staying in Mae Sot for a short time. We are renting a house. My mother will start a new shop when the situation is better in Huay Kaloke.

Interview 12: HRV: Refugee, Incursion, Women, Child

Name:	Saw Hai Kaw
Sex:	Male
Age:	18
Ethnicity:	Karen student
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Single
Address:	Beh Klaw (Mae La) refugee camp, Thailand
Date of interview:	February 3, 1997
Place of interview:	Beh Klaw refugee camp, Thailand
Source:	KHRG

[Saw Hai Kaw was in Beh Klaw refugee camp when it was attacked by a combined SLORC/DKBA force on January 29, 1997.]

The attack started at about 6:30 a.m. on January 29. At that time I was staying in the Bible school dormitory. I was coming down from the dormitory to work early. The Bible School was in Section C1 and the DKBA came in from the hilltop of Section C1. They came from different parts in that section. Just when I started working in the school compound, I heard a carbine gunshot. Then I heard heavy shelling. Some shells exploded but others didn't. They shelled heavy weapons to block off the gate. During the fighting, we Bible School students went to hide in a cave nearby. While I was running towards the back of the hill, one RPG [rocket-propelled grenade] shell dropped nearby, so I ran into the teak plantation. That shell fell in the bamboo and killed an old woman who was hiding there with some children. I don't know her name but we used to watch television together every night. She must have been 80 years old. She died instantly. Two 4- or 5-year-old children were injured.

The DKBA came in at the time when the [security] soldiers were rotating their duty, so only three soldiers were left. That was why the DKBA was able to reach the foot of the hill of section C1. Some DKBA did not even have any weapons - they came into the camp just to set the houses on fire. Only a few of them had guns, like AR, AK47, RPG-7, and M79 mortars [the AR is a cut-down version of the M16 automatic

assault rifle; AK47 is an automatic assault rifle; RPG-7 is a shoulder-launched rocket-propelled grenade; and M79 is a rifle-sized grenade launcher]. I saw some of them coming in and blowing a whistle. The whistle means “Start fighting!” Then others came in. So they started fighting in Section C1 because there was not enough security in that area to fight against them. The security soldiers didn’t have enough guns. One of the villagers told me that at that time three DKBA went shouting into the houses, “Is there anyone in this house?” Then they shot their guns into the houses and set them on fire. Afterwards I saw six burnt houses but other people said there were 15.

While I was hiding in the teak plantation, reinforcements of Beh Klaw security soldiers arrived. One of them who came from the other side of the camp was injured on his hand. He didn’t feel his injury because he was concentrating on his duty. He only noticed it when he saw the blood seeping out of his wound. Another Bible school student and I cleaned his wound and dressed it.

When the reinforcements came I felt encouraged and went to look around near the fighting. I followed the soldiers but not too close to them. When the shells fell, I hid under the teak trees. The DKBA retreated up to the hilltop, from where they were still fighting. During that time, some DKBA were killed. People told me that three DKBA died but I saw only one dead, under the banana trees. When this man fell down another DKBA came down to save him, but he got injured so he left his friend under the banana trees. Beside the dead body we found a gun, a backpack and a cassette player [stolen from one of the houses] which had been damaged by the gunshots. We opened his bag and we saw materials for mines and bombs and wires to hook them up to explode. I felt very sad for our Karen people. He also had an amulet to protect his life. These are the tricks of the Myaing Gyi Ngu monk [U Thuzana, chairman of DKBA]. Are the monks not holy? I don’t understand.

About 30 soldiers came but I only saw the one who died. They wore uniforms, the same as the SLORC, but “Thawka Thu Po” was written on their badges. It means “the monk’s soldiers”. I think they came to loot things from the refugees.

They fired about 35 artillery shells. Some exploded near people’s houses. During the fighting the refugees ran out of the camp. Some of them ran to the foot of the hills. For two or three days afterwards there was no one in the camp. I didn’t even see my family.

Interview 13: HRV: Refugee, Incursion, Killing

Name: Naw G'Mwee Paw
 Sex: Female
 Age: 49
 Ethnicity: Karen medic
 Religion: Christian
 Marital status: Married with 6 children
 Address: Huay Bone (Don Pa Kiang) refugee camp, Thailand
 Date of interview: February 6, 1997
 Place of interview: Huay Bon refugee camp, Thailand
 Source: KHRG

[Naw G'Mwee Paw, a medic at Huay Bone camp clinic, was there when it was attacked and burned on January 28 1997.]

On January 28 1997, they burnt our camp. At the time I was sleeping in a house, very close to my own house. I was not in my own house.

It was 9:45 p.m. Karen time [10:15 Thai time]. At first, we heard one gunshot, just one gunshot, and the people who were staying together with me in that house all ran away. But I came back to my own house to get my daughter, because my husband was staying there with my son and my daughter and he couldn't carry them both [her son is disabled and her daughter is 21/2 years old]. Within a few seconds, we heard a very strong voice near our house which said "Catch them! Shoot them! Don't let them get out of the camp!" We saw a lot of men with guns running out of the bushes to Section 2, toward our house and directly toward the clinic. They entered the clinic looking for whatever they needed. At first they didn't come for me. But when they didn't find the things they needed, they came to my house, surrounded it and then ordered the others to guard my house while some of them came into the house and pointed their guns at me.

Ten of them came into my house. They all had guns. They didn't shoot at me but they poked me with their guns and said, "Don't run or we will shoot you!" They pointed their guns at me and asked me for the key of the clinic. I gave it to them. One of their leaders ordered them: "Look through this house and open all the things in it. After that he said, "Don't do anything. Don't touch this Auntie! Don't hurt her!" So the soldiers who were standing beside me stepped away from me. I took the key and my little daughter. I carried her with me to the hospital, the soldiers following me, and I looked for the microscope in the clinic [the DKBA are usually on orders to get microscopes when they raid refugee camps]. When I opened the

cupboard, I didn't find the microscope. But these men who came to get the microscope, they didn't even know what a microscope is. They looked everywhere but couldn't find it. I gave them medicine to take back [to Burma] and use. At first they put the medicine in their bags, but afterwards one of them told me, "Auntie, I don't need these. In our place, we have a lot of medicine." He gave it back and I closed the cupboard and came back to my house. When they came out of the clinic, they talked to one of the leaders on the walkie-talkie - they said, "We haven't found the microscope. What do we do now?" One of the leaders said on the walkie-talkie, "How is it that you can't find it? Today they were using it to do malaria tests". They were speaking very loudly so I could hear very clearly. They were speaking in Karen language over the walkie-talkie, not Burmese. The leader told them over the walkie-talkie, "Threaten that woman and you will find it." The second time, they climbed into the clinic by themselves, but didn't call me. They found it in the breast-feeding room. They took the microscope. We were staying under our house and we could hear their voices. They were speaking very loudly. When they brought the microscope out of the clinic, the man with the walkie-talkie ordered: "Burn it down. Burn it down!"

I was under my house, I looked at the clinic and I saw that it started to burn. Then my house and the camp office [next door] started to burn. There were about 30 soldiers there, and at other places maybe a lot more, but I just saw the ones who were near my house and the clinic. They were dressed in uniforms and all of them had guns, but I don't know which kind. One of the guns was very short and a lot of them were long. I could not see very well at nighttime. We could not use our torch-lights, and they were training their torch-lights on us. Only some of them were DKBA. SLORC soldiers were also amongst them. As far as I know, the soldiers who came and talked to me were DKBA, but outside the clinic many of the soldiers were silent. They didn't speak. One woman told me that when they were outside the camp she heard them speaking Burmese to each other, but inside the camp they didn't speak at all.

I saw the face of the one who asked me for the keys but I didn't know him. But their eyes were very strange. Their eyes were red and they looked at us sternly, like they were crazy. I am sure they had taken some medicine. When they addressed me at first they were very aggressive, but afterward they became softer.

First, they surrounded the camp, then after the gunshot, some of them ran to the clinic and my house but another group went to the market. They shot one Thai [a merchant who sold things in the camp]. I didn't see that. Early the next morning I came back to the market and I saw a lot of blood on the ground, and the people told me, "Oh! Min Yen's husband was shot last night!" When he heard that the DKBA

were close to us, he jumped into his car and tried to drive out of the camp. Then he saw one DKBA soldier in front of him who ordered him to stop the car, but he tried to drive through and they shot him dead. He was hit in his leg and his bladder, inside the car. I don't know his name. He was Thai. His wife was also Thai. They did business here. They had a shop in the market. He was staying alone in the camp that night [without his wife].

At that time they ordered us not to run away: "If you run away, we will shoot you!" So my husband told them, "You are burning our house and yet you don't let us run away." But we tried to escape and we ran to the field outside of the camp. We didn't run too far and we could see the whole camp burning. They stayed around for about 4 hours. When the fire was nearly finished, we could hear them shouting: "All burnt. Now we must go back." We could see them with their guns, we could even count them! We stayed very quietly just outside the camp. We couldn't go far because we had no shoes. So we tried to hide in the bushes, and we spent the whole night there in the fields outside of the camp. We couldn't save any of our belongings. We only had the clothes we were wearing. That night, I didn't wear a sweater, only a shirt and my sarong, and it was very cold. I had left my jacket in my house. I had 764 *baht* in it to give to someone in the camp. That day I couldn't find the person, so I had kept the money in my jacket to give to him the next day. I was keeping the money very carefully, but at that time I didn't remember about my jacket and it was burnt. I lost an electric keyboard [a portable battery-operated piano keyboard, which are used by many Karen churches] and my cupboard with all our clothes inside. Also my medical dictionary, I lost it all.

At that time, we didn't know that they were also burning down Huay Kaloke camp. We could see the light of the fire in the sky but we didn't know where it was from [Huay Kaloke is just 10 km. further south]. It was nearly at the same time that they set our camp on fire.

There was no Thai security in our camp and nobody was staying at the checkpoint. Usually they stayed in the daytime, sometimes at night too. But if they heard that the news was not so good [i.e. that there may be an attack], they went away. It happened at nighttime, so there was no security for us. But the next morning, a lot of Thai soldiers came, checked the situation and asked many questions.

Afterwards we came back to the camp, but we had no more houses and nothing to cook. A lot of people were without any pots, without anything. So the monk who was staying here announced to the people: "If you have nothing, you can come to the monastery. Especially for the babies, we will give rice for you." [The monastery was not burnt down.] The adults had to wait. A lot of people came and ate there. Some

rice was left in the monastery. Some families who had rice came and gave it to the monks, and the monks gave food to the villagers.

I didn't hear of them looting anything in the market. Personally, I believe that their leaders only ordered them to do two things, to get the microscope and to burn down the camp. At the time I felt angry but also very sad. The people here felt so sad. A lot of them were crying because they had nothing left, not even clothes. Since then and even until now we have been sleeping outside of the camp. Only a few families have some blankets. The small children under 5 years old especially, have been catching colds. We've also had a few cases of malaria and diarrhea.

For the future, we can do nothing. I don't know. We are waiting to know what we should do, where we should go. A lot of people are waiting to hear what the leaders will say and they will follow. If they are asked to go back to Burma, they will refuse to do so. But if we build our houses here again, they will surely come and burn them again.

I was in the camp when DKBA attacked us. It was on August 23, 1996. As I was afraid, I was not in my house but in another one in the camp [there were already rumors in the camp of a possible attack because DKBA soldiers had been seen gathering just across the border]. They didn't send any messages beforehand.

First they entered Ka Na Su [an outlying section of the refugee camp]. The camp leader told me that it happened at about midnight. I didn't hear the shooting because it was about three kilometers away. They killed Major Tun Kyi there. The villagers said that about ten of them [DKBA] crossed the river and came directly to Major Tun Kyi's house. His house was a bit distant from the other houses. They surrounded his house. His wife ran out of the house. Major Tun Kyi also tried to run out of the house but he only got down the steps when somebody shouted to him and shot him. They didn't ask anything. Major Tun Kyi asked, "Who is coming?" He got no answer and he was shot. He was hit by many bullets in his chest. He was in the KNU before. He was 70 years old and had retired. He had four children. That night, only Major Tun Kyi and his wife were staying in the house. Their children were not staying together with them because they were at school, one of his daughters is a school teacher in this camp [the main section - there is no school in Ka Na Su] and the eldest one is married. His wife thinks that if she hadn't managed to run out of the house, she would have been shot too. We think that maybe the SLORC told DKBA to go and find someone like a leader, a KNU leader or a camp leader and arrest and kill him. We all know that they are controlled by the SLORC.

After they had killed him they entered his house and took all the clothes and all his

money too, 70,000 *baht*. Nothing was left in his house. I think that they came to catch him, but after they got him they also wanted to get his money. In Ka Na Su they also went to Pu Kyi's house. They stayed there for a few minutes and pointed their guns at his family. They didn't ask or steal anything. They only frightened them. I just heard now that they also took the clothes in another house.

The same group came here. They entered the camp [main section] at nearly 2 a.m. They didn't take the path -- they crossed the cornfield and came to the well in Section 7. One of the men saw them with their guns but he thought they were our own camp security guards. Only later did he realize that they were DKBA. They all had guns. My son also saw them, but it was night-time and he didn't know whether they were wearing uniforms or not. My son was not staying in our house. He was near the top of the road and he saw them passing by. Maybe they came in separate groups, because dogs were barking at various places. Then they must have joined together in the camp.

That night I was sleeping and I didn't notice anything. Only in the morning, my husband told me. When I went back to our house in the morning, my husband was complaining: "Last night I didn't sleep. I want to sleep now." So, I asked him, "What happened to you? Why didn't you sleep?" And he told me "DKBA came around our house, but they didn't ask or take anything in our house." He saw them. He knew it was DKBA because they had guns. In our camp nobody carries a gun, and we can recognize the Thai soldiers by their uniforms. Those that my husband saw didn't wear uniforms. He saw one man standing at the steps of the camp secretary's house [next door], two here and one or two there. The dogs were barking at them. They lighted their torches, and the dogs were barking a lot. We have 5 dogs, so if someone comes, there is so much noise. Afterwards they went to the hospital. Only one of the nurses and one patient were staying in the IPD [in-patient's department]. They went in and shone their torches but didn't ask anything and didn't take anything.

They went and surrounded Aung Gyi's house [Aung Gyi had recently married an American teacher who had just left the camp the previous day]. They were standing there with an RPG [rocket-propelled grenade launcher], the neighbors saw them. Three men entered his house and looked inside the bedrooms, but they didn't find anyone. Only the headmistress was staying in the house. They said, "Where is the foreigner? We want to see the foreign woman and Padoh Captain [Aung Gyi's father, who is with the KNU]". But she didn't answer and pretended she was asleep. She felt so afraid. Three times the same night they surrounded his house, but only the last time they came and searched inside. But they didn't find them so they left. The only house they entered in this camp was Aung Gyi's house. They knew very well.

They wanted a foreigner because they think that foreigners had a lot of money. And Saw Captain belongs to the Timber Department of the KNU and they wanted leaders like him.

They went to some shops and ordered, "Open the door. If you don't open it, we will do it ourselves." They took some bread and tins of sardines, and other things that they could eat. One shop was left nearly empty. They carried everything away themselves. They also arrested two people and asked them for money, 1,200 *baht*. They couldn't give it, but the DKBA didn't do anything and left them. No one was taken away. They stayed in the camp for about 2 hours, then they left at 4 a.m.

We think they came here for some people, leaders that they wanted, but they didn't do anything because they didn't find them. Even the section leaders were in hiding [the refugee camp section leaders]. They didn't ask the refugees anything.

Everyone was afraid but they couldn't do anything. Most people here didn't even know what happened. Sections 1, 3, 4 and 5 knew but the other side of the camp didn't notice anything. They didn't shoot here. Only the next morning the other people heard the news and got frightened too.

On the 24th, nothing happened, but on the night of the 25th they fired heavy weapons nearby again, across from the fields, on the Karen side [just across the border]. One or two fell on the Thai side near the river but didn't explode. I heard 5 shells. People woke up and ran away from the camp, some along the road and some to the cornfields. They didn't come back to the camp that night and stayed outside the camp under the trees. It was raining. Some people had a plastic sheets but some didn't. Some went to stay in the Thai [farmers'] field huts. My husband also went to stay in a Thai hut. That night I stayed here but the next day I went to stay in Mae Sot with my children.

Now we are afraid. When they came we knew some of them [DKBA soldiers] and nothing happened. Maybe that was good for us. But yesterday we heard that some villagers outside the camp saw them again, and this time they didn't recognize any of them - so maybe the SLORC changed them because when they came they didn't do anything in the main camp. SLORC wanted them to kill someone or burn the camp. Before, they sometimes used to visit some villagers who they knew, but without guns. This was the first time that they came with guns. Each of them had a gun. The villagers were so afraid. The camp leader will have a meeting with KRC [the Karen Refugee Committee] and the NGO's [the foreign Non-Governmental Organizations who supply the refugee camps] to see if we should move. It will not be easy to move so many families.

[After the attack on the camp on 24 August and the shelling of the area on 26 August, the refugees were living in extreme fear and no one was sleeping in the camp at night. They had moved their valuables out into the farm fields and went out there to sleep every night. By 10 September, most of them returned to stay in the camp.]

Recently, I heard that the local troops were asking the people from our village to come back. This was because they needed civilians to work on their forced labor projects. Our village was assigned to provide the labor for the construction of the Moe Htaung motor road. SLORC ordered every villager to return to their village. Anyone who failed to comply would have their land confiscated by the SLORC authorities, in accordance with orders given by Major Hla Min, local commander. In addition to supplying unpaid labor, our village was also required to pay 6,000 kyats per week as porter fees to the SLORC.

Interview 14: HRV: Forced Labor, Refugee, Relocation, Killing, Livelihood

Name:	Saw Hsah Muh Lah
Sex:	Male
Age:	54
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with six children
Address:	Nan Ka Prao village, Tenasserim Division
Date of interview:	February 18, 1997
Place of interview:	temporary site on Thai-Burma border
Source:	KHRG

[Saw Hsah Muh Lah was a village elder in Nan Ka Prao village, and was one of the few men allowed to cross the border by the Thai authorities.]

The SLORC made problems about building the road from Le Nya to Boke Pyin. So we couldn't stay there, and we had to come up here. The road had all been built before, we built it, then when it was finished the rains came and ruined it, then we had to build it again. So we had to go. If you couldn't go you had to pay money, and if you couldn't pay money then you had to go. If we couldn't go we had to hire someone, sometimes it was two or three thousand *kyats*, sometimes one or two thousand. We had to go one time every month, one person from every house. There were over 40 houses in Nan Ka Prao village. If the adults couldn't go then the children had to go, children around 12 and 13 years old. And old men over 50 or 60

years old often had to go on behalf of the young men. Each time it was for about 14 or 15 days. The Burmese didn't give anything, they [the laborers] had to take care of themselves and survive on their own food. Some of them got sick, and then we had to substitute them with others.

Nan Ka Prao village was ordered by the SLORC to move. We already had to move two months ago. The Burmese came to the village and ordered all the villagers to move to Le Nya, which was in their area. It was about three or four hours' walk away [from Nan Ka Prao]. Some of the villagers moved there because they were afraid, but some didn't go there or come here, they just fled and stayed somewhere else. As for us, we fled up here. The Burmese killed two of the villagers who didn't go to the relocation place, and they said they would kill all the villagers who disobeyed them and fled somewhere else if they saw them.

They killed the two villagers in the forest near Nan Ka Prao village. It was about a month ago. One was Kyi Lin. He was over 30 years old, he had a wife and four children. He was a Nan Ka Prao villager. The Burmese saw him when he was harvesting rice at his farm. They didn't ask him anything, they just shot him dead. They said they would kill any villagers who disobeyed and didn't go to Le Nya. And they did it.

I know the other who was killed too. That happened the first time the Burmese came, over two months ago. Over 100 soldiers came from Battalion 358. They gathered all the male villagers and took them along with them. There was a young man among the villagers and the Burmese accused him of being a Kaw Thoo Lei [Karen army] soldier and then tortured him. Later on, they realized he was not a Kaw Thoo Lei soldier, but they killed him anyway. They killed him along the way. Even his parents didn't know, and no one dared to search for his body. His name was Saw Peter. He was a Nan Ka Prao villager, about 22 years old.

I would guess that maybe over 40 households moved to Le Nya as ordered [from other villages as well as Nan Ka Prao]. I don't know how they stay there. Maybe they have to build the road. As for us, we didn't go there, instead we came to the Karen area among Karen people. Many people are staying in the jungle. But we would starve if we stayed a long time in the jungle, that's why we came up here. And up here is Karen revolution area, so I thought we'd have some hope of getting [or growing] some food.

The SLORC burned our village. There were four villages in Nan Ka Prao area -- Nan Ka Prao, Ler Pa Doh, Waw Pa Doh, and Kyet Der. All of them were burned by the Burmese, they did the same to all the villages. They burned all the houses,

they ate all our livestock and they cut down all the coconut trees and betelnut trees. None of the villagers were there, everyone had run away. They say we help Kaw Thoo Lei [KNU/KNLA], and Kaw Thoo Lei is their enemy. They had ordered everyone to move, so they said if people didn't move they were going to destroy everything and everything we had. When we came here, I could only bring two or three pieces of clothing. We came as a group of two or three families, 14 or 15 people altogether. It took us four nights along the way because of the children. There were no Burmese along the way.

When we first arrived we got rice from the Karen revolution, because we were staying with them. Then when they didn't have any more food for us the gawlewah [westerners] helped us with food. Now we've been in Thailand for five or six days, because we don't dare stay in Kaw Thay Lu anymore. The Burmese were coming there to attack and destroy, so we fled here. There are about 70 households here now. Altogether over 200 people [actually 282]. There are people from Nan Ka Prao, Waw Pa Doh and Ler Pa Doh, and from Kaw Thay Lu village. As for the people from Ze Daeng, they couldn't come up here even if they wanted to, because the Burmese were making many problems for them and blocking them.

Interview 15: HRV: Relocation, Refugee

Name:	Naw Lah Lah Htoo
Sex:	Female
Age:	30
Ethnicity:	Karen hill farmer
Religion:	Animist
Marital status:	Married with five children
Address:	Nan Ka Prao village, Tenasserim Division
Date of interview:	February 18, 1997
Place of interview:	temporary site on Thai-Burma border
Source:	KHRG

There are about 40 or 50 houses in Nan Ka Prao village. We got here over two months ago because the Burmese expelled us. They came up to Nan Ka Prao village, ordered the villagers to move and made problems. They burned all the houses. Some of the villagers came up here and some of them went down to the Burmese area. We came here quietly, so the Burmese didn't know. The people who went down where they ordered are staying in Kyaw Mote. As for me, I would not move there. I fled when all the other villagers were running into the jungle. We were in the bush for about three weeks. Then I went and stayed at Boke Pyin for

about a week, then I went back to my village again and it had already been burned by the Burmese. I couldn't do anything, so I came to stay here in Kaw Thay Lu. I couldn't bring along any sleeping-mats, I just brought along some rice and one blanket. Then we couldn't stay in Kaw Thay Lu because the [Karen] leaders were worried that there would be troubles for us when the Burmese came. That was why we came here [1 km. into Thai territory]. I came here with all my children. My husband is still staying on the mountaintop [the Thai authorities would not let him cross the border, even though he is just a villager and has never been a soldier].

There are many Karen villages in Nan Ka Prao, like Nan Ka Prao, Waw Pa Doh, Ler Pa Doh, Kyet Der, etc. Waw Pa Doh has 12 houses, Ler Pa Doh has 30 houses. All these villages had to move. Now there are still some villagers living there, but they've run and are staying in the forest [around their villages]. They were ordered to move to Le Nya and Ma Kaw, which are among the Burmese and the Mon. The Burmese said they would kill all the villagers who were living in the jungle, they said that these were bad people. They said all the people who stayed in the jungle or came to Thailand are bad people, that we all helped Kaw Thoo Lei [KNU/KNLA], and that only the people who went to their [relocation] place were good.

There are also Thai and Burmese villages in Nan Ka Prao area. The Burmese make difficulties for them too. All the villagers [Karen and others] who stay around Le Nya or go down to the places among the Burmese have to build the road and carry heavy things [as porters]. They're building a road to Boke Pyin, and one to Le Nya Kee and Nan Ka Prao. The Burmese said they would build a camp in Nan Ka Prao.

The Burmese and Thai villagers are fleeing here also. Only a few of the Thai villagers are still staying there now. Some of them are moving to Thailand.

Now I am separated from my husband. He hasn't come because the Thais won't allow the men to cross the border together with us, so all the men have to stay in Kaw Thay Lu. The Thais only allowed four men to come and stay here among us. I don't know why the Thais do that. My husband is not a soldier, he is just a villager. I don't know how long I'll have to stay here, but I've been here a week now.

We just got rice and salt while we were fleeing [from the KNU]. Yesterday we were given some sardines and noodles too. My children are healthy but I am not well, I feel bad and have pain in my back.

Interview 16: HRV: Refugee, Relocation, Forced Labor, Livelihood

Name: Naw Htoo Paw
 Sex: Female
 Age: 21
 Ethnicity: Karen hill farmer
 Religion: Christian
 Marital status: Single, seven siblings
 Address: Nan Ka Prao village, Tenasserim Division
 Date of interview: February 18, 1997
 Place of interview: temporary site, Thai-Burma border
 Source: KHRG

I'm a hill rice farmer, but our farm has been left behind because we had to flee. The Burmese ordered us out starting in 1996, they ordered us to move to Le Nya. Some people moved there but as for us, we didn't want to stay among the Burmese, so we came to the Karen revolution area. Before we stayed on the hill, but the Karen leaders told us we had better come here [into Thailand] because the military situation was getting worse. There are Nan Ka Prao, and Kyet Der, Waw Pa Doh and Ler Pa Doh villages, close to each other in my region. They all have to move, and the Burmese burned all of them. Some of the people went to the Burmese [relocation place] and half of us came to the revolution area. Only a few households from Nan Ka Prao went to the Burmese place. Some others are just staying along the way there but not going all the way to the Burmese area. Those people are building small shelters and farming in the jungle. It is only really old men and old women who can't walk, can't do things or can't see who are going to the Burmese place. From other villages a few are here, a few are hiding in the forest and a few went to the Burmese place.

Before we left from the village, all of us had to work for the SLORC. People had to build the road and carry heavy things, and some people had to pay money when they couldn't go there. The road goes from Boke Pyin to Le Nya. In our village we just collected money and sent it to the Burmese.

There are over 40 houses in Nan Ka Prao village. Our village has been burned by the Burmese two times. They have already burned three of my houses. The first time was about 20 years ago, and the second time was in [November] 1996 when we were there. It was after they ordered us to move out. They burned many houses except the church. At that time, I was hiding in the jungle. We were in the jungle, trying to build a small shelter like this one [she was being interviewed in a tiny 4-foot by 5-foot shelter in the forest with a plastic sheet for the roof]. Later, some Karen

soldiers and villagers who had gone and seen it told us that the Burmese had burned every house except the church.

After we had decided to leave for the border, we hid some rice, salt and fish-paste in the jungle, so that when things like this happen we could get it. Also, when these things happen we carry a little rice along with us, so we can survive for a short time. Then we fled out to here.

We were staying in the jungle for one or two months, and the Burmese attacked the Karen once when we were there. We just kept moving around in the jungle and staying along the upper reaches of streams. If the Burmese had seen us during that time it wouldn't have been easy. They would surely have killed us. Then we came here. We spent four nights on the way to get here. We couldn't bring anything except two sets of clothing, all our other things were taken by the Burmese. As for the food we brought, it was all finished on the way coming here. Then when we got here they [the KNU] gave us some rice and salt. At first they gave us ten plates, five blankets and one pot because there are ten people in our family. We arrived in Kaw Thay Lu in November.

There are 22 households here from Nan Ka Prao village. In the jungle there are more people than there are here. They would come if the situation was better, but for now they just have to hide in the jungle in the upper reaches of the streams.

Interview 17: HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Relocation

Name:	Naw Wah Mo
Sex:	Female
Age:	50
Ethnicity:	Karen, hill farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with four children
Address:	Nan Ka Prao village, Tenasserim Division
Date of interview:	February 18, 1997
Place of interview:	Temporary site, Thai-Burma border
Source:	KHRG

When the SLORC came to my village I was in the village, but we didn't dare face them so we fled into the jungle. Later I saw the places they'd burned. There were no more houses, nothing was left. All the houses were burned except for the church.

Some of the village moved to the area as ordered by the SLORC. They have made rafts and are living on the water [in shelters built on bamboo rafts in the river] and others are living on the sand bank [the sandy riverbank]. I wasn't there, but someone who saw it told me. I heard that the people who moved there are now building a motor road. The Burmese ordered all of the people to move there, but we didn't go. I don't know why the Burmese do things like this.

I've been staying in Kaw Thay Lu for two months now. Now we have come here [across the border to Thailand] because we are afraid of the Burmese. I don't think we can go back to Nan Ka Prao. If the situation is good we can go, but not if it is bad. We're really afraid right now.

Interview 18: HRV: Forced Labor, Relocation, Livelihood, Child

Name:	Saw Bleh
Sex:	Male
Age:	46
Ethnicity:	Karen hill farmer
Religion:	Animist
Marital status:	Married with four children aged
Address:	Ler Pa Doh village, Tenasserim Division
Date of interview:	February 18, 1997
Place of interview:	Temporary site, Thai-Burma border
Source:	KHRG

The SLORC came to the village and ordered us to move out, but we didn't and we fled. It was about three months ago. They said that they would kill us if they caught us after that. There are about 30 houses in Ler Pa Doh village and 20 houses in Waw Pa Doh village. Waw Pa Doh is right across the river from Nan Ka Prao. Ler Pa Doh is 30 minutes' walk from Nan Ka Prao.

I was in the village when the soldiers came to my village. They came to the village and they burned all the houses. I was hiding in the bushes. I saw them burning the paddy in my rice barn, the paddy which I grew on my own hill farm. There were a lot of them. It was over two months ago, then they came again. They came and burned the houses three times, because the first and second times not all the houses were burned completely. After the third time all the houses were burnt. All 30 houses.

First, we just went and hid in areas upstream. Altogether three households from Ler

Pa Doh arrived here. More households went to the Burmese place instead of came here. It took three days to come here. All our children came on foot with us. This one is 5 years old, and this one is 4.

We dared not stay there [just across the border at Kaw Thay Lu] because the Burmese would attack, so we had to flee into Thailand. If the Burmese arrive there we won't dare stay here either, we'll have to move to another place.

We can't stay back in our village if the Burmese are there. If the Karen leaders tell us the Burmese are not there anymore then maybe we can go and stay there.

Interview 19: HRV: Forced Labor, Prison Labor, Torture

Name	Inpo
Age	25 years old, single, male
Parents' names	U Gwan Shein and Daw Yin Kyi
Nationality	Burmese/Buddhist
Address	Nine Pagodas ward, Mergui
Date of interview	February 21, 1997
Place of interview	Htaw Ma Phyoe refugee camp
Source	Information Department, Tavoy, Mergui district

I had almost finished my sentence in Mergui prison when I was forced to work as a porter. My release date was at the end of February 1997. But, during the first week of February, all prisoners were sent to the frontline to serve as porters by the prison authorities. Only a few could afford to pay the money to avoid being sent to the front line.

The cost to avoid conscription as a porter depended on the authorities. Most charged 3,000 *kyats*, but some charged 5,000 *kyats*. I could not afford to pay and, as a result, had to go and work as a porter. Obviously, I did not want to go because I knew that it was dangerous. However, I did not have any other choice.

300 prisoners from Mergui prison were taken as porters on February 11. As part of our supplies, we were given one white prison uniform, one blanket and one jute bag. Later, we were all taken to Tavoy by boat. There were no civilians in Tavoy the next day. From there, we were taken to the LIB 25 base. I spent one more night there and on February 13, we were taken to the front line by truck. I had never been to this area, so I did not know where we were heading or which villages we were passing through.

Our portering duties began once we arrived at the village. I was forced to carry a half bag of rice for the soldiers. When I couldn't carry it any further, the soldiers ordered me to carry ammunition instead. I was beaten several times because I wasn't strong enough to carry my quota. Many porters faced the same treatment. Some were beaten and some died because of this brutal treatment. I saw one porter killed by one such beating. Because he was sick and too weak to carry his load, he requested of the soldiers to let him rest. However, the soldiers forced him to keep marching until he collapsed. Later, the soldiers beat him to death. This was the only killing I witnessed but I heard that many porters were killed in other columns for this same reason.

Only in the first two days, we were provided with rice by the soldiers. On the rest of the days, the troops only gave us the boiled banana trees. We did not have time to rest when the soldiers took rest in the village. They ordered us to pound raw paddy to make rice. We had to carry heavy load continuously without any rest and we also had to work while the soldiers were taking rest. They had a meal that we made, but they did not provide enough food for us. They just ordered us to find the banana trees to boil and eat. Some attempted to escape. Only the lucky people could manage to escape. I think about 100 were able to escape. The unfortunate were rearrested and badly treated.

I was also among the lucky ones because I was able to escape. I think I would have died if I had had to continue to serve as a porter in the SLORC army.

Interview 20: HRV: Relocation, Refugee, Child

Name:	Saw Wah
Sex:	Male
Age:	68
Ethnicity:	Sgaw Karen, hill rice farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with one son
Address:	Meh K'Tee village, Dooplaya District, Karen State
Date of interview:	February 26, 1997
Place of interview:	Ke Hee Paleh temporary site, Thai-Burma border
Source:	KHRG

I am from Meh K'Tee is my village, I got here three days ago. We came through Tee Yu Kee, up to Hto Kaw Kee, then to Meh Kwih Kloh, and from there we crossed the car road and reached Hto Kaw Kloh [river] at Hta Kaw, then we went down to

Meh Kwih Lah Per. One of our friends died there because he stepped on a landmine. His leg was blown off and he died. So we didn't dare continue and we slept there. He was about 20 years old. He was a villager but I don't know the name of his village.

The next morning we climbed up the mountain. There were about 300 of us altogether including women and children, from various villages. Some from Plaw Kee Pa, some from Meh K'Tee Hta, some from Htee Meh Wah. Many people ran with their children on to Htee Sgaw Sgee. But I don't know what happened there because we were behind the others. The Burmese didn't see us because we came through at nighttime. In the daytime we stayed in hiding. It was three days to travel to here, but if I count from when we first ran from our village it took us 10 days, going step by step from place to place. We arrived here three days ago.

The SLORC soldiers chased us and tried to find us when they entered the village. They ordered some villagers to go and call back those who were hiding. They said they would give written passes for those who went back, but they shot at those who ran away from them. People here have seen quite a few villagers killed just because they ran away from the Burmese. The Burmese shot them without asking questions. It's impossible for us to go back to our village as long as they are like this. If we go back they will divide us into two groups, those who have money and those who have no money. This is what I understand. [i.e. they would divide the villagers into those who can pay extortion and those who will have to do forced labor.]

The people staying farther inside have to flee around from place to place, because there's no easy way for them to make it here.

Interview 21: HRV: Relocation, Refugee, Child

Name:	Saw Maw Lay
Sex:	Male
Age:	48
Ethnicity:	Sgaw Karen, hill rice farmer
Religion:	Christian
marital status:	Married with seven children
Address:	Meh T'Ler village, Dooplaya District, Karen State
Date of interview:	February 26, 1997
Place of interview:	Ke Hee Paleh temporary site, Thai-Burma border
Source:	KHRG

Eleven people in my group just arrived now. The Burmese are in our village now. I saw them when we were hiding in the jungle. I saw them arrive. None of the villagers were still in the village. When I saw them they didn't do anything, but we dared not stay there because we were afraid of them.

We've slept in the forest many nights already! I think we spent three weeks on the way. We slept in the bush, for sure. Since we started to flee. Some villagers go back. The men went back to get things. Me, I didn't go back to the village. The Burmese came, I didn't dare go back.

No one is left in my village, everyone is coming here. But many are still climbing over the mountains to come here. We had to climb a big mountain. We slept along the path three nights on the way coming here [note: they've been sleeping in the bush for three weeks, but fled the area of the village three nights ago]. There are over 60 households in Meh T'Ler, and some people are bringing along some cattle as well. People are fleeing from Meh T'Ler, Po Si Mu, Taw Ghaw Law, Kwih Kler. Some of them have arrived here, but many are still left in the jungle. I came with my children. I couldn't bring anything except these clothes on my body. Some of my daughters and sons are in Kwih La Taw already. And this child here was born just two days ago, to my daughter-in-law. Along the way [he points to the mountain to the west]. Two days ago. In the forest.

Interview 22: HRV: Refugee, Religion, Killing

Name:	Nurul Islam
Sex:	Male
Age:	about 40
Religion:	Muslim merchant
Address:	Kyaikdon village, Dooplaya District, Karen State
Date of interview:	February 27, 1997
Place of interview:	Ka Hee Pa Leh, Thailand
Source:	KHRG

The SLORC soldiers destroyed the mosque in my village when they arrived there. They took all the wooden boards from the mosque, from the floor, the walls and the roof, and burned them. They also burned some villagers' houses around there. They also killed two people from Meh Ka Htee Hta. People who came here later saw it all. The brothers and family of one of the men killed are all staying here - that is his niece there. Her husband was staying with her uncle, and he just arrived here yesterday. The Burmese killed her uncle three days ago, because he was ill and

unable to run. He was just a villager, but he couldn't run because of illness when the Burmese came. Only three were left in the village. All three were killed, and two of them were Muslims. They were staying between Tee Tha Blut and Pa Klaw Kee villages. Their names were Pa Mot, Maw Mot Kya, and Hu Sein. All of them were men. Hu Sein was not so old, though Maw Mot Kya was older, his hair was white. He was about 50 years old.

There are many villagers still in Kyeikdon area, even my sisters and brothers. But not in the village, they are scattered here and there in the jungle and on the mountainsides. Maybe some have gone down to the towns like Moulmein, I don't know. We ran and came here.

Interview 23: HRV: Refugee, Religion, Women, Killing

Name:	Ni Ni Sein
Sex:	Female
Age:	20+
Religion:	Muslim merchant
Marital status:	Married with no children
Address:	Na Kree Hta village, Dooplaya District, Karen State
Date of interview:	February 27, 1997
Source:	KHRG

I know that SLORC killed three persons from my village. When they were looking for their cattle, the SLORC saw them and killed them. They broke their legs and arms, and they took out their eyes. People saw my uncle after he was dead and they told me. It happened four days ago.

Among the three, my uncle was one. His name was Pa Mot. He was over 60. His wife is dead, and his children and son-in-law are in the refugee camp. He lived in Pa Klaw Nee, and he fled to Pa Klaw Kee. SLORC saw him there so they killed him.

What about the other two men who were killed?

Their names were San Bo and Soe Tin [a.k.a. Hu Sein and Maw Mot Kya; villagers are often known by more than one name]. Soe Tin was over 30, and so was San Bo. They also had wives and children. Their families are in the jungle. They couldn't run. The SLORC blocked the way. Two of the men were Muslims and Soe Tin was a Karen Buddhist.

Many of my villagers are still hiding in the jungle. They cannot run. They try very hard to come here but they cannot. The SLORC blocks the way. Some of the Buddhists return again to their villages, but the Muslims cannot return. If the Muslims enter the village, the SLORC beat or kill them, and take their things. They want to stay in their villages but the SLORC says they cannot stay there. Only for Muslims. If Buddhists and others want to stay there they can. In Kyaikdon the SLORC didn't burn the houses but they broke apart the mosque, and they also burned the Muslim school.

In other villages they didn't burn anything, but if they see any Muslim people they catch them. Yesterday many Muslim people arrived here from Pa Klaw Kee area, over 200 people. I have been here for ten days. When the SLORC came into Pa Klaw Kee area they asked "Where are all the Muslims?" Some of the Karen people lied to them and said, "We don't know, they all ran away".

Interview 24: HRV: Refugee, Religion, Arrest, Killing, Forced Labor

Name:	Maung Thet Lwin
Sex:	Male
Age:	29
Religion:	Muslim day laborer
marital status:	Married with no children
Address:	Meh K'Tee village, Karen State
Date of interview:	February 27, 1997
Source:	KHRG

I just arrived here yesterday. I stayed along the way for eight days. I didn't see the SLORC, but I saw the places where they had dug the ground [for trenches and bunkers]. I came together with about 50 men, 30 women and about 150 children, all from different villages. From Kyaikdon, Pa Klaw Ni, Meh Ka Tee Hta.

There are no Muslims left in the area because the SLORC won't allow us to stay there. They confiscated all of the villagers' belongings, and then they drove all the Muslims out of the village. They fired into the air behind us as we ran away until we were all out of the village. They said they would send all the Muslims back to India. As for the Burmese, Mon, and Karen people, they gave them passes to stay in the village. But they drove the Muslims out to Kwin Kalay. They sent about 100 people together with their 28 bullock carts. Then when they got to Kwin Kalay, they took all the belongings of those Muslims and left them with only the clothes on their bodies.

Some of the husbands fled and arrived here with nothing, and their wives are still left there. Two of those people already arrived here. They said some of the others were arrested by the SLORC and killed, that four of the people were already killed by SLORC.

While we were in our village, the SLORC ordered the villagers to send 60 people for a week at a time to build their Army camp. They must do that every week. It's the same as going for portering. They order the people from Kyaikdon, Meh Naw Ah to build their camp. They are doing that now.

Interview 25: HRV: Refugee, Incursion, Killing

Name:	Naw Lah Paw
Sex:	Female
AGE:	30
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Married with two children
Address:	Sho Kloh refugee camp, Thailand
Date of interview:	March 5, 1997
Place of interview:	Sho Khlo camp, Thailand
Source:	KHRG

[Naw Lah Paw is the wife of the leader of Section 3 of Sho Kloh camp, who was hit in the shelling and killed.]

I have been living in Sho Kloh for about 11 years. On January 4, I was selling lottery tickets in the market. Then when I heard an explosion I was staying in my house. I started running towards the bunker [after Sho Kloh was shelled in June 1996, most families dug a small bunker near their houses] and I looked for my children. It was about 4 p.m. Burmese time [4:30 Thai time]. I heard 3 or 4 shells and the last one landed right here [about five meters in front of her house]. I stayed in the bunker while the shells landed. I wondered "What is happening?" because there was a lot of dust in the air, and I looked at my husband. I saw him falling down there [pointing at the footpath outside her house]. When the mortar landed, he was in front of the house shouting at the children to stay still and hide in the bunker. I shouted to him loudly that the children and I were already in the bunker. Just as I spoke a mortar landed there as he was coming towards us. It was too late for him to get into the bunker. His name was Saw Pay. He was 33 years old, Sgaw Karen and Buddhist like me. He was the section 3 leader.

I saw him lying down just like that. I thought that he was dead because he was so quiet and stayed still. I didn't see his injuries, but people saw him wounded and took him to the hospital about 30 minutes after the shelling. The other people didn't want me to go, so I went back to the bunker again. My parents heard that he was wounded, so my father came up to me about 15 or 20 minutes later and I came out of the bunker again. But the others forced me back into the bunker because they were worried for me. At that time I also had my youngest child in my arms, so I couldn't leave him lying in the bunker alone and there was no one to look after him. When it was dark, I followed my mother walking and running to the hospital because I wanted to see my husband. People didn't let me see him because they were worried that I would be upset. When I saw him, his wounds were covered. He was injured by four pieces of shrapnel - in his neck, in his side, in his stomach and in his right leg. The people sent him to Mae Sot by car along with his brother. I couldn't go to Mae Sot with the child and went to stay in my mother's house in Section 2. The next day, I tried to go down to Mae Sot but I could only get to Beh Klaw [half way]. I went to see him about a week later. At that time he looked better. He had an oxygen pipe going into his throat and he couldn't speak. Two weeks later, he became thin and couldn't eat well but he could speak a little. On the February 12, he died. My brother-in-law told me. They burnt his body in the hospital. I didn't even know when he was buried.

One uncle [older man] also got injured while he was staying in the bunker. I was in his bunker and he was trying to get into my bunker. I was too afraid to stay in my bunker, so I had gone to his. He got injured on his thigh and it broke his bone. His house is just here and his children are staying with his son. His wife is already dead. The people carried him in a hammock to the [camp] hospital. I saw him there with bamboo slats on both sides of his leg, tied up with a bandage from the hip to the ankle. They sent him to Mae Sot together with my husband. He is still in Mae Sot hospital now.

Altogether the shelling lasted for about five or ten minutes. I think it was DKBA who fired the shells. They were coming from Baw Pa Hta area. I think they have bad feelings toward us, but we have done nothing to make them feel this way. I don't know why. The Thai soldiers in Sho Kloh did nothing. I didn't hear them firing back. They just stayed like that. About five or ten minutes later, Thai soldiers from Mae Plu fired three or four shells back.

I dare not think about the future. I feel scared and sad. We have to stay alert. I don't want to go back to Burma. Only if there is peace would I like to go back. If the situation goes on like this, I don't want to go back. If everybody moves to Beh Klaw I will go too, because it is not safe to stay separate from the other people. I

will follow the others, though I believe that Beh Klaw is not safer than Sho Kloh. For now, I am staying in Section 2 with my parents.

Interview 26: HRV: Refugee, Incursion, Killing

Name:	Saw Win Hlaing
Sex:	Male
Age:	25
Ethnicity:	Karen shopkeeper
Religion:	Muslim
Marital status:	Single
Address:	Sho Klo refugee camp, Thailand
Date of interview:	March 6, 1997
Place of interview:	Sho Klo refugee camp, Thailand
Source:	KHRG

[Saw Win Hlaing was one of the three people wounded by the shelling.]

I have been living in Sho Kloh for the last ten years. I live in the market of Section 4. It was about 5 p.m. when the DKBA shelled into Sho Kloh. As soon as we heard the shelling, we closed the shop. As I was closing the door a shell exploded about seven or eight yards away, in front of my shop and the video house. Actually the mortar came through the roof of the video house and exploded in the middle [no one was in there]. It damaged the walls of the video house, my house and my things in the shop. A piece of shrapnel hit me. I was the only one hurt by that mortar shell. I was wounded in the back of my shoulder [the top corner of his left shoulder]. My family was already in the bunker and I went to the back of the house to my family. I waited for about half an hour until the shelling was over. My whole shirt got soaked with blood. Then my younger brother carried me to the hospital. He is bigger and stronger than me. I arrived there first, before the other two wounded people. There were one or two medics but no patients, all of them had fled to the bunkers near the hospital. The medic washed the wound and did first aid to it. Two other people were also wounded: Saw Pay, the section 3 leader, and one old man I don't know the name. We had to wait for a couple of hours. We didn't dare go without any security guard. At about 7 p.m. a Thai Army car took us to Mae Sot hospital. There were three patients and two medics. In Mae Sot, the doctors took out the shrapnel and dressed my wounds that night and I came back here the next day. I only stayed one night at Mae Sot hospital. Now my shoulder is sometimes numb. If I work for more than 10 minutes it gives me cramps. It is still painful when I sleep on my left side.

Five shells landed in Sho Kloh [four exploded and at least one or two did not]. They shelled from Baw Pa Hta. I didn't see them but I heard them, especially the one that hit me. One shell landed in front of my house, one at the monastery, one at the church and another one in front of the section 3 leader's house. That last one hit and wounded him. One leader dug up the tail of the shell and told me that it was a 2.5" mortar. I feel very angry and resentful about this, but since we are refugees we can't do anything. I believe this could happen again, and we will just run if we can escape. I don't want to move to Beh Klaw because of the difficulties for my family. Altogether there are ten people in my family, six brothers and sisters, my parents, my sister-in-law and myself. Now we have no money to move there. If our leaders ask us to move we will move, and if they ask us to stay we will stay. That's all. Staying in Sho Klo is better than staying in Burma, because there is a lot of fighting in Burma now. I used to live in Moe Nai village in Hlaing Bwe township. Sho Klo is safer than my village. I want the organizations of the whole world to help the Karen refugees. There is no hope for improvement through the peace talks between SLORC and the ethnic groups. It can only be possible with the interference of the whole world and if SLORC transfers state power to Aung San Suu Kyi. I think the situation in Burma might be better if Aung San Suu Kyi comes to power.

Interview 27: HRV: Refugee, Women, Child, Torture, Forced Labor, Religion

Name:	Naw G'Mwee Paw
Sex:	Female
Age:	30
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with two children
Address:	Meh K'Tee village, Karen State
Date of interview:	March 23, 1997
Source:	KHRG

The SLORC troop came to my village and we ran. We dared not stay and we ran. I can't remember exactly when because I was so frightened. Maybe the February 22. Two days before the Burmese arrived at Meh K'Tee, we left our village.

After the SLORC arrived, did you go back to your village?

Yes, only once. After I saw what was happening in my village, I dared not go back again. It was just a week ago, on Friday. I came back here on Tuesday.

Can you tell what was happening in your village?

Yes, I can tell something. The Burmese asked the villagers to show them around. If they couldn't show them [what they wanted], they kicked them, beat them and persecuted them. The Burmese arrested one woman who had a one-month-old baby and her husband when they were running and staying in the forest. They beat the woman. They accused them of being Kaw Thoo Lei and they tortured the wife as well as the husband. They beat them very mercilessly. They tied them, beat them, kicked them. They were accused of receiving visits from Kaw Thoo Lei [Karen soldiers]. I know her. Her name is Naw Blu and people call her husband Maung Kyaw. She is over 30 years old and her husband is maybe 38 or 39. I didn't ask them their ages. I didn't see the beatings but I saw the bruises on her face. I was only there for a short time and she told me about that. I saw her face black and bruised. They kicked her, slapped her face and insulted her. One side of her face was very swollen. She can see. It is a little better now. She tried to treat herself. Her husband, they beat him and kicked him. They tortured him so badly that he couldn't eat. They arrested them for one day and in the morning they released them. But because they'd tortured him so much, he didn't even know anymore whether he'd been kicked or punched or stomped on. They kept asking things without giving them time to answer, just kicked and asked and kicked again. They didn't even know how their faces had become so bruised. They didn't do anything to the baby. Just the woman and the man.

Did the SLORC ask them many questions?

They asked so many things and the couple explained everything. They told about the man who had a hunting gun. So the soldiers went to that man and beat him badly. His body was very seriously swollen, and his face was so swollen that he was nearly dead. Only because of that hunting gun. He gave the hunting gun to them but they were still beating him. He ran to the forest and came back again, and they tortured him again. When I arrived at the village, they had already released him.

They tortured the man and the woman, the man with the hunting gun and another two. Of the other two, one man was very afraid and couldn't answer any questions, so they beat him once. The other one, I don't know how or why but they accused him of having relatives in Kaw Thoo Lei. They beat him twice. That happened three days before I arrived in the village.

How many houses are there in the village?

More than 60, but now there are only six houses with people in them. The other

villagers went to stay in other villages, in Saw Hta [Azin] and in this camp. Because they were afraid, they went to stay where there were a lot of people. The Burmese didn't allow them to stay in Saw Hta and ordered them to stay in Meh K'Tee. But the villagers dared not stay in Meh K'Tee because there were only a few people there.

What else happened when the SLORC came?

They destroyed some betelnut trees and coconut plantations. They cut them down and ate them all. They just cut them down to destroy them. There were a lot of coconuts in Meh K'Tee but now there are none left. I don't know what they did with all the coconuts, but they took the betelnut to sell. They carried so much betelnut away with them. They shot some cattle for food. They ate all the chickens. They destroyed all the paddy and rice. They took it to the stream and poured it down. All the rice of the people who fled was destroyed. I saw one of the pastors' rice thrown away. Maybe they thought that something might be hidden in the rice. They threw it away in the river and along the road. They took some rice for themselves, some to sell, and the rest they threw away. [The purpose is to destroy food supplies so the villagers will be destitute and unable to feed Karen soldiers; unlike in the Tenasserim Division offensive, where SLORC soldiers are desperate for rice, in Dooplaya District their supply lines are better so they can simply destroy it.]

Now the villagers are afraid of the soldiers and they dare not go back. The soldiers move here and there all the time. They stay at Nat Zin Gone, on the way to Th'Waw Thaw [Sakanthit]. Some others stay at Htee Yu Kee sometimes, but when there are no villagers there they leave and go to Taw Th'Naw Kee, because villagers are staying there. The soldiers have no bunkers, just shelters and small holes for protection. Then they came to stay at Pa Klaw Kee. That is permanent, but they don't build. Instead they stay in the villagers' houses.

They don't do anything to the houses where the owners still stay. But if the people have run away and the soldiers see their houses in good condition, they accuse the owners of being Kaw Thoo Lei. They [the soldiers] try to sell these houses, but nobody dares to buy them!

Do the villagers have to work for the soldiers?

Yes. They have to work. They demand two villagers and one bullock cart each day. They use these to carry away so many things belonging to the villagers, like oil tins and bamboo baskets [everything left behind by those who have fled]. The people from Meh K'Tee have to go to Saw Hta [Azin] to work. The people from Nat Zin

Gone have to show the way to the soldiers [do labor as guides/human shields].

Do they have to be porters?

Yes. They have to carry food and other things. As for ammunition, I don't know. Along the way the soldiers even take the hats off the villagers' heads, then when they forget them in someone's house they order the porters to go and get it back for them. The villagers have to carry things to Saw Hta. If they are going further, other villagers have to carry the loads from there. In Meh K'Tee we don't have to build the road, but in Kwih Kler the villagers have to do that.

Why did you go back?

I went to see my house, and whether my possessions were still there or not. In my house there were only two or three pots. The rest had disappeared. Plates, spoons and food had disappeared. They destroyed part of my house, but not all of it. It was a wooden house. They destroyed all my betel-leaves. At Meh K'Tee Hta they completely burnt down the school, the church, and all the houses in the area around the junction of the roads. Not even one was left.

Was it easy to go and come back between here and your village?

It is a very long way. We went on foot and had to climb hills up and down about one day's travel. But for the women and those with children, it takes about three days. We had to ask permission first from the Burmese. When we asked, they asked us detailed questions like, "Where are you going?" "What are you going to do?" Then they allowed us. It is hard on both sides [of the border]. We are afraid. On my way back some Burmese soldiers told me to call the refugees back. They said, "You know about Huay Kaloke and the other camps [burned and destroyed in January]. If you don't come back, as soon as your houses are built the same will happen to this [Noh Po] camp." They threatened us that they would make trouble for the refugees. The conditions are not good on the Burmese side. There I was afraid all the time. Here too. I don't know where to go. We are afraid all the time. Everywhere it is all the same!!

Interview 28: HRV: Refugee, Repatriation

Name: xxxx
Sex: Male
Age: 34 years
Date of interview: March 12, 1997

Place of interview; Thuka, Thai-Burma border near Thom Pa Pon
Source: BI

In the morning, after breakfast, on March 3, I was in Thu Ka camp and was planning to go into the jungle to look for firewood. However, at that time everybody in the camp was talking about a possible SLORC attack against the camp, and they were very frightened. We got a message that stated the SLORC troops at Wa Loung Toe had gone into the jungle and were possibly heading towards Thuka.

We left Thuka camp at 12 noon, and when we arrived at Mong Se Mine (on the Thai side of the border), we were met by four Thai Border Patrol Police(BPP). The four BPP men immediately made a barricade of bamboo across the road but none of us cared about the bamboo or the Thai border police. One of the Thai border policemen even got pushed over by our crowd and he fell on his back. The BPP said, "We cannot stop you, but you will have to return soon; as soon as the army arrives." We wanted to continue past the Mong Soe mine since the mine area might not be safe from SLORC mortars. The BPP refused to let us proceed to this safer area. At this time many of the children were crying because of thirst and the heat; it was the hottest time of the day. There was a big tree there but impossible for all of us to receive enough shade.

One spokesman went to the BPP to ask for permission to get drinking water from the nearby stream and they said that only three people would be allowed at a time. The BPP said, "I am worried that you will go inside our country." The spokesman got very angry and told him that we were already in Thailand. Three people then went to the stream to get water for the other thirsty refugees.

We stayed at that hot place for about one hour, and then a truck came with 18 Thai soldiers wearing uniforms. The person I thought was the leader was using very sharp language and said, "You cannot stay here any more! I know that the SLORC is far from Thu Ka and you have to return to the camp. If there is fighting at Thu Ka we will allow you to come back. "At this time I thought, "I know the situation much more than you." But I kept it to myself.

At 2 p.m. the four BPP, and the 18 soldiers started to push all of us back along the road towards Thu Ka. I saw a woman, 43 years old, with a weak heart who became weak and dizzy when the Thai soldiers shouted, "Go! Go!" Her husband and I massaged her back and slowly started climbing the steep slope towards the border. None of us wanted to go back because we were afraid of the SLORC more than we were afraid of the Thais. We delayed the process by sitting down. Some even lay down on the ground. We thought that if we went on like this, the Thais would not

push us back. However, they continued to physically push us; they pushed me in the back twice, shouting “Go! Go! Go!” in Thai. Some women dropped their loads onto the ground, and the soldiers put the loads back onto the women’s heads.

One of the refugees threw away her whole load in despair when the Thais put her discarded load back onto her head. She was crying, but I had no time to take care of her because I was afraid and had to continue. Normally it would take us 10 minutes to get up the first slope to Ke Baw Yu Plaw (a flat field still on the Thai side of the border), but we arrived at the field at about 5p.m.; it took us three hours in all. Everybody was hungry so some people put down their belongings and started cooking and eating. Then it started to rain. This started a lot of activity to find shelter. Some people had not received any plastic sheeting as they had just arrived at Thuka from their home. There were about 50 sheets of plastic on the ground, and I started sharing them with those who had nothing. We even gave some plastic sheets to the Thai soldiers who asked for some, so they would not get wet.

It rained for about one hour. Even though we had plastic as a shelter from the rain, the ground got wet. After that we started cooking again. We slept at Ke Baw Yu Plaw that night. The night was filled with the cries of children and the people were very cold in the night. I could only sleep two hours that night. I thought about my life, and I missed my baby very much. When we left our village my baby was only two months old. She got diarrhea and died. My wife and I had come to Thailand to seek safety and now we were being pushed back. I thought that the SLORC or DKBA could burn down our camp as happened in the Mae Sot area. After what I saw that day, I think that even if the SLORC or DKBA did this, the Thai soldiers would not care. I was thinking and worrying what might happen the next day if they would continue shouting, “Go! Go! Go!” and really push us all back to Burma. I finally fell asleep at 4 a.m.

In the morning we cooked and after breakfast we thought that the Thais would allow us to stay, so some people started cutting bamboo for huts. The Thais did not say anything so more of us began building slightly larger shelters. At around noon the Thai soldiers started collecting the refugees again by using a loudspeaker. Most of the people had found shelter in the bushes and had slept spread out. Very slowly, people came out while others ignored the call. The commander said, “If you do not come out I will take out all to Nai E Taung by truck.” (Nai E Taung is the SLORC base camp in the area.) When we heard what the commander said, we all got frightened and came out onto the middle of the field quickly. The soldiers counted everybody and took photographs and video of us. Some people did not understand what the video camera was and thought it was a weapon and were very afraid. The recording of the refugees took about two hours and then the Thais allowed everybody

to return to their possessions. I thought that the Thais would not push us back again, so I lay down to sleep while some others started cooking dinner.

At about 2:30 p.m. I was still resting and others were eating when the Thai soldiers once again started ordering us to go back. A few soldiers cut down our bamboo shelters with their knives and again shouted, "Go! Go! Go! Quickly! Quickly!" Some people had to throw away their rice and collect their belongings.

The people did not resist as much as they did the day before, and the soldiers did not physically push them. Everybody went back to the Karen side of the border and once again started building new houses. We have stayed here until now, but in my opinion the SLORC will definitely attack, and the KNLA { Karen National Liberation Army } cannot stop them because they could not even stop the SLORC in Htee Kee (the KNU district headquarters recently occupied by SLORC). I hope that the SLORC do not come because I do not want to go to Thailand again, and I do not want the Thai soldiers pushing us back again. Here, everybody is frightened, even me.

Interview 29: HRV: Prison Labor, Forced Labor, Torture, Killing

Name:	Ko Maung Myint
Sex:	Male
Age:	32 years old
Ethnicity:	Burmese
Religion:	Buddhist
Date of interview:	March, 1997
Place of interview:	Sankhanburi border
Source:	HRDU

I was serving in Mergui Win Saung (a porter battalion) after I was sentenced to a five years prison term with hard labor. Altogether, 130 people were taken from the Mergui porter battalion on February 8, 1997 for the military offensive against the KNU. We were taken to Tavoy by boat and arrived in the evening. We were joined by other prisoners from Kyeik Chaung prison camp, Bokeyyin prison camp, Kaw Thaug prison camp and Tavoy prison. In addition, I saw many other civilians who had been forced to become porters. Our numbers reached approximately 2,000 (the exact number is difficult to estimate because there were many trucks loaded with porters, and I did not dare count the trucks out of fear the soldiers would beat me up). From there, we were quickly taken to Thaug Thone Lon village by a

convoy. The soldiers did not let us rest in Tavoy, and drove us to Thaug Thone Lon that night.

When we reach to Taung Thone Lon, the troops had already been divided into three columns. I was in the column which marched through the Tenasserim River. The officer I worked as porter for was Captain Moe Khaing. For the entire duration of the journey, I had to carry six 81" motor shells and two boxes of bullets.

Each group of porters (there were five in each group) was given a small box of rice twice a day. Sometimes, the soldiers shaped the rice into small sticky balls and gave us one each. They also gave us water, but it was never enough. Beatings were common. I was beaten several times because I could not walk as fast as they wanted. Corporal Win Myint punched me in the face and kicked me with his military boots. After that, I could not walk properly and, as a result, was scolded and beaten again. Other porters were also beaten frequently. When we were climbing the hills and mountains, we couldn't always move fast enough because the loads we carried were so heavy. The soldiers beat us on our backs and forced us to keep climbing. They never allowed us to even take a short break. Than Htay, also a prisoner from Mergui prison camp, was beaten to death by the soldiers when both of his legs swelled and he could no longer walk due to the non-stop marching. When he pleaded with the soldiers for a break, the soldiers got angry and beat him with bamboo sticks. Finally he died. Many porters tried to run away while they were resting at night. I saw many porters collapse from exhaustion while they were carrying heavy loads during this operation. If they weren't beaten to death first, they were left behind, without food or water, to die. Two prisoners died between Taung Thon Lon and Metta died in exactly this manner. Both were from Mergui prison and both carried the same load the rest of us did. But they were very weak and sick and were left on the side of the road unburied. Another twenty porters died when they were left behind without food and water, too weak to keep up with the rest. Even civilians were left behind without food and water, too weak to keep up with the rest. Even civilians were not spared. They were not spared. In Metta village, two civilians were shot dead because they did not follow the military's orders to assemble.

Interview 30: HRV: Forced Labor, Arrest, Torture, Women, Child

Name:	MyintLwin
Age:	24 years old
Ethnicity:	Burmese, fisherman
Marital status:	married with a one-year-old daughter

Religion: Buddhist
Address: Nat Seik village, Tenasserim Division
Date of interview: March 9, 1997
Source: Information Department, Mergui- Tavoy district

I was arrested in my village along with eight other villagers. Policemen from Win Wa village and militia rounded us up on February 9, 1997 for use as porters. They arrested all the men in the village at random. Many escaped, but we were caught when the militia discovered our hiding place.

We all were taken to Win Wa police station and put in a jail cell. Once there, we saw over 100 more civilians who had also been arrested to be used as porters. The next day, February 10, all of us were sent to the base of LIB 25 in Tavoy. We were held there for an hour and joined by more arrested people. The number soon rose to over 400, including around 200 prisoners. I did not know where they were from, but they were also rounded up for the same reason. Later they sent us to Heinda village and ordered us to work for the LIB. 104. Soldiers forced us to carry supplies for them. The column started moving after mobilizing for four days. I was ordered to carry one 120 mm mortar shell. Another time, I was ordered to carry a 120 mm launcher with another porter.

When we arrived to Pya Tha Chaung village, I saw soldiers from IB. 431 grabbed a Karen girl from the village. The soldiers ordered us to stay away and then gang-raped the girl. I did not dare to inquire about the girl because I was so scared of the soldiers. We did not even dare to talk among ourselves about what had happened.

There was a small clash between our column and the KNU near Pya Tha Chaung village. After the clash, the soldiers from IB. 431 rounded up 25 Karen women and five Karen men from the village. They were ordered to porter alongside with us the next time column moved. The women were ordered to carry the equipment of the soldiers as well as cook and wash the uniforms of the officers in the column. Eleven Karen women and one Karen elder were also rounded up when they were found at a betel farm between Pya Tha Chaung and Phaungdaw village. They were used as porters also and besides having to bear heavy loads, six of the younger women were forced to sleep with the officers.

All of us were subject to beatings by the soldiers. Beating was very common when we could not carry our loads. Three prisoners were beaten to death because they were very sick and could no longer carry on with their work. Soldiers beat them up and kicked them off the mountain. I am sure they all died.

We arrived in Htee Hta after the SLORC occupied it. I escaped alone with other

five porters as soon as we got a chance at Htee Hta. Since we did not know the area well, we all were recaptured the next day by troops from LIB. 224 at Amla village. They beat us and ordered us to work for them. Fortunately, we managed to escape again when the KNU troops launched an attack against LIB. 224 at Amla village. We ran away during the fighting and hid in the jungle outside the village. The KNU soldiers later found us and took us to this refugee camp.

Interview 31: HRV: Refugee, Incursion, Child

Name:	Saw Hai Kaw
Sex:	Male
Age:	18
Ethnicity:	Karen, student
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Single
Address:	Mae La refugee camp, Thailand
Date of interview:	March 2, 1997
Place of interview:	Mae La refugee camp, Thailand
Source:	KHRG

[“Saw Hai Kaw” was in Beh Klaw refugee camp when it was attacked by a combined SLORC/DKBA force on January 29, 1997.]

The attack started at about 6:30 a.m. on January 29. At that time I was staying in the Bible school dormitory. I was coming down from the dormitory to work early. The Bible School is in Section C.1 and the DKBA came in from the hilltop of Section C.1. They came from different parts in that section. Just when I started working in the school compound, I heard a carbine gunshot. Then I heard heavy shelling. Some shells exploded but others didn't. They shelled heavy weapons to block off the gate. During the fighting, we Bible School students went to hide in a cave nearby. While I was running towards the back of the hill, one RPG [rocket-propelled grenade] shell dropped nearby, so I ran into the teak plantation. That shell fell in the bamboo and killed an old woman who was hiding there with some children. I don't know her name but we used to watch television together every night. She must be 80 years old. She died instantly. Two 4- or 5-year-old children were injured.

The DKBA came in at the time when the [security] soldiers were rotating their duty, so only 3 soldiers were left. That was why the DKBA was able to reach the foot of the hill of section C1. Some DKBA did not even have any weapons - they came into the camp just to set the houses on fire. Only a few of them had guns, like AR,

AK47, RPG-7, and M79 mortars [the AR is a cut-down version of the M16 automatic assault rifle; AK47 is an automatic assault rifle; RPG-7 is a shoulder-launched rocket-propelled grenade; and M79 is a rifle-sized grenade launcher]. I saw some of them coming in and blowing a whistle. The whistle means “Start fighting!” Then others came in. So they started fighting in Section C1 because there was not enough security in that area to fight against them. The security soldiers didn’t have enough guns. One of the villagers told me that at that time three DKBA went shouting into the houses, “Is there anyone in this house?” Then they shot their guns into the houses and set them on fire. Afterwards I saw six burnt houses but other people said there were 15.

While I was hiding in the teak plantation, reinforcements of Beh Klaw security soldiers arrived. One of them who came from the other side of the camp was injured on his hand. He didn’t feel his injury because he was concentrating on his duty. He only noticed it when he saw the blood seeping out of his wound. Another Bible school student and I cleaned his wound and dressed it.

When the reinforcements came I felt encouraged and went to look around near the fighting. I followed the soldiers but not too close to them. When the shells fell, I hid under the teak trees. The DKBA retreated up to the hilltop, from where they were still fighting. During that time, some DKBA were killed. People said to me that three of them died but I only saw one dead DKBA, under the banana trees. When this man fell down another DKBA came down to save him, but he got injured so he left his friend under the banana trees. Beside the dead body we found a gun, a backpack and a cassette player [stolen from one of the houses] which had been damaged by the gunshots. We opened his bag and we saw materials for mines and bombs and wires to hook them up to explode. I felt very sad for our Karen people. He also had an amulet to protect his life. These are the tricks of the Myaing Gyi Ngu monk [U Thuzana, chairman of DKBA]. Are the monks not holy? I don’t understand.

About 30 soldiers came but I only saw the one who died. They wore uniforms, the same as the SLORC, but “Thawka Thu Po” was written on their badges. It means “the monk’s soldiers”. I think they came to loot things from the refugees.

They shelled about 35 artillery shells. Some exploded near people’s houses. During the fighting the refugees ran out of the camp. Some of them ran to the foot of the hills. For two or three days afterwards there was no one in the camp. I didn’t even see my family.

Interview 32: HRV: Refugee, Incursion, Killing

Name: Naw Lah Paw
Sex: Female
Age: 30
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Marital status: Married with two children
Address: Sho Kloh refugee camp, Thailand
Date of interview: March 5, 1997
Place of interview: Sho Klo refugee camp, Thailand
Source: KHRG

[“Naw Lah Paw” is the wife of the leader of Section 3 of Sho Kloh camp, who was hit in the shelling and died.]

I have been living in Sho Kloh for about 11 years. On January 4, I was selling lottery tickets in the market. Then when I heard an explosion I was staying in my house. I started running towards the bunker [after Sho Kloh was shelled in June 1996, most families dug a small bunker near their house] and I looked for my children. It was about 4 p.m. Burmese time [4:30 Thai time]. I heard 3 or 4 shells and the last one landed right here [about five meters in front of her house]. I stayed in the bunker while the shells landed. I wondered “What is happening?” because there was a lot of dust in the air, and I looked at my husband. I saw him falling down there [pointing at the footpath outside her house]. When the mortar landed, he was in front of the house shouting at the children to stay still and hide in the bunker. I shouted to him loudly that the children and I were already in the bunker. Just as I spoke a mortar landed there, as he was coming towards us. It was too late for him to get into the bunker. His name was Saw Pay. He was 33 years old, Sgaw Karen and Buddhist like me. He was the section 3 leader.

I saw him lying down just like that. I thought that he was dead because he was so quiet and stayed still. I didn’t see his injuries, but people saw him wounded and took him to the hospital about 30 minutes after the shelling. The other people didn’t want me to go, so I went back to the bunker again. My parents heard that he was wounded, so my father came up to me about 15 or 20 minutes later and I came out of the bunker again. But the others forced me back into the bunker because they were worried for me. At that time I also had my youngest child in my arms so I couldn’t leave him lying in the bunker alone and there was no one to look after him. When it was dark, I followed my mother walking and running to the hospital because I wanted to see my husband. People didn’t let me see him because they were worried that I

would be upset. When I saw him, his wounds were covered. He was injured by four pieces of shrapnel, in his neck, in his side, in his stomach and in his right leg. The people sent him to Mae Sot by car along with his brother. I couldn't go to Mae Sot with the child and went to stay in my mother's house in Section 2. The next day, I tried to go down to Mae Sot but I could only get to Beh Klaw [half way]. I went to see him about a week later. At that time he looked better. He had an oxygen pipe going into his throat and he couldn't speak. Two weeks later, he had become thin and couldn't eat well but he could speak a little. On the 12th of February he died. My brother-in-law told me. They burnt his body in the hospital. I didn't even know when he was buried.

One uncle [older man] also got injured while he was staying in the bunker. I was in his bunker and he was trying to get into my bunker. I was too afraid to stay in my bunker, so I had gone to his. He got injured on his thigh and it broke his bone. His house is just here and his children are staying with his son. His wife is already dead. The people carried him in a hammock to the [camp] hospital. I saw him there with bamboo slats on both sides of his leg, tied up with a bandage from the hip to the ankle. They sent him to Mae Sot together with my husband. He is still in Mae Sot hospital now.

Altogether the shelling lasted for about five or ten minutes. I think it was DKBA who fired the shells. They were coming from Baw Pa Hta area. I think they have bad feelings toward us, but we have done nothing to make them feel this way. I don't know why. The Thai soldiers in Sho Kloh did nothing. I didn't hear them firing back. They just stayed like that. About five or ten minutes later, Thai soldiers from Mae Plu fired three or four shells back.

I dare not think about the future. I feel scared and sad. We have to stay alert. I don't want to go back to Burma. Only if there is peace would I like to go back. If the situation goes on like this, I don't want to go back. If everybody moves to Beh Klaw I will go too, because it is not safe to stay separate from the other people. I will follow the others, though I believe that Beh Klaw is not safer than Sho Kloh. For now, I am staying in Section 2 with my parents.

Interview 33: HRV: Refugee, Religion, Forced Labor

Name:	Thein Myint
Sex:	Male
Age:	34
Religion:	Muslim, shopkeeper

Marital status:	Married with three children
Address:	Kyaikdon village, Dooplaya District, Karen State
Date of interview:	March 24, 1997
Place of interview:	KNU 6th Brigade area
Source:	KHRG

I arrived here twenty days ago. When I left Kyaikdon to come here, the enemy was already there. When I first left Kyaikdon [just before the SLORC arrived], I stayed in the forest behind Taw Ya Kyaung monastery near the village for three or four days. My children became sick, so I went back to the village and the soldiers told us to go away. I went back to the village with others in three bullock carts. When we arrived at the village we went to fetch water at the mosque, and the soldiers saw us and drove us out with their guns by telling us: “You, Muslims, you cannot stay here!” We could not even go back to retrieve our possessions. The soldiers had destroyed the mosque, they burnt the [Muslim] school down and they tore up all the Korans. I myself saw what the SLORC had done. I saw all the religious books they destroyed, all scattered around, and I saw how they had damaged our mosque. I dared not look at it too long, because the soldiers were standing very close to me and wouldn’t allow me to look at it. So I bowed down my head and fetched the water. I saw a big gun in the compound of the mosque. The mosque had collapsed and scattered. They cursed us Muslims, they said “Nga lo ma kala!” [“Fuck the mothers of all Muslims!”] They also asked me, “What are you doing here in the village? Would you like to rebuild your mosque again? If you want to you can!” I didn’t say anything, I just left the village with the bullock cart at about 12:30 because they forced us to leave the village. We can’t destroy each other’s religion and faith. I felt so sorry about that, so we went and slept in another village.

Then we went towards Sar Pa Daw village, and we spent a night in Sar Pa Daw. We met the soldiers again. At the time, many people and 23 bullock carts were there. At Kaw Tha Nu, another seven bullock carts, so altogether 30 bullock carts. When we were staying there, three soldiers came and asked for money, 3,000 *kyats* from us to buy pork. The soldiers said, “All of you, you cannot eat our food!” We had to buy one pig for the soldiers. [This was done as a humiliating insult, because Islam forbids the eating of pork.] They ordered us to buy it. If not, we would be beaten. Then we combined with the seven bullock carts at Kaw Tha Nu village and we spent two nights at Kaw Tha Nu. Then they demanded 500 *kyats* for each cart. Altogether we had to pay them over 15,000 *kyats*. Then the soldiers asked, “Where are all of you going to?” We replied: “To Than Ma Ya.” When we arrived at Than Ma Ya, the soldiers told us, “You cannot stay here. You have to go back to your village!”

At that time, the passenger boat to Seik Gyi arrived. My family is big. Altogether

we are 8 people. I took the boat and went back to Kaw Tha Nu village. When I got there, the villagers asked me where were our wives and children. I explained to them that they were all at Than Ma Ya village and that I was the first one to arrive back at Kaw Tha Nu. I told the villagers there what happened to us.

To destroy our religion and our mosque. These are the cruel things they did to us. The soldiers did that because they were ordered by the Army officers. They are from LIB. 22, LIB. 202 and Division 44. When I saw the mosque they had already destroyed it with their hands, but after that they blew it up with mines and razed it with a bulldozer. Even though they didn't torture us, they destroyed our mosque and that's what we can't bear. They cursed us and forced us to leave. Now the Buddhist people who come to the camp here say that at Kyaikdon gate near the village the soldiers have hung a signboard that says, "No entry for Indians" [meaning Muslims]. Muslims are strictly prohibited to enter Kyaikdon, but Buddhist people can stay there.

When there was fighting some Muslims ran to Ber Kler [southeast along the plains to the Thai border] and others ran to the mountains. It was at least an eight days' journey and they had to climb several mountains, but they didn't meet the enemy. The people who ran to Ber Kler met the enemy, but now they've all arrived at the [refugee] camp. Some fled to other villages, but many came here.

I met many people along the way who had to go as porters, from places like Moulmein, Thaton and Maw Tama. They arrived at Kyaikdon, but then they all were sent back to their places. After the SLORC settled at Kyaikdon they released the porters. I met some of them at Seik Gyi. They were ordinary villagers. We were talking about the SLORC setting fire to our mosque, and they were talking about how the porters had to carry big guns and bullets for the SLORC. I heard what they were talking about because they were sitting close to me, but I didn't dare ask them anything. I heard them say that it took a week to serve as porters, and that those who couldn't carry their loads were beaten. They were not only Muslims, but everybody. I saw about 50 of them who were going back.

The SLORC are now constructing a road from Kyaikdon to Seik Gyi. Trucks can travel already. The soldiers did it with a bulldozer.

I lived in Kyaikdon for a long time, we were all like a family. We were all close to each other like relatives. I wanted to stay there because I had lived there so long. I could not be happy at Kawkareik, which is my native place, and I can never forgive them for what happened to our mosque, that is why I came to stay here. My shop [in Kyaikdon] was full of things but I left it all, I carried nothing with me here, though

some other shopkeepers carried all their things here.

Interview 34: HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Forced Labor, Religion

Name: Saw Muh Lah
 Sex: Male
 Age: 45
 Ethnicity: Karen, farmer
 Religion: Buddhist
 Marital status: Married with ten children
 Address: Tee Meh Baw village, Dooplaya District, Karen State
 Date of interview: March 24, 1997
 Place of interview: KNU 6th Brigade area
 Source: KHRG

I can't remember exactly when the SLORC soldiers arrived at my village. Maybe on February 20, the SLORC arrived at the village. I left my village about the 25th of February, then I went back to the village two times. I slept one night in the village the first time I went, but the second time I went back I couldn't reach my village. I thought I would try to go back and get one pair of bullocks because I had nothing when I arrived here. If I could get my cattle I would sell them to get some money to buy vegetables and things. But I couldn't get them because the Burmese were very close to the village.

When I went back the first time I saw some villagers, but not the SLORC. As many people had left, the SLORC had taken and eaten our coconuts, and as for our rice they had poured it down on the ground to be trodden upon. They had also eaten our pigs. I asked the villagers the news, and they said the SLORC ordered them to make ready two bullock carts with two people to go for two days and carry things like ammunition for them from Saw Hta to Kyaw Kee. They said the soldiers also took all the villagers' things that they needed. Everything that they need us to do we have to do for them. Regularly the villagers have to send two bullock carts and two people for them, and if they need porters the villagers have to go. They haven't much time to work for their own survival. If the people from Tee Meh Baw want to travel anywhere they have to get a pass from Division 44, but the people from Meh K'Tee have to get their passes from Division 22. To go work your field you need one pass, and to search for your cattle you need another pass. If we go to search for our cattle in DIV.22 Division's area [very close by] we have to go and get a pass from them as well, one from DIV.44 and another from Div.22. You don't need to pay for the pass. Each village has to prepare two bullock carts and stand by at Meh

K'Tee. Tee Meh Baw village has to stand by at Kyaw Kee. Now Division 44 has taken over responsibility for Meh Kwih Kloh area, and they are in Kyaw Kee. The SLORC's headquarters is in Saw Hta. Once or twice a week they order the villagers to go and have a meeting there. When I was there I saw helicopters come one or two times.

The soldiers take clothing from the villagers and then sell it to other villagers. They sell for a cheap price, so some people buy it from them. Even the paddy they've taken from the villagers, they order the villagers to mill it. Then they sell it back to the villagers, for 500 *kyats* per basket. If they need something they go and take it. Even though the villagers tell them it belongs to them, the Burmese just say, "No, these are the Indian people's things" and they just take it.

There are 37 households in my village. Only seven houses came to this camp. The other 30 households were hiding in the forest, but they went back to the village because they heard that the Burmese were going to fire mortars into the forest. The people stayed in their houses and didn't trouble each other, but the Burmese beat 3 people on the head with a stick. Maung Kyaw, Maung Than Nu, and Saw Kloh. They were wounded a little bit. One of them went and came back and said something to his friend, then another told something to his friend, and then the SLORC said, "Mind your own business!" and beat them on the head. They were all beaten at the same time. With a bamboo stick, not very big.

When I went back to the village I saw a letter with names written on it, such as Pado Maung Myint, Puh Dta Er, and Tha Muh Heh. It said, "These three have surrendered and now they cooperate and work with us". The letter is still with the headman. After I came here the Burmese chose a new headman, his name is Saw Lwin. He showed me that letter. It was a typed letter. They distributed it. It was true that one person had surrendered to them [Tha Muh Heh], but the other two had not.

Two monks' helpers went to Meh K'Tee monastery and saw nothing there. The Burmese had taken everything that was kept in the monastery. None of the spoons were even left. All the [Buddha] images were taken, and all the floor mats. Then when the monks came back and there were no sleeping mats in the monastery, the Burmese offered them one. It was one of the same mats they had stolen from the monastery. The monks recognized it.

I dare not think about going back! Some people contact me and they tell me that the Burmese say I have two guns, but I have no guns. They say if I go and take them two guns, they will accept me. I dare not go back because I don't have any guns at all. If I go back, I would have to buy guns and give them to the Burmese. I'm happy to

stay here because I don't have to be too afraid of anything. Everything is in conflict in the village so I don't dare go back. I'll stay here.

Interview 35: HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Torture, Arrest, Forced Labor

Name: Pa Noh
 Sex: Male
 Age: 37
 Ethnicity: Karen, farmer
 Religion: Animist
 Marital status: Married with four children
 Address: H--- village, Dooplaya District, Karen State
 Date of interview: March 24, 1997
 Place of interview: KNU 6th Brigade area
 Source: KHRG

How long ago did the Burmese arrive in your village?

It's over a month now. They took all the pots, pans, and other things. They ate up the villagers' pigs, chickens, and bullocks, and they destroyed all the paddy and [husked] rice they saw. They took it out of the storage barns and poured it down on the ground to be trodden upon.

What happened to K--- [a villager in H--- who was tortured]?

He is 22 years old. He is married and has his family staying there in the village. He is a farmer, and also a village guard [KNDO]. They punched him and they poured water in his nose, because somebody sent them information that he had a gun. They held him for two or three days. He was tied to the betelnut tree near his house. I didn't see how they tied him but I could hear his crying and shouting. I dared not go to look. He was beaten for one night. He had to suffer seriously, his body was all swollen up and bruised. He had to give them the gun, which belonged to M---. That happened on the 17th or 18th of March.

At first I stayed in the village, but when I saw that he was beaten by the Burmese like that I ran away from the village. I saw him after he was beaten. I saw his wife gave him a hot formulation using medicated leaves.

After that they also tortured Tee Kay Pah. He is 30 years old. Also Saw Pu, Saw

Aw Gaw, and Saw Bleh Doh [these were all men the SLORC captured and tortured for having fled the village]. They tortured Saw Aw Kaw first. Then they tortured Tee Kay Pah because he ran away and then came back to check the situation in the village, and they captured him and beat him up. Saw Bleh Doh, they captured him, punched him, then carried him down and tortured him for one whole night. He is 30 also. He is [normally] unhealthy and pale. After the torture he was swollen and bruised. He had a lot of pain, especially inside his body. He can't eat much because of the pain.

At present, we in the village can't do anything for ourselves because we always have to work for them. The villagers have to carry betelnut for them. The Burmese also take the planks from the houses of Indian people [Muslims] and then order the villagers' bullock carts to haul them. When I was still in the village I saw them going and taking the paddy from the houses where the villagers had left and ordering the other villagers to carry it with their bullock carts. I think that they will take all that paddy and rice. They order the villagers to take all those things to Azin. Where they send it from there I don't know, but when I was there the villagers had to carry the paddy to the rice mill to grind it for them. I don't know what they will do with all that rice. They also take a lot of our chickens and other animals.

Does the SLORC still stay in your village?

When I left the village they were there, but after that they went back and now they just come and check in the village sometimes. Yesterday when I was on my way here they were at Meh K'Tee, and after they tortured two or three people there they moved on to H—village so I didn't dare stay and I left. There's one group who stay on the mountain and are always there. Every day three people have to go and carry water for the Burmese at Shwe Nyaung Bin, which is close to Meh Kwih Kee. The SLORC are building their camp on the hill and settling in Nat Zin Gone near Meh K'Tee.

Was it difficult for you to come here?

It wasn't easy to come here. I had to sleep in the forest for two days, and I had to climb the mountains. I was afraid and running alone, but my family stayed behind in the village. I think about going back to take my family but I am afraid. I dare not go and stay in my village because they beat people like that. They also destroyed our paddy and some of it they took for themselves. So far they haven't done anything to the houses. There are 30 families and over a hundred people, but more people have come here than stay behind in the village. Just about 20 people or more have stayed in the village, from not more than ten households. Now I heard that the Burmese

forced people to move to Toh Naw. I am not sure whether it is true or not, I only know that without their permission nobody can go anywhere freely. To come here we have to run out secretly.

Do you think it is better here?

Yes, here we can talk to others and meet with others freely. There we dare not speak or talk to others because we are afraid we might be beaten by the SLORC.

Interview 36: HRV: Refugee, Torture, Arrest, Livelihood, Forced Labor

Name:	Saw Eh Kaw
Sex:	Male
Age:	36
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Single
Address:	xxxx village, Dooplaya District, Karen State
Date of interview:	March 25, 1997
Place of interview:	KNU 6th Brigade area
Source:	KHRG

I fled to the forest, then I went back and stayed about two weeks in the village. I was staying in my village, then I got a pass because I had to go and work in the hills for three days [at his farm]. When I came back three or four soldiers came and arrested me at xxxx's house in xxxx village. It was 7 o'clock in the evening. They tortured two of us while we were sitting in the house, then they let us go. They pointed a gun at me. He [the leader] was a First Sergeant Major and he carried a Chinese gun. I've heard people call him Ba Gyi. They are from 22 Division.

Then at midnight [the same night] two soldiers called me down from my house. I heard one of their names was Saw Mu Tha. They tortured me and asked me about a gun, but I said that I had no gun. They tied me up and punched me, and they covered my face with ordinary plastic and poured water over the plastic on my face. I couldn't breathe. They covered my face and then asked me, covered my face and then asked me, they did it like that many times. I answered that I hadn't seen any gun and I didn't have a gun, so that night they tied me up and made me sleep in the betelnut plantation.

The next day they kept asking me about guns. I said that I knew where they [KNLA or KNDO] used to keep the gun, but I didn't know whether they'd taken it away or when they'd come and got it. [The SLORC were looking for a gun or arms cache which they knew was in or around the village. Like all the villagers, "Saw Eh Kaw" had a vague idea of where it had been at one point but didn't really know about it.] I took them and showed them the place where the gun had been and they searched all around and saw nothing, so we went back. In the evening I told them that I would like to go for a bath, and then I ran away to the forest and came here by the old way. That was one or two weeks ago. My nose was bleeding and my mouth was split. I still have the scabs, and my lips still hurt because they're not totally healed yet. After I came up here, I heard that many more villagers were tortured and beaten by the Burmese.

I was back there alone. When the SLORC arrived in the village my family and I fled to the forest and stayed at our farm near the village. At first all the villagers were staying in the forest. Then I went back to the village, got the pass and stayed with them for three days on the mountain. I went back because I wanted to get our belongings. My family was left alone at the farm for more than one week while I was at the village. After they arrested me and I ran away, my family and I moved here.

What did you see when you were back in the village?

There were over 30 households in our village, but now only 12 households have gone back and are staying there. The Burmese chose a new headman by themselves, not our old headman. They usually do that, they choose someone who can speak Burmese. I heard the new headman say they were going to check the number of villagers [in order to assign forced labor and extortion quotas]. The SLORC destroyed our paddy and took the villagers' clothes for themselves. They took the good things, like hand-woven tehku and nee [men's and women's sarongs] and good cloth. If they get new clothing such as Karen dresses and sarongs they keep it for themselves. They keep our clothes for their families, but when they send it to them I don't know if they'll sell it or not. As for our rice, they keep as much as they can for themselves, and if they can't take it they destroy it. Everything that they see out in the forest they destroy.

The Burmese made the villagers carry water and rice for them for three days at a time. They made us carry things from Tee Yoh Kee to Maw Hta, to Meh K'Tee or Nat Zin Gone with our bullock carts. It was two hours' journey by bullock cart. Each person had to do that for three days, then come back and other people had to take this place. For those three days we had to carry things all the time. Sometimes we had to carry on foot and sometimes with the bullock cart.

Was it easy to come here?

It was easy because I knew the way. Most of the villagers have fled to the forest or to here.

Interview 37: HRV: Refugee, Women

Name: Tha Doh Htoo
 Sex: Male
 Age: 45
 Ethnicity: Karen, hill farmer
 Religion: Animist
 Marital status: Married with two children
 Address: A'May village, Ler Mu Lah township, Karen State
 Date of interview: March 31, 1997
 Place of interview: KNU 6th Brigade area
 Source: KHRG

[Tha Doh Htoo's elder sister is blind and was left behind in the village during the rush to flee from the approaching SLORC Army.]

At first I lived in Kyi May, but now I live in A'May village. There were 18 households in A'May village. All of them came here. I arrived four days ago. I spent three days coming here from my village.

I heard that one old woman stayed behind near the village.

She was left behind at Kleh Pa Taw because we could not carry her, she couldn't walk and she was blind. She couldn't walk. She was more than 50 years old. Her name is Naw Nweh. Once a long time ago she had a husband but no children, now she no longer has a husband and she is alone now.

Where is she now? In the forest?

Yes, she is in the forest. She is outside the village. She has nothing to eat.

If the Burmese arrive what will they do?

I can't think about it. We couldn't do anything, we just left her. We dare not go back, we are afraid, but I think about her. She is my older sister.

When you fled your village were the Burmese arriving?

When I heard that the Burmese Army was coming I ran out of the village, but the Burmese had already arrived at Klih Thu. Klih Thu is not far from A'May, just about one hour's walk. I heard gunshots from Klih Thu and I came running straight away to here. It took me 3 days from A'May to here. On the way here we didn't hear anything.

How do you think your sister will survive?

I don't know how my sister will get food. I don't know if she is still alive or not.

Interview 38: HRV: Relocation, Arrest, Torture, Women, Religion, Forced Labor, Killing, Child

Name: Nai Thein Zar
 Sex: Male
 Age: 46
 Ethnicity: Mon, farmer
 Religion: Buddhist
 Marital status: Married with four children

Name: Nai Win Soe
 Sex: Male
 Age: 43
 Ethnicity: Mon, farmer
 Religion: Buddhist
 Marital Status: Married with six children
 Address: Mae Taw village, Kywe Thone Nyi Ma village tract, Ye Byu Township, Tenasserim Division
 Date of interview: March 30, 1997
 Place of interview: Thai-Burma border
 Source: KHRG

We arrived here on February 24, 1997. I couldn't stay in my village because the Burmese forced us to leave our village. Now nobody is staying there anymore. I had to leave - if I refused to leave I would be punished.

There are about 100 households in my village. All the people are Mon. At the beginning of February the Burmese troops came into our village. They forced all the

villagers including women, children and the elderly together into the monastery. Then the troops went out into the village and they searched every house and looted some belongings and they burnt down some houses. They also tied everyone together with rope in groups of 13. They tied all of us like that in groups of 13, including all the women. They didn't tie the children. But they especially tied up the village headman and the young men and they beat them. They tied them and they beat them. They also beat two women.

They tied us and then they asked some questions of the villagers. Some villagers could not speak Burmese, so they couldn't answer and they were beaten. The village headman was also beaten and they cut his body with a knife. They tied the villagers in groups, and then they beat them and tortured them with a knife group by group. They did it inside the monastery. When they were mistreating one group, another group of villagers saw that and they were afraid and tried to get out of the hall [the monastery gathering hall] and flee. Then the troops shot at them. One man broke free and tried to flee from the monastery. They shot at him but didn't hit him. He was afraid and stopped running. They captured him and beat him several times in the head with their gun butts. They beat his head from all sides. The whole of his head was bleeding and his face became black. He had many wounds on both sides of his head. They also beat him with a wooden stick on his thighs, and he lost consciousness. Then they brought him back to the monastery. When I came here, he was still receiving treatment and he could neither urinate nor eat any food, so I am not sure whether he will recover or not.

They also arrested one man who worked in the monastery [layman] and beat him with a nail. He was one of the men who was in the monastery to help the monk build the new building. The monastery was being built, and they took a nail from a post and hit his head with this nail. The blood came out of his wound for the whole night. The villagers worried that he would die, so the next morning the soldiers treated him. He recovered, but not so well.

They also asked the women questions in Burmese. The women didn't understand and didn't know how to answer, so the soldiers got angry and beat them. Two women were beaten. Both of them were pregnant. When the soldiers realized that these women were pregnant, they stopped beating them and said, "If you were not pregnant, I would kill you!"

As for the men, they mainly beat the village leaders, 5 of them, and those who tried to flee, another 10 men. Altogether, about 15 people were beaten. Most of the village leaders were elderly. The eldest one was about 80 years old. Those who usually worked in the monastery were old men.

The main reason that they gave to the villagers for coming to the village was, "In your village we have no military base, so your village has to move to where there is a military base". They also told the villagers, "You are the supporters of a dacoit [bandit] gang which is operating in this area." They accused the monk and the layman-in-charge at the monastery of receiving some funds from these dacoits. Over one year ago, almost two years, one of these dacoits used to stay in our village. He was not from our village but married a woman from our village. He left a long time ago, never returned and never had any contact with the villagers, even with his wife, for a long time. When the troops came they asked for the two dacoits. Their main questions were, "Where are these two men? Where do they stay?" As these men hadn't come back for a long time, the villagers told them, "We don't know. They haven't been here for a long time." They asked everyone, one by one. I was tied up like everyone else, but I wasn't beaten because I could speak a little Burmese.

In other areas, like in Hpaungdaw area [where the gas pipeline comes on shore], this group of robbers were also active. They also robbed traders who travelled in the sea. They used to take some hostages, maybe some traders, and demanded cash from these traders or businesses. But I don't know why the SLORC came and asked our monk. He was building a monastery and they accused him of using cash received from these robbers. They took his donations that he got from the villagers. Many villages from the village tract, even Kywe Thone Nyi Ma, had given donations to the monk to construct this new building. The monk had just started to build the buildings so he had a large amount of cash, not himself but the layman-in-charge. The monk took responsibility to collect donations from the villagers in his village and the surrounding villages for the construction of the monastery, but when he received the money he could not keep it with him according to our religious tradition [monks are not allowed to handle money], so he gave it to the laymen who worked for him. The five village elders were managing the money. They had to buy wood and building material and manage the construction work. The Burmese troops accused them of getting that cash from the robbers, but they never met the robbers and the robbers had never been back to the village. The monk had 140,000 *kyats* for the building work. I don't know who told them that the monk had this money. The soldiers did not beat the monk, but they disrobed him. They took his robe off. They searched everywhere in his monastery looking for where he put the cash, and they also searched his body and his robe. They didn't find anything. The donations were kept in one place, in a box at the monastery. They searched everywhere in the monastery, and that same night they found the box with 140,000 *kyats* and they took it. After they punished the villagers, the LIB. 273 troops posted in Cha Bone village returned to Cha Bone and they checked and made sure that the cash was from donations and not from the robbers. Their higher officers told them that the robbers had 8 million *kyat* and the monk had very little money compared to that [the troops believed the

monk was hiding money for the dacoits], so after two days they returned the money to the monk.

Altogether about 35 soldiers were in the village. They stayed in the village for four days. For four days they kept everyone tied up in the monastery. They didn't allow anyone to leave the monastery for four days. All the family members were kept at the monastery, including the children. They would only let one member of each family go to get food from their home, but they told them not to cook the food in their house but to bring the food to the monastery and prepare the food there. We were kept tied together all the time, every day. We were tied hand to hand. So if you could sleep like that, then you could sleep. But if someone needed to go to the toilet, the whole group had to go. There were women's groups and men's groups. They didn't tie the children but they didn't allow them to go outside of the monastery compound. They didn't make any trouble for the building workers at the monastery who were from other villages. They even allowed them to continue building the monastery.

During that time they searched everything in the village, every house, house by house. They took some of the villagers' belongings. On the last day they also burnt down some houses, especially the houses of the village leaders. Then they told us that we could not stay in our village anymore and that we had to move. On the last day, all the belongings they took from the villagers were gathered in the monastery. When they returned to Cha Bone, it was too much for them to carry. They carried some of them, then they returned to the village again and told the villagers: "We are leaving here, do not stay in this village." After that, the villagers felt they had to leave. They returned to their houses and packed their belongings and closed up their boxes.

They didn't say where we should go, but they said that we must stay in a village where there is a military base. Most of the villagers moved to Kywe Thone Nyi Ma village. LIB. 273 has a camp there. Some moved to villages in Thanbyuzayat township and Ye township [100-200 km. to the north].

In my village, the village leaders are the elderly people who helped the monk. My mother is one of them. She is old and works with the monk. When I was hospitalized in Rangoon, only my mother was left in the house. They forced my mother to go to the monastery. She is very old and did not take anything with her from the house. I lost 100 baskets of paddy in my house and all our belongings were burned up. I had a big house. To build it I spent 150,000 kyats. Everything was very good, like the furniture - I lost everything, furniture, clothing, rice, fishpaste, salt ... and the house! And because of the flames, about 6 coconut trees and durian trees were also burnt.

Four or five days after they burnt my house down I arrived back at my village. When I arrived with my wife, we couldn't find anyone in our village. My mother and my children had all gone to Kywe Thone Nyi Ma. I found them there.

They took everything they could carry, like clothes, pots, tools, rice and animals. For the other villagers it was the same. During those 4 days the soldiers killed all our chickens and ducks and cooked very good curries for themselves. They had 10 porters with them and they loaded the porters with our belongings. When the troops left on the last day, we saw the porters carrying things with them. We thought that they were carrying away just a few of our things. Only later did we realize that a lot of things were taken from our houses.

First they loaded their porters with things like longyis [sarongs] and villagers' possessions and made them go first. Then they took about 15 of our own villagers to carry their equipment and ammunition that the porters had brought when they first came. They had to carry everything to Cha Bone village. According to the Cha Bone villagers, when they got there the soldiers kept the old longyis and they had to load the boats with all the belongings of the Mae Taw villagers, and then these boats went to Kanbawk [at the southern tip of the Heinze Basin - Kanbawk is the main village on the pipeline route, much of the military assigned to the pipeline project is based there and the oil companies' base camp lies just outside of Kanbawk].

At that time, the troops that came to our village also killed one child about 14 years old from Maw Gyi village. They suspected the boy of having contact with the robber group, so they arrested him and brought him along with them to Mae Taw village and other villages. They beat him. They ordered the boy to show the houses of the robbers. The boy was so afraid, that he just pointed out some houses at random. The soldiers climbed into these houses and searched everything and couldn't find anything. So they beat him again and forced him again to show the robbers' houses but he really did not know. I don't know why they accused this boy of supporting the robbers. I don't know his name. According to the xxxx village head, during the whole four days that they detained the villagers they forced the boy to show the houses and beat him. They beat him very brutally. He was suffering from many injuries on his body. It was terrible. I saw him at the monastery. When I saw him it was on the first day, and the boy had already been beaten and had many injuries. His hands were tied to his neck. He could do nothing but walk. After 4 days they took him back to Cha Bone village again, and two days later the boy disappeared. The villagers there were sure that he was killed. They didn't see his body, but they knew that he'd been killed because the boy had so many injuries that he couldn't eat and he was suffering a lot. The villagers believe that even if he had been released he could not have survived.

Cha Bone village had to move after SLORC told them [to stay near a military base]. In Cha Bone village, the men fled and the women collected their belongings and started to move to Kywe Thone Nyi Ma. Chaung Phyar village also. When the 4 other villages heard the news about Mae Taw village, many of the villagers fled. They were afraid that the Burmese would come and torture them like in Mae Taw village. Most of them moved to Kywe Thone Nyi Ma and others went to other areas. So after the incident in Mae Taw village, there were no more village headmen in the other villages. The troops went around to the other 4 villages. They could not find the village leaders and the men, and they ordered the women to leave. [The villages which have been uprooted are Mae Taw, Cha Bone, Chaung Phyar, Mae Yaung and Mae Than Taung, all in Kywe Thone Nyi Ma village tract.]

People in my region also had to work for forced labor. We've had to work on the [Ye-Tavoy] railway for the last three years. Every month we had to work at the railway construction site, and if we could not go we had to give 3,200 *kyats* and half a tin of rice [about 8 kg./18 lb.] every month. Sometimes we had to work twice in one month, sometimes once. Usually we had to work for two weeks every month, one person per family. Up to June 1996 we had to do this work. When the rains started, we stopped. After the rainy season, we didn't have to do it. In January they ordered each family to provide two *kyin* of crushed stones and deliver that to the railway [one *kyin* = 10 x 10 x 1 feet, i.e. 100 cubic feet]. If you could not do it you had to pay between 700 and 1,000 *kyats* for each *kyin*. Many villagers were afraid to travel to the railway and be arrested as porters, so they paid the money instead.

After the rains stopped in September, we had to pay porter fees of 2,000 *kyats* every month. Kywe Thone Nyi Ma village has a military base. They don't call for any porters but we have to pay 2,000 *kyats*. In the other villages of Kywe Thone Nyi Ma village tract people also have to pay 2,000 *kyats* per month. But when the troops come to the village they will still arrest you. Also in my village - every month our headman has to send the porter fees to Kywe Thone Nyi Ma but when they come to our village, sometimes they still order people to carry. [In other words, LIB.273 has a standing order that every village must send 2,000 *kyats*/month 'porter fees' but has no standing order for porters; they just come and catch porters whenever they want them.] They usually take porters for up to two weeks going from one village to another, and then they change with other porters from other villages and you are released to go back home. When I came here, they had already been arresting porters for the Karen offensive but none of them had returned yet. [These are the current mass offensives in Dooplaya District of Karen State, 150-300 km. to the northeast, and in Mergui/Tavoy District of Tenasserim Division, 150-200 km. to the southeast - these are huge distances to take porters away from their homes; there are reports that thousands of people have been taken from the entire Andaman

seaboard, from Moulmein to Mergui, to be porters in these offensives.] I don't know whether they arrested anyone from Mae Taw village for the offensive because it was happening at the same time that we had to move. I heard that they arrested people mainly in Kywe Thone Nyi Ma village, especially the visitors and the traders. They caught everyone. Their base is near the road [the main north-south road on the mainland], and when the passenger cars arrived from Tavoy or from Ye, they stopped them and caught people. Also in the sea, they stopped all the passenger boats and arrested the people to be porters.

The village chairman of Cha Bone was arrested at the end of January and they kept him for 15 days. They beat him seriously. He nearly died. Nai Thein is the headman of Cha Bone. He is over 40. I don't know why they arrested him. They detained him in Bauk Pin Gwin and Nat Gyi Zin. They have a military outpost there. They detained him and beat him for 15 days. His relatives looked everywhere for him, and after 15 days they found him in the outpost near Bauk Pin Gwin. He had been tortured: his face was beaten, and they covered his face and held his head underwater. When his relatives came to fetch him they brought money for the military, but the military did not accept it. They ordered them to bring four big boats full of paddy-husks to Bauk Pin Gwin because they had to make bricks for railway construction. To bake the bricks they use paddy-husks as well as wood for the fire. At the time they needed fuel so they didn't accept the bribe. But now Nai Thein has moved to Kywe Thone Nyi Ma, so now his relatives have to collect the husk in that area, send it [from the island] to the road and then by lorry to Bauk Pin Gwin.

For about one and half or two years they used the Kywe Thone Nyi Ma villagers for forced labor in the army camps near the pipeline.. After that, they didn't call them any more.

People can't travel freely. Even to go to your farm, you need permission from the village headman and then you have to show it to the military commander to get him to sign it. If you don't carry your permission with you, they will punish you. Every time we have to pay 45 *kyats* to the village headman for that. Before, it didn't used to be like that. They started this at the beginning of 1996. Not only to go to your farm - wherever you go, if you want to go to town or if you want to visit another village you need it. Without this paper, you can't go anywhere.

In the area where the gas pipeline passes through the fishermen have to give money to the Army. In Kywe Thone Nyi Ma area, they have to give them I don't how many kilos of seafood, like fish, fish paste, dried fish, and dried prawns once a year for free. Also, very often when the troops come to a village they demand so many kilos of fish from the villagers and the fishermen have to provide it. When the troops come

into any village of a village tract, the villagers from that village have to provide everything for their military operation like pigs, rice, etc. After the troops leave, the headman goes and collects cash in all the villages of the village tract [to cover the cost of the supplies].

They have checkpoints along the seacoast. If you leave Kywe Thone Nyi Ma and go south [towards the pipeline], you will meet one checkpoint. The military check and do not allow the boats to travel at night time. When you are sailing a bit far from the coast, they stop and check your boat, because now they have many Navy ships and almost every island and village close to the sea now has a military base. This increase has happened especially since 1996. After the cease-fire [with the New Mon State Party], they built new army posts in inland villages too.

The situation of my village after the cease-fire is worse. There has been no improvement. The situation now is worse than before. Before the cease-fire, we didn't need to give them as much money as now. Since the cease-fire more [SLORC] military comes to our village, and they come very often, and we have to provide them with money and labor. We cannot go freely to our farms or to other villages for our work like before. Because of that, we've lost a lot of opportunity to work on our farms, in the plantations and to conduct trade. We've also lost a lot of our own resources. The military are doing business too. They force the villagers to sell them rice at a low price. It's the same for those who plant rubber trees, lemon and betelnut trees. They have to sell to the military at a low price and the military takes all the profits. Before the cease-fire we had to give 4 baskets of paddy per acre to the military, and after the cease-fire it increased to 10-12 baskets of paddy that we are forced to sell to them at government price. They give us only 98 *kyats* for one basket when the market price is about 500 *kyats*. I have no rubber plantation, only a rice farm, but the owners of rubber plantations presently have to give taxes sometimes in money, sometimes in rubber. When you plant rubber trees you have to wait for 6 years before you can collect some rubber, but even the owners of 3-year-old plantations have to pay these taxes. The owners whose rubber trees are still small have to pay 500 *kyats* per acre.

Another big business of the SLORC is hardwood. They are cutting the trees in our area and they don't allow the villagers to cut them. Before we could go freely to the forest and cut a tree. Now they do not allow us to go to the forest, but they cut the trees themselves. They've monopolized the entire wood business. They have made a list of the villagers who saw lumber, and they force these villagers to sell the lumber to the military base at a low price, not at market price. They put an outpost near the sea so they can arrest the villagers who refuse to sell to them. For example, they give only 8,000 *kyats* for one ton of hardwood, but if you sell this on the market you can get 30,000 *kyats*, three to four times more.

For me, I have nothing left and I have no money. My health is not so good. I came here to get some food and to help my family to survive. I will try to do some jobs here and earn some money. I don't want to stay there.

Interview 39: HRV: Religion, Torture, Livelihood

Name	Nusa
Sex:	Male
Age:	33
Ethnicity:	Karen Muslim
Religion:	Muslim
Marital status:	Married with two children
Date of interview:	March, 1997
Place of interview:	Temporary site near Mae Sod, Thailand
Source:	Images Asia

When we arrived at Kyaikdon we tied up the bullocks and went to the well in the mosque compound to get water as quickly as possible. In the meantime, a SLORC column entered the village, hurling rude abuse at us like "You sons of bitches!" and so on.

I was getting water at the in front of the mosque when some soldiers brought out the Koran and I saw them ripping it up. The soldiers said, "Don't watch! Just get your water," pointing their gun at me. I wanted to cry but I couldn't. They threw the pieces of Koran on the street. When the Muslim women saw this, they cried and felt much pain. The SLORC soldiers said, "Don't cry! This is not a Muslim country! This is Buddhist country! Go away!"

An officer from the 202 TOC (Tactical Operation Command), and other from LID.22 (Light Infantry Division) said, "Muslims cannot stay. You must leave." Another one said that Muslims could not stay there and we must convert to Buddhism and put an altar in our house. The soldiers then ordered us to move our bullock carts out of the village within half an hour. When we started to move from that place, the soldiers came out and threatened us with guns. They ordered us not to pick up any of our belongings that had dropped from our bullock carts. After that, we made our way back to Nam Ngen village and then went to Ywa Thit village to meet the commander of the SLORC troops. At Ywa Thit, the major told us we were not allowed to stay in the village and would have to stay somewhere outside the village. Therefore we moved, over twenty bullock carts, to the banks of a nearby stream.

The next day the soldiers arrived and asked how many bullock carts we had with us. They then ordered the whole group of villagers to go with them, including the girls and 27 bullock carts. They also said that we would have to eat the meat that we cannot eat (pork). We understood clearly what they meant, and after discussing it with the village elders, we decided to collect 150 *kyats* for each of the 27 bullock carts and gave the money to the soldiers. After that the soldiers bought pork and took it to the place where they were staying. We slept at the side of the stream for two nights.

I came to the refugee camp with part of my family. On the way we heard that the Islamic teacher of Kyaikdon had been arrested there by the SLORC. The Muslim villagers had to pay 2000 *kyats* to the officer there to secure his release.

Since I arrived here, I heard that in Azin Kyaung Paya village, the SLORC troops forced some Muslims to eat pork [this practice is contrary to the precepts of the Islam].

We have suffered so much grief at the hands of the military that I feel that if we could get some guns now, all of the people suffering here would fight back against this brutal regime. This feeling is felt deep in the hearts of our Muslim community here. We can never forgive the SLORC soldiers who destroyed our mosque and our Koran, which is the holy center of our community.

Interview 40: HRV: Religion, Refugee

Name:	Wanna Soe
Sex:	Male
Age:	30
Ethnicity:	Muslim Karen, wage laborer
Religion:	Muslim
Marital status:	Married with two children
Address:	Kyaikdon village, Karen State
Date of interview:	March 1997
Place of interview:	Temporary site near Mae Sod, Thailand
Source:	Images Asia

My wife and some of the other villagers returned to the village from the place where we were hiding in the jungle. They cried with grief when they saw the ruins of our mosque. They met the SLORC soldiers near that mosque, and the SLORC soldiers said to them, "This is not India! Within two days two bulldozers will arrive at this

village to raze the mosque!” They noticed that the doors on the left side of the mosque were burned down and the marble floors made of ceramic tiles had been crushed and destroyed by the SLORC troops. The Koran had been torn into pieces and was scattered on the public footpath in front of the mosque. The women in the group cried when they saw this. At that time, the soldiers told the people, “This is not India! All of you Muslims must leave the mosque compound within half an hour!”

From our hiding place, we had already seen our village through a pair of binoculars. We saw that the roof of the mosque had already been destroyed, and also that all the roof framework had been completely destroyed by fire.

The SLORC troops have now destroyed the mosque at Kyaikdon village twice. Once was in 1990 and the other time was this year. This time we tried to hide the Koran in a safe place in the mosque, however the soldiers found the Koran and tore it to pieces and scattered it across the road. The soldiers then killed the pigs and cooked and ate pork curry in the mosque compound [a grave insult to Muslims].

The destruction of the mosque and holy Koran hurts like a spear piercing my heart. Even if the SLORC were to kill me along with my family, it would not hurt as much as this. This feeling is deep in our hearts and we will never forget this incident.

[Another recent arrival told Wanna Soo that no villagers are staying in the Muslim quarter of Kyaikdon anymore. The SLORC tried to destroy the mosque in a series of five explosions. This did not completely destroy the mosque- which is made of concrete-but cracked the ceiling and walls].

According to the Karen elders who had also witnessed the destruction of the mosque, the SLORC troops were making many problems for the Muslim community, and it would be wise for us to leave the village for that reason.

We sent one man back to our village from our hiding place to collect news about the movements of, and conditions under the SLORC major from Light Infantry Battalion LIB.205. He went back to the village and returned to our hiding place in the evening. He warned us to stay in a large group, and that we should not travel separately. He advised us to run to Kawkareik.

Two porters who escaped and arrived at Nopho told us that the SLORC soldiers said to each other that if they had a chance to meet Muslim women, they would rape them and then kill them.

Interview 41: HRV: Religion

Name: Yi Soo
 Sex: Male
 Age: 36
 Ethnicity: Muslim Karen, cowboy
 Religion: Muslim
 Marital status: Married with seven children
 Address: Mehka Tee Htar, Karen State
 Date of interview: March 1997
 Place of interview: Temporary site near Mae Sod, Thailand
 Source: Images Asia

When I heard the SLORC was coming, I had to run with my cows and hide. I asked a Karen Buddhist friend to go to the SLORC troops and ask them what the policy was for Muslims. My friend came back and told me that it was bad news for Muslims-if the SLORC troops saw any Muslims they would kill them.

I got information that all the cows were being taken by the SLORC and the SLORC troops were taking all the things that belonged to Muslims. So I gave my cows to my friend to look after.

Interview 42: HRV: Religion, Killing

Name: Kyi Win
 Sex: Male
 Age: 33
 Ethnicity: Sgaw Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Marital status: Married with three children
 Address: Pa Glaw Ni village, Karen State
 Date of interview: March 1997
 Place of interview: Temporary site near Mae Sod, Thailand
 Source: Images Asia

The SLORC told the villagers [from Kyaikdon] to come and tell them if they saw any Muslims. The SLORC came and asked us, "Where are the Muslims? If we catch them we will barbecue them eat them."

I heard that they had killed two of them [Muslims]. Then they came back and told

the villagers to go and bury the bodies. The villagers picked up their tools to go and bury the bodies. When they arrived they could not find the dead bodies. They searched and searched but there was no trace of them. I don't know whether they were lying or telling the truth.

There was a mosque in the village, but the SLORC troops dismantled it. It was made of wood, and the troops told the villagers to take it, but the villagers refused. So they [the SLORC soldiers] sold the wood. The SLORC troops also burned the Koran and destroyed the Muslim coffin.

Interview 43: HRV: Religion

Name: Abdul
Sex: Male
Age: 54
Ethnicity: Muslim Karen
Religion: Muslim
Marital status: Married with nine children
Address: Yaikdon, Karen State
Date of interview: March 1997
Place of interview: Temporary site near Mae Sod, Thailand
Source: Images Asia

There was a fighting in Kyaikdon on February 13 for one hour. The Muslim troops and the SLORC troops shot at each other; then the Muslims retreated into the mountains.

The SLORC soldiers used four explosives [probably mortar shells] to destroy the mosque in Kyaikdon. I could see from a hill that it was destroyed, and the others who were there later came out and reported the details to me. The SLORC took everything left in the village. They said all of it belonged to Muslims, so they took it.

Interview 44: HRV: Refugee, Arrest, Forced Labor, Relocation

Name: Saw Kloh Wah
Sex: Male
Age: about 35
Ethnicity: Karen, farmer
Marital status: Married with four children

Address: Kyun Chaung village, southern Dooplaya District, Karen State
Date of interview: April 2, 1997
Source: KHRG

[“Saw Kloh Wah”’s village was in KNU-controlled territory, and was just occupied by SLORC in the current offensive.]

I have been here for three days. I came along with others and it took three days to get here. The situation in Kyun Chaung was so bad that I decided to leave. I am only a farmer. I always work in my field. Since the SLORC soldiers came to my village, we have had to work for them and serve them. They have been in our village for more than one month. At first they said, “Don’t flee from this village!” So we did not run away. Then they called all the villagers and listed down all the villagers’ names. Whatever they asked we had to give them, like chickens, food, etc. We had to supply bullock carts, too. One day the commander came and asked me, “Where did you hide the weapons and the walkie-talkies?” Since then, my situation has become more dangerous. It was not true, of course, but they went to ask the village elders whether I was involved in those kind of activities or not. The village elders also told them “No”. But in that situation, I didn’t dare stay any more in my village. So I left.

All the bullock carts had to be on standby for them. They collected one person from each house of the village and we had to go and get bamboo for their fences and their camp buildings.

Where did people have to work?

At Chaung Wa [at the mouth of the stream]. It [the Army camp] is not finished yet. It was still going on when I left. At the beginning around 20 villages were working there. Now, when I left, there were less than before. We cannot work for them any more. Even if you didn’t want to work for them they forced you to do it, and not only in our village. They also collected workers from other villages. [These villagers were in KNU controlled area before the offensive and were not used to doing all this forced labor.] I didn’t work there myself because I was so busy with my family problems. The health of some of my family members was not so good. But I have brothers and I sent them to work there instead of my family [if your house cannot send someone, you have to send a substitute]. I never worked there so they thought that I didn’t obey their orders, and they became suspicious of me.

How did the villagers have to work in their camp?

They had to go early every morning after their meal. Some of them took a lunch packet along with them. They could only come back in the evening. We had to go almost every day. When they started building we only needed to go two or three times a week, but now we have to go every day, the whole week.

The villagers were also ordered to bring all our paddy and food to a specific place. Then we had to go and get our food [rationed out] back from that place. All the villagers had to gather at that place and they redistributed some food, but it was not enough. All the villagers were facing food problems. Every family received only around two milk tins of rice [per day; only enough for 1 person]. We had to solve our food problems ourselves. When no food was left, we went and asked food from the soldiers. Sometimes they gave, but not always. And they also collected food for themselves from the villagers.

The situation of our paddy fields is also not good. Last year we got 120-150 baskets of paddy per acre. This year we only got 50. I had to buy more paddy for the coming rainy season. I have a large family. I have to try to get more.

Did they take porters in your village?

Yes. When they went on operation to search for insurgents, two or three villagers had to go along with them and they have not been released yet.

Do you know the battalion number? Did you see their badges?

I saw the number “4”, a tiger’s head and the Bandoola sign [Bandoola was a famous Burmese general who fought the British during the colonization of Burma], and above that, 3 and 4. People told me that some troops who surrendered to the SLORC came along with them [possibly soldiers from KNLA Battalion 16 who surrendered]. I don’t know whether this is true or not.

I cannot estimate exactly how many soldiers came to our village, maybe 500 or 600. There was no fighting between them and KNU. There was one KNU gate in Kyun Chaung area. A few KNU soldiers were there, around five or six. When SLORC entered the village, all of them ran away. Then when the villagers came back from their farms, they met SLORC soldiers. They were about to run away but the SLORC soldiers shouted: “Don’t run away! Don’t be afraid! We will not harm you, people!” They ordered the villagers to stand in a row and registered all the villagers’ names. At the beginning our situation was not so bad, but later they became cruel and it became worse and worse, day by day. So we left. At the beginning they didn’t force us to do anything, but later on they collected one person from each family to do

jobs for them. Some people from our village moved to the plains but others didn't know how and where to go. These villagers are remaining in the village and they are suffering. They are still working in their camp. If we move to the plains, they allow it but we are not supposed to move up here.

In our village, whenever they suspect someone they arrest him. Two or three villagers were arrested and beaten. I never did their building work, so the man in charge of the camp construction became suspicious of me. My situation became worse and worse. So I left my family and my village. We came here by ourselves through the jungle. I came with three friends but without my family. On the way, we met SLORC soldiers once but we ran away. My family will be coming. One of my babies was sick. Their situation is also very bad. All of them are in fear. After I left the soldiers warned and threatened my family. They told them, "We are going to burn down your house and seize all your paddy and belongings!" There is no more head in my household, so they are helpless and they also have to come here. My wife is coming with our four children. I don't know where they are now. They are coming by a different route and I don't know what will happen to them. I cannot say what will happen in the future.

Did other villages have to move?

Yes, like Min Ski, above Kyun Chaung. There were 80 houses in Min Ski. Some people from Min Ski have already moved to other places to work for their living. There are two villages above Min Ski Chaung. Min Ski is big. The other one has around 40 houses. The villagers were divided into two: Buddhists and Christians. They had to move to Ya Gyi. The SLORC ordered that all the villagers would have to move within one week along with all of their property, but the villagers could not organize everything within that amount of time. I don't know what will happen to them.

Every village now has SLORC troops. Min Ski, too. And Meh T'Kreh as well. People there have to work for them [SLORC]. Also in Kyone Done. Wherever the SLORC is posted, people have to build their camps. I heard they are building camps in Kyun Chaung, Min Ski, Meh T'Kreh, and Kyone Done. Their main camp is in Kyun Chaung. Most of them came from Meh T'Kreh and are posted in this area. They have to go and get their supplies from Meh T'Kreh. It takes them eight days' return trip to get their rations. But their main base camp is in Kyun Chaung.

When the SLORC arrived in Kyun Chaung, there were around 200 porters with them. Maybe one or two for each soldier. Some porters had to carry ammunition. The man who came along with me [to the refugee site - see below], had to carry

ammunition boxes. Some porters had to carry rice, one big tin. It was very difficult to climb up and down the mountains with the loads. They had to carry very heavy loads. He was arrested to be a porter and put in the lock up in Kyun Chaung. When the troops went on an operation, he had to be a porter along with others. When he couldn't carry any more he was beaten. They abandoned him as dead and he escaped. So now out of three villagers, two still remain in the lockup in Kyun Chaung.

Any troubles with DKBA in your area?

No. It is very difficult to find them! They didn't come. Well, I heard that four local people were with the SLORC soldiers but I don't know much about that.

Interview 45: HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Torture, Killing, Forced Labor

Name:	Saw Po Htoo
Sex:	Male
Age:	67
Ethnicity:	Karen, church elder
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Widower with two children
Address:	Kyone Yaw village, Kya In township, Karen State
Date of interview:	April 2, 1997
Source:	KHRG

When did you arrive here?

I arrived five days ago.

Why did you leave your village?

We left because we could not live and we had nothing to eat. Because our rice was all taken and we had to go and ask for our rice back, weighed out on a scale little by little. We had to climb high mountains with heavy loads. So we couldn't stay, we didn't dare stay anymore and we left.

Who collected your rice?

The Burmese soldiers. They came one month and six days ago. They made us collect all of our rice. They caught the chickens and the pigs to eat and they destroyed

our belongings and animals. They surrounded our village, gathered us together in one place, and then they took all of our animals to eat and destroy. They hurt us also. Even the Pastor couldn't stay at home, he had to run out and hide himself in the forest. They used us to do hard work and carry heavy loads until we couldn't do it any more, so we left.

They hurt some people. I saw it. They beat us on our faces, punched us and made us do hard work like cattle or buffaloes. Whatever they ordered we had to do. We had to clear a yard for them, dig holes, and climb the mountain to look for Karen soldiers. If we couldn't find any, they told us that we were telling them lies and hurt us. They didn't do anything to the women, but they were very dangerous for the men. I don't know what they would have done to the women if there were no men in the village.

How many people were beaten?

A lot of people who were caught. They caught me and bound me for a while, and while I was there I saw what they did so I felt afraid and escaped later before they beat me. They tied our necks with rope, so I didn't dare to stay. I didn't see everybody, but with my own eyes I saw them beat 20 people. With their feet they kicked, with their hands they beat people's faces and with their guns they struck us. They also beat us with bamboo and wood, and they took the stairs from our houses and beat us with them. [Karen houses are built above-ground with a ladder-like stairway of wood or bamboo.] If we couldn't find Karen soldiers they hurt us. If we couldn't climb high mountains with heavy loads they hurt us. They also killed some people. Two people were killed. I didn't see it with my own eyes, but an escaped porter told me that they were killed on the mountain among the rocks. I don't know their names. They were villagers in Kya In township. They felt so tired that they couldn't climb the mountain any more with their heavy loads. They fell down, so the Burmese soldiers kicked them and made them stand up again. Eventually they couldn't stand up again, so the Burmese soldiers killed them in the end. They shot them dead and continued their journey. That happened three days after the Burmese arrived at my village.

Is that the first time SLORC has arrived in your village?

The very first time for my village. They were from Division 44. Our village covers a wide area but there were about 40 houses in it. They ordered us to build a place [camp] for them, build shelters and dig toilets for them, dig holes for cover, clear a yard, and make four or five concentric rings of fences surrounding their place. We had to go and dig every day, from when they first came until now. It's still not

finished. It's a very wide place. They kept us all together a little apart from their place. We had to work every day for them, and we had to bring our own rice to eat for many days because they never gave us any food, and they never care about our hunger. There's no time left for us to do our own work. They caught every man to do the work. They didn't catch women because there were still many men in the village, but I can't say what will happen when all the men escape from the place.

We had to work early in the morning until late in the evening with no rest. When we were too slow they didn't beat us, but they shouted at us to hurry up. At night some people could sleep and others had to work. They called us by turns. The people on night duty had to live in their camp until we rotated. I had to work in the night for three nights. I had to stay until someone came to replace me. We had to work for them every night and day. It was hard work. Now my cart is left there with the Army. I'll never go back to get my cart and belongings any more. There are about 500 soldiers there now, I guess.

How did they collect your rice for the first time?

They collected all of our paddy on the first day they arrived. They ordered us to bring our paddy to them and to build a building for our own paddy. They ordered us to bring all of our paddy to their camp together because they said they didn't want us to feed Karen soldiers. They said if we kept our paddy in our own homes, the Karen soldiers would come and eat and it would give strength to Karen soldiers. So we have to beg our rice back from them, weighed by scale little by little. We must buy it back from them, our own paddy. They would never give it back to us for free. We had to pay ten kyats for eight milk-tins of paddy, or 160 kyats for two big tins. They kept it in their camp, and they only gave you one big tin [about 15 kg.] each time. When it was gone we had to go to them again.

They wrote down the villagers' names and also the names of the people who brought their paddy to them. They went around finding out how many people were in each family and wrote it down. Many villagers ran away and hid in the forest, but the soldiers tried to look for them and catch them. Some people escaped, but only men. They left their children and wives, ran to the forest with their rice and hid there, and they had a lot of trouble. [The men flee to avoid torture and forced labor, while the women and children hope to be treated better and stay behind to try to protect their home, land and belongings.]

Some families fled to other places, and some came here. Some families here are from my village, and some are from Lay Wah Ploh - it is very close to my village. We didn't come the same way because we didn't dare to wait for each other. We feared

that the soldiers would see us. They would catch us if they saw us.

Why did you choose this place to come and stay?

Because we knew this place and thought we could get food here. We walked one day to get here. We traveled at night, and we ran quickly when we crossed the [Thanbyuzayat-Three Pagodas Pass] road. We worried that if we went to other places we would have no food to eat. We had never been to Thailand before so we dared not go there, and also we didn't know how to go there. We heard that in this place our white younger brothers and sisters take care of the people, so we came [in Karen legend, the Caucasian is the younger sibling of the Karen people]. If they didn't take care of us, we would die. So I came to cry unto them for help. Please have mercy upon us.

Now that you are here do you want to go back again?

We think we will stay here and not go back any more. If we can't stay here we will continue our travels but never go back. Everybody in our village is afraid.

What do you hope for the future?

We hope to stay here.

Interview 46: HRV: Forced Labor, Torture

Name:	Saw Nee Taw Thaw
Sex:	Male
Age:	18
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Single
Address:	Kyone Yaw village, southern Doooplaya District, Karen State
Date of interview:	April 2, 1997
Source:	KHRG

When did you leave your village?

One week ago. I'm from Kyone Yaw. I came here because I was afraid of the SLORC. They captured me as a porter and I had to carry things for them and climb the mountains. When I couldn't carry things for them they beat me, so when we

reached the mountain I ran away.

Did they beat you hard?

Yes, they beat me very hard. I was in pain. They beat me with their hands while they pointed their guns at me. I just had to bear that, so later I ran away. When I was with them I didn't see anyone killed by them, but I saw them beat other people very hard with a stick. After beating them, they ordered the people to carry things. We had to carry very far and climb the mountains, and if we couldn't climb we were beaten by the soldiers. They wouldn't put any medicine on my wound, or on the wounds of other porters. They would kill us if we couldn't carry their ammunition and food. There were about 30 porters and 100 soldiers. They were from Division 44.

Did they see you when you were escaping?

Yes, they saw me along the path and they shot at me two or three times. I didn't go home, I ran straightaway to here. It took me four days.

What do you think about the future? Will you stay here or go back?

I'll stay here. I don't want to go back. If the situation is good I'll go back, but if the enemy doesn't leave I won't go back to the village.

Where are your parents?

In Kyone Yaw. My mother is old. I think they can't leave. [Note: his parents have no way of knowing where he is, or even whether he is still alive.]

Interview 47: HRV: Forced Labor, Torture, Child, Women

Name:	Moo Nay
Sex:	Male
Age:	40
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with seven children
Address:	Lay Wah Ploh village, Kya In township, Karen State
Date of interview:	April 2, 1997
Source:	KHRG

When did you arrive here?

Three days ago. The Burmese soldiers forced us to do hard work for them and hurt us. We were afraid of them so we ran away.

When did the Burmese soldiers arrive at your village?

One month and six days ago. They came around our village and took my rice and animals to eat. After that they called us together and forced us to work hard for them, doing things like fencing the place where they will settle down, digging holes for them to protect themselves, and clearing all the bushes from their place. We also had to cut a lot of bamboo and carry it to them. It wasn't in my village. We had to go and do all these things in Kyone Yaw every day. Other villagers also. Every village must do it. I had to work in the hot sun all day carrying heavy things for them. It was hard work, but they allowed no period to rest. They didn't beat me, but they shouted at me. I worked there for three days. They gathered us together, wrote down our names, and then 20 people had to go and work for them each day, for three days at a time.

Lay Wah Ploh village has 53 houses. They divided our 20 people into two groups. One group had to cut and carry the bamboo and the other group had to work in their camp digging the holes, cleaning the camp, etc. They didn't call porters, but they ordered us to bring our carts to them and they used our carts as well as our bullocks.

Did they hurt any people in your village?

Yes, they hurt one man from my village. He had to guard the carts. They didn't tie him but they beat him.

Did they also collect the villagers' rice?

For now they didn't collect our paddy, but they forced us to build a building to hold our paddy in our headman's garden. They ordered that one week ago. As for me, I didn't do that but ran away to escape.

Did your family come together with you?

Yes, we went out together at night time. All night and all the next day we walked from our place to here. When we were walking we hoped to get to a safe place. We thought that this place would be a safe place for us, so we came here.

What do you hope for the future of you and your family?

If we can stay here we will stay. If we can't stay here we will go forward, but we will never go back to our village. I'm not sure if this place is safe, I don't know, but if we have to move again we will. That is my decision.

Interview 48: HRV: Arrest, Forced Labor

Name:	Saw Kenyaw
Sex:	Male
Age:	56
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with five children
Address:	Lay Wah Ploh village, Kya In township, Karen State
Date of interview:	April 2, 1997
Source:	KHRG

I arrived here three days ago, with my family. There were a few families still in the village, but most had left the village. They left after the SLORC arrived. The soldiers captured me, I was the first one captured. Then we had to stay in Lay Wah Ploh village for three days, with one cart. After that they called me to Kyone Yaw village. They were teasing me. They asked me, "Are you a Ringworm? You are a big Ringworm. You are the Great Eagle of the Ringworm!" ["Ringworm" (nga pway) is a derogatory SLORC name for Karen soldiers.] I told them, "Go ahead and cut my throat." A soldier said, "We will kill you within the next three hours." After three hours he came and said he was just joking, and he wouldn't kill me. He said, "The ringworm, when they see us they just smile and we don't realize, and then they kill us. The one who smiles like you is the one who can kill us." ["Saw Kenyaw" smiles and jokes a lot.]

He didn't tie me up, but he kept me held in a house with five other captives. All five of us had been captured at the same time. There was no floor, we had to stay on the ground. One room was for the bullock-cart driver and the other room was for us. [The bullock-cart driver was probably the cart owner being forced to do labor with his cart, while the other five were suspected 'ringworm'.] They asked many questions but I don't remember all of them. They kept saying and accusing that we were 'ringworm'. They tried to threaten us and claim that we are their enemies, which was not true.

Did they threaten you when they were asking the questions?

Yes, one aimed his gun at me while the other questioned me. They took a knife and shaved my scalp three times [shaving his hair off] and they sawed the knife back and forth across my throat. They beat me three times on my head and three times on my leg. When they shaved my head it bled. It was very painful, but I just had to bear it.

I don't know how many hours it was, but at 2 p.m. we had to go. After beating me it was time to leave. Then we had to take them to Meh T'Pret village to get their rations - rice, milk, and sugar. We had to send them and carry the rations all in the bullock cart. It took eight days to go there.

Why did you flee your village?

I left because I was afraid that they would catch me and force me to work for them again. I left separately from the other villagers, but we met on the way.

Interview 49: HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labor, Child, Movement

Name:	Saw Tamla Htoo
Sex:	Male
Age:	60
Ethnicity:	Karen hill farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with seven children
Address:	Meh T'Li village, southern Doooplaya District, Karen State
Date of interview:	April 2, 1997
Source:	KHRG

I've been here for three weeks now. The reason why I left my village was because everything was all mixed up. We were living in little groups here and another group there and our houses were in their path. The SLORC Army came and the Karen Army came and passed through our village. When they crossed paths there was fighting, and we feared the crossfire would hit us so we had to flee our village. Before there was no fighting, only starting last year and this year the fighting came. There was fighting last month in March, and there was also fighting in December and January in our village. Meh T'Li is about six miles from Kyun Chaung which is two hours' walk.

Our village was KNU area because there was a gate there. SLORC often came to

the village even when the KNU stayed there. When the SLORC came last month they occupied the village, but when they were leaving the Karen soldiers came back, and when the Karen soldiers attacked with great force SLORC ran away. The villagers ran and dived and took shelter under the houses and trees and beside the stream. The Burmese didn't like it when the villagers ran away far from them. They said to us not to run away, just to stay close to them [as a shield, and not to go and tell the KNLA where the SLORC were positioned].

Now the SLORC is in the village. When they came they called all the villagers who were staying at their hill farms, up the streams and hiding in the bush to come back and stay in the village. They said to the villagers, "If you are good people come and live in the village and we won't do anything to you", so the villagers came back and stayed in the village. But the KNDO Karen told us not to go back. Now that the SLORC has occupied the village, the KNDO has run away to other places. When there was no more fighting, some villagers went back and stayed near the road. The SLORC said that if any fighting starts they won't differentiate between the civilians and the soldiers, they will shoot everyone.

We were there and waited to see what the SLORC would do. Then the SLORC started taking all the property and valuables from the villagers and burning their houses, and they ate all the chickens and pigs that they found. Even the cattle, they shot them dead and ate them. While I was there they took all the clothes and threw them around all over the place. We didn't dare say anything to them. From my house they took all the clothing that was good and all the rice that they found. They took eight big tins of rice [about 125 kg./250 lb.] and all the chickens. My house was close to the road so they took everything. They took everything from all the people whose houses were close to the road.

Did they take all the rice and put it into one place?

No, they did not do that.

How many houses are there in your village?

There are three areas in the village. Before we had to flee there were more than 100 houses in Meh T'Li village, but now some of the villagers hide up the streams and some stay in Lay Mine Hta, some stay in Htee Kay Kee and some of them stay in Meh T'Li Kee, they are all scattered. Now there are only 20 families on the northern side and 6 families where I live. The others have all fled up the stream or down the stream, or they've run away to other villages like Lay Mine Hta, Meh T'Li Kee and Htee Kay Kee.

Since the SLORC occupied the village have they asked the villagers to do anything?

The SLORC ordered them to dig trenches, build their barracks, fence their base, carry water and cut wood. The SLORC asked them to build the post in Ah Grime that is, between Meh T'Li and Ah Ploh. Three people from my village had to go, and others from Ah Ploh, Lay Po and Ler Say villages. My son had to go for three days. They had to take their own food. He had to take his own tools. He had to fence the barracks. There were about 20 or 30 villagers there. There were more than 100 soldiers staying there. The villagers had to cut and carry the materials to build the fence. For example, if they had ten villagers from Ah Ploh then five of them have to cut three big bamboo each and the other five had to stay with the soldiers in their post [building the fence]. For three days three villagers had to go from our village, then another villagers had to replace them for the next three days. All of those who went were men.

Did they demand any porters?

Yes, they called for porters when they came, but the people who stayed near the road they didn't even call, they just arrested them all and took them. Then they beat and kicked them.

When the SLORC came to occupy the village did they come with porters from other places?

Yes, the porters came with them, the porters ran to escape and came to eat rice at my house.

Since the SLORC occupation can the villagers move around freely?

No, if they want to go to other villages they have to ask permission from the military authorities for a 3-day pass. Their names are noted down, and after three days they have to report back personally.

Has there been any fighting since the SLORC occupation?

Yes, there was fighting a week ago outside the village between the SLORC and the KNU. Sometimes when the KNDO comes to the village and then SLORC comes too there is fighting, and none of them are wounded but the villagers die instead of them, so we left the village. The KNDO said, "Because you are living with the enemy this means you sympathize with them, so when there is fighting we must shoot you also. We told you to get out of the village, so if something happens to you it is

your own fault.” [Note: this goes against KNU policy. It shows a bad KNDO officer, possibly made worse by the frustration the current SLORC offensive has created in much of the Karen military.]

Did you have any difficulties coming here?

It was very difficult to come here, we couldn't follow the main route. We came the Meh T'Li Kee way, and we had to climb many mountains. KNDO was along the main route and the SLORC were also going along that route, so we were afraid that if there was fighting between them we would be caught in the crossfire and wouldn't know which way to run. So we took a roundabout route which was further but safer. We came here because the SLORC were all over our area and we hadn't heard of the SLORC attacking here, and because we heard that we could get food here through people's mercy. I couldn't bring any blankets, just one cooking pot and only three of our children. All our clothes and belongings were taken by the SLORC, we had nothing left there and no way to make our living, so whatever the problems will be here I left my village and came to stay here. If I am allowed to stay here I will stay, and if not I will go on to some other place, but if there is peace I would like to go back to my own village because I still have my land there. SLORC can take our belongings and burn down our houses, but even they cannot take and carry our land away.

Interview 50: HRV: Livelihood, Women, Forced Labor, Torture, Killing

Name:	Naw May Oo Paw
Sex:	Female
Age:	21
Ethnicity:	Karen
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Married with no children
Address:	Kaw Za village, Kyaik Maraw township, Mon State
Date of interview:	April 3, 1997
Place of interview:	Thai-Burma border near KNU 4th Brigade area
Source:	KHRG

[Naw May Oo Paw arrived at the Thai border on April 2, 1997. Her village is not directly in the path of the offensive, but it has still been affected.]

I left Kaw Za village about ten days ago. The Burmese Army were collecting taxes

in the village. We were forced to pay, otherwise they threatened us. Even the village elders had to follow their orders. SLORC collected rice and other food from the villagers and we had to send four or five bullock carts loaded with food for them. We also had to send porters through a lottery system. Children also had to do that. In my village, there were about 300 to 400 houses. Sometimes they demanded ten porters, sometimes six. Our village head didn't want to send people, so he needed to pay bribes to the soldiers. He collected the money, 10,000 *kyats* from each household [possibly for the whole year]. The Karen soldiers also demanded porters. We had to send two villagers twice a week according to the draw system. If someone didn't want to go, he had to pay some money. Occasionally, SLORC soldiers came and asked for paddy, five *tins* [about 15 kg. per *tin*] from each house.

And during the current offensive against 6th Brigade [Dooplaya District]?

Same as before. The KNLA also collects soldiers, the same as before. It is as usual. During the offensive, the Karen soldiers came and asked for food. The headman didn't give it to them so they looted it from the villagers.

SLORC also came, took food and collected some porters. When they entered the village, all the men had to flee and hide. Then they arrested even the children. Even if we had already given money for porter fees, they still came to collect people.

Both of them [SLORC and KNLA] always come to our village. Sometimes they meet. So the village elders have to go and request SLORC as well as KNLA not to fight in our village. SLORC does not have complete control over our village. They said, "If we see Karen soldiers in the village, we are going to burn it down and make it like an ashtray". The Karen soldiers are afraid of SLORC burning down the village, and they allow the villagers to leave for a short time when the SLORC arrives.

On Marchxxxx, when I was coming back from Moulmein hospital, along the road I saw two truckloads of soldiers, two truckloads of porters, one truckload of dogs [possibly to search for landmines] and one truck loaded with mules for carrying things.

Then after I got back, I met two porters near a rubber plantation in Lakasai village. One of them had been injured in his cheeks by a knife. He could not speak at all. The other one was injured on his nose. He could speak. He said to me, "Please help us!" I was afraid of them. It was night time. I asked them, "How can I help you? Where have you come from?" He said, "We were arrested in Moulmein." I didn't ask them their names. Both of them were from Moulmein. They were Burman. I didn't ask their ages, but maybe around 30. He said he was arrested in Moulmein

market when his wife was selling things. “I was arrested when I went to give a lunch box to my wife”, he told me. The other one [who could not speak] was also arrested in the market. All of them were arrested, tied with a rope. They had to work on the road construction near Kyone Done. They took them by truck to the construction site near Kyone Done. Some of them fell sick and some died. They got nothing to eat. The SLORC soldiers only fed them some banana stems. This one man was stabbed in his cheeks and fell down in the valley. Another man who remained at the top of the hill had his throat cut.

Why were they tortured like that?

They had no food to give to the laborers, so they wanted them to die. The villagers became a burden for them. I think these two men complained to the soldiers that they had no food to eat so a cruel soldier stabbed one of them in his cheeks so that he could not eat, and cut the other on his nose.

I offered them some food. After the meal, he said that they wanted to go to the hospital. He had no money. His family was arrested too. He had no money to pay for the treatment. So I gave them 2,000 *kyats* and took them to the hospital. First I brought the men to Lakasai. When we arrived at the car road, we went to the hospital by passenger truck. I requested the nurse to take care of them and to write a letter to their parents. One of them needed blood. Then I went back home. I didn't ask how long they were taken for [as porters]. I didn't ask any other questions because my duty was just to get them to hospital.

After that, when I went to Kyauk Kweh I met another porter who had escaped from the SLORC soldiers. He had lost his way near Kyauk Kweh. I didn't see any injury on his body. He said that he was tortured, so he fled. He said, “I didn't have enough food and had no water to drink. I had to drink my own urine.” I asked him, “Where are you going back to?” He said to xxxx. He was a porter and the Burmese soldiers tortured him. That's why he ran away. He was an old man. He said he had some children.

The Ya Wa Ta [Village LORC] authorities ordered that all the people who possess a television and video set must show two video tapes [generally, the only people who own such equipment are those who run public cinema houses]. If they didn't show these video tapes, the authorities would seize the video equipment. My mother told me to go and see these video tapes. One tape showed Karen soldiers and Burmese soldiers killing each other with many casualties on both sides [this is to promote the new SLORC line calling everyone to “exchange arms for peace”, i.e. surrender, as shown on TV Myanmar and in the New Light of Myanmar]. The second one was

the surrendering ceremony of Karen soldiers [Tha Muh Heh and some troops from KNLA #16 Battalion, when Tha Muh Heh went on his knees before SLORC General Maung Aye and Maung Aye walked on the Karen flag]. I don't know the name of the commander. In that tape, I saw a lot of weapons surrendered. There was one Karen Buddhist monk shown in Kyaikdon, and it said that when somebody wants to surrender to the SLORC, he will inform the SLORC for them.

Is Kaw Za village a Karen village?

Yes, mainly Karen. Mostly Buddhist. Only ten Burmese households are living there. Nobody has surrendered to the SLORC in my village.

Is DKBA in your village?

Usually it is the SLORC Army that comes to our village. Sometimes even a SLORC Intelligence man, disguised as a blanket-seller. Those with the yellow headband [DKBA] usually come and ask for money, chicken and food. The headman cannot collect everything for them so he gives the things himself [from his own possessions, not from the villagers].

What is the feeling in your village?

At night time we have to hide and sleep in other places. We do not sleep in our own houses. Sometimes the SLORC troops and the Karen soldiers are shooting at each other, and sometimes they rob our village.

When you fled, did you see many soldiers along the way?

I saw many Burmese soldiers along the Thanbyuzayat-Three Pagodas Pass road but I didn't see any Karen soldiers. The Burmese soldiers collected 1,000 *kyats* from each [passenger] truck. They also shot a passenger truck. I saw two burnt cars and one bullock cart along the road, on the way to Thanbyuzayat near xxxx. In my truck there were four soldiers but in all the others there were many more soldiers. So I asked a soldier, "Oh Uncle! Why are those cars all burnt?" "We shot them", he replied. Then I asked: "Why did you shoot?" "We shot at the Karen soldiers. Unfortunately some civilians were also wounded. We couldn't give them treatment so we shot them", he explained to me. Then I spoke to an old man: "Oh Uncle! How many were killed?" He said, "An old woman was shot in the back of her head and died on the spot. Some of her relatives also died."

Interview 51: HRV: Refugee

Name: Saw Ber Kaw
Sex: Male
Age: 42
Ethnicity: Karen, farmer
Address: Ta Pi Lay Ko village, Ler Mu Lah township, Karen State
Date of interview: April 3, 1997
Place of interview: KNU 4th Brigade area
Source: KHRG

[When interviewed “Saw Ber Kaw” had just arrived at the Thai border with a group of 500 new refugees. A large SLORC force had moved southward undetected through valleys parallel to the Tenasserim valley and had suddenly appeared in villages like Ta Pi Lay Ko, which had been far from the frontline, with little or no warning.]

I’m from Ta Pi Lay Ko. 1,000 refugees had gathered there [from villages further up the Tenasserim River closer to the frontline]. On March 25 we started to leave Ta Pi Lay Ko and fled up the Ka Kyu stream. When we arrived at Haw Thu area we heard Burmese gunshots, and the refugees divided into two groups. One group of about 500 people fled [upstream, east toward the border] to Ta Pi Kee and the other group went back [westward] to Ta Pi Lay Ko. The people who ran to Ta Pi Kee hid there, 500 of them. The people who went back to Ta Pi Lay Ko then ran down the [Tenasserim] river to Si Praw Hta.

At Ka Kyu Hta [upriver from Ta Pi Lay Ko] there was not a single Karen soldier. In Haw Thu area there were no Karen soldiers. When the Burmese fired on the villagers around Haw Thu, our group of 500 villagers fled to Ta Pi Lay Ko, and then down the river to Si Praw Hta. The Burmese ran after us place to place and then when they arrived at Si Praw Hta they fired their big guns on us. In Si Praw Hta the Burmese pounded with 30 big shells. At that time there weren’t any soldiers there. All were villagers. There were only one or two Karen soldiers.

Where did you run to?

Me, I was with the group at Si Praw Hta. One was wounded. A man, over 20 years old. He was from Ta Pi Lay Ko. When the shells landed we ran, we ran up the streams, place to place until we arrived at the border on the March 28.

Now where are the refugees?

Along the way near Si Praw Hta there are still 80 to 100 people, because they are sick, they can't walk or they have small babies. Halfway along the way there's another group of about 300 [a long distance upstream from Si Praw Hta, towards the border]. At the border at Lay Per Ko there is a group of 50. Near the border at Huay Ba Klai there are 80 or 100 refugees back there. Some others are in Thailand now. About another 400 refugees are coming to Naw La Daw and will arrive at 10 a.m. tomorrow [to cross the border].

Interview 52: HRV: Refugee, Killing, Child

Name: Saw Ku Hser
 Sex: Male
 Age: 30
 Ethnicity: Karen, hill farmer
 Religion: Animist
 Marital status: Widower with two children
 Address: Way Toh Ray village, Ler Mu Lah township, Karen State
 Date of interview: April 3, 1997
 Source: KHRG

When did the Burmese arrive in Way Toh Ray village?

They arrived on the 25th [of March], in the afternoon at about 1 o'clock. They came through the hills, but at Meh Ngaw there's a car road so they came along the car road. I arrived here four days ago. It took me one day along the way. One of the men in our group had only one child with him. She was 13 years old, and she died along the way. When we were fleeing along the path it was raining, and his child got malaria and died because we had to sleep in the rain. When we were coming, people said that a group of Burmese Army was crossing in front of us. We had to hurry up and go in the middle of the night in the rain. So the man whose child had died had no time even to look after [bury] his dead child's body. He had no time.

Did all the villagers run?

All the villagers ran away, but some of them are still staying not far away from the village. If the Burmese catch up them they will arrest them, make trouble for them and only some of them will have any chance to survive. I've heard much bad news from the village since I arrived here. We can't do anything. When I was coming along the way I heard that the enemy came behind us and burned down houses in Way To Ray and Si Pyet. I would like to go back and see what is happening in my

village, but it's not easy to travel there. I don't dare go back just like this, but if I had a gun maybe I could go back to my village.

What did you bring along with you?

I came along with just what you can see here, Thra! [Thra = 'teacher'], respectful form of address; he pointed to a small mosquito net, a couple of shirts, and a small bag of rice.] The villagers carried their things, but when they heard bad news they have threw away their things along the path. I only brought some of my things. I have two pots, three plates, and a big spoon for my family. I have two children - the older is 5 years old. The other daughter stayed behind, where she is staying is not far from the enemy right now. She is 3 years old. My wife died three years ago and left me with two children. One stays with my mother, and one with my mother-in-law. [He fled with his mother and older child.] My parents stay with me here, but I don't know where my mother-in-law and my younger child are.

Do you have problems here now?

We have problems for all the people, for all the future.

Now the Burmese say they will make peace for Karen people. Do you dare go back?

I dare to go, but I don't dare go back and stay among the Burmese. I dare to go back if I have a gun in my hand and go with the Karen Army, then I dare to go back and fight them because I've done that before.

The Burmese call all the Karen refugees to come back in peace and help build car roads.

Our enemy calls us to do this, but never in my life will I do this. Never in my life will I do their work, even if they order me to do it.

Do you think you'll have to be here long?

I don't know whether we'll have to stay here long or not, I can't say.

What about the refugees from Maw Ma Sa, etc. who were in the area? [The hundreds of villagers who had fled SLORC forced relocation orders and were sheltering in Way Toh Ray and other villages of KNU-controlled territory.]

Some of them arrived here. They've had to flee two times already, so they have nothing. I also have nothing, but people have given me some things. I carried some of my things that were old and left some that were new. When I ran out of my village, the Burmese weren't shelling with big guns but they were shooting their small arms. There were just over ten Karen soldiers - ten here, five there, three there. Our livestock, our rice and our house furnishings, all of them were left behind, we couldn't bring any of it. After we got here we heard that the soldiers from the frontline sent a message that the Burmese had burned down our houses. We heard that a woman was about to give birth in Way Toh Ray but the Burmese were all around them, so her husband ran away, they burned the house and she was burned to death in the fire.

Do you think the Thais are going to make problems here?

I don't know yet. It's up to the [camp] leaders here. If they arrange everything for us it should be all right, but if they can't and the Thais do anything then we will all die.

Interview 53: HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Forced Labor, Torture, Arrest

Name:	Nai Aung Kyi
Sex:	Male
Age:	75 years
Ethnicity:	Mon, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Address:	Wai Thar Lee village, Kya-Inn- Seikyi township, Karen State.
Date of interview:	April 5, 1997
Place of interview:	Halockani Mon refugee camp, Mon State
Source:	MIS

When did you arrive at this village (Halockhani refugee camp) and what is your main work in your native village?

I arrived here two days ago. (He has no house and his whole family stays in other refugees' house.) While I was in my village, I had a small farm and I grew rice. But the soil was bad and the field was not good I also cut fire-woods in the forest and sell it to earn money. After the end of the rainy season, I grew vegetables and sold them in the village.

This year, after I had given rice to the government (the government officials buy rice

from local farmers at low price, and the farmers feel like they give their rice to government free of charge, I was left with only 200 baskets of rice. In March, one of my sons was arrested by the soldiers to be use as porter and I gave 25,000 *kyats* to the military in Kya-Inn- Seikiyi town for his release. Many villagers were arrested by soldiers and they were sent to the front-lines in the offensives against the Karen soldiers.

Besides the arrests of the porters in dry season, did the soldiers force you to provide free labor in the construction?

Yes. The soldiers forced us to build the road that came from Kya - inn - seikiyi town. The Burmese troops from IB. 32 from Kya-inn-seikiyi town always came to our village and called the meetings with village headmen and sometimes, with villagers. Normally, every time they came they asked for porters or laborers to build the road.

The villager laborers were used to build the Kya-inn-seikiyi-Taungbauk road construction. Since last year November, about 50 villagers from our village had to work in the construction everyday. Some rich villagers paid cash to military through village headmen and avoided the forced labor. But they were only a small number.

Where is the work -site? Did the villagers sleep in the work-site?

No. The work-site is not so far from our village. We could go early in the morning and take food along with us. We completed works about 5 p.m. in the evening. Villagers who came from the village of Bokadaw, Lakepyotu, Pharkapo, Thadarpyat, Badargyi which are far from the work-site slept in our village monastery and left for the work-site together with us.

How did the military instruct conscription of the villagers who were far from the construction?

They gave the orders directly to the village headmen and dictated the number of villagers to work in the construction site. If the village headmen refused, the military threatened the villagers that they would burn down the villages. The soldiers could not reach these villages very often but while they launched patrol with huge number of troops they could burn down the villages to ashes. So the villagers were afraid and went to the construction.

Did the soldiers guard the villagers while they were working? Did they mistreat the villagers?

Yes. Most soldiers from Kya-Inn -Seiki town guarded the villagers while working. They walked around and along the embankment and if they saw the villagers stop working, they would beat them. Once, I was also beaten by two young soldiers. As I was an old man, while I was taking a rest under a small tree in the rice -field, the two soldiers saw me and shouted at me to continue working. I could not move back fast to the construction and because I was slow, they came and hit me severely with their strong fist. One soldier held me tightly with his strong arms and other one bstruck my face till it was black and I lost two teeth.

Were the other villagers beaten like you?

I think very few. Most young villagers could work for the whole time and so satisfied the soldiers. But old men like me could not work hard and that made the soldiers angry.

Besides the conscription of forced labor in the road construction, can you explain to me what other abuses have been committed by soldiers?

Arresting for porters was very constant in our village. Sometimes, in the normal situation when there was no fighting with Karen troops, they always asked for regular porters to carry supplies and ammunitions for their patrols. From February through May they came into the village very often and arrested the villagers to use as porters in their big offensives against the Karen troops. About 50 villagers from our village were arrested and were sent to the frontline. Before I came here, as I knew, three villagers disappeared and I believe they had died in the battles.

Related to portering case, how did the villagers have to pay the military?

If one of your relatives, your son or husband, was arrested you had to pay the military form 10,000 *kyats* (in February) to 25,000 *kyats* (in March) to get him back. The portering fee for each family every month is around 300 *kyats*. When they had offensives against the Karen troops, they asked about 1,000 *kyats* per month.