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Some Acronyms in This Issue

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

News

SPDC Buys Paddy at Low Price in Mon State (January 2001)

In Mon State, SPDC authorities have opened paddy-buying centers in all 10 townships, and forced the farmers to sell their paddy at low price, which is 3 times less than market price. It plans to buy about 3 million baskets of paddy (one basket is about 46 pounds) in Mon State alone and Mon State's Agriculture Products Trading Department has taken responsibility to buy paddy by cooperation with the respective township authorities.

To manage buying the set amount of paddy from farmers, the authorities also paid advance payment to every farmer about one third of total payment that they needed to pay if the farmers sold the set amount of paddy. They paid 350 Kyat per basket in August/September 2000 while the paddy price in the market was 800-1000 Kyat per basket. But unlucky for SPDC, in recently November/December 2000 during harvest season, the crop price dropped suddenly and then the authorities worried they would lose the payment and asked money from farmers on behalf of paddy. However, in January 2001, the rice price



A SPDC's Paddy-buying center in Thaton Township of Mon State

gradually rises and then, the authorities forced farmers again to sell their paddy at low price to designated paddy buying center.

According to Mon State PDC order and sources from Mon State, the authorities could buy only about 35% of the total set amount of paddy in mid-January 2001. As every township could buy this amount of paddy, so Mon State PDC authorities ordered to every township authorities to buy paddy as much as they could. Then, Township PDC authorities again ordered the respective village tract and village leaders to force the farmers to sell the set amount of paddy as quick as possible.

In an order from Kyaikmayaw Township PDC authorities to village leaders, it mentions that "in Year 2000-2001 paddy-buying season, Township planned to buy 348, 000 baskets of paddy totally for the whole township. However, we could buy only 129, 482 baskets of paddy until January 13. Thus, Kyaikmayaw township has the least buying force among all townships in Mon State and asks all town sections and village leaders to cooperate (with us) in buying paddy from farmers."

Similarly to Kyaikmayaw township, other township could buy only 35-40% of paddy that they required. In Paung Township, the authorities chose only high quality paddy and did not accept normal and low quality paddy. Paung Township PDC authorities also tried to buy over 500, 000 baskets of paddy. Among ten townships, the authorities to buy 800, 000 baskets of paddy from Mudon and Chaung-zone township respectively.

In buying paddy to farmers, the authorities have used various ways including threatening to detain or to confiscate lands, if they failed to buy paddy. Township authorities also forced village authorities by ordering that how many baskets of paddy the farmers must buy on which day and all processes of paddy must complete in February 2001, according to order from Mon State PDC.



Forced Labour Continues in Mon State

(January 2001)

In January 2001, when Kyaikmayaw Township PDC authorities in Mon State, planned building a 10 miles long motor road from Kyaikmayaw to Kyun-ywa, the authorities have not only forced the villagers to contribute their labour but also forced them to provide fund for buying facilities in building this road. This was an old WWII road built by Japanese imperialist. Although this road was abandoned for many years by Rangoon governments, now, they tried to build it to use for better communiton to extend their power to civilians in Mon State and Karen State, which

road is connecting.

Under the program of border area development program, this road building project was adopted in December 2000. In December, Commander-in-Chief of Southeast Command, Maj. Gen. Thiha Thura Sit Maung came to Kyaikmayaw town and called a meeting with all town section and village level leaders in township hall. In meeting, he ordered to them that the construction of this Kyaikmayaw - Kyun-ywa motor road must be built by the participation of civilians or must be "self-help" road construction, which meant the civilians must contribute labour and provide fund. Therefore, the rough building of motor road begins in January 2001.

On January 9, 2001, the headman from Kaw-dun village, chairman Nai Shwe Oo, ordered his villagers to carry stones, crash them and lay on the embankment of the road. In his order, he instructed that in every four households, one household must take an oxen-cart. The one who has oxen-cart has to carry stones and the remaining three have to crash them.

Similarly, on January 10, 2001, the village headman from Matkatar village ordered his villagers to go to road construction and contribute labour in crashing stones. As the villagers had to walk for one hour to reach the construction site, they waked up early about 4:00 a.m. in the morning, made foods and walked to motor road to reach to work-site at 6:00 a.m. The villagers are forced to work from 6:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. in evening except one-hour time for lunch in mid day.

In conscription of forced labour, one member from each household in the village has to go and work in the construction. The whole village has to work for one day. So, on a rotation basis, the civilians from Kyaikmayaw town sections and villages near motor road, such as, Kanaing-kraing, Kayin, Chango-gone, Mya-gone, Nee-tone, Kaw-dun, Kaw-kalart, Shan-lay, Shan-gyi, Myawe-house, Pan-gone, Kyunywa and Matkatar, have been ordered to work in January 2001. The authorities also used women and children to work in this construction.

Accordingly to reliable source from Kyaikmayaw, now, the authorities is planning to collect fund from civilians to buy many tanks of tar from foreign country and every household from the above mentioned Kyaikmayaw township sections and villages may have to pay 5000 Kyat per household. After the road embankment is completely laid by pieces of stones, it needs to lay tar for the whole length of embankment and the authorities need a lot of money from civilians. There are about 4880 households from these town sections and villages and so, the authorities could collect about 24 million Kyat fund totally to buy tar.



Report

(Part I)

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Cruel or Degrading Treatments against Civilians In Tenasserim Division, in Year 2000

Background of Tenasserim Division

Tenasserim Division situates in the southernmost part of Burma (look in map), it has border with Mon State in the north and Thailand in east, and it also has a long coastal. In Tenasserim, there are Mon, Tavoyan and Karen ethnic civilians are the main local inhabitants and the main occupations in the area are farming and fishing. Tenasserim Division has rich national resources. Geographically, it is divided into two districts of Tavoy and Mergui, and there are 8 townships totally in these two districts.

However, during the course of civil war over five decades, large jungle and rural areas of Tenasserim have been used as rebel bases to revolt against the Rangoon governments and Burmese Army. Thus, most parts of the region have remained as conflict area since the beginning of civil war. The rebel groups such as KNU, NMSP, MDUF and the current a Mon splinter group, have been active for several years and government troops could not oppress all activities of the rebels.

Because of armed conflict, the local inhabitants are always accused as “rebel-supporters” by troops of Burmese Army (tatmadaw) and treatments to civilians by the government soldiers have always been cruel, inhumane and terrible. Until now, human rights abuses such as forced relocation and dislocation, conscription of forced labour and frontline porter, sexual harassment against women, arbitrary killing, torture and arrest and others are still and widespread violated by tatmadaw soldiers or the current SPDC soldiers in Tenasserim Division.

The collective information about these cruel and degrading treatments against civilians in Year 2000 in Tenasserim Division describe as below with categories. In this Part I report, it describes about (1) portering cases and abuses during porter service and (2) conscription of massive forced labour.

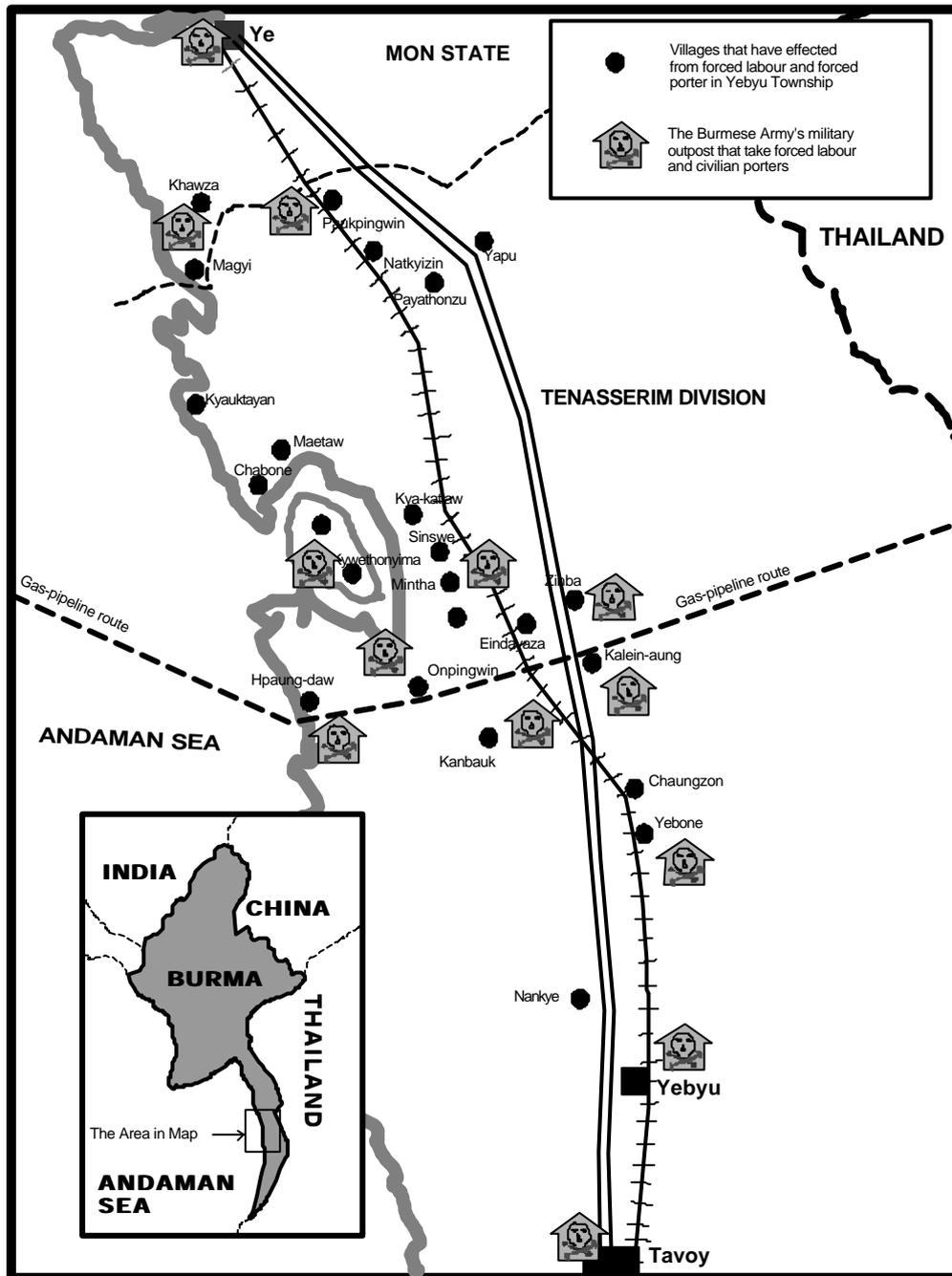
Portering Cases and Abuses During Porter Service

In Year 2000, when SPDC and Burmese Army planned to launch offensives against KNLA, MDUF, God's Army and one Mon splinter group in various parts of Tenasserim Division, they have arrested many civilian porters in all districts and townships in Division.

In operating military offensives against the rebel forces, the Burmese Army have used many battalions, such as Light Infantry Battalions from LIB No. 401 to No. 410, LIB No. 282, LIB No. 273 and



Civilian porters
*during Burmese
Army's military
offensives against
rebels*



Map of Yebyu and Tavoy Township area

Infantry Battalions IB No. 101, No. 104, No. 25. Among many rebel groups, the main target from SPDC to launch the military offensives was God's Army and Vigorous Democratic Student Army, which took base in opposite area of Ratchburi Province of Thailand. The offensive was planned as reprisal because SPDC dissatisfied on them after the seizure of its embassy in Bangkok in 1999.

Recently, SPDC's Coastal Region Military Command (Coastal Command) recently led by Maj.Gen. Thiha Thura Sit Maung deployed LIB

No. 401 to No. 410 in Yebyu Township together with another two battalions of LIB No. 282 and LIB No. 273. After Embassy seize happened in Bangkok, Coastal Command withdrew ten battalions of LIB No. 401 to No. 410 and deployed them in Tavoy, Laung-lone, Mergui and Tenasserim (Tanintaryi). Under the command of Coastal Command, the military battalions jointly have operated military offensives against all rebel groups.

In Yebyu Township, in which only one Mon splinter group and KNLA have operated military activities, Coastal Command have however used only LIB No.273 and 282, and other battalions from LIB No. 401 to 410 on a rotation basis, as main battalions to operate military activities. However, these two battalions have to take responsibility to provide the required number of civilian porters for other battalions, which operated military activities against rebel forces.

When the Burmese Army is operating military operations, they have two types of activities. The first type is a military patrol in a specific area by taking civilian porters for a few days and take porter from every village. The second type of military operation is offensive against the rebels and their bases that far



**A beautiful
fishing village in
Yebyu township's
coastal area**

from semi-control area of the Burmese Army, and the civilian porters must be taken for at least one month and most of them are taken for several months.

In the case of porter service for the military patrol in Yebyu Township area, LIB No. 273 or LIB No. 282 (which were changed every three months period) ordered the headmen from their village that they had to provide at least 3 civilian porters everyday. Normally, the village headmen had to send these regular porters to their nearest military outposts, or provide them when the army column into their village.

Besides Sin-swe village, all villages in township area were ordered to provide permanent porters and depending on the household numbers and population in one village, the villagers have to provide 3-7 civilian porters for every day. These porters were used for at least three days in army bases and most of them were brought along with military patrol that operated in all parts of township area.

If one family could not provide for a civilian porter accordingly village headmen's instruction, that family had to pay 1500-1800 Kyat to army commander as fine for their failure to be porter for 3 days. Sometimes when urgent situation happened, army commanders did not ask any fine but asked civilian porters.

In the porter service for military offensives, as the Burmese Army required a lot of civilian porters urgently and so, the soldiers suddenly went into villages, took all male villagers and brought them as civilian porters. During the villagers are used as civilian porters at frontline where the Burmese Army launched offensives against rebel armies, there were various types of inhumane abuses and treatment were committed by SPDC soldiers.

In April 2000, when LIB No. 407 conscripted many villagers as civilian porters from Kan-bauk village of Yebyu township area, 6 villagers are arrested and brought by soldiers. Then, they were taken away by soldiers for nearly two months totally. Most porters were forced to carry ammunitions and food supplies along the military operation. During the porter service, when the porters could not manage for quick walk like soldiers or when they fell sick, soldiers always beat them. Among the arrested porters, an ethnic Tavoyan escapee, U Soe Win (23 years old) was beaten for three times by gun-butts by soldiers while he could not walk like soldiers because of his 30 kilograms heavy loads. After two months, that man could manage to escape in a jungle.

Another five porters from the same village, U Ngwe Ya (40 years old), U San Aye (33 years old), U Hla Maw, U Kan Kyi and U Maung Kyaw Bo were taken for nearly 6 months. This was the whole length of military offensives that the Burmese Army' battalions have taken them. During porter service, even some villagers were too weak and could not walk longer, the army beat and forced them to walk.

Many porters in the porter service are beaten by soldiers because of several reasons, such as slower in walking, could not manage to walk, felt sick, and others. According to one porter escapee, U Soe Win, from Kan-bauk, was an eyewitness that the soldiers from LIB No. 407 in front-line beat three porters, who were in serious sick, until died. Accordingly to escapee the porters who were beaten were in estimation of 30, 35 and 59 years old representatively. They were not from his village but he knew most of them are

from Yebyu Township area.

While the army was operating military offensives in most parts of frontier, on the other hand, some battalions in Yebyu Township, especially, LIB No. 273 and LIB No. 282 had to take responsibility for security of Ye-Tavoy motor road, railway and Yatana Gas-pipeline, which are the important communication and business in Tenasserim Division.

Accordingly to one villager, who was arrested as porter, from Mayan village,

"I was regularly (in 2000) arrested as porter and the soldiers always came into our village and suddenly arrested all male villagers in village and took all of us as porters to sometimes carry rice or shells or ammunition along with soldiers. As our villagers were accused as rebel-supporters or as it was far from army bases, whenever the Burmese soldiers came into our village, they always arrested all people to use as porters. Differently from other villages that the headmen had to arrange the required porters for army, they didn't treat our village like that. They came and arrested us. And, the soldiers also didn't define how many days we have to go along with them. If they conducted only a military patrol in the area, we would be taken for at least 3 days and in maximum 15 days. If the soldiers took us to frontline, they would use us for at least one month, sometimes, up to six months.

"During we were used to serve as porters, we had to go along with soldiers while they were taking security for railway road, motor road and gas-pipeline. Sometimes, we passed across pipeline and sometimes, we walked along pipeline to take security. We didn't see foreigners, but mostly we walked in eastern part of (Ye-Tavoy) motor road."

Likely the villagers in Yebyu Township area were suffered from the mistreatment in porter service, in which they didn't receive any payment, other Mon, Karen and Tavoyan civilians in Mergui, Laung-lon and Tenasserim Townships had been suffered from porter service.

During the similar time, in May 2000, another one Burmese Army's battalion, IB No. 103, by coordinating with other township departments and battalions had arrested many porters in Tenasserim and Laung-lon and Mergui Townships to use them in military offensives for long period.

In Mergui Township, which has many island villages, LIB No. 103's Tactical Commander, Col. Thein Ye, ordered all village headmen in islands to provide the set number of civilian porters from their own village to use in offensives against KNLA and God's Army. Depending on population and household number in one village, the defined number of civilian porters varied. Or, the commander added, if one village could not provide the set number of porters, that village had to pay 4000 Kyat for one porter with reason the army needed to hire substitute. In some villages, the village headmen would like to avoid providing porters and tried to pay the battalion. However, a new instruction among the villages was that if one family could not pay porter fees, a man from that household must go for porter service. In this case, many poor families who could not afford to pay for porter fee have suffered from porter service more if compared with others.

As an instance:

"One villager from Win-thaung village of Mergui Township, U Tun Wai, 28 years old a Tavoyan man, was requested to pay for porter fee and after he could not afford to pay, he was transferred to township police department by village headmen. He was detained in the police for some days and then the police transferred him to IB No. 103 battalion and was brought with army offensives for one month."

Accordingly to his experience, he said when the Burmese Army's battalion, IB No. 103 troops launched offensives and passed into rural villages, they looted belongings owned by villagers. He said as he recognized when the soldiers went into Tha-git village, the soldiers looted foods, livestock of chicken and ducks, and even valuable belongings owned by villagers. He said they were likely robbers.

On the other hand, he also said, the soldiers used civilian porters as mine-sweepers or human-shields. As a new tactic, the soldiers forced the porters to wear their own clothes or soldiers' uniforms and let them walk in advance of soldiers without arms. By this way, during fighting were happening between two sides, the civilian porters were used as "human-shields" for Burmese Army.

He said, while they forced the civilian porters to walk in advance, one village from War-yit village of Mergui township refused to take soldiers' uniforms and walk in advance, because he was afraid. Because of his refusal, the soldiers shot and killed him in front of other porters. He was about 40 years old. Then, the soldiers threatened other porters that if they refused to wear uniforms, they must be killed. During one hour long fighting, about 5 porters died after hitting rebels' bullets."

In another case, one escaped porter from Magyi village, Yebyu Township explained when the soldiers arrested porters in his village; they could arrest him and other villager, Nai Zan Than (24 years old) and brought them along military patrol. When they arrived in one place, when the soldiers met a suspected man in jungle, the nearest soldiers put his gun on shoulder of Nai Zan Than and shot to enemy, and used him as human-shield. And, when the suspected man fled, another soldiers shot and the bullets hit him. So, he died on the spot.

Death during porter service not only because of porter service, when the village porters could not manage to walk or did wrong, they were severely tortured or beaten. Because of this condition, some porters died because of torture during service.

As an instance,

"On May 28, 2000, LIB No. 273 troops led by Maj. Myint Htay arrested one village from Sin-swe village of Yebyu Township, Nai Han Thein (20 years old) and brought him as porter along their military offensives. Troops passed Ye-Tavoy railway road and moved to eastern of the road to attack against the Mon splinter group and other rebel forces. When they arrived to Mayan village, they turned direction and moved to Singu village and find the way to cross motor road. They did not get any guide to show the ways and at the end, they selected Nai Han Thein to show the way. As he did not know the way to reach destination, he made wrong. The movement of troops delayed and soldiers angered to him. Then they beat him severely and he got a lot of internal and external injuries. When he arrived home, he could stay only 6 days and died because of torturing."

Similarly, during the porter service, soldiers have fed the civilian porters with very little amount of foods and they ate first and gave the remaining foods for porters. The porters themselves shared the remaining foods among them. Because of insufficient foods provided by soldiers, the porters always suffered from weakness and sickness during porter service and when they could not manage to walk as fast as soldiers, those weak porters were also beaten and sometimes were killed.

During porter service at the military offensives conducted for a long period, the army never released any porter and took them for so many days, or over one month period in every term. Thus, the porters always attempted to escape if they had chances to flee.

According to one porter escapee from Ah-mae village,

"When I was arrested by Burmese soldiers from LIB No. 273, I was taken by them for over one month. They didn't release, but I had to manage and find chance to flee from the arrest. Like me, many porters always tried to escape whenever they have chance. Some porters fled when the soldiers ordered them to carry water and find firewoods in forests or jungles. Or, some porters fled even during fighting and escaped into jungles and then into rebel control areas. After one month arrest by LIB No. 273, while we were in the jungle, when the soldiers ordered me to find water, I fled from them."

Actually, the Burmese Army's battalions were very careful for the fleeing of civilian porters while they were in frontlines, because the soldiers themselves have to carry some logistics if the porters flee. Whenever the porters flee, the remaining porters have to carry more and more weight of logistics that abandoned by fled porters. And when the porters remained less and less number, the soldiers have to carry their own loads.

If the escaped porters were re-arrested, the treatment against these porters would be terrible and inhumane. If the escaped porters were re-arrested in the battlefields, the soldiers would kill them. During in the normal military operation in one area, which was not in the battlefields of an offensive, the soldiers knew whose came from which villages and so, if one escaped, when the soldiers arrived the village of that person, he must be tortured and asked for fine.

As an instance,

"In February, to operate a regular military patrol in southern part of Yebyu township area, the commander from LIB No. 408, also asked for 7 porters from Sin-swe village of Yebyu township area. And, the headmen had to provide, Nai Than Tun (24 years old), Mehm Rot (14 years old), Nai Yunt (40 years old), Nai Sun (30 years), Nai Poe, Nai Bot Chot (36 years old) and Mehm Sann (20 years old), accordingly to a rotation basis arranged in village. While the military patrol conducted for 3 days, among 6 porters, Nai Sun, Nai Bot Chot and Nai Poe escaped from porter service of LIB No. 408 after they were very tired. Then, after one week, LIB No. 408 troops suddenly went into village and arrested three escaped villagers. And, they tied them up and beat them for their attempt of escape. The soldiers also told the villagers that if porter fled from porter

service, he must be killed in the future. The soldiers tied three men with chains and beat them unceasingly. They also received a lot of internal and external injuries because of beating. The soldiers also asked 30, 000 Kyat fine from men's families to buy foods during military patrol. Because of severe torturing, the injured villagers had to treat for nearly one month with local herbal doctors to recover."

Normally, in frontlines, when the troops and porters arrived in one place, the porters were rounded by soldiers and prevented to not flee. In some situation, all porters were tied with one rope altogether for the whole night and untied them in the morning. And, the soldiers used them as porters again.

When the soldiers requested regular porters from one village, the village headmen in that village had to manage providing porters on a rotation basis. However, after the villagers faced a lot of hardship and abuses in their villages, they gradually left from their village and at the end, the number of villagers has reduced slowly in most rural villages. However, the demand from army to serve for porter service and forced labour did not reduce and so, the remaining villagers had to work more for army after their rounds in rotation basis was closer than before.

As an example, Thaug-khun village, Yebyu Township area had about 120 houses at normal situation and it remained about 80 households at the beginning of 1999. In mid-2000, most families in village fled from village to escape from hardship and abuses committed by SPDC soldiers, it remained only 40 households. So, if compared with 1999, the villagers in village had to serve works for army 2 times than before.

According a villager from Thaug-khun village, he explained that:

"When our village has about 80 households, each family had to go and work for porter service and in construction 3 times in one month. The village headman had to manage on a rotation basis and he selected households and shared work-duties for army, porter service or construction work. Now, our village (in September 2000) has only 40 households and we are tired more than two times than before. We have to work for 6-7 times at least in one month. Thus, we have very little time to do our own works at home or farms."

In some rural villages, which were mainly accused as rebel bases by SPDC battalions, when SPDC troops went into a village, normally, most men fled to escape from the arrest of civilian porters or inhumane or degrading treatment. Only elder persons over 60 years old who could not be used civilian porters would remain in villages. Sometimes, when troops arrived into villages and did not meet any young men, they angered and beat the old men remained in villages.

As an instance,

"In April 2000, when IB No. 104 led by Lt. Col. Yat Kha went into Kywe-tho-nyima village, Yebyu Township, the soldiers did not meet any young villagers in village, because most of them fled to escape from porter service. And, the commander and soldiers went to monastery and arrested four men, Nai Win, Nai Thein, Nai Ong and Nai Ba Htoo, who were over 60 years old. These old men stayed at monastery to do religious purposes in there. After arrest, the soldiers interrogated them why most villagers fled from village and during interrogation, they also beat, slap and kick the old men. Among four men, Nai Ba Htoo, who was clearly weak in health, was severely tortured until he died."

Among various types of human rights abuses, the use of civilian in porter service for the military purpose is the most inhumane and terrible abuse. In every year many civilian porters died because they are used as mine-sweepers, human-shields and tortured by soldiers. Since the Burmese Army, tatmadaw, has not equipped with modernized logistics facilities, the civilians in the whole country have been suffered from unpaid and terrible porter service for army.

Conscription of Forced Labour

SPDC and Burmese Army, which attempted to get more control in the area, have tried to improve communication in Tenasserim Division during 1990s. Since 1992, the regime planned to provide security for Yadana gas-pipeline in this area and then deployed more military battalions to protect it in the northern part of Tenasserim Division. Before the end of 1993, the regime built a strategically important 110-mile-long Ye-Tavoy railway road and used many hundreds of thousands of Mon, Karen and Tavoyan local inhabitants from Mon State and Tenasserim Division, as forced labourers or forced to contribute compulsory labour in the construction. This construction lasted over 4 years and completed in 1998.

Continuously, in 1998, the regime re-built Ye-Tavoy motor road for two years' dry season. In this construction, because of international condemnation against SLORC/SPDC's use of forced labour, the regime has used only some hundreds number of villagers from Yebyu and Tavoy townships.

In 1997, after the regime's instruction to its military battalions, to create "self-reliance", many military battalions under the Coastal Command have tried to create paddy-growing farms and cash tree plantations in Yebyu and Tavoy townships. In this program, the battalions found new lands, built water dikes, dug water canals and created plantations. In every activity for self-reliance program of the SPDC battalions, the local villagers have been constantly forced to contribute free labour to the concerned military battalions.

After NMSP-SLORC ceasefire, under the name of border area development program, the Mon people are similarly suffered like other ethnic people for the use of forced labour. In various types of development projects, the civilians regardless of ethnicity have been suffered not only contributing free labour but also have to pay fund for every project. Until Year 2000, the use of forced labour continued and payment for development projects has been asked by authorities and army.

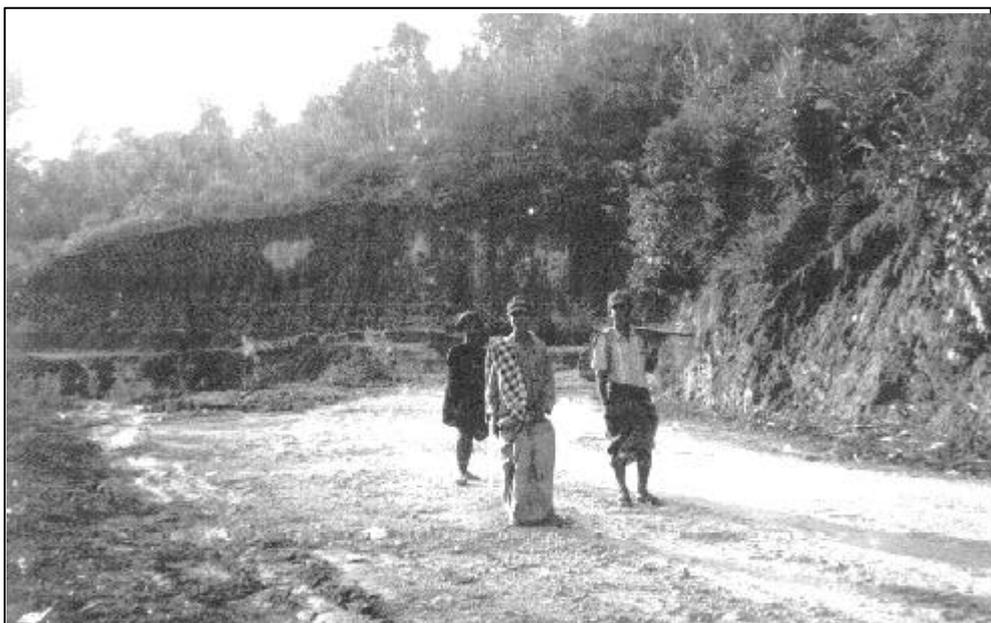
Since 1998, a battalion LIB No. 273, have forced the villagers from Kwethonyima village tract of Yebyu township, to construct a 2000 meters long water dike in Kwethonyima island to keep water. In 1999, the battalion could explore about 200 acres of land near water dike area and take water from it. However, in every year, at the end of rainy season, some parts of embankment of water dike were destroyed and the battalions have ordered the local villagers to rebuild it again. Therefore, from January to March 2000, the villagers from Kwethonyima, Chabone, Mae-tha-taung, Chattaw, Kan-taung and Ah-mae villages were forced to rebuild the embankment of water dike.

Similarly, LIB No. 273 have forced the villagers from above villages in Kwethonyima village tract during rainy season to plow lands, grow paddy seeds, plant small paddy plants and other works until harvesting crops. The villagers were forced to work for at least three days or until they could complete a piece of work set by battalion. The villagers have to carry and take their own foods and tools from their homes to work in work sites.

Similarly to LIB No. 273, another military battalion, LIB No. 282 created a palm plantation near their headquarters area (near 52 mile area) and forced the villagers from Kwethalin, Natkyisin, Yapu, Kalein-aung, Sin-swe, Mintha, and many other villages in Yebyu township area to contribute free labour in this plantation. During the battalion use of forced labour, the villagers have to carry their own foods and tools to do clearing lands, cut bushes, dig holes, plant palm plants and other works. The battalions has asked about 20-30 labourers to work in the plantation. In October 2000, during the battalion was using villagers as unpaid labourers, some women were raped.

Although Ye-Tavoy railway road completely built since 1998, as the regime had not used heavy machines to build it and just used manual labour of the civilians, the road is not strong enough. When the rain fell during rainy season in 1999 and 2000, many parts of embankment of this road were destroyed by flood and the authorities or battalions have ordered the villagers in Yebyu and Tavoy township again to rebuild the railway road.

Normally, when the road was destroyed in the northern part or in Yebyu township area, the battalion and authorities have used the villagers in Yebyu township area to rebuild the collapsed embankment. Similarly, they used the civilians in Tavoy township area when the southern part of the road was destroyed.



A little number of forced labourers used by SPDC authorities in re-building Ye-Tavoy motor road after international condemnation

Accordingly to a Shwe-ta-maw villager in Tavoy township area, he explained:

"After rainy season (in 1999) some parts of railway near New-lein area were destroyed by flood and a military battalion, LIB No. 408 ordered our village headmen that one household must have to rebuild with 50 feet long. Our village has about 150 households, pieces of work for rebuilding the railway road was set by army. Then, about 30 villagers, one or two members from each household, went to construction site everyday. To complete a piece of work, one family had to take about one week. From December 1999 until April 2000, we were forced to work in construction. If we could not go and work in the construction, we have to pay 3600 Kyat per household."

Besides Shwe-ta-maw village, many other villages in Tavoy township area such as Pauk-wa, Chaungtha-oo, Thet-kar-kyun villagers were constantly used to rebuild the collapsed railway road. The villagers from these villages were shared with works like villagers in Shwe-ta-maw and they had duty to complete repairing of 50 feet length road. Therefore, the villagers had to work for over four months to complete all repairing of railway road. If one family could not go and work in construction set by soldiers, they might have to pay 500 Kyat per day.

Similarly to this experience, the villagers in Yebyu township were forced to work in railway road in August and September 2000, after some parts of embankment collapsed because of floodwater. According to a villager from Kanbauk village, Yebyu township, he explained that:

"LIB No. 403 led by Lt. Col. Aung Win ordered our village headmen that our villagers have to work in Ye-Tavoy railway construction for one month in August to reconstruct some parts of railway embankment, which were collapsed by flood. Every time, we have to go and work for three days and in one month we have to work for three times without payment by soldiers. If one village could not go and work, they have to pay 500 Kyat per day. If they could not pay, the headmen will arrest and bring them to soldiers and so, they might have to work in road construction and other works for army for many days."

In many cases, most villagers were not only forced in one type of project, such as, rebuilding railway road, they were also forced to work in other types of project. According to Ah-mae villagers, while they were ordered to rebuild the embankment of water dike in Kwethonyima island, they were at the same time forced to work in Ye-Tavoy railway road reconstruction.

In 2000, the local military battalions, LIB No. 273, No. 408 and No. 282 also forced some villagers to contribute unpaid labour in repairing of Ye-Tavoy motor road for one month. Many villagers were forced to work in this road repair construction. In this road construction, most villagers close to motor road were forced to work. In 2000, with a plan to construct a gas-pipeline along Ye-Tavoy motor road, army managed by forcing the villagers to clear all bushes, trees, fruit gardens and houses along the planned new gas-pipeline route. ***(This gas-pipeline connects from Tenasserim Division, via Mon State and to Karen State, to provide energy for a cement production factory near Pa-an city, the capital of Karen State.)***



Forced labour has been used when clearing gas-pipeline route along Ye-Tavoy motor road, that connects from Tenasserim Division to Karen State, via Mon State

According to a Kyaukadin villager, who was forced to work in motor road construction and lost house explain about the construction of forced labour as below:

"LIB No. 408 mainly asked for forced labour in construction of widening of motor road. Our villagers had to work in the part from our village to Aleskan village (about 5 miles long). At least about 30 villagers were ordered to work every day, each round we were ordered for three days. The soldiers mainly ordered us to widen the road, and clear all bushes, trees along the road. They instructed to clear 50 feet each side of the road. We had to work for three days each round of work-duty. In April, when I was working in widening the road and away from home, my family in village was ordered to move my house as quick as possible, because my house was close to road. They gave only three days time to complete moving houses. My wife could not manage to move the house and when the deadline arrived, the soldiers came and burnt my house down. We could get only a little belongings that my wife gathered."

According the conscripted villagers, the soldiers set time for them to start working in the road and if they were late, they must be punished. When LIB No. 409 was managing to widen Ye-Tavoy motor road, if villagers came late to work sites, they must be slapped three times by commander and sometimes, they ordered to run 100 meters back and forth for three rounds. Such punishment is used in army and they treated the same to civilians during conscription of forced labour.

Depending on the works or development projects in one area, the villagers from one village were not only forced to work in projects near their villages, but were forced to also work in other village tract.

As an instance,

"The villagers from Kywe-tho-nyima village were not only forced to work in water dike near their village, sometimes, they were ordered to work in another water dike project. In August 2000, 14 villagers from that village were ordered to work in construction of water dike near Chattaw village, which was known, "Chattaw water dike", for 7 days. When the water level increased during rainy season, there was flood in some places near water dike and some embankment was destroyed. Thus, the soldiers from LIB No. 273 ordered all villagers from nearer villages to work in rebuilding embankment of water dike. During the villagers were working there, another part of embankment collapsed again and so, the soldiers accused the villagers in the construction that they were careless. Then, the soldiers asked fine from villagers to pay 1000 Kyat per head from whom in construction for their careless. When some villagers could not pay, the soldiers ordered their headmen to take money from their families in village."

Sometimes, although an implementation of an development project did not occur actually in one area, but the battalion told the civilians that there was a case to contribute labour and so, the battalion commander asked for money from the villagers to pay to avoid from working in a project. Normally, the villagers who were busy with their own work also tried to pay to army to avoid such conscription of forced labour.

As an instance,

"In June, 2000, while the villagers were busy in their own works in preparation for new cultivation of paddy, a military battalion, LIB No. 408 told to villagers in Sin-swe that the battalion required some villager labourers to contribute (unpaid) labour in building of embankment of Ye-Tavoy railway. And, the battalion also gave another choice that if the villagers would not like to go and work in railway reconstruction, the whole village could pay 350, 000 Kyat totally to avoid from the whole construction process. To get this amount of money, the village headmen needed to collect from 70 households in village and each household had to pay at least 5000 Kyat to avoid from contributing unpaid labour in railway construction. From the families who could not afford to pay this amount of tax, they had to go and work in construction."

Sometimes, during the civilians are working in construction or project site, the soldiers also guarded them. If they did not satisfy on one person, who delayed in working or was wrong in works, he must be severely



SPDC's use of child labour in conscription of forced labour in a government project

tortured by soldiers. In June, after some Sin-swe villagers could not pay for fund to avoid from contributing of forced labour, had to go and work in project sites. When one villager, Nai Chot (46 years old), could not work well, the soldiers also beat and tortured him. They rolled his legs and body with iron bars until he lost consciousness.

Beside the army was conscripting forced labour for road construction and other self-reliance projects, they also forced the local villagers to build military barracks in their bases. If the villagers could not go and work in the construction of military barracks, soldiers could punish them or they had to pay fines for their failure to contribute labour.

As an instance,

"In September 2000, when LIB No. 282 that temporarily based in Paukpingwin village, Yebyu Township, built a military barrack in the base near village and forced the villagers to contribute labour in there. On a rotation basis, the soldiers requested about 30-40 villagers every to work in the base. The headmen had to manage to provide villager labourers for construction. If one villager could not go and work in there, they have to give fines 4000-5000 Kyat for one month. It was calculated with 10 days work within one month. Thus, each family's member, either man or woman, had to work for 10 days for army within one month for barrack construction."

At the end of October, 2000, SPDC's Ministry of Interior ordered all military battalions, Township, village tract and village authorities to stop all practices of using forced labour in every area. However, as Burma has lost "rule of law" several years, the corrupted military commanders and authorities have still conducted to get labour from civilians.

Note: *In Part II of this report, it describes topics (1) Abuses against ethnic women, (2) Abuses related to accusation of rebel-supporters, and (3) Population Displacement.*



**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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