

to gamble for 3 days. They collected about 3,000 Kyat from one den and received about 150,000 Kyat every night.

IX. Conclusion

The regime SLORC/SPDC and the Burmese Army the country ruled for nearly 15 years after 1988 pro-democracy uprising and have failed to transfer the political power to National League for Democracy (NLD) which won the majority votes during 1990s Elections. Under the rule of dictatorship, the people in Burma has no rights to speak out for their suffering because of the Burmese Army and dissatisfaction against the regime. Although the regime claimed that they are moving for disciplined democracy in Burma, however, the people never feel they have democracy in the country, but just oppression.

Because of the exploitation conducted by the Burmese Army, SPDC authorities, the regime-supporters (such as militia force and Union Solidarity and Development Association – USDA), the civilians have been suffered as below:

- They do not have sufficient foods for their families, because they have less money to buy basic foods such as rice, fish-paste, meats, salt, vegetables, cooking oil and other substances.
- In Burma, the civilians are normally relying on the private medical care and when they have no or enough money, they could not receive medical care from private clinics or hospitals. Even they attended the government hospital, they have to buy all medicines and medical related substances from the private shops with high cost. The people died when they could not afford to pay for their treatment costs.
- The children leave from schools within their school age (from 5 to 16 years) to help their parents who are getting poorer and poorer. Many children are in agriculture farms, factories, and some also migrated into neighbouring countries, especially Thailand to seek works. Some young women also became sex workers.

As long as the regime is in power and no democratization process in Burma, the situation of the people in Burma is getting worst. Although the international governments, UN agencies and NGOs wish for changes in Burma, but they did not found any change.



A Paddy-planting competition conducted by local Burmese Army's battalion, which they collected money from civilians.

The Mon Forum

The Publication of Human Rights Foundation of Monland (BURMA)

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Some Acronyms in This Issue

- SPDC- State Peace and Development Council,
- SLORC- State Law and Order Restoration Council,
- APTD- Agricultural Products Trade Department,
- GONGOs- Government organized Non-Governmental Organization
- IB - Infantry Battalion (of Burmese Army),
- LIB- Light Infantry Battalion (of Burmese Army),
- MOMC- Military Operational Management Command
- PDC- Peace and Development Council,
- USDA- Union Solidarity and Development Association

News

Forced labour continues in Karen State

(April 2003, Kawkaeik Township, Karen State)

During March and April, 2003, SPDC authorities from Kawkaeik Township of Karen State, used Mon and Karen villagers from 33 villages in Township area to construct a 16 miles long motor road that connects two main villages, Kawbein and Kyone-doe.

The conscription of forced labour started since on March 10 and Kawkaeik Township PDC Chairman, Col. Ko Ko Gyi, and his authorities led in the conscription. First, in March they used the villagers from 17 villages in three Mon village tracts (or) village groups. They were Kaw-bein, Kaw-pauk and Min-ywa village tracts.

Later in early April, they again conscripted more villagers from 16 villages in Kharit; Kaw-go; Khayin-chaung; Kaw-lyan; Kanni and Thayet village tracts. Therefore, many villagers from 33 villages from 9 village tracts in Township had to contribute their labour with payment.

The authorities also shared pieces of works for each village tract and then the village headmen had to take responsibility to share the works to their villagers. From these 9 village tracts, there were 7620 households in total and at least one village from each house have to go and work in the construction site.

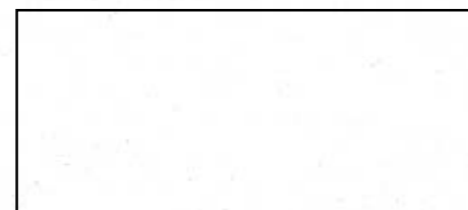
The duties in the construction were: to build 12-15 feet in width em-



Forced Labour used by SPDC Kawkaeik authorities in building Kawbein-Kyonedoe road

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Printed Matter



Address Correction Required

The people in Mon State and Karen State found human rights defenders

The people in the southern part of Burma, especially in Karen and Mon States, faced severe human rights violations committed by SPDC like many other people in various parts of Burma. Members of the Burmese Army or the SPDC authorities have involved in conscription of forced labour; extortion of people's belonging, forcible buying of paddy at low price, arbitrary arrest and torture, and other violations.

Burma is Buddhist country and many people believe in Buddhism. The religious leaders or Buddhist monks are the important figures who have influence to government authorities, soldiers and high-rank SPDC leaders.

The people, who have been cruelly suffered from the various types of human rights violations, have tried to find who are their defenders. Many of them found that the Buddhist monks are the important figure to protect them.

In the recent case of 'torture' to an old farmer, Nai La (78 years) old by a police officer, is the example that many farmers from Mon State asked the senior Mon monks to involve in the protection of that farmer. The monks also put the legal action toward violator together with the farmer's family.

Again in April, the farmer associations from 10 Township of Mon State and 3 Township from Karen State, appealed to two Senior Buddhist Monks in Mon State and Karen State to relieve their suffering, by informing how the cruel actions of SPDC authorities, police officers, and members of Burmese Army involved in forcing the farmers to sell their paddy at low price.

Civil society in Mon State and some parts of Karen State have been getting stronger and they also found the ways how to find the human rights defenders. However, the regime continuously denies to respect the internationally recognized human rights.

bankment with 2-3 feet in height. The villagers have to dig earth alongside of the route and then built the embankment. The villagers also had to carry their own food and tools from their homes.

Accordingly to our human rights workers, about 60 % of labourers in the construction are women, children and elderly people, because the men were busy in the farmers and other works for regular income. Many poor families have to come and work because they could not afford to hire substitute labourers.

While the authorities were planning for the conscription of forced labour from the Mon villages, the Mon political party New Mon State Party (NMSP) which has ceasefire with the regime, also against the plan and consulted with SPDC authorities to not use forced labour. But they rejected. On March 12, commander-in-chief of Southeast Command also threatened the NMSP officials 'do not disturb' their project.

Now, the road construction was completed only 4 miles, and when the rain started in early May, they stopped this project.

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Farmers tried to find defenders for their suffering

(April 2003, Mon State)

The farmers from all Townships of Mon State and 3 Townships in Karen State wrote an appeal letter to two well-known Mon and Pa-oh ethnic senior Bud-

dhist monks to stop the military regime, SPDC, from buying paddy from them at low price.

In 4 pages long hand-written letter, which put the name of Mon State's 10 Townships and Karen State's 3 Townships' farmer associations, sent to the Senior Abbots, Rev. Kesara, a well-known monk in Mon State, and Rev. Vinaya (also known as Thamanya Sayadaw), a well-known in Karen State, on April 17. In the letter, first, the farmers expresses how the hardship and poverty conditions of the rural farmers due to the regime's paddy purchasing policy.

In this policy, the SPDC set to farmers that they need to sell 10 to 15 baskets of paddy from one acre of lands, at price 300-350 Kyat per basket, which is 10 times less than in the market prices. They did not listen any reasons from the farmers, such as crop reduction due to flood, rain, or others, but they said to sell a full amount of paddy. (One basket of paddy is about 46 pounds in weight.)

Many farmers, if they did not have sufficient paddy amount to complete selling to the regime, they needed to buy paddy from markets at high price and sold at low price to the regime set paddy-buying centers. In the letter, the farmers also expressed that for a farmer who did not have sufficient paddy, they have to buy the paddy from the markets with price of 2500-3000 Kyat per basket and when they sold to paddy-buying center, they could receive only 350 Kyat per basket. Therefore, for a farmer, he lost 2000 Kyat for every basket. If he needed to sell 100 baskets of paddy to

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 e-mail as below:

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With regards,

Director
Human Rights Foundation of Monland

had to pay 4500 Kyat; and Hnee-pa-daw had to pay 11000 Kyat respectively. Many other villages also have to pay like these villages.

In Mudon Township alone, the authorities collected about 250, 000 Kyat from 45 villages in Township. Southeast Command requested 2 million Kyat from 10 Townships in Mon State for this ceremony.

Tax for competition of paddy planting

In August 2002, when MOMC No. 19 commander Brigadier Ye Myint planned to arrange a competition for paddy planting in Lamine village's farm, Ye Township, he ordered the authorities to collect money from the villages.

This fund collection to spend for several expenses in competition. They ordered the village headmen from Lamine village to collect this fund from villages under Lamine village tract. There are 6 villages in that village tract.

The authorities ordered to collect 300 Kyat from each household. In 6 villages in this village tract, there are about 4000 households and the authorities could receive over 1 million Kyat fund in total.

The authorities and army commander spent just small amount of money in giving prizes to winners in competition.

A farmer said, 'they got large money and they would not spend all money. I think they would share among them'. In Burma, corruption is always accompanying in every case of tax collection.

Tax from the gamblers

During the early of February, 2002, Navy Battalion No. 37 based in an island in Chaung-zon Township, western of Moulmein (see in Mon State map), coordinated with Township authorities set the gambling den near battalion headquarters and allowed 10 days gambling. During these days, the authorities and army commanders collected tax from the gamblers. They set many gambling dens especially playing card game and collected 3000-5000 Kyat per night from one den. They allowed about 40 dens every night and could receive a lot of fund from them.

During February and early March, the authorities moved from one Mon village to another in island and set gambling dens and collected tax from gamblers. Starting from March 17, while there was a pagoda festival in a new town section in Chaung-zon Town, the authorities set about 50 gambling dens and allowed them

alongside of the road, clearing bushes and grasses alongside of the road and repairing some bridges.

Villagers were instructed to carry their own foods from their homes and walked to work site every day if they were close. By the instruction of the army commander, the village headmen asked one villager from each household to contribute their unpaid labour. Piece of work for the villagers is: 3 villagers must complete all works laying stones; digging canals; and clearing grasses and bushes in 1 furlong length of the road.

According to a villager from Aleskan village, they were ordered to work for 7 days in the work site to complete the duty. If the work site was far from their villages, the villagers also had to travel by ferry to reach there. They also had to pay ferry cost, 700-1400 Kyat depending on distance from their villages to work sites. As they have to work for many days they also slept in army barracks at night.

In some houses, if men were working in farms, the women and children (under 18 years old) had to go instead of their fathers. If one house could not go, they had to hire a substitute by paying 5000 Kyat for the whole work duty or for 7 days works.

The village headmen managed on a rotation basis in sending the villager labourers to work site. If they failed to manage they must be punished by Burmese Army. At least one member of every family had to work in the work site. The road repairs completed on October 25.

During the repairs of this motor road, the village PDC authorities, who led the requisition of forced labour never paid any compensation cost for those who received serious injury.

Bridge construction on Moulmein – Ye motor road

On March 2, 2002, an old bridge between Son-htit-tar and Aru-taung villages in the northern part of Ye Township was destroyed and the Township's construction department did not come and rebuild the bridge. Transportation was cut for some days and the nearest military battalion of Burmese Army, LIB No. 343, took responsibility to build a new road for temporary use and to repair the bridge.

So the battalion commander collected fund, 10000 Kyat from every ferry car that used the road and collected from the civilians 500 Kyat each. Many ferry owners and passengers were too disappointed with this fund collection. One ferry driver said, collection of fund was too much and the battalion could get a lot of extra money. About 200 ferry cars used that road and many hundreds of travelers used the road.

VII. Unfair Tax in rural areas

Since every battalion of the Burmese Army did not have sufficient fund for general expenses in their bases or during the military patrol, they normally extort money from the civilians. The commanders just ordered the village headmen when they needed money and the headmen took responsibility in collecting money for the army.

In many times, to get money from the civilians, the commanders of Burmese Army normally showed the reason of an important occasions or development activities, such as school building, equipping computer system in schools, hospital building, and others. After collecting huge amounts of money from the civilians, the army battalions or commands concerned cut some money and use for their own expenses. In most cases, the responsible commanders, who collected money, never have accountability for the use of collecting money to the civilians or headmen, and therefore, they use the money as they liked.

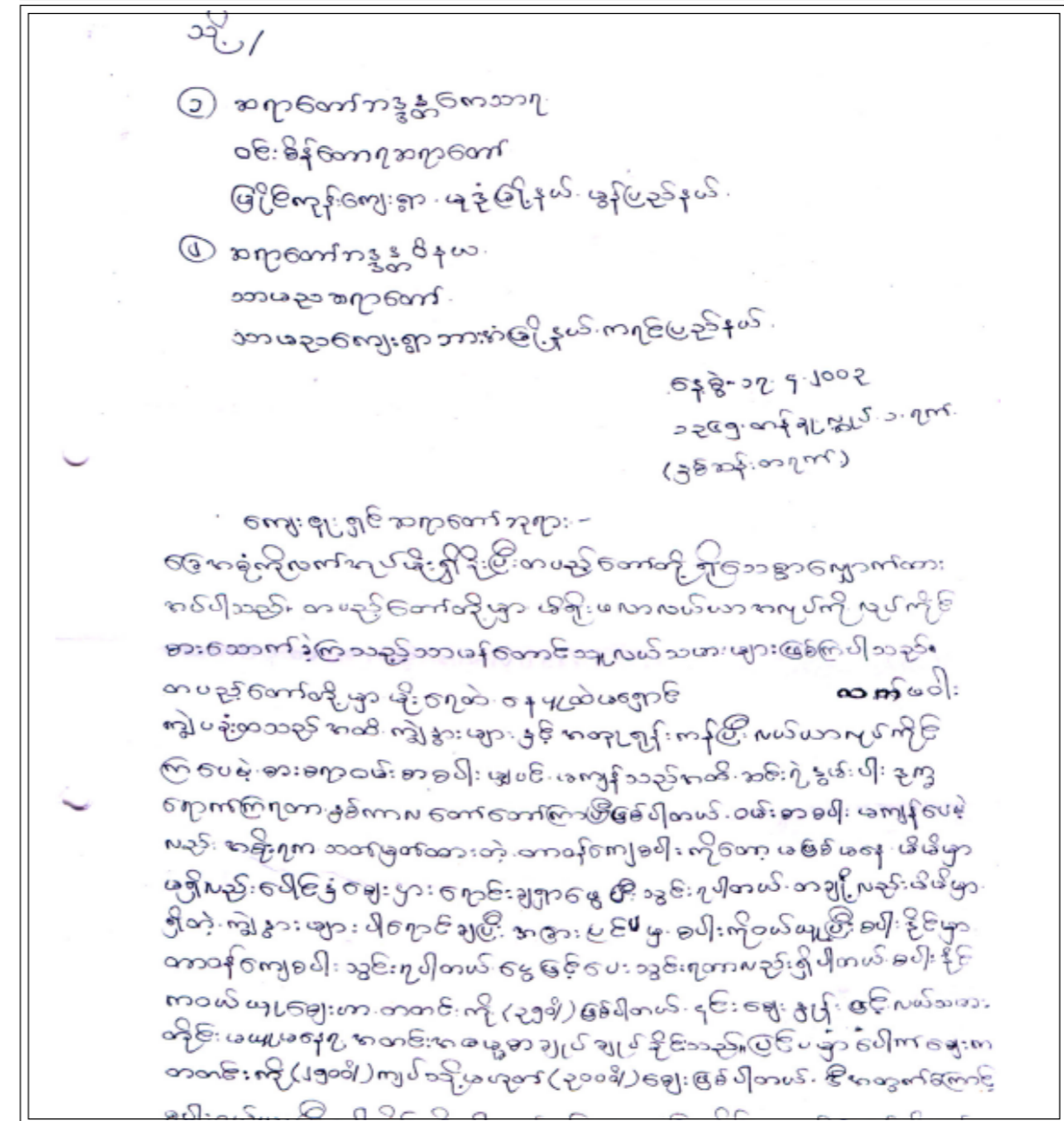
The instances are:

Tax for Tatmadaw Day

To celebrate 57th Anniversary Armed Force (Tatmadaw) Day on March 27 in the hall of Southeast Command in Moulmein, Mon State, the authorities in every Township are requested to provide fund for the celebration.

In Mudon Township, every village was asked to provide fund for the ceremony. Depending on the household numbers, the demanded fund is from 3000 Kyat to 15000 Kyat for each village.

For example, three Mon villages in Township, Kwan-hlar village had to pay 7500 Kyat; Yaung-daung village



Petition letter from farmers to the Senior monks.

the regime, then he lost about 200, 000 Kyat in total.

The letter also added that there were many farmers who lost the crops in the last rainy season because of flood. Those farmers who totally lost their crops were also forced by the authorities to sell their paddy. Some farmers also had to hide and some fled from their native villages. Some farmers were also beaten by the police officers and the authorities. The letter also mentioned about an old man, Nai La (78 years old), who was tortured by a police officer in Kyaikmayaw Township of Mon State.

The farmers appealed that the farmers survive in their agriculture activities and they could not work other occupations and could not find income from other sources. If the regime continues their policy of buying rice from the farmers, they could face a big hardship and difficulties for survival.

They demanded the Senior Monks to pressure the regime,

- To cease buying of paddy at low price from farmers, or,
- To buy paddy accordingly to the market price

The farmers also concluded that as they believe in the Buddhism, the donations to monks and other religious affairs are quite. However many poor Buddhist farmers could not make donations and so that poverty conditions among farmers affect to the religion. They also added that they also believe to two Senior monks to relieve their plight.

Many the farmer associations are formed secretly formed in their communities and the leaders have tried to find the way how to relieve the suffering of the majority farmers.

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Report

Burmese Army (Tatmadaw) Involvement in Extortion and Corruption in Burma

I. Increased numbers of Burmese Army but no available military budget

In 1988, the troop number of Burmese Army was 180,000. In September 1988, after the Burmese Army under the name of State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) seized the political power by killing thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators, and at the same time, the Burmese Army planned to extend the number of Burmese Army up to 400,000 – 500,000 troops.

Burma has been under the least developed nation since 1997 and the new military rule in 1988 also lost the supports from the international community for its killing of the civilians. Burma which has been isolated for 26 years under the rule militarized socialist system was again ruled by the army again. Western countries condemned the rule of the Burmese Army, but some ASEAN countries exploited the natural resources from Burma. Those countries involved in logging concessions, fishing industries and other concessions and has supported the military with the policy of 'constructive engagement'.

After opening the countries for selling the national resources, dealing with businesses and inviting foreign investments, SLORC received some foreign income. By these foreign currency, the SLORC could buy more arms, ammunitions, jet fighters and armors from China in the modernization of the Burmese Army. Therefore, the Burmese Army gets some strengths and could operate more military offensives against the ethnic arm oppositions and could overthrow many bases belonged to the rebels.

At the same time, the Burmese Army gradually increased the troop numbers in the Burmese Army and has extended many light infantry battalions in various parts of Burma, especially in the non-Burman ethnic areas. SPDC and the Burmese Army also tried to take control of border areas where the ethnic armed oppositions could raise their fund from border trade.

When there is more troop number, the SPDC and Burmese Army have to use more State budget to provide sheltering, foods and salaries for the soldiers. This is a big burden for the Burmese Army to provide enough foods and salaries to all soldiers. The regime has used 40% of the State budget for the army. But this expense are still not enough for all required costs for all soldiers in the whole country. When more and more troops take bases and more military deployments in the rural areas of the ethnic areas, the ethnic people have not only suffered from various violations related to the suspicion of the rebel-supporters, but the civilians also have to provide them with foods and money.

On the other hand, during under the rule of military regime, the local military battalions or military divisions have the most power in the region and they also helped implementing the development or infrastructure projects on behalf of the regime. The commanders themselves not only involved in forcing the civilians to contribute unpaid labour but also collected various types of fund from the civilians in supports of the project.

Additionally, when there is an important occasions, the army also involved in the arrangement of celebrating the ceremonies, but they also forced civilians in paying fund. Even some military trainings, the civilians needed to pay for all expenses if possible to the soldiers.

Under the rule of the regime, SPDC, the commanders and soldiers could have interfered in all administrative activities and the administrative authorities have to listen to them. Again, they also abused power and ordered the administrative authorities to involve in the defense or army's duties, such as taking as local militiamen for area security purposes and recruited even firemen, village headmen, and young people in the community, to involve in the military training schools. They have to take the security in their own areas.

The following accounts how the members of Burmese Army involved in abusing the power not only in the military purposes, but also in the administration and development purposes.

II. Livelihoods and Income of the civilians

Burma, although it has rich natural resources, but it became the most poorest country in the world under 26 years under the rule of 'socialist' government, Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP). Over 80% of the population are in the rural areas and their main livelihood is working in agriculture especially growing paddy, bean and other crops. Burma is also known as agricultural country.

To be sufficient for many soldiers in the base, they had to send many kilograms of meat or fishes, at least about 20 kilograms weight of meats or fishes for them, said by one of village headmen.

Similarly to LIB No. 538, a commander from LIB No. 354, Cap. Kyaw Lin also constantly requested from the many similar villages nearby. According to a village headman, the commanders asked at least 10 kilograms of pork or beef or fishes from the villagers and so that the village headmen had to send the foods to reach to their bases.

Ye Township, Mon State

On July 2002, The village headmen of Khaw-za village, southern part of Ye Township, collected 500 Kyat from every house on a monthly basis, to pay for food expenses that paid in feeding Burmese soldiers.

Whenever Burmese soldiers (local name for members of Burmese Army) arrived into Khaw-za village, they always asked village headmen to provide them some food, especially rice and meat. Additionally, they also asked liquor, beer, bervarages and cigarettes. Village headmen had to manage and bought foods, beer, liquor, beverages and cigarettes with debt and promised to pay later.

The Burmese Army's military columns arrived into village many times. Each time, the headmen had to feed at least 20 soldiers and sometimes, up to 200 soldiers. Whether the number of soldiers were much or less the headmen needed to arrange for foods and other stuff for them.

For the headmen, they were too busy for this management because the Burmese soldiers came into village very often. As an example, IB No. 61's 70 troops went into village on 2nd July and stayed there for 3 days. After only one day IB No. 61 troops left, another 60 troops from LIB No. 343 came into village again. They stayed for another three days.

Thus, the village headmen have to spend a lot of money for feeding different group of soldiers. Burmese soldiers never brought their own food and just ask from the civilians.

As Khaw-za village has about 800 households, the headmen could collect 300000-400000 Kyat from the villagers. At the end of each month, the headmen had to pay all debts to shops from where they bought food and other stuff.

Additionally, if a base of Burmese Army is close to the village, they have regularly asked for food on a regular basis. Some battalions did not ask foods from one village, but they have asked from many other villages.

VII. Burmese Army's involvement in the development activities

As the Burmese Army has the most power in the country, they also involved or interfered in development activities in various parts of Burma, especially in the road constructions, road repairs, water canals and dike construction. In most construction, the commanders of Burmese Army not only forced the civilians to contribute their labour and they also forced them to contribute money.

Some instances of these development activities conducted by the commanders of Burmese Army were:

Ye-Tavoy motor road repairs

Starting from October 8 until 25, 2002 a local military battalion in Yebyu Township, LIB No. 282 has forced many hundreds of Mon and Karen people in Ye-Tavoy motor road repairs.

This motor road is over 100 miles long and connects Ye Town in Mon State and Tavoy town in Tenasserim Division. The road repairs was done after rainy season (rainy season ends in September), because flood and rain water destroyed some parts of the road and water canals alongside of the road were also full with mud.

LIB No. 282 commander, Lt. Col. Maung Aung led in the conscription of forced labour from local villages, which situates along the motor road. The villagers from over 15 villages under Yapu, Aleskan, Kalein-aung and Pauk-pin-gwin village tracts of Yebyu Township were forced in the road repairs.

The conscripts were forced in works laying stones (to be ready for tarring), digging water canals

Town to Ye Township area and they brought the porters along with them. After they reached to their destination, they released them without any payment even for their travel and food when they needed to return.

Although Burma's regime, SPDC, promised to International Labour Organization (ILO) to eradicate all practices of forced labour in Burma, however, the higher military commanders in Rangoon and in various commands still blinded their eyes for their battalions' commanders arrest of porters and take porter fee from the civilians. Porter service for Burmese Army in Burma is the most serious and cruel use of 'forced labour'.

VI. Collecting and extortion of tax, materials and food from civilians

In Ye Township, there are about 14 military battalions, the local population have been greatly suffered from the conscription of porters by not only one or two battalions, but the commanders from various military battalions forced the villagers to be porters or unpaid labours. These battalions have been constructing the military camps continuously and have forced the civilians in the northern part of Ye Township to provide building materials.

Not only the Burmese Army's battalions in Ye Township, many battalions from other parts of Karen State and Tenasserim Division, the southern part of Burma, request the tax, building materials and foods from the civilians on a rotation basis.

As some instances in Karen State,

In Kawkareik Township, Karen State

On August 18, 2002, 2nd Warrant Officer Thein Sein from LIB No. 545 based Kyone-doe village, ordered the villagers from Kanni village to send 10 pole of bamboo for each household to their base for the construction of military barrack and fence round the base. To get this materials, one man have to spend at least one day to go into forest, cut them and carry to their designated place. Not only the villagers from Kanni village were forced to provide bamboo, villagers from many other villagers were forced to provide the similar amount of bamboo.

Kya-inn-seikyi Township, Karen State

Case 1:

On April 6, when the troops of LIB No. 354 led by Lt. Col. Kyaw Soe went into Win-yaw-seikyi village, the commander tried to confiscate the villagers' wooden lumbers in the village. Although most villagers who involved in lumber trade also paid tax to Township Forestry Department and received permission to make lumbers, but the army still confiscated their lumber.

When the soldiers arrived into Win-yaw-seikyi village, they found Nai Myat's lumbers on the riverbank and accused he involved in illegal logging. Although he proved his permit documents for making lumbers, the commander did not believe and told him to pay them tax similarly to forestry authorities. And so he had to pay them with 35,000 Kyat as tax.

And the troops went along the river and found wooden lumbers along the riverbank and could not find the owners of those materials. As most owners of lumber were afraid of being arrested or tortured they did not appear up to admit of their owns. Therefore, the commander confiscated all these wooden lumbers.

On the same day April 6, the troops also moved to another village, War-hmyin-gon village and confiscated about 3 tons of wooden lumbers. On the next day of April 7, LIB No. 354 soldiers conscripted 10 oxen-carts from Mee-pran village and carried all lumbers that they confiscated in village and along the riverbank to their battalion headquarters in Taung-dee village.

Case 2:

In Taung-dee village, the Burmese Army's LIB No. 354 and LIB No. 538 are taking bases in there. Various ranks of army commanders from these military battalions have increasingly also requested food supplies from the villages nearby to sent them especially different meats and fishes.

In January and February 2002, a low rank commander of LIB No. 538, Cap. Thein Tun took responsibility to find supplementary foods by demanding from the villages in the surrounding area. The commander requested foods from 7 villages on a rotation basis. The villages that needed to send foods are from Khawon, Taung-dee, Wae-zot, Mee-pran, Win-yaw, Hlaing-ka-noy and Hla-kada villages.

When the neighbouring countries of Burma, Thailand, Malaysia and China planned to step up as industrialized countries, however Burma has remained as 'agricultural' country, with low income among the civilians. When the Burmese Army under the name of SLORC seized the political power from pro-demonstrators in 1998, although the new regime opened the country to welcome foreign investments, but the investors had lack of trust on the Burmese political situation. But the regime sold the country's rich national resources to get foreign currency in their attempt to maintain the political power. Many foreign companies also withdrew their investments from Burma after they lost profit or faced 'stop doing business in Burma' campaign in their own countries.

The people in both urban and rural still face worsening poverty situation because of less employment in the country and tax extortion conducted by the regime on the regular basis. Additionally, the currency inflation and rocketed price of food and commodities in Burma, the people in many parts of the country could not afford to buy even sufficient basic foods.

The income level in Burma is too low. One labourer who worked for the whole day more than 8 hours could get labour cost, 1000 Kyat (1.1 US Dollar) per day. One family could buy only one Kilogram of pork with this amount of money. In Burma, a government servant receives only 5000 Kyat salaries and thus, their families could not rely on them.

In rural areas, a farmer owned lands from 2 acres to 20 acres. The farmers have income after selling their crops. Most farmers grow paddy and they could produce 20-80 baskets of paddy per year. One basket of paddy is about 46 pounds in weight (about 20 kilograms) and it could produce about 12 kilograms of rice. A farmer could sell a basket of paddy with price 2500-3000 Kyat in the market. Additionally, the farmers also have to sell their paddy to the SPDC set paddy-buying centers at low price, 350 Kyat per basket. The farmers have to sell 8 to 15 baskets per acre to the regime at low price.

While the civilians have less income and could not have the sufficient foods, housing materials and other requirement, the members of Burmese Army who are similarly poor tried to extort money from the civilians as much as they can. SPDC could not allocate enough budget in the military purposes and again the commanders and soldiers from the battalions concerned extort or loot from the civilians.

III. Recruits of the civilians to be soldiers and expenses in training

When the Burmese Army extended the number of its troops, they also conscripted the villagers to be militia-men and then used them as 'soldiers' to patrol their own areas. During the military schools, the villagers also have to pay for all expenses. The instances are:

Yebyu Township

In July and August 2002, LIB No. 282 forced the villagers from Aleskan village tract in Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division to attend the basic military training for one week with a purpose to use all villagers to serve as members of militia force in their area.

According to the villagers, LIB No. 282 registered all number of villagers of men between 18 years and 50 years old and the women between 18 years and 40 years old and planned to provide basic arm equipment and military training in early July. The trainers from LIB No. 282 would provide them 7 days short days training for many rounds.

Each household which has no paddy farms or fruit plantations needs to provide 2000 Kyat to trainer during 7 days training. And each house-holds have to provide 4000 Kyat as special payment to trainers.

After training, the villagers were forced to be militia-men or militia-women on a rotation basis although most of them would not like to join in this armed force that needs to support the Burmese Army in the area. They must be work at least 7 days each time and militia leaders would manage the conscription on a rotation basis. If one household failed to provide when rotation arrived to them, that family must have to pay 4500 Kyat as a fine.

Aleskan village tract has four villages and it has about 500 households. The majority of villagers are Mon people. SPDC or Burmese Army's two military battalions, LIB No. 273 and LIB No. 282 launched the military activities in this area. The Mon splinter armed group also launched the military activities in the area, those battalions mainly tried to fight against this rebel armed force.

IV. More porters and levying of porter fee in rural areas

The Burmese Army has launched the military operations against a Mon splinter group in the southern part of Ye Township and various parts of Yebyu Township areas. If compared with the Mon people in various parts of Mon State, the villagers in this area have been constantly suffered from the porter service. The local village headman has to provide villager porters to the army battalion concerned. In the isolated remote areas, the Burmese Army has not worried for the monitoring of ILO on their use of forced labour.

If the Burmese Army does not ask for the porters from the villages, they normally asked money from the villagers with a reason of hiring the porters. The village headmen took responsibility in providing money for them and then they again collected from the villagers.

Some instances of the conscription of porter and levying of porter fees are:

By LIB No. 273 in Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division

In January 2003, when the Burmese Army's LIB No. 273 planned to launch military offensives against a Mon splinter group in the area, they also take 3 porters from each village in Yebyu Township for 7 days period.

LIB No. 273 troops are led by Maj. Kyaw Soe and he has about 60 men in launching the offensives. He ordered the village headmen from the villages, along Ye – Tavoy motor road to provide their troops with three porters every 7 days.

Accordingly to the a porter from Yapu village who returned from the porter service said that, the soldiers forced them to carry about 6 motor shells and an army bag with food supplies. He added, most porters could not get sleep at night-time because of mosquito.

The commander, Maj. Kyaw Soe also instructed to the village headmen, the villagers must not flee during the porter service. If they fled and then are arrested at villages, they must be punished to pay 10000 Kyat, one sack (about 66 kilogram) of rice, and face 20 times beating with gun-butts.

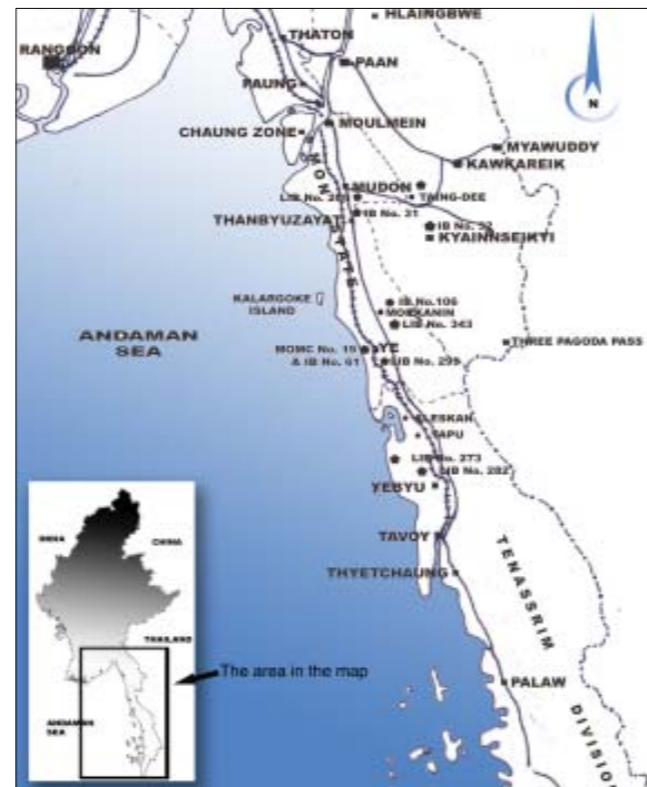
The villagers from many villages such as Aleskan, Law-thaing, Kyaukadin, Kywetalin, Yapu are serving for porters to the battalion. They prepared for readiness when the soldiers came and took the porters. The soldiers took 3 porters every time they came into village and moved to another village. When they arrived to another village, they also took another three porters.

On the other hand, the troops from LIB No. 282 and LIB No. 273 ordered to not get out from the village without permission letter from village headmen or army commanders. They also ordered the farmers not to take more food than one day meal. If they found the villagers without permission, if the man he must be punished and if woman, she must have to pay.

By LIB No. 586 in Ye Township, Mon State

On June 25, when the troops of LIB No. 586, which is under the command of MOMC No. 19, launched a military offensives in the southern part of Ye Township, the Burmese soldiers also arrested many porters from Yin-ye village and demanded porter fee.

Before the troops arrived into the village, they arrested all villages and farmers who they saw in the village and used them as porters to carry ammunitions and food supplies along with them. They arrested nearly 20 villagers and used them as porters, said by a villager.



Map of Mon State, Karen State and Tenasserim Division

When they arrived into the village, the commander called the village headmen and asked them to pay for porter fee if the whole villagers would not like to be porters. The soldiers asked the village headmen to pay them 2000 Kyat from every household immediately.

The commander also complained to the village headmen, "you are also collecting tax fund for rebels. We are defending for your security, why don't you pay us." The headmen had no choice and had to collect for them.

The village has about 400 households and most percentages of villagers are poor fishermen. The commander and his troops also waited for one night until they got complete amount of money from the villagers. Then, on the next day, after receiving money, the troops took 20 porters along with them and returned to their base.

V. Battalion change and Porter Fees

Normally, the Burmese Army deploys the army battalions in the border areas, such as in Three Pagoda Pass (opposite of Thailand's Kanchanaburi Province); in Myawaddy (opposite of Thailand's trade town, Mae Sot) and others just temporarily to prevent the soldiers' escape into Thailand. Whenever the new battalions arrive to the border area, the commanders experienced that there have been many soldiers flee into Thailand to seek works.

Why? When the soldiers are in very poor conditions why they are in the battalion concerned. There are many young and child soldiers. They are not fed with sufficient food and they have to work for many hours during the offensives or even in the normal military operations. When they arrived the border areas, they also found the opportunity to flee into Thailand.

Therefore, the Burmese Army's operational commands have instructed one battalion for only three months and then after three months, they also have to exchange with another battalion and return to their battalion base. When there is military change in the border bases (opposite of Thailand), the civilians have been suffered to pay porter fees or to be porters to carry things and ammunitions from the border areas to the battalion bases in jungle roads.

As an instance,

On September 10, 2002, in the troop exchange between LIB No. 34 and LIB No. 550 in Three Pagoda Pass Town, LIB No. 34 required many porters because they needed to return to their bases in Karen State. Quarterly troop exchange was managed by Southeast Command in Mouldmein, the capital of Mon State, because there was no permanent battalion in there. However they could not make arrest as they liked, in this town because news for this human rights violations could be separated to the media. Then they informed to Township authorities that they would hire some civilians and called them 'paid porters'. It hired about 30 porters from town with payment, 1500 Baht (the people in this border town uses Thai currency Baht even it is in Burma) per head. Those paid porters needed to carry ammunitions and food supplies for over 10 days during rainy season. As the jungle roads were quite slippery and the water level in streams were high, therefore they have to pay for porters with possible price.

But the battalion commander did not have responsibility for these expenses and just ordered the Township authorities to collect porter fee from every house in Township. The amount range of porter fee collection in town was 70 Baht to 400 Baht. Depending on the economic conditions of the households, the amount of porter fee also varied. In this border town, there are about 1000 households and the authorities could collect a lot of money. According to reliable source, they received about 150, 000 Baht in total for porter fee.

But some military battalions did not care for the separate of the news into media for their arrest of porters in the bordre areas. They both arrested porters as they liked, but outside of main border town and also asked for porter fees from the civilians.

Another instance in Three Pagoda Pass Town is:

On December 20, 2002, after exchanging with new military battalion, the troops of LIB No. 550 planned to return to Mon State from Three Pagoda Pass Township. The battalion's soldiers did not arrest any civilian in the town and left from town without porters. After leaving, they arrested the villagers especially farmers who were traveling or who stayed in farms and used them as porters. They conscripted about 20 porters along with them. They walked for 4 days from Three Pagoda Pass