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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,
KNLA-	Karen National Liberation Army,
KNU-	Karen National Union,
KNLA-	Karen National Liberation Army
ILO-	International Labour Organization,

News

Torture and Ransom Related to Suspicion of Rebel-supporters by LIB No. 343 (April, 2001)

In March and April 2001, after a Mon splinter activated around the southern part of Ye Township area, the Burmese a local battalion, LIB No. 343 also tortured some villagers with suspicion of rebel-supporters, detained them and asked ransom for them for release.

Since March, the Mon troops from the splinter group have launched more military activities in southern part of Ye Township area to collect fund from the civilians. These Mon troops traveled near Mon villages and the Burmese troops from LIB No. 343 also instructed the villagers to inform about the activities of rebel troops to their nearest base. If the village headmen or villagers failed to inform about the rebels, they must be punished.

On April 13, a group of Mon splinter troops went into Kyoneka-nya village, in southern part of Ye township area, and the head of that village delayed to inform to LIB No. 343 troops because the time



Burmese Army's troops in rural areas, where they have forced the civilians to cooperate with them

was quite late. On the day morning about 7:00 a.m., LIB No. 343 troops led by Cap. Lin Oo, went into that village and arrested two village headmen, Nai Uu, Chairman of the village and Nai Thar Aye, section leader for their delay to inform about the activities of Mon troops.

Then they brought these two village headmen and detained them in their military outpost in Khaw-za village. The soldiers tortured them and accused that they were the rebel-supporters. The soldiers believed the headmen refused to cooperate with them and tortured them to admit they would cooperate with Burmese Army in the future. The soldiers threatened them if they did not agree to cooperate with them, they would kill them. At the end, after the headmen gave promise that they would cooperate with Burmese Army, the commander, Cap. Lin Oo also demanded 400,000 Kyat as fine or a ransom for release. After the families and other villagers helped paying ransom, the soldiers released.

The similar case was also happened in March in the same village. In second week of March 2001, LIB No. 343 troops also accused as rebel-supporter and arrested one village section leader, Nai San Kae. They accused him that when the Mon splinter group collected fund in the surround area, he was the helper. They brought him to Ye Town and detained him. In detention, when they interrogated him, they also beat him severely. After he promised he would cooperate with Burmese Army, they demanded for 100,000 Kyat ransom and then released him.

In southern part of Ye township, because of LIB No. 343 troops' mistreatment against the villagers, many people in the area have also been displaced and moved to more safer area to avoid torture and other mistreatment.



Various Types of Fund Collection in Kya Inn Seikyi Township, Karen State

(April, 2001)

In duration from February until April 2001, Kya Inn Seikyi Township PDC authorities have collected



Harbour of Kya Inn Seikyi town on Zami river bank

various types of fund from the local civilians from the whole township area to have available fund for their office expenses and other required expenses for important occasions, accordingly the orders from Township to village and village tract leaders.

In February 2001, with a purpose to build a hospital that could provide 25 patient beds in Pa-an city, the capital of Karen State, Karen State PDC authorities have requested fund from all townships to provide fund. In an order that sent from State PDC authorities to Kya Inn Seikyi township, they demanded for 200,000 Kyat fund from the township and then, Township PDC authorities again demanded the headmen in town quarters and villages to provide 2000-5000 Kyat for each town quarter/village. Depending on the population and household numbers in each town quarter or a village, the demand of funds were also varied. The deadline for this fund is February 28, and ordered the headmen to not fail to pay the set amount of fund.

In March 2001, with a plan to hold "56th Anniversary of Armed Force (Tatmadaw) Day", as the most important day for SPDC, Township PDC authorities also demanded fund from the civilians by selling lottery tickets with price 1000 Kyat per sheet. The selling of these lottery tickets was forcible way and forced the concerned village headmen to receive the lottery sheets without any complaint and paid for the cost of lottery sheets. If one village received about 15 lottery sheets, the village headmen had to pay 15,000 Kyat to authorities in Township. Whether they would like to buy the lottery or not, they might need to take these lotteries. From selling of lotteries, the authorities received about 1 million Kyat fund totally from the civilians through their headmen. The deadline to pay for the fund or cost for lotteries is March 20.

In April, when the traditional New Year Celebration (Songkaram festival) was held, the authorities still collected fund from the civilians to spend in sending one dancing group from Township to Rangoon. In order sent from Township authorities to all village headmen, it demanded 2000-5000 Kyat fund from each town quarter or village by counting the population and household number in each town quarter or village. From this fund collection, the authorities could receive fund about 200, 000 Kyat totally. The deadline for headmen to give this fund was on March 25, 2001.

In March alone, the authorities requested fund for two times for tatmadaw Day celebration and additional some expenses for Songkaram festival. To provide the set amount of fund on the set date, the headmen again forced the civilians to give fund. Some corrupted headmen again collected more funds than required. Because of this fund collection, some village had to pay up to 50, 000 Kyat from their village alone within one-month period.

These types of fund or tax collection which is not described in existing laws and regulations, have been collected by local State or Township authorities as they like. The fund collection by authorities for their own administration purposes or for important occasions always happened in the whole part of lower Burma including Mon State, Karen State, Pegu Division and Tenasserim Division.



Tatmadaw Plans to Invest in Cement Factory in Karen State

With a tremendous plan to produce many million tons of cement from an extent factory in Myaingkalay village in Pa-an Township of Karen State, a Bur-

mese Army monopoly company, Tatmadaw Oo Pine Ltd., deals with a Japanese company, drug lord U Khun Sa and Zakabar Company in Burma, to cooperate and invest in operation of the factory in recent months.

According to plan, the extent cement factory would use gas energy to generate the machines and most machines are required to be bought from foreign countries. To have enough budget to buy the required machines and facilities, and to construct gas pipeline, Tatmadaw Oo Pine Ltd., had asked a Japanese company, drug lord U Khun Sa, and other Burmese Company, Zakabar to invest in this cement production.

The tatmadaw expects they could produce 4000 tons of cement every day after the factory is well operated and within 20 years they could get back all invested money and a lot of profit. During this 20 years period, they would share the invested money and profit to all partners. After 20 years, all investors withdraw and agree to transfer the factory to government or tatmadaw Oo Pine Ltd.,. Additionally, the tatmadaw would employ some retired tatmadaw members for management of this factory and soldiers as employers according to a source from Karen State.

Just recently to have enough the required energy for this factory, SPDC's Construction Ministry and Southeast Region Military Command (Southeast Command), that bases in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, took contract and built a gas pipeline from Kanbawk, on-shore Yadana gas station, via Mon State and into Karen State. In construction of this gas-pipeline, many hundreds of lands owned by Mon and other ethnic civilians were confiscated without any compensated costs. When the gas pipeline passed through two Mon villages near Thanbyuzayat town, some villagers' houses and gardens were on the route

and they were ordered to move from their houses immediately and gave for only three days to move every thing. The authorities did not give any compensated cost for them.

From reviewing the activities of Tatmadaw Oo Pine Ltd., the Burmese Army or the military regime requires to grip in power for so many years, by investing in long-term business. They have no plan to transfer to anyone or 1990 elections winner, National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.



Gas pipeline from Kanbawk: The main energy for cement factory in Myaingkalay, Karen State

Report

Forced Labour by the Burmese Army in Lower Part of Burma

I. ILO Actions and The Burmese Army

With dated October 27, 2000, although the Burmese regime, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)'s Ministry of Home Affairs issued an order to its army battalions and local administrative authorities, to stop conscripting of unpaid or forced labour from civilian communities in Burma, the army and local regime authorities have not stopped this practice absolutely. On the other hand, the army high rank army officers and authorities have not also taken actions against the army members and authorities concerned, who have conscripted forced labour.

Issuing of this order also was made after ILO (*International Labour Organization*) sent the second Technical Co-operation Mission to Burma. ILO Governing Body also instructed to SPDC to amend the existing village and town acts that officially apply for the use of forced labour. During ILO Conference in June 2000, it decided to impose sanctions against Burma with majority vote, if the regime did not amend the Acts or put into practices of stopping requisition of forced labour. However, some ASEAN countries and the regime requested to give more time to amend the Acts and so, the Governing Body also decided to send Technical Cooperation Mission in October. To avoid the sanctions, or to save the last face, the regime issued the 27th October order. However, it was late because the Mission who traveled to Burma in the same month found that SPDC had not made any progress in amending the Acts and had not rigorously done toward putting these changes into practices. (*Look the origin order in The Mon Forum 3/2001.*)

After issuing the order, SPDC sent the order to all administrative offices and army battalions, and additionally instructed to not use forced labour. Although some government authorities have stopped conscription of forced labour in some parts of rural areas, especially, the army commanders from many battalions have ignored order and continuously, have conscripted forced labour in rural areas.

In Mon State, Karen State and Tenasserim Division, or most southern parts of Burma, there have been still rebel activities against the SPDC armed force, or the Burmese Army. Thus, the Burmese Army still operates military activities against these rebel groups. Whenever the Burmese Army's local military battalions launched offensives or operated military patrols, as they did not have a proper logistics system, they still used the civilians in the local areas to be porters to carry ammunitions and other food supplies during the military offensives or military patrol.

Additionally, under the instruction of "self-reliance program" for all SPDC military battalions, most military battalions in Mon State, Karen State and Tenasserim Division confiscated some lands from local farmers and have used as battalion farms. In all processes of cultivation, the soldiers have forced the civilians or villagers near the farms to work instead of them.

Actually, as Burma has lost "rule of laws" in the country and ruin of legal system, the members of Burmese Army (*tatmadaw*), who have absolute power in every part of Burma, have not response for the practices of stopping use of forced labour instructed by ILO.

II. Use of Forced Labour after ILO Conference

In the period between ILO conference and its Technical Cooperation Mission went into Burma, the Burmese Army's local military battalions have constantly used forced labour in many parts of lower Burma for many purposes. However, the military regime, SPDC, has not cared much to the army's continuous requisition of forced labour although it was condemned in the international labour conference and in the situation the international community could impose sanctions as punishment for its inhumane treatment against its people.

In Year 2000 before the October order came out, in the requisition of forced labour, not only the rural based military battalions used forced labour, but also even some military command such as Southeast Region Military Command (*Southeast Command*) that bases in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, had used forced

labour.

As an instance,

“In the whole month of June, when the rainy season started, Southeast Command forced Mon villagers from ten villages in Kyaikmayaw Township to plough 100 acres of lands in Kyaikmayaw township, near Khayon village. The Southeast Command confiscated these lands from the local farmers from Kha-yon and other villages. These lands are situating in eastern part of Moulmein city and the military just forced the villagers nearby to plough the land. The villagers from ten villages, such as Damatha, Than-ga-laung, Tarana, Kaw-thut, Khayon, Lat-pan, Ywa-thit, Kyone-wan, Kyone-manin and Kyaik-paran, were forced to work in army farms. The village headmen from these ten villages were ordered to send 60 men, 60 pairs of oxen and 60 set of hand-made ploughing equipment to the work site on a daily basis.

“After completing ploughing lands for two weeks, the army again ordered the village headmen to send more number of villagers to grow paddy lands in the farms. Until the second week of July, the village headmen had to send about 80-100 villagers to the army farms per day.”

Similarly, in Ye township of Mon State, a SPDC local military battalion, LIB No. 343 have constantly used forced labour in building its new military barracks in northern part of Ye Township area. The battalion had used the villagers from nine villages that close to the base and forced them to clear grasses and cut small trees, lumbering the logs, digging trenches and bunkers and building the barracks.

In an order in June 2000, which it sent to village headmen, it mentioned as below:

“To do the construction work in the army base, we (the soldiers) informed you to send the villager labourers according to the set dates, the set number of villagers as below:

- (a) Taung-bon village, (from June 28 to June 30) to send 20 villager labourers,*
- (b) Kwan-du village, (from 28 to June 30) to send 7 villager labourers,*
- (c) Thaung-pyin village, (from July 1 to July 3) to send 20 villager labourers,*
- (d) Zar-ga-le village, (from July 1 to July 3) to send 7 villager labourers,*
- (e) Aru-taung village, (from July 4 to July 6) to send 20 villager labourers,*
- (f) Hnin-son village, (from July 4 to July 6) to send 20 villager labourers,*
- (g) Son-na-thar village, (from July 7 to July 9) to send 5 villager labourers,*
- (h) Ah-plaing village, (from July 7 to July 9) to send 5 villager labourers,*
- (i) Taung-zun village, (from July 7 to 9) to send 5 village labourers.*

And, it also mentioned that since the works were important for battalion, the villagers should not fail to come and work. It added that the villagers must bring their own tools together with them. The order was signed by Cap. Lin Oo, on behalf of the battalion commander.”

Like LIB No. 343, other battalions in Ye Township, IB No. 61, IB NO. 106 and LIB No. 299 had also used the villagers as porters for military operations and labourers for their own purposes. Similarly to LIB No. 343 battalion, one new military battalion in Kya Inn Seikyi Township of Karen State, LIB No. 708, have forced the villagers from Win-yaw-seikyi, Kha-won, Win-htaung, Myaing-gone and Taung-dee to build its military barracks for several months.

While LID (*Light Infantry Division*) No. 22 launched military offensives in Karen State before the end of 2000, the battalions under this military command have arrested many villagers in rural areas of Kya Inn Seikyi township and forced them to be frontline civilian porter for several days. Some porters also died in the fighting between the regime and rebel soldiers.

While the ILO was sending its Technical Cooperation Mission, there were still requisitions of forced labour in rural areas by the army battalions or commanders concerned. Again, after “October Order” by Ministry of Home Affairs, this practice was stopped by some SPDC administrative authorities in some places, but most army battalions still enjoyed using forced labour.

III. Abuses after October’s Order

A. Use of Civilian Frontline Porter

In southern part of Burma, the rebel forces such as KNLA (*Karen National Liberation Army*, the military faction of Karen National Union - KNU), a Mon splinter group (led by some former MNLA commanders),

and MDUF (Mergui-Dawai United Front) have still operated military activities and attacked the troops of Burmese Army. It is a great trouble for Burmese Army to control the whole area of southern part of the country although the Mon political organization, NMSP (*New Mon State Party*) and its military faction, MNLA, has dealt for ceasefire with the current military regime in Rangoon, SPDC since 1995.

To oppress or stop the military activities launched by the rebel troops, the Burmese Army's various military battalions in southern part of Burma have operated military operations or attacks to these rebel troops. However, they could not oppress against these rebel forces totally. As a practice, whenever the local military battalions are operating the military operations against the rebel soldiers, they always arrested the local villagers and used them as porters to carry ammunitions and food supplies along the military operations. These are the evidences that the army battalions and commanders have not given good responses to both ILO instructions to halt use of forced labour and SPDC's October Order.

As an instance,

"On December 2 and 3, a Burmese Army military battalion, LIB No. 299, that based in southern part of Ye Township, Mon State, also conscripted many villagers from the villages nearby and used them as porters without payment. In the plan, LIB No. 299 troops had to take base in a border town with Thailand, Three Pagoda Pass, and changed with LIB No. 343 that took base in December. Accordingly to a rotation basis, each battalion must have to take responsibility in taking base in that border town for at least three months, and then it could change with other battalion, that ordered by SPDC's Southeast Command.

"Because of the order by Southeast Command, LIB No. 299 planned to travel and take base in the border town. During their travel to border town, they could be attacked by KNLA troops and so, the soldiers did not dare to go with trucks along the road in the areas where they have less control. When they have to walk along the road, they could not carry all of their ammunitions and food supplies that required during operation and therefore, the soldiers went into the villages and demanded the villagers as porters.

"One army commander, Lt. Hein Lin Htat from LIB No. 299 went to 10 villages in southern part of township area and asked the village headmen to provide village porters. The number of villagers were also dependent on the households or families number in village. The commander demanded 5 villagers for Koe-mile village, 6 villagers from Kalort-gyi village, 8 villagers from Hangan village, 2 villagers from Ba-round village, 4 villagers from Kaw-hlaing village, 3 villagers from Singu village, 3 villagers from Toe-tat village, 4 villagers from Yin-ye village, 4 villagers from Yin-dein village, 4 villagers from Kabya village and 8 villagers from Khaw-zar village. In Khaw-za village, as the villagers avoided to be porters, they also paid with 100, 000 Kyat as porter fee, so the village headman did not have to provide villagers.

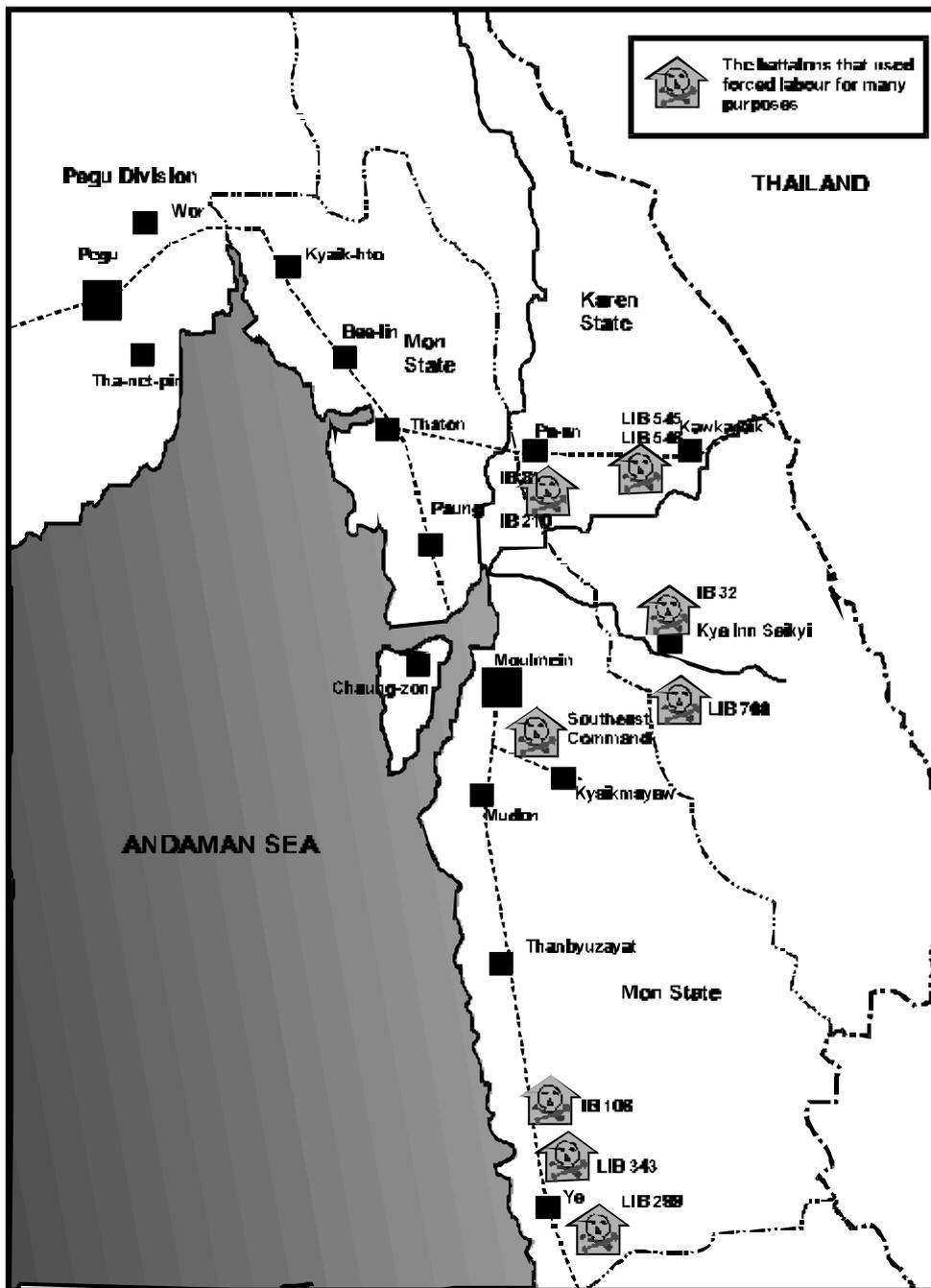
"After gathering porters, LIB No. 299 troops moved to Three Pagoda Pass Town from Ye on December 4. In their travel, although they could go by trucks from Ye to Thanbyuzayat (look in the map), but they have to walk from Thanbyuzayat town to Three Pagoda Pass border town and so, the villagers had to carry ammunitions especially motor shells and other food supplies along nearly 70 mile-long Three Pagoda Pass – Thanbyuzayat motor road.

"The army took the porters for three days to reach to the border because they had to avoid ambush attacks from the rebel soldiers. The fighting also happened along the road and only some soldiers injured, but the civilian porters were safe. So, the porters and LIB No. 299 troops arrived to Three Pagoda Pass on December 7. Then, LIB No. 299 commander transferred all these porters to the battalion, LIB No. 343 that needed to return Ye township area. Therefore, the civilian porters were used for 7 days for porter service for two military battalions, LIB No. 299 and LIB No. 343."

On the other hand, besides the Burmese Army's local military battalions are forcing the local villagers to be civilian porters, sometimes, by showing the security reason, they also conscripted villagers to be village militia troops whether they would like to join to the militia force or not.

In Yebyu Township of Tenasserim Division, one Mon spliner group have launched military operations against the Burmese Army and collected tax from the local civilians in many parts of Township area. The Burmese Army, Coastal Region Military Command's Tactical Command No. 2, which have taken responsibility for security for the area and Yadana gas-pipeline, could not control the whole Yebyu township area and have forced the local villagers to take security for their own village.

Then, since June 2000, the commander of Tactical Command No. 2, Lt. Col. Soe Htet tried to create village militia troops and forced the villagers from Yapu, Kywe-ta-lin, Ale-skan and Kyauk-ka-din villages in Yebyu Township to attend the military training conducted by LIB No. 282. These villages are situating along



Map of Lower Burma and the Battalions that Use Forced Labour

the motor road and sometimes, the rebel soldiers from Mon splinter group tried to enter into these villages or to ask fund from the villagers. By giving this reason, the local military battalions and commands forced the village headmen and villagers to agree to form the militia force in every village. By this way, they could create enemies each other among the villagers and rebel soldiers.

Therefore, in October and November 2000, LIB No. 282 conscripted 60 villagers from Aleskan village, 30 villagers from Kyaukka-din village, 30 villagers from Kywe-ta-lin village, 60 villagers from Yapu village to attend the military training in the battalion base. In conscription of the villagers for militia force, as commanders understood that many of them would not like to join, they ordered the village headmen to send double numbers of the required villagers to attend training, if some of them left as militiamen, they could easily replace with another trainees. On the other hand, the commanders could get the background of most villagers during training and so, they could give pressure to them to not contact rebel forces.

When the village headmen conscripted the villagers to attend training, many villagers who would not like to cooperate with Burmese Army or in militia force were forced to leave from the villages, because they could be accused by Burmese Army as rebel-supporters. When they refused to join the militia forces, it also means in opposite by Burmese Army that they would support the rebel armies. Therefore, the men in village who were ordered to join militia force had to flee anyhow if they refused to join.

Additionally, the Burmese Army did not support the trained militia troops with food and salaries after formation of militia force. Tactical Command No. 2 and LIB No. 282 just ordered the local village headmen from these village to provide them with available foods and 8000 Baht per month salary for every militiaman. The Burmese Army just equipped them with arms and ordered them to fight if the rebel soldiers came to their



Burmese Army's requisition of porters in frontline to carry ammunitions and foods

villages.

This is one type of forced conscription of the villagers into militia force without their voluntary participation. When the army commanders hold meetings with the villagers and village headmen, although the villagers proposed the villagers were in difficult situation such as low income, unemployment and low rate of crop production, and that they could not support the mi-

litiamen, however, the commander refused to listen from them. Even the militiamen, they would not like to join the troops, because they might have less and less time to work for their own in paddy farms or fruit plantations or raising cattle and on the other hand, they would not like to confront against the rebel troops.

In addition, because of the rebel troops' activities, the commanders also ordered every village headmen to fence their village later in October 2000 in many villages in Ye and Yebyu township area.

An instance,

"In southern part of Ye township area, LIB No. 299 ordered the villagers in villages to fence their villages in October and November 2000. The battalion commanders ordered the village headmen from Khaw-za, Yin-dein, Yin-ye, Ka-bya, Han-gan and Kaw-hlaing to fence their villages with bamboo.

"During this season, the villagers were quite busy with their own work for reaping their crops. On the other hand, the villagers also complained that their crops in rice fields could also been destroyed if they made fence in some of rice fields outside of the villages before they completed harvest in their farms.

However, the Burmese Army's local military battalion have not listened the complaints from the villagers and ordered again they must finish fencing the villages."

As a regular conscription of forced labour, LIB No. 343 in the northern part of Ye Township area and LIB No. 299 in the southern part of that township areas always conscripted the villagers from all villages in the whole township to take security for both railway and motor road.

Along the Ye-Thanyuzayat railway and motor road, the army has forced the villagers to build one hut in every 500 kilometers and conscripts the villagers through the village headmen to take security for these roads. Therefore, at least 10 to 20 villagers in every village are conscripted on a daily basis to take security in the roads. The army also instructed them if they met the rebel troops' activities crossing the roads or coming close to the roads, they must have to immediately inform the nearest military outpost.

The army is not only using the civilians to be forced labourers in most military purposes or security in one specific area, sometimes, if they wanted their ammunitions and food supplies as quickly as possible for the military offensives, they also forced trucks and owners or drivers to do this type of logistics.

As an instance,

"On February 27, LIB No. 62 commanders and local authorities from Thanbyuzayat township stopped four ten-wheels trucks, which carried various types of products from Tenasserim Division and sent them to Rangoon, and forced truck drivers to load down all their loads in trucks in IB No. 62 base in Thanbyuzayat town. Then IB No. 62 commanders brought these trucks to Southeast Command and loaded up all military supplies and ammuni

tions on trucks and forced them to move along Thanbyuzayat – Three Pagoda Pass motor road to the border on the next day. These supplies needed to be provided for military battalions that were operating military offensives against rebel forces along the border area.

“Similarly, on February 23, when the Burmese Army’s IB No. 106 bases in Ye Township required to carry their logistics, when it had duties to launch offensives along Thanbyuzayat- Three Pagoda Pass motor road, the battalion requested about 40 trucks and their drivers from Ye Township Motor-mobile Association to provide them. These trucks had to carry both army’s supplies, ammunitions and soldiers to designated places along Thanbyuzayat – Three Pagoda Pass motor road.”

The army used these trucks for many days, because they had to wait safe conditions to transport these supplies and delayed along the roads as well. Even under the unsafe conditions, the truck drivers had no choice to refuse for transportation of soldiers and their supplies. The trucks could be shot or could step on nes during there were moving into armed conflict areas.

B. Forced Labour for the Purpose of Army Fund

Since 1997 after the military regime, SLORC/SPDC, ordered to all its military battalions and commands that it could not provide rations of food supplies and payment for them and instructed the commanders concerned to create self-reliance program in their own military battalions and commands.

The order was also meant that the military has full authorities to confiscate the lands that close to their base and create farms or other plantations as feasible to the land soil. Among many military battalions in lower part of Burma, some very little number of battalions took wild lands and created paddy growing farms or rubber plantation or fruit plantations. Most battalions confiscated valuable lands that grown with paddy, rubber trees and fruit trees without any compensated cost and sold these crop products for their own battalion fund.

The regime has also allowed every military battalion to confiscate lands from civilians, to involve business activities, to collect various types of tax and to use forced labour for all activities that connected to the fund raising program of all battalions.

Depending on the difference from one area to another, the fund-raising programs of the battalions are varied. However, many battalions have been involved in paddy growing in their confiscated lands. The battalions such as IB No. 81 that bases in Pa-an township of Karen State cultivated the two-season paddy crops in farms and forced the villagers from the villages nearby to do farming. Although this battalion received “October order” to halt use of forced labour, but it still used forced labour in November and December 2000, when it planned to grow dry season paddy crop.

As an instance,

“IB No. 81 battalion has about 100 acres of paddy growing lands that confiscated in late 1997. This land could be used for two-season paddy crop cultivation and the battalion has used this land to grow two-season paddy crop. In October, after harvest of rainy season crop, the army planned to grow dry season paddy crop in November. This military battalion is close to three Mon villages, Khaya, Than-hlae and Kaw-lamu. Then, the battalion put responsibilities of crop cultivation to these villages.

“On November 10 and 11, a commander of IB No. 81, Captain Thein Win, who took responsibility for battalion fund-raising program, also called a meeting with village headmen from these villages and conscripted some villagers to work in the farms and provide fund. The commander ordered to Khaya village headmen to send 60 villagers everyday to bring water through water canals and grow paddy plants. He also ordered the headmen from Than-hlae village to provide fund to buy gasoline for water pumps and fertilizer to use in farm. Then, he ordered the headmen from Kaw-lamu village, to send some villagers to thresh and winnow the crops after reap. Therefore, all villagers from these villages had to provide fund or labour for that IB No. 81 battalion farm. The conscription of forced labour have always been taken by army because the soldiers have no time or no ability to do farming.”

While some battalions had only one type of activity for fund-raising program, some battalions have many programs to raise fund. For example, a SPDC military battalion, IB No. 32 that bases in Kya Inn Seikyi town in Karen State, also had various type of business to raise fund. It has paddy-growing farms, rubber

plantations and brick-making factory. In all activities, the battalions have used the villagers nearby as forced labour in their farms or rubber plantations or even for firewood for brick-making production.

As an instance,

"IB No. 32 also established a brick-making factory near their battalion, and to produce a huge amount of bricks, the battalion required large amount or many tons of firewood to burn rough bricks made with clay. The army did not buy the required firewood from the villagers, who sell these things, but ordered the village headmen from some villages in township to provide woods.

"According an order in December, the battalion instructed the village headmen that to provide firewood in estimation of 5 tons from Shwe-la-inn village, 5 ton from Kyauk-pone village and 20 ton from Htee-pauklo village respectively. The villagers had to cut firewood in forest close to their villages. Then the battalion instructed them that to bring all firewood and put them in designated place on Zami riverbank. The battalions ordered boats from the villages nearby to carry many tons of firewood to Kya Inn Seikyi Town."

This battalion also has about 100 acres of paddy-growing farmlands and they also grow paddy with the conscripted labour from the villagers. In November of harvest season, this battalion conscripted many villagers from Htee-pauklo, Shwe-la-inn, Kyauk-pone, Kyat-tu-ywe-taung, Wai-tha-lee and other villages to contribute labour in reaping paddy crops.

As an instance,

"On November 8, 2000, IB No. 32's Tactical Commander, Cap. Hla Maung ordered about 50 villagers from Htee-pauklo and Thayar-gone to reap the paddy. On the next day, they ordered villagers from other villages, such as Bokalay, Waekarai, to reap the paddy crops. The reaping of paddy crops nearly two weeks and the army commanders forced many hundreds of villagers to do farming on behalf of them."

IB No. 32 has continuously used forced labours for many purposes of the battalion's fund-raising program. Just recently in April 2000, the battalion still asked for forced labour to clear its rubber plantations and pour fertilizers kin rubber trees before the rain come. In an order by a commander from IB No. 32, it mentioned to send 5 villagers from every village including one village headman.

Similarly to IB No. 32 and IB No. 81, another military battalion, IB No. 210 that bases in Pa-an township of Karen State, also conscripted the villagers from Kaw-kyaik village tract to contribute their labour in the battalion's paddy farms since December. This battalion also had about 50 acres of land on the Gyaing river bank and grow two-season paddy crop. After harvest in November, the army started cultivation for dry season crop and forced the villagers from Kaw-kyaik village tract to contribute their labour in taking water into farms from the river, ploughing the lands, growing paddy plants in December 2000 and January 2001. Besides labour, the villagers also had to provide fund to hire oxen in ploughing lands.

According to a villager from Kaw-kyaik village, who has been forced in the continuous conscription of forced labour described as below:

"In the IB No. 210 farms, they put the signboard of "(District's) Township Cooperative Farm" and although it is likely pretending the farms are owned by all villages, actually, only the battalion owned them because they confiscated from farmers three years ago.

"In November (2000), there was still some rain in our area and so, IB No. 210 commanders, Maj. Aung Win and Cap. Kyaw Soe, forced the villagers to hurry in reaping the paddy crops in their farms. They forced the villagers from Pa-ae, Kaw-kyaik, Htone-ie villages to reap the crops, thresh and winnow paddy to get fine crops, and carry them to the designated place. While the villagers were quite busy with their own works, they also had to work for the Burmese soldiers. Additionally, while the villagers were reaping the paddy under the rain, the soldiers shout to villagers to carry on reaping quickly and they also shot guns to air and threatened the villagers to hurry up.

"After they got paddy, some of it were wet because of rain during harvest, they could not sell it to traders in market. And, the army forced every household in our village to buy 2 tins of paddy each household. The villagers could not refuse, but had to buy the army's wet paddy. The soldiers sold it with 600 Kyat per basket to villagers, while the farmers had to sell their paddy to paddy-buying center with 300 Kyat per basket. But the paddy-buying centers did not accept wet paddy.

"During the army is forcing the villagers to work in their farm, most of us are quite busy in our farms, sometimes

we could go and work in their farms. Sometimes, we needed to find some substitute labourers and hired 500 Kyat per day. In their rainy season crop cultivation (from June to November) I had to hire labourers several times and had to pay about 6000 Kyat for labour cost.

“Again, in December and January, the villagers are forced to work in their farm for dry-season paddy crop cultivation. In this time, besides the villagers from our village (Kaw-kyaik village) are forced to work, we also had to hire oxen to plough the lands. The villagers had to hire 5 pairs of oxen each day and ploughed the lands. We had to pay 800 Kyat per pair of oxen to plough the lands.”

Similarly to the above mentioned conditions, SPDC's another military battalions that base in Kawkareik township of Karen State, LIB No. 545 and No. 546, which has about 700 acres of lands in Kyone-doe village tract, have constantly forced the villagers from Kyone-doe, Kanni, Kaw-lyan and Thayet-taw village tract to contribute unpaid labour in all activities of farming in their farms.

Before October, these two military battalions have used large number of villagers in cultivation such as for ploughing lands, growing paddy and other works since June. In October, although the battalions received the order from SPDC's Ministry of Home Affairs to stop the requisition of forced labour from the civilians except emergency cases, but these battalions still continued requisition of forced labour in harvest season of November and December 2000.

As instances,

“In duration of harvest season, from December 10 to 23, LIB No. 546 battalion ordered six Mon villages nearby, such as Kaw-kyaik, Kanni, Thayet-taw, Thadar-oo, Kaw-lyan and Kaw-kite villages, to send 40 villagers from each village to reap paddy crops in the battalion farms. They forced the villagers to do this work until the completion of reaping paddy crops.

“Similarly, LIB No. 545 asked forty villagers from one every day from Kyone-doe village tract and forced them to reap paddy for two days, December 16 and 17 respectively. Kyone-doe village tract has about 5 villages and the headmen had to manage to send the requested number of villagers to army owned farms.”

In many cases, while the Burmese Army's local military battalions are forcing the civilians to contribute their labour, at the same time, they also give all responsibility to civilians to complete all processes of paddy cultivation.

Sometimes, some cases of conscription of villagers as unpaid labourers are not relating to army fund-raising program or for porter service or security reason, they just conscripted the villagers to stay in the army base and to do daily works required in base. Most daily works are included such as cooking, finding firewood, carrying water, fencing the base compounds, growing vegetables and building or repairing military barracks.

As instances,

“During the period from November 2000 to January 2001, when a column of Burmese Army from LIB No. 343 took base in a Mon village village, Khawzar, southern part of Burma, the commander asked 30 villagers everyday to work daily works in their military base. When the villagers were in the military base, they were forced to work every thing that required by soldiers, including fencing the base compound, cooking foods, finding firewood and other works.

“After three months taking base in this area, LIB No.343 troops left from that base and IB No. 61 troops replaced there. Continuously, this new military column also requested the same number of villagers to do the same work in the military base on a daily basis.”

Similarly to this military battalion, many other military battalions in Karen State, such as IB No. 32 and others, and the battalions in Tenasserim Division also used many villagers for their daily works in their military bases.

IV. Conclusion

Although SPDC's Ministry of Home Affairs has ordered all members of Burmese Army to halt the practices of requisition of forced labour from the civilians, however, as evidence mentioned above, most

military battalions of Burmese Army in the rural area still have continuously used forced labour for their many purposes, in military operations and offensives, army fund-raising program and army's daily accommodation activities.

It is normally shown that the requisition of forced labour from the civilians is becoming a firm practices of most battalions in rural areas and they could not abandon this practices more. They have been much relied or addicted to these practices and without forced labourers along with them, they could not manage their military operation, fund-raising program or farming and even cooking.

Under the mismanagement of economics in Burma, the local villagers are in worst economic conditions and are hard to have enough foods and incomes to get access into other needs such as health care, education for children, farming facilities and other accommodation costs. To get regular income and foods, nearly all family members in one families except women taking care small children, elder persons and children, have to work hardly for many hours in farms or plantation or fishing.

While the civilians have a huge load of work for survival, the army battalions have still forced the busy civilians to contribute labour for their works without any payment. The civilians who feared for punishment had to go and work for the army so many days in porter service, continuous days in farming or other works related to fund raising program and a rotation basis for the works in the army bases.

Due to this constant and conscription of forced labour in rural area, the villagers had less and less time to work their own work. Some villagers also face food-shortage problems even in their native villages and many of them fled to other area or to to refugee camps to avoid forced labour. This type of population displacement occurs not because of civil war, but also SPDC's constant conscription of forced labour.



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:

HURFOM
P. O. Box 11, Ratchburana P. O.
Bangkok 10140, THAILAND
Fax: (66 34) 595 443
E-mail: mforum@np.anet.net.th

With regards,

Director
Human Rights Foundation of Monland

HURFOM
P. O. Box 11
Ratchburana P. O.
Bangkok 10140, THAILAND
E-mail: mforum@np.anet.net.th

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