

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),
- USDA** (SPDC's) Union Solidarity and Development Association
- LIB-** Light Infantry Battalion (of Burmese Army),
- KNU-** Karen National Union,
- NMSP-** New Mon State Party,

News

LIB No. 343 Asked Civilian Porters from Ye Township Area

(July 2000, Ye Township, Mon State)

With an order dated June 30, 2000, Ye Town based SPDC's army battalion, LIB No. 343 gave an order through letters and wireless to headmen of 9 Town sections and 19 villages, to provide it with 121 civilian porters to use them carrying ammunitions and foods in offensives, which they had to launch in southern part of Ye Township against an active Mon armed force. In order, IB No. 343 ordered headmen to send the set number of porters to Ye Town or LIB No. 343 headquarters on the same day and to not delay. When the army asked porters from village headmen, they just asked from villages in southern part of Ye Township, because it needed to operate military operation in that area.

Since the beginning of 2000, the Mon armed force have been more active and could launch many attacks against Burmese Army, also hold a big Mon national day ceremony in one village in Yebyu Township area and since then, the Burmese Army have angered to these Mon troops. While SPDC troops in Yebyu Township have operated military offensives against Mon troops, Southeast Region Military Command also ordered LIB No. 343, to launch military attack against rebels and stopped their activities in Ye township area.



The Burmese Army's troops regular use villagers and oxen-carts as porters in the military offensives

According to the order, depending on the village size and the population numbers, the requested numbers for porters have been differed from one village to another. In 9 town sections, the army requested from 2 to 5 porters. In some big, the battalions requested about 10 porters while a village with about 50 households had to provide at least two porters.

In the official order, LIB No. 343 did use terms of porters as "Military Operation Labourers", and not use civilian porters. These porters must be used for longer days from at least one month until the end of operation. Southeast Command also secretly ordered for the period of operation. Thus, the village headmen in Town sections and villages could not explain how long these civilian porters would be taken for how many days. Many villagers would not like to go with this military operation because it would be long and however, they could not refuse according to headmen's management, on a rotation basis.

Actually, the headmen have to provide their villagers not only for LIB No. 343, but they have to provide in other cases of conscription such as for road construction, army camp construction, army farming, guards along motor and railway roads and others. Civilians both in town and villages have to pay a lot of their time for army and SPDC authorities every month.

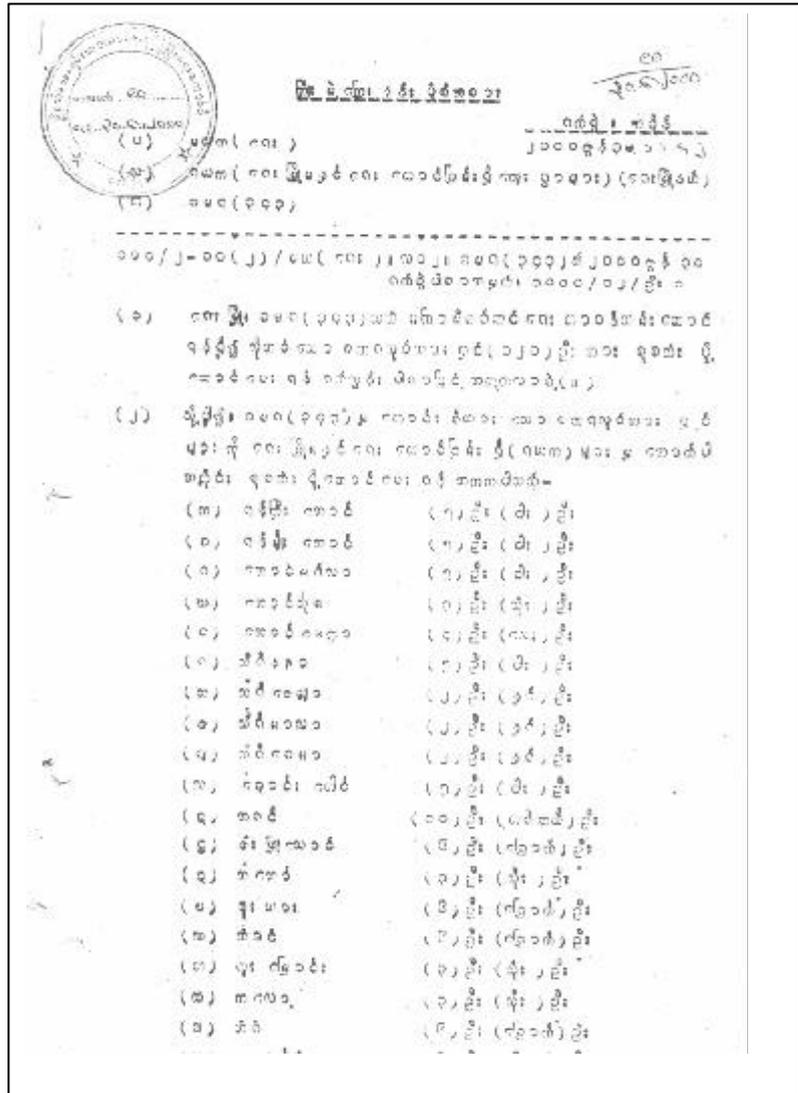


Tatmadaw IB No. 9 Killed 12 Villagers in Thaton Township

(July, 2000, Thaton, Mon State)

In the first week of July, 2000, IB No. 9 - a regular SPDC regiment based in Thaton township, led by Maj. Nyan Htun and Maj. Aung Lwin - killed about 12 Mon, Burman and Karen villagers from three villages, Pein-ne-taw, Min-lwin and Payit-kho, with the accusation that they were rebel-supporters or KNU members. The villagers who were killed by SPDC soldiers were: U Thein Aye (38 years), U Maung Aye (46 years), Saw Kyaw Kapaw (34 years), U Nan Ba (~ 60 years), Saw Pha Hla Shin (~ 50 years), U Kyaw Wai (41 years old), U Kyar We (~ 30 years) and other five villagers from these three villages. They were killed near their own villages.

These killings happened after one KNU defector,



The origin order by LIB No. 343 for military operational labourers

Saw Phu Too, a former KNU Thaton Township Chairman, surrendered to SPDC in February. During February, when SPDC military LIB No. 357 operated military offensives against KNU troops in eastern part of Thaton Township area, this Karen official surrendered to Burmese Army after he could not flee. After his surrender, he was interrogated for some months and they forced him to show the villagers who helped KNU soldiers. Some villagers were also killed after he gave evidence to the army.

When he went along with Burmese Army, KNU troops attacked and killed him. After the killing, the local Burmese Army battalion IB No. 9, which is based in Kyaik-kaw village also took responsibility to arrest KNU supporters or members in the villages in eastern part of Township area and arrested some villagers who were alleged to have been supporting KNU forces. Actually the KNU, and its armed faction the KNLA, could operate in area only eastern part of township, and sometimes they went into these villages.

The arrested villagers were not brought to court hearings and were killed arbitrary without (?) a trial or strong

evidence. Some villagers were just local farmers near Than-lwin river and they were innocent villagers. Whenever the KNU troops went into their villages or passed their farms, they had no opportunity to stop them. However, they were accused as rebel-supporters and killed by SPDC soldiers with complaint from them.

When the soldiers conducted killed these men, they also made threats to the remaining villagers that if they were continuously supporting KNU soldiers they must be killed like these men. When the Burmese Army is using such tactics to cut contacts between civilians and rebel forces, the local villagers have inhumanely suffered from killing and various types of torture.



SPDC Forced Forming of Militia forces in Village Tracts of Yebyu Township

(August, 2000, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division)

Since June until August, 2000, with a purpose to halt the Mon and Karen rebel activities operated by a Mon armed force and KNU in Yebyu Township area, the Burmese Army's local military battalions, LIB No. 273 and No. 282, have forced the local headmen and villagers to cooperate with them in forming militia forces in respective village tracts and to protect their tracts their own village tracts by themselves and helped army in launching offensives against the rebel troops. Normally, in this conflict area, the villagers would not like to hold arms and create enemy with rebel forces because it could harm their lives.

Since June, LIB No. 273 and No. 282 went to many main village of village tracts in township area and called meetings with headmen from all villages in each village tract and first the army formed "Anti-Insurgency Force" first with

participation of army commanders and village headmen. In these Anti-Insurgency Force, the army led the group and ordered the village headmen to cooperate with them to attack against rebels. From the meetings, the commanders instructed the policy for every village that the villagers themselves must protect their own villages, to not allow any rebel forces into their villages, villagers must be equipped with arms and fight against the rebels, and the villagers must pay for those who hold arms, and if necessary, they must cooperate with army in launching offensives. These were responsibility each village tract must have to implement.

From the plan to equip villagers with arms, LIB No. 273 and No. 282 again formed militia forces for every tract. On June 1, they officially formed a village tract militia force with 30 members in Kwe-tho-nyima village tract. In forming this militia force, they took selected villagers only from Kwe-tho-nyima village, because they could have a firm that village and believes these militiamen will not surrender and fled to other areas. In this village tract, there are totally six villages such as Kwe-tho-nyima, Chaung-phar, Thaug-kun, Chabon, Mae-taw and Chattaw.

Then in July, LIB No. 282 moved to Mintha village tract and forced the village headmen to form a militia force with 30 members. In this village tract, there are about 7 villages, and army took only selected villagers who were under their firm control. At the beginning of August, LIB No. 282 went to Yapu village tract and formed a military force with 26 members. In this village tract, there are totally six villages and these are, Yapu, Yapu-ywathit, Law-thaing, Kwetalin, Kyaukadin and Aleskan.

When they formed the militia forces, they also equipped them with arms or weapons such as AK-47, M-16, G-3, G-4 and M-79 and additionally trained them how to use these guns and equipment. All these militia forces are under supervision of village tract chairmen and all chairmen are also under the command of the concerned SPDC battalion commander. At the moment, all of these militia



The troops of Burmese Army entered into a Mon village and their regular activities were to create suffering to villagers and halt them to not support the rebel armies



Confiscated lands by Southeast Military Command, in Kyaikmayaw Township of Mon State, in which the villagers are forced to plow lands and grow paddy every year

forces are under the command of LIB No. 282 commander and open respective Anti-Insurgency Force in each main village of village tract.

The commander also instructed to headmen and villagers that they must take responsibility to pay 10,000 Kyat salary to each militiaman for their service protecting the villages and the headmen need to collect from villagers every month. This salary includes 3,000 Kyat foods and 7,000 Kyat for other accommodation costs. Thus, the headmen collected 500 – 1,000 Kyat from every household to pay for salaries to militiamen. This is new tax collection for villagers in Yebyu Township area and a new burden for poor villagers in the whole Township area.



Forced Labour in Kyaikmayaw Township

(July 2000, Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State)

In the whole month June, when rainy season started, Southeast Military Command forced the Mon villagers from ten villages in Kyaikmayaw Township to plow 100 acres of army lands in the township area. The military command bases in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, and it also owns lands in east of Moulmein city, in Kyaikmayaw township. That 100 acres of paddy-growing lands were confiscated since 1997 and the Mon farmers from that area lost lands. The farm-lands are situating near Kha-yone and Kyone-wan villages.

At beginning of rainy season, when the lands received water and army ordered villagers from 10 villages, such as Damatha, Than-ga-laung, Tarana, Kaw-thut, Kha-yone, Let-pan, Ywa-thit, Kyone-wan, Kyone-manin and Kyaik-paran, to plow the lands. After plowing lands, the soldiers continuously forced the villagers to grow small

paddy plants in the farms.

From these ten villages, the village headmen have sent about 60 men, 60 pairs of oxen and 60 men-made plowing equipment to the work-sites every day and the process of plowing lands completed within 2 weeks period. After completing plowing the lands, the army ordered the village headmen from the similar villages to send villagers to grow small paddy plants in the new plowed lands. On a rotation basis, the village headmen had to manage sending men and women from their own villages to work-sites. Until the second week of July, these ten villages sent about 800 villagers totally to work growing small paddy plants in farm-lands.

Generally, ten villages shared 100 acres of lands to take responsibility to plow and grow paddy plants for 10 acres each. Even some big villages could send more villagers to work in the lands, some small villages could not afford to complete on time.

While army was forcing the villagers to work in the farms, most villagers were busy in their own farms. Some villages, the headmen could not manage to get possible oxen and had to hire oxen and plowing equipment. If they hired oxen and equipment, they have to pay about 1,200 Kyat per day. Some villages also had to hire labourers to grow small paddy plants by paying 350 Kyat per day for one labourer.

According to estimation by village headmen, the overall using of forced labour was also equal to costs for 3 millions Kyat totally, if they had to hire labourers, oxen and equipment. Some villagers had to spend about 100,000 Kyat to hire labour, oxen and equipment and the village had to collect this fund from the villagers.



Report

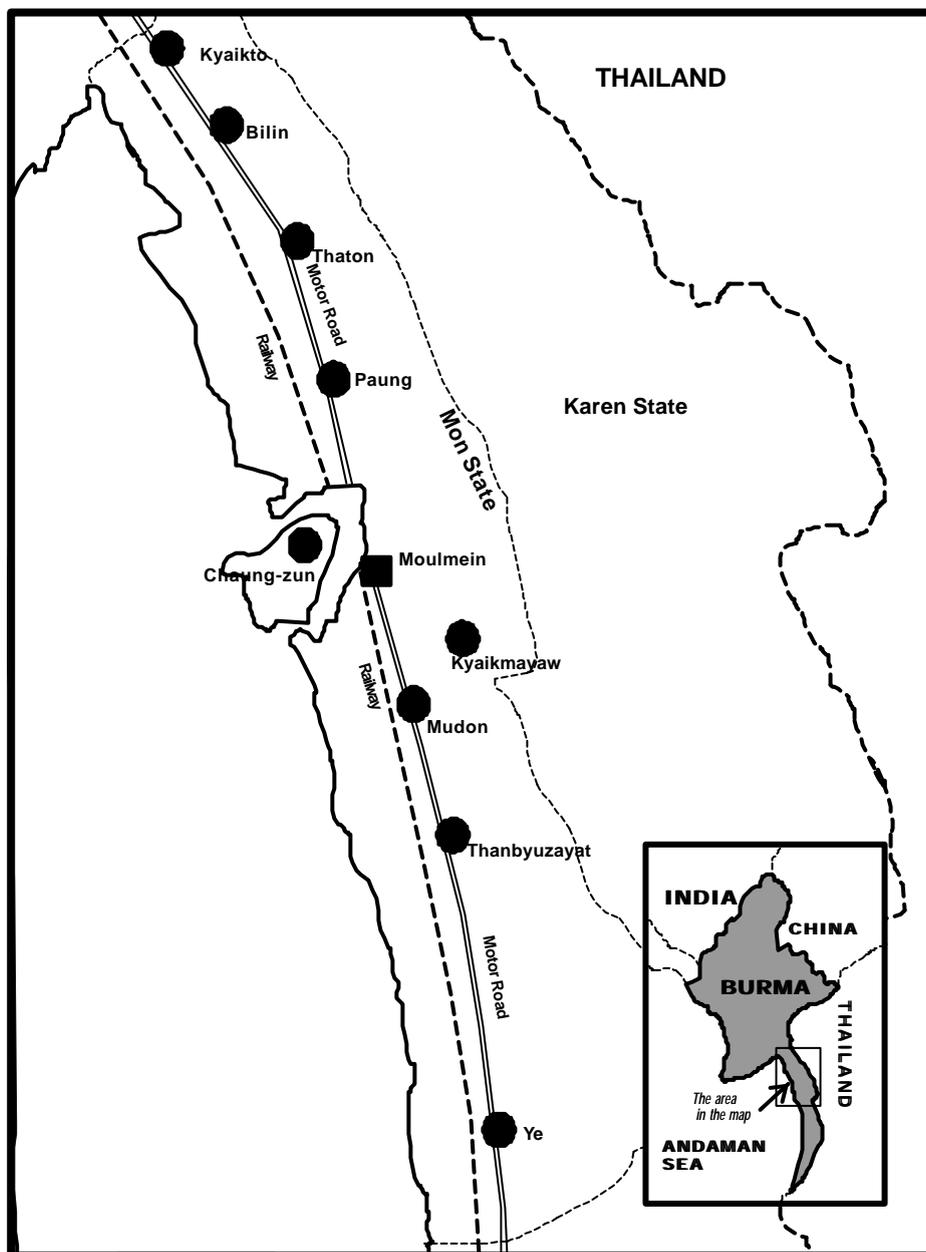
Collective Accounts of SPDC Cash Extortion in Mon State

I. Taxation in Mon State after NMSP-SPDC Ceasefire

Since 1997, the military regime SLORC/SPDC has faced financial constraint and could not provide enough costs for administrative and military battalions. However, the regime still claims that they are legitimate government and implement development projects although it has very limited budget to implement these projects. Thus, in any implementation of development projects, State ceremonies, occasional Sports and other purposes, SPDC's concerned ministries or military commands always give orders to their subordinate administrative bodies and military battalions to collect fund from civilians.

During SLORC-NMSP ceasefire in June, 1995, the former SLORC Secretary (1) Maj. Gen. Khin Nyunt also gave promises to Mon leaders that "Mon State must be developed within three years", by mentioning to induct various types of development projects in Mon State. After his official speech, SLORC/SPDC's concerned "Ministry of Progress of Border Areas & National Races and Development Affairs" had adopted various types of development projects in Mon State, such as building schools, hospitals, bridges, roads and others as usual that the regime has implement in other parts of Burma.

Initially during 1995 and 1996, although SLORC's Ministry could contribute complete financial supports accordingly to budget plan in some development projects in Mon State, later it could not. Since 1997, the regime has faced constraint of finance in government budget and so could contribute less than 50% of the total requirement budget in the existing development projects, but it does not termi-



Location map of Mon State

nate its implementation for some projects. The regime has ordered its Mon State PDC authorities or Township authorities or army commanders to collect fund from civilians or force them to make financial contribution to projects. As an example, in 1997-1998, during the regime was building a bridge, Attaran Bridge, which crosses Gyaing river, the border between Mon State and Karen State, it spent about 500 million Kyat totally to complete the bridge. Since the government could contribute about 30-35% of total requirement budget, it instructed Mon State and Karen State authorities to collect fund from civilians. In Mon State, every household in Moulmein Township had to contribute about 1, 000 Kyat for building of this bridge. Similarly, during 1999, while Ye Township built a field hospital in Kyaung-ywa village, Ye township authorities collected fund at least 500 Kyat from each household in the whole Township.

In 1999, SPDC planned to celebrate Students' Sport in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State and the local authorities collected a lot of fund from civilians by various ways. In attempts to get fund from the civilians, every Township authorities staged some concerts or boxing and forcibly sold tickets to all households in township. Town section leaders or village headmen had to take responsibility selling tickets and whether civilians would like to watch shows or not, they had to pay for tickets. From this cash extortion, Mon State PDC received some million funds for Sports. However, because of corruption among authorities and stealing, the funds were not enough to celebrate the Sports. So, the authorities delayed to celebrate the Sports until December 2000 and planned to collect more funds.

Widespread habit of corruption among the authorities also created more and more cash extortion in Mon State. Whenever an order came to collect funds, all ranges of authorities including some village headmen also enjoy in corruption by taking some public money into their pockets. It became as a habit and has taken roots in Burma for many years already.

In Year 2000, such collection of fund, or extortion of public money has continued and civilians in the whole Mon State had to pay every month. Under this circumstance, the local civilians lose any rights to complain to authorities or refuse to contribute to authorities. The following facts are the collection of cash extortion by authorities since the beginning of Year 2000, in many townships of Mon State.

II. Cash Extortion in Several Townships in Mon State

(a) Ye Township

As described above, under the name of border development program, some development project, the building of a field hospital has been continued in Kyaung-ywa village of Ye township area and the collection of fund from the local Ye Township civilians also made by the military battalions and local SPDC authorities. In 1999, although Ye Township and army IB No. 61 battalion have asked fund from many villages to pay 500 – 1, 000 Kyat per household for building this field hospital, they complained the building was not completed yet and tried to collect more fund again. Thus, later in February 2000, IB No. 61's army officer based Kyaung-ywa village outpost also asked the local villagers to provide nearly 250, 000 Kyat again. According to villagers, the request of expenses for building of hospital is often made by army officers.

According to the order (the origin order with Burmese version is enclosed), army officer said army had paid for the expenses in advance and the villagers must replace and pay for the expenses used for hospital. It said, army had paid 235, 000 Kyat totally and Kyaung-ywa villagers took responsibility to pay 80, 000 Kyat and so the other 17 villages from 4 village tracts, needed to pay for the remaining expenses. The villages are in east of Ye Town and situating along Ye river. Depending on different numbers of household in the villages, the requested amounts of fund were also differed from one to another. However these villagers are generally small villages and the biggest one has only about 150 households. Army ordered some big villages must have to pay about 13, 500 Kyat while small villages with households about 20-30 had to pay about 5, 500 Kyat per village. Village headmen in all villages have to take responsibility to collect these funds and send them to IB No. 61 military outpost in Kyaung-ywa. Army also set the deadline for all villages was to send all funds on February 28.

Besides the development fund, the local villagers always have to pay monthly porter fees to the local military battalions in Ye, IB No. 61, LIB No. 343 and LIB No. 299, which base in Ye and close to town. Sometimes, normally in the cold and dry seasons, which are in period from October to May, when the Burmese Army launched the military offensives against the rebel forces, the request of porter fees became more and these are called "offensives porter fees". Generally, the villagers in Ye Township have to pay about 200-500 Kyat per household monthly porter fees to the concerned military battalions and in the special situation when the battalions asked for offensives porter fees, each household has to pay 500 – 1, 000 Kyat.

As an instance,

In the last December and January, when IB No. 61 and LIB No. 343 were ordered to launch a military offensive,

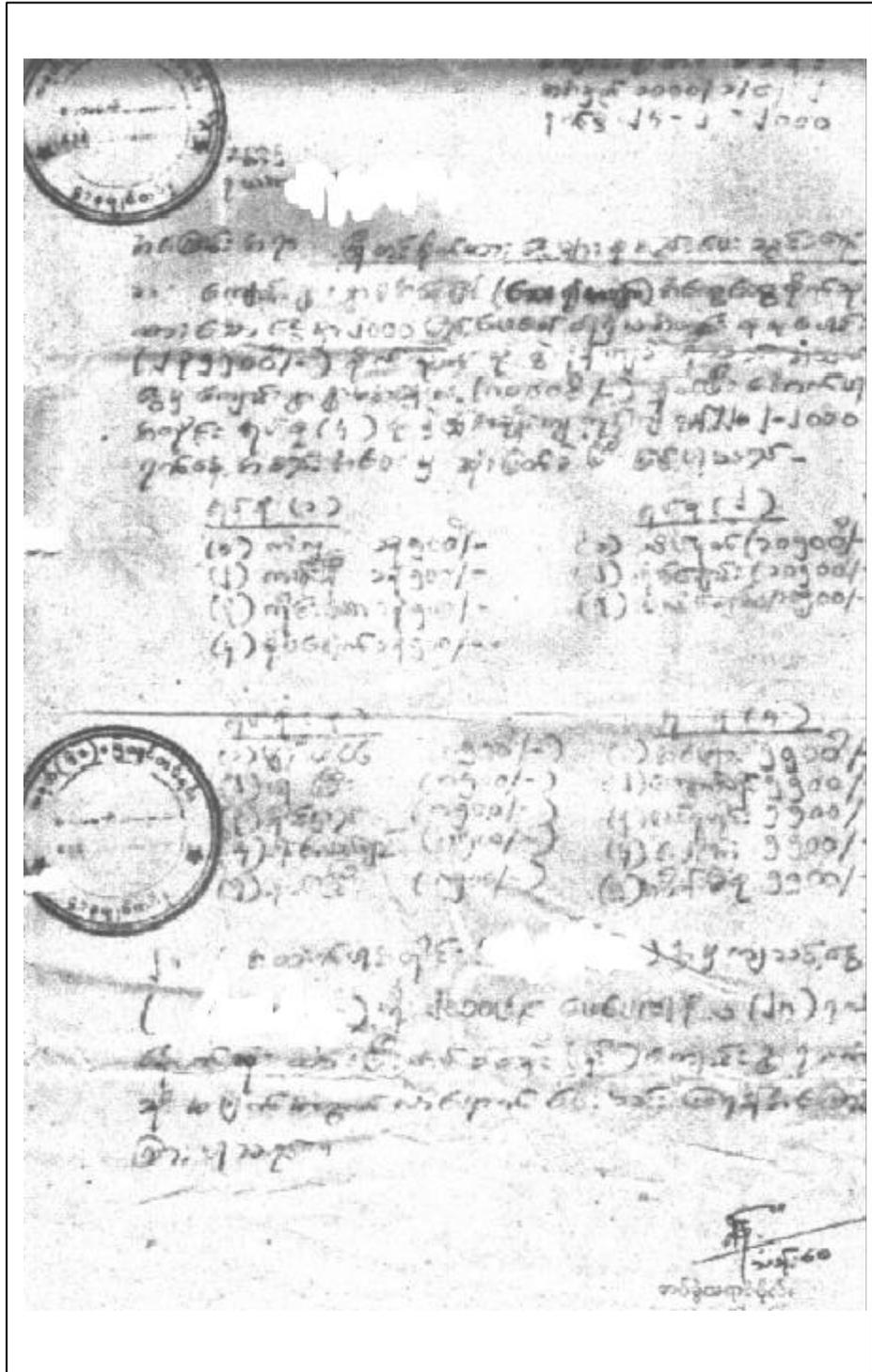
IB No. 61 also ordered to the respective village headmen to collect offensive porter fees with 500-1,000 Kyat from one household in every village. On December 7, when the headmen from Duya village collected huge amount of porter fees, they had arguments with villagers. Most villagers refused to pay these porter fees and the headmen could not manage. On the next day, soldiers from IB No. 61 came into village and made threat to villagers to pay porter fees. This village is situating in west part of Ye Town and is far about 10 kilometers.

Additionally, military battalions, IB No. 61 and LIB No. 299 instructed all villages in southern part of Ye Township, to take security along Ye-Tavoy railway road in the part of Mon State, about 20 miles long, to prevent some sabotage activities conducted by rebels, or to let them inform to

nearest Burmese army outpost about the activities of rebel troops. The villagers have to build some small huts along the roads and guard the road for 24 hours. The villagers near the road were ordered to take security of the road on the rotation basis and if one village failed to go and take security, he must have to pay 400 Kyat per day to the nearest military outpost. On the rotation basis the villagers have to security in railway road for 3 – 5 days every month, without receiving any payment from authorities but also have to pay if they have failed to go.

(b) Thanbyuzayat Township

Likely to civilians in Ye Township area, the local Mon civilians in Thanbyuzayat Township are also suffered from fund collection by both township and village PDC authorities. In Thanbyuzayat Township, two regular military



The origin order that IB No. 61 outpost asked for fund

battalions, IB No. 31 and IB No. 62, and another No. 4 Military Training School are taking bases. In collection of funds, mainly government authorities have been taken responsibility and while sometimes, the local battalions directly ordered to headmen to collect instead of Township authorities.

Under the name of development project, Thannbyuzayat authorities and army also collect a huge amount of fund from civilians. In May, when army, No. 4 Military Training School built a middle level school for students especially from soldiers' families, army ordered town section leaders and village headmen to collect fund from civilians and shops in town and villages. On May 4, Town section leaders collected fund from every in town to pay 1,000 – 1,500 Kyat per household, depending on the size of shops and materials in there. Additionally, the authorities also collected 1,000 Kyat from every household in town and two villages, Wae-kalee and Wae-rat, which are close to place where the new school would be built.

On the other hand, SPDC also modernize the education systems widely in Burma, by equipping computer systems and other education supporting materials and facilities in most high schools since the previous years until Year 2000. However, in equipping these materials and facilities, the government has no enough budgets and just give order the concerned high school authorities and Township authorities to collect fund from public. Similarly in May and June 2000, Education Ministry also instructed Thanbyuzayat Township authorities to equip computer systems and other facilities in some village high school under the administration of Township.

As an instance,

On June 21, according to instruction from Township, Karoat-pi village chairman, Nai Aung Shein, called a meeting with the whole village and he expressed to 500 villagers about the government's instruction to equip computer systems and other facilities in their own high schools. He also explained to equip all these facilities, it needed about 3.5 million Kyat fund totally from village to equip about 10 computer systems and others in school. After meeting, village chairman and committee members collected fund 4000 Kyat, or 3000 Kyat or 2000 Kyat per household depending on the economic conditions of households. Even a poor family, they have to pay 2000 Kyat to village authorities. As that village has about 1,000 households, village authorities received 3.6 million Kyat totally in June. They also set deadline June 30 was the last day for them for some villagers who could not afford to pay. The villagers anyhow had to find money and pay them.

Although SPDC claimed it would increase and provide 5 times salaries to government servants and in June, they could provide only soldiers and other servants such as teachers still could not receive increased salaries from governments. The students who attended all levels of schools still have to pay large amount of entrance cost and other teaching costs to school authorities. Depending on the school authorities, the decisions for collecting of these costs might be differed, but the schools in Thanbyuzayat Township have collected much money from students as below:

When the students began attending their schools in Panga village of Thanbyuzayat Township, high level students, 10th Standard and 9th Standard had to pay entrance costs, 2000 Kyat and 1700 Kyat respectively, middle level students, 8th Standard, 7th Standard, 6th Standard and 5th Standard, had to pay entrance costs, 1600 Kyat, 1530 Kyat, 1500 Kyat and 1350 Kyat respectively and primary level students, 4th Standard, 3rd Standard, 2nd Standard, 1st Standard and Kindergarten had to pay entrance costs, 1225 Kyat, 1200 Kyat, 810 Kyat, 715 Kyat and 515 Kyat respectively. Additionally, high level students also had to pay to teachers extra costs, 5000 Kyat per head for teaching costs. The teaching cost was defined as 1000 Kyat for one subject of school curriculums for one school year.

Because of various costs for one student to have education in government schools, many poor parents could not afford to send their students to higher level education in middle and high levels. After students completed primary levels, many of them left from schools. Thus, the student numbers in middle and high level schools have been dropped a lot.

(c) Mudon Township

In Mudon Township, the authorities also collected various types of fund from the local civilians. In July, with a purpose to build a Buddhist Dhama Centre in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, under the supervision of Mon State Police Department, the police in every township in Mon State also collected fund from civilians. For this large building, the authorities required about 20 millions Kyat totally from the civilians and Mon State Police Department has instructed their subordinated police departments to collect fund in their respective township.

In the same month, July, police department in Mudon Township, have collected fund with 500 – 1500 Kyat from truck or car owner in the whole township area for that Dhama Center. Additionally, they have collected fund from shops with 500 Kyat, 1000 Kyat, 1500 Kyat and 2000 Kyat respectively depending on the sizes of the

shops and groceries in each shop. From Mudon Township alone, the police could get about 2 millions Kyat totally.

Additionally, when any celebration happened in a township of Mon State, the authorities also collected a lot of fund from villagers.

As an instance,

Before Mudon Township PDC authorities hold a “Mon State Day” ceremony in Mudon town, on March 29, the authorities have collected funds in both town and villages in township area. The authorities collected fund 200 Kyat from every household and there are over 25, 000 households in the township area and received 5 millions Kyat from the whole township area.

Besides fund to contribute to special ceremonies, whenever the township planned to conduct training for their own staff members, servants and USDA (Union Solidarity and Development Association of SPDC) members, the authorities always collected fund from civilians for training. In March, when Mudon Township SPDC authorities planned to provide a “Management and Administrative Training” to USDA members in Mudon Township, the authorities collected fund 3, 500 Kyat from one village. In Township, there are about 42 villages and the authorities received nearly 150, 000 Kyat totally to cover for expenses during short-term training.

Similarly to other township area, whenever Mudon Township authorities implement development projects, building schools, hospitals, roads and others, they always collected fund from civilians.

As an instance,

In March, when Mudon Township authorities planned to build extent high school in Kalort-tort village, village headmen have collected about 2 millions Kyat fund from the local villagers in Kalort-tort village tract. In this village tract, it has about 4 villages and the authorities and village headmen have collected 800 Kyat, 600 Kyat and 400 Kyat per household, depending on each household’s economic conditions. However the fund was still not enough for school building and authorities have requested more another Kamawet village tract.

(d) Chaungzon Township

Chaungzon Township is situating in an island, named Balu-kyun and it is in the west of Moulmein city, the capital of Mon State. If compared with other township area, this township area is under the firm control of military government, and the people are under absolute control of SPDC’s township authorities. So, most of them are enjoying in corruption or in taking public money. Whenever the authorities are holding sports, implementing



The general civilians in Mon State are poor and struggling hard for survival and additional cash extortion by authorities make them to face more hardships

development projects and others, the villagers always have to pay to Township authorities.

As an instance of fund collection for sport:

In July, SPDC's Chaungzon township authorities also collected about 2 million Kyat of fund for Township football match, which will be celebrated after rainy season. Township authorities have ordered the respective village headmen to collect 100 Kyat from each household in their own villages. In Chaung-zon Township, there are over 60 villages and the estimated total households in the whole Township are 20, 000 households. From these households, Township authorities could receive over 2 million Kyat during one month period, July, to cover some costs for Township football match.

Additionally, when the authorities adopted a plan or are implementing development project in an area in Township administration, they similarly collect money from villagers to cover these costs. In May, Mon State PDC also ordered Chaung-zon Township authorities to implement self-help development projects such as building roads and others.

On May 5, about 11 o'clock, Township authorities called a meeting with all village headmen in the whole administrative area and explained them about Mon State PDC's instruction for implementation of self-help development projects, mainly to improve roads, which connect from one village to another in the whole Township area. The authorities officially explained that all costs for new building or re-building of the roads must be paid by the concerned villagers. It means, if one road is built connecting with two villages, the villagers from these two villages must pay for all expenses of road building. The village headmen from the concerned villagers must take responsibility to collect fund from villagers to cover for all expenses.

As an instance,

On May 15, the concerned village headmen also ordered to build a new road that connects two villages, Bo-net and That-kaw villages. This road is about 15 miles long and the authorities instructed to village headmen that they must clear the road with 50 feet in width and build 15 feet width embankment and lay it with small pieces of stones. To complete the building of new road, both villages' headmen required about 7.5 million Kyat totally. In these two villages, there are about 1, 500 households totally and so they needed to collect 5, 000 Kyat per household. So, since May 15, the headmen from these two villages collected 5, 000 Kyat per household to cover all expenses of new road building. But nearly 80% of total villagers could not afford to pay 5, 000 Kyat money to headmen within one month.

Normally, the villagers in the remote areas of Chaung-zon Township are quite poor and most of them are farmers. When they harvested paddy crops in December and January, the authorities forced to sell many hundreds of thousands baskets of paddy to government paddy-buying centers at low price. So most of them sold their paddy to get supplement foods, to hire labourers and oxen for farming in lands and other works, they have left only paddy for their own foods to eat in rainy season and have no extra money. When the authorities implemented such type of self-help road building, very few numbers of villagers, the rich families, could afford to contribute these fund. After the village headmen could not get the set amount of money from the villagers, they were also threatened by Township authorities that they must be dismissed if they failed to manage to get enough fund or to implement the road.

(e) Paung Township

As mentioned above, the fund collections conducted by the Township authorities are quite similar from one Township to another. Like Chaung-zon Township, the authorities from Paung Township also collected fund for both celebration and development projects. The methods of fund collection are similar as Township authorities ordered the subordinated village headmen to collect fund and send it to them.

In Paung Township, the Township authorities also received orders from higher authorities to conduct self-help development projects in their own administrative areas and collect fund from the local villagers.

As first instance,

In July, when Paung Township authorities are building a rough motor road, which is one mile long and connects Htan-pin-chaung and Ywa-ma-gyi villages, Paung Township authorities required about 5.5 million Kyat totally to lay tar along the route. To receive this amount of money, Township authorities had collected 1, 500 Kyat from one household in the village. In village, there are about 1, 000 households totally and receive only about 1.5 million Kyat fund. And to get all amounts of fund, the authorities also forced farmers from areas nearby to pay 400n Kyat for one acre of their lands. In the area, the farmers have about 10, 000 acres of lands and so the authorities received another 4 million Kyat fund again.

Such collection of fund for the development projects have been made in various parts of Paung Township and

if one development project is implemented near one village or 2-3 villages, those villagers have to pay all expenses for the development projects.

Another instance of fund collection for development project was:

On May 15, with a plan to build a boat station or bridge from land to river, which was called as Yama boat station, on Yin-ngein river near Kyone-hor village, Township authorities instructed to Yin-ngein village headmen to collect 5 million Kyat fund to cover for all expenses in building bridge. So, the village headmen collected fund from farmers in Yin-ngein village that the farmers must have to pay 250 Kyat per acre of land. Yin-ngein and other villagers owned about 20,000 acres of lands surrounding the village and so all farmers households provided totally 5 million Kyat fund to authorities to build the bridge.

In Paung Township to spend as administrative fund, the Township authorities always collected fund from civilians on the monthly basis. Actually, Paung Township area in full control of SPDC and it has not affected for any military conflict in the area. However, the authorities have collected fund from both town civilians and villagers to pay 100 Kyat per household. According to reliable sources, Paung Township authorities receive about 3 million Kyat for this fund collection from the civilians every month. Normally, Township authorities have used these fund for their own administrative works and other purposes. On the other hand, those authorities are enjoying in corruption.

Since the authorities have chance to collect fund as they liked without showing any proper reasons, some Town section headmen themselves in Paung Town also collected fund from the civilians as they liked. As an example, Town section authorities of Moe-naing section of Paung Township collected 150 Kyat per household monthly in their own section for their own expenses. In this section, there are about 670 households and the authorities receive nearly 100,000 Kyat per month. Sometimes, some village headmen in villages also collected fund without showing any proper reasons and these money go to their pockets. In August, Pan-gone village headmen collected 300-500 Kyat per household from villagers and they received about 260,000 Kyat totally from (800) households of villagers. By this way, all government authorities in various levels have enjoyed in corruption of taking public money into their pockets.

III. Results after Hugh Cash Extortion

In Burma, since the government has no enough fund even to run the government administrations and other activities, implementation of development projects and conducting of Sports celebrations, the SPDC authorities have only one method, to collect fund from the people.

In Mon State, most people living in town are day-labourers, such as vendors, car drivers, small shop owners,



A road building: whenever the authorities are implementing development projects, the civilians have to contribute fund for them

trishaw drivers and other workers. These civilians very less daily income and sometimes, their daily income is not enough to support for food of the whole families and daily expenses. It is quite hard for a trishaw driver to get 500 Kyat as daily income and they have at least to spend about 500 Kyat per day. Additionally, they also have to spend for clothes, for schooling costs of their children and other costs. On the other hand, because of government's mis-management for economy, many town civilians are unemployed. Some carpenters have works only for a few months during dry season and they are totally unemployed in rainy season. In comparison with civilians who have no farmlands or fruit plantations, the lives of people in families who have rice-farms or rubber plantations or fruit plantations are better.

In the village communities of Mon State, most villagers own some pieces of lands for growing paddy or rubber or other types of fruit trees. In these lands, the villagers received these lands from their parents and they are traditionally farmers who have the similar works for many years. However, these farmers are forced by the concerned authorities to sell their paddy crops or rubber at low price to government as yearly tax. For the farmers who own fruit plantations also have to pay yearly tax to government authorities. Because of these huge amounts of yearly tax, the local farmers are also facing many difficulties or have fewer expenses similar to town civilians.

Additionally, after the concerned authorities collected various types of tax or fund from them, all of them remain less and less expenses and become poorer and poorer. Some villagers also have to sell their own lands or properties after they have no money for foods and other daily uses. Thus, many young men and women from every families in Mon State tried to illegally enter into Thailand and seek works for better income in Thailand's various industries and send money back to their remaining families in Burma.

However, SPDC authorities in every township of Mon State have become richer and richer by taking money from public. As the people lose democratic rights, nobody could complain about the authorities corruption and if someone is talking against these authorities, he/she must be detained in prisons or faced punishment.



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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