

# The Mon Forum

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## Some Acronyms in This Issue

<b>SPDC-</b>	State Peace and Development Council,
<b>SLORC-</b>	State Law and Order Restoration Council,
<b>BSPP-</b>	Burmese Socialist Programme Party,
<b>MOI-</b>	Ministry of Interior (of SPDC)
<b>IB -</b>	Infantry Battalion (of Burmese Army),
<b>LIB-</b>	Light Infantry Battalion (of Burmese Army),
<b>USDA-</b>	Union Solidarity and Development Association,
<b>NMSP-</b>	New Mon State Party,
<b>KNU-</b>	Karen National Union,
<b>KNLA-</b>	Karen National Liberation Army,

## News

Conscription of Forced Labour by LIB No. 299  
After Order Halting This Practice by SPDC  
(December 2000)

With dated October 27, 2000, although SPDC's Ministry of Interior (MOI) officially issued an order of stopping the practices of all types of conscription of forced labour to its township, village tract and village levels administration and military battalions, LIB No. 299, which bases in southern part of Ye Township, still conscripted or requested civilian porters from villages in southern part of Ye Township, Mon State, in early December. These civilian porters were requested by that battalion when they required to operate a military operations and planned to deploy base in Three Pagoda Pass town, a border town with Thailand.

On December 1 and 2, before LIB No. 299 left to the border town, battalion commander, Col. Aye Tun ordered the village headmen from 11 Mon villages in Ye southern part area to send some numbers of villagers for battalion to use them as porters. Depending on the sizes, population and household number in the village, he ordered to send 5 villagers from Koe-mile, 6 villagers from Kalort-gyi, 8 villagers from Hangan, 2 villagers from Ba-round, 4 villagers from Kaw-hlaing, 3



**Forced porters** during the Burmese Army's a military operation

villagers from Singu, 3 villagers from Toe-tet, 4 villagers from Ying-ye, 4 villagers from Yin-dein, 4 villagers from Kabya and 8 villagers from Kapyar villages respectively. The commander also requested 100,000 Kyat from these villages for expenses for foods to feed these porters during their military operation to border town with Thailand. The deadline to send these all porters was on December 3.

After the battalion gathered the required total 43 civilian porters and porter fee, they started moving to border town on December from Ye town. From Ye town, to reach to Thanbyuzayat town, the battalion took by trucks and from that Thanbyuzayat to border town of Three Pagoda Pass town, the soldiers had to walk to avoid from the ambush attacks of KNU/KNLA troops and so, the civilians had to carry ammunitions and food supplies along over 60-mile-long Three Pagoda Pass - Thanbyuzayat motor road. They had lasted about 3 days to reach to Three Pagoda Pass town and LIB No. 299 troops were also attacked by KNU/KNLA's Karen troops two times along their way. But no porter was killed, while some soldiers injured.

After 3 days along the road, LIB No. 299 reached to Three Pagoda Pass town and changed position with LIB No. 343, and transfer all porters to LIB No. 343, which needed to return to Ye township again. In principle, SPDC does not deploy a permanent battalion in Three Pagoda Pass town and send about two columns of troops from a battalion from regular battalions in Mon State and Karen State to take base in that town for three months. On a quarterly basis, SPDC's Southeast Command, which bases in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, has responsibility to send and change troops for three months deployment in this town.

When LIB No. 343 returned to Ye township,

43 porters were transferred and they were forced to carry ammunitions and food supplies for LIB No. 343 again and it lasted about 3 days to reach to battalion base in northern part of Ye township. Thus, these porters were used for two battalions, they were taken for over one week for their homes and the battalions never provided them with any payment.

Regarding for the arrest of porters, NMSP also sent a complaint letter to concerned strategic commander in IB No. 61 battalion and pointed out the issued order from MOI dated October 27, and send a copy to Southern Command. However, Southeast Command did not reply to NMSP for their subordinated battalions' wrong doings.



### Conscription of Forced Labour in Karen State (December, 2000)

Similarly to some situation in Mon State that some military battalions have conscripted of forced labour or arrest of civilian porters to use them in military offensives after SPDC's MOI issued order dated on October 27, some army battalions in Karen State such as IB No. 81, LIB No. 545, LIB No. 546, IB No. 32 have also forced local villagers to contribute unpaid labour in battalions' rice-farms and other works.

In the period from the second week of December until the end of that month, two military battalions, LIB No. 545, No. 546 and a Military Intelligence Unit. 25, which base in Kawkareik township have forced the villagers from Kyone-done and Kawbeik village tracts to contribute free labour in their own 300 acres of farmlands for the work of harvest-



**Forced labour** used by government authorities in one place for clearing the bushes along the road.

ing paddy crops. Army commanders have asked 40 villagers every day from Kanni, Kaw-lyan, Thayet-taw, Tadar-oo, Kaw-kyaik, Kaw-khaik and others to contribute labour in reaping ripe paddy plants for the whole day. When army forced the villagers to contribute labour for harvesting, the commanders also instructed villagers to bring their own foods and tools.

After SLORC/SPDC instructed its army commands and local battalions to implement "self-help" plan, most battalions confiscated lands and forced the villagers in all processes of farming. Additionally, some battalions that confiscated lands close to rivers also have grown two seasons crops including dry season crop and unceasingly force the local villagers for farming.

As an instance, from second week to third week of November, a military battalion based in Pa-an township of Karen State, IB No. 81 has forced the villagers from villages nearby to prepare lands and grow dry season crops, soon after harvesting rainy season crops. The battalion asked 60 villagers everyday from Than-hlae, Khaya, Kawlamu and Kawzin villages to work in its 50 acres of land. The villagers had to plough lands, bring water to lands and grow paddy plants. The battalion this 60 number of villagers for 9 days and later it used small number of villagers to fill water in farm plots and provide fertilizers in there. Besides the conscription of villagers, the battalion also collected fund from the villages nearby for expense used for gasoline for water pumping engines and to buy fertilizer. So, the villagers had to provide for battalion from 20, 000 to 50, 000 Kyat per village.

Similarly, to seek battalion fund, IB No. 32 that bases in Kya Inn Seiki township, also established a brick-making factory near its base. In making earth bricks, the battalion needs a lot of woods to burn them until it becomes harder. To get many tons of woods to burn earth to get hard bricks, the army battalions have also forced the villagers near Kya Inn Seiki town to find woods in forests and give them. According to

order in early December, the battalion instructed the village headmen that to provide in estimation 5 tons woods from Shwe-la-inn village, 5 tons wood from Kyauk-pone village and 20 ton from Htee-paukho village respectively. Then the battalion instructed them that to bring all woods to a designated place on Zami riverbank. The battalions ordered boats from the villages nearby to carry many tons of woods along Zami river to their factory. Before this conscription of forced labour was done, IB No. 32 also forced many villages from these villagers for harvesting in its 100 acres of rice farms.

Although SPDC officially ordered all its battalions and army commands to stop all practices of using forced labour in rural area, Burmese Army's battalions in remote areas of ethnic areas still have conscripted forced labour like the previous situation.



#### SPDC Forcible Paddy-buying Conditions in Mon State (December 2000)

Like previous years, SPDC and its respective township authorities in Mon State, Karen State and Tenasserim Division has tried to buy the set amount of paddy from local Mon and other ethnic inhabitants at low price, which is lower than 2-3 times of market prices. To forcibly buy paddy from farmers, the authorities have created various paddy-buying centers in Mon areas and paid advance payment to farmers since November 2000. Depending on amounts of crop production in each township, the authorities have defined different amounts of paddy to be sold to paddy-buying center.

In Mon State, there are totally 10 Townships and three townships of Mon State, Mudon, Chaungzong and Paung, which could produce better crops were instructed by Mon State PDC authorities to sell 15-16

**SPDC's paddy-buying center in Mon State, which constantly forced farmers to sell their paddy at low price**



baskets of paddy (about 750 pounds in estimation) per acre to the nearest or designated paddy-buying centers, while the authorities instructed to sell 10-12 baskets of paddy per acre in other remaining townships.

As preparation to get full set amounts of paddy from the local farmers, the authorities have instructed the concerned paddy-buying teams in every township and village tract to provide advance payment to farmers. By giving advance payment to farmers, the authorities forced farmers to sign a contract and give promise that they agreed to sell the set amount of paddy to center after they harvested their crops. Although many farmers would not like to take advance payment while they did not know how many baskets of paddy they could produce, however, the authorities forced them to take and signed the contract. It also meant if the farmers failed to sell the set amount of paddy, they could be detained. But the authorities provided about 1500-2000 Kyat advance payment that equal to half of paddy to be sold per one acre.

During the authorities paid advance payment to farmers, they have paid about 300-350 Kyat per basket of paddy while the price in the market was 800-1000 Kyat per basket. However, after harvest season, the paddy price in Burma including Mon State dropped to 700 Kyat per basket and the authorities re-instructed that they would pay only 250 Kyat per basket. Then, the authorities ordered again that the farmers must sell paddy amounts that equal to new price or if the farmers would like to sell their paddy, they must pay money to authorities with price of paddy 600-700 per basket of paddy accordingly to market price. Actually, when the paddy price drops, the authorities would not like to get more paddy, but need money instead of paddy.

As an instance, in Paung township, the paddy price has been dropped to 600 Kyat per basket in December 2000. Thus, the township authorities re-instructed that they would buy from farmers with 250 Kyat per basket. Or, they said, if the farmers are unable to sell paddy, they must have to pay money that equal to the set amount of paddy required by paddy-buying center. So the farmers in Paung Township are disappointed in dealing with government authorities.

For farmers in Mon State, they could produce only about 25-50 baskets of paddy per acre and they

needed to spend about 2000-3000 Kyat per acre for hiring labour, buying fertilizers and other requirements. After they produced paddy, they needed to sell them to government again, and so they remained very little amount of paddy in their hands which could not support them enough for their survival of their families.



#### Land Confiscation and Fund Extortion for Development Projects in Mon State (December 2000)

Since November until the end of December, 2000, when the authorities are constructing gas-pipeline from Tanasserim Division via Mon State into Karen State's Pa-an Township to provide energy for extent cement factory in Myaing-kalar village, many hundreds of farmlands, plantation lands, houses' gardens and houses are confiscated by SPDC authorities and the villagers have not received any compensated costs. During the authorities confiscated lands that owned by villagers in Thanbyuzayat township, the villagers were ordered to leave their houses within three days without delay.

This was a gas-pipeline that connects from Yadana gas-pipeline of Tanasserim Division to Mon State which comes along Ye-Moulmein motor road or railway road. When it passes through farmlands along the roads between Ye and Moulmein, Mon villagers' owned farmlands were confiscated. Then, when it passed in Kyaikmayaw township of Mon State, some farmlands and plantations were also confiscated. Accordingly to claims by authorities before the pipeline is connected, they said, the pipeline project would support the people in area to get enough electricity and energy for their daily. But now, the people in the area know that gas is used only cement factory and they just lost their lands.



**Some houses' gardens are were destroyed when SPDC local authorities confiscated lands in which houses are built, to clear gas-pipeline route.**



**Some farmlands are confiscated** which are on the gas-pipeline route

Besides land confiscation for new gas-pipeline project, the government authorities also confiscated lands and extorted money from villagers for development projects especially for road building.

On November 10, 2000, Southern part of Chaung-zon Township PDC township authorities instructed a village, Kwan-hlar village headmen U Maung Than and secretary to confiscate lands, so there were about 200 acres of paddy fields and 100 acres of toddy plantation were confiscated without compensation. According to authorities, they would need to create a new village and that was why they have to take these lands. But, the villagers said that that land confiscation order must not come from higher authorities, they themselves tried to collect the lands and sold to other people who needed lands.

Because of government's order to half using forced labour on October 27, later the village PDC authorities in some area tried to avoid using forced labour, but collected more fund from civilians to implement development projects. As an instance, in Thanbyuzayat township of Mon State, when the authorities built 15 miles of motor road, that passes through Karote-pi, Wae-galaung, Kaw-lay, An-kae, Htinn-yu and Ah-nin and the authorities instructed that the civilians in these villages must have to pay for all cost of road building. So the villagers from these villages have to pay to authorities 3000 Kyat to 7000 Kyat depending on economic conditions of one house. In these villages, there are over 3000 households totally and the authorities could receive

Similarly, the government authorities have collected huge amount of money from the villagers in eastern part of Ye Township area. In August 2000, the government authorities planned to build a 10 mile-long motor road from Ye to Kyaung-ywa village road. In building

this road, the authorities requested about 7.9 million Kyat from 17 villages, which are near the motor road. Since August until December, the village headmen have to send money to authorities in Ye rationally before the authorities really built the road. Therefore, some slightly big village with 200 households have to pay about 700,000 Kyat totally while village with 30 households have to pay about 150,000 Kyat to them. Thus, the smaller and poorer villages had to pay more for fund to build this road.

Then, in Ye Township again, when the authorities tried to build a new bridge in a village, Ah-zin, near Andaman Sea, Township authorities instructed village headmen to collect about 1000 Kyat fund from a poor house and about 3000-4000 Kyat from other families. In that village, there are about 500 households and the authorities received a lot fund from civilians.

On December 18, 2000, Mudon Township authorities also called a meeting with six ferry teams that base in town and instructed them that each ferry team must have to provide 150,000 Kyat fund for authorities to repair the road from Mudon to Chaung-htit-kwa village, a border village with Karen State. The threat was if any team refused to provide, that team's ferries must not run on the road. These fun was just for use to buy some stones to lay in road, and instructed to individual trucks in town to carry stones to designated places.

As conclusion, although SPDC has less use of forced labour, they have collect more fund instead of conscription of forced labour after October 27' order.



# Report

## Human Rights Situation in Paung Township, Mon State

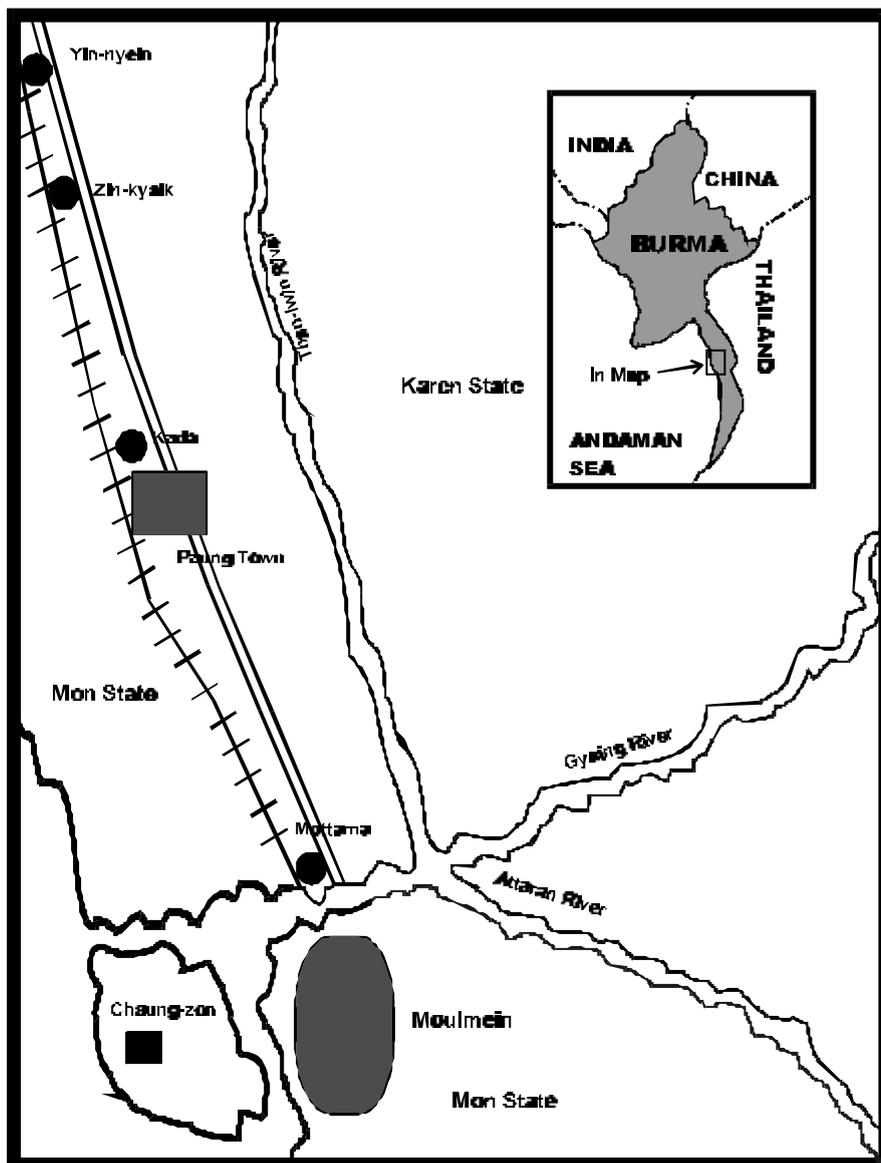
### I. Background of Paung Township

Paung Township is in Taton district of Mon State and situates northern part Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, and majority inhabitants in this township are Mon people and the remaining are Pa-oh, Karen and Burman. Economically about 80% of township population are paddy growing peasant farmers and so the main products in this township is paddy. Township has about 300, 000 population and the main roads of Mottama-Rangoon motor and railway roads provide for smooth communication and travel for the inhabitants.

This township is formed with three administrative areas and these are (1) Mottama tract, (2) Paung main town tract, and (3) Zin-kyaik tract. There are 10 villages in Mottama tract; 4 town sections and 21 villages in main town tract; and 19 villages in Zin-kyiak tract. Thus, there are 4 town sections in Paung Town and 50 villages totally in township area.

Under the rule of military regime, SPDC, the administrative officials are not elected democratically, but are appointed by higher SPDC authorities. Normally, former BSPP members or former military commanders are always appointed for Township PDC authorities and have the highest power to rule the people. From Township PDC authorities, they appoint their supporters in each town section and village to rule the civilians. Now, the people who have connections with USDA (*Union Solidarity and Development Association*) are easily appointed to be township or village PDC officials.

As Paung Township is under the absolute control of SPDC or as "White Area" recognized by regime, only small number of troops are deployed in township and Township SPDC authorities are the most powerful in Township. Although the civilians in this area have not suffered from



Location map of Paung Township in Mon State

violations that connected to “rebel-supporters”, they have been mainly suffered from conscription of forced labour, various types of tax and fund collection, political oppression and movement restriction and others.

## II. Violation of Economic Rights and the Conditions of Paddy Growing Farmers

With plan to buy paddy from farmers, which is also known as yearly paddy tax, the farmers in Paung Township have been also forced by the local Township paddy buying management committee to sell their paddy at low price. Like previous year, the paddy-buying authorities have paid advance payment to farmers and then forced them to sell the set amounts of paddy to respective paddy-buying center.

In July and August, 2000, before the farmers knew how many baskets of paddy they could produce, the government authorities gave them some advance payment and instructed to farmers to sell 15 baskets per acre at price 350 Kyat per basket while the price in the market is about 800-1,000 Kyat per basket. The authorities did not give money for all amounts of paddy that the farmers needed to sell paddy and gave about 1500-2000 Kyat for one acre of land that equal to about one-third of total payment.

However the price of paddy have been gradually dropped and so the authorities worried about the price drop. The paddy price dropped from 800-1000 Kyat per basket to 500-600 Kyat per basket. So later when the farmers started to harvest crops, the authorities re-instructed to all their paddy buying centers that they would buy paddy from farmers with 250 Kyat per basket. From calculating with payment they paid to farmers, the authorities also replied that they would reduce payment amounts and said all farmers should sell the set amount of paddy required by authorities. Later, when the authorities received orders that Agricultural Products Trading Department, a main department of SPDC Agriculture Ministry did not want more paddy, the authorities also instructed to farmers that they would pay money instead of paddy. Accordingly to instruction, if they would not like to sell their paddy more, they would have to pay 450 Kyat per basket (*by abstracting 250 Kyat from 600 Kyat per basket of the market price*) to officials in paddy buying centers. So, the farmers could choose whether they would pay money or give paddy to centers. If they paid, they needed to pay 6750 Kyat per acre of land and by combining with advance payment, they needed to pay nearly 9000 Kyat per acre. Therefore, for a farmer owns about 10 acres of land has to pay to officials about 90, 000 Kyat to government officials and they remained only little income for them.

During the farmers grow paddy, they needed to spend at least 3000 Kyat per acre of land for labour cost and expenses for fertilizer, and by subtracting these costs, the farmers left very little income and paddy for their income and survival. In this situation, some farmers also abandoned their lands and sought another types of works.

In forcing the farmers to sell their paddy or to pay the equal amounts of payment, the authorities also adopted a restriction against farmers to not husk their paddy freely. In Mon State, whenever the farmers husk their paddy to give polished rice, they need to go the concerned town section or village PDC authori



**Civilians are hardly struggling for survival for their daily lives, and the government authorities illegal tax extortion made them more harder again.**

ties to ask permission for husking of their paddy. In restriction against farmers during they forced them to sell the paddy, the authorities instructed that if one farmer fails to sell such amount of paddy, they do not permit to husk paddy. It pushes farmers to be starved and then forced to sell the set amount of paddy.

During 2000, because of government mismanagement and centralized for paddy crop products trading, the paddy price has gradually dropped. The government authorities have not allowed any private traders to involve in the paddy products trading and always accused that they would play the price. On the other hand, most paddy are husked in government own low qualified paddy-husking mills and produced rice quality is low. Then most countries that bought rice from Burma stopped buying low quality rice and that was another reason why the rice price has gradually dropped. In addition, politically, because of SPDC's worst human rights accords and violations of international labour rights, and related sanctions, some countries also stopped buying rice from Burma.

Because of the paddy price drop and huge amount of paddy that the farmers have to pay to authorities, all farmers faced many difficulties for survival. On the other hand, because of high commodity costs in the markets, such as clothing and foods, the farmers could not buy and their situation getting more and more terrible. As a result, some farmers also sold their lands and left to another places, where they could get works.

On December 12, a Mon farmer family with 9 members from Zin-kyaik village, Paung Township, also abandoned their lands and the head of the family, Nai Kyaw Win (47 Years old), explained his situation at his village to our Human Rights Worker as below. Now, he is at a border village with Thailand.

*"I stayed at Zin-kyaik village, a big Mon village in nothern part of Paung town, it situates on Mottama – Rangoon motor road. Like last year, in Paung Township, the authorities defined and told to farmers that they needed to sell about 15-16 baskets of paddy per acre to designated paddy buying center. If your land soil is good, you have to sell 16 baskets and for the normal lands, the farmers have to sell 15 baskets of paddy.*

*"I need to sell my paddy in our village's paddy buying center and so the authorities instructed me and our villagers to sell 16 baskets of paddy to their paddy buying center. As they considered our farms could produce more paddy. But because of flood and insect attacks to my paddy plants, crop production in my farm was reduced and I received only 30 baskets of paddy in average in my farm. And, I needed to sell 16 baskets of paddy to government. So, I left nothing.*

*"After I paid for labour cost and fertilizers, I failed to sell the set amount of paddy to paddy-buying center accordingly to the request by authorities. Then, the authorities threatened me they would arrest me and so I have to sell my farms. Since many farmers are disappointed to continue working as paddy growing farmers, the land price was quite cheap. Anyhow, since I have to sell the set amount of paddy or I could be arrested if I failed to sell, thus, I sold my farms, with 40000 Kyat per acre. With that money, I paid all my debt and then paid the authorities. Then I left from my village."*

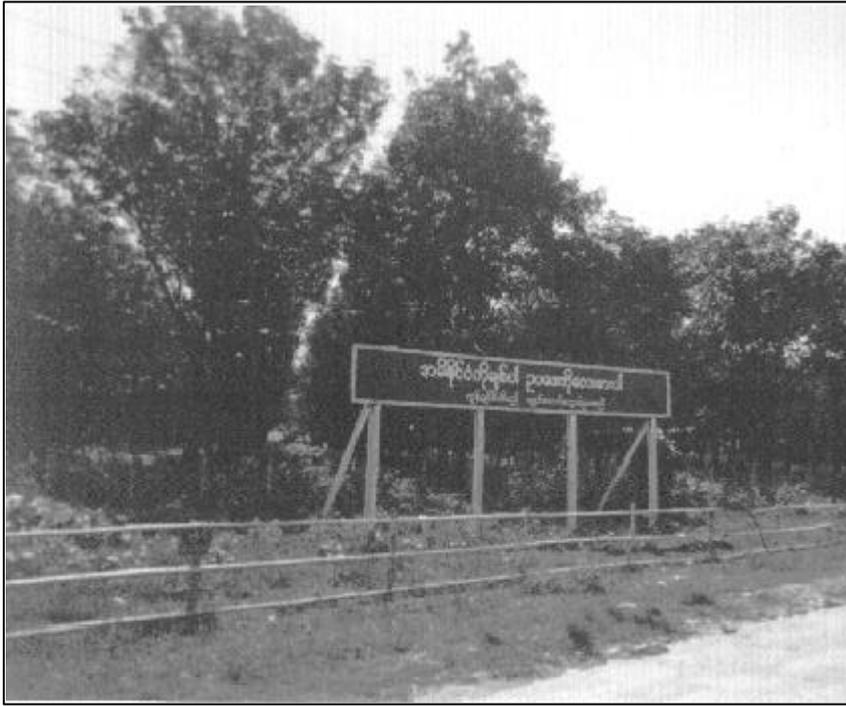
In Burma, the farmers have no rights to complain to authorities that they would not like to sell their paddy or about their crop conditions. Although sometimes the authorities widely knew about disasters and insect attacks that affected to less crop production, they did not care and did not listen to the complaints from farmers. Not only farmers from Paung Township area, many farmers from other parts of Mon State, Karen State and Tenasserim Division have also abandoned their farms after they could not tolerate abuses committed by authorities.

### III. Widespread Conscription of Forced Labour

In June 2000, although ILO (*International Labour Organization*) warned to stop all practices of conscripting of forced labour in the whole Burma, however SPDC State, Division, District, Town, Village levels administration and army commands and battalions have not stopped using civilians to contribute unpaid labour in various types of development projects and to be civilian porters to carry ammunitions and food supplies in the battle-fields.

In area under the control of SPDC, the civilians are generally suffered from conscription of forced labour in government projects and some works for government, while civilians in remote areas or conflict areas or SPDC's semi control areas have suffered from the arrest of forced labour and use local civilians as forced porters.

In Paung Township, the civilians in township mainly suffered from the conscription of forced labour in some SPDC's development projects and works in township. As this township area is "While Area" fewer civilians are suffered from porters. However, when the Burmese Army operated military operations



**As country with signboards, Burma's military regime have oppressed its people with various methods, because of there is no "rule of laws" in the country.**

against rebel groups, sometimes, huge number of civilians in this area were arrested to be porters to carry ammunitions and food supplies for army for several days. Since 1997 military offensives against KNU, there have been no more arrests for porters in years later.

**The instances of conscription of forced labour are as below:**

*On October 1, 2000, Township PDC authorities forced the civilians of all villages in which Mottama-Rangoon motor way in the township part, to clear the bushes that are growing beside the motor-road. So, the villagers from that area had to perform their so-called duty tasks started from October 2 and must be finished by October 10, 2000. Furthermore, even primary school students were forced to distribute their labour.*

*On October 5, even though the students from Basic Education Primary School, Kada village, were too young to do hard work, they were afraid of their teachers and had to clear bushes and grasses with hoes nearby school and beside the motor way. Similarly, the civilian from that village had to perform their so-called duty tasks during October 4 and October 9, 2000.*

Sometimes, when the authorities forced the civilians to contribute unpaid labour, they gathered a huge number of villagers for one place and let them do one specific without payment.

**As an instance,**

*On October 28, 2000, to celebrate a pagoda festival in one place, the authorities asked 50 people from one town section to come to that place to clear bushes and grasses in there. So, the authorities received about 200 civilians totally from these four town sections and forced them to work clearly bushes and grasses for the whole day. Some civilians had to come to that place for nearly one hour and the authorities did not arrange for transportation of civilians who were far from workplace. The civilians had to take their own foods and tools when they came to workplace. Police, USDA members and township authorities took guard to these 200 civilians in workplace.*

Such huge number of conscription of forced labour is regular conscripted whenever Township PDC has occasions and festivals. If one family fails to go and work in workplace, they must have to pay fine. Even ILO warned the SPDC in June to stop all practices of using forced labour, these were the evidence that the civilians were still forced to do works for government.

#### IV. Tax Extortion in Township

In Paung Township area, since it was under the control of SPDC, the civilians in the whole township including villages that far from town, have been greatly suffered from the huge tax extortion. By showing various reason, the authorities have collected various type of tax from the civilians. Most tax collection are not described in laws and so the authorities had chance how much they would like to collect and whenever.

Sometimes, the government authorities although arranging for the purposes of themselves or their ceremony, they have collected fund from the civilians.

**As an instances,**

*On October 8, 2000, in Moe-nine, Paung township, Nursing and Women Affair Association celebrated closing ceremony of the eliminating of illiteracy 2-month-training. In order to accomplish the closing ceremony, every household in that area had to pay (150) kyats respectively. It was started on August 5, 2000, and, firstly, there were 40 trainees attended; however, the trainees remained only 30 people at the end of the course. On closing ceremony, the reward for the first price was 800 kyats; second price was 700 kyats, and 500 kyat for the third person. In Moe-nine, there are 670 households and village PDC had collected fund more than 100, 000 kyats for closing ceremony. In fact, they spent only 30, 000 kyats for both reward and entertainment, so the rest of them Village PDC didn't show the list and distributed among themselves. On that day, Village PDC didn't invite the civilians in that around area, but they invited only Township PDC, Women Affair Association, trainees and teachers. They entertained the attendees with curried rice and chicken curry and tea. Although the population in Moe-nine has more than 3, 500, only a few people were finished this course; therefore, apparently, Local SPDC authorities have no attention to the grassroots, but they just want to have 'a good name' and to benefit for the sake of their properties.*

*On September 2, 2000, Women Affair Association opened a training that including sewing, decoration, and baking cake. In that opening ceremony, (it was held at Pong City Hall) township PDC chairman U Mya Kyaing and Nursing Association Daw San San Yi gave speeches. The period of training was 2-month-long and there were 44 trainees have attended. In that area, it was divided into four sections and Township PDC demanded fund 30, 000 kyat from each block and the trainees also had to pay 1000 kyats per person for entrance. Moreover, township PDC extorted money 50 kyats per family respectively.*

In Paung Township area, there are many government servants including police in township and normally, the government could provide them with small amount of salaries. Those servants could not survive from these salaries and the authorities always extorted fund and foods from civilians to support their servants.

As an instance,

*On October 15, 2000, Zin-kyaik village PDC, Paung township, collected fund from the civilians 100 kyats per family, so they obtained totally over 500, 000 kyats. The source said that the Village PDC did not delicate any evidence why they had to collect fund from the civilians. After that, on October 18, 2000, Htan-pin-chaungyi village PDC, Paung town, collected fund from the villagers 150 kyats per family respectively, so local authorities obtained totally over 150, 000 kyats. In that village, since on October 20, 2000, the civilians had to distribute to the Burmese Patrol Police 2 cups of milk of rice whenever they husk their paddy; besides, they also have to pay the police 10 tins of rice monthly. The police own 3 acres of cultivation fields and they also conscripted the civilians to harvest for them and if anyone failed to perform their so-called duties tasks, they had to fine such as money and hard work in police station.*

Sometimes, when Township authorities is planning for development program in township, they did not receive budget from the government, by have collected fund from the government. Or, sometimes, by showing a reason as supporting social welfare, they also collected fund from the civilians.

**As an instances,**

*On October 26, 2000, SPDC local authorities demanded fund from the civilians of Pan-koung village, which has 82 households, Paung township, 1, 000 kyats per household and 2, 000 kyats from rice-mill owner respectively and they obtained totally over 1, 000, 000 kyats in order to construct village clinic. Likewise, on October 28, 2000, SPDC local authorities collected monthly fund from the villagers of Thabyuchaung village, with over 700 households, Pong town, 100 kyats per family and received over 70, 000 kyats.*

*On October 10, 2000, Moe-nine village PDC led by chairman U Kyaw Aye, and his accompany U Ngwe Hlaing and U Chit Ngwe extorted so-called taxation monthly money from the civilians and have received more than 65, 000 kyats every month. Similarly, on that day, the civilians of Kada section, with more than (1, 500) households, Paung town, also had to pay 250 kyats per household respectively and totally SPDC local authorities have received over 375, 000 kyats. However, SPDC local authorities did not spent that fund in social welfare, actually, they distributed that money among themselves every month.*

Sometimes when the authorities are arranging for sports, they similarly extorted fund from the civilians.

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**As an instance,**

*On September 20, 2000, Paung township PDC extorted money from the whole villages in Pong town 100 kyats per household respectively, they haven't celebrated football competition until September 30, 2000, yet. Moe-nine section football team had received invitation for competing of Ottadar village soccer club, and the football team in Moe Nine represented to the Township PDC Chairman U Kyaw Aye and his member to arrange uniform for players. SPDC local authorities didn't allow organizing football team and replied that the players had to spend their own fund if they want to. Therefore, although township PDC had extorted fund from the civilians, they used that fund not for the villagers, but for the sake of their benefits.*

Because of Order issued by SPDC's MOI to stop using forced labour dated on October 27, the authorities tried to avoid using forced labour in Township. However, the collected more fund for the civilians for the development project in Township area.

**As an instance,**

*On November 15, 2000, when Paung authorities planned to build and tar a road between Kyawe-chan village and Kaw-kayin village which is about 3 miles long, Village PDC authorities have collected 2,000 Kyat from every farmer, which farms were near the road. Then, the authorities collected 500 Kyat collected from every household. There are about 830 households in Kyawe-chan village and 500 households in Kaw-karin village, and the authorities could collect about 3, 830, 000 Kyat totally to build this new road. Actually, the authorities do not need to spend these amount of money for this road building, and villagers knew they would take some of fund into their pockets.*

Actually, like other townships in Mon State, Paung Township civilians are quite poor and many of them are unemployed under the mismanagement of the government. Additionally, those civilians have to serve a lot of extorted fund for authorities, and their situation became more worst.

## V. Political Oppression against the Civilians

Since before, Even though the rural area could gather and discuss things such as religious association, Youth association, and others, nowadays, they are forbidden from participating even trivial activities by Burmese military ruling junta SPDC. On the other hand, SPDC forcibly conscripted the teenagers in rural areas or remote villages to participate in USDA, which found by SPDC. In order to grip power for a long term, SPDC establishes organization, such as USDA, Red Cross, Women Affair Association, and etc... Therefore, the inhabitants in that area have lost their fundamental rights, and they have to survive under fear and repression of SPDC troops.

As instance of religious restriction against the civilians,

*On October 12, 2000, it was the day of religious ceremony for Buddhism, (the day of special full moon and the end of the lent for Buddhism) and most of residents in Paung Town are Buddhist, so as they preserve their old traditional, the Buddhism have been celebrating the Buddhist ceremony every year. However, this years was not as crowd as last year because Paung Township PDC and Village PDC have constantly been watching and issued an order to prevent the civilians from gathering and discussion each other.*

Similarly, the villagers especially the teenagers were not allowed to participate into Youth Association or Religious Association, but they were forcibly to join associations, such as Union of Stability and Development Association (USDA), Women Affair Association, Myamnar Red Cross Society (MRCS), and Nursing, by SPDC local authorities. Furthermore, the youngsters who have not participate into USDA and MRCS yet, SPDC local authorities have been giving pressure in order to involve into association mentioned above, which are under SPDC control.

As an instance,

*On October 23, 2000, USDA in Paung Township took census every village and then conscripted the families who haven't entered into SPDC sub-associations. Moreover, USDA in Paung village tract has been watching the Youth Association closely and then represents to the above.*

Sometimes, when the authorities heard about the activities of rebel armies, which is rarely happening in this township area, the authorities always made movement restrictions against the local civilians.

As an instance,

*Since on October 11, 2000, SPDC local authorities in Paung town issued an order that nobody couldn't cross the railway before 6 a.m and after 6 p.m, and local authorities also reminded if they saw somebody who across the railway, they would shoot to death without asking any question. The majority inhabitants in that around*

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area live off cultivation crops, and as their cultivation fields situate in the west of railway, the peasants in that area have been encountering many difficulties in order to get to their farmlands. In this case, the peasants in that area are facing difficulties such as personal affairs, transporting supplies, and etc., according to the source.

Since 1990, after SLORC/SPDC decided to not transferred to 1990 election winners, NLD and other ethnic nationalities political parties' People Representatives, the regime formed USDA and strengthened it and used this organization to support the regime and whenever they arranged rallies against democratic oppositions, this organization mainly arranged for these rallies. Whenever, SPDC is appointing Town section or village PDC, they always selected from USDA members. Later, SPDC has extent more organizations such as MRCS and others to use as their supporters. They also give special favour to those organizations' members.

### VI. Conclusion

In this report, although we have described a specific situation in a Township in Mon State, the other townships also have been suffered similar abuses and violations. Among ten townships of Mon State, about 8 townships are under the absolute control of SPDC, the civilians in these townships similarly suffered of political oppression, conscription of forced labour, fund extortion and other abuses which are daily committed by authorities.

In remaining two townships of Ye and Thanbyuzayat, in where the rebel troops sometimes arrive, the civilians in these townships are not only suffered from the above mentioned abuses, but also suffered from abuses and violations that connected Burmese Army's accusations of rebel-supporters. Therefore, the population displacement occurred in Mon State not only because of war, but also violations of economic rights and fundamental political rights



### 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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