

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,
- DKBA-** Democratic Karen Buddhist Association,
- NMSP-** New Mon State Party.

News

Rape Attempt to a Mon woman during the Conscription of Forced Labour

(Yebyu Township, September, 2000)

During LIB No. 282 was conscripting forced labour to grow palm trees in their own battalion's plantation, some Mon villagers from Kwe-tha-lin village in Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division were forced to work in the plantation in the last week of September. During they were in the work-place, one SPDC commander, Sergeant San Win attempted to rape a Mon woman, Mi San Htay (28 years old).

LIB No. 282 is taking base in southern part of Yebyu township, in "52 Miles" area, near Yatana gas pipeline route and this battalion is the main battalion that have to take responsibility to take security of gas pipeline. On the other hand, LIB No. 282 took some wild lands around the battalion headquarters near 52 Miles area and the battalion commanders constantly forced the local villagers from many villages in Yebyu township area to grow palm trees in these lands and created palm plantation.

On September 20, army commander from LIB No. 282 asked Kwe-ta-lin village headmen to provide 25 villagers from the village to contribute free labour in growing palm trees in the plantation. The



Women labourers in the workplaces conscripted by Burmese Army are vulnerable to be victims of rape abuses

commander also instructed to village headmen that the villagers must contribute their labour for three days from 21 to 23, and they could return on 24 September. He also ordered the villagers to carry their own foods from homes. The village headmen needed to send the requested villager labourers on 20th evening.

Among 25 villagers, there were 12 men and the remaining 13 were women. That group of villagers worked together in the plantation for three days. Their main works were to clear grasses, dig holes and plant small palm trees. After that group of villagers completed their work-duties and before they returned to their village, the attempt of rape case happened in the workplace in the evening of September 23.

On that day evening, about 7 o'clock, after the group of villagers completed having dinner, the commander Sergeant. San Win asked the group leader, Nai Maung Sein that he would like to meet with Mi San Htay (*the victim*), to give some palm trees for her as a gift. And, the leader said that as the night already fell, it was not polite for meeting with a woman and suggested him to meet tomorrow's morning. But, he refused. So group leader went back the labourer barrack and told Min San Htay to meet with Sergeant and suggested to take an accompanied girl with her. When she arrived to the barrack, the commander ordered the girl to stay outside of the barrack and he would like to meet only Mi San Htay in private. Then the commander brought Mi San Htay to a kitchen building near barrack. Then, he pushed her and tried to rape.

The Mon woman also shout for help and called the name of her accompanied girl. The girl was afraid to help her and run back to the building, where all villagers were staying. The girl also explained to the group of villagers about Mi San Htay's shouting for help and then group leader and some elder women quickly went to the kitchen building after arguing with some soldiers who took security outside barrack. When the group of villagers arrived close to the building, the commander stopped his attempt.

Some elder also told to commander that such attempt to rape the woman was a rude behavior. He also asked the group leader, Nai Maung Sein and other villagers to not tell about that case to commander. However, after incident, the group of

villagers also complained about the case to battalion commander to take actions on him. After two days of the case, the commander was moved to another area and the villagers have not heard any action taken to that Seageant.

Normally, in the work-places where SPDC battalions are conscripting the villagers for labour, women are quite vulnerable to be victimized. They could be raped because of unsafe building or taken by pointing guns by soldiers for rape when they could not protect themselves. So, while the soldiers are away from their families or no place for visiting to have sex with prostitutes, women in the work-places, in porter services and in conflict areas are quite vulnerable to be victimized with rape abuses. Because of ashamed for the rapes according to tradition and cultures in Burma, many women always keep quiet after they are raped.



Illegal Tax Payment in Pegu Township and Poverty (September, 2000)

In both Pegu city and the villages in township area, because of government's huge illegal tax collection, which are not in the laws and unemployment conditions, the civilians in the most part of township have faced more deeper poor situation, while many families in the town faced food-shortage problems. Pegu is a capital city of Pegu Division and its had about over 20, 000 population in city.

As a monthly tax, Township police department collects about 500 to 1, 000 Kyat per household depending on the economic situation of each household and the police requests this fund from the civilian to cover all of their activities and department's expenses. As yearly tax, Township authorities collected 1, 000 - 5, 000 Kyat from all shops or other service to cover all expenses used in the whole township's administration and distribute fund to all departments. Some departments also collect some separate funds that are different from tax collected by township. For example, forestry department also



A girl selling water in Pegu railway station, that is helping their parents to get some more income

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Report

SPDC's Conscription of Forced Labour and Other Abuses Related to Suspicion of Rebel-supporters in Kya Inn Seiki Township, Karen State

I. Gross Human Rights Abuses in Kya Inn Seiki Township

Geographically, Kya Inn Seiki township locates in the western part of Karen State and its borders with Mon State. This township area stretch out to Thailand-Border and Zemi river is the main river for communication from Kya Inn Seiki town to the border with Thailand. In this township, there are over 50 villages in which Mon and Karen villagers are staying and normally Mon villages are close to Kya Inn Seiki town or at the bottom of Zami river, while many Karen villages are east part of Zami river and some are at the top part of the river.

Since over 50 years, after Burma retained Independent from British Colony, this area has been remained as conflict area because it has been used as main bases for Mon and Karen ethnic armed forces. Because of civil war, the area is under-developed and the civilians in the area have been constantly suffered from various types of abuses committed by Burmese Army.

In 1995, although a Mon armed political organization, NMSP entered into ceasefire with SLORC, the Karen main armed political organization, KNU (Karen National Union) has still remained as a main group in this area, which has been waging war against SLORC and SPDC until now. In the situation while NMSP is ceasing fighting and KNU is still fighting against KNU, most Mon population have been suffered from some abuses and violations from the conscription of forced labour and portering, while Karen villagers have been suffered from arbitrary killing, arresting, torturing and rape by the SPDC soldiers because they are under the suspicion of rebel-supporters.

II. Continuous Conscription of Forced Labour by IB No. 32

IB No. 32 is a permanent or regular military regiment that have taken base in Kya Inn Seiki town for several years and it has responsibilities in managing in township administration and has a high authority. However, it has rare duties to launch or involve in a larger scale military operation against KNU/KNLA in the forest areas far from the town.

Since the battalion has taken base in this area for several years, it has lots of experience in collecting various types of taxation both legally and illegally from the civilians, and has involved in businesses to raise

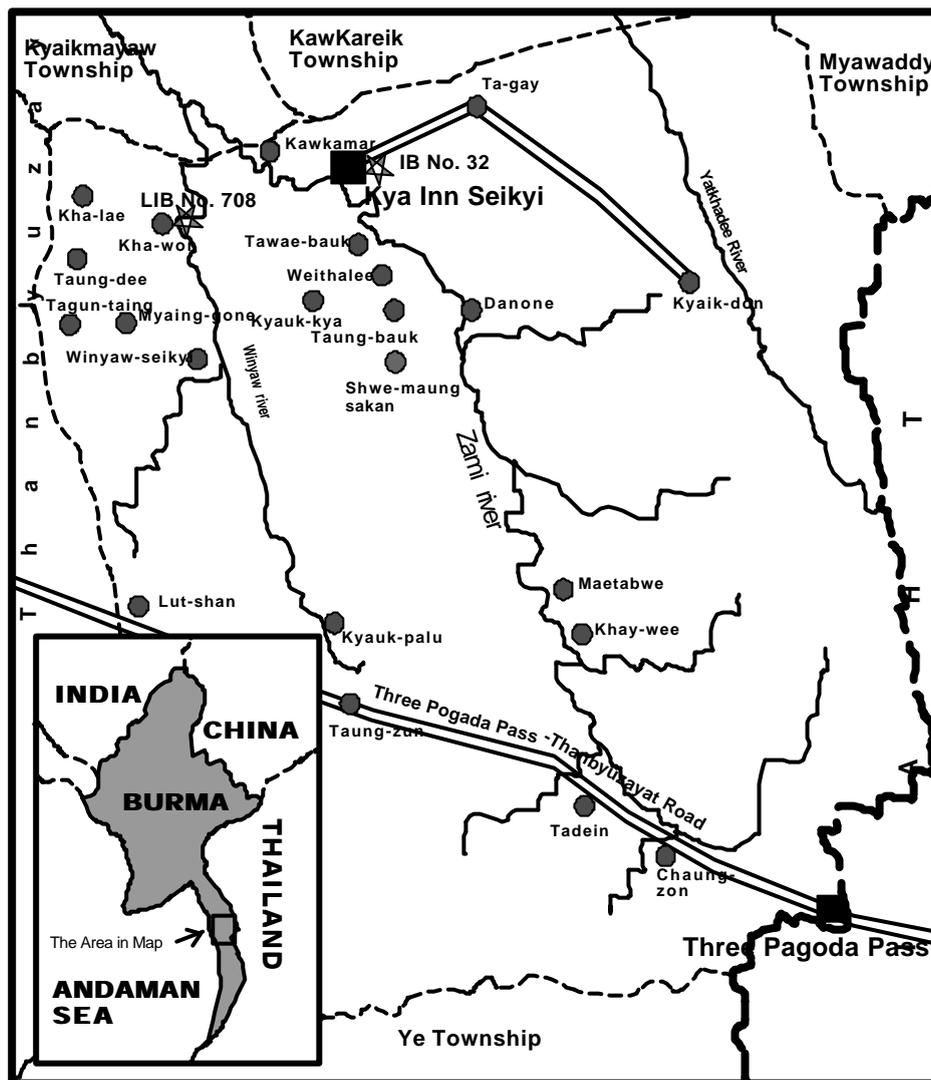


the battalion fund. For example, since 1992, until now the battalion has received about 50-100 Kyat from one passenger through gathering tax from ferry drivers who charge for transportation of passengers between Kya Inn Seiki Town and Mudon, a small town in Mon State. Additionally, the battalion could involve in business by giving shares in transportation business that

Villagers are forced to work in making fence for IB No. 32

has operated in the areas.

In 1997, when the respective military command that has supervised to local IB No. 32, Southeast Region Military Command (Southeast Command), ordered all local military battalions that have taken bases to create self-reliance or self-support for their soldiers and families in the respective battalion. The main activity of raising funds for the battalion is to raise fund and foods for their own battalion. In this case, the supervised military command has allowed or given chance to battalion to confiscate lands, to involve in businesses, to collect tax from paddy-growing farmers and rubber plantation owners and other types of tax.



Location map of Kya Inn Seikyi Township and IB No. 32 and LIB No. 708

Therefore, since 1997, IB No. 32 has created about 100 acres of paddy-growing farms from the confiscating lands from the local farmers and then cleared about 50 acres of wild-lands for rubber plantations. Every year since 1997, the battalion has forced many hundreds of local Mon and Karen civilians from the villages close to Kya Inn Seikyi town and villages resided between Zami and Winyaw river (look in the location map).

In Year 2000, the use of forced labour in these paddy-growing farms and rubber plantation has continued and the following accounts are the information, which have been collected from the fields. Since May, when the rainy season started, the commanders from IB No. 32 have ordered the respective village headmen in the area to provide the requested number of villagers to send to the designed work places.

As instances,

On May 3, 2000, Maj. Than Yin of IB No. 32 asked about 100 villagers from Shwe-la-inn, Htee-paukhlo, Wae-krai, Kaw-krot and Ohn-khataw villages to clear grasses in the battalion owned rubber plantation and used them to grow vegetables in their own battalion compound.

Similarly, on June 6, a commander from IB No. 32 also requested Htee-paukhlo village headmen to send 7 pairs of oxen and plowing equipment to battalion farmland to plow lands. During June, as many farmers from that village were quite busy in plowing their own farmlands they could not provide the requested numbers of oxen pairs to the military battalion and informed to commander the reason why they could not provide oxen. Then, the battalion instructed to give fines for their failure to provide oxen as 1, 000 Kyat for one pair of oxen.

The headmen had to collect this cash fine from villagers and paid them to army battalion.

The army battalion, which created paddy-growing farms, does not have any facilities such as machines to plow lands or other farming facilities, and even they have no human resources to complete all processes of cultivation. In such conditions, army commanders just give orders to village headmen to contribute free human and oxen labour in their farms.

In July, after more rain, the battalion also required to extend its field of rubber plantation and forced the villagers again to grow more rubber trees in cleared wild lands to grow rubber plants. Thus, the battalion also forced the local villagers to grow the small rubber plants.

As an instance,

On July 4, a commander of IB No. 32, Lt. Col. Win Bo, asked about 20 villagers from Htee-paukhlo village to clear grasses and grow rubber trees in the battalion owned rubber plantations. The villagers had to carry their own foods from their homes and cleared grasses and bushes, and grew rubber plants for the whole day.

After rotation of other villages, the villagers from this village were again forced to contribute their labour. On July 9, the same commander asked about 50 villagers from Htee-paukhlo village again to grow rubber plants. The villagers had to carry their own foods and worked for the whole day.

In using or conscription of forced labour from the villages, the army commanders have used a rotation basis and instructed many villages to send the set number of villagers to workplaces. In this Htee-paukhlo village case, the villagers were forced to work on July 4 and then the battalions have used villagers from other villages from 5th to 8th of July and then used Htee-paukhlo village again on July 9 for one day. The conscription of forced labour for planting trees had been taken for nearly 3 weeks to complete growing about 10 acres of land, the battalion commanders have forced about 200 villagers from about 10 villages. Among them, Htee-paukhlo village was the biggest village with over 300 households while some small village has less than 50 households.

Similarly, after plowing lands, the battalion also required villagers to grow the paddy plants in their farms. Therefore, the battalion had ordered to village headmen to send the set number of villagers to battalion farm to grow small paddy plants.

As an instance,

On July 7, the commander of IB No. 32, Lt. Col. Win Bo asked about 50 villagers from Htee-paukhlo village, to come to battalion to plant their paddy. Thus, the village headmen had to arrange 50 villagers to send to farmlands owned by IB No. 32, while most villagers were very busy with their own farming activities.

By analyzing this case, the commanders already ordered the villagers to work in the rubber plantation just on July 4 and again used them in July 7, for the whole day. And, the villagers had to go and work again on July 9 in the rubber plantation again. So, the villagers have been often forced by the local military commander in contributing their unpaid labour in army's workplaces.



A Mon village with poor conditions in Kya Inn Seiky Township area

Not only Htee-paukhlo village, other villagers were also forced similarly to regularly contribute their labour in IB No. 32 paddy farms and rubber plantation. Because when the time is quite busy for the local villagers to contribute their labour in battalion farms or plantations, sometimes, the village headmen were in the difficult role in managing the villagers to send

them to the workplaces on a rotation basis. If the village headmen failed to provide labour for the army, they must have to pay fine (in cash).

As an instance,

On July 20, when a commander from IB No. 32, Maj. Tin Oo asked about 30 villagers from Kyaukpone village to contribute labour in planting paddy plants in army's farms, the headmen could not manage to send these villagers. The commander instructed that they must have to work in the workplace only for one day, however, the headmen could not manage because all villagers were busy with their farming activities. After the headmen informed to the commander that they could not provide the requested number of villagers, the army ordered to pay fine with 500 Kyat per head. The headmen have to collect 15, 000 Kyat from the whole villager and paid them to the commander as a fine for their failure to send the defined labourers to the workplaces.

Normally, the village headmen always tried to send the villagers on a rotation basis, because it was also quite hard for them to collect money from the villagers. Besides two villages, Htee-paukhlo and Kyaukpone, mentioned above, the villagers from many other villages, such as, Shwe-la-inn, Pyaw-yar-gone, Kyatu-yawe-taung, Weithalee, Kawkamar, Pyoe-lin, Pyoe-daw, Shwe-daung-baw, Thanbyaya and Bada-gyi villages have been constantly used as labourers during the whole of July in working in army farms.

The following accounts show how a large number of villagers near Kya Inn Seiki town were forced to contribute labour in army's farms.

On July 20, about 16 villagers from Shwe-la-inn village were conscripted by the commander of IB No. 32, Maj. Tin Oo to contribute unpaid labour in battalion paddy-growing farm, especially to grow paddy plants. Only July 21, about 20 villagers from Pyaw-yar-gone village were forced to work in the same farms with the same work.

From July 22 to 30, the villagers from Wei-tha-lee, Kawkmar, Pyoe-lin, Pyoe-daw, and Shwe-daing-baw villages were forced by IB No. 32 in their farming activities. The village headmen had to send different numbers of villagers to the set workplaces, with 70, 60, 50, 30, and 15 villagers depending on pieces of works.

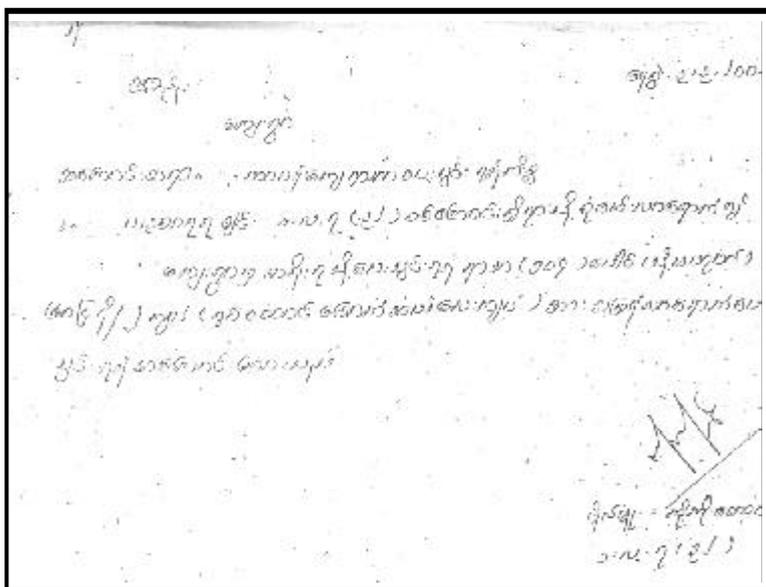
Sometimes, after some villagers from the villages in the conflict zone were arrested by the other battalions, they sent these villagers to IB No. 32, to use them as permanent labourers in paddy farms or rubber plantation. As an instance, on July 28, about 10 villagers from Yale and Mae-tha-kræ villages were and sent to IB No. 32 to use them in farming and plantation. They were used as permanent labourers in the battalion for over two weeks until most works finished in the battalion's farm and plantation.

III. Conscription of Forced Labour by LIB No. 708

LIB No. 708 is a new battalion that have been taken in Kya Inn Seiki township area only about one year. After many armed oppositions in the northern and eastern parts of Burma entered into ceasefire with SLORC prior to 1995, the Rangoon military regime has not had to use much military forces in these area. Therefore, many military battalions were withdrawn from other parts of Burma and deployed them in Mon State and Karen State to launch the military offensives in keeping KNU to not get control in rural areas.

For example, LIB No. 299 and LIB No. 343 were deployed in the new confiscated lands in Ye Township of Mon State, while the Burmese Army deployed LIB No. 708 in confiscated lands in Kya Inn Seiki township of Karen State.

Whenever a military battalion is deployed, the local villagers nearby are always forced to build the military barracks, making fences and others. The villagers from villages near the new village might have been constantly conscripted by the local military commanders to contribute free labour in various constructions in the battalion. For example, when the Burmese Army deployed a new military battalion,



The Burmese version of Order 1

LIB No. 299 in southern part of Ye Township, the villagers from Mun-aung, Koe-mile, Kalort and Han-gan villages were forced in the workplaces. Normally, the soldiers forced the villagers to find building facilities and build the barracks, dig bankers and trenches and make fence.

Similarly, while LIB No. 708 was being deployed in Kha-won village of Kya Inn Seiki township, the villagers from the nearest villages, such as, Winyaw-seiki, Win-htaung, Myaing-gone, Taung-dee, have been constantly forced to contribute unpaid labour to the battalion.

As an instance,

On July 24, a commander from LIB No. 708, Maj. Ye Htun, asked and conscripted about 60 villagers from Kha-won, Win-yaw, Win-htaung and Myaing-gone villages to build the military barracks in their army camps. These villagers had to find some building facilities and built the barracks. Depending on work-duties, some villagers had to work for 3 to 7 days in the barrack construction. In each barrack construction, the villagers were forced to build a 50 feet long barracks with two roles. The villagers themselves had to find woods, bamboo and thatches for building. Prior to building a barrack, the army already requested these types of building facilities from villages nearby.

When the soldiers conscripted the villagers to be labourers in building of their military barracks and others, they always ordered the concerned village headmen to send the set number of villagers. Sometimes, when the headmen failed to manage for their requirement, the soldiers made a threat against the headmen.

As an instance,

On July 24, when a group of soldiers arrived into Myaing-gone to inform about their request for villager labourers, they did not meet with village headmen. Then they also accused that the headmen were trying to escape or to not meet with them. And, they called some villagers to collect in middle of village, shot their guns on the villagers'. This was a type of threat to obey their order. After their return, the headmen urgently arranged to send the requested villager labourers to workplaces.

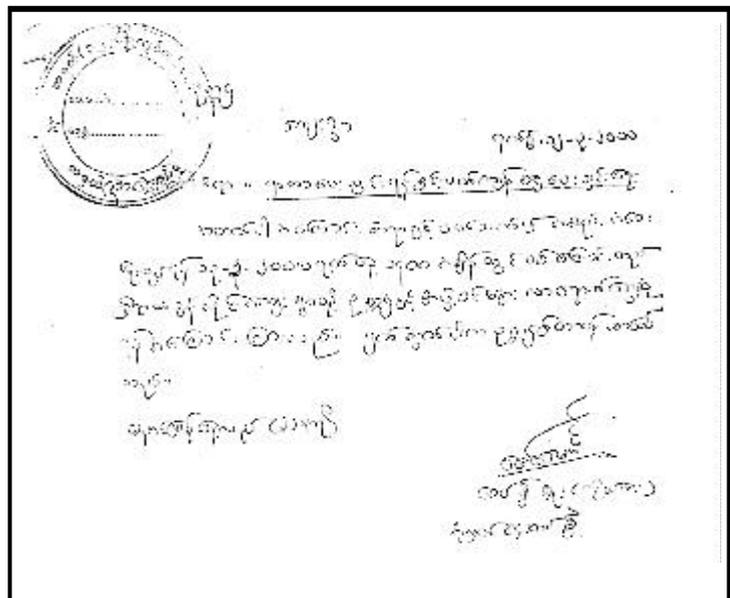
In July, after the battalion completed all building of military barracks, villagers were required to do another works in the army base of LIB No. 708. Besides the battalion's commanders forced the villagers to build many military barracks, the villagers were continuously used to dig a long trenches rounded the base's compound and some near the military barracks. Some villagers were used to made to dig and maker bankers and make fence.

As an instance,

On August 18, LIB No. 708's commander Maj. Ye Htun asked about 50 villagers from Taung-dee village to construct a long trench by rounding the bases. The soldiers instructed the villagers, to dig a 5 feet width and 5 feet depth trench round the base, and pieces of works were shared to villagers to complete for 5 meters to 10 meters feet long. Depending on the number of village labourers, the different pieces of work were defined. So, the villagers have to complete their pieces of works from 3 to 7 days in workplaces. Some villagers were used to dig trenches round each military barracks, while some dug and made bankers. In building fence, the villagers themselves have to bring tree poles and bamboo from their villages and then made fence in the base.

All of these work in the military base such as building the barracks, digging trenches and bankers, building fences were all hard works and the villagers have to work in one piece of work at least about 3 days and sometimes, have to work over 7 days. Among many villages in the surrounding area who were forced to work, the villagers in Kha-won village where the army takes base has been suffered more from the constant conscription of labour. Whether other villagers were forced to work or not, the headmen in Kha-won village have to provide at least 10 villagers every day to the bases to do every thing for soldiers including cooking, carrying water and other daily works.

LIB No. 708 also took fine from



The Burmese version of Order 2

the village headmen, if they failed to manage or provide the requested number of villager labourers. In most cases, the villagers were quite busy with their own works in farms or other places to get foods or incomes for their families and it made quite difficult for village headmen to get the requested number of village labourers for any construction in the base. For example, whenever the army commander asked for 30 villager labourers from one village, normally the headmen could not manage to get this number of villagers, and could provide about 20 or less than 20 villagers to the workplaces. Thus, the army commander took fines from the villagers who failed to come and work in the base. The commander instructed to pay 300-400 Kyat fine per day fine for one village who could not come. And, the headmen collected money fines from villagers and then paid to battalion. From taking fines, the battalion could earn about 40, 000 – 50, 000 Kyat every month from 4-5 villages in surrounding areas. By this way, the new battalion had taken both villagers' labour and cash for their own battalion buildings and fund.

IV. Taxation by Army and Township Authorities

In raising the battalion fund, the regular battalion especially IB No. 32, has not only used one or two methods, it also used various methods to get enough income to operate all their purposes in their battalion. On the other hand, the light infantry battalions, such as LIB No. 284 and a new battalion, LIB No. 708, which are taking bases in the township, have relied on the fund provided by IB No. 32.

If compared with other two battalions, IB No. 32 has main responsibility to seek fund and it has used various methods to raise fund including collecting tax from rubber plantation owners and paddy-growing farmers. After negotiating with local Township PDC authorities, IB No. 32 found opportunity to collect tax from rubber plantation owners from many Mon and Karen villages in the surrounding of Kya Inn Seiki town.

In Kya Inn Seiki Township, some villagers from over 20 villages, in surrounding area of town, but some are far from town. For the nearer villages, Township PDC or IB No. 32 ordered the concerned village headmen to give the set amount of rubber as yearly tax or they asked that tax to pay by cash. Rubber plantation owners from villages such as Kha-le, Tagun-taing, Weitha-lee, Taung-dee, Winkabar, Kyauk-pone, Kyuauk-kya, Kyatu-yawe-taung, Htee-paukhlo and other villages close to town have to give the set weight of rubber or the equal amount of money to IB No. 32 or Township PDC's Agriculture Products Trade Department, as tax.

In March, 2000, IB No. 32 instructed to all villages which owned rubber plantation outside of their villages, to give rubber tax to the battalion. It also set the amount of rubber weight (which was measured in *Pound*) to give to the military battalion. When it ordered, it mentioned the set amount of rubber it required as tax and calculated them into cash, and also mentioned the set amount of cash instead of rubber tax. Actually, the army did not want drought rubber sheets from the villagers but really required some equal amount of cash to the costs rubber sheets.

According to an order by a commander from IB No. 32, it mentioned as below: (*Look the Burmese version order No. 1, on Page 6*)

To

Chairman

_____ Village

Date: March 3, 2000

Subject: To complete the duty of giving rubber tax.

As the subject mentioned above, I inform you that soon after you received this letter, you needed to find the IB No. 32 military patrol forces and to give 104 pounds of rubber (or) 8, 064 Kyat (*eight thousand, sixty-four Kyat totally*) that your village remained to pay off.

Signed –
(Maj. Ko Ko Aung)
IB No. 32

In this case, although army commander mentioned the set amount of rubber to be given to battalion as tax, he also added the amount of money in order. Since the military patrol of IB No. 32 led by Maj. Ko Ko Aung, moved from one village to another, it might be quite hard for the village headmen to track him. So, instead of carrying 104 Pounds of rubber sheets, the headmen would bring 8, 064 Kyat tax for the battalion.

In collecting this type of tax, IB No. 32 tried to get the set amount of tax in cash, when they

launched the military patrol in the area. Many villages which are far from the town or IB No. 32 headquarters failed to give this type of tax and whenever its military patrol arrived close to these villages, the operation commanders sent letters and asked for tax. Sometimes, the commanders also made threats against village headmen who have been delayed to complete their duties of giving rubber tax.

In an order dated on March 13, sent to a village chairman, the commander mentioned, the village headmen must need to discuss with them about giving yearly rubber tax. Its also threatened that "if the headmen failed to meet with commander, it was their own responsibility", which means that they must face punishment if they did not continue to complete their duties of giving rubber tax to army. (*Look the Burmese version of Order No. 2, on Page 7*)

Similarly to rubber tax, army or Township PDC authorities also asked yearly paddy tax from paddy-growing farmers, by using a forced purchasing of paddy from farmers at 2-3 times low price every year. In most case, the army does not directly handled this collection of tax, but Township PDC's Agriculture Products Trade Department or Township council itself takes responsibility in forcing farmers to sell the set amount of paddy to designated paddy-buying center created by authorities.

As an instance,

On January 1, 2000, Kya Inn Seikyi PDC Chairman sent an order to Winyaw-seikyi village tract to sell 2,000 baskets of paddy to designated paddy-buying center. In this village tract, there are about 4 villages and the headmen of all villages needed to discuss to share the amount of paddy tax that required to sell to authorities. The deadline to give this tax was January 15, 2000.

In this case, both army and authorities do not need cash instead of paddy. They really required to collect over 30,000 baskets of paddy as their food supplies in township to provide army battalions, government servants in different departments and other Burmese Army's troops, who often arrive to township to launch offensives against the rebel force in township area.

V. Cruel and Inhumane Treatments During SPDC's Military Offensives

As Kya Inn Seikkyi township area is a larger one and KNU/KNLA troops have been active for several years and now, SPDC have tried to clear all their enemy's roots and have regularly launched offensives. The regular military battalions, such as IB No. 32, LIB No. 284 and LIB No. 708, have no direct responsibility to launch regular military offensives, but Southeast Command bring other battalion outside of Kya Inn Seikyi township, especially from Karen State and Mon State, to operate military offensives against KNU. The main duty of the military battalion in Kya Inn Seikyi township is to operate military patrol in the surrounding areas of their bases.

When the other military battalions came into this area, their main duty is to launch military offensives against KNU. During the beginning of Year 2000, LID No. 44 and some battalions, such as LIB No. 703, LIB No. 705, LIB No. 707 had launched the military offensives against KNU in areas along Zami river and along Three Pagoda Pass – Thanbyuzayat motor road. During this dry season offensives, many Karen and Mon villagers were displaced and some of them were killed and inhumane tortured with accusation, they were rebel-supporters. (All detailed report is described in "The Mon Forum", Issue No. 7/2000, produced in July, 2000.) This military have been taken place until the end of June.

From July until September, another three military battalions, LIB No. 703, LIB No. 208 and IB No. 31 have launched military offensives in many parts of rural Kya Inn Seikyi township area.

During the military offensives launched by any battalions, the villagers in the conflict area, or free-fire zones have been constantly suffered from various types of human rights abuses and violations that related to accusation of rebel-supporters. The villagers are not treated as humane, like the people in the government control areas. Many villagers are killed, tortured and many women are also raped by SPDC commanders and soldiers.

Along their routes, SPDC soldiers arrested all villagers with suspicion of rebel-supporters, they used them as porters to carry their ammunitions and food supplies. They never select whether man or woman, they arrested all villagers who they met. The porter service is the most terrible and hard for all porters.

According to a villager from Yale village, who had experience about porter service, he said,

"In the first week of July, when the Burmese soldiers from LIB No. 703 passed near our village, I was arrested as porters. They took me about 7 days totally and the soldiers used me to carry about 25 viss (about 40 kilograms) of ammunitions or sometimes, food supplies or even their boots for the whole journey. Another about 60 porters had to carry all loads together and the soldiers kept us to walk with a heavy load for 12-14 hours a

day. If we could manage to walk or walking rate was slow down, we must be kicked. One porter was terrible kicked and beaten by soldiers in front of me, after he failed for attempt to escape.

“Later, while I was at my farm, my daughter, Naw Nu (19 years old) was also arrested by Burmese soldiers from another battalion (which he did not know). She and another five women from our village were taken by that battalion for 5 days. They also had to carry heavy loads for soldiers.”

During the porter service, if the fighting or attacks occurred, the soldiers also pushed porters to walk in advance to use them as shields or mine-sweepers. Some civilian porters also died because of gun-shots or land-mines.

As an instance,

On July 14, when troops from LIB No. 703 move from Three Pagoda Pass area to Apalon village along the motor road, the soldiers also arrested two women and one men who they met on the road near Tadein village. These women and men were working in their farms and raising their cows, they were Naw Phar Tu Klaing (31 years old Karen woman), Naw Swe Nyunt (30 years old Karen woman) and Nai Ah Maung (about 34 years old Mon man). The soldiers brought them as porters and let them carry some food supplies that they looted from other villages.

On the same day in the evening about 6 o'clock, before the SPDC troops entered into Apalon village, they faced with an ambush attack from Karen (KNLA) troops. In the fighting, the SPDC soldiers pushed some porters to stay in front of them and used as human-shields. So, some bullets also hit to Naw Phar Tu Klaing. After 10 minutes ambush attacks by rebels, the fighting ceased. But the soldiers did not take the injured woman porter and went into village. She was left behind with serious injuries and died at night. On the next day morning, the villagers took corpse back to village.

In this case, the SPDC soldiers did not care any life of the villagers in the conflict area because all villagers were accused having connection with rebels. Additionally, because of accusation against the villagers as rebel-supporters or rebels, many villagers were also killed during three months, from July to September, military offensives launched by LIB No. 208.

As an instance,

During three months while LIB No. 208, led by Maj. Aung Htun Khaing, was taking base in Taung-zun village, and launching offensives in the surrounding area of their base, the soldiers also killed about 5 villagers from Kyauk-palu village with accusation of rebel-supporters. Taung-zun village is on the Three Pagoda Pass – Thanbyuzayat and Kyauk-palu village is not on the motor road and is far about 6 miles from Taung-zun. Kyauk-palu village is a Karen village and most villagers have their farms outside of their farms. The villagers who were killed by LIB No. 208 soldiers were accused as rebel-supporters for their staying in their farms or walking along the jungle roads to their farms.

Initially, the soldiers from LIB No. 208 arrested Saw Pae Din on a jungle and interrogated him about the activities of KNU and Karen soldiers. Since Karen villager could not speak Burmese well and the soldiers dissatisfied for his answers and accused him as a rebels' informer. During interrogation, the soldiers tortured him with various methods and after one-day interrogation, the soldiers killed him.

Secondly, another villager, Saw Kyaw Myint was arrested about 5 o'clock in the evening on the way to his home. The soldiers accused him that he was a informer for Karen soldiers and kept rebels in his farm. After severe torturing, he was also killed similarly to the first Karen man. Additionally, another three Karen villagers from the same village, Saw Kalar Pyaung, Saw Aung Myat and Saw Phar Kalort were also arrested and killed by LIB No. 208 soldiers with accusations they were rebel-supporters.

This violations is a part of **“ethnic cleansing”** plan of the Burmese Army, and put threat to all different race of ethnic people to not contact with concerned rebel forces and keep them to be frightened. The killing of villagers is also a part of “four cuts campaign”, which has been implemented since BSPP era, that the Burmese Army has tried to cut supports and information between villagers and rebel armies.

Not only villagers' men have been suffered from killing, many Karen ethnic women are also suffered from rape and killing because of their ethnicity or race. In many rural isolated villages, while the women are working and staying at homes, they are always suffered from sexual abuses by SPDC soldiers.

During LIB was launching offensives, some women from Kyauk-palu village, from which five men were killed, were also raped and killed.

The complete incidents are:

During three months while LIB No. 208 was taking base in Taung-zun and launching offensives around

Kyauk-palu village, about 5 young women were raped by soldiers in their farms, on the way to their village and in the village. Some were killed after rape, because those women are accused as rebels' wives or relatives to rebel soldiers.

Firstly, in July the soldiers arrested Naw Paw Sa (about 21 years old) in her farms and accused her having contact with rebels. And, some soldiers raped her. Secondly, in late July, the soldiers arrested another one girl, Naw Ba Baw near the village and raped her again. Then in August, the soldiers arrested another girl Naw Kyin Shwe (15 years old) in the village with accusation she was a rebel's relatives and raped her. Then they killed her after rape to close all cases. Similarly another two sisters, Naw Tin Nyunt (18 years old) and Naw Tin Hla (16 years old) were arrested at their farms and were raped by soldiers.

In the cases of killing villagers with accusation of rebel-supporters and made sexual abuses against ethnic women, all battalions, which launched offensives, have been involved. It means not only LIB No. 208, another battalion, IB No. 31, which headquarters is in Thanbyuzayat town of Mon State, have similarly mistreated against Karen villagers while it was launching offensives against KNU.

The incidents are:

In August, when 60 troops of IB No. 31 launched offensives along the motor and close to Zami river, the soldiers also arrested some villagers with accusation of rebel-supporters and killed them. In first week of August, when they entered into a Karen village, Win-laung, all men in village fled to escape from torturing or arrest for porters. When the commander asked to meet with village chairman, he was also in his farm. Then the

Continued from Page (2)

collected tax from wood traders and lumber sawing mills, with 5, 000 Kyat to 10, 000 Kyat depending on the sizes of economics of those traders and mills.

In Pegu township, if compared with village communities, who are working in tradition paddy-growing farms, the communities in town have found more and more unemployment conditions in Year 2000. They almost tried to seek work as hard and day labourer to get daily income but many could not get jobs on daily basis. Some poor families could raise income only about 150 – 200 Kyat per day and this income could not support them enough to buy rice, other supplement foods and clothes for each whole family, while all prices of rice and daily used groceries are quiet expensive.

Additionally, the Township PDC also requires arranging various types of ceremonies that are not related to community's religious and other affairs. The ceremonies include welcoming of SPDC executive military leaders; meeting, seminar and conference against NLD and other democratic oppositions; opening of new self-help roads and other activities. In each ceremony, the Township PDC requires some hundreds of thousands Kyat budget to cover all expenses and whenever it was celebrated, the authorities collect fund from every household. Even in Anti-NLD Signboard Putting ceremony, the authorities asked fund for civilians. In each ceremony, one family has to provide fund from 50 Kyat to 100 Kyat. In each ceremony, the authorities forced all families especially in city to attend ceremony and instructed one member from each family must attend. If one family failed to attend a ceremony, that family needed to pay fine from 100 Kyat to 500 Kyat depending on how important of ceremony. The civilians had no choice, they tried

to attend any ceremonies to avoid payment.

In building of self-help roads, the civilians in township have to provide their unpaid labour, take their own foods and build the roads as ordered by Township authorities. The familly who failed to go and work in road construction needed to pay 300 Kyat per day. And, by showing the reason to hire the labourers in taking security for railway road and for preventing fire flame in city, the authorities asked 30 Kyat as fund from every household every month.

Besides illegal tax for ceremonies, whenever a development project have conducted for this township, the government never allocates a complete budget, and just orders Township PDC to collect fund from civilians. In July, 2000, when SPDC ordered to build a public hospital in city, each family has to provide about 50 - 500 Kyat funds for that building depending on the family's economic conditions.

In July/August 2000, by following SPDC policy, Township authorities also created "free tax market" in a place that far from the city center and public buyers. After creation of this market, the authorities have forced all small vendors to move to new market. They have to abandon their former market places and moved to new places where very less buyers come and buy their groceries. Therefore many small vendors are disappointed with this situation.

Because of the government's continuous and huge tax collection; mismanagement in administration; corruption among the authorities; the people in the whole township have faced more and more poor.

soldiers let some women asked chairman to return homes to meet with commander. When the village chairman, Saw Lat Kae (54 years old) arrived into village, the soldiers arrested and tied him up. Then the commanders accused and said that he was rebel-supporters and a informer accordingly to news he received. They detained him for six days without feeding any foods and forced him to tell true. After he could not give satisfied answer to soldiers after six days, he was severely tortured by soldiers. They cut his body with knives and sometimes they burnt him to admit he was a rebel-supporter. After 9 days interrogation and severe torturing, the soldiers killed him.

Similarly when a Karen farmer, Saw Phar Tort (40 years old) returned to his village from farm, he was arrested on the way and the soldiers accused him that he was having contacts with Karen rebels. After he refused that he did not know anything, he was tortured. At last, the soldiers opened his mouth and shot into his mouth with pistol gun with one round of bullets. He died on the spot.

The soldiers also arrested one woman, Naw Laung (about 50 years), on her way to home in Win-laung village and raped her. And, they also killed her with accusation of a rebel's informer.

In a large Kya Inn Seiki township, there are various types of human rights violations have been committed by the government soldiers against ethnic people in the township, Mon and Karen. Because of NMSP-SLORC/SPDC ceasefire agreement, the Mon people have been less suffered if compared with Karen villagers.

Mon ethnic communities in this township area have suffered more from conscription of forced labour, forced portering and porter fees, payment of various taxes and forced displacement. Differently to Mon people, Karen communities in Kya Inn Seiki Township area have been suffered more violations that related to accusation of KNU-supporters, such as killing, torturing, rape, forced relocation, and others.



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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