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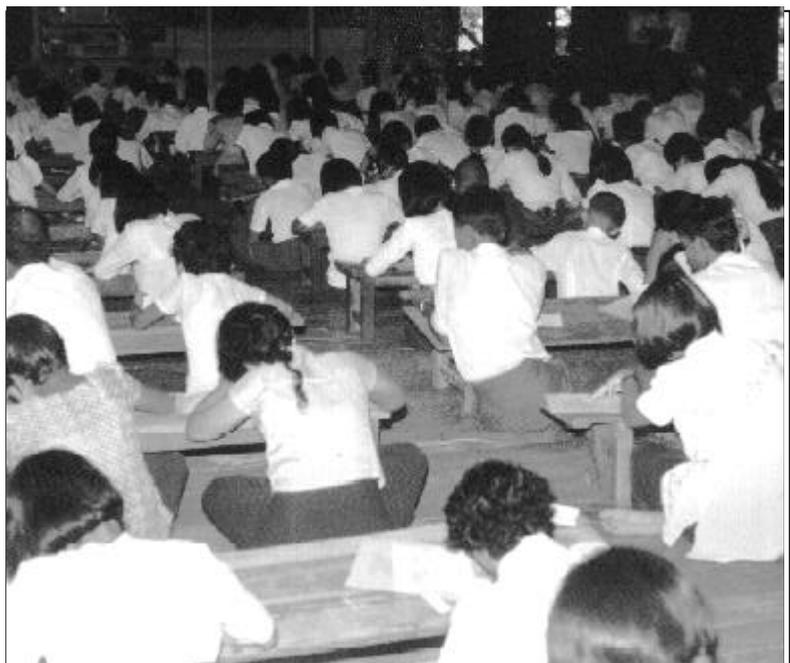
- SPDC-** State Peace and Development Council,
- SLORC-** State Law and Order Restoration Council,
- DDSI-** Directorate of Defense Services Intelligence
- IB -** Infantry Battalion (*of Burmese Army*),
- LIB-** Light Infantry Battalion (*of Burmese Army*),
- LID-** Light Infantry Battalion (*of Burmese Army*)
- MLCC-** Mon Literature and Culture Committee
- KNU-** Karen National Union,
- NMSP-** New Mon State Party,

News

Mon State PDC Bars the Mon Literacy Training in Moulmein

(June, 2000)

On May 9, 2000, while the members of Mon Literature and Culture Committee (MLCC), Moulmein, is operating the Mon literacy training in 11 city wards of Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, for Mon children, the Mon State PDC (Mon State Peace and Development Council) authorities ordered the activists to stop teaching of Mon literature and forced them to sign a promising document that they would not continue operating of literacy training. On responsible person from MLCC (Moulmein) was forced to sign the promising document in front of General-Secretary of Mon State PDC, Col. Aung Maw Maw and all activities of operating of Mon literacy training was halted by the authorities. The authorities and Unit No. 5 of DDSI (*Directorate of Defense Services Intelligence*), also threatened to the activists and students that if someone did not stop teaching or learning of Mon literature, he/she must be imprisoned.



The Mon children in a Mon literacy training during the dry season

Since April 24, 2000, the activists of MLCC have been active in operating the Mon literacy training in 11 wards in Moulmein city. About 500 Mon students and more have gradually joined the literacy training and the student numbers has grown in every section class. MLCC also provides about 15 Mon teachers including some monks and the bases of the training are also in monasteries. The 11 city wards where MLCC conducted the literacy training are: San-gyi, Daung-zayat, Thiri-myaing, Say-gyo, Myainghaya, Sayay-gyi-gone, Thein-gone, Pago-chaung, Shwe-myaing-thiri (1) and (2). In each city ward, there are about 20-80 students attended the classes and many Mon parents send their children to these classes to learn how to read and write Mon literature.

Actually, this training is arranged by MLCC (Moulmein) to operate only for one month period, from the last week of April to the last week of May, during the holiday of the government school, the operation of the literacy training has not posed any competition to government education and school. With objectives to maintain the Mon identity, MLCC and the Mon parents in city has tried to arrange such literacy training. In every previous years, MLCC (Moulmein) conducted this type of training and the authorities did not take actions against them. Thus, when they started the training, they did not ask any permission and expected the authorities would allow it like every previous year. However, in the previous years, the numbers of students who joined the classes were not much like this year. This year, the student number have grown and that was a reason why the authorities stopped the arrangement of Mon literacy training.

The arrangement of literacy training is late, if compared with activities in other Mon villages and towns in Mon State. Other villages and towns in Mon State started the training soon after the closing of the government schools and the arrival of dry season holiday. The training started in March and ended in the last week of April. Mudon Township MLCC also arranged the huge closing ceremony of Mon literacy training on April 24, 2000. Similarly, the villages and town wards that have operated the Mon literacy training hold closing ceremony in the last week of April. Only MLCC (Moulmein) has lately arranged training due to difficulties in organizing of the city Mon people to support the training. Normally, some city Mon people forget their identity and have not given much support or show their interest to training. However, the MLCC (Moulmein) could arrange the training in late April after their hard attempt.

In the villages and towns where the SPDC authorities have less influence or where the local Mon people has strong communities, although the authorities tried to close down the training, however they could not. Like in Moulmein, even the capital of Mon State, the Mon communities are weak and some Mon people are working as government servants and they have less cooperation each other and this condition is quite vulnerable from the actions of Mon State PDC authorities to stop the Mon literacy training.



The military operations, human rights violations and related population displacement in Kya Inn Seikyi Township area

(June, 2000)

As armed conflict between one main rebel group, KNU and SPDC military government, is on-going situation, the Burmese Army has operated military operations against KNU every year in all seasons, depending on how KNU and its troops have military activities. Before the end of 1999 and in the half year of 2000, Burmese Army has sent many military battalions under the command of LID No. 88, LID No. 99 and Operational Administrated Command No. 5, into the rural areas of Kya Inn Seikyi Township to attack KNU and clear its roots.

The military operations have taken place in many parts of this township, along Zami river, around many ethnic Mon, Karen and Lao Shan villages and along some parts of Three Pagoda Pass-Thanyuzayat motor road. From November 1999 until January 2000, the Burmese Army's military battalions, LIB No. 120 led by Lt. Col. Maung Maung Oo, under the command of LID No. 88, operated military offensives against KNU's 6th Brigade area of eastern part of Zami river areas. Following this offensive, the villagers who were under suspicions of KNU supporters were killed, inhumanely torture and some women were raped and killed. Thus, many hundreds of villagers from Kyaikdon and Kyone-sein village tracts have fled to border area and displaced.

From February until the end of April, Burmese Army turned the military turned its head to take security along Three Pagoda Pass and Thanbyuzayat motor road. The purpose of this military operation was to uproot KNU activities collecting tax from passengers, traders and trucks, who have used the road. Thus, the villages along the motor road had suffered from constant conscription of civilian porters, torturing, forced relocation and paying various types of tax to Burmese Army's battalions. A few numbers of villagers also fled into Mon villages under the control of NMSP in Three Pagoda Pass in March.

From May until June, the Burmese Army sent four military regiments, LIB No. 703, LIB No. 705, LIB No. 284 and LIB No. 415, under the command of LID No. 99 and Operational Administrated Command No. 5, to operate military offensives against KNU along Zami river and many other parts of rural area of Kya Inn Seikyi Township. Therefore, the fighting between KNU and Burmese Army regularly happened in the area.

For example, when LIB No. 703 operated the military operation from the top of Zami river to down part, it faced continuous attacks by KNU forces. On June 15, LIB No. 703 faced fighting with KNU forces near Apalon village and on June 20 and 22, it also had fighting with KNU forces nearly Lay-mile and Pone-khaw villages respectively.

all villages were supporting KNU forces. Sometimes, the soldiers confiscated all food supplies from villagers with objectives to stop these supplies to not flow to rebel soldiers, while some rice kept by villagers in their hilly farms were also burnt into ashes.

Because of various types of human rights abuses, the local villagers in many rural areas of Kya Inn Seikyi township could not tolerate these conditions longer and all villagers felt they are not safe in their home villages. Whenever one villager is killed or the headman or one villager is severely tortured by the soldiers the villagers feel more fear and the families of victims tried to move from their villages to another.

From May until the end of June, when Burmese Army escalated their military activities in many parts of Kya Inn Seikyi Township area, more and more villagers left from their villages. Among displaced villagers, many of them moved into SPDC control areas, where they felt they are not so safe but expected fewer abuses than in their native villages. Some families, whom their family members were severely abused by the government soldiers felt they are not safe in SPDC control areas and decided to move into NMSP control area or KNU's firm control area. While a few numbers of families could enter into Thailand based refugee camps. Since Thai government has a certain policy to not accept the new refugees in their territory, most escapees are displaced in Burmese territory after they escaped from their native villages. ❖ ❖ ❖

Conscription of Forced Labour for Water Canals near Pegu City

(May, 2000)

Since the beginning of March, the Pegu Township PDC authorities have forced both town residents and villagers to contribute free labour in digging water canals in the rice-farms and outside of town, with objective to prevent flood.

As Pegu city, the capital of Pegu Division, is close to Sit-taung river and sea, it is easily flooded during rainy season and so the authorities have planned to dig some old water canals, which were dug for many years, and use them for the better flow of water. As the government have not used any type of machine to dig and carry the dug earth, the civilians have been forced to contribute labour. Civilians were also instructed to com-

plete some piece of works for each family.

Because of this rebuilding of water canal, about 1,000 families, who could not pay fine to authorities and another 1,500 families near Pegu town have been instructed by the authorities to contribute labour since March to May. Four villages near Pegu are, (1) Mokala, (2) Naing-tee, (3) Oh-poe and (4) Kama-nat. Although some town residents who could pay the same amount of money to required labour could avoid from conscription, all villagers were forced to do digging the water canal.

The Township authorities also shared work duties to the respective villages and then village leader have to share pieces of works to each family in the village again. The village headmen also shared pieces of work to a non-farmer family, to complete digging 15 *Kyins* of earth and carry it away to 20-50 meters. For the farmer family, as they have their own oxen-carts and owned some lands near the canals, the authorities instructed to complete digging about 20-30 *Kyins* of earth. After instructed order, the village headmen managed to send the labourers on a rotation basis.

For a non-family, they have at least to work in the construction for 7-10 days while the farmers have to work for 15 days every month. At least one family has to work for two months to complete their pieces of works. In one month, one family worked in the construction for 5-7 days and they worked their own works for the remaining days. However, for the day labourers, who work as trishaw drivers, truck drivers, paid day-labourers were quite difficult to have enough time to do their own works. For the farmers, they also have less time to work in their farms.

For the city residents also have to pay about 150 Kyat as fine and some of them also hired the substitutes to dig the earth instead of them. For the villagers, they could not pay fine, and if they could not work they have to hire the substitute labourers.

When the civilians went to the work-sites, they have to bring their own foods, medicines and tools from their homes and the authorities have not provided any assistance. If one villager was sick, he/she also have to hire a substitute labour to complete the pieces of works.

Similar to Pegu township, the civilians in many other townships under SPDC firm control are also forced to contribute labour in various types of development projects, building roads, water canals, water dikes, building army barracks and farming and tree planting for the authorities and army.



Forced labour in SPDC firm control area

Report

Population Displacement in Yebyu Township Area, Tenasserim Division

I. The Background of Yebyu Township Area

Since over many decades, during the course of civil war in Burma which has been waged between many different ethnic armed opposition groups and governments' Burmese Army (BA), nearly all parts of Yebyu township area is used as battle grounds. This township is the northernmost area of Tenasserim Division and is connecting with Mon State (*See map*). In this township area, three different ethnic peoples, Mon, Karen and Tavoyan are the native inhabitants and the Mon people are the majority. During British colony era, to get better communication, the government also built about over 90 miles-long motor road that connects Ye and Tavoy towns, or the current Mon State and Tenasserim Division.

Normally, the Mon villages are situating, along motor road, between motor road and sea-coast, and along the seacoast. Many Tavoyan villages are in the southern part of township's coastal area, and Karen villages are in eastern part of motor road. During the civil war, the ethnic armed groups, NMSP (New Mon State Party), KNU (Karen National Union) and MDUF (Mergui-Dawai United Front) have been active in these areas, and the BA troops have regularly launched the military offensives against these ethnic groups.

During 1991 to 1992, when the military government, SLORC, planned to build Ye-Tavoy railway road and invite the multinational oil and gas companies to exploit gas from Andaman Sea and sell it to Thailand. In the preparation process, the BA troops also relocated all villages situated in eastern part of motor road by forces to move and resettle along the motor road. This was a forced relocation of local ethnic communities to cut off their contacts with rebel armed groups.

However, NMSP's army faction, MNLA (Mon National Liberation Army) still controlled many parts of coastal areas and got into sea and could manage navy operations even in the sea. In 1994, when Thai government agreed with SLORC for MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), to buy gas from Burma from Yadana gas field, both Thai government and SLORC had given pressure to NMSP to agree for ceasefire with Rangoon. According to 1995 NMSP-SLORC ceasefire agreement, MNLA troops in Yebyu township had to withdraw from the whole Yebyu township area, and the Burmese Army troops could have more control.

After the NMSP withdrew from Yebyu township area, the Mon people in the area also lost protection from Mon troops, the Burmese Army has more chance to use forced labour in their development works and civilian porters for military purposes in the army outposts and frontlines. Additionally, the local Burmese Army battalions also collected various types of tax from the villagers.

After ceasefire, some Mon soldiers from MNLA also went back to their homes in Yebyu township area and retired to rehabilitate their life in their home places. They tried to recreate their own rice farms and fruit plantations. Similarly, the displaced villagers also went back to their villages and reconstruct their life again. However, because of the continuous conscription of forced labour for railway road, motor roads and dike construction, both retired soldiers and villagers have no enough to do their own works in rice farms and fruit plantations. These mis-treatments against the villagers also made them dissatisfaction against the Burmese Army. At the end, a group of Mon soldiers who could not tolerate longer also rose up with arms to against the Burmese Army. Thus, the war in Yebyu township resumed since 1997 again after many thousands of Mon villagers suffered from the constant conscription of forced labour in building of Ye-Tavoy railway construction.

II. Rebellion and More Human Rights Violations in Yebyu Township Area

Since Yebyu Township area is the homeland the members of rebel group, they could make more effective activities in fighting against the Burmese Army. Before the end of 1997, although the group has little number of troops, the members have been grown and they could extend their activities not only many parts of Yebyu township area, but also to other parts of Ye Township area in Mon State.

Since the beginning of the rebellion, the local villagers were terribly and inhumanely treated by the local SLORC/SPDC troops with accusation of rebel-supporters to rebel group. The members of the rebel group have traveled from

one village to another to launch military fighting against the government troops. Whenever, they launched their activities and passed into a village or outside of the village, the villagers from those villages were also accused as rebel supporters. Because of this accusation, some villagers were killed, while many of them were severely tortured by the government soldiers since 1997.

As an instance,

In the third and last week of October, 1997, the officers and soldiers from LIB No. 273 killed many Mon villagers from Mayan village, Yebyu Township, without trails after they were accused having contact with rebel group. On October, on column of SLORC troops led by Lt. Col. Myint Oo entered into Mayan village and arrested Nai Bue with accusation of rebel-supporter. That villager's house was situating outside of the village and it was also on the road, which the rebel forces had regularly used. As the man knew he could be accused as rebel-supporter, he decided to move into village in the first week of October and had stayed with his relatives. But he was unlucky. The soldiers came into village and arrested him, and interrogated him about the activities of the rebel soldiers. Then, the soldiers brought him, his wife and one five months old baby to his former house and forced him to tell how he had helped the rebel soldiers. After they could not get satisfied answers from Nai Bue, they brought him into a small bush and shot him with gun. He died on the spot. Then the soldiers also brought his wife for investigation and left 5 months old baby alone at home. As all villagers were afraid of being killed by soldiers after Nai Bue was killed, nobody were dare to go to the man's house to look after baby. During one day and one night, small baby also died because of starvation and terrible cold weather.

On October 25, the soldiers from the same battalions led by Lt. Col. Myint Oo came into that village again and arrested another 7 men with accusation of rebel-supporters. Most of them are young men and were accused of having connection with rebel soldiers. All of them tied up in the middle of the village and the soldiers tortured him in front of the villagers.. They also warned the villagers that if someone supported the rebel group, they must tortured and killed. After those villagers were inhumanely tortured for nearly one hour, the soldiers brought them outside of the village and shot to their heads. All of them died on the spot.

After many villagers were inhumanely tortured by the government soldiers, the villagers were afraid of staying on in the village, and many of them left from the village and abandoned their properties in the village. Sometimes, although the local military regiment of the Burmese Army did not order to leave from the village, because of mis-treatments against some villagers including killings, the villagers automatically left from homes and moved to other areas where they felt more safer than in their villages.

Thus, soon after NMSP-SLORC ceasefire, the population displacement in various part of Yebyu Township area have happened. They could not stay safely in the own village and always afraid of being tortured or killed and decided to leave from the villages.

Such mis-treatment against the local villagers have continuously happened in 1998, the ordinary villagers, community leaders including monks and headmen were constantly ill-treated by SLORC/SPDC soldiers with accusation that they were the rebel-supporters. Whenever the fighting happened near one village or between two villages, the villagers were accused as rebel- supporters, and the headmen and villagers were constantly tortured.

One instance of arbitrary execution by LIB No. 408 during 1998 was:

In May 1998, one SPDC battalion which took responsibility to attack the rebel troops, IB No. 61, was ambushed near a Mon village, Kyonekanya, another SPDC's three battalions went into this area to take revenge against the rebel troops and villagers. On June 6, one column (about 60 troops) of LIB No. 408 went into Kronekanya village and arrested two villagers, namely, Nai Mit (48 years) and Nai Aung Kyi (35 years) with accusation that they were agents for rebel troops. Actually, these men's rice farms were situating near the fighting ground and the rebel troops also passed their farms to pass a stream after ambush fighting. And, so they were accused as rebel-supporters. After the arrests by soldiers, they were severely and cruelly tortured. During the soldiers were interrogating Nai Aung Kyi, since he could not speak Burmese language, they did not get satisfied answers from him and so, the soldiers cut his mouth and face with knives. Due to his refusal that he did not meet rebel troops passing near his farms, because he was at village, the soldiers dissatisfied on him and, cut and open his stomach with knives. Similarly, the soldiers also cut the face and throat of another villager, Nai Mit, with knives. Both villagers died in the hands of LIB No. 408's troops' cruel treatments. On August 7, when LIB No. 408 entered into Thauangkhu village in the evening time about 7:00 p.m. they also met two villagers using touch lights. They accused the villagers as rebel soldiers because they had touch lights. The soldiers brought these two villagers outside of village and killed them.

While the fighting between the two factions was escalating, the SPDC troops demanded more porters from the various villages to carry ammunitions and other supplies for the military operations. The local battalion troops also instructed the respective village headmen to prepare to be ready for the set number of porters to provide them as porters. Those villager porters were used in the military operations for at least 3 days and sometimes, they brought those villagers to the battlefields and it lasted for one month to three months or died in the front-line.

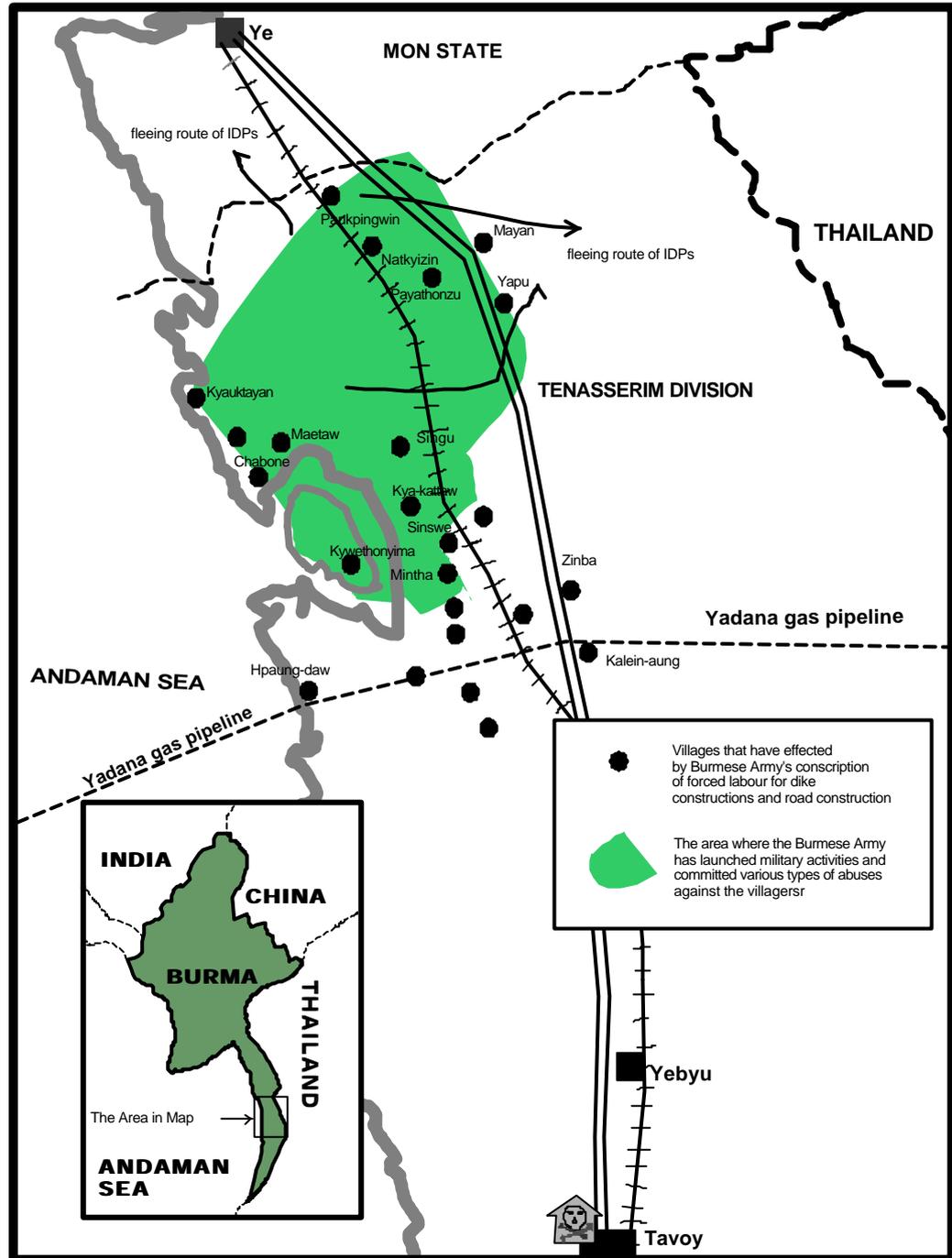
As the local military regularly have regularly entered into villages and launched the constant military attacks

against the rebel troops, the request orders also came to village headmen unceasingly. When the troops came to a village, the headmen had to manage not only providing villager porters but also had to feed the soldiers and commanders with foods, liquors and cigarettes. For the cost of feeding the soldiers, the villagers also had to pay. When the headmen could not manage for porters and foods, they also abandoned their duties and resigned as headmen. In 1998, sometimes, there was no any headman in some villages, and sometimes

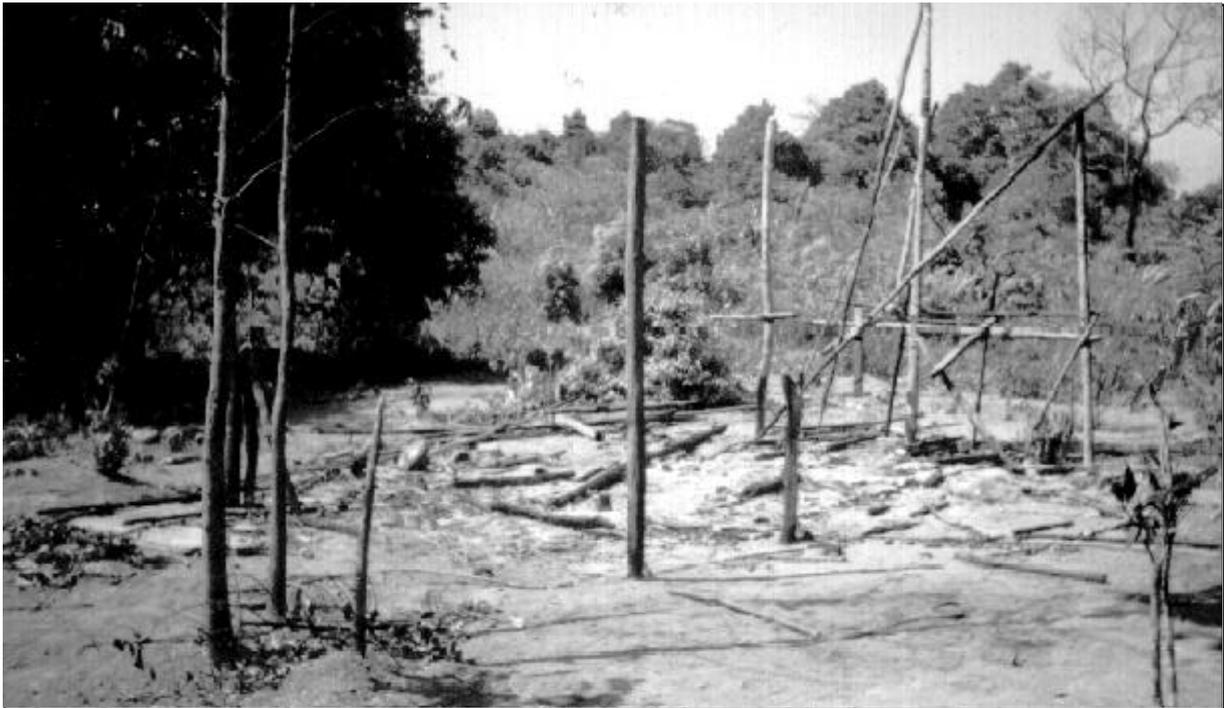
the local battalion commanders forcibly appointed some villagers as headmen to serve for them.

As an instance,

In 1998, for feeding the commanders and soldiers, Kyonekanya villagers had to pay the cost of foods about 20,000 – 50,000 Kyat every month. So, every household in the village had to pay 500-1000 Kyat to headmen every month. Additionally, the headmen also had to manage in providing at least about 15-20 porters to military battalions. In July, because of continuous conscription of porters, many villagers fled from village to escape from the porter service for SPDC troops. Then, the headmen could not provide the set number of porters to SPDC battalions. In September, when the headmen, both village chairman and general secretary, could not manage to provide the set number of porters, both of them were severely beaten by commander and soldiers from LIB No. 410. After the headmen could not tolerate torture and requirement of SPDC battalions, the chairman fled to another village with his family and village general secretary entered into Buddhist monkhood. On October 19, when a column of SPDC troops from LIB No. 273, led by second-commander Colo. Maung Maung Than arrived into that village, there was no headman to manage for porters. He angered and



The location map of Yebyu Township area



A burnt hut near a fruit plantation: some house was burnt down by the army and the villagers were forced to not stay at their rice-farms or plantations

asked the villagers where the headmen went. After inquiry from the villagers, they also knew that the village secretary went into monkhood and abandoned the headman duty. The commander went to monastery and forced the monk (the former general secretary) to disrobe from monk and rule the village, especially, to manage foods and porters for the military operation.

Besides the regular demand of villager porters and porter fees, the village headmen also had to manage for the regular labourers in various SPDC local battalions' development projects and to work their own military outpost. In Yebyu township alone, there are over 10 military battalions and each military battalion has to take responsibility for at least one development projects, when they have no duty to launch military offensives against the rebel bases in other part of Yebyu Township area. If these battalions are in Yebyu Township, they have responsibility to do both development work and operate military patrol for the security of the whole area.

During 1998 and 1999, the local military battalions in Yebyu township area, LIB No. 404, No. 406, No. 408 and No. 410 have to take responsibility in rebuilding Ye-Tavoy motor road and railway road. Therefore, many hundreds of villagers were regularly forced by the local military battalions to contribute free labour in these construction sites. Besides road construction, in 1998, the local military battalions also built about four water dikes to keep water and distribute it to their rice-farms. The villagers were additionally forced by the soldiers to contribute free labour in these dike constructions. Thus, on the rotation basis, the village headmen have to arrange to send the set number of villager labourers to the respective construction. And, every battalion has asked the headmen to send some villagers to their military outposts and to do some daily works such as cooking foods, carrying water, gathering fire-woods, growing vegetables and other works. Because of constant conscription of forced labour, the villagers have less and less time to do their own works in rice-farms and fruit-plantations.

On the other hand, the military battalion always instructed regular movement restriction against the villagers whenever the fighting happened near a village and around the area. After a fighting completed, SPDC troops tried to clear the area and always ordered the local villagers to not stay in their rice-farms and plantations and instructed all villagers to move into villages and stayed there. If the soldiers met some villagers in their farms, they must be severely beaten or killed. Therefore, the villagers also lost opportunity to do their own works.

The combination of these human rights violations was the main reason why the local inhabitants have been displaced in their home area regularly. When the villagers faced persecution from the soldiers, for example, one of their family members were killed, the remaining family members also decided to move from their own villages. Or, when one family had to work continuously in the army development projects and dike construction, if they could not pay fine to the concerned military battalion, they have less and less time to work their own works and receive no income and foods at the end. Then, these type of families have to leave from their home villages and moved to another place where they suffered less abuses. Similarly, if the villagers have no time to work in their farms or plantations due to movement restrictions, the villagers also could face food-shortage problems and have to leave from their home villages. The similar situation also happened in 2000.

III. The Population Displacement in 2000

(a) Movement Restriction Orders After Mon National Day

Since before the end of 1999 until April 2000, when SPDC withdrew some of its troops from many battalions that took bases in Yebyu township area, from LIB No. 401, No. 402 to No. 410, by combining with other forces and have launched the military offensives against God's Army in the southern mountainous area of Mergui district area. By taking it as a good opportunity, the Mon rebel troops launch more activities in Yebyu Township area and organized the villagers to support them.

During the Mon National Day, which was held on February 20, 2000, the Mon rebel group and its leaders also tried organizing the villagers in Yebyu and celebrated the Mon national day in a Mon village, Paukpingwin. Many villagers and community leaders from the villages close to Paukpingwin attended the ceremony. Thus, villagers who attended the ceremony were accused as rebel-supporters or sympathizers to Mon rebel group, by the SPDC local military battalions.

After the local military battalions heard about the Mon army and the local villagers celebrated the Mon National Day celebration in Paukpingwin village, they angered to both villagers in the area nearby and rebel troops. Recently, SPDC's LIB No.410 took base near this village and the villagers were regularly used as unpaid labours in various types of government development projects.

Due to the new activities of Mon rebel forces, LIB No. 410 troops were brought back to take security in the area again. To clear the activities of the rebel forces, LIB No. 273, LIB No. 410 and IB No. 25 troops were ordered to co-operate each other. These troops also checked the villagers from which village attended the national day ceremony and went into all these villages and inquired who were supporting the rebel force to celebrate the Mon national day.

As revenge, the SPDC from these military battalions have blocked all villages and conducted new movement restrictions against the villagers. As a result of this movement restriction order conducted by the SPDC battalions, about 20 villages in Yabu, Mintha and Kwethonyima village tracts have been effected and the villagers also lost opportunity to work in their own farms. According to movement restrictions order, the army instructed the villagers with three points, such as, (1) the villagers must stay at homes and must not work in the rice-farms and fruit-plantations, (2) if the army met someone in these work-places, they must be accused as rebel soldiers and be executed, and (3) the villagers must not keep any type of foods in the work-places or outside of the villages.

Following this movement restriction order, the SPDC also went around many rice-farms and fruit-plantations to find out the rebel bases. Since the villagers have no chance to stay in their own farms and plantations, the soldiers from these battalions also took their fruits in the plantations and sold them for their income. This abuse of looting villagers' belongings is the regular violation and the soldiers also make profit from this looting.

According Natkyisin villager, explaining about this abuse, he said

"During April, we (the villagers) were ordered to not go to our rice-farms and fruit plantations. I also owned a betel-nut plantation outside of the village, about 1 kilometer far and I lost to harvest my fruit. When the soldiers from LIB No. 273 came to near our village and they also took our fruits and collected them in one place and brought to Ye Town. And they sold them. I lost about 20, 000 betel-nut fruits during 3 weeks and it was equal to about 40, 000 Kyat. This betel-nut plantation is the main income for my family and Burmese soldiers looted nearly half of my fruits. Before the end of April, I also went to my plantation secretly and I met about 10 betel-nut trees were cut down to the ground. When the soldiers could not harvest the fruits, they also cut the trees."

When the villagers have no opportunity to go to their plantations and harvest their fruits, they receive less and less income. Sometimes, some fruits such as durians, limes and oranges became too ripe and the farmers also lost their fruits. When the farmers have less income and no foods, they also tried to go to fruit plantations, to gather fruits. Sometimes, those farmers, who were in the fruit plantations, were arrested in plantations and they were severely tortured by soldiers for their being in the plantations and they were also accused as rebel-supporters, by providing foods and shelters to rebel soldiers.

According a witness from Paukpinwn village, he said about the Burmese soldiers' maltreatment against a village from his village as below:

"In the last week of April, one of our villager, Nai G— (54 years old) went to his betel-nut plantation secretly. While he was gathering betel-nuts, the soldiers from LIB No. 273 came and met him. Then they arrested and tied him up. The soldiers made interrogation to him what he was doing in the plantation and asked him why he did not listen the order. Although he explained him he would like to gather betel-nuts to sell them for income to buy rice to feed his family, they did not trust him and

The soldiers also put water on his nose and forced him to admit that he was supporting rebel soldiers. After he refused, they also rolled and pressed his knee and shins of both legs with a round stick of bamboo until he lost consciousness. And, the soldiers left him behind and went into village. Then they also warned the villagers that if they went to rice-farms and plantations, they must be killed or tortured like Nai G—. And, after the troops left the villagers brought back Nai G— to village.”

Similar torturing also happened in other villages. Sometimes, the soldiers tortured the villagers not only because of their instructed movement restriction order, but also because of some other purposes. Most terrible and inhumane torturing are treated by soldiers whenever they arrested the villagers with accusation of rebel-supporters. Sometimes, with accusation of rebel-supporters, some villagers were disappeared or killed.

As an instance,

On May 30, 2000, when SPDC troops from LIB No. 273 led by battalion commander Col. Htin Kyaw, entered to Sinswe village, Yebyu Township, the soldiers also arrested two men and brought them away with accusation of rebel-supporters. Until the end of June, those two men were not released and some villagers said those two villagers were killed. According to villagers, these two men were innocent farmers and they had no background of relationship with the Mon rebel group. The two men are Nai Krot (28 years old) and Mehm Kun Blai (18 years) and they born in Sinswe and helped their families in paddy farms. They were arrested only with suspicion, and but the soldiers also did not have any evidence they have contacted the Mon soldiers or joined the Mon army.

After the arrest, the soldiers also tortured these two men to admit that they were rebel soldiers. The soldiers beat them with fists, gun-butts, jungle-boots and sticks several times and also cut Nai Krot face with knives. At the end the soldiers brought them to other village, even they were painful with several injuries. After soldiers brought them, the villagers believed they must be killed.

During the military activities launched by SPDC local troops in rural areas, whenever the troops went into villages, they surrounded the villages first, shoot the guns outside of village and make threat to villagers and then went into villages. Soon after the soldiers arrived into the villages, they also tried to arrest the villagers who are under the suspicion of rebel-supporters. Then, normally, the soldiers tortured these suspected villagers in front of all villagers and make threat against them to stop any attempt to support the rebel troops. Additionally, the soldiers also arrested many villagers who are in the villages. As the troops rounded up the village, no man dare to flee to outside of the village and it makes easier for soldiers to arrest men in the villages to use them as civilian porters to carry their ammunitions and food supplies along the military operations.

Whenever the troops of rebel group passed near a village or went into a village, the SPDC battalions came to these villages and make various types of threat against the villagers and normally, the village headmen are severely tortured and beaten. Some villagers are also tortured and beaten for their failure to inform the SPDC troops nearby about the activities of the Mon rebel soldiers.

As an instance,

On May 2, one column of SPDC troops from LIB No. 273 led by the Second-commander, Lt. Col. Kyaw Myint went into Chabone village, to make threat against the villagers and the village headmen. Soon after they arrived into the village, the soldiers asked all villagers, including women and children to gather in the middle of village and asked them about the activities of rebel



Internally displaced persons are building houses in a jungle area

troops. They also asked headmen why they did not inform the nearest military outpost about the activities of Mon troops. After the soldiers did not receive satisfactory answers from the village chairman, Nai Kyaw Sein, they also beat and slapped him in front of all villagers. And the soldiers also slapped other two women after they did not receive satisfactory answers from them. Then, the soldiers made a lot of threat to villagers and instructed them that they must inform about the activities of the rebel troops, whenever they heard their news of activities. If they failed to inform, they must be punished.

On May 10, the same troops from LIB No. 273 came to this village again after they heard that some Mon troops have been active in the area. Due to the failure of headmen to inform about the activities of rebel troops, the village chairman, Nai Kyaw Sein, again. Then the soldiers arrested all men in village and used them as porters and moved to another villages.

Sometimes, when the fighting happened near a village, the village headmen were not only severely tortured but also were arrested by the SPDC troops and took them away. Sometimes, the village headmen disappeared after they were brought by SPDC troops.

As an instance,

On May 26, after a column of SPDC troops from Strategic Column (2) under the command of No. 8 Strategic Administered Command, was ambushed by Mon troops near Mayan village, the SPDC soldiers also angered to village headmen and arrested chairman. SPDC troops were led by Maj. Soe Thet and he ordered to arrest the headman with accusation he was the supporters of rebel group. Until the end of June, he was not released by the Burmese troops and disappeared.

Because of the movement restriction and various types of human rights violations committed by the local SPDC troops, the villagers have been facing more and more difficulties for survival especially to get enough foods and income. Because of these conditions, some villagers secretly abandoned their villages, moved to other areas where they felt that they are more safely.

(b) Forced Relocation of Paukpingwin Village

For the acceptance of the celebration of Mon National Day in their own village, the SPDC battalions also gave a punishment to all Paukpingwin village to move from their own village immediately with 7 days.

On May 23, the SPDC troops from LIB No. 273 led by battalion commander, Col. Htin Kyaw, came into Paukpingwin and interrogated the village headmen why they have supported the rebel soldiers and accused them that they were rebel-supporters. After several rounds of interrogation, the commander ordered the village headmen and the villagers that they must abandon and move from their village within 7 days. Although the village headmen, Chairman Nai Htun and others, requested the commander to extend more time for them, but he refused.

Thus, the villagers had to collect their belongings and moved away within 7 days because if they remained in the village, they must be killed or inhumanely maltreated after deadline. Normally, the villagers moved to some villages under the control of SPDC troops or to NMSP control villages.

Actually, Paukpingwin village was established for nearly 100 years ago and it is an oldest village in Yebyu township. Most Paukpingwin villagers are garden farmers for fruit plantations and they grow fruits in many of



Paukpingwin villagers are moving to other areas after they received order from SPDC's LIB No. 273 to immediately move from their village

plantations outside of their villages and few of them are paddy-growing farmers. In these plantations, the villagers grow durian, betel-nut, rubber and cashew-nut, and they receive more income from these fruits and this is the main economy of the villagers. Because of this forced relocation order, about 1, 000 villagers had to abandon their own village and moved to other places.

Since 1993, when SLORC built 110 mile-long Ye-Tavoy railway construction, the villagers from this village have been constantly forced to build the railway road. And, in 1998, when the SPDC local authorities widening Ye-Tavoy motor road, the villagers have been again forced to build the motor road. Thus, the villagers have been constantly suffered from continuous conscription of forced labour.

IV. Population Displacement

In Yebyu Township alone, the Mon troops launched some activities around 30 Mon villages and these villages are effected by the maltreatment of SPDC troops. Because of Mon national day celebration and related movement restriction, about 3, 000-5, 000 Mon villagers, as a result, from Mi-htaw-hla gyi, Mi-htaw-hla Kalay, Dani-kyar, Chaung-phar, Kyauktayan and Paya-thonzu villages have to flee from their native villages and about 70 families moved into NMSP control areas, while many remaining families moved to other places. This number of population displacement happened during March and April.

After LIB No. 273 ordered Paukpingwin villagers to move from their village, another 1, 000 population displaced again. Very few number of this amount of population moved into NMSP control area while many of them moved to town and big villages and stayed with their relatives or their friends.

Normally, the villagers fled from their villages because of fear for further persecution and some of them also faced food-shortage problems during they were in their own villages. Many villagers moved into SPDC's firm control areas, where they could face less persecution. However, many villagers and headmen who were accused as rebel-supporters moved into NMSP control areas to get protection from NMSP.



Information on HURFOM and Invitation for Feedbacks from Readers

Dear Readers,

Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) was founded in 1995, by a group of young Mon people. The main objectives of HURFOM are:

- To monitor human rights situations in Mon territory and other areas southern part of Burma,
- To protect and promote internationally recognized human rights in Burma,

In order to implement these objectives, HURFOM has produced "The Mon Forum" newsletters monthly and sometimes it has been delayed because we wait to confirm some information. We apologize for the delay.

However, we also invite your feedbacks on the information we described in each newsletter and if you know anyone who would like to receive the newsletter, please send name and address to our address or fax number or e-mail as below:

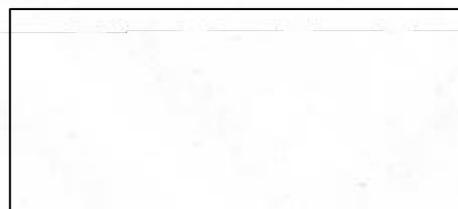
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