

# The Mon Forum

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## Some Acronyms in This Issue

- SPDC-** State Peace and Development Council,
- SLORC-** State Law and Order Restoration Council,
- LID-** Light Infantry Division (of Burmese Army)
- IB -** Infantry Battalion (of Burmese Army),
- LIB-** Light Infantry Battalion (of Burmese Army),
- KNU-** Karen National Union,
- KNLA-** Karen National Liberation Army,
- NMSP-** New Mon State Party,

## News

### Forced Farmers to Sign A Contract to Sell Paddy to Government

(July, 2000, Mon State)

In June and July, SPDC's Township authorities in Mon State have prepared and adopted a plan to force the local farmers in every township to sell the set amount of paddy to respective government paddy-buying center. In forcing farmers to do selling their crops at low price, the government authorities also give some advance payment to farmers and forced them to sign an agreement contract that promising they must sell the set amount of paddy to authorities designated paddy-buying center in November and December 2000.

As an instance, on June 2, Ye Township's an official from Paddy-buying Management Committee, U Htay Naing and his 10 policemen went to Duya village, about 20 kilometers northwest of Ye Town and asked all farmers to meet him. In the meeting, he also explained the government policy on purchasing paddy from farmers and about advance payment to farmers. Then the authorities gave advance payment to farmers and asked them to sign a contract agreement that giving promise they must sell the set amount of paddy to authorities' designated paddy-buying centers in November and December, 2000, after harvesting crops. These processes of forcible purchasing of paddy have been taken for three days in this village and the authorities moved to



The government's paddy-buying center in a Mon village

another to do the same things. On June 5, the authorities and township policemen arrived in An-din village and forced the local farmers to sign a contract agreement and paid some advance payment.

In Mon State, besides Ye Township, other townships such as Chaung-zone, Mudon, Paung and Thanbyuzayat also started this plan in July to force farmers, by giving advance payment to sign a contract agreement, to sell their paddy. Depending on land quality and the maximum estimation of paddy crop production in each township, the authorities also defined the set amount of paddy to farmers to be sold for one acre of land. The authorities set to farmers in Ye township area to sell 10 baskets (one basket is about 30 kilograms weight) per acre during their trips into many villages, while the farmers in Mudon, Paung and Chaung-zone township areas are set to sell 15 baskets of paddy per acre.

In buying paddy from farmers, the authorities pay only 350 Kyat per basket, while one basket of paddy in the market price is about 1,000 to 1,200 Kyat per basket. The price paid by government's paddy-buying center is three times less than the market price. So, when a farmer is ordered to sell 10 baskets of paddy per acre he could get 3,500 Kyat totally for one acre. When the authorities forced them to sell the paddy, they gave them 1,000 – 1,500 Kyat of advance payment, which was nearly half of cash amount they would get after selling paddy.

Although many farmers would not like to accept the advance payment from authorities, but could not refuse. The authorities say everybody must accept this advance payment and must sell the set amount of paddy. The farmers refused to take this payment because of many reliable reasons. In Mon State or nearly the whole Burma, farmers are only relying on monsoon weather and rain in growing their crops. If the worst weather came or too much rain than required, paddy plants could be under flood water and died within a few days. Or, if the rain late, paddy crop grains could be destroyed by rain. Since the farmers could not foresee what could happen to their crops, most of them would not like to accept this advance payment from local authorities and give promise to sell the set amount of paddy. However, the authorities who just listen only orders have never taken any public hearing and just force farmers to sell the set amount of paddy.

According to last year experience, after the authorities paid advance payment, many farmers could not afford to sell the set amount of paddy to government. After those farmers failed to sell the set amount of paddy, they also faced arrest and detention by authorities. During Year 2000, there are some evidence of arrest in Mon State, after some farmers failed to sell the full set amount of paddy asked by authorities.

As an instance,

*On February 11, 2000, a Mon farmer, Nai Tun Shwe, from Kawpee-htaw village in Kalortort village tract of Mudon Township, was arrested by authorities and polices after he failed selling some remaining amount of paddy. In Decem-*

*ber, village headmen and paddy-buying authorities set for him to sell 192 baskets of paddy for his 12 acres of land. Before the end of rainy season, some of paddy crops from his farm were destroyed by rain and he lost some crops. However the authorities have not sympathized and asked the full amount of paddy that he needed to sell. From December to January, he could manage selling about 131 baskets of paddy at low price and remained about 61 baskets. On February 5, village headmen warned him to sell the remaining as quick as possible. But he could not manage. Then, the authorities and polices came and arrested him on February 11, at his house. He was detained for 25 days and during he was in detention, the authorities forced his family to sell the remaining paddy. After his wife sold full amount of paddy, then they released him.*

Such type of arrest always occurred to farmers during the whole period of paddy-buying season, especially from November to March, every year. Besides arrests, the farmers who failed to sell the set amount of paddy were always threatened to complete selling paddy. Sometimes the authorities also set deadline for them.

As an instance,

*During a period from April 20 to May 10, Chuang-zone Township authorities of Mon State, asked farmers from four Mon villages, such as, Bo-net, Thet-kaw, Ka-nyor and Mudun, who failed to sell the set amount of paddy and set deadline for them to complete their responsibilities. After deadline, some farmers who still could not manage to complete selling paddy were arrested by authorities and detained in Chaung-zone police station. Some families also paid 1,500 Kyat ransom to authorities to bring their husbands back to homes and promised to complete selling paddy.*

In most cases, for the farmers who really have no more extra paddy at their houses, have to buy substitute paddy from markets at high price and sell it to paddy-buying centers at low price again. To buy paddy from the market, the farmers also have to sell some of their belongings or properties first. Sometimes, they also have to sell some pieces of their farmlands and then buy paddy from markets. Therefore, under the rule of military regimes, many farmers also abandoned their lands and changed to new jobs, which they have no skill, or send some of their family members to Thailand to seek jobs and send money to the remaining families for survival or to continue working in paddy growing farms.



## Fund Collection for Education Facilities and Student Sports

**(June, 2000, Paung Township, Mon State)**

In June, to buy computer systems, computing facilities and others to use in Government High Schools, Paung Township PDC authorities have attempted collecting many million Kyat fund from the town residents and villagers.

Since the military government, SPDC, has no enough budget to support in promoting education in the whole country, it has adopted a "self-help" policy to their subordinate administrative bodies to create self-help program in their own area. Because of this policy, Township authorities in Mon State have collected fund for school facilities since 1998 and received no support from the government.

At the beginning of June, Mon State PDC authorities instructed Paung Township to collect about 12 million Kyat fund from civilians to spend in buying computer systems and other facilities. The authorities planned they will install from 5 to 10 computer systems in each school, depending on the student numbers in that school. For each computer system, they required about 500, 000 Kyat and put all these responsibilities to civilians to pay.

In collecting fund, the government collected from every household and depending on each family's business conditions, the amounts of fund to be paid are different. In this case, the Township authorities themselves have collected fund in town wards and ordered village headmen in rural area under their administration to collect fund.

In town, the authorities collected fund from every household. A shop, which sells daily use groceries, foods, betel-nuts and clothes have to pay to authorities from 500 Kyat to 1, 500 Kyat depending on their shops' sizes. Some similar big shops and stores have to pay 2, 000 Kyat to 4, 000 Kyat for one shop. A gold-wares selling shop, car and motorcycles repair service and other service businesses have to pay about 5, 000 Kyat to 10, 000 Kyat. Even from trishaw owners and other day-labourers, the authorities collected about 500 Kyat – 1, 000 Kyat respectively.

In rural villages, in where almost farmers and fishermen are inhabitants, the authorities collected 500 Kyat from every household. If one farmers owns a small shop selling groceries and service, that farmers needs to pay 1, 000 Kyat to 2, 000 Kyat. The headmen also collected 5, 000 Kyat to 10, 000 Kyat from paddy-husking mill depending on how each mill could husk how many baskets of paddy. Sometimes, the authorities also used forces when they did not receive the fund on time. In second week of June, when some paddy-husking mills delayed paying fund to headmen, the authorities ordered to shut down these mills and stopped operating their mills. After the mill owners paid the requested amount fund, the authorities allowed them again.

Within two months, June and July, Mon State PDC authorities ordered Paung Township authorities to complete collecting fund from civilians in the whole township. According to reliable source, the Township authorities could collect over 12 million Kyat fund and must have to spend only 11 million Kyat for buying computer systems and other facilities, and pay 1 million Kyat to Mon State Sport Committee, to celebrate Students' Sport in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, in December 2000.



## Tax Collection from Rubber Plantation Owners in Mon State

(June, 2000, Mon State)

Under the name of battalion fund, similarly to paddy growing farmers, rubber growing farmers in some parts of Mon State are also pressured to pay rubber tax or to sell their rubber sheets, (after pressing rubber into sheets) at low price to their respective or nearest military battalions.

In June, SPDC's a local military battalion IB No. 62 and No. 5 Weapon Repairs and Engineering Battalion, that base in Thanbyuzayat and Mudon Townships have collected fund from the local rubber plantation owners in villages in eastern and southern parts of Mudon township. In this township, about five villages in its eastern part grow many hundreds acres of rubber along Mudon – Chaunghtitkwa motor road and over 10 villages in southern part of township grow over 3, 000 acres of rubber plantation along motor road between Mudon and Thanbyuzayat towns.

IB No. 62 and Engineering Battalion collected ordered every rubber plantation owners to sell about 70 pounds rubber from each acre of land at price 50 Kyat per pound, while the market price is about 80-100 Kyat per pound. However, all rubber-growing farmers have to sell their rubber sheets to battalion at low price. If the farmers would not like to sell their rubber at low price, the army also instructed they could pay with cash instead of rubber. Thus, for one acre of land, the army asked to pay 3, 000 Kyat cash as tax.

Similarly, No. 4 Central Military Training School bases near Thanbyuzayat township similarly collected tax from rubber-growing farmers who own about 500 acres of rubber plantation near its base. The rate of tax collection is about 250 Kyat per acre and the farmers have to pay every month. It is equal to 3, 000 Kyat tax from the whole year for one acre of land. IB No. 32 that bases in Thanbyuzayat town also collected similar tax from 2, 000 acres of rubber plantations in western part of township areas. IB No. 32 normally bought rubber sheets at low price from farmers and then re-sell it at market price.

Since 1997, after SLORC ordered its local military battalions and commands to create self-reliance program among their bases and the army battalions have found various ways to have regular income. In some areas, the battalions themselves confiscated some lands or explored new lands and grow rubber. Like Mudon and Thanbyuzayat township, there is no more lands and the battalions in these areas used this type of tax collection from rubber-growing farmers.

When the government authorities and army are raising fund for operating of their administration and for feeding of soldiers and their families, the local paddy-growing and rubber-growing farmers have been terribly suffered from paying huge amount of tax.



## Report

### Human Rights Violations and Population Displacement in Kya Inn Seikyi Township Area, Karen State

#### I. The Background of Kya Inn Seikyi Township Area

Geographically, Kya Inn Seikyi is a large township area in Karen State, and this township area connects with Mon State and extends to Thai-Burma border. In this township area, there are many rivers and streams, such as Zami, Winyaw, and Kyone-daw, are interspersing and over 50% of the area are covered with forests. The main river, Zami, passes across in the middle of this township and it is a main river for communication during rainy season. Additionally, about 50 kilometers of Three Pagoda Pass – Thanbyuzayat motor road also passes across the southern area of this area and it is the main road for communication during dry season. Two ethnic nationalities' people, Mon and Karen, are the local inhabitants of this township and they are staying in harmony and peacefully. Most local inhabitants are paddy peasant farmers and fruit and rubber plantation gardeners. While Most Mon people lives in various villages in western part of Zami river, Karen people lives eastern part of the river. However, during the course of five-decade-long civil war between ethnic Mon, Karen armed forces and Burman dominated Rangoon governments' Burmese Army *tatmadaw*, both Mon and Karen in the whole township area have been constantly and terribly suffered from gross human rights violations committed by *tatmadaw* soldiers.

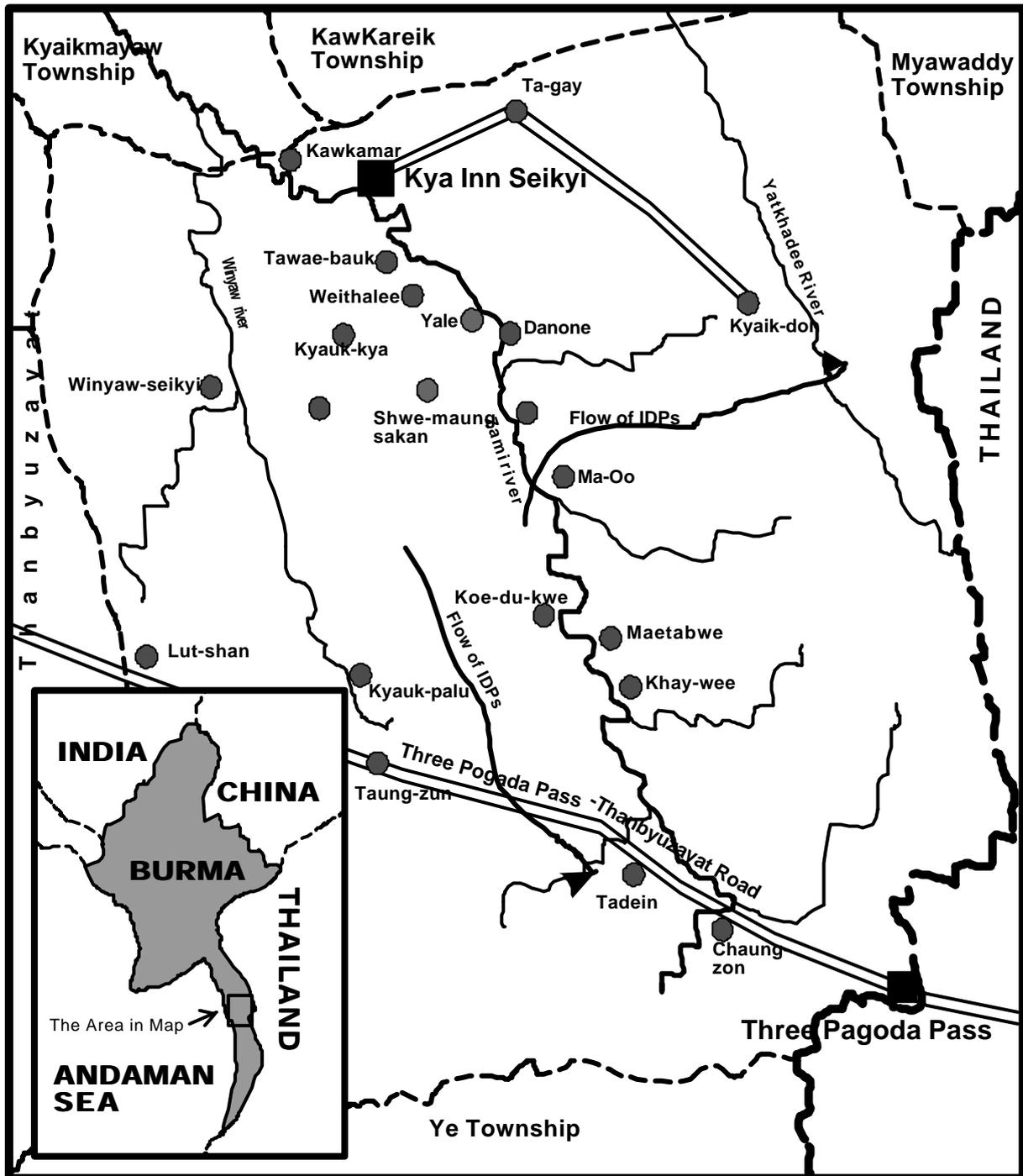
Recently, both NMSP (*New Mon State Party*) and KNU (*Karen National Union*), have operated its military offensives against the government and also deployed main bases in this township. In 1995, although NMSP made a ceasefire agreement with SLORC, KNU and its military faction, KNLA (*Karen National Liberation Army*) have continuously fought against Rangoon military government, SLORC and the current SPDC. Similarly to other parts of Karen State and Tenasserim Division, the Burmese Army has continuously launched military operations and offensives in this area against KNU/KNLA.

Because of war, the local Mon and Karen inhabitants have been maltreated by the Burmese Army's military battalions with accusation of rebel-supporters. Because of these accusations, some local villages are generally relocated or burnt into ashes, the villagers are forced to dislocate after arbitrary killing, arrest and torturing, and villagers' belongings are looted. On the other hand, with objectives to cut off contacts and supports from civilians to KNU and KNLA, the Burmese Army always implements "four cuts campaign" against the local civilians. Under this instruction, the government troops conducted various of movement restriction against the local villagers such as force them to not stay at their work-places, arrest during traveling, burn their rice stored in low-land farms or hilly areas, rape against women, and use of villagers to be porters for carrying ammunitions and food supplies or cleaning mines or shields for bullets, and others.

In this township area, forced relocation of the local villages often made by the Burmese Army's military The



**Zami river** and displaced villagers on river bank



The location map of Kya Inn Seikyi Township

battalions, with objective to destroy the bases of KNU and to cut off people support to KNU. The Burmese Army also deployed more and more battalions in this township area and operated more intensified offensives since 1997. The 1997 dry season *tatmadaw* military offensives drove out many thousands of Karen villagers and some Mon villagers from this area and these displaced persons fled into Thailand's refugee camps and internally displaced in NMSP and KNU control areas.

There were many cases of recent forced relocation of Mon and Karen villages in this area. On October 15, 1997, LIB 355's Tactical Commander Col. Zaw Lin Htun ordered Mon and Karen villagers from 13 villages in township, such as (1) Lake-pyort, (2) Kalort-tort-chaung, (3) Thar-shay, (4) Htipho-hut, (5) Kyaik-round, (6) Ahkyar, (7) Htipalay, (8) Htipataw, (9) Yale, (10) Tharya-gone, (11) Chilaungchi (12) Taungale and (13) Shwemaungsakan, to move into three villages, (1) Weithalee, (2) Taung-bauk and (3) Htipaukhlo. In the new resettlement sites, LIB 355 confiscated some lands from villagers without compensation cost and let the relocated villagers stay there.

forced relocation of the villagers has been continuous whenever the Burmese Army launched offensives in this area. In the first week of April, 1999, Southeastern Region Military Command, which bases in Moulmein ordered its battalions, IB No. 97, IB No. 32, LIB No. 230 and LIB No. 284, to relocate about 12 Mon and Karen villages situating along Three Pagoda Pass – Thanbyuzayat motor road into five designated villages under the army firm control. The relocated villages were: (1) Zee-hnit-pin, (2) Law-shan, (3) Rat-phaw, (4) Yathay-taung, (5) Ka-kathit, (6) Ta-nyin, (7) Thanpaya, (8) Sin-pyay, (9) Khon-khan, (10) Ma-law, (11) Pan-aung, and (12) Ta-dein. The villagers from these villages were instructed to move into 5 designated villages, such as (1) Yatagon, (2) Anan-gwin, (3) Taung-zun, (4) Maezalee and (5) Chaungzon, where the battalions had their outposts.

When the order was taken place, the villagers from these relocated villages had to decide whether they would move into SPDC battalions' instructed resettlement sites or not. The villagers who decided who would not like to join the resettlement sites, had to hide in the forests or fled to another areas, such as, NMSP or KNU control areas, to villages and city under SPDC firm control in which the conditions were better than in the resettlement sites, and into Thailand to seek works or to take refuge in the refugee camps.

However, those displaced persons have always tried to return to their home villages, because they have properties such as farms, houses, gardens and others in there. When the SPDC military battalions ceased operating military offensives or launching no military activities, the villagers went back to their homes. Sometimes, when the rainy season started, the villagers went back to their homes and do farming again. Anyhow, the population displacement always occurs every year in Kya Inn Seiki Township area of Karen State.

## II. SPDC Military Offensives in Late 1999 and 2000, and Human Rights Violations

As the armed conflict between KNU and SPDC troops is on-going situation, Burmese Army (tatmadaw) has operated military operations against KNU every year. After the end of rainy season, October 1999, tatmadaw resumed its military offensives against KNU again. At the beginning of military offensives, SPDC sent LID No. 88 (Light Infantry Division) and its military battalions LIB No. 120, LIB No. 703 and LIB No. 284, to clear KNU bases in Kya Inn Seiki Township area. This military operation had operated offensives in this township area from October to February and its main duties are to stop KNU's military activities in eastern part of Zami river and along Zami river and along Three Pagoda Pass – Thanbyuzayat motor road.

From February until the end of April, Burmese Army turned its head to take security along Three Pagoda Pass – Thanbyuzayat motor road. The purpose of this military operation was to uproot KNU activities that collecting tax from passengers, traders and trucks, which used motor road. From May until June, to reinforce the former troops and intensify the military offensives, the Burmese Army also sent another three military regiments, LIB No. 705, LIB No. 707 and LIB No. 415. These battalions were under the command of LID No. 99 and Operational Administrated Command No. 5 (Command No. 5) and their main responsibilities were to operate military operations along Zami river and western part of Zami river. Thus, since May, there have been many military battalions, such as IB No. 32, LIB No. 284, LIB No. 703, LIB No. 705, LIB No. 415 and other troops under LID No. 88, LID No. 99 and Command No. 5 in the whole Kya Inn Seiki township and have tried to uproot all activities of KNU and KNLA troops. Total estimated 2, 000 tatmadaw troops launched joint military operations to fight against KNU troops.

Following these intensive military operations, the local ethnic villagers, Karen, Mon and Lao Shan, from villages along motor road, along Zami river and other parts of township areas have been constantly suffered from various types of human rights violations that related to accusations of rebel-supporters, or sympathizers. Most terrible gross human rights violations are arbitrary killing, arrest, torture, forced relocation or dislocation, conscription of forced labour and porters, and looting of villagers' belongings and foods. All of these human rights violations have been the main causes of population displacement.

### (a) Killing

Whenever a military offensive was operated, the local villagers who accepted the rebel soldiers to come into their villages were always punished by the *tatmadaw* or SPDC soldiers for the acceptance of rebels. They were normally accused as rebel-supporters and some villagers were severely punished and the most inhumane treatment was killing.

During the course of offensives from the fall of 1999 until the first half-year of 2000, there have been many evidence that SPDC soldiers killed innocent villagers, community leaders and religious leaders with accusation of rebel-supporters. During a battalion of Burmese Army, LIB No. 120 under the command of LID No. 88 launched the military activities in eastern part of Zami river, the *tatmadaw* killed many Karen villagers with accusation of rebel-

supporters.

As instances,

*On October 3, when LIB No. 120 led by Lt. Col. Maung Maung Oo went into Kyone-sein village, the soldiers arrested 12 Karen villagers including two women with accusation that they were rebel-supporters. The soldiers also tortured them while the soldiers were interrogating them to give satisfied answers. Some villagers were beaten, burnt with fire, cut with knife, and were treated with many cruel ways. The soldiers also cut one pastor's ear. The soldiers also accused two arrested women that their husbands in KNU forces and they repeatedly raped these two women. The two women were Naw B—B— (16 years old) and Naw M—K— (17 years old) and the soldiers also cut Naw B—B—'s breast with knife. They also pulled hot water onto women's noses until they lost consciousness. And, on October 10, the soldiers killed two men, Saw Lay Doe (17 years old) and Saw Kaw Kaw (40 years) after various types of torturing, with accusation they were Karen rebel soldiers.*

*On October 25, when LIB No. 120 troops went into a Karen village, Palaw-toki, in Mae-sakit village tract, the soldiers arrested villagers altogether who were suspected as rebel-supporters and interrogated about the KNU activities and its strength. After the soldiers did not satisfied answers, they also killed three villagers, Saw Pel Khaw – 40 years, Saw Thaw Hae – 35 years, and Saw Chit Chit – 28 years with accusation of they were rebel-supporters.*

These torturing and killing were the most cruelest ways that the *tatmadaw* soldiers have maltreated the local Karen villagers to halt them to not contact with any KNU/KNLA troop. Not only LIB No. 120 troops alone, the other troops that operated military activities during in 2000 also maltreated villagers and then killed.

Sometimes, while the troops from the *tatmadaw* continuously launched the military offensives, they were also ambushed and attacked by Karen rebel soldiers. The *tatmadaw* soldiers also wounded or died during fighting. As a result, soldiers angered to villagers from the villages nearby, where the fighting happened and killed villagers instead of rebels, with accusation those villagers have allowed rebel soldiers to stay in their villages and to have opportunity to attack them.

As an instance,

*From May until June, LIB No. 703 troops have been active and operated military operations from the top of Zami river to down part of it, and they faced various attacks by KNU forces. On June 15, that battalion was attacked by KNLA troops near Apalon village, and on June 20 and 22, it was again attacked by KNLA troops near Lay-mile and Pone-khaw villages respectively. As revenge to KNLA forces, villagers in the area are suffered from various types of torturing by soldiers. On June 22, after fighting and retreated from the battle-fields, the soldiers also rounded Mae-ta-bwee village and the soldiers shot and killed one farmers when he came out from village.*

Sometimes, when *tatmadaw* troops heard KNLA soldiers were taking bases in a village, they also shelled into villages with motors and rifles, and killed some innocent villagers. During this case, whenever the *tatmadaw* soldiers shot into a village, the shells hit very little numbers rebel soldiers but hit to a lots of villagers. Then villagers died because of this shelling and shooting.



**The civilian porters** used by the Burmese Army's LIB No. 703 along Three Pagoda Pass - Thanbyuzayat motor road

As an instance,

*On June 18, when LIB No. 284 heard that KNLA troops were taking bases in the monastery of Tawae-pauk village, near Kya Inn Seikyi town, they also came into that village and shot into monastery compound where they have suspected the Karen soldiers were there. After several rounds of shooting into monastery, one novice (12 years old) and two other villagers got serious injuries and died on the spot. Actually, Karen soldiers already left from the monastery and however, some innocent villagers died.*

Although several Burmese Army's battalions have arbitrarily killed the villagers, these battalions were not taken actions from their higher authorities. Whenever the battalions' soldiers killed some villagers, they always reported to their respective commands that they killed only Karen soldiers. Sometimes, the battalions did not report to higher commands about killing.

## **(b) Conscription of Forced Labour and Porters for Military Purposes**

While the Burmese Army is launching military offensives against the KNU troops in the whole township area, at the same time, the local military battalions, such as IB No. 32 and LIB No. 284, that base near Kya Inn Seikyi Town, have also conscripted the villagers as forced labourers to work several works in their battalions or other places. Other military battalions which were sent from Rangoon and under the command of Southeast Region Military Command and LID No. 88, always arrested the local civilians as civilian frontline porters to carry ammunitions and food supplies for battalions whenever they launched the military offensives against KNU/KNLA bases and troops.

In conscription of forced labour, the local military battalions, IB No. 32 and LIB No. 284 have always taken responsibility and the villagers in this village are mainly used to build the roads, military barracks, daily works in army camps and in army farms. To support for the better communication, the army has ordered the local village headmen to send the villagers to re-build or widen the roads from Chaung-htitkwa and Kya Inn Seikyi, to connect Mon State and Karen State. And, the army has also built a road from Kya Inn Seikyi to Kyaikdon to have access to reach eastern part of township area.

In Kya Inn Seikyi Township, IB No. 32 confiscated some lands near town and had grown paddy in these lands in both dry and rainy seasons. Accordingly SPDC plan, the military battalions under every command of Burmese Army have to find own lands and if they got lands for growing paddy, they need to grow both dry and rainy season crops.

Among the use of forced labour in many cases, the local battalions also have used many hundreds of villagers in farming of army's paddy farms during in the beginning of 2000. As an instance,

*After IB No. 32 harvested their paddy in May, they started growing rainy season crops in June, when the rain started falling. In cultivation of paddy in these lands, the local military battalion, LIB No. 32 has constantly forced the local villagers near Kya Inn Seikyi town to contribute free labour. Depending on them villages' population, the army has instructed the nearer villages close to battalion base to send 20-50 villagers from one village as one round to work in farms for 3 days to weeks. The village headmen from Htipaukhlo, Winye, Pyawayagone, Shwe-la-inn, Thanbaya, Bada-gyi and Nonepharpoe villages have to send the villagers for the whole month of June.*

Besides forcing the local villagers contributing forced labour in farming, the villagers were also forced to work for daily works, such as cooking, carrying water, collecting fire-woods and other works.

According one woman from Tawae-bauk village;

*"Since March-April (before the new year festival of Burma), the Burmese commanders from LIB No. 284, that bases in east of Kya Inn Seik town forced us to work in their battalion base. In the beginning, they ordered village headmen to send 5-6 men every day to work in base. As our village is close to base, our headmen had to arrange to send the villagers regularly on the rotation basis. In May, soldiers also beat some men whenever the KNLA troops went into our village. Later, when the soldiers asked form villages to work in their bases, the men were not dared to go and work there. Once, at the beginning of May, when one man from our village was working in the military camp, the soldiers also interrogated him about KNU activities, the soldiers also beat him. Later the men from village were not dared to go to army base. When the soldiers could not get men, they also ordered women to work instead of men.*

*In the army camp, we have to work various works including from cooking for soldiers to hard works to fence the compound of base and to build new military barracks. If the soldiers have no hard or special works in military base, they also used the villagers to work daily works such as cooking, carrying water and finding firewoods. Everyday, the villagers have to go to army base early morning to reach there about 7:00 a.m and we have to take our own foods. In the evening, we could return homes about 5:00 p.m."*

During the whole period of military offensives, before the end of 1999 until June 2000, the Burmese Army' battalions which launched offensives against KNU troops in Kya Inn Seikyi township have been constantly arrested the local village civilians to use them as frontline porters to carry ammunitions and food supplies.

When the army arrested the villagers as porters, normally they have used two ways. If the Burmese army has semi-control in one village, the battalion commanders just instructed the local village headmen to prepare for a ready to give 2 to 10 villagers as porters for the battalions when arrived to villages. Thus, the village headmen have to stop some villagers to not go to their work places and waited for army battalions. When the battalions arrived into village, the headmen have to provide army with the set numbers of villagers for porters.

As an instance,

*In June, LIB No. 707 led by Lt. Zaw Tun instructed the local village headmen from Mepran and Wae-sop to provide 2 porters from each village, and from Win-yaw village to provide, whenever their troops came into their villages. If the village headmen failed to provide the set number of porters, they might have to pay 15, 000 Kyat per porter. These porters were brought by army for several days and it could harm the life of porters. So, if possible, the headmen always paid commanders to avoid from the porter service. At the beginning of June, Mepran and Wae-sop village headmen paid 30, 000 Kyat for each village, while Win-yaw gave three villagers for porters. After a half-month, the battalions returned to these villages and requested porters again from village headmen.*

Sometimes, the battalion could not have any control to villages and could not order the headmen to prepare for porters. Then, when the soldiers came into a village, they suddenly arrested all men and used them as porters. Some military battalions even arrested children under 17 years old and have used them as civilian porters in frontline for several days. When the military battalions went into a village, the soldiers also rounded the village first and then arrested all men in village. Sometimes, the soldiers could get about 20 porters from only one village.

According to an escaped porter from Kyun-chuang village;

*“Soldiers from LID No. 44 arrested me in my village in the third week of May, because the soldiers already rounded our village and we lost chance to escape. The soldiers took all men as porters. I was taken for 21 days when the soldiers launched the military operation along Three Pagoda Pass – Thanbyuzayat motor road. I had to carry about 50 kilograms weight of motor shells in my backs. My back and shoulders was getting pain and pain. Along the way, the Burmese soldiers were also attacked by Karen soldiers, and whenever fighting happened they shout us to move advance and to walk quickly. On porter died because he was hit by a bullet. When I arrived to Kyun-chaung village, I escaped. If I didn’t escape I must be used as porters for several days for sure.”*

Normally, if they met the villagers outside of village, or in their work places such as in paddy-farms and fruit and rubber plantations, the soldiers beat those villagers and interrogated them about KNU activities in the area. Then, those villagers were brought by them and used as porters. Then, the villagers even had no time to inform about arrest to their families at villages. So, the villagers lost their opportunities in their farms whenever they heard that the Burmese Army’s military operations were taking place near their areas.

As an instance,

*In the period, from June 10 to 20, the Burmese Army’s LIB No. 703 have been active along Zami river and have had regular fighting with KNU troops and so the villagers who went to their farms and selling groceries and foods along the river worried for the arrest and they could not to their work-places. The soldiers also destroyed the villagers’ flooding houses along the riverbank with accusation these houses were used as temporary bases for Karen soldiers.*

Besides men, when the villagers could not get any man in the village and really required some porters, the soldiers also arrested women and used them as porters. Women porters also had to carry the same weight to men and they were used for many days along with military operations. According to an escaped villager from Khay-wee village;

*“In the third week of April, when a group of Burmese soldiers from LID No. 44 arrived to our village, they also arrested about 20 women. As the women realized that the soldiers have never arrested women, all women stayed in the village. Most men except elder persons already fled from the village to escape from the arrest. When the soldiers did not see able-bodied men, they angered and arrested all women. The soldiers gave their loads to these women and let them carry like men. These women were brought by army for three days and then were released after soldiers could replace them with other villages’ porters.”*

Sometimes, the soldiers took not only men but also forced the villagers to give their oxen-carts to bring the materials and ammunitions for soldiers. The forcible use of oxen-carts was always taken when the soldiers are too tired or were faced attack by the rebel troops.

As an instance,

*On June 18, SPDC troops from LIB No. 703, led by Lt. Col. Ye Zaw were attacked by Karen troops near Kyein-chaung village and the troops also moved down along Zami river. Then when the troops arrived into Pone-khaw village, they destroyed all civilians owned water rafts in river to prevent the coming of Karen troops. When they entered into Pone-khaw village, they arrested all men and also tortured some of them and took all oxen-carts to carry their supplies.*

Anyhow, because of constant arrest of porters and the village headmen’s provision of regular villager porters,

the villagers in every village have to escape and hid in the jungle to avoid from arrest. Along the period in the offensives, the villagers have been not safe to stay in the villages or to hide in the jungles.

### (c) Looting of Villagers' Properties

In the rural villages, where the Burmese Army has no firm control, the government soldiers always think or accuse the villagers that they have supported the Karen rebel soldiers with foods and provision of fund. On the other hand, they always believe some villagers in the villages are the relatives of Karen soldiers and they always support Karen soldiers anyhow.

Because of this accusation, whenever the government or SPDC soldiers went into a village, they always looted villagers' belongings and properties including foods, vegetables, livestock and others. They believe if they didn't take these foods and materials, the Karen soldiers will take them.

Normally, the villages that close to town have been suffered less from looting because the soldiers believe the rebel soldiers could arrive to that village less time if compared with villages that far from towns or military bases.

Additionally, according to Burmese Army's initial plan to launch "four cuts campaign" against the rebel troops, it also includes to cut food supplies to rebel soldiers supported by villagers. So, because of this belief, whenever the Burmese Army's soldiers went into a village, they also confiscate foods from the villagers and gathered them in one place and gave the villagers with ration. Sometimes, if the villages is close to their bases or has convenient way to their bases, they brought all food supplies from village to their bases.

According a villager from Khay-wee village;

*"When the Burmese soldiers arrived into village on June 19, all villagers are afraid of being arrested by soldiers and many men hid in the forests nearer to village. Soon after the soldiers arrived into village, they looted all villagers' rice. They climbed onto houses and took all polished rice and they also went to hand-made paddy-husking mill owner house and took all rice. This rice was owned by villagers and it remained in the mill after husking. The soldiers could collect about 700-800 baskets of polished rice from the whole village. And, the soldiers also took some chicken, pigs and ducks from villages for their foods. The soldiers also looted some goldwares and money from some flooding houses in the river."*

These conditions are the normal situation, which the army from every battalion of Burmese Army has looted from every village. Besides the soldiers used the looted foods for their own foods, they also sold extra foods in towns or in the village where they have base with money.

Sometimes, the commanders officially declared to villagers that all of their foods must be gathered in one place in the middle of village and the soldiers shared again to them. They estimated and gave the villagers for one month or a halt month foods and took the extra foods.

Because of these constant violations of looting villagers' belongings, the villagers have faced food-shortage even



**Displaced  
villagers**  
are in a place in  
Three Pagoda  
Pass area

in their own villages. On the other hand, because of army restriction against them, they could not go to their farms to take back foods to villages. During the army instructed movement restriction against the villagers, they also took foods and other villagers' belongings, which are remaining in farms or plantations. As a result, when the villagers could not tolerate longer from food-shortage problems and could not move to the places they like, they also abandoned their villages and became displaced persons.

### III. Population Displacement and Flux to Three Pagoda Pass Area

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 were 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.

During May and June 2000, the new arrivals who arrived to three Mon villages, under NMSP control in Three Pagoda Pass area, came from about 13 rural Karen, Lao Shan and Mon villages, where they were severely mis-treated by Burmese Army's offensives battalions. Since the first week of May until the end of June, there have been 82 families of new arrivals arrived into these villages. They came from 13 villages, which are situating in both sides (east and west) of Zami river, which flow from Three Pagoda Pass area to Kya Inn Seikyi town. Their native villages are Yalae, Danone, Koe-du-kwe, Khay-wee, Kawkamar, Maung-yaing, Maetabwee, Pone-khaw, Taung-kalay, Tawae-pauk, Ma-Oo, Kyauk-palu and Kyauk-kya.

Now, the villagers from these villages have left from their villages nearly almost 75% of the total population. Only 25% of villagers remain in the villages who would not like to abandon their houses, farms, live-stocks and other properties. Among displaced villagers, only 20-25% arrived to three Mon villages in Three Pagoda Pass area.

The comparison of the village situation of the origin villages of IDPs comprising the origin households in normal situation and in the current time shown as below:

No.	The names of villages	Ethnic Nationalities	Households in normal situation ( <i>Estimation</i> )	House in current time ( <i>Estimation</i> )
1.	Yalae	(Lao Shan)	180	30
2.	Danone	(Karen/ Lao Shan)	200	100
3.	Koe-du-kwe	(Karen)	200	50
4.	Khay-wee	(Karen/ Mon)	60	20
5.	Kawkamar	(Karen/ Mon)	70	10
6.	Maung-yaing	(Karen/ Mon)	50	15
7.	Maetabwee	(Karen)	70	30
8.	Pone-khaw	(Karen)	50	20
9.	Taung-kalay	(Karen)	150	25
10.	Tawae-pauk	(Karen/ Mon)	120	0
11.	Ma-Oo	(Karen)	150	50
12.	Kyauk-palu	(Karen/ Mon)	220	100
13.	Kyauk-kya	(Mon)	200	60

This population displacement occurred since Burmese Army's biggest offensives in 1997. By reviewing the information from the listed villages, many families of villagers have been displaced. The occupations of almost villagers are farmers and almost families own some land in the native villages. Before they started their farming, normally in June and July, when the rain started falling, they have to abandon their houses and lands, to escape from

the abuses. The Burmese Army's human rights violations also destroyed the community practices of living.

#### IV. Conclusion

After those villagers fled from their villages to reach to a safe place under a rebel control areas, they are in quite dangerous situation. The Burmese Army's troops also crossed and separated in many parts of Kya Inn Seikyí township and they were always worried they could face with some of government soldiers. If the soldiers met them in the jungle or along the roads with small amount of foods and other belongings they could be accused as rebel-supporters or relatives of Karen soldiers and they could be killed.

Thus, many of displaced persons have hid in the jungles for several days without enough foods. If they heard about the activities of the Burmese Army, the hiding period for them was longer. According to a villager from Kyauk-kya, a village close to Kya Inn Seikyí town, he said his family took about 10 days to reach to a Mon village under control of NMSP in Three Pagoda Pass. Actually, if there was no activity of Burmese Army, they could reach to this village with only two days walk. They had to hide many days and they could carry foods only for five days. If they took a lot of foods and were arrested by Burmese Army, it was a serious danger for them.

After displaced persons arrived to new villages, where they expected safe, they faced another new conditions and new problems. In the new places of three Mon villages, the villagers could not get job and income. On the other hand, although Mon troops have control these villages, there are some fighting and military activities were conducted by KNU and Burmese Army outside of these villages. The villagers are not dare to go outside of the villages and even gathering forest products is not easy. So, they face new type of problems such as lack of work, no regular income and food-shortage problems.



### 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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