

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,
- IB - Infantry Battalion (*of Burmese Army*),
- LIB- Light Infantry Battalion (*of Burmese Army*),
- NMSP- New Mon State Party,
- MDUF- Mergui-Dawai United Front,
- KNLA- Karen National Liberation Army,

News

Fund Collection for *Tatmadaw* Members

(February, 2001, Mon State and Karen State)

In February 2000, some military battalions and veteran *tatmadaw* (Burmese Army) members Association have sought some fund from the civilians by making direct collection from civilians and taking betting tax from allowed gambling in Mon State and Karen State. Since 1997, after the military regime, SLORC/SPDC could not support enough budget for expenses to its army members, but has instructed the commands' and battalions' commanders to raise fund by their own way to cover all their expenses. Because of this order, the local military commands and battalions choose the methods, which they could get money from the civilians.

In 1st and 2nd weeks of February, 2001, one SPDC Navy battalion No. 37, which bases in an island of Chaung-zon township, Mon State, in the west of Moulmein city, the capital of Mon State, also ordered every village headman in many villages under the administration of township to officially allow conducting gambling. Everyday, there were about 30 gambling places in many villagers and the navy battalion



SPDC's *Tatmadaw* members in Mon State, the number gradually grows

collected betting tax, 2000 Kyat from one place. Thus, the navy could get about 60000 Kyat per day and got many thousands Kyat of money during two weeks.

Actually, accordingly to traditional and customary laws, gambling is illegal in Burma. The people in Burma believes that gambling could create misbehavior among the civilians after some of them lost their money from involving in gambling and could become robbers or thieves. However, the army and navy who are factions of SPDC, themselves allow this gambling and collect betting tax from gamblers.

Similarly, in February 2001, IB No. 24, which bases in Thaton township, Mon State, also ordered village headmen from 5 villages in Township, Yin-nyein-taung, Myout-kwin, Phu-ba, Ywa-tan-shay and Kyone-hor-kwin, to collect fund from farmers and paid them. The commander instructed the village headmen to collect 100 Kyat from one acre of land from these villages and there are about 17, 000 of paddy farmlands and army receive about 1.7 million Kyat money for their own battalion fund.

On the other hand, SPDC is also organizing a "Veteran *tatmadaw* Members Association", as their supporting organization and has allowed this organization to collect fund as they liked. This organization also has authority to order Township and Village PDC authorities to collect fund on behalf of them.

In February, 2001, this organization members went to Kawkareik township of Karen State and ordered headmen from 8 villages to collect fund. They ordered headmen from Kanni village to collect 45, 000 Kyat, Karit village to collect 30, 000 Kyat, Thayet-taw village to collect 45, 000 Kyat, Kaw-lyan village to collect 45, 000 Kyat, Kaw-go village to collect 45, 000 Kyat, Kaw-bein village to collect 45, 000 Kyat, Min-ywa village to collect 45, 000 Kyat and Kaw-pauk village to collect 45, 000 Kyat respectively.

This is a burden for civilians to provide fund for army and veteran *tatmadaw* members, after the SPDC could not pay for their military commands, battalions' and organization's expenses.



Conscription of Porters in Mon State

(February 2001, Ye Township)

During January and February, 2001, one Burmese Army's battalion, LIB No. 343, which bases in Ye Township and has responsibility for 3 months to take military patrol in southern part of township area, has conscripted 30 villager porters every day from a Mon village called "Khaw-zar". The battalion takes porters along with them to carry ammunitions and food supplies while they are launching military patrol in area to halt the entry of a Mon splinter armed group

into the area.

Khaw-zar village has about 700 households totally and the headmen have to arrange to provide porters on a rotation and daily basis. Khaw-zar village is a big Mon village near the border of Mon State and Tenasserim Division. And, one Mon splinter also launched their military activities in this area after crossing from Yebyu Township of Tenasserim Division. Sometimes, fighting between SPDC and Mon troops also happened in this area and the villagers are also suspected as rebel-supporters.

Since 1996, after NMSP agreed for ceasefire with SLORC, according to ceasefire agreement, Mon troops of NMSP withdrew to another part of area and SLORC deployed more troops in this area. However, another Mon splinter group started their military operations in 1997 and SLORC/SPDC's local troops attempted to prevent the rebels to not come into the area. In 1998 and 1999, the army in the area collected a lot of money from villagers in the area and built a new road from Khaw-zar to Ye town, to have better communication and make better conditions for Burmese Army to come into this area.

Just recently in October 2000, to halt the rebels to not enter into Khaw-zar village, a SPDC battalion, IB No. 61 also forced the villagers to fence their villages roundly and opened only three small entrances. The villagers or farms who daily need to go to their farms or plantations, have to take permission letter every day from army commander and they are not allowed to stay at their work-places at night time.

Now, LIB No. 343 takes 30 villagers every day and used them to carry ammunitions and food supplies when they operated military patrol in surrounding area and the headmen had to replace with new villagers on the next day. When they have no military patrol, they used these villagers to work in their military camp just outside of village, to build military barrack, to build trenches and bankers, to make cooking and carrying water and others. At night time, the soldiers also use villagers to guard their own village and to inform to soldiers if the rebel troops approach to village.

Although SPDC's Ministry of Interior ordered all military battalions to not use forced labour in their battalion and military patrol or offensives, some battalions, like LIB No. 343 still does not listen and continuously use forced labour in their responsible area.



Forced Purchase of Bean in Pegu Division

(February 2000)

SPDC plan is not buying only paddy from farm

Continued on Page (11)

Report

Part II:

Cruel and degrading treatments against civilians in Tenasserim Division, in Year 2000

I. Accusation of Rebel-supporters and Abuses

In northern part of Tenasserim Division of Yebyu, Tavoy, Tenasserim (*Taninthayi*) and Teyet-chaung townships, although the Burmese Army's Coastal Region Military Command have launched offensives with nearly 20 battalions of troops, from LIB No. 401 to No. 410, LIB No. 273, LIB No. 282, IB No. 25, IB No. 104 and others, the rebel troops of KNLA, a Mon splinter group, and MDUF still could operate military activities in this area. Besides a Karen splinter group of God' Army was taking base in border area with Thailand, opposite of Ratchburi Province, and other remaining three groups have operated its military activities in many parts of rural area of these four townships up to coastal area of Andaman Sea (*look in map*). Sometimes, the rebel troops also took base in coastal village and used Andaman Sea for traveling and military operations. As a result, the villagers in rural villages were always accused rebel-supporters and they have been suffered from various of abuses, killing, detaining and torturing by SPDC soldiers.

Whenever the rebel troops activated near a village, the villagers in that village were always accused as rebel-supporters, as who encouraged the rebels to launch activities or provide foods for the rebel soldiers. Normally, the villagers outside of the villages were accused as this type of the supporters to rebels and were always arrested by SPDC soldiers and tortured in their process of interrogation about the activities of the rebel troops.

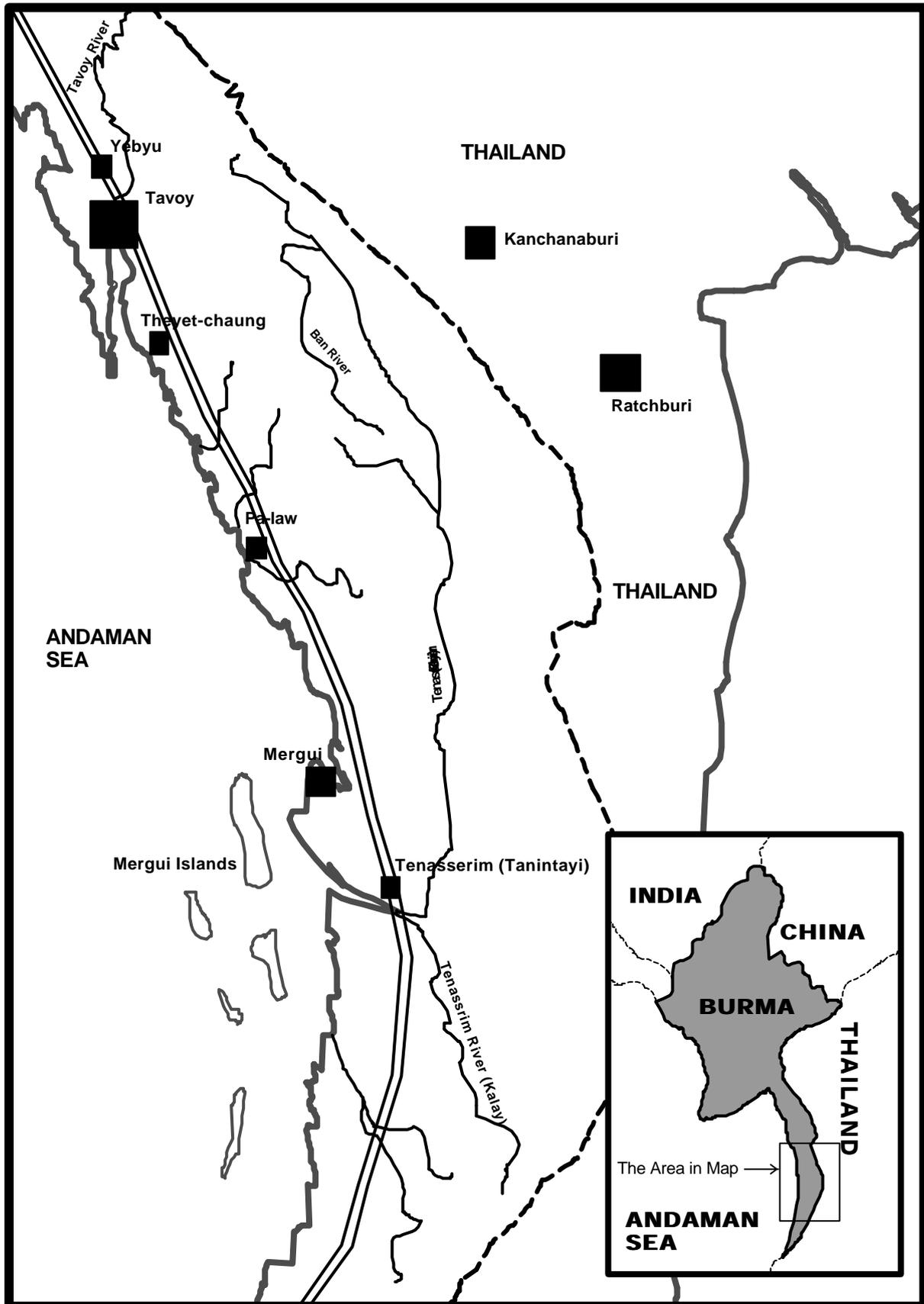
As an instance,

"In third week of May 2000, after rebel troops of a Mon splinter group launched a military activity near Sin-swe village, in Mintha village tract of Yebyu township, SPDC soldiers came and arrested some villagers in that village with accusation of rebel-supporters. The LIB No. 282 soldiers came into Sin-swe village arrested four villagers, Nai Halae (25 years old), Nai Kyae (19 years old), Nai Pyaung (32 years old), and Nai Maung (21 years old). Four villagers were arrested with accusation of rebel-supporters as who showed the way for rebel soldiers and provided foods, and were severely and cruelly tortured by soldiers. The soldiers interrogated them how they treated to rebel soldiers, and when they refused they did not meet with rebels, they were beaten and their faces were closed with plastic bags. After one day torturing, the village chairman arrived back from a journey and appealed to soldiers that they were not supporters, by showing evidence that they were in farms during the rebels launched activities, said that they did not meet with rebel soldiers. As SPDC soldiers trusted to village headman, they released four villagers."

By using the method of torturing to some villagers in a village, the SPDC soldiers threatened to remaining villagers to not contact and support to rebel-soldiers. Sometimes, whenever the government soldiers arrived into a village they beat or slapped all young men in villages and threatened them. According a village from Sin-swe, whenever SPDC troops from LIB No. 273 and No. 282 arrived into village, they beat all young men and said they must kill if they tried to contact rebel. This was an attempt by SPDC soldiers to cut all contacts



Forced relocation of Paukpingwin villagers with accusation of rebel-supporters



Map of Tenasserim Division

between civilians and rebel forces.

Sometimes, whenever a fighting happened between rebel and government forces near a village, the villagers in that village, were accused rebel-supporters, the villagers were also ordered to move from village and some houses were also burnt by soldiers.

As an instance,

"In second week of August, when a fighting happened near Mayan village, Yebyu township, the SPDC troops accused all villagers in Mayan were the supporters to a Mon splinter group. After fighting, some SPDC soldiers died and some got injuries, so LIB No. 282 soldiers went into village and ordered the villagers to move from their village. Within a few hour, the villagers had to collect some belongings and move from their villages. The soldiers did not instruct them that to where they have to move and resettle and just said they would not like to see them in the village, when they came into village again.

"And, the soldiers also tortured to village headmen and interrogated them why the Mon soldiers came close to their village. The soldiers tried to arrest some villagers whose fruit gardens were close to fighting place. When they tried to arrest one farmer, Nai Pho Thaung (45 years old), he fled away to avoid from arresting. He was accused as rebel-supporter and when the soldiers could not get him, they also burnt his house down.

"They also arrested another villager, Nai Ah Pae (34 years old) and tied him up. And, they beat and interrogated him with accusation he was rebel-supporter, because his betel-nut fruit garden was close to fighting place. When they interrogated him, they also tortured and beat him. The more he refused that he had no connection to rebels, he was beaten more cruelly and inhumanely. At the end, his wife also paid some bribe of 50000 Kyat to commander and then he was released. He was also ordered to not stay at his village.

"Besides the above two men, another two men, Nai Ba Han and Nai Kyaw were also arrested with accusation of rebel-supporters. Two men were severely beaten several times and the soldiers interrogated them how they were supporting rebels. After they could not get satisfied answers, they continuously beat them. Because of several beatings, Nai Kyaw's face was ruin with blood. Nai Han also got serious internal injury. They also brought village secretary and tortured him, by pointing him with knife and cut slightly. He was detained at LIB No. 282 for two days."

At the end all villagers from Mayan village were quite afraid to stay longer in their own village and they have to move from their village. At the end, the village was automatically relocated.

In February 2000, the Mon splinter armed group also celebrated a Mon National Day ceremony in Paukpingwin village, which is quite close to Ye-Tavoyan railway road. Because of this celebration, the Burmese Army in the surrounding area were angry to Pauk-pin-gwin villagers and accused all of them as rebel-supporters. In March 2000, the Burmese Army's IB No. 25 came into this village again and ordered all villagers to leave from their village within 7 days. So, the villagers had to collect their properties suddenly and abandoned their village. Later in May, 2000, after NMSP military commanders appealed to re-allow the villagers to stay at their villages and with agreement they would not support the Mon splinter group to SPDC commanders, the villagers could go back to their village.

Later, the villagers from this village were also accused as rebel-supporters and some of them were arrested and tortured.

As an instance,

"In second week of August 2000, with accusation of rebels-supporter, two villagers, Nai Pha and Nai Kha were arrested by LIB No. 273 and were severely beaten by soldiers. On that day, when the military commander from that battalion arranged for a meeting with all villagers, two villagers were missing. So, the commander accused them that they were rebel-supporters, and tried to avoid the meeting. They were severely beaten by soldiers."

A Mon splinter group has mainly launched military activities along coastal area of Yebyu township area and sometimes, tried to get support from Mon villagers in that area. There are many fishing Mon villages in the area and whenever the Mon army arrived to that area, the villagers were suffered from the accusation of rebel-supporters. Villagers from villages such as Ah-mae, Thaung-khun, Chaung-taung, Kya-khat-taw, Kywe-tho-nyima, Kyauk-tayan and others, of Yebyu township, have been constantly suffered from various abuses committed by soldiers, because their villages are accused as rebel bases and they are accused as rebel-supporters.

As an instance,

"Ah-mae village is a Mon fishing village and its headmen and villagers are always beaten by SPDC soldiers as rebel-supporters and sympathizers. In the beginning of Year 2000, LIB No. 104 battalion regularly went into this village and checked who were the supporters of Mon army. If they suspected someone, they could arrest and beat him to admit that he was a supporter to Mon army.

"In February 2000, Nai Tun Kyi and Nai Lun (about 50 years old men) were arrested by IB No. 104 soldiers

in their farms and were severely beaten by soldiers. Nai Tun Kyi also got serious internal injury after beating, and had to treat for one month. And, Nai Lun's head was also spoiled with blood.

"In April 2000, IB No. 104 also arrested another villager, Nai Tin Maung (about 35 years old) with accusation as a supporter to Mon army and tortured him. He was tortured when the soldiers interrogated him to tell about the activities of Mon rebel army. When they did not get satisfactory answer from him, one commander burnt his knife and cut various parts of his body. When he lost consciousness, they left him behind. Then, he run to another place and had to cure his injuries for over one month. Similarly, the soldiers from the same battalion arrested another villager, Nai Ba Aye (45 years old) and tortured him with the accusation of a rebel-supporter. During interrogation, after they could not get satisfied answer from him, the soldiers tortured him until he died."

Another inhumane treatment against village leader was as below.

"On October 4, 2000, after a military column of Mon splinter group led by Nai Sein, passed through near a Mon village, Thaug-khun, Yebyu township, the SPDC soldiers from LIB No. 282 came and arrested village's secretary, Nai Han Kyi (53 years old), who was appointed by them, as a rebel-supporter. After arrest, the soldiers interrogated him to tell the base of Mon army. During their interrogation, the soldiers used inhumane and cruel ways of torturing against the village secretary after he could not give satisfactory answer to them. First, after he gave answers that he did not have contact with rebels, the soldiers also cut his ears with knife. Then, they cut his left at the end after they could not get answer he was a rebel-supporter."

"Still the soldiers dissatisfied on him and brought him to a military outpost on October 5. When they arrived to military outpost, they continuously asked him the same questions how he was supporting the Mon army and where was their bases. He also gave the same answer that he did not have any connection with rebel army. After 10 days in detention and cruel torturing, as a result he died in the hand of LIB No. 282 soldiers."

Not only the ordinary villagers are killed during interrogation by SPDC soldiers, some of them who were walking on the road or working in the farms were also killed. If they met the villagers were on the road and work in farms, the soldiers could shoot them or torture them with accusation of rebel-supporters. Normally, SPDC soldiers believed that if the villagers were outside of their villages, they must try to contact rebels or support rebels by giving foods, by giving information about Burmese Army and etc. By this way, the SPDC soldiers also have made movement restriction against the local villagers to not stay outside of their villages.

As an instance,

"In October 2000, when a column of SPDC troops from LIB No. 282 came near Thaug-khun village, they met one man was walking on the road, and shot to him without inquiry. The man was Nai Lay (43 years old) and he did not die, but got serious injury in his left leg. When he lied with serious injury, the soldiers came and told him that to not stay outside of village and accused him he was a rebel-supporter. Then, they also warned to villagers to not stay outside of the village later."

As another instance,

"In the second week of May, 2000, while a Mon villager, Nai Win Maung (37 years old) from Magyi village, Yebyu Township, was working outside of village in his farm, SPDC soldiers from LIB No. 406, who came close to his farm arrested him with accusation of a rebel-supporter. Then, the soldiers tied him up and interrogated him about the activities of rebel army in the area nearby. During interrogation, when he could not get satisfied to army, he was beaten by soldiers severely and inhumanely. Then the soldiers tied him up for the whole night in village and decided to kill him on the next day. About 4:00 a.m. in the morning before dawn, he attempted to escape. When he was running, the soldiers shot at him, but lucky, he got only a little injury. After he fled for one hour, he lost consciousness in a forest for 20 hours. While he was in forest, the soldiers went to his home and tried to find him again. When they did not meet him, they looted all his belongings. After he waked up, he went back home and knew the soldiers were searching for him. And, he decided to flee from village."

Forced relocation was happened in another part of Tenasserim Division. In the beginning of 2000, Burmese Army's IB No. 25 also operated military operations in eastern part of Mergui and Tenasserim townships to launch military operations against KNLA troops in the area. During this offensives, some villages were also relocated with accusation these are rebel bases.

As an instance,

"In May 2000, Burmese Army's IB No. 25 battalion commander also ordered to Tavoyan villagers from

Shaw-la-maw village, Mergui township, to move from their village because a fighting happened near the village. The village was accused as the rebel's base and that was why the villagers were ordered to move. That village was a big village with 400 households and the soldiers burnt all houses in village. Before they burnt houses, the soldiers drove all villagers out of village and took villagers' belongings as they liked. And, they burnt all houses."

Similarly, another Karen village, Pauk-wa, in Mergui Township, was relocated because it was accused as a base used by rebels. When IB No. 25 troops arrived to this area, the soldiers accused the village was used as rebel base and ordered the villagers from nearly 500 households to move from their village as quick as possible. So, the villagers from 200 households quickly moved to Mergui town and some the remaining 300 households/ families moved to another villages under the control of SPDC and some moved to Three Pagoda Pass. After they moved, the soldiers from IB No. 25 also burnt down all their houses. Additionally, the villagers from Thet-kar-khun, Chaung-tha-oo, were similarly treated SPDC soldiers with accusation of rebel-supporters.

Sometimes, with suspicion of the villages were as rebel bases, whenever SPDC troops arrived close to villages, they always shot into village with aim to drive out all rebel troops in there. Additionally, they also burnt down some villagers' houses with this suspicion and threatened to villagers to be afraid to support rebel army allowing them to stay in village.

As an instance,

"In second week of April 2000, before IB No. 104 troops went into Kyauktayan, a village in coastal area of Yebyu Township, they shot into village with artillery shells and these burnt about 7 households in village. Then, they went into village."

On the other hand, the SPDC local battalions in Tenasserim Division, have also halted even to not contact NMSP (New Mon State Party), although NMSP agreed for ceasefire with the current military regime. According to instruction by the military battalions in Tenasserim Division, NMSP, a Mon armed political organization, is illegal in Tenasserim Division to operate even their traveling and visiting to their relatives or friends. This has been a secret instruction among the military battalions and a way to halt the political activities conducted by NMSP. If the soldiers met someone was supporting NMSP members or military commander, he must be the same punishment as a rebel-supporter.

As an instance,

"On May 7, 2000, LIB No. 273 troops led by Maj. Myint Htwe came into a Mon village, Sin-swe, Yebyu township and arrested a villager, Nai (35 years old) and accused him that he was a supporter to a NMSP military commander to get access into village. Actually, one of his brother was a Mon commander and came and visited to him with civilian clothes and without arms. After his brother went back to NMSP control area, the soldiers from LIB No. 273 asked him to pay 20, 000 Kyat as porter fee. When he replied that he could not



Displaced villagers in Yebyu Township area

pay this amount of porter fee only one time and would pay it gradually later. However, the soldiers dissatisfied on him and came and arrested him. After arrest, he was severely beaten with accusation that because of Mon commander's encouragement, he refused to pay porter fee. Although he explained that accusation was not correct, the soldiers did not listen and tortured him.

"They also beat him and cut his some parts of the body with knife. And, when the soldiers operated military patrol, they also brought him together with them. When they stopped in one place, they also tortured and beat him and ask for huge

amount of porter fee. When he refused, they accused him that he was reliable on NMSP and would refuse from all requests made by them. SPDC soldiers brought him for 24 days totally and they tortured him along their journey.

“During interrogation, beating and kicking were the common abuse sometimes, when the soldiers angered to him, they also point his body with sharp knife and a lot of blood flew from his body until he lost consciousness. Sometimes, the soldiers also put plastic bag on his head and closed it to stop his breathing and he normally lost consciousness. Later, when his brother of Mon commander knew about serious torturing against him, he complained to the respective military battalion and took his brother back from the hands of LIB No. 273.”

Torturing, killing and suspicion of rebel-supporters are also connecting each other and most people who did not die always tried to flee from their villages to avoid from another mis-treatment. This is a systematic persecution against the villagers because of their race is identical to rebel soldiers.

II. Abuses Against Women

In conflict areas of many decade long civil war in Burma, the women in these areas have been sexually abused by government soldiers. Most cases of abuses are not known because the women community themselves cover most cases because of shame and their status.

In rural areas, as the men are constantly used as forced labourers to contribute unpaid labour in army's various types of projects and as front-line civilian porters for military patrol, or the men have to flee from villages to avoid from arrest, torture and arbitrary killing, and so their wives and young daughters are very vulnerable to be raped by government soldiers who could enter into their villages without advance information.

Psychologically, the soldiers who are away from their wives for several months during the military patrol or military offensives always hunger for sex and attempted to rape ethnic women when they arrived into any rural villages. Although village leader knew these sexual harassment in their own villages, as they are afraid of being beaten and tortured by soldiers, they are not dare to complain about that. Therefore, during the military offensives or patrol launched by SPDC troops from various battalions, many Karen, Mon and Tavoyan women in Tenasserim Division have been seriously suffered from sexual abuses.

As an instance,

“In June 2000, when the troops from LIB No. 273 went into Sin-swe village, column commander, Maj. Khin Soe, raped a Mon woman, namely, Mi Khin Htee (about 29 years old) when her husband was away. When the troops arrived into village, the commander found that house and thought Min Khin Htee was a widow. At night time, although the woman refused and explained she had husband, the commander did not listen and rape. Even many villagers and village headman knew the woman was raped, nobody was dare to help her because many soldiers guarded house compound.”

Such case of rape also happened in various conflict areas and even many women have been suffered from this sexual harassment, most of them normally kept quiet and did not even tell to their parents or husbands.

The women are raped not only when the SPDC soldiers went into their village and stayed at night, sometimes, they were also raped while the soldiers use them to contribute unpaid labour for their development or self-reliance projects. As we mentioned in the Part I of this report, SPDC battalions in Tenasserim Division also tried to create their own paddy growing farms or cash tree gardens in many Townships and the soldiers many hundreds of villagers to contribute their labour. When a defined number of villagers from one village went to army's work-places, about 50% or over it were women. Normally, women had to go to these work-places because their husbands had to work in their farms to get income to feed the family. Or, sometimes, the men were arrested and used as porters for army and so, women who remained in village had to work on behalf of their husbands.

When the women were in army's work-place, they were more vulnerable to be raped by soldiers. So, some women were raped during the SPDC battalions were conscripting forced labour from civilians.

As an instance,

“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 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. So, 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, to give some palm trees for her. And, the leader said as the night already fell, it was not good for meeting with a woman and suggested him to meet tomorrow's morning. But, he refused. So group leader 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. Then the commander brought Mi San Htay to a kitchen building near barrack. Then, he pushed her and raped her.”

LIB No. 282 was conscripting forced labour to grow palm trees in their own military battalion's plantation near its military headquarters which is in “52 Miles” area, which is situating near Ye-Tavoy motor road, is far 52 miles northern part of this town. Thus, the battalion is conscripting forced labour from villages along the motor road, such as Yapu, Kywe-ta-lin, Aleskan, Lort-thaung and others to contribute unpaid on a 3-days basis. While the villagers are working for LIB No. 282, such rape case happened in their military base.

Similarly to LIB No. 282, another military battalions have also conscripted local civilians including many women to work in their rice. If these women could come and work on a daily basis in the army work places, there might be no vulnerable situation to be raped by soldiers, but whenever they have to sleep at night in work places, they are quite vulnerable to be raped.

Sometimes, women are asked by battalion commanders not for works in construction sites or army work-places, but instructed them to work daily works in army camp, such as collecting fire-woods, carrying water, cooking foods, growing vegetables and others. During women are at army camps, they are quite vulnerable to be raped by commanders or soldiers.

Not only women are raped in army conscription of forced labour, they are also raped during porter service, when SPDC battalions use them in carrying ammunitions and food supplies in military operations and offensives. The soldiers used women to carry ammunitions or foods at daytime and raped them at night time by threatening and separating some young and good looking women.

As an instance,

“In April 2000, when LIB No. 104 led by Lt. Col. Yatkha went into Kywe-tho-nyima village, Yebyu Township, the soldiers tried to arrest all men porters. This village was Mon village and there are over 500 households in there. However, the men who got advance information about the arrest fled outside of village and hid in forests and their plantations. So, the soldiers were quite angry and arrested women at some houses. As the SPDC troops never arrested any women when they arrived in village, and so most women were suddenly arrested by soldiers without information.

“The soldiers arrested totally 13 Mon ethnic women in village and they were Mi Kar Yee, Mi Ye Oo, Mi Ngwe, Mi Ma Than, Mi Sein, Mi Thar Oo, Mi Knee, Mi Cho, Mi Shwe, Mi Khin, Mi San and other unknown two women. Age range of these women was between 23 and 60 years old and both married and unmarried involved in the arrested group. The soldiers took these women for porter service in their military patrol for three days and three nights totally.

“During porter service, the soldiers forced the women porters to carry about 25 kilograms of weight of ammunitions or food supplies and forced them to walk for the whole day with that weight. When the women could not walk fast as soldiers, they shout, beat and kicked women porters like men porters who were arrested from another village. During porter service, two women, Mi Kar Yee and Mi Thar Oo, who could not manage to walk as soldiers, were kicked by a sergeant.

“After sun set and the beginning of night time, the soldiers grouped them in one place and let them sleep. After mid-night, some soldiers came and pointed gun to some young women and separate them from the group and some commanders raped them. About 4 women (the witness did not identify their names) were separated from the group during three nights and were repeatedly raped.”

Normally in most rape case, the ordinary women have not involved because they are afraid of severe punishment by commanders according to laws. However, most commanders who have the most power in battalion always involve in many rape cases. Sometimes, they also ordered the soldiers to threaten and take women whom they liked and let the soldiers guard them while they were attempting to rape or being raped.

Besides rape cases and conscription of forced labour, the women are also suffered from killing by soldiers, under the suspicion of rebel-supporters. Normally, when fighting happened in villages or when the SPDC troops shot into villages, women who have babies or pregnancy could not flee like other ordinary women. So, those women are killed in fighting.

As an instance,

"In April 2000, with suspicion, rebel troops were in village, the SPDC troops from IB No. 104 also shot into Kyauktayan village, Yebyu Township with artillery shells. A piece of shells also hit to a Mon woman with 2 months pregnancy, Mi Htwe (34 years old) and she died on spot."

Although the current military government, SPDC, ratified Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the military battalions and soldiers in conflict areas, have still violated various women rights especially forced labour and rape.

III. Population Displacement

In Tenasserim Division, accompanying with the situation of various types of human rights abuses violated by Burmese Army's battalions, the population displacement also occurs in many parts of rural area, after the civilians have tried to flee from their villages to escape systematic persecution by the Burmese Army. As this report describes, the civilians in conflict have been constantly suffered from killing, arrest and torturing with accusation of rebel-supporters; contribution of forced labour for army and unpaid porters for military offensives; forced relocation and dislocation by SPDC troops; and sexual abuses.

The range of displacement period is varied from one situation to another. During the SPDC troops are planning the military offensives against rebel forces, when the government soldiers tried to arrest massive civilian porters, the men in village had to flee outside of their villages and hid in forests or in farms or in fruit plantations to avoid from the arrest. In this situation, the men could only displaced from their families at least 3 days until the troops left from their area. Sometimes, if the troops are rounding in their area, they could displace up to 2-3 months without coming homes.

The similar displacement also could happen when villagers attempt to avoid from the constant conscription of forced labour for army or SPDC authorities, when they have no time to work their works. In this case, all family members could be displaced, because if the men are not at homes, women are forced to work instead of men. Thus, all families left from their villages and moved into forests or stayed at their farms or plantations. If the villagers stay at their farms or fruit plantations, they need to be careful to be not arrested by soldiers, which launch military operations. Otherwise, they could be tortured or killed with accusation of rebel-supporters. When the villagers had to contribute unpaid labour for army's development projects or self-reliance program for many days, they might not have chance to do their own works in farms or plantations. So, the villagers tried to avoid from the constant conscription of forced labour and stay at their own work places. This type of displacement could last from 1 month to 6 months depending on an area situation.

The long-term displacement happens when the SPDC battalion commanders order the villagers to leave their villages or when forced relocation or dislocation occurs. The commanders would give deadline to move from their villages within one hour or one week. This displacement is the most terrible and the villagers could get only some belongings from their homes.

Generally, most villagers have displaced not only because of one reason, there are many other reasons cooperate and these forced the villagers to leave from their homes. Sometimes in one family, when the husband is arrested for porter service, the wife is conscripted to contribute labour in constructions or in army camps. Then, that family has less and less time to work in their own farms and at the end, the family has no food and decides to flee from their villages and find another place where they could get foods and less abuses by soldiers. Sometimes, the civilians moved many places to get safety and regular foods.

As an instance, one villager from a Tavoyan villager from Pain-Tun village, Tenasserim township, he explained his displacement as below:

"I was from Pain-Tun village and I arrived to this village (a village under NMSP control) about one month ago. I left from my native village since 1997 and I have stayed in many villages before I reached here. In 1996, when the government soldiers from IB No. 103 and IB No. 101 battalions built a motor road from Tenasserim town to Thein-taw village, the soldiers forced many villagers to contribute labour in construction. Through our headmen, U Sein, the army commander ordered to get the defined number of villagers from our village. My wife or me had to work in construction about two weeks within one month. On the other hand, we also could not have enough time to find work as day-labourer. I have no land like other villagers. Then, our family faced food-shortage problem and then we decided to move to another place.

"We moved along Tenasserim river and arrived to a Karen village, 'Tala-bwe', I stayed there for 7 months. We built a small house and received a work of paddy cultivation from a Karen family. However, we could not stay in stable situation, because the Burmese Army launched a big military offensives (it was 1997 offensives by SLORC), burnt all houses in that village. There were about 30 households in the village. From that village, we moved to the north and arrived another village, 'Kin-ni-kyun' and there were 40 households in that village. I stayed there for one year but the situation in that village was not so stable and in early 1999, the Burmese Army launched military offensives and tried to arrest all villagers with suspicion of rebel-supporters. Then I fled to another Mon village, 'Kyauk-lon-gyi', in Yebyu Township area. I stayed in that village for another one year, but the cultivation conditions in that area not good and not so safe and so I moved to this village."

When displacement happens, some villagers from their villages, which is in conflict area, to SPDC firm control areas, where the government troops have no chance to commit abuses that related to rebel-supporters. Most rich families in villages who could build some house and buy one space of land, or who have relatives in town, normally moved to town for safety. Many poor families had to move another villages, where they thought safer and had work opportunity. Some families also moved to Thailand or to KNU or NMSP control area.

As an instance,

"In early 2000, with accusation of rebel-supporters against the villagers, the Burmese Army's IB No. 25 ordered all villagers in Shwe-ta-maw village, Tavoy township, to leave their houses within a few hours. Then, the soldiers burnt all 400 villagers' houses. After the village was burnt down, some about 100 families moved to Mergui town and stayed with their relatives and only some of them could buy new house and land in town. Many families moved to more stable villages and the remaining about 100 poor families found the ways moving to border area and into Thailand, where they could work and safety."

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ers at low price, which is lesser three times than market price, its authorities in Pegu Division also tried to buy bean at low price in Pegu Division, including Pegu township, which is about 60 Kilometers northeastern far from Rangoon, the capital of Burma (Myanmar). After paddy harvest, many village farmers grow beans in their own farms, and now, Township PDC authorities forced the farmers to sell nearly half of bean products from their farms at low price, which is only half of market price. During the authorities are forcibly buying bean products from farmers, they also halt all private bean product buyers with their authority to stop buying and monopolize all bean products.

Normally, bean-growing farmers could produce about 5-6 baskets of beans from one acre of land and the authorities forced farmers to sell 3 baskets per one acre to designated bean-buying centers arranged by Township Agriculture Products Trading Department. While the bean price at market is 4500 Kyat per basket, the authorities pay to farmers with only 2200 Kyat per basket.

Although the farmers would like to sell their bean products to traders, they could not because the authorities will keep halting traders to not buy beans until the end of March 2001. The authorities expected they would get all set amount of beans in March and then, they would allow traders to buy the remaining beans from farmers. In halting the traders' activity, the authorities checked every truck which used the road and confiscated traders' beans that are on private trucks.

The suffering of farmers in Pegu Division is doubled. In December 2000 and January 2001, they were forced to sell their paddy with 12 baskets per acre to government at low price, which is 300 Kyat per basket, while the market price is about 650-700 Kyat per basket. Now, they have to sell their beans at low price again. To get good production of paddy and beans, the farmers had to spend a lot of money for investment such as hiring labour, buying fertilizers and insecticides and tools. Because of government's forced purchase program of agriculture products, the farmers are disappointing to work on in their farms. ❖ ❖ ❖

In most cases, whenever forced relocation happened in rural area, the commanders who ordered the villagers to leave from their homes did not instruct the villagers to which place they needed to move and resettle. They just told the villagers that they could resettle anywhere, but they would not like to see any villager in their former village.

Some villages are constantly accused as rebel bases and villagers are suspected as rebel-supporters. Because of this accusation, the villagers are suffered more than other villagers, such as torturing and killing and the villagers who are afraid of being killed and tortured tried to leave from village and displacement occurs.

As an instance,

"Ah-mae village in Yebyu Township has been accused as a rebel base for a Mon splinter group and the villagers and village headmen were always beaten by soldiers from IB No. 104. Some villagers were killed by soldiers. Because of systematic persecution against this village community, the villagers from that village have gradually fled to another area, especially, to NMSP control area."

After some villagers displaced and moved to closer places, have always tried to return their home village even under dangerous situation, because they could get their cash fruits, such as betel-nut, coconut and others or tried to cultivate paddy in the fields. Or, sometimes, when the battalion that ordered them to leave their village was changed with a new battalion, they went to their homes and stayed there. If the new battalions were not so cruel or brutal like previous ones they could stay longer in villages. And, when the brutal battalions came, they would displace again. For families who moved to another area far from their homes or stay at safe places, would not tried to go back to their village again.

Anyhow, population displacement is a main problem in southern part of Burma especially in Karen State, in some part of Mon State and most parts of Tenasserim Division.



**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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