
Interview 54: HRV: Refugee, Forced Labor, Torture

Name: Nai Aung Nwe
Sex: Male
Age: 37 years
Ethnicity: Mon, farmer
Religion: Buddhist
Address: Paukpingwin village, Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division
Date of Interview: May 5, 1997
Place of interview: Ye-Tavoy motor road inside Burma
Source: MIS

When did you arrive here (a plantation in east of Ye-Tavoy motor road because he was internally displaced) and why?

I arrived here about three days ago. The SLORC Army and the village chairman forced us to work in the railway construction very often. We had no time to work in our own farm. We had to work for them the whole time and later we faced food shortages ourselves. I, therefore, decided to come here.

Which part of road did you have to contribute labor?

This year (in 1997), we almost had to work in a work-site close to our village. The section was from our village to 14-mile village (about five mile long section). Last year (in 1996) we had to go to Tavoyan area (in southern part of the railway), and worked in a section between Ye Bone and Kalein Aung.

How many days in one month did you have to work in the work-site close to your village?

About 20 days in one month. We had no time to work in our own farm. We had to go the work-site everyday in the morning. We brought our own tools and food from our homes and worked for them (the military) free.

Besides your village, did other villagers have to work like you?

Yes. There were many hundreds of villagers from Waethali, Natkyinsin, Kyaukadin and others worked in the construction site like us. But they worked in the respective section close to their village. The military defined the construction sections for those villagers.

What was the main work you had to do the whole time you were used as forced labor?

We had to collect a lot of firewood. The soldiers ordered us to collect and bring them to brick-making factories, to burn the earth. The bricks were used to build bridges. We went into forests and cut many small trees and carried them to the factories or to the construction site and then the oxen-carts came and brought it to the factories. The military and the village chairman (village leader) told every family in the village that each must provide four *kyins* of fire-wood a month. We had to provide four *kyins* of fire-wood every month from February through May this year.

Where were the brick-making factories situated?

Normally, the factories were built near every bridge along the route. We had to walk at least 2-3 hours from the forest we cut firewood to the factories.

Did you receive any payment for fire-wood from the military? Did the workers in the brick-making factories receive payment for their labor?

No. We, the villagers, did not receive any payment. But the workers in the factories received payment from the military. They receive about 600 *kyats* per *kyin* of bricks produced from their factories. Most workers came from Ye northern area villages and they were not native villagers.

Did you only have to collect fire-wood? Or, did you have to contribute labor related to railway construction?

No. Not only collecting firewood. We also had to gather stones to lay on the embankment. Besides collecting firewood, at least about four days every month we had to gather big and small stones to the embankment and broke them into the needed size. We gathered these stones from streams and hills. Every day about 40 villagers from the village had to do this stone-gathering work on a rotating basis. Each family had to work about four days per month.

*How many days did you have to spend to collect one *kyin* of fire - wood?*

At least five days. We went into forests for three days to cut some 10-inch or one-foot diameter trees and bring them to the factories. We cut trees about three days and then spent two days to bring wood to the factories. Every family had to send two members to complete this work within five days.

How did the military conscript the villagers to work in the construction?

They conscripted the villagers to work in the construction and other work related to the railway construction through our village chairman. They had lists of all the families and the population with them. The LIB. 408 discussed and sent instructions to village chairman that how many *kyins* of firewood they needed from our village or how many villagers they needed to gather rail bed stones.

If someone refused to work according to the instruction, how was he/she treated by the military or your village chairman?

If someone refused to work, he would be severely beaten by the soldiers based in the village. Nobody dared to refuse because they knew how the soldiers would react if villagers showed up late at the work-site on the set date; they were severely punished by the soldiers. Our village chairman is very bad in treating his villagers. He always follows the military instructions and he also likes to beat or punish his own villagers. He also owns a small detention cell in his house compound. The village chairman, himself, told the villagers that "If you refuse to collect fire-wood or rails bed stones, please leave this village quickly, I wouldn't like to see your faces anymore."

Did the military beat the villagers in the construction sites or in their bases? Did the soldiers ever beat you?

In both places. Yes. I was beaten by the soldiers from our village base, LIB. 408. Once at the beginning of January, when I was reaping rice in my farm, the village chairman and four soldiers came and arrested three of us, me, my brother and my 13-year-old son. We were brought to the military base. The soldiers accused us of disobeying order that the military need 20 villagers to work in the railway. I explained to them that just three days ago, I came back after collecting two *kyins* of firewood for the factories. The village chairman did not remember our work-duties that he gave and did not support our explanation. Then the soldiers beat us with gun-butts, jungle-boots and fists. On the next day they sent us to the work-site again.

Will you stay here longer or return to your village?

I would not like to abandon my farm. If the situation is better I will return or if the situation is worse I will go into Thailand.

Interview: 55: HRV: Refugee, Forced Labor, Killing

Name: Saw Wah
 Sex: Male
 Age: 25
 Ethnicity: Karen, farmer
 Religion: Buddhist
 Marital status: Single, lives with his mother
 Address: Dta Oo Kee village, Belin township, Mon State
 Date of interview: April 26, 1997
 Source: KHRG

[Saw Wah fled his village in Belin Township of Thaton District (about 60 km. west of Bee T' Ka area). He arrived in Bee T' Ka and immediately had to continue fleeing and become a refugee just before this interview was conducted.]

The SLORC caused a lot of many trouble in the village. They wanted the villagers to work for them every day and people had no time left to do their own work. We had to build their camp and carry their food. Every 15 days the villagers had to carry the soldiers' rations over the mountains to the Belin River. All the men had to be porters for them, and the women whose babies weren't breast-feeding anymore also had to carry their rations.

Our village has about 200 houses. Usually about 100 people from three nearby villages: Nyaw Oo Kee, Baw Kee and Daik Kee villages had to go work for them. At Daik Kee and Yo Klah people also had to build the road. Between those two villages we also had to stand sentry watching the road. It's the road they use to transport their rations in 1st Brigade [Thaton District] area.

DKBA has been to our area, they've killed at least two young men from our village this year. One villager was killed when the rains started [mid-1996] and last January another villager was killed. Their names were Pa Taw Oo and Maung Myat Bu, they were both shot dead by Ko Per Baw. Pa Taw Oo was 25 and Maung Myat Bu was 27. They were both single. They were killed because they ran away. If DKBA come we have to run away. The villagers don't love Ko Per Baw. None of the villagers ever join Ko Per Baw, they only join KNU.

Our village was destroyed by Ko Per Baw and the Burmese. They set up their camp there. The villagers had to face difficulties, because they set up their camp in the middle of the village and then told the villagers to go stay outside the village and build their houses there. Some of the villagers ran away, to take shelter in the villages of

their relatives. Our village is one day's walk from east of Belin. Some want to come here [to the refugee camp], but it's not easy because of Ko Per Baw and SLORC. We feared them on our way here. We saw them, and when they asked us where we were going, we said we were going to visit relatives and find work.

Now there are more and more SLORC in our area. They say they send more to look for their enemies, but it is only the villagers who suffer. Now they have three battalions, and there is still some fighting. I don't dare go back. Back there I couldn't even dare to work on my farm anymore. About ten households from my village are already here. Other villagers want to come out here if they can. Most of them are living outside the village now, and they all have problems getting enough food.

Interview 56: HRV: Refugee, Torture, Arrest, Forced Labor, Relocation, Child

Name:	Maung Hla
Sex:	Male
Age:	38
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Animist
Marital status:	Married with two children aged 2 and 8
Address:	Noh Ray Tee Per village, Dta Greh township, Karen State
Date of interview:	April, 1997

[Maung Hla spent the last year living in a hut in the forest out of fear of SLORC abuses, only sneaking back and forth to his village when he could. Then his village was ordered to move, and he fled to become a refugee one week before this interview was conducted. His village is a few hours' walk north of Dta Greh.]

My village is situated at the foot of the big mountains [just west of the Dawna Range]. Dta Greh is to the south. It takes from morning until noon to walk to the main part of Dta Greh. There were about 40 households in the village, but there are not many houses left now because most of the people have scattered. About five families went to Sho Kloh [refugee camp in Thailand], and my family came here. Now we have been here one week, because there were difficulties and trouble in our village. The Ko Per Baw and SLORC made trouble, so I could not live any longer in my village and I came here. When they arrived in the village they sometimes caught and beat the villagers. Less than a month ago they beat two villagers, Pa Ghaw Ghet and Pa Kwet Naw. They are brothers. Pa Ghaw Ghet is the eldest. He is 21 years old and Pa Kwet Naw is 19 years old. Pa Ghaw Ghet has one child but Pa Kwet Naw has

no children yet.

I don't know why they were beaten. SLORC came with guns and told the villagers to come down from their houses, and then the Ko Per Baw tied them up and beat them. They hit them once with their guns, they stepped on their necks and kicked them in the chest. Then they fired their guns until one magazine was used up. They fired their guns close to the two villagers' ears to frighten them and then they took them to Pah Eet village. At Paah Eat village, they were rescued by the Karen soldiers.

Those who are afraid like us, ran away and stayed in the forest. We're afraid of arrests and beatings. For one year already I dared not to go back to stay in the village. I was too afraid to go back, so I built a hut and we stayed in the forest. As soon as he was released, one of those men who was beaten came to me and told me he dared not live in the village anymore, that he would go to Sho Kloh refugee camp and live there. The soldiers who beat them were Ko Per Baw. Their leader is Pa Nwee. He comes once every two or three days, but sometimes once or twice a day, sometimes not for four or five days. Sometimes they come together with the Burmese, sometimes it is Ko Per Baw soldiers alone. They don't kill, but they torture the villagers. There are plenty of cases like these.

We had to work for the army. We had to build barracks for Ko Per Baw at Be Kyo and work for the Burmese at Kwe Taw Ru village. Every day five persons had to go for forced labor. They had to put up spikes [bamboo obstacles and man-traps around army camps], carry water and build roads. The road leads to Kah Dteh, Maw Ko Kah Dteh. I didn't go myself, but my younger brother went ten times while I cultivated the land. Sometimes they fed the forced laborers only once a day. When we took along our rice, they made us exchange our good rice for their rice full of dirt and paddy [unhusked grains]. Their rice was colored yellow, but if we said we wouldn't exchange our rice with theirs they threatened and beat us. Before I came out here we also had to give the Burmese 300 *kyats* per household.

The soldiers ordered our village to move but we did not move yet. Our village had to move to Ler Pleh. The Burmese came themselves and told us. They said we'd have to move on the April 8, about 25 days ago. Ta Wih Koh village also had to move, but they didn't listen and ran away in to the forest. Ta Wih Koh had 80 houses. The people there were supposed to move to Dta Greh. I don't know why we had to move. They said we had to build our houses near other villages, but the villagers did not want to move. So some fled into the jungle to hide and some still lived in the village. Now those who ran away and hid in the forest dared not go back to stay in the village [for fear of arrest for having fled]. The Ko Per Baw said that if they village saw anyone in the forest they would shoot him. Whenever they saw

people cultivating in the forest they beat them at once. My brother built his house in the forest, and when Ko Per Baw saw it they burnt it down instantly. My brother ran back to the village. They don't like people building houses in the forest.

Sixteen people died of cholera -- among them two of my cousin's small children and two of my uncle's children. About ten children died, and some teenagers. Most of the dead were children between the age of 8 and 10. There were many children in the forest with us but none of them died. It was the children in the villages who died, and especially the people who had to go and live in the army camp. None of them had any medicine, and no one has any rice. The people in the village had to eat roots and leaves, just like I was eating in the forest. I had to live on roots and leaves for four or five days at a time. Now people in the village and in the forest were preparing and hoping to plant their rice. For one year I had lived in the forest in a hut because I was too afraid to stay in the village. I planted banana trees and ate roots and some vegetables. Sometimes my two children got sick. There are many households in the forest now, five or six or ten houses in a group, one or two houses here and there. I couldn't count them all, but there are plenty.

There were difficulties living there though there were plenty of houses in the forest. The Ko Per Baw didn't like people staying in the forest. They said that two they would shoot people dead if they saw them in the forest. It took us two days to come here with our three children. I carried the small one, and my wife is also pregnant. We didn't bring anything, we had nothing to bring. We were afraid of the bombs [landmines], we had to avoid them along the way. We came cautiously and in fear and finally arrived here. Many people from Noh Ray Tee Per would like to come here. Some are still planting, so maybe after the crop they will come here. If there is peace I would like to go back, but I don't know how long it will take to have peace.

Interview 57: HRV: Forced Labor, Relocation, Killing

Name:	Saw Po Htoo
Sex:	Male
Age:	39
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with two children aged 4 and 9
Address:	Bee T'Ka village, Dta Greh township, Karen State
Date of interview:	April 26, 1997
Source:	KHRG

[Saw Po Htoo fled forced labor and forced relocation in Pa-an District to become a refugee just before this interview was conducted.] I arrived to the border two days ago. I came to find work here because we couldn't live there. There were too many hardships. They demanded that we do forced labor working for them. We had to construct roads, work in their barracks and do portering, carrying things. I had to go all the time, when I was in Bee T'Ka I had to go two times a month for five days each time carrying things and building the road. Sometimes we had to go for ten days constructing the road, and we had to bring our own food. It is a new road, from Daw Lan to Pa-an.

From Bee T'Ka to that road it is 15 -- no, 16 miles. One time 117 of us had to go, another time it was 107 of us, and another time 32 of us. We had to go three times until the road was finished. We had to sleep on the road and beside the road, we couldn't go home to sleep. They made us work digging earth right through the night, and they wouldn't let us rest until 10 a.m. The last time I worked on the road was three months ago. Every village had to go and build that car road.

We also had to work at the Paw Ye Bu military camp. It used to be Battalion LIB. 339, then it was LIB. 338, now it is 99 Division. We had to make fences around their camp, finish their camp buildings and repair their barracks. We had to go day by day, usually about ten people per village.

Our village was ordered to move two months ago -- to Taw Kyo, Naw Boh, Paw Ta Ka Kyo, or Plaw Po Toe, one of these four villages. There were five villages they wouldn't let us move to -- Meh Da Ma, Naw Deh, Naw Ter Hta, Htee Wah Ker, and the two villages of Naw Ter, even if we had relatives in these five villages the Burmese wouldn't allow us there. Meh Da Ma is close to the Burmese post. Five villages had to move to one big place: Ta Ku Kraw, Tee Hseh Ker, Naw Ter Kee, Bee T'Ka, and Kaw Per Nweh Ko.

The soldiers said the Karen soldiers asked us for food and the villagers fed them, so we had to move. They sent a written letter once and later they came to the village themselves. They said, "You all have to move by the March 26. All of you have to finish moving by then -- if anyone is still in the village we will shoot him or her dead." They gave us from the March 15 until the March 26. [Note: they had previously been ordered to move by March 6 but had not yet complied.] Our village was very big, over 400 houses, but in ten days we all had to leave. We were supposed to move to a place between Yah Kay Ko and Ber Law. The Burmese had cut and cleared a very wide place there, but there was only one well for water. If we went and stayed there we would all die, so we didn't go. One time [between the March 15 and the 26] they came to frighten us. they came into the village at night with many

carts [as though they were going to force them to move immediately] but then they went back. We don't know what their plan was. But no one went to their place. Some stayed in the village, some went and stayed at Paw, some at Khaw Po Taw and Ler K'Su. The Burmese didn't come back to Bee T'Ka after that, they were afraid to come [because of the KNLA in the area]. The Karen soldiers shot them at Bee T'Ka, so they ordered the villagers to come back to the village [to act as a human shield; when SLORC troops camp in villages among villagers the KNLA generally does not attack]. They called the villagers for a meeting but I didn't dare go. When I came out here the Burmese were still around the village, patrolling the area. They had camps at Paw Ye Bu and Taung Zone.

There are no DKBA in Bee T'Ka. They only come around when the Kaw Thoo Lei soldiers go away. When they come they call for porters, eat people's chicken and pigs, take all our rice and don't leave us anything.

[Note: the following story concerns Nu Po and Saw Tha Dah, two brothers from Bee T'Ka who joined DKBA and became notorious for torture, robbery, beatings and killings of villagers]. Nu Po from Bee T'Ka and three of his men were robbers, and they also arrested three people from Bee T'Ka, Pa Nya Li and two others. They had three guns. They have robbed Ku Po Mo two times already, one time last year and one time this year. Her husband is dead. They took 8,000 *kyats* and two ticals of gold, they took her Karen sarongs and Karen dresses. They tortured her and tied her up. First they hit her daughter in the head with a gun butt and kicked her son in the belly. Nu Po's brother Saw Tha Dah is now at Thamanya doing nothing, just working under the monk. These two brothers aren't so strong anymore. Now Nu Po is sick with gastric disease. The Burmese say that the DKBA has arrested Nu Po for robbery and sent him to Myaing Gyi Ngu. [Thamanya is the town-sized Buddhist retreat near Pa-an, controlled by the famous Thamanya Sayadaw, the most revered monk in Burma. Myaing Gyi Ngu is DKBA headquarters on the Salween River.]

Some of the villagers have gone back to our old village but not all. Many are still at other villages. I don't dare go back. The Burmese burned about ten houses in Naw Ter Kee village and all their rice. Some people are left with only a few baskets of rice. They demand rice and money for porter fees. First they demanded 500 baskets of paddy from us, then later 900 more baskets of paddy. They said they'd give us 140 *kyats* for each basket, but they didn't give anything when we sent them.

Now the Bee T'Ka villagers are living in small huts and eating what is left of their rice. They don't have any belongings left because when we had to move they sold all their belongings for low prices. Villagers from elsewhere came and bought them. For

example if we had something worth 1,000 we had to sell it for just 700 or 800 *kyats*, if it was worth 2,000 *kyats* we could only get 1,000 *kyats*. Now it's not easy for people to prepare their sugar cane plantations. You can't go downstream from Bee T'Ka. If they see you they give you trouble. Many people are hoping to come out here [to the refugee camp]. Now they're scattered all around the village.

It took us four days' journey to get here. We couldn't bring anything, just the clothes we were wearing. There were very high mountains and I had to carry my children - the bigger ones had to walk, and I had to carry the small one. There are bombs [landmines]. Kaw Thoo Lei bombs, on the mountainsides. The Burmese dare not come into the mountains. Two villagers stepped on the bombs. Many Burmese soldiers stepped on the bombs too. I know of seven, and no one survived, all were dead. The two villagers also died.

Interview 58: HRV: Prison Labor, Forced Labor, Torture, Killing

Name	Ko Maung Myint (a) Nyunt Maung
Sex:	Male
Age	32 year
Marital status:	single
Address:	Pale, Monywa township, Sagaing Division
Date of interview:	April, 1997
Place of interview:	Karen refugee camp near Ratchaburi province
Source:	HRDU

I was a prisoner from Mergui prison. My prisoner number was 1308. I was sentenced to five years in jail for murder. I paid 3,000 *kyats* to the head of Mergui prison for transfer to the Mergui porter battalion. I gave money because the battalion was not as hard as prison. It is a stand-by porter battalion. Only when the army requires porters for their column or operation, the battalion has to provide the required number of porters. It is situated near Ywa Thit village in Mergui. It is for the prisoners who were serving less than five years imprisonment. I heard there are only six porter battalions across the country. Someone told me that there was a reserved battalion in Kyein Chaung, Mergui, but I have never been there. I know other prison labor camps in Tenasserim division such as 14-mile prison labor camp, 7-mile prison labor camp. Prisoners working there are ordered to carry and crush rock. Their uniform is white and our porter battalion uniform is blue. In Mergui porter battalions, family visit is allowed. When the family comes and meets the prisoners, they can stay at the building provided by the official and meet their relatives, but they are required to pay

bribes to the authorities.

In January 8, the authorities gathered 130 prisoners including me from the battalion and taken us to the pier for portage. Before we went, the head of the battalion, U Maung Thu told me that we need not to serve anymore for our sentence when we safely returned back to the prison after the portage. Then we all were brought to Tavoy my boat. Without stopping at Tavoy, we were taken to Taung Thonlone at night by truck. Many more people from Boke Pyin prison labor camp, Kawthaung prison labor camp and prisoners from Mergui prison joined us in Tavoy. The number was difficult to estimate, but I think there were between 1300-1400 porters in the group. I don't know the numbers of soldiers. We were ordered to carry artillery shells and 200 bullets of .5 carbine all along the way. Little food was given to us by the soldiers. We picked up the small tins on our way and saved the water in. The soldiers did not give us water. Many porters died on the way of exhaustion. I saw two prisoners die when we arrived to Minthamee area. They also had to carry 81 motor shells. Some had to carry heavy artillery launchers which were very long and heavy. The soldiers did not let us rest all the way. They went ahead of us and took rest themselves. But they did not allow to take a rest. When someone was sick and unable to carry on the journey, the soldiers beat them up and forced them to go on. When they could no longer carry on, the soldiers beat them to death or left them to die. I am sure they died later. Altogether 15-20 porters died. I myself was also beaten. I did not have slippers and I got a cut on my foot. I could not walk fast. Lance corporal Win Myint beat me. Other soldiers kicked me while other slashed my face. Some soldiers hit my back with a gun. When we were climbing up the mountain, the soldiers beat us from behind and forced us to go faster. Than Htay, from our porter battalion was beaten with a bamboo stick to death. He was forced to carry the heavy artillery. He was forced to carry six big mortar shells. When he refused to carry on because he was so sick and weak, the soldiers from heavy artillery section beat him to death.

When the fighting took place, the soldiers ordered us to sit down quietly and not to run away. They threatened to shoot us if we attempted to run away. However, many people attempted to escape. Some porters managed to escape while we were taking rest at night or in the village. Near Metta village, I saw soldiers shoot to death two persons who attempted to escape.

I saw many soldiers died during the fighting. Some were killed by landmines. I saw at least 30 soldiers wounded by landmines. They did not let us see the dead bodies of their soldiers. When the soldiers got wounded, other soldiers carried them themselves.

I escaped while I was climbing the mountain. I jumped down the precipice and then escaped. I had worked for three months as a porter.

Interview 59: HRV: Killing, Arrest, Forced Labor, Relocation

Name:	Naw Paw Na Muh
Sex:	Female
Age:	30
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with six children aged 7 months to 15 years
Address:	Bee T'Ka village, Dta Greh Township
Date of interview:	May 1997
Source:	KHRG

[Naw Paw Na Muh had just fled her village to become a refugee when this interview was conducted. Her brother was murdered by SLORC and DKBA, then they tried to arrest her and her husband as well for no valid reason.] Altogether 60 people fled together including me. We couldn't stay because the Burmese and Ko Per Baw oppressed us. My husband is just a farmer. One day I was just staying there without knowing anything and they arrested my brother. We tried to follow him, but there was fighting and the Ko Per Baw tried to arrest me and my husband. They killed my brother, but they couldn't arrest us. People told me not to stay there, that I should go away, so I went to stay in Ghaw Po Toh and then came back to stay at Ler K'Saw. We kept running like that, if we had stayed anywhere they would have arrested us. My children couldn't take it, it was hard to get food so I came here with my husband and my two children.

It was three months ago that they killed my brother. His name was Saw Heh Wah. He was 23. He was married with one child, and his wife was pregnant. Now she's close to giving birth, so she couldn't make it here. Her parents are both dead, so she has no one to help her.

I don't know why they killed him. He had a friend named N— who was a trader, and his friend asked him to go along with him to Peh Baw when some Indians [Muslims] came to trade goats. Some people hated his friend. Then when they got there the Ko Per Baw arrested them. [Whoever had a grudge against his friend probably told the DKBA that he was KNU - this commonly happens due to business rivalry and other grudges.] We went there, but they wouldn't allow us to see my brother. Then later his friend escaped, so they killed my brother instead of him. His

friend escaped with hack wounds all over his body. When Ko Per Baw arrest people they never kill them, they just give them to the Burmese to do it. They captured him and killed him at Peh Baw. I don't see any reason why they killed him.

It took us four days to come here. We saw Burmese and Ko Per Baw along the way, and we ran away and hid. In the morning we came secretly, we slept at Meh Pleh Wah Kee one night, at Thay May Oo Pya one night and at Thu Myeh Nee one night. We had to come very slowly. There were mines, and the Ko Per Baw were just one mile away from the route. They killed one Tee Hseh Ker villager without any reason, and then Ko Per Baw leader called all the villagers who were in the hills to come back to their village. We knew that, so we just pretended to be going back to our village and we came through here.

We came here because they killed my brother, and because they tried to arrest us and blame us when people [KNLA] went and fought with them. When they arrested my brother, the message from Pa Nwee [a DKBA leader] to his men was to bring us back if we let them capture us, and to shoot us dead otherwise. We couldn't hide with our children, so we came here. When we came here we had nothing, only my baby and the clothes on my body. No pots, no blankets.

Some people came here for reasons like ours, and others came because Ko Per Baw asked for money and they couldn't pay, or because they were beaten by Ko Per Baw. They ordered us to go and work on the road, and some people had small babies and couldn't go so they had to pay money -- 1,000 *kyats* each time. We had to buy rice, and one big tin was more than 1,000 *kyats*. The road starts at Nat Kyun and goes to Thamanya [this is part of the Daw Lan and Pa-an road]. We had to build it for three months - it started three months ago. We had to go for five days, then come back and rest, and then the same group had to go again because there were no other groups [usually the village is divided into groups which rotate turns of forced labor]. 50 people from the Christian part of the village had to go, and 50 people from the Buddhist part, altogether 100 people. Women and men. If you couldn't go it cost over 1,000 *kyats* to hire someone to go in your place. We had to take our own food. We had to take along a nurse for the sick people, a pastor so we could have a mass and a traditional doctor for people who got bitten by snakes. The road is very wide, and built as high as two men so you have to climb up to it with a ladder. It took us one day to walk there. I've been two times. This car road is supposed to go on to Nabu and Bee T'Ka. Ten villages had to work on the road. There were 15 soldiers there, and sometimes they got angry and fired their guns. The villagers in T'Nay Cha [Nabu] had to build the road in T'Nay Cha, the villagers in Paw Ye Pu and Dta Greh were another group, and Nat Kyun and Bee T'Ka were another group. Some of the roads were already finished: from Pa-an to Thamanya,

then at Thamanya the road forks, a small road goes to Nat Kyun and the big main road goes to Kyeh. We were working on the small road.

We also had to go as porters, work for them and carry their things. We had to carry to Noh Law Bler, Ta Ku Kraw, Tee Hseh Ker, go around and then back to Taung Zone, Paw Ye Pu and Dta Greh. We had to carry their food to Dta Greh. They called five people for five days. We had to go for the Ko Per Baw also.

The Burmese have camps at Thamanya [actually outside the refuge of Thamanya], Kalah Gone and Der Law. In Bee T'Ka, first there was Battalion 28, then after six months it changed to Battalion 339, and six months later Battalion 338 came. There are 40 soldiers at Bee T'Ka. They call the villagers to stand sentry through the night, but they don't give them guns. At Kalah Gone many villagers died because they were sentries and there was a battle. Every night the villagers have to be sentries. Even when the soldiers stay in the monastery the villagers have to stand sentry there. We never had time to rest. They ordered us to do one thing and then another thing.

So people don't want to stay. For some people the only way to get money is to be a porter. If anyone hires you it is five days for 1,000 *kyats*, and you can buy rice with that money. People who have money hire others, and the people who are poor do it. [When SLORC demands porters, people who can afford it hire others to go in their place. It is a desperate and dangerous way to make enough money to survive, and there is no guarantee of release after the specified time.]

The SLORC ordered the whole village of mine to move. Every household had to move until there were none left -- 40 or 50 households. They didn't tell us anywhere to go, we just had to go and stay anyplace. They also forced Noh Law Bler to move. They were also told to go to any other place where they could stay. If the Karen soldiers came and you did not tell them about it, they came and said, "You don't report to us so you can't stay here, get out". They did not like us to allow the Karen soldiers in our village. They said, "If you didn't accept the Karen soldiers how could they get food? And if they can't get food then they can't stay around." Many villages had to move, I can't count them all. Bee T'Ka, Noh Law Bler, Ta Ku Kraw, Tee Hseh Ker, and Kwih Sgheh moved to wherever we could and stayed wherever we had relatives.

Interview 60: HRV: Refugee, Arrest, Torture, Killing, Forced Labor

Name: Naw Hser Muh
 Sex: Female
 Age: 55
 Ethnicity: Karen, farmer
 Religion: Christian
 Marital status: Married with four children aged 2-33
 Address: Bee T'Ka village, Dta Greh Township, Karen State
 Date of interview: May 1997
 Source: KHRG

["Naw Hser Muh" had just fled her village to become a refugee when this interview was conducted. Her son Saw Heh Wah was murdered by SLORC and DKBA]I arrived at the border over ten days ago. We came via Meh Th'Wah Kee - two days climbing the mountains, we nearly died. There were more than 20 of us, some from Bee T'Ka and others from Papun.

Three months ago, SLORC soldiers arrested and tortured my son and his friend. The soldiers tied them up, covered their faces and beat them badly, then his friend escaped and they killed him. They arrested my son on Tuesday and killed him on Saturday, held him for six days and killed him. The Ko Per Baw gave him to the Burmese, and they tortured him and killed him. His sister went after him and got the help of the senior monk at Peh Kru, but they wouldn't let her see him. His wife went also but couldn't see him. They just told us to wait. They said we should bring the village headman, but he had run away so we couldn't find him. The Ko Per Baw gave my son to the Burmese, and they took him somewhere else and questioned him about many things, but his friend told us that my son answered every question correctly so they knew he had done nothing wrong. But his friend was beaten and knew they were going to kill him, so he escaped.

His friend escaped on Friday. After his friend had escaped they ordered my son to show them his friend's goats, and then they killed him. His friend had gone there to buy goats, and my son just went along hoping to get hired for money. But they don't allow anyone to trade anything [without SLORC permission] - anyone who trades anything gets arrested. His friend had bought only five goats. My son had one child, his child is already two years old, and his wife was pregnant when he was killed.

People in my village also had to work for the forced labor, but I could not. I had to

ask my daughter to go for me. My other sons had already fled and come here, so my daughter had to go. It was the Nat Kyun road. People over 40 years old and those as young as 12 had to go, and they all had to do the same work. Everyone had to dig and carry the earth. The road was already made but we had to make it higher for the rainy season floods. The road is wide enough for two trucks.

We also had to work as porters, but I was afraid to go so we had to hire people for 200 or 250 *kyats*. They also made us go every morning to work for them, and we had to give all the information [on KNLA movements, etc.]. They ordered the villagers to stand guard while they slept, and whenever something happened or anyone came we were supposed to beat on a piece of bamboo. So we beat on the bamboo, and then they came and beat us up. Every night, two villagers had to go for the whole night and stand guard along the road from Peh Kru to Dta Greh. Along the main road to Naw Ka Ya the villagers had to go and stand guard spaced all along the road, two people at each spot every night. If we did not go they demanded 1,500 *kyats*. Two men died there because of snake bites. The nurse tried to save them but couldn't. There are many snakes there in hot season and rainy season.

Interview 61: HRV: Refugee, Forced Labor, Women, Child

Name:	Maung Kyaw
Sex:	Male
Age:	27
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Single
Address:	T'Nay Cha village, Kawkareik Township, Karen State
Date of interview:	May 1997
Source:	KHRG

[T'Nay Cha is the Sgaw Karen name for his village, which is known as Ler Pu in Pwo Karen and Nabu in Burmese. This large village is south and west of the relocation area, in territory more strongly held by SLORC. Maung Kyaw was interviewed just after arriving in Thailand as a refugee.]

I arrived here eight days ago. I came because I don't want to be a porter, I'm too tired to do it anymore. Burmese soldiers and DKBA asked me several times to be a porter. They stay together. I also had to build the road for them, be a sentry, and dig their bunkers. Everyone in the village has to go and work for them. As for sentry duty, two villagers from each village have to go and do that every night in front of

their camp. When we go we aren't allowed to sleep, but they are all sleeping. We are sentries without guns. We're supposed to watch, and if we see Karen soldiers we must go and tell them.

In the daytime one person from each family has to go. If there is no man in the house, women and children have to go. We have to build the car road, and we also have to plant and harvest rice for them. We have to go from two to six times each month. Sometimes we have to sleep there for three to five days each time. We have to bring our own rice, fish-paste and salt. They don't give us any food. We can only rest when we are eating rice, and we must eat rice by turns - while some people are eating, the others must work. We must work early in the morning until half past one in the afternoon, then we can take a rest for one hour. We start again from half past two until 5 o'clock in the evening. We have to sleep in their camp, under the trees, or in a hut if there are any huts in the camp.

They didn't hurt me, but they shouted at me and forced me because they wanted me to finish their work quickly. They hurt some people who fail to work. When people's children or anyone in their house is not well, they have to take care of that so they can't go to work for SLORC that day. Then the next day the SLORC usually hurts them and says it's because those people have shown disrespect for the SLORC. They beat them and punish them. On April 13, 1997 my cousin was hurt by the SLORC because for only one day he'd missed going for labor building the houses for SLORC [soldiers'] families. The SLORC hit him with a gun on his head, above his right ear, and his head was broken. So then the SLORC sent him to the hospital, but they didn't give any food to feed him in the hospital, and they didn't even pay the cost of the medicine. They only paid the hospital for the first day. Now my cousin still isn't well yet. He said he'll come here once his wound heals. His farm and his big house were already taken by the SLORC because his fields are near the SLORC camp. They took all of it. At first my cousin was going to sell his house, but the SLORC wouldn't allow him to sell it and they took it for themselves. Then SLORC ordered him and his family to go and live in Tee Kywa village.

Last year each village had to give them about five baskets of paddy for seed, and they said this year they will take more. Then we had to go and plant the seed for them and do all the work on their farm. They didn't pay us anything. Not only that, but those fields are not even theirs. They just took the villagers' fields. If your farm is close to their camp, they just take it for themselves.

It took me two days to come here by car. I had to ride the car from Kru Tu [Kyone Doh] to Myawaddy for one night for 1,500 *kyats*, then I came here by car for 50 *baht*. I just came in a car that was bringing goods to sell. The SLORC didn't know.

If they knew, they would never let us come. I will go back sometime, but not this year. Maybe in two or three years. I think I'll go to Bangkok to find work, or if I can't maybe I can find work here on a farm just to survive from day to day.

Interview 62: HRV: Forced Labor, Torture, Women, Killing

Name: Saw Kayni
 Sex: Male
 Age: 50 years old
 Ethnicity: Karen
 Religion: Christian
 Marital status: Widower, father of four children
 Address: Ha Ko Khee village, Papun township, Karen State
 Date of interview: May 14, 1997
 Place of interview: Klopa refugee camp, near Mae Sariang, Thailand
 Source: Lokanat

I served as a porter from March 12 to the end of April. I was captured while I was shopping in the market by soldiers from LIB. 548. Other people in the market were also arrested. The soldiers pointed their guns at us and said that they would shoot if we did not follow the order. About 100 people were rounded up for portering that day.

I had to carry bullets and weapons. Sometimes I had to carry chicken, and pork which were taken by force from the villages along the way. The soldiers also took the household utensils from the houses which were deserted by the owners.

Everyday we were given only one plate of rice which was inadequate for an average adults. If we asked for some more rice the soldiers scolded us. Sometimes although the soldiers had pork, only two pieces each being about the size of two-fingers was given to each porter. All porters had to give labor without getting payment. No medical services for porters. The soldiers said that there were no medicines for the

porters and if they were sick and could not follow them they would be killed by shooting. If the porters did not wish to die, they must keep working in spite of being ill.

We saw the porters beaten by the soldiers. Two Karen women were taken as porters because the SLORC knew that they were the wives of the KNU leaders named Bo Pha Palaw Pho and Bo Kyaw Hair. SLORC forced them to carry more heavy load. They became unconscious due to the continuous beating along the route. They were left behind. Fortunately, the two women were found accidentally by the KNU soldiers and received medical treatment. They were sent back to their home village.

Two of the porters died on the way. One of them was a sixty-year-old Karen elder and the other one was fifty years old. Both of them were left on the way when they were exhausted due to overwork. They died soon after.

Nearly two months after serving as a porter there were many battles between KNU and SLORC. Three SLORC soldiers were killed and buried beside the route.

I had to carry one injured SLORC soldier back to Papun. At the entry gate of Papun there was a bridge. I was left there because I could not continue carrying the wounded soldier. I ran away from there and escaped.

On arrival at my village, I learnt that all villages were forced to relocate to Thai-Burmese border. So I decided to leave for the Thai-Burma border. Now, I am staying at Klopa refugees camp. If conditions permit, I would like to go back home.

Interview 63: HRV: Refugee, Forced Labor, Incursion

Name:	Nai Nyein
Sex:	Male
Age:	47 years
Ethnicity:	Mon Buddhist
Address:	Kwe-tho-nyi-ma village, Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division
Date of interview:	May 20, 1997.
Place of interview:	Halockhani camp, Thai-Burma border
Source:	MIS

When did you arrive to this refugee camp? And Why?

I arrived here about two years ago. My native village is Kywe-thone-nyi-ma village. I came here because I escaped from the conscription of forced labor. When I was in my village (in 1994 and 1995), we, the villagers were always asked by the military through the village headmen to work in the Ye-Tavoy construction. I had no time to work in my rice farm and faced food-shortage problems. Once, I was absent for work in the construction and I was severely beaten by the SLORC soldiers from LIB. 408. After that, I decided to leave my home and village. I came here with my whole family.

When the SLORC troops came into this village (Halockhani camp), did you stay in your house and how did you feel?

I was very afraid like other villages. I went to Baleh Donephai and carried sugar cane to sell and when I arrived home about 5-6 0'clock in the evening, the Burmese soldiers were in the village. Two young soldiers, about 14 years old, were staying in my house and my wife and children were quiet. It was hard to decide whether I should enter the house or turn to the section leader's house. One commander was in his house while I stood on the road. Then he came to me and told me not to be afraid, but to stay at home. I went back home.

When I dropped the sugar-cane in front of my house, one soldier came and asked for sugar-cane. The other soldiers too came and took sugar-canes without payment. I was very afraid and did not say anything to them. Every day during their stay they always asked for vegetables and meat from us. Every family in the village were in fear that fighting might take place in their village, because the Mon troops were entrenched at the top of a mountain not far from the Burmese soldiers. We told each other to flee into Thailand. But it was too difficult. Many Thai soldiers were stationed at the entrance of Thai territory and we had no ID cards to go into Thailand. We thought if the fighting broke out, we would be killed.

How did they treat the villagers?

The soldiers went around every house and checked the population of the camp. They searched around the houses for arms. They also asked the villagers to tell them who the native villagers were and why we fled to this village. We lied to them we that came here to get good jobs and more income.

The soldiers also went to the hospital and annoyed the female medics. They asked medicines from the hospital and ordered the medics to take care of their commanders. They also asked the section leaders to provide bamboo and thatch to build the military barrack. I suddenly remember about the forced conscription of the villagers

in our village to build the military base. They did the same. On the next day the Mon commander came and told the villagers not to provide bamboo and thatch. We were afraid fighting would break out between the Mon and the Burmese.

How did they leave the village?

After staying for five to days, they left the village. The Mon commander pressured them every day to return Three-pagoda-Pass. At the end, they agreed to return. But they asked for 20 porters from the village to carry their supplies and weapons. The village and section agreed to provide them with 20 porters because we wanted them to leave the village as quickly as possible. The 20 porters carried the materials to Day Sot, a place half way to Three Pagoda Pass.

Interview 64: HRV: Refugee, Relocation, Women, Forced Labor, Killing, Torture

Name:	Saw Win Htoo
Sex:	Male
Age:	25
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Single, lives with his parents
Address:	Noh Kheh village, Dta Greh Township, Papun district, Karen State
Date of interview:	May, 1997
Source:	KHRG

[Saw Win Htoo had just fled his village to become a refugee when this interview was conducted.]I came to this refugee camp because the Burmese forced us to move. We ran and scattered everywhere. We had to run to T—. Eight villages had to move - Naw Ter Kee, Pleh Wah Hta, Taw Ghoh Hta, Noh Kheh, Pa Wih Kee, Paw Tee Hta, Paw Tee Wah, and Kyaw Law Kloh. The Burmese ordered us to be porters and to find the Karen soldiers. We couldn't find them, so they forced us to move. They told us, "If you stay here and there's any fighting, you will have to do your duty and face the consequences. If you don't do your duty we will kill you." They wanted to make Kaw Thoo Lei [KNU] people go hungry. They said that people from the village welcomed and gave rice to Kaw Thoo Lei people, so they moved the village. Somebody went and shot at the Burmese at Peh Leh Noh and one died, so they beat our Burman village headwoman. She cried out very loudly and one of her ribs was broken. After that she dared not be a village head anymore

and we had to choose a new one. Our village head was a woman because if we choose men the Burmese treated them very badly, but women were treated a bit better [i.e. tortured a little less frequently].

They started giving these orders last rainy season [mid-1996]. First they said nobody could go outside the village, that they would shoot dead anyone they saw outside the village. All our livestock also had to be kept and cared for inside the village [impossible for cattle and buffaloes], but the villagers couldn't feed them like that so they had to let their livestock wander freely, and the cattle ate and destroyed all our rice crop. The people from Naw Ter Kee and Play Ghaw Hta, lost all their crop to the cattle, so they didn't have enough for themselves and they had to buy it from elsewhere. Then in January the Burmese started to relocate the villages to Thu K' Bee. The Burmese said, "Anything you can't take with you will be ours. We will burn all of your houses." The villagers moved, they took some money with them and bought some rice, but when the money was gone they went hungry. Some tried to find work to earn some money, and they all thought about coming here.

The Burmese set up their camp there four years ago. It was IB. 36. Now there are three camps around the village, 30 soldiers at each camp. They came and asked us "Where are the nga pway ['ringworm'] Karen soldiers, have you found any yet?" If we said no, they beat us and say "Are you nga pway?" Then if we said no they beat us, and if we answered yes, they beat us. They always demanded seven people from each village to work at their camp. Seven people had to go with their own rice and then came back each day. They wrote orders to the village head and then she had to arrange the villagers for them. In each village three to five villagers had to go as porters and 40 or 50 people had to go for other work at a time. If you couldn't go you had to hire someone else for 100 *Kyats* per day. The oldest who went were 40 or 50 years old, and the youngest were 15. For work on the road, it was mostly women who went, and single young people. If older people went the soldiers made them work even harder. We had to go for three to four days, and take our own food.

They demanded porters and people went, and then if people couldn't carry their things any more they kicked them, stomped on them, beat them and punched them. Sometimes they said people helped the "nga pway", that means Karen soldiers, and then they killed them. They poured water in their mouths, tied their hands behind their backs, tied their necks and plunge them in water, then they make them crawl across thorn bushes. They killed two villagers this year that way, Tee Po Thay and Tay Po Ker. The Burmese ordered them to go and find some Karen soldiers and as they couldn't, they killed them. The village head tried to vouch for them, but they didn't listen and said it was none of her business. Their wives followed and tried to

see them but couldn't. They held them in the forest for two or three days and then killed them. The leaders of the Burmese knew their men were doing these things but they pretended they did not know. People went and told them about it, and later they came and forced the villagers to move.

I decided to come here and try to find work to live. I'll do anything that I can. Three of us came together. Along the way at Meh Th'Wah, Ko Per Baw gave us problems. We had to give them money or else they wouldn't allow us to come. We couldn't come secretly. In our village we did not see Ko Per Baw. We came into Thailand and the Thais arrested two of us on the road at Mae Tan. We had to stay in Mae Tan jail for one night and in Mae Sot jail for four nights. I had to give them 700 *baht*, that was all I had, and my uncle [already a refugee] came and he only had 100 *baht* so he gave it to them, and then they released me. My friend had to stay there cleaning the grounds of the jail. They released him later, but I don't know where he is now. After I was released I came here [the refugee camp] on the passenger car, but I had no money for the fare, so the Thai driver got angry with me. [Note: unlike the scenes of Thais "welcoming" refugees portrayed in Hollywood movies, this is more typical of what really happens; new refugees who arrive in small groups are commonly arrested, imprisoned, robbed and abused in other ways by Thai authorities, then either forcibly repatriated, sold into sweatshop labor, or allowed to pay their own way to get to refugee camps.]

My parents are still at Noh Kheh but they will come soon. Many people will come because they can't stay there any more. I don't know when they will arrive. They are all farmers but they can't do anything now.

Interview 65: HRV: Refugee, Livelihood, Forced Labor, Killing

Name:	U Thar Htae
Sex:	Male
Age:	56 years
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Address:	Kyun Chaung Village, Kya-Inn-Seikyí township, Karen State
Date of Interview:	June 5, 1997.
Place of interview:	Three Pagodas pass, near Sankhlaburi, Thailand
Source:	MIS

Why did you leave your village and when?

I arrived here one month ago. I could not survive if we stayed in our village longer.

The Burmese soldiers took all our rice, and they didn't leave any for our family. That was why I fled here to escape from the mistreatment of Burmese soldiers and to seek a job.

Do you get job here, now?

Yes. Now, I am a worker in a furniture factory.

Can you explain to me how the Burmese soldiers confiscated your rice and when?

It was at the beginning of March. About 500 Burmese soldiers from the joint operation (especially from IB. 61, IB. 32, LIB. 343 and other Light Infantry Battalions and these troops are under the command of SLORC Brigade No. 44) arrived at our area and surrounded our village. The soldiers came in and called a meeting with all villagers. Firstly, they asked how often the Karen troops came to the village and then explained that if we kept our paddy or rice in our village, the Karen soldiers would take it. They instructed the villagers to carry all their rice to the middle of the village and keep it in one place.

How did they (the soldiers) keep all paddies and rice from the villagers? Did they distribute it to the villagers later?

They forced the villagers to build the military camp and keep all the rice and paddy in their base inside the village. The villagers had to build a big rice store and all villagers' paddy was kept there. Yes, they distributed it to the villagers. First, they distributed one basket of paddy to each family for one week. It was not enough to eat. When we asked them to give more, the commander refused. After two weeks we had buy our rice from the soldiers. The commander said they would keep these paddies for troops and if the villagers needed it they would have to buy.

How much did you have to pay for one basket of paddy?

About 80 kyats per basket. Most villagers had no cash to buy and we gathered cash and bought the rice, and then shared it equally.

You said, the soldiers also forced the villagers to build their military barrack. How did they conscript the villagers and when was it?

Soon after they arrived at our village, the soldiers planned to build the military camp. Previously, the Burmese Army had come to our village; they stayed only a few hours

and never established their base. This time they changed their plan. They conscripted all male villagers including boys to build the military barracks. These villagers went to their base in the morning and returned home in the evening. We had to work for the whole day excepts one-hour rest for lunch.

What kind of works did you have to do?

Several kinds of work. We dug earth to make bunkers and trenches. We cleared the land and dug the earth for a playground. We built the barrack and cut bamboo to make fences. The trees around the base were cut down and used in building barracks and etc.

Did they use the villagers as front-line porters?

Yes. They brought many porters together with them and these porters were arrested from other areas. But they also used our villagers to show the bases of the Karen troops. Once, two days after they reached the village, they used about 20 of our villagers including me to lead them to the Karen bases. They forced us to walk in front as human shields so that if the Karen troops fired we would be killed and not them. But luckily, there was no fighting or shooting from the Karen troops.

Did you hear about the killing of the porters when you were there?

Yes. When we built the military barracks, I also talked with a porter from Kya-Inn-Seikyi town. He was a Karen. He said the two Karen villagers who were arrested as porters from villages near Taungbauk (a village close to Kya-ein-seik-kyi town) were killed by the soldiers on a mountain before reaching our village. These men were sick and could not walk any more. The soldiers were getting angry with these men and beat them. They were then shot and left behind.

Because of the forced labor and portering, did men flee from the village?

No. You couldn't flee, because your wife and children were in the village. They also made registration of the villagers and told the head of family that if they fled from the village, their wives and children would be punished. So nobody dared to flee without their whole family. When I fled I brought all my family members. If I left someone there, he/she would be severely punished.

When will you return home?

It depends on the situation in the village. I will stay here for the whole rainy season

and next dry season, if there is no fighting, I will go back.

Interview 66: HRV: Arrest, Women

Name: Nam Nu
Sex: Female
Age: 32-year-old
Ethnicity: Karenni
Place of interview: Thai-Burma border, Karenni State
Date of Interview: June 1997
Source: HRDU

I spent about one year in Loikaw prison. I did not want to say why I was arrested. The MI came to my house and asked me to come with them. I asked there if they had a warrant. They said they did not need any warrant. They took me to the police station and interrogated me. They also beat me up during the interrogation. I did not have a chance to sleep for three days. They forced me to confess that I committed a crime. The MI punched me in the face, They beat me up with batons and also forced me to squat on the stone for a long time. They also shone bright light on my eyes for a long time, too. These all were MI, not police. They came into the room and blindfolded me so I did not know who they were. I knew only Captain Kyaw Kyaw Thu, Captain Kyaw Win, U Tun Shein, U Han Nyunt, Thet Khin Soe, quarter master Myint Oo, Khin Soe and Thet Naing. They all were from MI 27 in Loikaw. Finally, I had to make a false statement because I could no longer bear their torture. They stopped beating me only after I made a false statement. Other women in the police cell were also beaten and women with political charges faced worse treatment.

Anyone has a right to a lawyer during the hearing at the court. However, the cost for hiring lawyer was so high that most could not afford to hire one. It cost between 10,000-50,000 *kyats*. Even having lawyers did not help so much as all lawyers and judges were also scared of the MI. All cases were screened and judged by the MI. The judge only had to read out the decision provided by the MI. It seemed free and fair by pointing out that people could come and hear at the court. However, MI were among the crowd, so nobody could speak or give comment.

I was put in Loikaw prison after the sentence. I met about 70 women during my time in prison. The hardships and maltreatment continued in the prison. While wealthy people could avoid the mistreatment by paying bribes to the prison officials, the ordinary people suffered many forms of mistreatment during their time in the prison.

Women prisoners were sentenced for different reasons. Some were for stealing, drug trafficking and political reasons as well. I saw some women prisoners serving for political reasons. They were Nan Nyunt Yee Hlaing who was serving a 20 years' imprisonment, Ma Rosy who was serving five years' imprisonment and Hnin Mu, Htar Ya Moe and one woman (wife of U Rona, NLD member). All of them were sentenced for allegedly having communication with the armed ethnic groups, particularly with the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP).

Anyone who could give 5,000 *kyats* to Sonny, chief prison officer was able to get special privilege. Besides him, she had to pay 500 *kyats* each to three wardens. They were Daw Hla Hla Myint, Daw San Yee and Daw Mi Mi Khaing. They regularly asked for more money every two months. I spent over 10,000 *kyats* for them during my one year period inside prison.

The situation of women inside the prison was terrible. Many young girls were sexually harassed by Sonny. He slept with one young girl each night. Some young girls slept 3-4 nights with him. Girls were given good treatment if she agreed to sleep with him. Some girls were released before their actual release date for sleeping with Sonny. Most girls who were sentenced for prostitution faced this situation. Other girls also faced this situation. For example, Ni Ni Myint, a young pretty girl was put in prison for alleged prostitution. Actually she was not. She was forced to sleep with Sonny. She was later released after one month. She told her story to her boy friend from Special Investigation Branch. Later I heard that Sonny was transferred to Myingyan prison due to his malpractice.

Women prisoners did not get special treatment during their period. Pregnant women also did not get good treatment during their labor time. Women had to give labor behind bars because they were not allowed to go to the hospital. I witnessed two women who gave deliveries behind the bars. They were Sue Mei, 25 year-old-girl from a village near Loikaw. She gave birth in April 1997. She had labor pain at 11:00 p.m. but was not allowed to get out for medical treatment. Nan Nyunt Yee Hlaing who had the medical experience helped her deliver her child with unclean things that were available in the prison. There was no medical supplies. She used the burned iron plate during the delivery because there was nothing else. Another one was Khin Khin Oo, a 27-year-old girl from Chike village, Loikaw who gave birth at the beginning of June 1997. She was assisted by Nam Nyunt Yee Hlaing too.

Interview 67: HRV: Forced Labor, Arrest, Torture

Name: Win Naing
Sex: Single, male
Age: 28
Ethnicity: Burmese
Parents' names: U Chit Zin, Daw Khin Nyunt
Address: Bawa Gone village, Tavoy
Date of interview: June 19, 1997
Place of interview: Pin Si village, Thai- Burma border
Source: HRDU

I worked as a porter on June 4, 1997 as part of an ongoing rotation. There were about seventy houses in my village and, as part of each rotation, twenty people were assigned to work as porters for ten days. If someone wanted to hire a substitute during their rotation, it would cost them 3000 *kyats* to cover that ten-day period. Since I had no money to hire a substitute, I was forced to become a porter for the army.

I think there are three different types of porters. The first, is the type of porter with quota obligations, like in my situation. The second, is the hired porter, who receives the money as the substitute to fill the quota. And the third, is a person who is randomly arrested and forced to work as a porter. Generally, the first two types might have a little time to prepare the basic materials they will need as porters. For example, they could bring some dried food like salt and fish paste. The third type, however, is given absolutely no time to gather even the simplest of provisions. They are conscripted and forced to work with nothing more than the clothes on their bodies. Their situation is obviously much worse than it is for the first two types of porters.

On June 4, 1997, my group was taken first to Taung Thine Lon village, then to Myee Khan Ba village. We were trucked there along with the soldiers from the LIB. 104. In total, there were about 200 civilians taken as porters from different places within the Tavoy and Yebyu town ships. Most of us were quota and substitute porters, and I did not see any of the third type porters among us.

When we arrived in Myee Khan Baw village, we were put in the local primary school. The soldiers guarded us the whole time we were there and warned us not to attempt to escape. They told us that many troops had been deployed all around the village including the village militia troops. (Note: the village militia troops are different from the People's Voluntary Armed Force found in other areas. This militia group is

known as the Anti Insurgency Group, and was formed and armed by SLORC troops. Incidentally, they were the same auxiliary force used during the recent offensive against the KNU 4th Brigade). With these threats fresh on our minds, we stayed there for two days. During this time, we were each given one meager plate of rice per day. Drinking water was also in short supply and as a result we were not allowed to bathe during that time. Unable to bear the miserable conditions, six porters decided to try the escape on June 5, 1997. Later, we heard the four of them had been rearrested that same day and executed by troops from the LIB. 104. They all were from Kalaing Aung village in Yebyu township. I did not know their names. The other two escapees were also apprehended not long afterwards. We saw them when we arrived at See Phyone village on June 7. They were tied up and guarded by the village militia. A corporal from the column cut the throat of one of them with his knife as soon as he saw them. He was angry because he had been reprimanded by his commanding officer for not having kept better guard in Myee Khan Baw village. The died instantly. The other porter was hit with an axe by another corporal. We watched him fall and I do not know whether he survived.

We were each ordered to carry two tins of rice and other materials which were about 20 viss in weight. Some porters had to carry military equipment and ammunition. We were continuously reminded by the troops that we would be shot dead if we attempted to run away. Some porters who did not walk fast enough were physically beaten by the soldiers, but none of us dared to try and escape after witnessing the outcomes of the six that had tried earlier.

On June 8, the column left from See Phyone and arrived in Thu Kha village after marching all night. We came to realize that the soldiers in our column were assigned to replace the troops stationed at Thu Kha. We were not allowed to go back with this column, and the troops ordered us to keep working for them. We were divided into four groups, each comprising of 50 porters. Our group was ordered to stay with the LIB. 104 column which was stationed at the top of a hill in Thu Kha. We had to do everything for them including collecting firewood, digging trenches, building barracks, fences and roofs.

We were forced to work every day we were there. Sometimes the soldiers beat us because they were not satisfied with our work. There were also some militia soldiers stationed with the SLORC soldiers at the outpost, and they were also cruel to us. When they got drunk, they would threaten to kill us. They wore the same military uniforms as the units from Tavoy, and the badges on their uniform were also the same as the SLORC soldiers. Altogether, I think there were about 100 of them in this column.

Although SLORC had promised to send another group after our ten days rotation finished, the new group had still not arrived. The hard work, compounded by the inadequate food rations made me tired and disappointed. This, plus the fact that we were routinely beaten by the soldiers made me decide to run away. It would be the only way to escape this hell and I was constantly looking for the chance to escape. One day, when our group of seven porters was ordered to gather firewood in the forest near Kyun Chaung village, I took my chance and started running. I ran and ran, afraid that the militia was close behind me. I ran without stopping for four hours until I arrived at the Thai- Burma border. Now I am staying in Pin Si village.

Interview 68: HRV: Arrest, Forced Labor, Women, Child, Refugee, Killing

Name:	Mugha Lwee Paw
Sex:	Female
Age:	49
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Widow with four children
Address:	xxxx village, Myawaddy township, Karen State
Date of interview:	July 4, 1997
Source:	KHRG

[Mugha Lwee Paw had to flee her village after being arrested and tortured by DKBA. Her testimony shows how the village structure breaks down when the lack of any rule of law causes people to make false accusations over personal grudges.]

The DKBA arrested me at my village because they had ordered me to go to Lu Baw Heh post [and she hadn't gone]. I didn't know anything. It was [DKBA] Battalion 333. Their battalion commander is Bo Kyaw Kyaw and the second-in-command is Tha Lone. They said that I joined the Karen [resistance] but I never did that. They accused me and asked me, "Do their soldiers come to your house in the middle of the night?" I answered that I never saw them, and they asked, "How many times have you sent rice to their soldiers?" I told them I'd never done that. He said people told him they'd seen me talking to Bo Kyaw [a KNLA officer] in my garden." I've never seen him," I answered.

They beat me with a bamboo branch that still had the husks on it. They hit me one time and my skin was slashed, and my youngest child cried until she fainted, and my son looked at me and he was also crying with fear. They beat me because they said

I had stolen some cattle. I am a woman, why would I have to steal cattle? Even a chicken, I would never steal.

That was the first time they arrested me, in March. They kept me for two days. It was Ther Heh who beat me. The second time it was Ther Heh and Bo Than Htun who arrested me, and they kept me for eight days in April. They called me to go to them, and then they tied me all over my body, they tied up my neck, around my chest, and my legs. I couldn't stand and I couldn't sit. They tied me up like a ball. They kept me tied like that for one and a half days. I couldn't stay like that. The knots were not very tight, so I told Bo Than Htun I couldn't stay the way he had tied me anymore and then I untied my own hands and the rest of my body. I told them, "I won't run. If I run, shoot me dead and keep shooting until my body falls to pieces. If I had done anything wrong, I wouldn't even have dared come here. I only came because I know nothing."

In the afternoon they took me back to Thra K---'s place and we slept there. They tied one of my hands again. I told them not to tie me, I said, "I will follow you wherever you go. I would die rather than run." But every time we were near people's houses they tied me again. They tied my hands very tightly, and they tied my neck and my whole body. I said to Ther Heh, "Why do you tie me like this? I won't run, untie me please". Then he said to me, "I am not a leader. We have leaders and we have to do this by order, so I cannot untie you now." I told him, "No problem", and I untied my foot. I was thinking, "If you want to kill me just kill me, but I will untie myself". Then I couldn't sleep, so I untied my whole body again. Their porter told me not to untie myself like that, he said "If people see it won't be good". But I told him I couldn't stay like that, and then I untied all. I stayed at their side, and I told them to sleep close to me because I was afraid. My child had stayed behind, and I was worried whether it could eat or not because it was very small. Then, in the morning they tied one of my hands and some villagers from Kaw M'Ka arrived. They talked to each other and said, "This woman knows nothing, don't beat and torture her." After that Bo Than Htun didn't do anything to me, even though I knew he'd wanted to torture me at first. I said to him, "Don't torture me, I know nothing", and I tried to stay close to Ther Heh. But then Ther Heh said, "I'll send you to Noh Baw Heh post and you'll stay with Bo Than Htun." So I got angry and told myself, "If you will go back, then go. If I must die, I will die." But then Than Htun didn't do anything, he said not to worry because he knew people had falsely accused me. He took me to Bo Kyaw Kyaw who asked me more questions, but then he said, "This woman knows nothing. Three people have come and accused her, but she knows nothing."

The first time they arrested me alone, but the second time they also arrested my

relatives P--- and L--- [both men]. P--- is 40 years old and L--- is over 30. They beat P--- one time, but not L---. They said that Bo Kyaw Kyaw's father-in-law died because these two had joined with the Karen soldiers to come and kill him. Bo Kyaw Kyaw told me he would kill five people to repay this one life. Then they demanded money for the death [when they realized that none of the three had anything to do with it]. At Noh Wah Klay village they demanded 100,000 *kyats*, and P--- and L--- had to give 50,000 *kyats*, altogether 150,000 *kyats*. No one helped us. They arrested us for no reason, and they released us with nothing. When they released me they told me not to go anywhere, not even to search for food, just to stay in the house.

Then I stayed in my village, but one of the Ko Per Baw told me, "If you can go anywhere then you'd better go away". Then Bo Than Htun told me, "People still accuse you, so you'd better go away. You know who is accusing you, so if you come back later you can do what you can do [i.e. get revenge]". But I told him I would never do anything to anyone. I dared not stay anymore, so I went to N--- with my child. I saw my brother in his field planting paddy, and he asked me where I was going. I told him I didn't dare stay, that people would keep accusing me until I was killed. I told him wherever I went they would arrest me. He asked me to stay there a few days, so I stayed and helped him in his field. I was still afraid and was always watching out because Ko Per Baw had come to that village as well. People there told me the situation there was not good either, so I left and came here. Along the way I nearly met Ko Per Baw. If I meet them again I will die. I don't dare go back to my village. I used to work my fields, but now I did not dare do anything. In many places they [DKBA] are burning all the field huts and straw, because they say this is where the Karen soldiers hide and sleep. Along the way here, I saw that they had burned all the villagers' field huts as well as their coconut trees.

With Ko Per Baw, if we can give them money, things are a little bit better, but if not, then things aren't easy for us. They do whatever they want to the villagers. As long as their own families stay happily, they don't care about the villagers. For them the most important thing is to get money. They don't care if the information people give them is true or not, they just arrest everyone. The man who was killed [Bo Kyaw Kyaw's father-in-law] was U Tun Maung, he was about 50, from Ywa Kine Kong village close to the Burmese post. The villagers have had to face many problems since his death [retaliation by DKBA]. He was very cruel to the villagers, so earlier this year the Karen soldiers came and shot him dead and got a rifle and a pistol from him. DKBA gave him permission to have these two guns and put him in charge of some work for them. He was in charge of trading logs, and he was a DKBA spy. He stayed in the village, did whatever he wanted and helped the DKBA, like if they wanted to trade logs in secret, capture your cattle, or want to drink wine. All these

things he did for them. Whenever he had any information he would go straight away and ask for money. People would tremble when they heard U Tun Maung's voice. For example, if some villagers didn't have enough rice, they would sell one cow to get money to buy rice. Then if he heard about it he would come and take all the money, saying that the villagers were illegally trading. If I planned to buy a bullock to work in my field and he heard about it, he would come and take all my money and say that I was illegally trading. They arrested all the traders, took their money and shared it among themselves. Then if their shares were not equal they fought each other. No one is free to sell anything now. We have to ask their permission and give money for a pass before we can do anything. If we build a cattle hut here near the village, there's not enough room for the cattle, but if we build it farther away then they demand money and punish us because they say we're in contact with Kaw Thoo Lei.

So now Bo Kyaw Kyaw is arresting villagers and saying, "My father-in-law is dead, he is only one, but even if I kill five of you for it I will not be satisfied". Now U Tun Maung's wife is staying at M---, and whatever she says people have to do. She is the same as her husband was. Her name is Mu Ku Po, she is in her forties.

Interview 69: HRV: Arrest, Torture

Name:	Saw Bo Gyi
Sex:	Male
Age:	38
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Address:	xxxx village, Pa-an District, Karen State
Date of interview:	July 8, 1997
Source:	KHRG

[Saw Bo Gyi was arrested and beaten by SLORC troops.]

The SLORC arrested me on June 16 at Noh Kway and took me to Ah Yin Pu. I was at Noh Kway for a wedding, and one person accused me before them, because they knew I used to help collect money for the Karen [KNLA]. I was never cruel to villagers. The Karen asked for my help and I used to help them a lot.

They kept me for one day. They told me not to work for the Karen. I told them that if they didn't believe I'm just a villager they should go and see the headman. Then they punched me in the face. They were from Battalion 13. There were many of

them who beat me. They arrested two of us and tied up our whole bodies, they even tied our necks. The Burmese soldiers told their officer that I'd tried to take his gun. How could I take his gun from him, when they were many and I was only one? They punched me in the face. I tried to cover my face with my hands but they wouldn't allow me to do that, they told me, "Let us punch you, just stay still". A lot of blood was pouring out of my nose. Then they made me go with them to Ta Gkay Pu, and when we arrived at the Lon Cha main road they tortured me again, they tied me and tortured me a lot. When we arrived at Paw they didn't torture me anymore because then we were near their captain, but by then I couldn't even move anymore because I had no more strength.

Now I have scars on my face, here on my hand, and the skin on my back was split. They beat me on my back with a gun. The wounds still aren't healing well because they beat me many times. I've tried to treat myself but it's still not better. My wife tried to treat me with special oil [combined with spirit worship] to cure me and I've also taken a lot of injections, so it has cost me a lot.

Interview 70: HRV: Arrest, Torture

Name:	Pa Boh
Sex:	Male
Age:	35
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Address:	Bee T' Ka village, Dta Greh township, Karen State
Date of interview:	July 15, 1997
Source:	KHRG

[When interviewed Pa Boh still had terrible scars on his neck and legs caused by knives and ropes.]The SLORC soldiers arrested me on June 24, 1997 in front of Lay Law Pya, on the hill. I stumbled upon them, and they at once started to beat me, stomp on me and kick me, stomp, kick, stomp, until I was unconscious. They didn't ask me anything, just saw me and started beating, kicking and stomping. After that they tied me to the wooden post of a house and they sawed back and forth across my neck with a knife, front and back until my tongue was hanging way down out of my mouth. They kept me tied and then they scraped my shins up and down with pieces of firewood, but I dared not make any move, I just had to stay still like that. They tied my hands behind me like this. They asked me for guns and walkie-talkies, and I said I never saw walkie-talkies because I was a civilian. They said, "You're not a civilian, you're Kaw Thoo Lei". Then they hacked me with a knife and my blood came out. They covered my head with a plastic sheet two or three times until I nearly

died. I tried to stand up and just fell down again. They beat me in my side with a gun, an AK [AK47], until I was unconscious. Their captain beat me with a rattan as thick as my toe. They kept me tied with two nylon ropes. They tied my hands, my legs and my neck.

I don't know their Battalion number. They stay at Loh Baw and they came to Lay Law Pya. When they arrested me they took some of my clothes, my *tehku* [man's sarong], torchlight, pot, my watch, my sandals, and my money - 13,500 *kyats*. It was the soldiers who took it, but when they searched me their Captain was right there. I didn't see them arrest anyone else, but when they'd tied me up and were pulling me along behind them I saw a person who'd been shot. I saw him running and the Ko Per Baw shot him, not the Burmese. The Burmese came along after. He was not dead, but his foot was smashed. I looked at him and he looked at me. I had never seen him before. At about 10 o'clock [p.m.] on June 28 one of the soldiers was guarding me, and when he went to the Captain I tried to untie my hands and free myself. Then I ran a little distance away from the house and he came to search for me with a torchlight - he nearly reached me, the light of his torch was on me. I went and hid under the small bushes. I could hear them making a lot of noise, but I couldn't make out what they were talking about. Then I escaped.

The SLORC soldiers caused a lot of hardship to the villagers. They ate a lot of the villagers' chickens, and they ate a whole herd of goats and only left two of them. That was in Thay Mu Pa village. They saw the goats on the hillside, captured them and ate them. The Captain saw it but he didn't say anything to them. They also took six buffaloes and five cattle.

Interview 71: HRV: Arrest, Forced Labor

Name:	Aung Zaw Win
Sex:	Male
Age:	34 years old
Address:	Oakkan village, Taikkyi township
Occupation:	Trishaw driver
Date of Interview:	July 12, 1997
Source:	HRDU

While I was watching video on June 6, 1997, the soldiers from IB 13 arrived at the video hall and arrested all the males in the hall. Altogether 300 males including me were arrested but some escaped by jumping from the window. Some were released

after the arrest by paying money or giving their valuables they had on their bodies. Ten people including me remained arrested because we could not afford to pay the bribe money. So we were immediately sent to Rangoon railway station. We were met by the soldiers from Division (33) at the station. We stayed one night at the station and on the next morning, we were sent to Thaton, Mon State by train. Soldiers from IB. 13, based in Shwebo, joined with us at Thaton and we also left for Pa-an, Karen State, by truck. When we arrived at Pa-an, we were taken to the army base and given meal. After the meal, we were taken to Kawkayeik by truck. Before arriving at Kawkayeik, the trucks stopped and we all had to walk in the jungle. Soldiers from IB 13 also walked around in the jungle for five days. After the five days, we went to Myawaddy. We spent two hours in Myawaddy and went back to the jungle.

Every porter was beaten up by the soldiers all the way. Food was not enough and I got only a small piece of fish-paste. We had very little time to take rest during the journey. When the soldiers took rest, we were ordered to collect firewood, food and fetch water. The soldiers escorted us when we had to do the work.

After one day, we were attacked by an armed group. Fighting lasted about half an hour. I was so scared I ran away. While I was running, I hurt myself in my feet. After the fighting we all had to proceed our journey. I told the soldiers that I could not walk properly because of my wound. They ordered me to carry the rice bag instead of heavy ammunition. We walked for three days and arrived at Shokali village. My wound on my feet was very painful but I had to continue the journey until we arrived at Mae Htaw Kalay village after eight days. I could not continue the journey, so finally the soldiers left me alone at the village.

The villagers gave me medicine for my wound. Later I went to Myawaddy after my wound got better. I arrived at Myawaddy on July 10, 1997. I came to the clinic in Mae Taw for treatment.

Interview72: HRV: Killing, Child

Name:	Pi Heh Ku
Sex:	Female
Age:	50+
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Animist
Address:	xxxx village, Dta Greh township, Karen State
Date of interview:	July 15, 1997

Source: KHRG

[Pi Heh Ku's son was shot dead on June 26, 1997.] My son was shot dead by Ko Per Baw. He was with seven people in a farm-hut, and he jumped down and ran because he was afraid of the Burmese. Two of them were [shot and] wounded, him and P---. People said my son was hit in the head, in the back and in his hand. After he was shot, nobody went to cover him up.

I thought about him and felt hopeless, I didn't even go and look at him. My youngest child went to look at him and came back to eat with me. He had been dead for about two days and one night, then people went to bury him [they didn't dare do it before that because SLORC troops were still in the area]. We just had a small ceremony. The next morning after that I came to stay at my farm-hut and slept there three days. His name was Pa Kyi Kheh. He was 20. Now no one can help me. If I look at the front of our house I don't see his blanket hanging on the wall, if I look at the wooden house post I don't see his bag hanging there. [She was crying at this point.] Now I am old and no one can help me to work. When my son was growing he helped me a lot, and now they have shot him just because he was afraid and ran. People said the soldiers were Ko Per Baw. The Burmese came together with them, but the Burmese said they didn't shoot him. The Ko Per Baw are very cruel to us, their hearts are not good. They put on the yellow cloth and come to kill people. Who the hell are they?

The Burmese came together with the Ko Per Baw. Then when they came back [to the village after the shooting] they said nothing to me. We were afraid so we couldn't say anything [about her son]. They came and stayed all around people's houses and inside people's houses. They arrived at my house, and they told me to cook rice for them. I kept betelnut in the kitchen and they took it all. They looked around everywhere in the kitchen and took everything. The Burmese took it, only the Burmese dared come to our houses. The Ko Per Baw stayed at the monastery and in the lower half of the village. My daughter said that at the hut [where the shooting happened] they took one pair of slippers and one hoe. From my son's bag they took 100 or 200 *kyats*, then they took the bag, his blanket, his watch and his machete. Nothing was left. Now we don't even have one good machete left, how can we cut anything?

I miss my son a lot. I looked after him when he was little and now he was old enough to look after us. I hoped he would take care of me when I become old. The Burmese have done this, now who will look after me? His brothers and sisters who are left can feed me, but he was old enough to walk and work for me, to cook and to search for vegetables. He cooked and we ate, he searched for food and we ate it. But now when we come home we don't see him anymore. Hai! We just have to survive like this. What can I tell you? His brothers and sisters will have to look after

me. The dead are gone, how can he look after me?

Interview 73: HRV: Killing, Forced Labor, Livelihood

Name: Saw Lah Ku
 Sex: Male
 Ethnicity: Karen, farmer
 Religion: Animist
 Marital status: Married with three children aged 3-6
 Address: xxxx village, Dta Greh township, Karen State
 Date of interview: July 15, 1997
 Source: KHRG

I witnessed the killing of innocent people in my village. It was five days ago, at 1 o'clock in the afternoon. I was in the lower field outside of village. I heard the Burmese call to me, "Don't run, if you run we will shoot!" I didn't see Pa Kyi Kheh, my friend who got shot and I ran here. One of their porters told me later that when he was shot, Pa Kyi Kheh was higher in the hut.

The SLORC soldiers shot him dead for no reason. Nobody had guns or was wearing uniforms - we were all civilians. The soldiers just saw people running and shot them. They knew for sure that they were villagers, so they shouted, "Don't run!", but the villagers were afraid of them and ran and they shot at them. Three of them were running through the field, and two of them were hit. Pa Kyi Kheh was hit in the middle of his back. He was hit twice. My younger brother P--- was also wounded. The people who didn't run saw their friends get shot, so they ran too and then they were also shot at by the soldiers. The Burmese said if we ran they would shoot - and they did shoot. One villager was dead, one wounded. The soldiers who shot them were Ko Per Baw, their leaders were Maung Kya, Ta Kay, and Pa Klay. Afterwards they went to the monastery and told the monk about it, and the monk's helper saw one of them putting bullets in his carbine rifle. He'd shot about 20 bullets.

After the shooting the soldiers came into the village. They said nothing, they just said, "Don't run". The Burmese and Ko Per Baw were all very angry, they shouted at me no matter what I did, so I was afraid of them. The Burmese were from Division 33. When they came to the village they ate our chickens and two pigs, and more than forty chickens. They ate all the chickens in our village. People said the Ko Per Baw did not eat the hearts of animals, but I saw them get one chicken, throw it dead by the house post and then put it in their bag. They did not even look you in the face, all their faces were dark. They took a lot of our animals. I did not dare look at Ko Per Baw. They took all the belongings of my brother who was shot, all his clothes and sarongs, and they took all the pots and spoons that they saw in

people's houses.

First we asked a Burmese soldier, "Haven't you got a doctor?" for our villagers who got wounded. He said "Yes, we have" and then he went to ask his officer, but the officer said the doctor was not here, he was in the village. So I went back to the village and asked the officer there, and he said to me that the doctor was with the Ko Per Baw. Then I went to the Ko Per Baw and asked T---, "Where's the doctor?" He was very cruel and said to me that the doctor was with the Burmese. I just went around and around asking them like that. They had a doctor, but they wouldn't even look at my face, so what could I do? The man who died, we kept him for one day and on the second day we buried him.

Both SLORC and Ko Per Baw ask for money as taxation. Every month Ko Per Baw ask for 20,000 *kyats* and the Burmese ask for 20,000 *kyats*, altogether 40,000 *kyats* from our village tract. It has five villages, over 70 households altogether. We have to give all of it, so the villagers have no money and we can't do anything anymore. We're just forced to give it to them, we try to give it the best way we can, and we have to bear it. The village elders just try to do the best for their village.

Interview 74: HRV: Livelihood, Arrest, Forced Labor, Child, Women

Name:	Thra Ler Muh
Sex:	Male
Age:	about 30
Ethnicity:	Karen, teacher
Religion:	Animist
Marital status:	Single
Address:	xxxx village, Pa-an District, Karen State
Date of interview:	July 15, 1997
Source:	KHRG

Padoh xxxx [a KNU official] asked me to reorganize the school because they dared not enter the village anymore. Places such as K--- and K---, they also could not enter, so he asked me to go back, try to collect all the [students'] names, give the people chalk and open the school, then send him the list. I went back, but I couldn't open the school because people [meaning SLORC and DKBA] wouldn't allow it to open. Later [after the start of school in early June] I asked people there, "Was the school at Toh Thu Kee already opened?" People told me it had opened but only for two weeks - then the Ko Per Baw asked for 100,000 *kyats*, so the school had to

close. I don't know why they asked for the money.

I have been teaching for four years. We have over 50 students. Some of them come from xxxx [a nearby village]. We wanted to open our school. If M--- [village] can open their school then we are going to open our school as well. The high school at Ker Ghaw, the schools at Toh Aw, Pah Klu, all the lower places [in the plains], we are just waiting to see if they will open, and if they can't open then we can't either. Now I think it won't be easy to open the school this year. If they [SLORC and DKBA] allow us then we can open it, otherwise we can't. Last year we opened it and they asked, "Whose school is this?" We said it's the villagers' own school, it's not a Kaw Thoo Lei [KNU] school, not a Buddhist school, not a Burmese school, just our own village school. But whenever the Army came we had to close the school. And if they saw us outside the village, they made problems. Once they arrested one of my teacher friends and he had to be their porter for over a week. His name is Saw H---. We were teaching together when the column of soldiers came, so we closed the school and went to the monastery. We had no time to run, so we let all the children go home, there were just the two of us. Then the Burmese arrested him and made him a porter. They also arrested me, but the monk came and told them, "This man has to look after the monastery", so they let me free. That was last year in the rainy season [mid-1996]. No one dared to tell them, even he himself dared not tell them. He said that he was a villager who worked on his farm. All are afraid of the Burmese. If they know you're a teacher, they will ask many questions, like "Where did you go to school?" and things like that. [Any teacher suspected of having been educated in KNU territory would be arrested.] If we kept the school open when they came I'm not sure what they would do, but the old men in the village don't dare face this problem so we also don't dare face it. We can't tell what they will do, so we have to think of our own safety.

One old man named Saw B---. The Ko Per Baw came and asked his wife where he was and she said he wasn't at home. Then the Ko Per Baw went and searched through the house and found him, so they hurt his wife, they showed her a knife and said to her, "The old man is here but you said he's not. I'll cut your throat", and the woman's eyes turned white [i.e. she almost fainted from fear]. The Ko Per Baw are all captains, they don't have any leaders in their organization. Any one of them can kill people. They always eat our animals, people can't stop them, and they demand porters. Yesterday people had to carry their rice for them, and this morning more people had to go to be porters. If they ask for seven porters we have to send seven, if five we have to send five. We have to hire porters [to go in their place] at 2,000 *kyats* each for five days. If they ask for five porters and we only send four, then they say, "I asked for five porters but you sent only four, so if I come I will arrest people, and furthermore you will have to give money before I release the porters already

here.” They say, “We asked only seven people but you didn’t send them, so I don’t want these porters, I’ll come and arrest some myself.” So whatever they demand, we have to fulfil it. If they come they will destroy things. Last time they went to Loh Baw village they demanded two tins of paddy from each house, and then they made the people grind it for them. So many problems, even if we try to run we can’t run! It’s like coughing and coughing but nothing ever comes out [i.e. no matter what you try to do it never helps].

Interview 75: HRV: Arrest, Torture

Name:	Saw Shwe Htoo
Sex:	Male
Age:	48
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Married with two children
Address:	xxxx village, Pa-an District, Karen State
Date of interview:	July 17, 1997
Source:	KHRG

[When interviewed Saw Shwe Htoo was still suffering from a broken rib and a fever.]

DKBA arrested me at Tone Ton village, last month. A woman had died in Tone Ton village so I went there with four friends. In the afternoon they came into the village and asked one of the women, “Did you see our two or three friends come through here?” She answered that we didn’t know, and then they said to us, “Why didn’t you see them?” They were drunk, and they arrested us, beat us and tied us up at Tone Ton for one day. They tied my feet, my hands and my neck [i.e. they tied him up in a ball]. Then they took us to Noh Kway and demanded 22,500 *kyats* from us. Then they asked me, “Do you dare go back to your village?” I answered, “Why wouldn’t I dare go there?” They told me to follow them to my village, and I followed them there. Then they beat me over ten times in my chest and ribs. They beat me and said, “You used to be headman and Karen soldiers came to your house”. I said it wasn’t true, but they said, “I saw you, you had contact with Karen soldiers.” They beat the two of us, myself and a villager from Noh Kway. The other villager was in his thirties. The soldiers were all Ko Per Baw, there were 17 of them. They used to be villagers but now they are Ko Per Baw. I knew two of them, C--- and L---.

Interview 76: HRV: Refugee, Repatriation, Forced Labor, Women, Child

Name: Nai Khaing
 Sex: Male
 Age: 53 years
 Ethnicity: Mon
 Religion: Buddhist
 Address: Kyauktaung village, Boke Pyin township, Tenasserim
 Division
 Date of interview: July 24, 1997
 Place of interview: Halockani Mon refugee camp, Thai-Burma border
 Source: MIS

When did you arrive at Thai territory again? How did you come and were you alone or with your whole family?

I came with my whole family and arrived here about five days ago. We could not come along straight that easily reaches into Thai territory, and we made a roundabout the way in the north side of the mountains. We climbed the mountains and slept for one night in the forest and then climbed down into a Thai plantation.

Are you a returnee in June repatriation by the Thai authorities? Did you really want to return to Burmese side of the border?

Yes, I was a returnee. Actually, we would not like to return but we were also afraid of being detained by the Thai soldiers and we didn't know how to stay inside Thailand like other families. At the same time, we were also afraid of the new military deployment of the Burmese troops in our village. We knew very well about them. We knew if they saw us, they would use us as porters like those in our native village.

Many villagers disappeared while the Thai soldiers were bringing them with trucks to the Burmese side of the border. Some of them knew how to travel inside Thailand and also knew where they could get jobs. I had never stayed inside Thailand before and if I fled from the group, I would be arrested by the police. Though I didn't want to return, I did.

Why did you come back to the Thai territory again?

Soon after we reached the village, all the villagers were used by the military and we had not time to build our houses or to farm. They used all men, women, and children in the whole village to build their military barracks and forced us to build the road. Before we fled here, the soldiers also arrested the villagers to use them as porters for the frontline of Burmese Army against the Karen troops.

How did the soldiers force the villagers to build the military encampment? And what kind of work did you have to do every day?

Normally, the Burmese commanders ordered Mon soldiers to bring all villagers to the work site. They also gave responsibility to village leaders to manage and bring the needed laborers. Almost all villagers were conscripted to work in building their military encampment. We went early in the morning to the designated place and first, had to clear all trees and grass. After clearing the ground, they forced us to dig bunkers, nine feet deep and covered with wood and earth on it. We also had to dig their long trenches inside the base compound and later build the fences outside of the camp. When I left the village, the rest of the villagers were forced to build the military barracks with hardwood and bamboo. All villagers were forced to cut and bring big pieces of hard wood from the forest.

Did you have enough food while you were working for them? Or, did they provide some food for the village?

No. At that time, they also told some villagers to bring rice from Murmtaing village, about one day's walk from our village. When the rice arrived, first they took it for their troops and distributed very little amount to the villagers. They also told the villagers not to expect the rice from relief agencies and that if they would like to eat rice they must go to Murmtaing. They provided us only about ten days of rice supplies and we made rice soup and ate it for several days before we fled.

Once, they also called a meeting with all villagers and ordered them to complete their military encampment. One villager requested the soldiers to give them time to build houses and to farm. He was hit by a glass thrown by the commander. They also threatened the villagers not to make any complaint and to continue building the military encampment if the villagers ate their rice.

When did you decide to flee from the village?

On 10 July, the soldiers told the villagers that some of them would have to carry ammunitions and supplies for the Burmese army in the offensives against the KNU and other student groups. I did not know where the fighting was. Many villagers

were afraid of being arrested and used as porters. I fled into my old plantation and stayed there. The next day, my sons and wife came and joined me. Then, we decided to flee here.

Interview 77: HRV: Refugee, Arrest, Forced Labor, Relocation, Killing

Name:	U Bo Thar
Sex:	Male
Age:	52 years
Religion	Buddhist
Ethnicity	Karen, farmer
Address:	Manawtone village, Boke Pyin township, Tenasserim Division
Date of Interview	July 18, 1997.
Place of interview:	Halockani Mon refugee camp, Thai-Burma border
Source:	MIS

When did the Burmese soldiers arrest you and how did they use you in their military operation?

I was arrested on April 27 and since then I was constantly used as a porter, to carry rice and ammunitions along with LIB. 358 military operation. Mostly, this military operation manoeuvred around Moetaung, Pongkachit and Chaungchi areas and launched offensives against Mon and Karen soldiers. For nearly three months, I was not given time to rest and always had to work for the military.

How did you escape from them?

When I arrived at Chaungchi village, I had a chance to talk with villagers there and always tried to escape from them (the Burmese soldiers). I was very tired and could not walk more. I was lucky. When the villagers planned to come here (Thai territory), they also asked me to go with them. When the soldiers let us cut bamboo and hardwood in the jungle, one villager hid me in the forest and then he brought me here. This villager Nai Aung Kyi, saved my life. If I had stayed longer with them, I would have died.

What was your native village and how did the Burmese soldiers treat to your villagers?

I was from Manawtone village. My wife and children are still in my native village.

Last year (1996), our village was destroyed by Burmese soldiers. They drove out all villagers to move to Moetaung or Myoh Thit, a section of Tenasserim town. All villagers did not like to abandon their farms and plantation. They refused to move there. The villagers fled their village and stayed in the jungle or plantation.

At the beginning of this year (1997), the soldiers told the villagers that they could go back to their homes and that they would not punish anyone who had refused to stay in Moetaung or Myoh Thit. I went back to my home with my whole family before the end of January. The situation was better for two weeks. We repaired our houses, which we abandoned for three months. And, we prepared to work on our farms.

In the third week of February, about 200 Burmese soldiers from LIB. 224 led by Maj. Than Aung came and told the villagers that they would not allow any villager to go outside without their permission. Then, they asked the village headman to provide five villagers every week to work in Tenasserim-Moetaung motor road construction on rotation basis. At the same time, the military also administrated to build Manawtone-Tenasserim truck road and asked about 20 villagers to work in this construction site on a daily basis.

In mid-March, the Burmese soldiers from LIB. 358 prepared to launch an offensive against Karen and Mon troops, and asked for 20 villagers to be porters from headman again. Every villager was afraid and fled from the village without their permission. The village headman could not manage the village and he was beaten by the soldiers. In second week of March, after the soldiers knew the village headman could not provide the porters, the villagers were arrested. I also fled, but they didn't arrest my wife. I stayed on my plantation and sometimes moved into the forest nearby.

Whenever the soldiers came into the village, they threatened the rest of the villagers, women and children, that if they met them outside the village they would kill them. They also accused all our villagers as Karen rebel-supporters and said male villagers were soldiers.

Did they kill anyone they met outside the village?

Yes. U Kway Ni and his wife were killed. The soldiers from LIB. 224 met them in the forest near their plantation while they were hiding there to escape from arrest and portering. They tied the man and his wife and asked them to show the Karen bases. Because U Kway Ni and his wife Naw Day Tet could not give a satisfied answer to the commander he ordered his troops to kill them. Their bodies were cut in to three parts and left in a betel-nut plantation. The next day, the villagers found their corpses

and had them buried.

When the men left the women inside the village, did the soldiers rape these women?

LIB No. 224 was very bad. The operational commander Col. Ye Myint Aung raped about three girls from our village alone. I would not like to tell their names. He was also well known as a bad guy in the area and that was why many young women also hid in the forest with their fathers or brothers.

When were you arrested by the soldiers and how long did you have to work as porter along with military operation?

I was arrested in my betel-nut plantation before the end of April, while I was hiding. Soon after I was arrested, the soldiers beat me and asked me where the Karen troops were. I said I didn't know. So they beat me again and again. They also asked me about my native village and I told them the whole truth.

They took me with them on their military operation all the time and I was forced to carry rice and mortar shells. After two weeks, I was sent to the road construction (Tenasserim-Moetaung) for another two weeks. I had to do hard jobs such as carrying earth to build embankment, crushing stones and laying them on embankment, cutting bamboo and hardwood to build the military camp. Sometimes, the military operation took us to Moetaung as porters. Then we were brought back to the work sites again.

In May, I was taken by LIB. 358 as a porter in their offensives against the Mon troops at the border area. After Chaungchi fell and the Mon troops surrendered in June, I was kept for two weeks in Chaungchi base. We, porters were forced to carry rice and other supplies from Murntaung to Chaungchi every day and had no time for rest. I was too tired. Then we managed to enlist the assistance of Chaungchi villagers to escape.

Did you see anyone die in the road construction?

Yes. When I worked in the construction, two men, one was Karen and another was Tavoyan, died at the work sites. They were suffering from severe malaria, but the soldiers still forced them to work. They did not dare tell the soldiers that they were not well because they were afraid of being beaten. One Karen man died after being bed-ridden. Five days later, the Tavoyan man was seriously sick with malaria again. He was brought to Moetaung. He died in Moetaung.

Likewise, did you see any porters die in the offensives against KNU and Mon troops?

In May offensives against the Karen troops, some porters died because of mines. They forced porters including me to walk in front of them. I was, anyhow, lucky and was not hit by any mines. The Tavoyan man who walked beside me died after his right leg was blown off by explosion. He was about ten feet away from me when he stepped on the mine. The soldiers ordered a retreat and, we left that porter behind. He was crying loudly for help.

Now, you are in Thailand? What is your next plan?

I don't know. I will just go along with these villagers. They say, if we arrive in Thailand, we can get rice and stay in the camp. I will stay with them and if they move, I will move with them.

Interview 78: HRV: Religion, Women, Livelihood

Name:	Pati Kyaw Than
Sex:	Male
Age:	37
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer/cowboy
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with three children
Address:	xxxx village, Myawaddy township, Karen State
Date of interview:	June 28, 1997
Source:	KHRG

The DKBA has distributed their calendars for two years already. If they send 20 calendars to our village, then we have to buy them all. We can't stay there if we don't buy them. If we buy one and keep it in our house there will be fewer problems for us. As far as I know the order to sell these calendars came from Myaing Gyi Ngu [DKBA headquarters]. Then Maung Chit Thu [a DKBA officer] came and gave the order on the numbers of calendars to be sold in each village and township. Last year we had to pay about 250 *kyats* for each calendar, and this year 280 *kyats* [a much higher price compared to other calendars]. Maung Chit Thu said that everyone had to buy one, and no one could stay there without buying the calendar. So some villagers thought it would be better to have one in your house than not to have one. But when the SLORC came, if they did not see anyone in their houses

they would burn them down anyway. So it doesn't do any good to have a calendar in your house. They are honorless people. One Christian woman hung a DKBA calendar in her house. A DKBA soldier who knew her, saw it and asked, "Are you a Buddhist or a Christian?" She answered that she was a Buddhist, and he laughed at her.

The DKBA also tried to recruit the new members from the region. It depends on the number of houses in the village. Generally they ask for two or three people from each village, but if the village is especially big or small they ask for as many as they think they can get. In the past, they asked for four or five villagers each year from each village tract, but now they ask for over ten people. They know how the Kaw Thoo Lei [KNLA] used to do it, so they do it the same way. Maung Chit Thu tries to organize it. When Kaw Thoo Lei asked for soldiers they always said "over 17 years of age", they didn't want very young people. But now many people say that the DKBA doesn't care about the age, and that children as young as 13 years old are with them. For each recruit the village can't send, they ask for over 10,000 *kyats*, so each village tract has to give over 100,000 *kyats*. That is only for one year. Sometimes they don't need men, they only need money.

In May [after already demanding recruits once], Toh Thu Kee village was ordered to send money again to lower officers like Bo Kya, but that time I think those officers were just taking it for themselves. Perhaps they gave some of that money to SLORC. But most of it, I'm sure they used for themselves, because in May, Pa Klay [a DKBA officer] went to Day Law Pya and Meh Pleh Wah Kee and told the village heads, "Ask for the money now because we need it. Later we'll pay it back when it's time for you to give the money for this year's DKBA members." [In other words, DKBA has financial problems supporting its own soldiers and has to get 'advances' on extortion money from villagers.] For example, with a DKBA soldier, if we were friendly with each other some time ago when he was Kaw Thoo Lei and the situation was better, now he might say, "Friend, lend me 10,000 *kyats* because I need it for my family". You don't have much but you dare not tell him, so you have to give it to him. Or he may ask for one or two tins of dog fruit for his family so the villagers have to collect it and gave it to him through you. They don't know how hard they are making lives for the villagers.

The DKBA creates much suffering to the local people. For example, if they want to clear an area they ask SLORC to go with them, but the SLORC enters the village before the DKBA, takes all the villagers' belongings and eat everything. They come into the house and one take your Ajinomoto, another takes your chilies. No one can stop them. One woman from Day Law Pya told me that when they came to her house some stayed in the house while some others killed a 7-viss [11-kilo] pig under

her house without making a noise. When they came on April 2, they asked for people's rice because they said their rations were gone. There were two or three DKBA together with their [SLORC] group.

The SLORC also asked for porters. Two or three porters who escaped told us that the first group they were with made them carry very heavy things, and the soldiers put their own [personal kit] bags on top of the porters' loads and they had to carry those too. The SLORC soldiers give their rations to the porters to eat, and for themselves they demanded good food from the villagers. The rations they bring for themselves are not good so they don't eat them. When they enter a village they kill, cut, cook and eat the chickens all night long, so by morning there are none left. If they go to a hut where a woman is staying, they demand one chicken, so the woman gives it quickly hoping they'll soon be gone. But then two or three more come and ask again and again. In the daytime they demand, at night they just steal.

Before, when SLORC had a post in our village and if Kaw Thoo Lei attacked them, the SLORC tried to put pressure on the villagers. If one of their soldiers died or one gun was lost, the villagers had to give money for the gun or the dead person. If Kaw Thoo Lei put a bomb [mine] near the village or on the road and one of their soldiers was wounded, they made problems for the villagers. Now it is still like that, with DKBA too. If we can't give them security then we have to give them our lives.

Interview 79: HRV: Killing, Arrest, Forced Labor

Name:	Saw Htoo Say
Sex:	Male
Age:	32
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Address:	xxxx village, Dta Greh township, Karen State
Date of interview:	July, 1997
Source:	KHRG

When the Burmese came to my house they called me down to the ground, then they went into my house and took one necklace, one knife, 600 *kyats* and some clothing. When they came out of the house they took one tin of my rice, then they called me and said to me, "We need you". They pointed to the hills and told me to go with them and show them that place, so I went with them. The first morning they made me take them to Thay Mo Pa Kee, and on the way they shot at people. One man died and one was wounded. They were two villagers, Kyi Kheh and P---. The

soldiers saw nothing strange, they just saw a group of people from a distance, so they surrounded the hut and called “Don’t run”, and when the villagers jumped up to run, they shot at them. The villagers were just wearing clothes like you and I, they were just civilians. The soldiers wouldn’t let me go and see, they kept me below the stream, pushed me down and said, “Sit down here”. That Army group was bad. While we were walking along the way, they said they would shoot anyone they met along the path. If they couldn’t capture someone, they shot at them.

They arrested me six days ago and released me three days ago. The Burmese were from Battalion 44 [sic: Division]. There were also about 30 Ko Per Baw with them. The Ko Per Baw officer was Pa Klay. There were also porters with them. Later, we all came back to my village, and then they arrested one man at his hut. His name was Po Ko Nee.

Interview 80: HRV: Women, Child, Livelihood

Name:	Pi Say Say Mo
Sex:	Female
Age:	50+
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Animist
Marital status:	Married with nine children aged 6-20 died
Address:	xxxx village, Dta Greh township, Karen State
Date of interview:	July 1997
Source:	KHRG

I don’t know exactly when the SLORC soldiers came to our village, but they slept two days in the village. They ate five of my chickens. I had brewed some wine for a wedding, and they drank two bottles of it and took my four bottles of honey. They were Burmese who ate my things. I said to them, “Don’t eat my things”. I kept the honey in my kitchen and covered it with a big blanket. I put my necklace in the kitchen. I buried it under the ashes of the fire and I put pots on top of it, but I was afraid they would see it because they came and cooked in my kitchen. They searched through everything in my house all day long, but they wouldn’t listen to me. I told them to stop searching and one said to me, “I am going to grab you by the neck”, and I wanted to burn him with the wood in the fire. My baby was afraid and cried out very loud. He took and ate the honey and chickens and I said, “You must be very poor to rob me like this.” They took my husband’s hunting rifle [an old barrel-loaded flintlock]. They took a tin with 30 eggs in it, and one tin of rice.

There were many soldiers everywhere, and their officer was staying up above. I was afraid but I couldn't think what to do, I couldn't talk anymore. They came and caught the goats under my house, then they cooked rice under there. I needed to go to the toilet but I couldn't because there were many soldiers, and then I had to relieve myself inside my house. I said to them, "You've eaten everything we had!". They frightened me with their guns to get more food. They took and ate 24 milk-tins of sticky-rice. I couldn't leave my house or they would take absolutely everything. They searched the bag where I keep my sarongs, my clothes and my children's clothes, they took everything out again and again and spread them all over the place. I don't know which Army group this was. People said they came from Day Law Pya. People said, "Don't run and, if we run the Burmese will shoot us dead."

Interview 81: HRV: Refugee, Arrest, Torture, Forced Labor

Name:	Saw Htoo Heh
Sex:	Male
Age:	31
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Married with four children
Address:	xxxx village, Waw Raw township, Karen State
Date of interview:	August 1997
Source:	KHRG

[Saw Htoo Heh was headman of his village, but fled due to abuses by the occupying SLORC troops.] I am the Karen village headman. There is also a SLORC headman. [One villager acts as liaison with the KNU, while another acts as liaison with SLORC.] I left my village this month on the 5th of the Burmese calendar - maybe August 8-9. We were afraid and we could not stay. There are many groups of SLORC. The first group which entered the village was Division 22. They arrested people and bound their feet and their necks, and tied their hands behind their backs. This group tortured people a lot in our village. They tortured our people and then they left, but even after they were gone our villagers were still suffering from what they had done. Now that it has been a while, they are all better.

Another group [of SLORC soldiers] came to the village and told the villagers: "The people who work far away from the village have to go in the morning and come back in the evening." So by the time we arrived at our fields we already needed to come back. Then when the soldiers saw us along the path they made trouble for us even though their officers had given us permission to go. So we stayed in the village and we couldn't do any work. Since we were afraid and had no chance to do our work,

it was better to leave.

They arrested me and I escaped immediately after. But many villagers suffered, and they came with me here. Many families already came and I heard more would come. The village has already been destroyed. The houses are still there but no one is staying there anymore. Before, there were over 40 houses. Some people fled to SLORC area. Some families went to other places. They went to nearby villages and they came back sometimes to look after their animals, fields and gardens. When they were caught doing these, SLORC arrested them. The SLORC soldiers sawed one of my cousins' neck with a sharp knife until the skin was cut open. Many people were tortured by the SLORC. Some came with me. They were tortured in their houses.

Some people say that if we stay in Burma we cannot avoid the Burmese. "If the Burmese come, no one should run", say the elders. The elders say: "Stay!" But the Burmese elder [the headman for SLORC] also ran. He was the first one to run. When the Burmese came, they beat him until he could not eat for one day. Around our village area, the Burmese have beaten elders to death. That happened in Klih Tu village. He didn't die immediately after he was beaten. He treated himself for seven or eight days and then died. His name was U Kyaw Ta. He was nearly 50. It happened in the month of Tgu. Among the many people who were tortured in our village, some were seriously beaten and some not. They accused us of being a KNU village and they demanded guns. They said that the Karen Army were staying in our village and that they kept their rations there. People who could not speak Burmese well properly were not beaten so seriously, but those who could speak Burmese were [probably because this made it possible for the soldiers to interrogate them -- this is an exception to the rule, because normally villagers are beaten for not being able to speak Burmese]. The Burmese kicked and slapped about ten people this way. Three or four people were cruelly beaten. They were swollen, but not as badly as the Klih Tu headman.

In our village there are no Karen soldiers, only civilians and ex-soldiers. They are beaten because this place is a 'black area' [opposition-controlled territory] for the SLORC. The Karen soldiers sometimes cross and pass through the village, but they never stay. They don't have their own place. Sometimes they just come and sleep one night and then leave. But the Burmese said: "This village is Kaw Thoo Lei. After you give us their guns, we won't trouble you and we won't come again. If you don't give us the guns, we will come back. We don't have any option. We have to get guns before we go back." [The soldiers must have been ordered to bring back some guns or face severe punishment.] These soldiers were from Division 22. When I came here there were many soldiers around. They would stay in one village for one

or two nights and then would go to another village for one or two nights. One time when they left our village we secretly escaped and came here. We dared not face them, because when they came back they would demand guns again. Maybe they would tie people up and demand 10 viss of pork, or 50 viss, like that [1 viss = 1.6 kg./3.5 lb.]. So we left the village just before they were to come again. Only a few people stayed behind in the village. All the young people left. We were worried that our village would be destroyed, so we were staying to try to prevent this. But when I escaped, everybody escaped at the same time. Anyone who thought it was better to come here came. Other villagers wanted to go to other places and they went. Everyone went separately. Some people didn't escape far but went to stay downstream. Not many were in the forest, only those who came back to look after their animals and their fields. Those who had nothing just left. With their entire family, with the children and everyone..

I am not sure the people left there are able to harvest. If the situation is good they will harvest. If not, they won't. The latest group which came to our village was LIB.355. Then they left. So there was a little time there, and at that time the villagers who had run not too far away came back to the village, but only the older people, not the younger. They didn't bring the children along and they left again on the same day. They came back just to look at the situation and at their houses.

The SLORC are torturing people in villages which are small and distant from them. In the villages close to the car road, they usually don't torture the people. Our village is away from the car road and away from them, so they torture us a lot and they consider it as a 'black area'. When they call us for loh ah pay [forced labor] we have to go to cut and clear [the scrub along roadsides and around Army camps]. We have to work for them. The loh ah pay is the same for all the villages which are staying close to them. The car road [from Thanbyuzayat to Three Pagodas Pass] is 5 klih [armspans] wide. They clear both sides of the car road, not because they are afraid of mines, but when their trucks go along the road no Karen soldiers can hide beside the road to ambush them.

The soldiers asked for porters but we gave them money instead. Like this. In the area, there are two different groups of troops and people have to go and work for both of them. The troops which are staying nearby accept money, but the other group who stay further upstream need porters. Before we came here, they ordered three porters every day by turns. The nearest group is IB.106 and the groups further away are LIB. 545, Division.22, and LIB.355. The nearest group ordered us to clear the car road and cut and clear a place to plant vegetables. That is the loh ah pay, but for the porters we can give money. When they plan to go to Tavoy area [this can mean Tavoy itself, or the Karen expression "going to Tavoy" just means

anywhere very far away], we dare not go along and so we give them money.

I decided to come to this area. Even though my heart is not cool here [Karen expression meaning that he is worried and afraid], it is better than in the village. If we stay in our village we dare not do our work. So we have no work. We stay in our houses and we dare not go out. Just like this... We came with our children. We had to walk for nine days. Without children, it would take only four days.

Interview 82: HRV: Relocation, Torture, Arrest, Relocation

Name:	Saw G'Lu Taw
Sex:	Male
Age:	50
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with children
Address:	xxxx village, Waw Raw township, Karen State
Date of interview:	August 1997
Source:	KHRG

[Saw G'Lu Taw's village northeast of Ye was ordered to move. Adding to his comments in this interview were an elderly woman who is a relative of his (noted as 'Old woman') and a church elder from their village (noted as 'Church elder').]

We just arrived today. Just now! Because we are afraid of the Burmese. We dared not stay because they beat us, hit us.

They didn't beat me, but they beat some people. And hit them. The Burmese were coming, so the headman told us to leave the village. Around our village, they tortured so many people. They treated the people like their slaves. When they arrested porters, they never released them. That's why I escaped and came here.

We had to come because the Burmese are getting worse and worse. If we stay there, we have no more strength left to face all the problems. If we go back to our village, they will force us to move to the car road.

Our village received an order to move to Ker. It is over two miles away from our village. It is a little bit away from the car road. We had to move at the beginning of the rainy season. When it was already raining heavily. We didn't know why, they just ordered us to move. In May, the soldiers came to the village by themselves and

waited there with their guns watching while the villagers had to dismantle their houses. The big houses were built of wood and we stripped the wooden planks off. All the houses had to be destroyed within six days. The bullock carts had to carry our things to Ker and we didn't have any time to work any more.

I know of five villages which were ordered to move: Htee Ter, Wah Ka Ter, Wah Pa Theh, Kru Maw Hta, and Tar Ba Taw villages, but there are many others. The other villages had to move to Kaneh Kamaw. They were given the order during the same month but not on exactly the same day.

At Ker, SLORC did not provide shelter for us to stay. It was only a temporary place. People just built like they do here [small bamboo shelters]. They provided separate plots, group by group. There was no fence. We did not get any rice or support from the SLORC. They didn't give us anything. They were even asking things from us. Our chickens, our rice. Some people worked half their field and can work only for a short time. They could not complete their work. They didn't allow us to stay at our farm huts. We could not work anymore. If they saw us in the fields, they beat, hit and killed us.

All of our villagers moved to Ker. We destroyed our houses and moved at the same time. The Burmese didn't allow them to stay in the village. Now I am arriving from Ker. All moved to Ker. No one is hiding in the forest. Most of them moved to Ker and some came here. Many more want to come but it is difficult because of the heavy rains. Their children are very small so they cannot come now. They are waiting until the rainy season is over. We are not the first group. They started coming two months ago. As soon as they moved to Ker they saw that they couldn't stay there, so they decided to come here immediately.

There are about 40 houses in my village. At Ker there are over 100 houses. No Burmese [troops] stay in Ker yet, but they come sometimes. They come from IB. 343 and IB. 31.

In Ker, the soldiers ask for money for porter fees, and we have to give it every time. One house, 150 *kyats*, every month regularly. If you give them money, no need to go. But then another group of Burmese orders us to go as porters and we have to go. That's why we don't want to face that problem. If people don't go [as porters], they arrest them.

If we run, we meet the Burmese everywhere. We run this way, we meet the Burmese, we run that way, and we also meet the Burmese. We don't want to be there. So we came here. It took six days to come here [he showed the blisters and calluses on his

feet from walking]. When we ran, we had nothing to eat.

The Ker villagers didn't come but the villagers who were forced to move there want to come here. Some will come and some will stay there. Our church congregation members are all going to come here. The other villages also want to come but it is raining now. In our village, we have about 30 families who are church members. And all the church members from xxxx will also come. Their church has more than 45 families. Even the Pastor will come too. We came here because we were worried that the Burmese would come [to Ker] and do more terrible things to us than before. The SLORC don't give trouble to the [Karen] soldiers, they just give trouble to the civilians. When the Burmese shoot, it is the villagers who have to suffer. We don't know exactly why they do this. The head of our village has to go to see the Burmese every day, and he told us what the Burmese had said to him: "The Karen are like a tree. If you cut the trunk, branches will come up again, so you have to dig out the roots so it will never grow again." The Burmese from IB. 106 told him that during a meeting at Maw Kaneh about one month ago.

Interview 83: HRV: Torture, Forced Labor, Arrest, Relocation

Name:	Saw Tee Wah
Sex:	Male
Age:	35
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Address:	Married with four children
Address:	xxxx village, Kya In township, Karen State
Date of interview:	August 1997
Source:	KHRG

The Burmese soldiers ordered us to go and bring their rations with our bullock carts. On the way back, when we arrived at Kru M'Tee, they tied us, interrogated us and tortured us. They were demanding guns. They didn't get any guns, so they tortured us. We are only villagers. How can we have guns? But they ordered to find some and give them. How can we find guns and give them? We don't have any.

When the soldiers first came to our village the men ran into hiding [when they first occupied the village during the offensive]. Then the Burmese made trouble for the women, so we came back into the village. They welcomed us and they registered the number of houses and people. At first they didn't disturb us too much. They only imposed stricter rules. Then later on, bit by bit, they started arresting us.

It was in April. I arrived at Kru M'Tee in the evening, on the return trip. I had just gone to Seik Gyi to get their rations with my bullock cart and carried them back to Kru M'Tee [where there is a SLORC Army camp]. Altogether we were 30 people with our bullock carts. They arrested and tortured 15 of us. They never tortured us at our own village because they did not want our wives to see it. The Burmese use their brains. If they tortured us in our village it wouldn't look good for them.

They didn't ask anything. They just started calling names from their list. I don't know how they knew my name, but one person [a Karen soldier] had surrendered to the Burmese and he knew me. The soldiers called our names and demanded guns, tied us up and tortured us, all at the same time. They were asking for guns and beating us. You couldn't even talk. It was night-time, and many soldiers were torturing us. I couldn't see them. Two of them punched and kicked me while they asked for guns. They punched my chest five times and slapped my face five times. They also burnt my beard. Other soldiers, I don't know how many of them, came and hit us with their guns. They beat me for 10 minutes. Other villagers were tortured for 15 or 20 minutes. They were all young and their foreheads were bleeding. My face was also bleeding. They took everything that belonged to me, like my knife and my watch. Afterwards, we had to carry their rations as far as their camp. Some had to go to Paw Ner Mu and Ya Kra to carry rations for the soldiers who were staying temporarily in the villages.

The soldiers came from Seik Gyi [Kya In Seik Gyi, three days' walk away]. When they arrived at our village they didn't build a camp, they just stayed temporarily. They went patrolling to the other villages. After Division 44 left, they [other groups] came for three or four days at a time. They went by sections, a hundred soldiers covering seven villages. The Burmese stayed very close to me, two houses away from my house. I couldn't tell whether there were DKBA together with the SLORC or not, but a lot of them were speaking Karen language. They all had the same [SLORC] uniform. I knew some of them but I don't know their names. I don't know where they came from. Before I saw them walking along the road, following the Burmese. [These may be SLORC soldiers who are Karen, DKBA soldiers attached to SLORC units, or soldiers from KNLA Battalion 16, whose commander surrendered to SLORC in February; some Battalion 16 soldiers have reportedly joined SLORC, while the commander has set up a SLORC-run militia in Dooplaya District.]

I was a porter once and then I escaped because I couldn't bear it. The first time, in April, I was ordered to take their rations with my bullock cart, but the second time I had to carry things on my back. I had to carry gun barrels and one bag -- I don't

know what was inside. I carried it for four days. Our loads were over 30 viss a piece [48 kg./105 lb.]. We could barely even move, it was too heavy. So I escaped and went back home. They didn't beat the porters, but after four days carrying like this you couldn't even lie down on your back. I had to carry for a distance of three miles, going and coming back, again and again. We had to go by turns, one man for two or three days. In xxxx [his village] they demanded seven villagers every day. If the headman didn't collect people to send as replacements, they would never release the porters. We had to carry rice and ammunition, ducks and chickens, everything. They put everything that they took by force from the villagers into baskets and ordered the porters to carry them. They started from Paw Ner Mu to Ywathit, Ywa Haw and then back to Meh Ta Kreh, Kru Kyi and K'Kyar and then to M'Ya Done. Just around the whole area.

They told the headman to call the people. If it was not for the headman calling us, the Burmese would never find us. Our headman was afraid that the Burmese would burn down the village, so he tried to control the villagers. We listened to our headman until we couldn't take it anymore. After that, he couldn't do anything [to stop them from fleeing].

I cannot explain how much they torture the people. Some of our villagers were beaten until they were bleeding. Many of those who were tortured by the SLORC went to stay at xxxx. Some other villagers in our village were put in the pit, but not me. They didn't allow us to see it and we couldn't go near. We could listen from far away. My uncle had to suffer more than me. He was put in the pit. When they put people in the hole, we were not even allowed to go and give them food.

Many people didn't dare face that any longer and ran away from the village. The villagers don't even care about their property anymore, they would rather flee. I came here without my wife even knowing. I couldn't take it any longer. My family still stays in xxxx. I don't know what to do. I came here just a few days ago and now I've decided to go back to xxxx and stay with my wife. My family should move away from the Burmese. If it is possible, I would like to go with them and stay in a refugee camp. If not, we will stay there hiding. We can go and stay in the forest if there are not too many of us. We are Karen people, we would like to stay there because it is our land and our country. My farm is in the village, but we dare not work on our farm and we have to leave the land. We are not free. Sometimes we have to get passes, sometimes not. They treat us like children. People don't want to work anymore but try to find a way to escape. Thinking about it, it is better to stay in a refugee camp or somewhere else. If we escape, we want to be safe.

Interview 84: HRV: Relocation, Livelihood, Refugee

Name: Saw Lay Htoo
Sex: Male
Age: 56
Ethnicity: Karen, farmer
Religion: Christian
Marital status: Widower, five children
Address: xxxx village, Waw Raw township, Karen State
Date of interview: August, 1997
Source: KHRG

[Saw Lay Htoo lived in a Karen village along the Thanbyuzayat - Three Pagodas Pass road, but had to flee after his village was ordered to relocate and his house was burnt down.]

Originally I am from Doe Way Paw village, about two days walk from here in Kya-In township. I left my village ten years ago because the Burmese were doing military operations in the area and they forced the villagers to work, so we dared not stay. We went to live in xxxx village.

I arrived here one week ago because the Burmese burnt down our house in xxxx, so we had to leave and we came to stay here. The Burmese forced us to move to the village [to Three Pagodas Pass village], we didn't go and so they came to burn down the houses.

The SLORC soldiers first came and told the villagers to move. I don't know which Battalion, but I saw "62" on their uniform [this is IB. 62, notorious in the region for destroying villages; it was this Battalion which attacked Halockhani refugee camp in 1994]. We didn't move and after four days they came back and said to the villagers: "Don't stay here. Go and stay at Three Pagodas Pass." I told them: "Yes, we can go and stay there but we cannot bring our belongings with us." The villagers didn't go and the same day they burnt our house down. xxxx. They burnt my house while I was hunting in the forest but my family saw it. We lost everything which was in the house, like clothes, pots, plates, ... everything! I felt very angry. The villagers couldn't stay anymore, so all the households moved to the Burmese place [to Three Pagodas Pass as ordered by the SLORC]. We stayed there for a short time and they asked us to do this and that. They ordered us to carry their things but I am old and I cannot carry anything, so I asked the children to go. If any troops came, we had to go as their guides. So altogether 6 members of my family came here: one daughter, one son, the other daughter with her husband, one grandchild and myself.

The SLORC soldiers demanded porters but the villagers had not gone yet. I have never been a porter, but my children sometimes had to carry their things. Before they burnt my house, we could stay there.

Interview 85: HRV: Relocation, Livelihood, Torture

Name:	Saw Shwe Hla
Sex:	Male
Age:	21
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Married with two children
Address:	Klih Tu village, Ye township, Mon State
Date of interview:	August, 1997
Source:	KHRG

[Saw Shwe Hla witnessed the beating by SLORC troops and subsequent death of his village headman. He was interviewed just a few days after fleeing the area.]

I ran from the Burmese because I did not dare stay. When the Burmese came, they called us and we had no more time to work. They came and ate our rice that we had prepared to store for our food, and they ate the fowl that we reared. When they order us to work for them, they did not feed us and we had to take our own rice with us. If they asked for porters and they didn't get them, they tortured the village headman.

Most people were beaten by the soldiers, but I escaped. The whole village was beaten, the village head as well. It was at the beginning of this rainy season. They were asking for guns. When the people said they didn't have guns, they started beating people. They tortured our village leader and now he has already died. They beat him with a stick, they hit him with gun butts and they shot him with a slingshot. They burnt him, they beat him with a rock and cut through his skin with a knife. I saw it all. He was a tall man. He was completely bruised and black. After the Burmese tortured him, he went to the hospital in the morning, but the hospital wouldn't accept him [for victims of shootings or beatings, written passes from SLORC officers are required for admission to hospital; any doctor or nurse who treats such a person without Army permission risks arrest or the loss of their license to practice]. So he came back to the village and died in our village. He was the secretary of the village. His name was Kyaw Ta.

We did not receive an order to move from the SLORC soldiers. There were 100 houses in our village and about 80 or 90 are still there. Some people went to the towns, like Ler Moe Mor and Lai Sa Bya [these are big Mon villages]. Some families came here. Some from Wah Pyi came here too, after the Burmese came to their village.

Now the Burmese have left our village, but people are saying that they will come again. I left my village about one month ago and went to stay outside the village, in xxxx village. It is not near here. I stayed there because the heavy rains stopped me from going further. There was no problem in xxxx, because the Burmese have never arrived there yet. But we heard that they would come there too. So we came here. We slept two nights on the way. We couldn't carry anything. We came with the children and it was raining too. I came only with my own family. If we go to any other place we will be among the Burmese again, so I don't want to go.

Interview 86: HRV: Torture, Women

Name:	Pa Ngeh
Sex:	Male
Age:	36
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Married with two children
Address:	xxxx village, Waw Raw township, Karen State
Date of interview:	August 1997
Source:	KHRG

(Pa Ngeh saw a woman and the headman tortured in his village, so he fled to Kyun Chaung, where he had to do forced labor for SLORC. Then he fled back to his village, only to be ordered to move, so he finally fled the area.)

I arrived last week, just over ten days ago. We had to face so many problems. They tortured people a lot. One or two people. The soldiers tortured one of the women very seriously. There was a woman buying something at the shop and they came close to her. She was afraid and ran. Then the soldiers grabbed the woman shopkeeper and asked: "Who is that woman?" She answered: "She is a good person." Then they said, "She is not good. If she is good, she wouldn't have run!" And they started beating the woman shopkeeper until she passed stools in her sarong. She had to suffer instead of the woman who ran away. They wanted to beat the other woman, but couldn't run after her, so they accused the shopkeeper of being a

“Kaw Thoo Lei trader”. They beat her I don’t know how many times. They hit her with a bamboo as big as this. I dared not look at it.

Many people were tortured in xxxx [his village], even the village head. I saw the Burmese burn him with their cheroots and demand guns from him. Now he has fled and is hiding in that area. I was not beaten, but I didn’t want to stay in xxxx anymore. That’s why I went to stay in Kyun Chaung. In Kyun Chaung I had to suffer too. I had to work for them weaving bamboo every day. We had no time to work for ourselves. We had to go and stay with them. I was there for two months and we had to cut bamboo, weave it and build a fence [part of the seven layers of fencing SLORC has placed around their new Army camp in Kyun Chaung]. So I went back to xxxx [his home village], but I saw them there too. We had to move. I was living in the outskirts of the village and they forced the villagers who were living in the outskirts to move to the center of the village. So I fled. I came here because I had to move. I don’t know but I will stay until other people move. Then I will move with them. I won’t go back.

Interview 87: HRV: Arrest, Torture, Forced Labor, Women

Name:	Saw Tamla Wah
Sex:	Male
Age:	41
Ethnicity:	Karen, pastor
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with three children
Address:	xxxx village, Kya In township, Karen State
Date of interview:	August 1997
Source:	KHRG

[Saw Tamla Wah is the Baptist pastor of his village. He fled three months ago after being arrested and tied to a tree for two days by SLORC troops.]

When SLORC Division 44 entered the area, the villagers heard that they were torturing people a lot. So they all ran here and there. I told them not to run. I said if the Burmese make trouble for the villagers, I would face it. We don’t want our church and our congregation destroyed, our congregation scattered, and we don’t want our village and our families destroyed either. So when SLORC Division 44 entered, I faced them in the village. I had to solve their problems for them, so I became a leader among the villagers. The Burmese started registering the names of all the villagers, and they often called me for any number of reasons. And later on, Division

44 left.

Then SLORC Division 22 came into the village and they ordered me to go and see them. I thought that I had done nothing wrong so I went. When I met their group, they asked me to sit down beside the Captain and he told me, "Don't tell me anything. Only when I ask you questions, you must answer me. Otherwise you mustn't question me or say anything." Then he told me many things, and he accused me of having two guns and one walkie-talkie and ordered me to bring them to him. Later on, he interrogated me three more times. He sent the soldiers to call me to see him. I went three times to see him. After that, he said to me: "You are choosing the way to death!" I had been order to go and bring these things [guns and a walkie-talkie] to him but I had nothing, so I couldn't. Then he ordered me to get them from anywhere I could and bring them to him. I couldn't do that either.

So the Captain, I don't remember his name, tied my hands behind my back. They tied up many people. They tied people up in the garden under the trees. First they tied people with a rope, then they tied the rope to a tree, and they had three sentries to guard each group. I was tied up to a friend of mine. I didn't see the others because we were kept separately. I can't say exactly how many were beaten, but I know more than ten. Their wives told me about it later. They kept me like this for two days and one night. We couldn't sleep because we were very anxious and we just had to sit there like that. They gave food to us, the same food they ate. They didn't beat me but they beat the others and dunked their heads in the Tha May river. Some were beaten and kicked until they were bleeding. Some escaped but they still haven't returned home yet. The man tied to me was not beaten, but later on they ordered him to be a porter and sent him to another place, about 5 or 6 miles away. I wasn't beaten, just kept like this for two days and one night until the Battalion Commander arrived. He ordered the soldiers to untie all the people that they had tied up. Then one by one, he interrogated us.

I escaped when the Major ordered me to go and talk to the villagers. He said: "If they have any gun that is hidden or buried, they must show it and give it to me. You are the pastor and most of the KNU leaders are Christians, so if you speak to them they will listen to you. Tell them that their fighting is now over, they must join us and work together with us." That was why they let me go to the village. He let me go at 6 p.m. in the evening and told me: "This same night you have to report to us!" and I said to him: "Tonight I cannot arrive there." So he told me then: "Tomorrow at 6 a.m. you have to be back." I promised that I would be back at 6 a.m. But I left with my family and didn't go back.

While the SLORC soldiers are in our village, three people have to go at all times and

work for them. If they're staying in their camp then the villagers have to work in their camp. They also order the villagers to carry things to the frontline. The soldiers walk in front and keep the porters in the middle of their group [so they can't escape]. They know that the Karen Army hasn't put mines around there. That is why they don't send the porters in front of them.

The situation for the villagers is very difficult, because if the Karen soldiers engage the SLORC close to the village, the blame is put on the villagers. For example, if any mine explodes near the village, the village will be destroyed by SLORC and the villagers will have to move to another place.

In other villages too, some people were tortured badly but I didn't see that. Pastors like me were tortured until the skin broke on their heads and their jaws became swollen. I saw one who had to suffer that, but I heard that many others suffered it too. His name was Thra E--- from H--- village, not very far from us. We are friends and we work together. The Burmese hit his head with their gun butts, kicked him and punched him, and his whole body got swollen. He was beaten because one of his church congregation members, Padoh T---, is a KNU leader. The SLORC told him, "He is your church member. You must know everything about him and his movements." That was why they beat him!

I didn't see it but I heard they raped three women from xxxx and yyyy villages in Waw Raw area. When they entered the village the men were afraid, ran to the forest and slept there. Then the Burmese went and raped the women. This happened not so long ago, shortly before I came here. After I left my village I also heard that one woman was raped by the soldiers in xxxx village, a nearby village. That information, I know, is true. That happened last month in July, when her husband went to sleep in the forest and the women stayed alone in the village. She was 32 years old and she has three children. She is the mother of G---. She is still staying there in the village.

Our village has twenty households. Some are Buddhists, not all are Christians. The SLORC don't care which you are. They also arrested some Buddhist people but most of them were Christians. I didn't see any sign of DKBA. When they arrested me, the soldier who was guarding me was a Burmese guy from Rangoon. He talked about many things to me and he said, "Among our #22 Division, some are DKBA. DKBA only combined with us because they couldn't join the other Divisions." I knew that some DKBA were with them, so I was afraid. [Because DKBA members often identify anyone they don't like, particularly Christians, as 'KNU' so that SLORC will execute them.]

Interview 88: HRV: Arrest, Torture, Forced Labor

Name: Pa Noh
Sex: Male
Age: 45
Ethnicity: Pwo Karen, farmer
Religion: Christian
Marital status: Married with six children
Address: xxxx village, Kya In township, Karen State
Date of interview: August 1997
Source: KHRG

[Pa Noh fled his village after being arrested and badly beaten by SLORC troops.]

One month ago I arrived at the Thai border. I left because the Burmese came to my village and arrested people. They called us and interrogated us about guns. We didn't have guns but they said we had. They beat us often. I was detained for three months, from the time they arrived in Saw Kee and Saw Hta [a.k.a. Azin] until SLORC Division 44 left our village.

The SLORC arrested me and interrogated me about the guns and tortured me. They punched me, beat me and hit me with a gun butt. They tortured me up to the point that four times I became unconscious. They accused me of having contact with Kaw Thoo Lei. They told me: "If you stay in this area, then Kaw Thoo Lei is here too." I was not a village headman, but they arrested and interrogated me questions. During the month of the Water Festival [in April], I was in Plaw Toh Kee and Tee Klee Thu area. They captured me at Plaw Toh Kee. They have established a new strategic camp there. They beat me, they stomped on my chest with their boots and hit me with a gun barrel. They accused me of having a gun, but I've never had any gun. Then they said that I was a traitor and that everything that went wrong in the country was my fault. They said I was the one who wouldn't allow the civilians to come back [from hiding and from the refugee camps, to live under SLORC]. The Burmese ordered me to go around with them. They ordered me to follow them and tied my hands. Just me alone. They kept me for more than one month. They didn't torture me every day, just once a week or so, but then they did it so badly that I became unconscious. They slapped and beat me many times, five times they beat me unconscious. The first time I went unconscious was in Khaw Gheh when I was walking along with them. At Meh Ker Kee once, Plaw Toh Kee once, Ivo once, and Paw Ner Mu once. The first time they tortured me, they hit me with a gun barrel and they kicked me with their boots and they hit my head. They punched me in the ear and it was broken. For three days when I was passing urine it was only blood,

and when I passed stools it was also blood. I thought I would die. I will show you the scars. This one is from punching. On my head there are many scars. They also rolled a bamboo pole over my shins. They ordered me to stretch out my legs, they put the bamboo over my shins and two soldiers on each side of me rolled it very heavily.

They didn't keep me at any one place, they ordered me to follow them. When they arrived in a village they stayed there for two or three days and they tied me up. Sometimes in three days they only gave me one meal.

They dug a hole in the ground four plah x five plah, like a bunker [one plah (elbow to fingertip) is about 1.5 feet]. They had only one hole to put people in. They wanted to dig a hole of around eight plah depth but they met with rocks at the bottom, so they couldn't get deeper than five plah. Then they put the excavated ground around the top and made it 6 plah deep. They put logs on the top of the hole and left only one gap to get in. I had to grab the soldier's hand [to climb down inside]. I couldn't stand up inside [he was forbidden]. They put me in there and then covered the opening with a plastic sheet so I couldn't breathe inside. They put me in that hole once, for the whole day. After that, I couldn't see properly. When the opening was covered, it was hard for me to breathe. I could sit and lie down but breathing was extremely hard and slow.

I know the name of those who tortured me: xxxx and yyyy from SLORC Division 44. The Battalion Commander above them is named xxxx and he is Arakanese. They finally released me when Division 44 left the area. I dared not remain in my village because they had said: "We won't release you! We interrogated you and we got nothing out of you. So I will hand you over to the other army troops." Two new Battalions came and they surrounded my house to arrest me. A third group arrived and did the same.

K--- was also tortured. He is 30 years old. They tied K---'s wrists behind his back and put a bamboo pole through under his two arms like this, and they hung him on a tree like that. Then they kicked him and one of his arms went loose [they disjointed his shoulder]. It happened in the cattle corral. He was tortured for one day and then they released him. He couldn't hold anything in his hands anymore. Now he still stays at xxxx but not in the village, in the forest.

They didn't kill anyone but they tortured many people like this. Moreover, the villagers had to go and carry things for them. Our xxxx village has 80 houses. Eight persons each day have to work for the Burmese as porters. One person has to carry three big tins of rice [50 kg./110 lb.] and we have to take our own rice to eat. On top of

that, they also take machetes and other things like coconuts from us. They eat them or destroy them. They arrive at the village and they eat whatever they want, like our rice. They don't take all of our rice but they take some for themselves to eat.

I came here with all of my family. If I left them behind the Burmese would come and arrest them. They are staying here now. I will stay and see the situation.

Interview 89: HRV: Arrest, Torture, Forced Labor

Name:	Saw Lah Po
Sex:	Male
Age:	19
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with no children
Address:	xxxx village, Kya In township
Date of interview:	August 1997
Source:	KHRG

I arrived here one month ago. I dared not stay because they said, "If I see you again, I will not allow you to say one word and I will torture you again." We ran away from them and we thought that they would not come again. But then in April I met them beside my house in xxxx. They didn't ask any questions, they just started at once to tie our hands. They took me to Kru M'Tee monastery. They have a camp in Kru M'Tee. They pushed me with their gun barrels and hit my back with gun butts. They beat me on my neck. They stomped on my back with their boots once, here and here. They punched me here and on my stomach many times. They ordered me to carry things and demanded guns. I left the Karen Army two years ago. I told them, "I don't have any!" and they said, "Yes, you have!" They tied me up and stomped on me. They handcuffed my hands behind my back and attached the handcuffs to the post of the monastery. They ordered me to stretch my legs and keep them straight and together. Then they stepped on my shins with their boots. They made me stay under the hot sun for four days at Kru M'Tee monastery. I felt burning inside. They didn't allow me to drink any water. They only gave me one cup of rice and salt, and they gave this only in the afternoon. Early the next morning they gave me another cup of rice. In the night they didn't untie me and I had to stay sitting up.

After four days, they gave me a pass [allowing him to stay]. They said, "If you lose this pass, you don't need to say one word" [i.e. don't even bother trying to explain]. When they gave me the pass the commander told the soldiers, "If you see that pass,

don't bother him and don't arrest him". After they released me, they called me back many times and I had to carry things for them. When some other SLORC troops [a new group] saw my pass, they tore it up. After my pass was torn, the first group of soldiers tried to arrest me again. I had to go and stay in the forest. Later I went to stay in xxxx [in Thailand]. I am still there doing day labor. My wife and her mother are staying there. Her mother and her older brother cannot see very well. She has "tha mu paw" [a disease which causes blindness]. I arrived after my wife. She came first.

Other villagers including my elder brother and my uncle were tortured too. They arrested my brother and me on the same day but they kept us separately in Kru M'Tee. They kept my elder brother by the road and I was detained at the monastery. My elder brother was also an ex-soldier. One of his friends surrendered to the SLORC and came back with them. The Burmese arrested my brother and also demanded guns from him. They thought that he was a captain, so they beat him and stomped on him. They tied him up and tortured him a lot too. They made a fire and forced him to hold his face close to the fire. His face was burnt and became covered with blisters. His mouth was also burnt and he couldn't eat anymore. After the first beatings he could still eat but not after the burns. He was tortured so badly for two days that he was passing blood in his stools. My elder brother also received a pass, but he lost his too. it also was torn up by the new troops.

Only my brother had joined the army [KNLA] in the past, not my uncle. But the Burmese also accused my uncle of having a gun. They pushed my uncle's head into the water. He is 40 years old. They bobbed his head up and down in the river. They made a fire under him and he was forced to lay above the fire. They smoked cheroots and pressed the burning cheroots on him. They handcuffed his hands behind his back. They beat him three different times and one time he went unconscious. When he fell unconscious the soldiers hit him with their gun butt. There were many wounds on his body, and many scars all over from the cheroot burns. Blood still comes out of his mouth because of the stomping he got.

The soldiers asked five people from the village for porter every day. They have to carry three tins [50 kg./110 lb.] of rice to Seik Gyi and then they have to come back in the middle of the night. If the porters get too tired to go on, they catch new ones. It is a long way from Seik Gyi to our village, four days' walk. So altogether their duty is for five days [four days carrying the rice, then a fast non-stop walk home]. Before there were 20 households in xxxx, but now only 12 or 13 households remain in the village. The men have gone to stay outside the village and the women remain in the village. Many people stay outside the village, some have gone to other villages and some have gone to stay at xxxx. My elder brother is now at xxxx. I have four

brothers and two sisters. I am the youngest. My father died when I was young. My mother stays in Burma and I came alone to stay here with my parents-in-law. I would like to go and see my mother but I dare not go back. If the Burmese meet me there will be problems for me.

Interview 90: HRV: Arrest, Torture, Forced Labor

Name:	Saw Po Ther
Sex:	Male
Age:	18
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married, no children
Address:	xxxx village, Waw Raw township, Karen State
Date of interview:	August, 1997
Source:	KHRG

I arrived here with my wife on July 6, 1997. I left my village because the Burmese tortured us and accused us of having guns. We don't have guns. They arrested us on April 16 and asked us to give them guns. We had a television and they took it. Before they arrested me, they took everything - sleeping mat, watch, goat, chickens, pigs, plates, pots, etc. They took everything from me. They accused people of having connection with the rebels. They arrested me at my house, took me to the church and beat me there. I told them that I didn't have any gun but they said I had. The first night they tied me to a tree and didn't beat me. In the morning, they tortured me for three hours, stopped for a while and then beat me again for one hour. Then they arrested me again on April 28. They kept me in the church for twelve hours, the whole night, and the next day at noon they moved me to another place along the Tha May river and they tortured me again. They rolled a piece of wood on my shins. They tied my feet in the air, my hands behind my back and hung me up [hanging upside down]. They hit me so many times that I couldn't count it, and I was bleeding here and there and here... My whole body was swollen. They beat me with a piece of wood, on my head, my body, my feet. They kicked me with their boots and beat me until I was broken. You wouldn't have recognized me if you saw me then. They tortured me until I was unconscious. I didn't vomit because I swallowed it. I didn't want to show them that I was really hurt.

Then after beating me up, at 7 o'clock in the evening they put me in the water for 15 or 20 minutes and let me breathe only sometimes. They tied me up that night. I had to stay there on April 30, 1997. Then they moved me to Ywathit and they tied me

up there for three days, and then they sent me to Ya Kra and I was kept there for three days. In the mornings the Burmese ate fried rice and drank tea, but they didn't give anything to us. Only sometimes in the afternoon they gave us one piece of chicken with stale rice. Once in the evening they gave us one meal. Then they untied one of my hands, and one night later they released me.

I didn't go to hospital because it is far away from my house. I stayed in my house for one month in May to recover. SLORC Division 44 had already left and I thought I could stay in our village. But then on July 1st I heard that Division 44 Division was coming again, so I decided to leave the village and I arrived here on July 6.

The soldiers also arrested two of my elder brothers. The three of us were tortured more than the others. With the others, they only ordered them to carry things as porters. My two elder brothers were tortured even more than I was. They were arrested the same night as me. The soldiers beat their shins and their heads with a piece of wood. Now they cannot walk anymore. They can just stay like this. And they had to go into the hole for six days. They had to pass urine right there in the hole. They were released on May 4. My brothers are still staying in the village. They didn't come because they think there are too many problems on the way. They will come if the situation gets worse.

In our village, they are asking for five kinds of porters. Since their boat sank they have asked for human porters, bullock-cart porters, boat porters, carrying porters and porters to guard them. [He uses the term for 'porter' to refer to any kind of forced labor; by 'carrying porters' he means people to carry supplies, while 'human porters' presumably means people for Army camp labor and 'porters to guard them' means forced sentry duty.] In the place where their boat sank, their guns also sank and so they ordered villagers to guard the place. [Some escaped porters reported that this sinking occurred during this rainy season, when a boat carrying a dozen soldiers as well as a group of porters tied to each other was attempting to cross a river in that area and sank. The 12 soldiers drowned because of their boots and heavy equipment, while the porters managed to swim tied up together and reached the bank. After the incident, the Army was determined to recover the guns from the river bottom, so they forced villagers to guard the place and also forced them to dive into the wild current to recover the guns.]

We're not making things up behind the backs of the Burmese. I am telling you this to report to the world because what they are doing is really true, they are torturing us like this without mercy and we cannot bear it. I don't say this just to tell bad things about them. It is the very truth. Our soldiers are weak and there is no fighting. Why are they treating us like this?

Interview 91: HRV: Arrest, Torture

Name: Saw Lah Kuh
Sex: Male
Age: 41
Ethnicity: Karen, farmer
Religion: Christian
Marital status: Married with five children
Address: xxxx village, Kya In township, Karen State
Date of interview: August 1997
Source: KHRG

[Saw Lah Kuh was headman of his village, but fled after being detained in a hole in the ground and beaten by SLORC troops.]

I cannot say exactly when I left my village, because when I escaped from my village I was really frightened. It was over three weeks ago. The SLORC hurt the people, so I was afraid and came here. It took me three days to get here.

The soldiers tried to arrest the civilians in the village including me. At first [when SLORC occupied the village] I escaped for about one week and the village elder asked me to come back. He is the SLORC headman in our village [the villagers choose one headman to represent them to SLORC (though SLORC often dictates whom this will be), and another to represent them to the KNU; “Saw Lah Kuh” was the “KNU headman”]. He has to go often to the Burmese camp. He called me back to go to their camp. They had built a temporary camp in our village. The Burmese had requested him to go and call me. He told me: “Even though you escape, you are not safe. The Burmese will not be around for just two or three months!” So I had to go back and stay in my house. I went to the Burmese and I had to let them interrogate me. I am the leader of the village group [liaison with the KNU].

In April 1997, they put me in the hole and interrogated me because I was the village headman. That was the main reason. When I arrived at their place, they asked my name. My name was already written down in their list in their books. Then they immediately put me in the hole and didn’t allow me to say a word. After they put me in the hole, the Burmese called the young man who works together with me and interrogated him too. Then they took me out of the hole and questioned me more. They put me in the hole again for another half day and then interrogated me again. They interrogated me three times each day. They asked so many questions on so many things that I cannot tell you all of it. They questioned me about guns and about Karen soldiers. “Where did the soldiers escape to?” and “Where did they hide their

guns?" And so on, and so forth. I didn't know anything. I didn't see anything. So I couldn't tell anything. But they interrogated me until I couldn't answer anymore. When I felt very tired they would let me rest for a while, and then as soon as I was a little better they interrogated me again. They frightened me. They cocked their pistol to shoot me. During the first eight days they didn't torture me, but on the last day they did.

On the 9th day, they started torturing me. They kicked me with their boots and punched me. My chin was hurt. They punched my chin twice and I fell unconscious. Then people came to lift me up and the Burmese put me in Y---'s house. That house was inside the Army camp fences. After nine days, they released me.

SLORC Division 44 arrested me. Division 44 also arrested other people who were tortured more than me. Altogether 12 people were arrested. The first time they arrested six and later six more. Those who worked together with me were beaten more than me and were detained longer than me. The Burmese tied them up, punched them, kicked them and put them in the hole. I couldn't see all of them because we were kept separately. They arrested us at the same time but they separated us at once. In the evening they put us together. In the daytime they separated us. Division 22 came in, they asked the village elders about me and then they started interrogating me again. They didn't do anything to me. I just explained to them that when they launched military operations like this, the Karen soldiers split and move in separate groups, so obviously they wouldn't tell me where they stay and I don't know where. Then when LIB. 549 came, I dared not face them because they always beat people they meet on the road or see ploughing their fields.

I don't know the current situation, but before I came here they used to do like what I have related. We didn't have time to work in the fields, and they ordered us to go and carry things for them. If they saw us when we were ploughing or if they saw us on the road, they called us and beat us. Therefore we could not work in our fields anymore and we came here. We always had to be going as porters. Now there is more oppression but I can't explain everything. They took away a lot of chickens, pigs, cattle, coconuts, etc. and they took some rice from some villagers but not from others.

Many villages around my village were also forced to move as well. I heard that the Burmese ordered villages to move, like Kwih Gyi Kloh. Around xxxx, the small villages and the villages where many had fled and few people were left all had to move to the big villages. To Meh Ta Kreh village and to Ka Kyar village, I heard. I heard that the soldiers just came and gave the order. They went to the village called xxxx. They had problems on the way because of the floods and the rivers and they

had small children. Some men came here to check the place and then went back to bring their families, but because of the rains they haven't arrived yet.

We stay here and we are waiting to see how the situation will evolve. If we can stay, we will. If we have to move, we will move again to xxxx. I don't feel very safe here but it is better than there. As long as we are staying away from the SLORC, we have less to worry.

Interview 92: HRV: Livelihood, Forced Labor

Name:	Saw Ler Muh
Sex:	Male
Age:	45
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Marital status:	Married with seven children
Address:	xxxx village, Waw Raw township, Karen State
Date of interview:	August 1997
Source:	KHRG

[Saw Ler Muh is a church elder from a village near the Thanbyuzayat - Three Pagodas Pass road. He had to flee after SLORC troops ordered him to find guns for them.]

I left my village on July 15, 1997. It took me one day to get here. When I was living in xxxx, they came and asked for chickens. Then they went into the houses and searched everything. They didn't get anything. They left and then another group came. They found two bullets in my kitchen. I think that the first group who came to my house left those two bullets behind purposely and told the second group how to find them so they could accuse me. Karen never use that kind of bullets, they were G3 bullets. [The G3 assault rifle is used by SLORC troops but almost never by Karen forces, who prefer M16 and AK47 assault rifles.] "Are these M16 gun bullets?" they asked. I told them, "No, they are G3 bullets!" and I went inside the house and took a gun to show them. I had a hunting gun. They said to me, "You have to look for this gun until we get it." They gave me a deadline, three days, to find the gun. I couldn't find the gun and I fled. That was the reason why I left. First they ordered me to find the gun which the bullets came from. Then within two or three days they demanded that the whole village find them one gun. The villagers could not find a gun and had to give them 2,000 *kyats*. Then later again they asked for two guns and since the villagers could not find them, the Burmese soldiers went to the Tha May riverside and arrested the headman there. His name is xxxx and they took

him back with them. xxxx is an old man and he is friendly with the Burmese leaders. The leaders from Seik Gyi gave him a special pass. When the Burmese soldiers who arrested him saw that pass, they couldn't do anything to him so they let him free. Then the Burmese left the village. As soon as they left, the families also left the village at once and came to this area.

In the past, there was no one in xxxx and then the Burmese forced people to move there. After the people went to stay there, the Karen soldiers did not come anymore. Before we were staying at the mouth of the stream and along the Tha May river, then the Burmese forced the people to go and stay near the main road. xxxx is very spread out, divided into three parts, Altogether there are 60 houses and my area, the middle section, has 30 houses. But now the Burmese come often and ask the people for guns, so the villagers are now all scattered here and there. I don't know how many houses are left but in the upper side no more families remain. There are still some left in the part of the village where I stayed.

They stay in the village and they ask for porters, shoot the cattle and the pigs, and steal our chickens. They wait along the road for the cattle traders, they demand one cow from them and then let them go. They don't bring their rations, instead they ask rice from the villagers and the villagers have to feed them.

I was not a porter but I had to give money - each month 200 *kyats* for porter fees, and twice a month we have to give other fees as well. Then for the Captain who came and stayed there, we had to give 10,000 *kyats*. I don't know why, maybe for the soldiers' salaries. This is for LIB. 202, LIB. 355, and Division 44. The headman said that if each house gives 200 *kyats*, he will find people to hire [to meet the demands for porters]. We gave the money to the headman, and the headman gave the money to the Captain. The officer who stays in our village is not the commander. The commander stays in Lay Noh [called Taung Zone by the Burmese, along the Thanbyuzayat - Three Pagodas Pass road]. He asked for the money so we had to give it. They move around that area, and porters have to go with them and carry their things and ammunition in the rain. In the rainy season the road is washed out and trucks can only come up to Anand Gwin. It is half a day's walk between Taung Zone and xxxx [his village].

Interview 93: HRV: Torture, Forced Labor

Name: Saw Kler Eh
Sex: Male
Age: 25

Ethnicity: Karen, farmer
Religion: Christian
Marital status: Married with two children
Address: xxxx village, Kya In township, Karen State
Date of interview: August 1997
Source: KHRG

[Saw Kler Eh's brother, who was present at the interview, was beaten by SLORC troops even though he is deaf and mute and must communicate in a sign language unique to his family. Saw Kler Eh himself was once a Karen soldier so he was accused of possessing guns. Both brothers had to flee the village.]

I arrived here during the last week of July, 1997, about one month ago. I dared not stay in xxxx. I used to be a Karen soldier. I left the army already, but the Burmese accused me of having guns. They told me to find them. I knew that if I couldn't they would start to harm me.

One month ago, my elder brother was staying in a hut and the Burmese came there. He cannot speak [he is deaf and mute]. They ordered him to come down from the hut and hit him twice with a knife on his head and took his clothes and money. He did not come with me because he thought that he would stay and do the farm work. But after that, he dared not stay and work on the farm anymore.

The SLORC soldiers also made many problems in the village. They asked for porters, and if they could catch any animals they ate them. They always asked for porters. When I came here they were asking for seven porters. Even after the villagers had already gone [for a shift as porters], they come and catch more people ploughing in the fields. After I left, I heard that now they are demanding up to 20 porters. We have to go by turn. If they need you for a week, you have to go for a week. If they go somewhere, the porters have to go with them. If they stay, you have to stay with them. If your time is up, you must be replaced. They change porters every week. Some people who have carried their things have been badly tortured. Some of them have had to climb high mountains and couldn't do it anymore so they were beaten. When they came back the skin of their backs was damaged and raw. I know some of them but they haven't come here yet. Before I left, among the porters who came back to the village, two of them had had the skin of their back ripped off until it was completely raw, and another one had been brutally beaten.

Over 20 families have left our village up to now. Before we had 50 or 60 households. It is not easy to leave because we have to pass through the Burmese. We had to go secretly without them seeing, because they would never allow us to come here.

We're not safe here either, but it is better than in our village.

Interview 94: HRV: Torture, Child, Livelihood

Name: Saw Nee Th'Blay
 Sex: Male
 Age: 57
 Ethnicity: Karen, farmer
 Religion: Christian
 Marital status: Married with six children
 Address: xxxx village, Kya In township, Karen State
 Date of interview: August, 1997
 Source: KHRG

[Saw Nee Th'Blay was a church elder in his village but had to flee after SLORC occupied the area and began abusing the villagers.]

I arrived at the Thai border about three months ago. We dared not stay in our village because the SLORC oppressed us. They didn't oppress me much. But they oppressed my children [his church congregation] so much, I felt as though they were oppressing me. They put some in holes, beat some and punished some. Some were bleeding so much that we dared not even look at them. Therefore I left with my whole family.

They beat and kicked and punched, they did so many things. Many people were tortured in my village. Not only in my village, in every village. The Burmese demanded guns. Even though you don't have any guns, they say you have.

More than twenty villagers were tortured by the SLORC soldiers in my village. In my [extended] family, they tortured about ten of us. My nephews and nieces, my grandchildren, etc. They had to suffer mostly in the same way. If they put one person in the hole for three hours, then they did the same to everyone. They put them in, take them out to demand guns, then put them back in again, out and in again... all the time. The troops that tortured the villagers were from #44 Division. When one group left, another group came and then another. And they oppressed us more and more. I couldn't stay there anymore and face all these problems.

The SLORC soldiers came often to our village, going around and checking everywhere. But since they came in April they've always stayed in the village. Now they stay in every village. In my village, 200 soldiers came to stay. In the other villages, about

100, 200 or 300 soldiers. They stayed until the rainy season and then left. Now there are fewer in the village.

They stayed in the villagers' houses. They took everything. I don't even want to talk about it. They arrived and took our rice without even asking. They also took our prawn paste and ate it. They did not give money for what they took from our village.

There were 70 houses in my village. Now I am not sure how many are left. You should ask people who came out later than me. My friend left three weeks ago and only 50 households remained, he said. And I am not sure whether they are going to stay in the village or not because everyone wants to leave.

Interview 95: HRV: Forced Labor, Women, Prison Labor, Arrest

Name:	Tategay
Sex:	Male
Age:	23 years old
Ethnicity:	Karen, farmer
Religion:	Christian
Education:	Fourth standard
Date of Interview:	September, 1997
Source:	HRDU

I escaped from portorage and arrived back home. I did not stay at home. As soon as I got back, I brought my 8-year-old nephew who was staying with me in my home. I decided to flee because I could no longer work for the forced labor in the region. The authority has conscripted civilians in Phasaung township and Mawchee township, Karenni State. I had been forced to do forced labor in the renovation project of the old motor road between Baw Gali and Mawchee.

In addition to the forced labor, people had to provide the porters for the military column from LIB 429. It is stationed at the Buko and Kyawkhee camps and demanded the villagers from Bolopa, Kaw Thu Tee, Ywa Tee Do, Tana Lo, Ywape and other villages in Phasaung township to provide 15 porters from each village. These people had to work three days a week and each time lasted three days. Most were ordered to carry two iron-tins of rice. If people did not want to go, 2,000 *kyats* was required as fine. Many women also had to work as forced porters.

When I was working for portorage, there were five women in the group of 15 people

from my village. I only remembered two names. They were Bwe Dosay, 25-year-old and Se Saymo, 30-year-old. I could not remember the rest. All were married women with children. There were another 15 porters from other villages.

No money was paid for service. Two meals were given with unassisted one plate of rice and small piece of fish-paste. It was not enough for us.

I found about 100 prisoners with the military column we served. They were from porter battalion. Some attempted to escape during their time in portorage. I saw three prisoners were shot dead because they attempted to run away. Soldiers threatened us not to run away and we would be killed if recaptured or because of landmines planted along the route. I did not know who planted the landmines.

I escaped from portorage on December 15, 1996. I could no longer bear the big burden for this regular forced portorage. I could not go three days every week for this hard work. Not enough food and medical care. The work was also very hard and tiresome. I was hit with gun butts by the military officer when I could not continue to walk during my porter service. I still suffer pain in my chest. I cannot breathe well. It is painful when I cough.

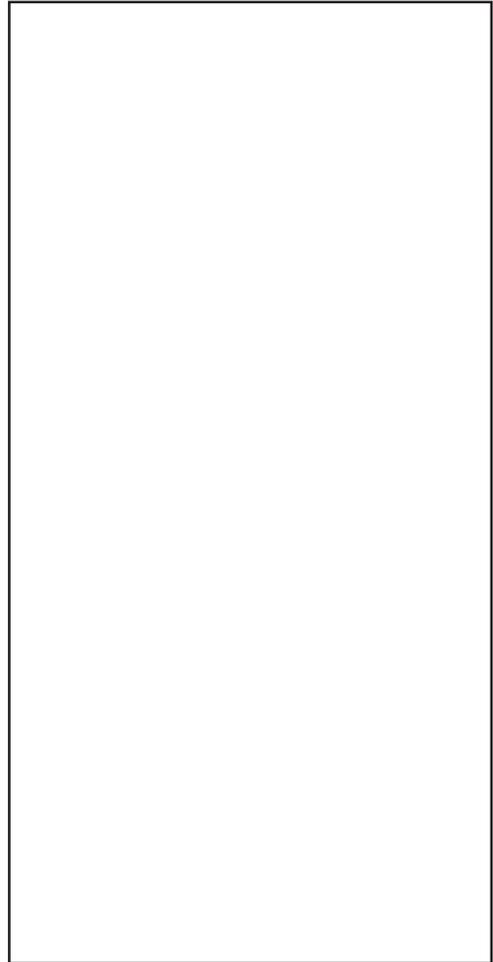
Portering and forced labor is very common in my region. We had to go any time. Every household in my village had to clear their quota space along the Baw Gali-Mawchee motor road. It was absolutely by force. Villagers could not go back to the village every day so they built temporary shelters along the motor road and worked until it was finished. Altogether 200 civilians worked for this road. I saw some prisoners in some construction site. The troops from LIB. 429 monitored the construction and laborers. If the people could not finish their quota, fine was demanded. They are subject to arrest if they failed to give fine. Many people got arrested in this way and many also fled to Thai-Burma border. The whole family fled.

Interview 96: HRV: Child, Forced Labor

Name:	Kyaw Ohn
Sex:	Male
Age:	15 years old
Ethnicity:	Arakanese
Religion:	Buddhist
Address:	Pyin Shin village, Kyaukpyi township, Arankan State
Private ID:	Kapa/952698

Date of interview: September 1997
 Place of interview: Thai-Burma border near Mae Sariang
 Source: HRDU

I had a problem with my mother and I joined the army. I registered at the Kyaukpyi, a new recruit center, and they took me to Mingladon New Recruitment Center. I was only 11 years old when I joined the army in February 1992. No problem for my young age. Some were younger than me. They were only 9 or 10 years old. I learnt later that they were forcibly conscripted. Their parents were paid 3,000 *kyats* for their son. All are Arakanese from Myauk-U in Arakan State. There were three 8-year-old boys, three 9-year-old boys, two 10-year-old boys in my training intake. Many of them were punished and beaten because they were not strong enough to carry the guns. Not only them, other recruits in their group were also punished. I spent three months in the new recruitment center before I went to training in No.(9) Training School in Thaton, Mon State. We were paid five *kyats* per day for working at the fishing ponds for the fund raising project at the center.



In January 1993, I was sent to No. (9) training school in Thaton, Mon State. During the training, I received 450 *kyats* per month. Many fees were deducted from my salary. I can't remember all the names of fees deducted. The training took five months then I was assigned to Division 11, Thaton. In September 1993, I was transferred to LIB. 434 in Papun. I received 500 *kyats* only eight months after the training. Similarly, many fees were taken from my salary such as education fees for the children in bases and social fees.

I spent most of the time at bases by building the fence and digging the trenches. My first experience at the frontline was in May 1994. When the shooting took place for the first time for me, I was really scared. I forgot to open fire. Two soldiers were

killed and one officer was wounded. There were many young soldiers as young as 12-13 years old. They cried when they could not climb the high mountains. Other soldiers helped them carry their equipment. Every time we went to the front line, the column conscripted at least 60 porters. Sometimes, there were women porters. At one time, the column forcibly conscripted one person from each household in Papun. When the males were not available, the column took women. At that time, we found female high school teachers and a bank clerk. The female porters also had the same work as the male porter. At night there were forced to sleep with the officers.

In September, 1997, my group was assigned to Kyauk Nyunt camp. There were four soldiers from DKBA led by Captain Hla Tun who were working logging concession. Our group was about 60 soldiers and led by Captain Aung Kyaw Lin. He threatened me that I would be killed for an unknown reason. I was told by Sergeant Myint Than. I was so scared that I asked the DKBA leader about the other armed groups. He said the KNU would kill me if I join with them. But the students would not kill an army defector. Finally, I decided to flee from the camp when I was ordered to bring rice from Kyauk Nyunt camp to Payagone with my friend Myint Aung and others. It was November 7, 1997. I carried his gun and mine while he carried the rice. When others were far ahead of me, I ran away with two guns. I could not carry the two guns for long time, so I left one. I spent two days on the way. I did not know the way, but I ran and ran. The troops also came after me. About 30 soldiers including DKBA leader Captain Hla Tun. When I was in hiding, the troops passed by. I met a group of students after two days.

Interview 97: HRV: Arrest, Torture, Forced Labor, Killing

Name	Ko Myint Aung
Sex:	Male
Age:	39 years old
Marital status:	Married with three children
Address:	Loikaw, Karenni State
Occupation:	Merchant, grocery shop owner
Date of interview:	October 10, 1997
Place of interview:	Karenni refugee camp near Mae Hong Son
Source:	HRDU

On August 8, 1996, police came and searched my house. They said they would search my house for drugs. I asked them to show the warrant for the search, but their reply was that a warrant was not required. I told them that I was not involved in the drug trafficking business but they ignored me. They went into my bed room

and later claimed that they found one inch of opium in my room. They later arrested and took me to the police station. I was innocent and I was not involved in the drug business. It was merely their plot to arrest me. They also arrested my wife.

At the police station, both of us were interrogated and tortured the whole night. They forced us to admit that we were involved in drug trafficking. When we did not admit, the military intelligence personnel kicked and punched us all over our bodies. They dropped the burning wax from the candle on my face. They also dropped water over my head. They interrogated me for three days. But they asked the question regarding drug only on the first

day and on the later two days, they only asked about my father-in-law, U Saw U Rei, elected MP from the Prusoe township, Karenni State. They asked who came to meet him, who the contacts were and who was working for the Karenni National Progress Party. I really did not know, so I said I did not know. They did not believe what I said and said that I was lying. They kept torturing me. After I admitted that I was involved, because I could no longer bear that inhumane treatment, they stopped torturing me. We were kept in the police station for some days and sent to the State court and charged with drug trafficking. It was a false charge for me because the Military Intelligence only wanted to arrest my wife, the daughter of U Saw U Rei, who is doing time for his political activities.

I was sentenced to nine years imprisonment and my wife was sentenced to 12 years by the judge named U Tin Maung Lwin.

I was sent to Loikaw prison. The life in the prison was not easy. Prisoners were not provided with enough food. A little amount of rice was given to prisoners. All of us had to work hard work every day. We had to crush stone at the work site for the military barracks. We were ordered to make fences for the military compound, digging the sanitary holes and working at the farms. One could avoid hard work by giving bribes.

Meat was served once in a week. The size of the meat we received was only the size of wo fingers. We did not get enough rice. We did not dare to ask for more. When

prisoners were sick, the prison authorities did not provide them with medicines. Only when a prisoner was seriously sick, he received some medical treatment. Mostly, the authorities gave injection to the seriously sick prisoners. Many sick prisoners did not want to get shot, because the needles and instruments in the prison hospitals were not clean. Only prisoners who could afford to pay bribe to the prison authorities could get proper treatment. Some gave 5,000-10,000 *kyats* to the prison authorities for proper treatment. Some prisoners died for lack of proper medical treatment in the prison. I witnessed the death of U Maung Than from Oaktwin township and Kyaw Kyaw Win, a deserter from LIB 54.

There was a large number of prisoners serving prison term for desertion from the army. They were recaptured and sentenced to prison. There were approximately two hundred army deserters out of three hundred prisoners in prison. Many of them revealed their feeling about the army. They said they were really fed up with what's going on in the army. They also said there were many more wishing to escape from the army. I met some army deserters including Captain Win Htut from LIB. 530, officer-Clerk Captain Saw Aye Kyaw, private Thiha and Private Nyunt Thwin. There were many other people whose names I did not know.

I also met around 50 political prisoners in Loikaw prison. Among them were are U Saw U Rei (my father-in-law), Lawyer U Wai Lin and many others. Some were sentenced for allegedly having contact with the KNPP forces. Among them were U Aung Than Phaw, U Htar Yuh, Saw Adaw, U Thein, Toe Reh and Mee Reh, all for allegedly having contact with the KNPP.

Only prisoners with less than five years imprisonment used to go for portorage in the past. They were taken to porter battalion and then sent to the frontline. Due to the death of a great number of porters in the previous years, the authorities sent the prisoners with more than five years imprisonment to the porter battalion.

I had been a prisoner porter when I was in prison. In my first time, July 22, 1997, I was sent to Hway Pon Lon with a LIB. 54 column. There were more than 100 prisoners from Loikaw prison, but when they arrived back to the prison, there were only half left. Some were sick and killed during their service and some escaped. Many of them were killed by the troops when they were recaptured. I knew Kyaw Moe Lwin, a 30-year-old man from Mawchee, who died of sickness. He was a prisoner like me from Loikaw prison. Another prisoner, U Kyaw Soe, about 50 years old, was sick on the way and he was kicked down off from the cliff.

My second time was at the end of September 1997 with LIB. 247. We had to carry heavy ammunition and bags of the soldiers. I, myself, had to carry the bags of Captain Sein Win. Many were killed this time, too. I saw Maung Kyaw Oo, a 12-

Human Rights Yearbook 1997-98: Burma

year-old boy from Mawchee, who was beaten to death by Corporal Ngwe Soe because he was no longer able to carry on. He was beaten to death at Nam Pon river near the Baw La Ke new village.

Interview 98: HRV: Arrest, Torture, Forced Labor, Prison Labor, Child, Killing

Name	Ko Thaug Tin
Sex:	Male
Age	37 years old
Marital status	Married with two children
Address	Chaung Na Thu village, Oakpho township, Pegu Division
Occupation	Farmer
Date of interview:	October 10, 1997
Place of interview:	Karenni refugee camp near Mae Hong Son
Source:	HRDU

I was arrested on August 16, 1990 for cultivating marijuana. Many people in my village cultivate marijuana in their farm, but I was singled out because I had a quarrel with the chairman of the village LORC. He informed the police and the police arrested us. I was sentenced to seven years in prison.

First I was sent to Tharawaddy prison. There were many mistreatments in the prison. As soon as you entered the prison, the beating began. Prisoners were ordered to do hard work. I spent a very short time in Thayawaddy prison. I was sent to Mingun prison camp near Phaunggyi, assigned for the construction of Rangoon-Mandalay Highway project. I worked for two months, carrying and crushing rock for the project. Then I was transferred to Loikaw prison.

There were over 800 prisoners in Loikaw prison when I first arrived. A small number was sentenced for criminal cases, but most were sentenced for political reasons or for allegedly having communication with the Karenni ethnic armed forces. I saw a large number of army deserters in prison. They were recaptured and sentenced for

attempt to desert the army. They were given two choices, one is to go to the military court and back to the army after serving short term imprisonment; second is to go to the civilian court and serve long prison term. Those who have served longer imprisonment in civilian prison do not need to go back to the army again. Many chose to go to the civilian court and serve in the prison for the civilians. That was because they did not want to go to the military court and return to serve in the army.

Food in prison was not enough. People from Loikaw were able to ask their families to supply food from outside. Most of the prisoners like me from other far places, did not have a chance to get the food from outside. Even those who come and give food to their family members in prison had to pay money (bribe) to the prison authorities. If you are able to give money to the prison authorities, you can avoid work or you can enjoy better life in prison.

I have worked as a porter two times. The first time was in July 1997 with LIB 54. This was my second time and I went along with LIB. 247. Only persons who were able to give 5,000 *kyats* could avoid being a porter in the frontline. I had no money, so I was sent to do portering. I thought I would get a chance to escape from prison while I was working as a porter outside rather than working hard in prison. I saw many prisoners die of exhaustion and lack of proper food in prison. However, some prisoners did not want to go to serve as porters because they thought it was very risky and dangerous. Those, especially, who were about to finish their long prison terms did not want to go and take a risk. They had heard much about porters who were killed by landmines, exhaustion, and sickness.

During my first portage, I saw Zaw Win Lwin, a 19-year-old boy from Mawche, beaten to death in June, by a corporal from LIB 54. Another porter named Kyaw Win and an unknown porter from Loikaw died of sickness in July. Than Shwe, a 35-year-old army deserter from LIB. 72 was beaten to death in Nam Pan river by Corporal Ngwe Soe.

I was able to escape while I was being ordered to carry water from the river in Nwagone camp.

Interview 99: HRV: Forced Labor, Women, Killing

Name:	Aung Win
Sex:	Male
Age:	28 years old
Ethnicity:	Burmese

Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Single
Address:	Phut Letto village, Tavoy, Tenasserim Division
Date of interview:	October 13, 1997
Place of interview:	Pinsi village, Thom Pha Pum district, Thailand
Source:	HRDU

I arrived in Thailand on October 12, 1997. The reason is I was scared to go as porter for the military.

There were over 30 houses in my Phut Letto village but now there are only ten houses left. The people in my village started to move from the village since the beginning of the Ye-Tavoy railway construction. People had to go for forced labor and also for portorage several times. They did not have time for the family and for their living. That forced many families to move from the native village and seek jobs in Thailand.

I was arrested by the soldiers to serve as a porter on September 14, 1997. The troop from IB 80 rounded up my brother and me and took us to Wah Zone Chaung village which was one hour's walk away. There were about 20 armed soldiers. When we arrived at Wah Zone Chaung village, another six porters joined us. The soldiers ordered us to carry rice. The other six were ordered to carry bags and ammunitions. The column I was working with was mobile column mobilizing around the Phut Letto, *Kyat Paung Chaung*, Wah Zong Chaung villages. The things we had to carry were not so heavy. But I did not like this work. I discussed with my brother to run away when we had a chance. After two days, on September 16, I ran away while I was away from the troops to carry water from a stream. My brother was left behind with the troop. I arrived back at the village on the same day. I did not dare to stay in the village so I took hiding in a farm outside. On September 18, I heard that two women were gang-raped by the soldiers between the Wah Zong Chaung village and *Kyat Paung Chaung* village. I did not know the exact story and who committed the rape. But I assumed that it must be the soldiers from the column I worked with, because the column was the only moving column operating in this area. Both the women were released after the rape, I heard. The column returned to Phaungdaw village through my village. I was surprised to learn that there was no porter returning with them. I was worried about my brother and went to Wah Zong Chaung village to collect the news of my brother.

When I got there, my friends told me that after the rape of two women, the soldiers killed all remaining seven porters including my brother on September 17. I did not know the reason why they killed all the porters. I didn't get any more information

about the killing as well as the rape of two women. The women were threatened with death by the soldiers if they revealed the story to others. I did not dare to go and look for the dead bodies of my brother and others because somebody told me that the troops planted landmine there.

My brother's name was Aye Win. He was 23 years-old and married with a three-month-old baby. My father informed to the Phut Letto village LORC that his son was missing during the portorage. But nobody looked into this case or investigated.

Interview 100: HRV: Arrest, Child, Forced Labor, Torture, Killing

Name:	Htun Hlaing (a) Shan Gyi
Sex:	Male
Age:	20 year-old
Ethnicity:	Shan
Religion:	Buddhist
Address:	North Lawpita Shan village, Loikaw, Karenni State
Education:	7th standard
Date of entry to army:	October 10, 1996
Army ID no.:	ta/70085
Battalion:	IB. 25, Division 4, Office of the Division
Date of desertion:	November 13, 1997
Date of interview:	November 25, 1997
Place of interview:	Karenni refugee camp near Mae Hong Son
Source:	HRDU

I was asked to show my ID card at the Rangoon Railways Station. I failed to produce it, so they arrested and sent me to the Mingladon new recruitment center. I was not the only person who faced that kind of fate. I saw many people as young as 13 years old at the recruitment center. I was sent there on October 8, 1996. The officials took a blood test of me on October 10, and I passed the blood test. Then on the same day, I had to fill up the form and forcibly join the army. On October 12, 400 recruits including me were sent to Mergui by Hakha streamer. We arrived at Mergui on October 15, and the authorities took us to Shwedu village where the No.12 Divisional Central Recruitment Center was located.

The training began on October 21. We all were given 450 *kyats* per month during the four-month training. However, our salaries were deducted for stationery, candle, and many other forms of tax. After deducting all the fees, only 50 *kyats* was left.

The training finished on February 13, 1997. The next day, 50 recruits including me were sent to Tavoy. We arrived on February 15 at Tavoy. 29 recruits including me were assigned to IB. 25 in Tavoy and 31 were assigned to the IB 104 in Launglon. After taking rest for three days in the battalion, all 29 recruits were assigned to go and join Division 4, operating around the Heinnu Chaung village. We were there about one month. The main duty was guarding the Taung Thonlone-Metta motor-road and Heinda-Taung Thonlone motor-road. Then I was assigned to the region around Gaung Say Chaung village for twenty days. In April 1997, I was with the joint column of LIB. 224 and IB. 25 moving towards Thukha, near the Thai-Burma border. There was no major battle because the KNU troops had withdrawn when we reached there. After we overran the camp, troops from LIB. 224 retreated and our battalion was to station in the region. I stayed there until June 1997. In June, our battalion was replaced with LIB. 104 and we all returned to Tavoy. I had a rest for one month. In July, I was assigned with others from my battalion to Thukha camp again until I ran away from the army.

During my time in Thukha, the duty was taking guard at the trade route and checking the people crossing the border. An average of 30 people cross the border daily into Thailand. There was an army check-point run by the troops from the IB. 25. The troops levied 600 *kyats* from the people going to Thailand and 100 Baht from the people returning to Burma. People from Burma usually brought cattle and buffaloes to sell in Thailand. The troops levied 100 Baht for each cattle or buffalo. They also brought other animals from Burma to Thailand. They had to pay ten per cent of their profit to Col. Win Htein, commander of IB. 25.

Every week, the following rations were provided to each platoon (five soldiers) under the column 1 of the IB. 25 in Thukha. They were rice- 15 military tins, condense milk-5 tins, canned fish-1 can, small canned meat-2 cans, low quality bean-one military tin, oil-2 1/2 tins, salt, fish paste, and 175 *kyats*. It was not enough for five persons for a week, especially rice. We could not ask for more from the supply section. We had to save as much as we could.

The monthly salary for a private was 620 *kyats*. I received it from June, 1997. The officials deducted the following fees from the salary life insurance-50 *kyats*, stationery fee-5 *kyats*, social fund-5 *kyats*, other unknown fee-100 *kyats*. Total 210 *kyats* were regularly deducted from the monthly salary. I only received the salary for June, the rest would be given when we returned to the battalion in Tavoy, the officials said.

Privates were entitled to receive a loan of 10,000 *kyats* from the battalion. They could only receive one time. From the 10,000 *kyats* loan, 5,000 *kyats* was deducted for the battalion investment in fishing industry. Only 5,000 *kyats* arrived to the private.

From the investment, a private received 200 *kyats* monthly as profits. However, private who received the loan had to pay back 450 *kyats* from his monthly salary. So, only about 100-150 *kyats* was left in his hands every month.

A private received only one uniform given at the closing ceremony of training. No more was provided. The following supplies were provided by the training school: one uniform, one military bag, one rough blanket, one smooth blanket, one mosquito net, one big military towel, one small military towel, a pair of jungle boots, a pair of parade boots, one military cap, one jungle cap, one belt, one water canteen, one equipment, one spoon, one cap pin, and one collar pin. When the boots provided by the school are no longer usable, a private has to buy the jungle boots for 380 *kyats* and one pair of slippers for 300 *kyats*. Similarly, when the uniform is no longer usable, we have to make a new one ourselves. It costs 1,000-1,500 *kyats*.

According to the order in the military, only medicines produced by the State must be given to the soldiers in the army. However, in my battalion, China-made medicines are widely used. In the front line, many soldiers died because they were treated only with the cheap and in-effective China-made medicine. The officials did not care when the soldiers got sick. Even the soldiers who were seriously ill were not sent to the hospital for the treatment.

Privates are subjected to maltreatment by the superior. We have to bear their beating and scolding. One thing we have to have in our minds is "Obey the order." No one dare to say against the order. If we say anything against, the officials will kill us. When we enter a village, we have to find food for the superior. We take the chickens, ducks and other animals for our officials. We arrest people for portorage as we are ordered. Local people hate us so much, but they also do not dare to say anything against the army.

My battalion spent most of the time in the front line office, very little time for the operation. While we were taking rest in Metta in June, I was assigned to take the wounded soldiers from the front line at Ai-wai village. One my way back, troops from Division 66 and LIB. 17 came along with us. Ko Myint Cho, a 35-year-old villager from Taung Thonlone village was so sick that he could no longer carry the wounded soldier on his back. He fell down on the ground and could not move. The captain and soldiers from LIB. 17 beat him and he died immediately from brutal beating. No compensation was given to his family.

This mistreatment forced me to run away from the army. I did not join the army on my own will, but conscripted. So finally, I decided to run away.

Interview 101: HRV: Arrest, Forced Labor, Prison Labor

Name: Sai Tin Myint (a) Tin Moe
 Age: 19 years old
 Education: 7th standard
 Ethnicity: Burmese/ Buddhist
 Address: *Kyatsakan* village, Thasi township
 Occupation: Odd job
 Date of Interview: December 18, 1997
 Source: HRDU

I was an ex-soldier from Artillery Division (4). I was sentenced to one year imprisonment for quarrelling with my officer on December 13, 1995. I was in Loikaw prison for eleven months. On November 11, 1996 I was sent to Ma Htaw Khu labor camp and spent one more month. I was released on December 12, 1996 from prison. After the release, I stayed with my friends in Bamagone quarter, Loilin and was working at odd jobs. I went to visit Loikaw in October 1997. I went to Khitthit video hall in Dawtama quarter in Loikaw. Soldiers from IB. 261 rounded up the civilians who were watching the video. It was in the second week of October.

22 civilians and 18 prison laborers from porter battalion were taken along with the military column of IB. 261 led by deputy commander Kyaw Naing. There were about 200 soldiers in the column. We wandered around Sin Thaug area.

I have had different experiences as prisoner, soldier and porter. I have experienced many forms of suffering and abuses in my life. The most unforgettable thing was, when I was in my last portorage. Soldiers from IB. 261 column destroyed all the Kayah's traditional monuments, marks, houses, religious building and everything they found. I saw the soldiers draw moustache on the picture of Jesus Christ at Dawlakhe village. The officer in the column also told the soldiers to destroy everything. He said because of these things, the Kayah armed groups managed to survive. He ordered his soldiers to destroy everything to eliminate the armed opposition in the region.

The military planted a lot of landmines in the region. I saw many notices of landmines around Pon River and Tatamaw camp. They also planted many landmines around all the military bases in Kauk Kauk area.

I saw some Karenni breakaway soldiers along with the SLORC soldiers in the column. They jointly operated with the SLORC soldiers. I think there were about 35 soldiers from Karenni breakaway group in my column. They did not physically involve in

destroying the religious buildings, but they did not say anything to the SLORC soldiers.

After a long time of carrying heavy things, I was so tired and could no longer carry on with the duty. They beat me up when I could not carry on. They did not give enough rice to us. They only gave a military box of rice for every six porters. We could only take rest when they allowed us to take rest. We had to carry 60 mm rockets. We could not drink water without their permission, even when we were crossing the river. They did not like being asked for water from their water containers. I fainted several times because I did not receive enough food or rest. Whenever I fell down, the soldier kicked me with military boots all over my body.

I was always looking for an opportunity to escape. When I felt safe and thought it was a good time for escaping, I hit the soldier near me with rockets that I was carrying and ran away. Finally I arrived at the area where I am staying now.

When I was in prison, I saw many people put in prison for allegedly having connection with KNPP forces. I think at least 40 were arrested and sentenced for this charge. I heard that Saw U Reh was put in a separate room and he was not given any medical attention. The names of persons for this charge were: U Thein, Toe Reh, Taw Reh, from Mai Long, U Saw, U Reh, Ko Baw Reh, Sai Wanna Htun, his father from Loikaw, Ko Ne Win, Win Pe, All Reh, Lee Reh, U Sal Pa, Thakin, Buu Ree, Saw Aung Khant, U Htar Yu, Sisto, Khun Tin Aye, Saw Palu Htoo, his wife, from Demawsoe, Baw Reh, U Soe Reh, from Lawpita, U Lee Reh, Kyaw Kyaw, from Bawlakhe, U Aung Than Phaw from Min Suu, Kuu Reh from Daw Nuku, U Kaung, Zin Min Thein, from Daw Ouku, U Sanna, U Ainda, U Nanda, U Aik Khan, Wan Hla, from Kyaukkhe, Thaye from Daw Tama, Saw Tuu Saw, an unknown woman teacher and Than Tin from Naungyeh.

Interview 102: HRV: Prison Labor, Forced Labor, Killing

Name	Hla Myo (a) Hlwan Wai
Sex:	Male
Address:	Kywe Tone village, Maubin township, Irrawaddy
Education:	Third standard
Date of Interview:	December 18, 1997
Source:	HRDU

I was an ex-soldier. I finished my basic military training and was assigned to LIB 119 based in Kalay on February 20, 1994. While I was serving there, I got a letter from my family saying that my mother was seriously ill in February, 1997. I asked for

leave but was not given. So I decided to go back to my home on my own. I stayed two months at my home and when I returned to my base I was detained for a week at the quarter in the base. I was later sentenced to one year imprisonment by military court in my base on April 29, 1997.

I was taken to Mandalay prison and then to Meikhtila after one week. I only spent two days in Meikhtila and then taken to Ma Htaw Ku porter battalion on May 9, 1997. This battalion of prisoners was kept standby for portorage. We knew the hardship and danger of being porter, but I hoped we would have a chance to escape during portorage. The situation in prison was also so bad that we thought it would be better staying in the porter battalion.

There were about 80 military deserters out of 400 prisoners in Ma Htaw Ku porter battalion. After one week of arrival, I was assigned to go to porter with LIB 427. After that I had to go with LIB 530 in July 1997, with LIB.430 in the last week of July, and with IB.102 on October 8, 1997. Prisoners from the porter battalion were constantly transferred from one battalion to another. I escaped while I was portering with LIB. 424.

In my first time going porter with LIB.427 in May, there were about 150 soldiers with two 81 mm launchers and many 60 mm rocket launchers. They brought a lot of food for themselves and seven mules. We were 40 porters including ourselves from porter battalions as well as other civilians. I saw some civilian porters who were about 50-60 years old. The column mobilized around Kauk Kauk region. Many got sick with malaria because of heavy duty assignment and hard weather. No medical assistance was given. Some were beaten to death when they could not manage to carry the loads. I saw Moe Wai, 24 years old from Lume village, Kyaukse township and Myo Hlaing, 25-year-old army deserter were beaten to death by the soldiers between Kauk Kuak and Hway Oun, with my own sight.

I spent one month and five days working porter with LIB. 427. After one month in the battalion I had to go for portering again with LIB. 530. This time, there were 70 soldiers from LIB. 530 and 35 prisoners from the porter battalion. This time was to replace the troop from LIB. 430 in Kauk Kauk. We arrived at Kauk Kuak after three days' travelling. All 35 porters were kept in a bunker with a log roof. We were not allowed to get out from the overhead exit except going to the toilet. If we want to go to the toilet, our hands were tied behind and escorted by the soldiers. We had our meals in the bunker. We had to stay like that for ten days without taking a bath.

When the troops from LIB. 430 returned to their base, we were taken out from the

bunker and brought back. Many of us could not walk well, because we were kept in the bunker for ten days without enough movement. We walked alternatively with the soldiers. The soldiers beat us all the way.

I arrived at Bawlakhe, base of the LIB. 430, in the last week of June. We were not sent back to Ma Htaw Khu porter battalion, instead, we were kept in the jail inside the battalion. After a week, fifteen prisoners including me were taken to Daw Tamagyi area with military column (2) and the rest were sent to Shan-Karenni area with column (1).

During my portorage, I saw many villages between Salween and Pon River that were destroyed by the military column. All farms and houses were burnt down by the troops. Three prison laborers managed to escape while they were portering with LIB. 430. For their escape, the rest 12 prisoners including me were tied up and left in the heavy rain. While we were being tied, the soldiers conscripted other villagers and ordered them to carry the loads. The villagers were ordered to carry the loads at the front and the soldiers pointed their guns at them from behind. We were taken back to the base in Bawlakee around the second week of September.

I spent only one day at the base. On the next day, we all were taken by the IB. 102. There were 30 prison porters taken along with the two divisions of soldiers from IB. 102. We went to Daw Mumar camp and we were ordered to sharpen the bamboo, dig the trenches, cut the logs and build the overhead. Later, soldiers from LIB. 424 arrived at the camp. They were building the bases around the area. They built one base for LIB. 428 and other bases for LIB. 424 and 423 on the strategic hills in the area. I saw that some other porters were extremely weak.

When I got a chance, I ran away with Ko Khin Maung Saw. I got lost in the jungle and had nothing to eat for five days. Then we met one Karenni hunter and he helped us to find the way.

Interview 103: HRV: Prison Labor, Forced Labor

Name	Chit San
Sex:	Male
Age	23 years old
Address	Bassein West township, Ngaputaw village
Ethnicity	Karen/ Buddhist
Serial No.	941071

Rank	Private
Battalion	LIB. 405, Division 4, Group.2, Thayetchaung township, Tenasserim Division
Source:	HRDU

After both my parents died, the economic situation of my family was bad. I decided to join the army after meeting with my friend in the army. He helped me to get to the Mingladon new recruitment center. I spent 18 days there and was sent to Training Center No. 12 in Mergui. After attending a four-month training, I was assigned at LIB. 405.

As soon as I arrived at the battalion, I was ordered to work for the repair of the battalion ground. Privates were ordered to carry bricks, dig the ground for 17 days. After that, I was assigned to go with the military column to Taung Thon Long village. I spent some time and returned to the battalion. As soon I got back to the battalion, I was sent to work on the Ye-Tavoy railway construction for one month. After that, I could go back to the battalion and was allowed to take rest for 15 days. Then, I was ordered to go back and work on the construction site at Yebyu. Only privates were assigned to do this hard work. We were formed into three-person groups and ordered to dig the ground for the railway road embankment. The authorities told us that they would buy 100 *kyats* for extra one *kyin* of 10 ft x 10 ft x one ft high apart from the assigned three *kyins*. Nobody wanted to do the extra *kyin* because the quota of three *Kyins* was already too much. One three-person group could finished three *kyins* a day, We had never received a full amount of wages for everyday quota of three *kyins*. We only got 90 *kyats* once. The rest were deducted by the officials. Sometimes, the officials did not pay us, but they gave only cheroots to us. At the other site, namely 9-Mile camp, prison laborers were also used for construction.

I knew that previously, the authorities used the civilian labor without pay in this project. When there were many complaints about that, the authorities stopped using civilians and started using soldiers instead. We were told that we would be able to earn extra money and we did not need to go to the frontline.

During the labor work, every morning at 5:00 a.m. we were given fried-rice and went to work at 6:00 a.m. Lunch was between 11:00 and 1:00 p.m. The work finished at 5:30 p.m. I worked at the Ye-Tavoy railway construction site between Nat Kyi Sin village and Yengan Gyi village. I started working in September 1996 and it was supposed to be finished after eight months. The camp for working soldiers was at Sein Pon village.

While I was at the LIB. 405, I witnessed many mistreatments against the civilians in

the region. While I was on duty, the officers in the army arrested the cattle traders and confiscated all the cattle and other properties. The 3,000 *kyats* for each private was shared from the loot. I did not want to stay in the army because of inequality in army and hard work assigned to us.

Interview 104: HRV: Arrest, Child

Name	Sergeant Zaw Ye Naing
Sex:	Male
Age:	28 years old
Marital status:	Single
Army ID No.:	725974
Address:	Kandawgyi (1) Ward, Bogalay, Irrawaddy Division
Date of interview:	December 1997
Place of interview:	Thai-Burma border near Mae Sariaing
Source:	HRDU

I took part in the 1988 uprising. When the military staged a coup, I did not dare to stay at home and went hiding. The other reason was to avoid the military conscription in town. At that time, my town was demanded to provide the recruits for the army by quota.

In Pyapon, I was stopped by the soldiers at night while I was hanging out. They were about to beat me up when I was not able to show them my ID. So I said I came to join the army and then they immediately took me to the new recruit center. It was December 21, 1988.

I was taken to Inma and enlisted in 2/89 new recruit training. After the training I was assigned to Division 3, IB.19 in Papun, Karen State. I was promoted to Lance corporal in 1990, Corporal in 1993 and Sergeant in 1994.

Since I was assigned in Papun, I had never been allowed to go back home and see my family. I received 1075 *kyats* when I became a sergeant, but the officers deducted as a form of fees for many reasons. I also got sick of what the army officers and other ranks and files were abusing their authority in Karen State.

Finally, I decided to run away from the army after Captain Zaw Moe Kyaw slapped my face without any proper reason in front of other soldiers.