

**PHYSICIANS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS / DENMARK
AND
DANCHURCHAID**

**VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS
IN
BURMA**

REPORT OF A FACT-FINDING MISSION NOVEMBER 1997

by

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SUMMARY

In November 1997, Physicians for Human Rights / Denmark and DanChurchAid visited Thailand to describe violations of human rights committed against Burmese refugees in their home country. We interviewed and examined people mainly from rural areas in the Shan, Karenni and Karen regions of Burma.

We asked about exposure of family members to forced labour, porter service, forced relocation, arrests, physical ill-treatment incl. torture, and about killing, rape and disappearances of family members or persons from the village of the examined person. Furthermore, we asked about landmine incidents among the examinees, family members or persons from their village. If the examinee confirmed such exposure, we asked about details according to interview forms.

In case the interviewed person alleged exposure to physical assaults, a physical examination was performed to assess whether there was agreement between the reported exposure and the presence or absence of scars or other physical sequels.

In total, 188 persons were examined and interviewed.

92 persons, incl 46 Shans, were examined. 61 (66%) reported exposure to two or more of the mentioned violations of human rights. 34 (37%) had fled within the last year (median 5 months) before our examination. There was no difference between the exposure to human rights violations committed against the Shans compared to the others. Those who had fled recently were as heavily exposed as the rest of the examinees.

Of the 92 persons examined, it was among other things reported that 65% had done porter service, that 51% had been relocated from their villages, that 14% had been tortured, that 36% had experienced killing of family members (not from landmine explosions) and that 25% (themselves or family members) had been traumatized or killed by landmines.

In all cases of reported exposure to ill-treatment / torture or landmine incidents we found agreement between the history and the result of the clinical examination.

Furthermore, 96 persons were interviewed. Of this group, 40% had fled within the last 12 months before our examination. Those who had fled most recently had been more heavily exposed to human rights violation than the others who had fled earlier.

We **conclude** that the 188 persons examined and interviewed represent various ethnic groups, mainly from rural areas in Burma, which have been heavily exposed to human rights violations. Our results do not indicate that the Shan people has been less exposed than other groups. We find no signs of amelioration of the human rights situation in Burma within the last year. Apart from the landmine problem, in which local guerilla groups are involved, troops from the Burmese army are responsible for all the described violations of human rights.

PREFACE

Previously known as "The Asian Ricebowl", Burma was once one of the richest countries in that part of the world, far ahead of Thailand and Singapore. However, in January 1998 as Burma celebrates 50 years of independence from the former British rulers, the country is one of the poorest in Asia with millions of under-nourished people and refugees often with no access to health or education.

The 48.3 million inhabitants are living under a military dictatorship introduced by General Ne Win in 1962. Under Ne Win the country was almost completely isolated and his way of "Burmese Socialism" failed totally. Since 1989 and until recently the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) has ruled the country, and they disregarded the election results of 1990 where Aung San Suu Kyi's party, NLD, won 82 per cent of the votes.

In November 1997 SLORC changed its name to State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), but the dictatorship changed very little. SPDC is today more a result of an internal battle between the generals with supporters for General Khin Nyunt winning over General Tun Kyi's group.

Burma opens up

In this decade Burma has tried to lure foreign investment in order to strengthen its economy. However, the results have been limited, especially after the economic collapse in many Asian countries in 1997. Aung San Suu Kyi's call for sanctions, which the USA introduced last year on new investment in Burma, could also have had some effect.

Tourism boomed during the 1990s, but suffered a downturn after December 1996, when students in Rangoon launched demonstrations against SLORC, and reports of violence scared visitors away. The campaigns launched by the Burma Committee against tourism may also have some effect.

Rich country, poor people

The Burmese population is living on a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of USD 650, ten times less than Thailand. Burma, fertile and 676.000 square kilometers wide (15 times bigger than Denmark,) has plenty of oil, gas, tin, plutonium, zinc, copper, cobalt, gold, rubies, jade and teak, but the resources - apart from teak - have been used very scarcely.

Burma's former major export, rice, has decreased from 2 million tons in 1962, when Ne Win introduced his dictatorship, to only 20,000 tons in 1996. The "Burmese Socialism" tried to introduce subsidised prices for rice and other necessary commodities, so that even poor people could get sufficient to eat, but this system collapsed more than a decade ago for civilian people. Only the government still uses artificially low prices when they force farmers to sell rice to them, thereby weakening the livelihood of these farmers. Farmers often claim that they are forced to sell rice for next to nothing to the government only to buy expensive rice on the free market for their own families' survival.

Another problem for food stability is the internal refugees and forced relocation. Approximately two million people have been moved away from town and villages, leaving empty farms behind.

All together the result was that at least 7-10 million people - often rice-farmers and internal refugees - were mal- or undernourished in Burma in 1996. After the severe flooding in

1997, when 40 per cent of the crop was lost, the amount of hungry people may be even higher today. Starvation level is predicted in ethnic areas.

Gas and opium

But the government is getting rich on two major products: Gas and opium. According to the USA opium production has increased dramatically since SLORC came to power, and 60-70 per cent of the 1994 estimated production of 2400 tons entered the USA. For the moment opium is probably the major source of income for Burma, but in the near future money from gas will also fill government coffers in Rangoon. Two pipelines are under construction in the southern part of the country, from the Indian Ocean through Burma to Thailand. The oil companies Total, Unocal and Texaco have been criticized by human rights groups for their investments in the pipelines, and Texaco withdrew from its project in Burma after the criticism.

The people

Burma is a patchwork of different tribes and people, from almost black-skinned persons who look like Bangladeshi, to nearly white-skinned of with Chinese origins. According to measuring methods, 25-40 percent of the population are ethnic tribes, the rest is ethnically Burmese.

The unrest in Burma is often believed to be due to wars between the tribes, and sometimes it has been true, especially when Burma got its independence in the late 1940's. But in the 1990 election, there was surprisingly an understanding between the tribal groups and ethnic Burmese in support of Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD-party.

84-85 per cent of the population is Buddhist, the rest are animist (5 per cent), Christian (4,5-5,5 per cent), Muslim (4 per cent) and Hindu (1,5 per cent). The mon-people in Burma brought Buddhism to South East Asia from India and Sri Lanka almost 2,000 years ago, and they are, together with the ethnic Burmese, mainly Buddhists. Christianity is seen mostly among the ethnic tribes, and Islam and Hinduism among immigrants from India and Bangladesh.

Outside Burma

According to the exiled National Coalition Government of United Burma (NCGUB,) 370,000 ' refugees were living outside Burma in 1996, most of them in Thailand. DanChurchAid, which is the major non governmental organisation in Denmark supporting Burmese refugees, used DKK 7 million (approximately USD one million) in 1997 to support the 125.000 refugees in camps along the Thai-Burmese border.

Including illegal immigrants, Thailand gives shelter to approximately one million Burmese. During Thailand's economic boom they worked on construction sites, but they are currently facing problems after Thailand's economic collapse in the autumn of 1997 and the concurrent increase in unemployment.

Thailand only accepts Karen and Karenni from Burma in the refugee camps. Mon have been asked to go back to camps in Burma after a ceasefire was reached between SLORC and New Mon State Party in 1995. Shans have never been allowed to stay in camps, despite requests to the Thai government. Therefore, all the approximately 200.000 Shans presently in Thailand are there illegally.

The members of the NCGUB government live in different countries, but keep close contact to each other and Aung San Suu Kyi. The last NCGUB meeting was held in Frederiksdal in Denmark in July 1997 on the invitation of The Danish Burma Committee. They had to meet without Aung San Suu Kyi, because she would, needless to say, be prohibited from re-entering Burma, once outside the country.

One of the major problems for NCGUB is that Burma was accepted in 1997 as an ASEAN-member. This could "white-wash" the reputation of the military dictatorship, and open the doors for Burma to the rest of the world, especially other ASEAN-member countries.

In Denmark DanChurchAid cooperates with The Danish Burma Committee. Both organisations want international sanctions against Burma, which the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Niels Helweg Petersen, supports. In 1996 the Minister tried to convince other EU-countries to introduce sanctions against Burma, however he was not successful.

In 1998 Human Rights is a major theme for DanChurchAid, and cooperation with Physicians for Human Rights Denmark is a major element in our work to help people who have been victims of violation and abuse.

Bjarne Ussing

Mr. Ussing is coordinator for DanChurchAid's Burma campaign, and travelled together with the four physicians to Thailand November 1997. Information in this article is only on behalf of DanChurchAid.

Sources: Human Development Report 1996 (UNDP), Human Rights Yearbook 1996 (NCGUB), Embassies in Rangoon, The Danish Burma Committee, Gyldendals Dictionary and Euro-Burma Office Bruxelles.

INTRODUCTION

Various organizations have described the violations of human rights in Burma during the past years (1-11), all committed by the Burmese army. These studies mostly describe selected episodes and events without relating them to the overall situation in the country. The problem has been similarly mentioned in a few scientific journals (12-14).

To our knowledge there has been no previous systematic epidemiological study of the Burmese population's exposure to human rights' violations, apart from that of Allden et al. (15). Because of the safety of the involved persons, such studies must take place outside Burma.

Thus, Allden et al. examined 104 Burmese, mainly students who had fled to Bangkok after the 1988 uprising. The purpose of the study was to assess them psychologically, including the possible presence of PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) and depression.

In 1991, Physicians for Human Rights / USA also made a study in Thailand; they obtained 47 eyewitness accounts from refugees along the border with Burma (16). The study was not epidemiological, and clinical examinations were not done.

The present study was primarily an attempt to examine the exposure of the rural population to various violations, and when relevant to perform a clinical examination in order to evaluate the validity of the accounts given.

Furthermore, we wanted to study whether the past years had seen a change in the conditions of the rural populations, and if possible to compare the conditions of various ethnic groups in Burma.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was planned as a cross-sectional examination. We wanted to find out about Burmese refugees' exposure to various forms of violations of human rights in their home country.

According to available information, the exposures included: forced labour and work as porters for SLORC's armed forces, forced relocation, arbitrary arrest and detention, physical violation including torture, either during detention or on other occasions, threats in various connections, killing of family members or disappearances, e.g. following arrest or during service as a porter, and rape. These forms of violation were registered from testimonies of members of the family or the household.

Furthermore, questions were asked about violations against other people, i.e. people living in the same village or people with whom the interviewee had done forced labour or porter service. The questions concerned physical violations, executions, cases of rape in the village, and disappearances of persons other than family members. Questions were also asked about deaths and injuries from land-mines, involving household members/family, fellow villagers, or fellow forced labourers.

The individual examinations started with use of an overall questionnaire concerning basic demographic data, e.g. age, sex, family and household pattern, occupation, and name of village or township. This questionnaire included all the forms of exposure we expected to encounter based on our studies of the literature, as well as a space for "other" forms.

Exposure-specific questionnaires had been prepared for each registered category of exposure with respect to its character and quantity, including the identity of the responsible persons. When the interviewee confirmed exposure to specific forms of violation, the relevant specific questionnaire was also used.

When considered relevant, a physical examination was carried out, and the findings were compared with the information about exposure in order to find evidence of agreement. With respect to evidence of torture, the methods used have been described previously (17). The examinations were conducted in English, with local interpreters.

We aimed at getting access to refugee camps or other areas with a large concentration of refugees in order to select representative groups of the refugee population, a method used previously (18). This proved impossible. The people who were examined according to the above mentioned programme (group A) were selected by our contact persons, mainly people living in the local area and knowing the whereabouts of the Burmese refugees and how to contact them. Thus, group A (92 persons) consisted of selected refugees from different parts of Burma, i.e. of various ethnic origin.

During the last days of our stay in Thailand we got access to a private institution attended every day by many Burmese refugees. Due to lack of time we chose to carry out the examinations of this group B (96 persons) according to a modified questionnaire, omitting details about the character and amount of the exposure. Apart from the demographic data, the questionnaire included time of flight from Burma, and the following types of violation: forced labour, porter service, forced relocation, killing of family members, rape of family members or

others, as well as injuries from land-mines of family members or fellow villagers or fellow workers in forced labour or porter service.

Both groups were asked if the flight had resulted in breaking down of the family, such as parents leaving children under the age of 18 years of age, or if a person under the same age had lost contact with one or both parents. *l*

Thus the material comprised two refugee populations, groups A and B, which were analysed separately. In both groups the participants were analysed according to their ethnic origin. When a group's size was large enough, the amount of its exposure was compared with that of the whole material.

In order to obtain an estimate of any recent change of the exposure to violations of human rights in Burma, the two groups were analysed according to whether the flight had taken place within or before the previous 12 months.

The examinations took place in November 1997 in the northern part of Thailand in areas near the border to Burma.

ETHICS

The examinations started by informing the contact persons and participants about our aim, i.e. publication of the obtained information on human rights violations in Burma.

It was stressed both to our contact persons and to the individual participants that participation was voluntary, and that, in order to protect the participants, there would be no publication of data that might identify them, e.g. their names, their villages or townships, photographs of their faces.

In order to safeguard the participants and their families and our contact persons, the present paper will not contain names of people or localities, nor of refugee camps or institutions that were visited.

DATA ANALYSIS

The material was analysed according to ethnic origin and time of fleeing from Burma.

In **group A** each participant was given 2 points if he or his family/household had been exposed to the following: porter service, forced relocation, torture, other violations such as being fired at, rape, killings, disappearances, accidents from land-mines.

One point was allocated for each of the following: forced labour, arrest, and for the following exposures for persons other than family/household: killings, rape, disappearances, accidents from land-mines. >

In **group B** 2 points were allocated for each of the following exposures: porter service, forced relocation, killing of family/household members.

One point was allocated for each of the following: forced labour, rape in the village, and mine accidents involving family members, fellow villagers or people with whom the participant had done forced labour or porter service.

As mentioned, the participants were grouped according to ethnic origin and time of flight from Burma. The scores of the groups were compared using a t-test and a Mann-Whitney test.

The above grouping was not used for the description of the individual forms of exposure.

RESULTS

GROUP A

Group A comprised 92 persons, of whom 80 (87%) were farmers. The most essential results are shown in **table 1**.

Of the 46 participants in the Shan group, 31 (67%) had been exposed to 2 or more violations against the family: porter service, relocation, physical assault, torture, killings, rape, disappearances, and/or mining accidents. The corresponding number in the non-Shan group was 30 (65%). For those who had fled during the 12 months before the study, and more than 12 months before, the corresponding numbers were 24 (71%) and 37 (64%), respectively.

In 13 cases (14% of group A), the flight from Burma had resulted in breaking up the family. Six persons under the age of 18 had left their parents, 5 had left spouses and 2-4 children, and 2 had left one child. Nine were from the Shan-group, and 9 had fled during the period November 1996 - November 1997.

Individual exposures or traumatic events will be described later, but the details will not be complete in all cases.

The SLORC troops were held responsible for all the given violations of human rights, apart from the placing of land-mines.

A few had bought themselves free from forced labour or porter service.

Four people said that they had been indirectly involved in relocation because people from other villages had been relocated to their village. These 4 were not classified as exposed to relocation.

"Assault against family members" does not include being beaten, e.g. during porter service, because being beaten is almost taken for granted during such service.

Looting was not included in the questionnaire, but the examination revealed that this was common; 21 people, 17 of them Shan, reported that SLORC troops had come to their houses and had demanded or taken food or animal stock, within the previous 12 months in 10 cases. Of the 21, 20 were farmers. A further 8 farmers denied being looted, which means that 71% of the farmers had been exposed to this violation.

"Killings (family and others)" does not include deaths due to mine accidents.

The allocated scores showed no difference between the exposure of the Shan group compared with group A as a whole ($p > 0.90$, t-test). Nor was there any difference between the exposure of those who had fled during the previous 12 months and of those who had fled earlier ($p > 0.30$).

Forced labour

Sixty-one persons (52 male, 9 female; aged 15-70 years, median 32 years) reported forced labour. Ethnically, 35 were Shan, 16 Karenni, 9 Karen, and one of other ethnic origin. It was common for individuals to have carried out forced labour periodically during the 2-30 years before they fled Burma; 41 reported forced labour on 1 to 20 days per month (median 8 days) during the 12 months before their flight.

A few reported that they had worked 6-7 hours daily, the rest that they had worked 8-11 hours, or "all day".

Fourteen said that they had worked on extensions of military camps, 29 that they had taken part in constructing roads (14) or railways (7), and 4 had done other sorts of work.

The 48 people questioned said that they had worked without salary; 39 had had to bring their own food, while 9 received some kind of food.

For 28 of 44 questioned, recruitment had been through the village headman, but for 12 it had been directly by the army; 4 had been recruited sometimes by the army, sometimes by the headman.

All the 47 people questioned said that all the village households took part in forced labour. When questioned, 36/37 reported that women took part in forced labour, and 4 people said spontaneously that women replaced their husbands when they could not take part. Children aged 8 to 15 years (median 13) also took part, as reported by 26/40 (65%).

Beatings during forced labour were reported by 14 out of 43 (33%), while 24/32 questioned (75%) said that they had seen others being beaten.

Killings during forced labour (a total of 8 persons) were reported by 4 people. Three of the 8 had been shot and 2 beaten to death, while one died in a work accident because he was overexhausted. The cause of death was not given for the 2 remaining cases.

Porter service

Porter service was reported by 58 people, and by 2 involving family members. They comprised 57 men and 3 women, all aged between 18 and 70 years (median 34 years).

Thirty-six persons reported that they had worked 3 to 120 days (median 40 days) during their last year in Burma. 23 persons reported working the whole day, and sometimes also at night, up to 20 hours per day.

The weight they had to carry was given as 20-30 kg.

Nineteen had been recruited through the village headman, 25 directly by the army; 12 out of 15 questioned said that they had been explicitly threatened.

Every village household took part in the porter service, according to 25 of the 26 questioned, though according to two the village headman was excepted. Twelve of 23 questioned reported that women also did porter service, and 9 out of 20 that children aged between 11 and 15 years had taken part.

Beatings were experienced by 22/40 (55%), and 32/37 (86%) had seen fellow porters being beaten.

All 34 refugees questioned said that during the porter service they had been guarded at night by armed soldiers, either locked up or tied up.

All 41 questioned said that they had worked without salary and that the food was insufficient.

Killings of fellow porters were reported by 18/38 (47%). These reports described 51 killings; 36 persons had been beaten to death, or were left unconscious in the jungle, while one had been tied and left in the jungle; 6 had been shot, 2 while trying to flee; one had had his hands tied behind his back and was thrown into a river after trying to escape; 3 had been killed in an armed encounter between the guerilla movement and the soldiers having been ordered to go in front of them during the fight; 2 had been killed by mines, one because he had been ordered to go in front of the soldiers into a mined area. The circumstances of the deaths of 2 persons were not given.

The clinical examination of 15 refugees showed small non-specific scars on the shoulders, but we were given 2 photographs of scars on persons who claimed that they had extensive lesions from the traumas of the porter service (figs, 1a and b).

Forced relocation

Forced relocation from their home villages by SLORC troops was reported by 47 refugees; 16 had fled during the previous year, 31 earlier.

We obtained information from 30 of these interviewed persons about the circumstances surrounding forced relocation. One said that his village had been destroyed in 1962, while the other relocations had taken place from 1977 - July 1997 (median 1996).

The reason for 20 of these relocations, according to SLORC, was that the villagers had given support to the guerilla movements. In 2 cases the reason was given as war in the area.

The time given to leave the village had been 0 to 15 days (median 5 days).

In 12 cases the villages were burnt down, and 4 were pulled down. In the remaining cases the refugees knew nothing about what had happened to their villages.

Four refugees reported that they had been ordered to house villagers, relocated from other villages by SLORC. These 4 persons were not included in the total number of 47.

Thirty people said that they owned a house and land in or near the village, but none had

received any form of recompensation.

In 22 cases the order to leave the village had been accompanied by explicit threats, for instance of being shot if they did not obey the order (9 cases).

There were 2 reports of rape by SLORC soldiers in connection with the relocation.

Two reported that villagers had been shot (a total of 10 people, the youngest 10 years old) in connection with the expulsion from their own village. There were also reports about family members being killed in connection with expulsion from other villages.

Arrests

A total of 23 stated that they (21) and/or family members (10 people) had been arrested and detained and/or imprisoned during the period 1984 to 1997. Four were women, the rest men, all aged between 17 and 52 years.

The background for the arrest of 14 people was political activity or suspected guerilla activities. Three were suspected of criminal acts. One was accused of illegal border crossing, and one had refused to take part in forced porter service. One person had defied a curfew, while details about the circumstances were missing in the remaining cases.

The duration of imprisonment was from one day to 6 years (median 1 month). Four people had been through regular court procedures, but only one was assisted by a lawyer.

Three reported that they had been beaten. Eight had been exposed to systematic maltreatment, i.e. torture. Another person described how his two brothers had been tortured in prison. One of his sisters had been threatened with rape while in prison.

One reported how a co-prisoner had been beaten to death. Another that his uncle had died in prison of dysentery without getting medical treatment.

Torture

Thirteen people reported how they (12 men, aged 26-70 years) or family members (2 persons) had been tortured. One person had been tortured at a police station, while SLORC soldiers were responsible in the remaining cases - 4 locally in the village or forest, and 7 in military camps or prisons. The torture took place during the period 1980 to 1997, 5 of the cases during 1996-97.

Four had been accused of guerilla activities, 5 of political activity, 1 of manslaughter, 1 of misguiding SLORC troops in the jungle, and one was suspected by the SLORC troops of knowing about a mine field where explosions occurred while the suspected person was doing porter service. The last person was so exhausted that he could not continue his porter service.

The torture methods used were various. Eleven of the 12 had been beaten or kicked, 8 with bamboo sticks and/or rifles. One had been injured by a saw, one with a bayonet. Three had been stepped upon by soldiers. One had been forced to crawl on sharp stones. Four had been suspended.

Four had had their shins scraped by bamboo sticks or similar items. While they were lying on the ground, two soldiers scraped the stick up and down their shins with maximum pressure.

Three reported torture by suffocation procedures, either with a plastic bag or by having their heads forced under water. Four reported electric torture. Two reported that a gun had been fired close to their ears. Six that they had been exposed to other forms of torture: drenching with cold water, burning with cigarettes, mock execution, pulling out of hair, chili put up the nose, blows on the ears with the flat hand, confinement to a hole in the earth covered by branches across which the soldiers walked.

Five stated that they became unconscious in connection with the torture. Two reported vomiting blood and passing blood in the urine after torture. One developed an eye infection following a direct eye injury. One had been left unconscious in the jungle where he was found and helped by local villagers.

Clinical examination showed remarkable scar formations on the shin in 3 cases, which were said to be due to maltreatment with sticks. One had a characteristic group of linear scars on his thigh, said to have been inflicted by a saw. One had lost an eye from infection or trauma. One had typical signs of a neglected fracture of the femoral bone, said to have followed violent trauma. One had a chronic unspecific ulcer said to have been caused by a bayonet wound, and reduced hearing, allegedly due to gunshot trauma.

One person reported that his two brothers, father, and mother had been imprisoned in Rangoon because of political activities. The two brothers had both been beaten. One had been suspended and forced to crawl on sharp gravel; he was trodden on, his shins were scraped with sticks, and he became unconscious when his head was forcibly held under water.

Other assault of household/family members

Ten persons reported that they (7) or family members had been exposed to traumatic events or trauma that had led to invalidity.

Seven persons had been hit by gunshot or shell splinters. Three of them had lost a foot (amputation of lower leg). One had a chronic shoulder injury with reduced movement. Clinical examination showed that 3 had scars from bullet wounds or shell splinter lesions. Impaired function of a shoulder joint was confirmed in one case, and 3 had amputations at the level of the lower leg.

One reported that his cousin had broken his femoral bone during porter service. Another reported that his mother and brother had been confined in a hole in the earth for 24 hours by SLORC soldiers.

Killing of family members

Thirty-three persons (20 Shans, 8 Karennis, and 5 Karens) said that family members had been killed by SLORC soldiers, or in fighting in or near their villages.

A total of 46 family members (36 men, 10 women; aged 11-70 years, median 26 years) were

reported killed during the period 1980 to June 1997 (median 1996); 19 of them were reported by refugees who had fled within the previous 12 months.

Twenty-nine had been shot, 10 beaten to death, 4 stabbed to death (one in connection with rape), one had been tied up and thrown into a river, and one completely exhausted person had been kicked down a slope. The way in which the last person was killed was unknown.

The circumstances surrounding the killings were given in 27 cases: 4 were killed in their homes or at another place near the village during fighting between SLORC forces and rebels, 2 were beaten to death during detention by SLORC forces, 7 were killed during porter service and one during forced labour, 10 were killed in connection with forced relocation, 7 of them because they returned to their villages to collect their belongings following the relocation. One was killed in connection with rape, one headman probably because he did not show sufficient cooperation with the SLORC forces. One was shot when he left his house despite a curfew.

Rape

18 persons (8 Shans, 6 Karennis, 4 Karens) reported that they knew about cases of rape, all committed by SLORC soldiers. In 7 cases it was a question of family members, in one of which both daughter and wife were raped, while the remaining cases concerned a grandchild, a sister, a wife, and a niece, respectively.

One person reported that a family member and others in the village had been raped. The ages of the victims ranged from 12 to 40 years (median 16/4 years).

In 7 cases the rape had taken place in or near the village, in 2 cases in the victim's home, one case in the woods, and one in a military camp.

The reported cases of rape took place from March 1993 - October 1997. One was killed in connection with the rape; the family found the corpse with stab wounds of the chest.

It was reported that, some months after being raped, an abscess developed in the anal region of one woman, who died from blood poisoning (case JL 5).

Disappearances

Thirteen people reported that they knew about somebody who had disappeared. In 5 cases it was a question of family members, while 7 had disappeared in connection with porter service or forced labour during the period 1987 - December 1996.

Killings of others than household members

Twenty-eight refugees reported killings of fellow villagers or people with whom they had done porter service. These reports included the killing of 89 people, all by SLORC soldiers; 32 persons were shot and 39 beaten to death.

Fifty one of these deaths were in connection with porter service. Twenty-five were beaten to death, while 11 were left exhausted and beaten in the jungle. One was tortured to death, one

had his hands tied and was thrown into a river. One died in a mine explosion while ordered to walk in front of the soldiers in a mined area. Six were shot, three were killed in crossfire between SLORC soldiers and rebels while they were ordered as porters to walk in front of the soldiers.

Three were reported shot in connection with forced labour, while one died from an accident due to exhaustion from forced labour. Fifteen were reported shot in connection with forced relocation. Two were reported beaten to death in their village under unknown circumstances.

Landmines

Twenty-seven refugees reported being wounded by landmines, and 5 had family members who were killed by mines. Apart from one of the family members, all were men. The median age of the examined victims was 25 years (range 16-70). The accidents occurred from 1965 - November 1997 (median 1990).

Six of the examined refugees said that the accidents had happened during fighting activities, one that it happened while placing a mine, one while doing porter service, 5 while working in the field or forest, 3 while fleeing from SLORC forces or in connection with forced relocation. One had been wounded while he tried to help another mine victim.

Of those examined, 16 had had a leg amputated, either at the thigh or the lower leg. One of these had also had a finger amputated on his left hand. One had the front of one foot amputated. One had lost fingers on both hands. One had lost both eyes and both hands, the explosion having happened when he tried to place a mine himself. One had a chronic ulcer on his shin, allegedly due partly to a splinter from a mine, partly to torture with a bayonet in the already existing wound.

Several refugees had numerous small scars from splinters from mines (fig. 5). Seven stated that other people had been killed or wounded by the same explosion that wounded themselves.

GROUP B

Group B comprised 96 persons, aged between 14 and 60 years (median 28 years). Of them, 38 (30 Karens, 6 Burmese, 2 with other ethnic origin) had fled Burma during the period November 1996 - November 1997 (median, 3 months before our examination).

58 had fled before November 1996 (median, 5 years before the examination). They comprised 24 Karens, 24 Burmese, 5 Muslims, and 5 other. The main profession of Group B was farming (70%). Essential data are shown in Table 2.

As judged by the scoring used, the people who had fled Burma from November 1996 - November 1997 had been more seriously exposed to violations of human rights than those who had fled earlier ($p < 0.02$). This holds also for the sub-group of Karens ($p < 0.005$).

The SLORC troops were held responsible for all the violations of human rights, apart from the placing of land-mines.

Breaking down of the family unit because of the flight was reported by 20 Group B refugees.

Eleven refugees reported that they had paid money to be free of porter service.

Six refugees reported that villagers from other villages had been relocated to their villages, but they are not included under forced relocation.

The killing of 56 family members was reported by 28 refugees, while 2 reported disappearances - a sister who had disappeared after being arrested by SLORC forces, and an uncle who disappeared during porter service. These two cases have been classified as killing of family members.

Seven refugees spontaneously reported the killing of other than family members. One reported about 6 deaths from mines when they were ordered to walk in front of the soldiers in mined areas.

Mine injuries were reported by 46 people, of whom 34 reported 125 deaths, and 25 about 87 persons wounded by mines.

In Group B, 59 (61%), including 39 Karens, reported that the family had been exposed to one or more of the following violations: porter service, forced relocation, killing of family members. Of these 59, 27 had fled during the 12 months before our examination.

Group B was not asked about exposure to torture, but one person said that he had been imprisoned in Rangoon after taking part in a student demonstration. He had been held for 6 months, and was beaten and kicked and given electric shock. Two of his ribs had been broken.

DISCUSSION

By far the majority of the refugees we examined represented Shan, Karenni and Karen groups, and they described how they had been exposed to various violations of human rights. Our examinations do not reflect the exact extent of violations of human rights in Burma; however the numerous testimonies we received were remarkably identical and in consistency with information from other sources on the situation in Burma (1-12).

We reached our target group, since 150 refugees corresponding to 80 per cent of the examined were farmers; however similar to the difficulties experienced by Allden & al (15) in tracing target persons we were only to a limited extent able to carry out examinations of inhabitants in refugee camps.

Moreover our study cannot be compared with Allden et al's study (15), since they primarily examined the psychological health of refugee students, while we focused on traumatization of the rural population.

A exact comparison between group A and B is not possible since the quantity of information on exposure to violations of human rights varies quite substantially. However, it is evident that both groups have been severely exposed to among other things forced labour, porter service, relocation, killing, rape and other violations, including torture.

Add to this numerous accidents in connection with land mine explosions. The fact that the accounts from the individually interviewed refugees were relatively identical clearly indicates that the violations are systematic.

The Shans we examined in **group A** had been exposed to the same degree of violations of human rights as the rest of the group. We found no difference in exposure to violence between the people who had arrived in the period November 1996-1997 and the people who had arrived earlier. In **group B** the people who had fled within the last year had been more severely exposed than those who had arrived earlier.

The difference between group A and group B may be due to dissimilarity of selection. As already mentioned group A and group B are not comparable as regards the quantity of information; however our results do not in the least indicate any improvement in the human rights situation in Burma during the last year.

Family breakdowns are not included in the score used for exposition, since we consider breakdown of families to be a result of extremely difficult conditions of life. It is thus remarkable that 14 per cent of group A and 21 per cent of group B reported a breakdown of family structure. This observation confirms that the families have been subjected to extreme violations.

Our plan included questions about exposure to threats. However this soon proved pointless. As it clearly appears from our results at least part of the rural population lives in an atmosphere of imminent danger of being pressed to do forced labour or porter service as well as relocation; especially the two last mentioned factors involve a severe risk of losing one's life. In the areas from where we interviewed refugees, there is also a substantial risk of losing either your life or limbs due to more or less accidental shootings by SLORC troops or land mine explosions.

The issue of looting did not form part of our interview sheets. Therefore we have not systematically asked any questions, however quite a few of the interviewed refugees reported on looting, so we assume that this is a phenomenon of common occurrence.

At the clinical examinations we found indications (although unspecific) that many of the refugees who reported that they had been doing porter service had been carrying such heavy loads that it had caused pressure wounds and rub sores which had left scars.

The scars demonstrated are in agreement with information from the examined refugees that they had experienced pressure wounds on their shoulders as a result of carrying heavy loads during porter service. Big and deep pressure wounds are to be expected on people carrying heavy loads over a long period of time and having been forced to neglect pains caused by continuous pressure on the skin.

The scars reproduced on photos exactly match what can be expected on people who have got deep pressure wounds after carrying on their backs heavy loads strapped over the shoulders.

Thirty-six per cent of those interviewed in group A reported that family members had been killed by SLORC-troops. Corresponding figures from group B were somewhat less, however together they form a clear picture of the risk of losing one's life in parts of rural Burma.

Rape performed by SLORC-troops seems not to be an event of rare occurrence. Our figures must be considered to represent an absolute minimum. The subject is tabooed in most cultures. Only one of the participating doctors was a woman and most of the interpreters were men.

Therefore we cannot expect that women interviewed will report on such violations consistently. We also expect that husbands whose wives or daughters have been raped will tend to under-report such violations.

Twelve persons in total reported that they had been subjected to torture. In all those cases there was agreement between the types of torture described, the acute as well as the chronic after-effects and the result of the clinical examination.

We did not find a single case where the lack of clinical findings suggested any inconsistency between the reported torture and the result of the clinical examination.

We demonstrated remarkable scars on four persons: 3 cases of extended scars on the front of both shins allegedly caused by systematic and violent scraping with sticks; one case with several linear, transverse scars on a thigh allegedly caused by sawing with a saw. You do not expect to find such formations of scars on people who have been exposed to trivial everyday traumas.

One refugee had lost an eye and another showed clear clinical signs of a neglected fracture of the thigh-bone, cases that clearly underline the degree of violence utilized in physical punishment/torture.

A substantial number of refugees from group A as well as group B reported on injuries and/or deaths in connection with land mine explosions. We received clear testimonies that not only

SLORC but also local guerrilla groups are responsible for putting out land mines. SLORC-troops were singled out as the only responsible for all the other reported violations of human rights.

CONCLUSION

The interviewed and examined refugees from Burma represent groups from mainly rural districts who have been exposed to massive violation of human rights. Our examinations do not indicate any improvement in the human rights situation over the last year. Shan people examined by us had been subjected to just as severe violations of human rights as the other groups.

Apart from the land mine problem where local resistance groups are involved SLORC is fully responsible for all the reported violations of human rights.

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APPENDIX

HPH 4

26-year-old fanner from the Karenni state in Burma. He said that he left Burma in November 1996, arriving in Thailand December 1996. He had been ordered to do porter service and forced labour several times. He was ordered to do porter service as follows: the military told the village headman that every family should pay 100-200 Kyat per month in porter fees. Those who were unable to pay were ordered to do porter service.

He could not afford to pay, and was then ordered by the village headman to do porter service, which he did one to three times every month, in total at least ten days a month. The porters had to carry cases with ammunition and other supplies for the army, and they had to work 8-16 hours a day without any form of payment; they were not provided with food.

In 1996 he was sick with fever during a period of porter service. He received no treatment and was not relieved of the work. To make sure that they did not escape at night, the porters were either locked in or were guarded by armed soldiers. Deep sores on the shoulders and back developed several times from the porter work.

Like all the other men in the village, he was often ordered to labour for the authorities. The work was mostly construction, especially Buddhist temples (he is Christian himself). The working hours were from sunrise to sunset; there was no salary and they had to bring their own food.

In June 1996 all the inhabitants of his village were forcibly relocated. The army accused them of supporting the local guerilla movement (Karenni National Army). The villagers were given 12 days to pack their things, after which they were ordered to move to a nearby village. His own village was fenced round, and armed guards were placed to prevent the villagers from returning.

He said that 5 male inhabitants of his village were beaten to death with bamboo sticks by the military.

He was arrested by the military on 6 August 1996. About 50 soldiers surrounded the house and he was accused of being a resistant movement soldier. He was taken to Ma Htoa Khu military prison, where he was detained for 3 Vi months without legal assistance and without coming before a judge.

He was tortured in prison, beaten all over with bamboo sticks. He was suspended several times by the legs, and was rolled up in plastic and not unrolled until he was about to faint from lack of air.

On several occasions he was given electric shocks all over the body with an instrument that was described as an electric stick, used in some countries for cattle. Chili juice was often poured into his nose while he was hanging head down. At one of the torture sessions a saw was used on his right thigh, and the soldiers threatened to saw the leg right off.

At the time of the examination he seemed mentally unaffected by what he told. At physical examination there was a 3 x 3 cm hypopigmented area on top of the right shoulder. There were

several light-brown scars on the right thigh, horizontal and parallel, 10-15 cm long, 1-2 mm wide, all at the level of the surrounding skin.

Conclusion

Typical description of forced labour (porter service and construction work), and typical history of forced relocation of the village. He was detained by the military for 3 months, and tortured in different ways, including use of a saw. At the time of examination he seemed unaffected mentally. On the right shoulder there was an area of hypopigmented skin. This finding in itself is not specific, but it could be the result of a healed sore from porter service. He also had several parallel linear scars on the right thigh. These must have been caused by a sharp instrument and are thus fully consistent with the alleged torture with a saw.

HPH 7

18-year-old male from the Karenni state in Burma. Previously healthy, he originally made his living by helping his father with farming.

One day in 1992, while looking for one of the family's buffaloes, he stepped on a land-mine on the banks of the Pon River, about 2 hours walk from the village. The left foot was blown off. A friend who was with him was not hurt, and helped him back to the village, where the leg was bandaged. He was taken to the nearest town, where there was a hospital.

Here he underwent two amputations; first, half the lower leg, later at the upper third of the thigh. His brother paid for the treatment. He had only a home made crutch, and was never offered any rehabilitation or an artificial limb. He related how another man from his village had stepped on a land-mine and died. He also said that several of his fellow villagers had been beaten and kicked by the military, and the soldiers had also threatened to kill them all if they did not do forced labour.

All the villagers were forcibly relocated by the military in July 1996 because they were accused of supporting the resistance army (Karenni National Army). The villagers were given three days to pack and move to a nearby town. Their village was then burned down. He had no possibility of survival in the town and so fled to Thailand.

At the examination he was quiet; he answered the questions slowly, and his hands were shaking. The left leg was amputated at the upper third of the thigh, and on the back of the right thigh there was a 5 x 5 cm scar, dark and slightly shrunken. On the anterior part of the right forearm there were two partly shrunken scars, one 3 x 3 cm and the other 4 x 4 cm, and on the posterior part of the left forearm there were two irregular scars, dark and partly shrunken, one 2 x 3 cm and the other 4 x 5 cm.

Conclusion

Typical history of land-mine injury and forced relocation. At the examination he was quiet and seemed somewhat nervous. The left leg was amputated at the upper third of the thigh, and there were scars on the right thigh and both forearms, consistent with injury from mine fragments; typical sequelae of land-mine explosion.

HPH 21

25-year-male from the Karenni state in Burma. Originally a farmer, he entered the resistance movement (Karenni National Army) in 1990. He stepped on a land-mine during combat in March 1997. He thought it was a "blast mine". His company was about to cut off a SLORC company when the accident happened. The anterior two-thirds of the foot was blown off.

Shortly after the accident he was treated by a medical orderly who could perform minor surgery. He was then taken to a provincial hospital in Thailand, where he underwent further surgery. He was later provided with an artificial leg made in the refugee camp by another refugee who had been shown how to make artificial limbs of metal, wood, and old tires.

He said that he was not married; he was 18 when he joined the resistance movement. He also said that all his fellow villagers had been forcibly relocated by the military, and that three men in his village had been shot by the army.

At the examination he did not seem mentally affected by what had happened to him. Hah⁰ the left lower leg was amputated, and there were several irregular scars on the right knee and calf, slightly hyperpigmented and mainly shrunken.

Conclusion

Typical history of land-mine explosion during combat. Half the left lower leg was amputated, and there were several scars on the right leg, consistent with scars from mine fragments; typical sequelae of land-mine explosion.

JL5

30 years old shan farmer, who escaped to Thailand in 1995, because of forced labour and forced relocation. His first wife died in 1993 (please see below), he is now remarried. He has no children.

Forced relocation: In April 96 SLORC soldiers ordered the inhabitants to leave the village within 7 days. They were not offered another place to settle down. The village was burned, and the villagers were not economically compensated.

First the inhabitants moved to a nearby area, but one night three months later SLORC soldiers came and beat all the male inhabitants. The villagers all escaped, and since then they have been spread all over the area. The examinee does not know where the people from his old village are living today.

Rape: In 1993 five soldiers came to his house. His wife (at that time 15 years old) was home alone. The soldiers forced their way into the house and raped her several times for the next couples of hours. She was also beaten several times in the face. She died ten months after from an abscess near the rectum.

Killing of family members: His 18 years old cousin was killed during porter service in 1995 by SLORC soldiers. His family collected the body. They described that his left temple was depressed (excavated), and there were several superficial lesions on the rest of his body.

Killing of inhabitants of the village: He stated that one person from his village was found dead after porter service. When he was found the back of his head was fractured with a hole in it. The hole had the shape of a rifle butt.

Land mines: He states that a 20 year old woman from his village in 1994 was captured by SLORC soldiers while she was working in the fields. She was forced to go in front of the SLORC soldiers and take them to the village. She stepped on a land mine, and her left leg was injured. The soldiers took her to a nearby hospital, where the leg was amputated below the knee.

Forced labour and porter service: All the men from the village had to do porter service and forced labour on shift. The women only had to do forced labour. The youngest person doing forced labour was 15 years old.

He himself had done porter service five times in the period 1994-96.

He usually had to carry 30 kilograms. The porters worked up to 16 hours a day. During the night they were tied to another person with a rope. They got one bowl of rice a day. They were not paid for the work. He states that he did porter service with about 80 other men.

The last time he did porter service was in 1996. He was fishing at a lake when some soldiers appeared. One of the soldiers' porters jumped into the water to escape, but he was shot. The examinee was taken instead of the shot porter. He was forced to take the soldiers back to his village, where some other persons were taken to porter service.

On his last trip as a porter he became very exhausted and he could not carry any more. The soldiers started to beat him with bamboo sticks. During the maltreatment he fell to the ground and broke his right thigh-bone. While he was lying on the ground the soldiers continued to beat him until he fainted. He was left in the jungle while the soldiers continued.

After a few days some local people found him. They took him to their village, where they treated him for 14 days. After the treatment they transported him back to his own village. When he had recovered from the thigh-bone fracture he escaped to Thailand. Since this incident he has been unable to work.

Objective examination: Right leg is 77 centimetres from the hip (anterior superior iliac spine) to the ankle (medial malleol). The left leg is 80 centimetres long.

The rotation in the right hip is 45 degrees compared to 90 degrees on the left side. The flexion and extension in the right hip is not clearly affected. There is only 10 degrees flexion in the right knee. The flexion of the knee is stopped by some compact resistance. The knee is kept in a straight position.

The right femur is clearly deformed. On the lateral side a little below the middle there is an old

fracture with an irregular projection of the bone below a 7 x 2.5 centimetres irregular scar. There is a 10 degrees valgus position of the fracture. On the inner side of the thigh is a longitudinal irregular, superficial scar 7 cm long and 0.5 cm wide. On the right shin and anteriorly on the right knee are 8 scars, some longitudinal, others irregular and rounded, the biggest is 2.5 cm in diameter. Some small scars are also present. On the inner aspect of the right knee are several small scars, the biggest is 1 x 1 centimeter, surrounded by many scars up to 4 millimetres in diameter. There is muscular atrophy of the right leg.

On the anterior part of the left wrist 3 centimetres proximal from the flexor line there is an irregular, shrunken 3 centimetres x 3 millimetres scar.

The shoulders have several non specific small scars. Some are longitudinal, the longest is 2 centimetres, some are broad and irregular. He can not explain the cause of these scars.

Conclusion

The statements about the forced relocation and the burning of the village are very similar to several other statements.

He was not asked further about the rape and death of his first wife. But the statement about the rape is similar to statements from other persons we have interviewed. The cause of death is probably septicaemia due to the abscess in the perinaeum. An abscess like that could be a result of sexual violence causing profound trauma of the genital and/or anal region but an abscess like that can also have other causes.

Due to the statement about the cousin who was found dead, the cause of death was probably a consequence of blunt force injury to the head. Beating with guns and bamboo sticks have been described in several of our other interviews. Therefore we conclude that the cousin most probably died of blunt force injury with a riflebutt or a bamboo stick.

The statements about the 20 year old woman who was forced to walk in front of the SLORC soldiers and stepped on a land mine is in accordance with many other statements where SLORC soldiers used captured people to go in front of them as human mine sweepers.

The statements concerning forced labour and forced porter service have been described by almost all the interviewed persons. The way of recruiting, the weight of the burden, the food, the statements of binding during the night and the killing of porters are fully consistent with other testimonies.

The clinical findings on the right leg are consistent with his history. The clinical examination concluded that there was an incomplete healing of a right femoral fracture, an unnatural position of the fracture, and healed lesions of the right knee. This could be due to blunt force injury like beating with blunt objects. The scars on the right leg are consistent with the testimony regarding all the traumas.

The findings on the shoulders were non specific, but are consistent with traumas from porter service, where the skin have been affected by heavy loads for a longer period.

JL 2

18 years old shan farmer who escaped from Burma October 10, 1997. He now lives in Thailand, where he stays with his uncle. He escaped because of porter service and severe physical violence.

Porter service: He did porter service 11 times. The first time was in April 1994. The last time was in October 1997. The longest period he did porter service was 10 days. He stated that on all occasions he was taken by SLORC soldiers and forced to do porter service.

During the night he was tied by chains. He had to provide his own food. He worked with two to six other porters. He got fever twice during porter service. Both times he was beaten by the soldiers until he continued the work.

Forced relocation: In April 1996 his village was forcibly relocated because the SLORC claimed that the villagers had supported the Shan Resistant Army. The inhabitants of the village had three days to move.

They were threatened with shooting, if they did not follow the orders. They were not given a new place to settle down, so they fled into the jungle. During the flight his family was separated, and he lost contact with most of them. The village was burned down. His family owned their house and land, but they were not economically compensated in any way.

Killing of family members: March 23, 1997 his 35 year old brother was shot by SLORC soldiers while he was working in the fields. His brother was found 3 days after by the family. He saw the body and described two gun shot holes on the anterior part of the thorax, and one gun shot hole in the abdomen.

March 3, 1997 his younger brother, 11 years old, was shot, while he was working in the garden near their old house. He was shot in the head. He saw his brother's body and described that most of his head was missing.

He does not know why his two brothers were shot.

Rape: His unmarried cousin, at that time 17 years old, was raped in October 1997. She was in the forest with her parents while two soldiers appeared. She was raped several times by the two soldiers. Her parents had to watch the raping while they were held up by guns.

In September 1997 an 18 year old woman from his village was captured by two SLORC soldiers. She was taken away for 15 days. In that period she was raped several times. Her parents saw that she was taken away.

Three persons from his village lost a leg from land mine explosions. One male from his village was beaten to death by soldiers.

Torture: In September 1996 he was severely injured by soldiers during porter service. The cause of the violence was that he was very tired and he could not carry anymore, so he put down his load. Because of that he was punished by the soldiers.

He was beaten with bamboo sticks, which he describes as 2 metres long and about 8 cm diameter. He was beaten mostly on the back. He was also kicked particularly on the legs. During the maltreatment he lost his consciousness. While he woke up he was forced to continue the portering.

After that episode he had vomitted with blood and blood in his urine for 20 days. Since then he have had problems with his eye sight. He describes that he cannot focus on a text when he is reading.

Clinical examination: On the back were several healed superficial scars, particularly on the lower part of the back. Just below the inner aspect of the left knee was a 3 x 1 centimetres hypertrophic scar.

His sight was examined by counting fingers and an evaluation of his vision field. There were no abnormal findings.

Conclusion

The statements about forced porter service were described in almost all our interviews. The way of recruiting, lack of food, the use of chains and the physical results are fully consistent with many other testimonies. The bloody vomiting is probably due to a gastric ulcer caused by stress or an esophagitis. The 20 days with blood in the urine is most probably due to injuries of the kidneys. The alleged problem with the sight could be a result of brain concussion.

The described symptoms are consistent with the description of the physical assaults. The clinical findings are non specific, but are fully consistent with the testimony.

His brother was killed because he returned to their house and land. We have several testimonies of people being shot if they returned to their properties after forced relocation.

MM 23

A 26-year-old woman, interviewed through female interpreter in camp xx. She is a Karen Buddhist, and has lived in the camp since November 1996 together with her three children, 6, 4, and 2 years old and with her husband's younger brother.

She came from a village in Burma, where her husband was a farmer. She said that since the age of 21, she had often been doing forced labour for the army. Like every other household in the village her family had to supply one person for that purpose. It could either be porter-service or road construction work, at a duration of 1-5 days. She used to take the one day jobs, and her husband the longer ones.

She always did road construction, never porter service. Usually she was recruited by the military directly, but sometimes by the village headman as well. The work went on "all day", and she had to bring her own food. No salary was ever paid. Also children had to work, from the age of 14 years. During forced labour neither had she herself, nor any of her fellow-workers been ill-treated, and she had not seen anybody being killed.

On the other hand, she had often been beaten in her home, when the soldiers came to get her - if she was alone and had other things to do. Reportedly, she had never been raped. She knows a family of three who was killed outside the village by landmine explosions.

One early morning in November 1996 more than a hundred armed SLORC-soldiers in uniform arrived at the village. She and her husband, who was then 31 years old, were on their way to their fields, when they encountered the soldiers. Her husband was arrested, accused of supporting the guerilla.

The soldiers started to kick and beat both of them, both with fists and with rifle butts. She was hit in the face and on her back, and ran away. On returning somewhat later, she found her husband lying dead in the ditch next to the road, with marks from beatings all over his body. One arm and one thigh were broken and his chest had many holes in it, and there was blood all over as if he had been stabbed.

Furthermore she told that the soldiers stayed all day in and around the village beating everybody they met. They accused the villagers of supporting the guerilla. She herself was beaten once more later that day, and 3 other men were beaten to death. She can name the officer who gave the orders.

Almost immediately after this incident she fled to Thailand with her children and brother-in-law. It took them 2 days to get to the border. She buried her husband, but did not attend the memorial service that is customary after one week.

At the time of examination she still felt weak, but better than before. The children were not so healthy either, and for that reason the oldest son had not yet started school.

Clinical examination: There were no marks from the beatings. She participated actively in the interview, but when left on her own, she became serious and introverted.

Comment

Testimony of serious abuses committed by SLORC-soldiers. Her husband and 3 other villagers were stabbed or beaten to death. The fact that there were no marks after previous physical traumatization is not in disagreement with the alleged exposure to beatings.

MM 3

A 39-year-old male, ethnically Chinese/Burmese, but born and raised in a town in the Karenni region, where he used to be a shopkeeper. He is a Buddhist. He was interviewed in camp xx, having arrived in August 97 after 18 days' flight through the jungle. He had left behind his wife in jail and his 3 children (5, 8, 12 years old) with his brother and sister.

He told that he and his now 33-year-old wife were arrested in their home on 4 August 1996 by 10 armed men in plain clothes, led by a named officer from the Military Intelligence. They accused him of drug-trafficking and searched the house, finding some heroin.

This, he claimed, must have been planted, he had not been engaged in such things. He

thought that he was targeted because his father-in-law was a member of the opposition party, from which he later was forced to withdraw.

When the heroin was found, he was taken to the interrogation centre of the Military Intelligence where he was detained for 3 days and 4 nights. He was kept alone and naked in a cell and allegedly subjected to the following torture: Beatings with sticks all over the body, including the head, burns with cigarettes on arms and legs, electric current through wires on his arms.

He was suspended from the ceiling by wires tied around his wrists and then again beaten all over the body. He was kept hanging for a long time. They pulled a plastic bag over his head and installed hot water in his mouth, they put the muzzle of a gun into his mouth and threatened to shoot. He lost consciousness and had many wounds. He was brought food by his relatives, but could not eat because of pain.

After 3 days he was transferred to the local jail, where he stayed for 9 months. He was sentenced to 9 years in prison by an ordinary court (no lawyer). His wife was sentenced to 12 years. In this prison he was together with 80 people in one cell.

They were guarded by the police who threatened with prolonging his sentence if he - his relatives that is - did not supply them with money, food and whatever else they wanted. Several times - as a punishment for "not obeying"- he was placed alone in a dark cell with shackles around his ankles in periods of up to 4 weeks.

After 9 months he was taken to do porter service in the front-line, which allegedly is a normal traffic. He was together with about 100 others, all convicts. They carried guns, ammunition, provisions, wounded soldiers etc.. He worked "all day" that is up to 15-17 hours, at night they were guarded by soldiers. Everybody was beaten and they did not get sufficient food. He witnessed 3 men being beaten to death, and 2 who stepped on landmines and received injuries of the legs.

His health deteriorated, he got "malaria" and had sores on the shoulders. After 3 months he succeeded in escaping.

At the time of the interview he suffered from the following: Pain everywhere in joints, bones, muscles, and chest, especially in cold weather. The pain was disrupting his sleep.

Clinical examination: Psychologically there was nothing remarkable. There were several scars: on top of the right shoulder a dark area about 2.5 x 5 cm. On the left, 3 similar pigmented areas about 0,5 x 1-2 cm. On the anterior and inner aspect of the left arm, about 15 cm below the shoulder, there were 3 roundish atrophic scars of about 1 cm in diameter - allegedly from cigarette burns. On the upper, inner aspect of the left thigh, 2 similar, more oblong scars were seen. On the left wrist, opposite the thumb there was a linear, narrow scar, about 1,5 cm long.

Conclusion

The history about systematic torture for 3 days by the SLORC Military Intelligence is in agreement with his non-specific symptoms and with the described scars. In particular, the small round ones were remarkable in shape, in full agreement with the statement of cigarette

burns, located in sensitive parts of the body. The scar on the wrist may well be a sequel to the alleged suspension. The dark pigmented scars on the shoulders can very well be results from sores due to carrying heavy loads.

HD 5

Old male Shan. The interview was somewhat difficult because of reduced hearing on the part of the interviewee. Apart from this, his communication was fully relevant, he answered the questions appropriately.

He reported that for several years many times he was forced to do porter service for the army, i.e. at least ten times a year in periods of 3-6 days; however, on one occasion he worked about 30 days.

He reported that during the last period of porter service approximately three years before the interview, he was indirectly exposed to a landmine explosion. During his porter service in the forest a soldier stepped on a landmine. One soldier and one porter were killed on the spot. The examinee was superficially hit by a mine fragment wounded on the lateral aspect of the left calf.

The soldiers of the group interrogated the examinee to obtain information on who had placed the landmine. During the interrogation he was tortured with bayonets which were introduced into the wound. He was kicked particularly at the right side of his body. While he was lying on the ground, a rifle was fired close to his ears. After this he was left exhausted in the jungle.

He told that since this incident he has suffered from the reduced hearing. Furthermore he reports that during his porter services many times he received kicks and beatings. At one time during his porter service he was hit by a branch which caused lesion on the anterior aspect of the right shin.

The weight of the load the porters had to carry was usually approximately 20 kilos. Normally the work started in the morning and continued until late afternoon. No salary was paid and the food was insufficient. At night the porters were guarded by the soldiers; several times he was tied by a rope to other porters to prevent them from escaping. Numerous times during his porter service he watched other porters being beaten by soldiers.

He told that usually men carried out the porter service, but every household should provide a porter at a given time, and if no man in the household could fill in the task as porter, a woman had to do the service.

During his service as porter he had witnessed 8 men being beaten to death by the soldiers and their bodies left in the jungle.

Apart from the porter service he reported that his village was left because of numerous raids by the army during which the population was exposed to various forms of abuse. Armed soldiers many times came to his home and demanded food, crop or animals.

After his migration, the village has been burned down.

He furthermore reported that a 20-year-old grandchild was killed during porter service. Due to exhaustion he fell over; he was beaten and kicked and afterwards thrown out from a slope. The body was found and carried to the village and buried.

An 11-year-old granddaughter was taken by soldiers in the village, brought outside the village and raped.

At the **clinical examination** he had the appearance of an old man without apparent physical handicaps. He moved around without any difficulty and without visible signs of pain. His cooperation in the interview and examination was excellent apart from his reduced hearing (allegedly caused by noise trauma).

On both shoulders across the clavicles, a small 2 x 3 cm superficial scars with dyspigmentation were seen.

On the lower part of the anterior aspect of the right lower leg there was a 2 x 3 cm dark scar (sequels from a lesion caused by a branch).

On the anterior/lateral aspect of the left lower leg there was a 4 x 6 cm irregular hypertrophic scar, 2 cm behind the shin. In the centre there was a 0.5 cm deep and dry defect, 1 cm in diameter (figure 2).

Conclusion and comments

The description of absolutely non-sophisticated torture is not very detailed, but the lesion on the left lower leg is in complete agreement with the given torture report. There was a chronic ulcer, a condition which is not unusual in an elderly person after a deep contaminated trauma not treated appropriately with cleaning and may be antibiotics.

The fact that the scar on the right calf which also is absolutely non-specific is reported to have been caused by a natural trauma and not alleged to be a sequel to torture strengthen the credibility of the examinee.

The scars on the shoulders were completely non-specific, but they are in agreement with the assumption that these regions had been heavily strained during porter service.

The reduced hearing reported by the examinee and observed by us is in agreement with the exposure to a violent noise trauma.

The reports on forced porter service and the abuses during such service including beatings to death of exhausted porters and the dead or half-dead porters being left in the jungle are in complete agreement with the reports of other persons who have served as porters in the same or in other regions of Burma.

The report on rape of a young female family member is remarkable. We only heard few testimonies like this. The open-minded attitude of the examinee to sexual abuse could be due

to his old age and thus less tabooed. Probably it also played a part that both the interviewer and the interpreter were males.

HD-6

42-year-old male from the Shan district in Burma. Previously a healthy farmer. As a side-line he repaired electrical devices.

He fled to Thailand in 1996. For many years he was ordered to do forced labour in a nearby military camp, approximately every other day. On some occasions he paid others to do the porter service he was ordered to do.

He reported that he had been arrested three times. First time in 1994. He was accused of having participated in a killing in the village. He was transferred to a nearby jail and was in remand custody for five days. During the interrogations he was threatened with guns, but he was not physically ill-treated. The charge was dismissed and he was released.

Second arrest took place in 1994 on the following background: In his home he had a video camera apparatus. From the rebels in the region he had got a video describing the activities and policy of the rebels and he was forced to show the video to local villagers.

The army was informed about this, he was arrested in his home and spent one day and a night in the military camp. He was interrogated about his activities with the rebels. He was not physically ill-treated but he was treated badly and told that in case of reiteration or in case he collaborated with the rebels he would be shot on the spot.

The third arrest took place February 10, 1995. He thought that the arrest was based on the fact that he had refused to sell a tape recorder to a local officer. Early in the morning his house was surrounded by approximately 20 soldiers. The house was searched and he was accused of possessing equipment especially walkie-talkies for communication with the rebels.

He was taken to a local military camp and interrogated while soldiers beat him at all parts of his body with bamboo sticks, approximately five centimetres thick. While his hands and arms were tied on the back and while he was sitting on the floor two soldiers forced a bamboo stick approximately 1,5 m long and 8-10 cm thick up and down his shins while they pressed the stick with the full weight of their bodies downwards to his shins. Thereafter, bleeding from his head and legs, he was ordered out of the military camp.

He was informed that the soldiers were going to shoot him dead, and he was asked whether he wanted to see his children before he should die, which he didn't want. At some distance from the military camp he was thrown to the ground and pretending that they were going to kill him; the soldiers fired guns close to his head. While he was laying prone, soldiers stepped on his back and his legs. He lost consciousness and woke up in a sort of cell in the military camp. There he spent seven days unable to walk around.

He had an open wound in his scalp. He reports that a medic sewed his wound with hair from the tail of a horse. The horse was right outside and he could see the hairs being cut from the tail before his treatment. After seven days the army demanded 30.000 kyat from the family for

his release. After the family had payed he was released but only after spending one more day in the camp. At that time he was still unable to walk due to pain in his right heal and his back. In the village he could get some sort of analgetic, but even before he had taken the medicine he had black and bloody stools and also red, bloody urine.

He asked for permission to go the local hospital, which he was denied, however he was allowed to go to Thailand for treatment under the condition that an officer could buy his tape recorder for 10.000 kyats. This amount of money was taken from the other villagers.

In Thailand he received various kinds of medical treatment, his foot was X-rayed and he was informed that he should be operated on which he could not afford however.

At the clinical examination in November 1997 he reported that he still suffered from daily headache and pain in the right heal for which he took aspirin. Occasionally, he experienced pain in the lower part of his back.

He still suffered from upper abdominal pain in periods, the pain could not be related to meals. Occasionally he would vomit, sometimes the vomit contained fresh blood.

He reported that he still observed red blood in bis urine sometimes, but no pains when voiding his bladder. Occasionally he had chest pains and he felt that he lost his breath.

He still suffered from reduced ability to concentrate, this impeded his work as repairer of electrical devises. His vision became blurred after only a few minutes of concentrated work.

Psychologically he still suffered re-experiences of his traumas, both when he was awake and while sleeping in the form of night-mares. He tended to isolate from others and is to some extent irritable. He tried to avoid thoughts associated with the traumatic experiences, which might cause both emotional and physical reactions, e.g. discomfort in the chest. His interests in normal daily activities were significantly reduced.

On the PTSD-form he scored 40 points in 15 items, one item was let out. This result indicates the presence of PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder).

Clinical examination

Well formulated, cooperated well, did not appear depressive or anxious.

The general physical appearance was likewise non-remarkable. He moved around without difficulties.

On the anterior aspects of both lower legs, there were widespread small superficial scars somewhat confluent. Below the left knee there were two larger hypertrophic 1 cm by 1 cm and 3/4 cm by 3 cm scars.

The right heel was somewhat deformed, the tuber calcanei prominated somewhat dorsally and medially.

On the scalp there was a small scar in the parietal region.

The movement of the joints of the arms and the legs and that of the back was not remarkable.

Conclusion

The examinee gave a detailed description of torture and ensuing symptoms. There were widespread and remarkable scars on the anterior aspects of both calves and clinical signs of an old fracture of the heel-bone, and an unspecific scar on the scalp.

He described chronic psychological symptoms which typically can be seen after extreme stress. Judged by our scale he suffered from PTSD.

The examinee could very well have ulcer disease in spite of the fact that his symptoms are non-specific. Judged by his report there can be no doubt that he had had an upper gastrointestinal bleeding in connection with the torture.

The described blood in the urine (haematuria) in the period just after the torture can very well be explained by trauma of the kidneys. It is more difficult to relate the information about chronic recurrent haematuria to his traumatization.

We find that there is good agreement between the described torture, the described physical and psychological symptoms and the clinical findings, i.e. the peculiar scars on the calves and signs of a previous fracture.

We could not offer him treatment for the presumed ulcer, but we advised him not to take aspirin or other similar analgetics. In stead, we advised him to take paracetamol to treat all sorts of pains.

HD-26

32-year-old Karen male farmer, who fled with his family to Thailand in June 1997. He reported the following about life in his village in the Karen part of Burma until the time of migration:

For many years he was forced to work at the military camp, digging and doing construction work, approximately 8 hours a day, fifteen days a month. He worked without salary and had to bring his own food to the military camp.

He was recruited to the forced labour through the headman of the village. All households in the village had to participate. If a man from a household had to grow his fields, another one from the household had to replace him. In that way women and children from the age of 12 years took part in the forced labour.

Occasionally he was taken by soldiers and forced to work as a porter for the army. He had to carry military equipment and supplies through the jungle in periods of 3-6 days. On one occasion he had to work for the whole month.

The load he had to carry usually weighed between 20 and 30 kilos. He worked all day and on some occasions also during the night. At night the porters were guarded by armed soldiers.

The food offered to the porters was insufficient. Many porters became sick, first of all because of exhaustion. When the performance of the porters was considered unsatisfactory, they were beaten by the soldiers. The examinee reported that he himself several times had been beaten and kicked by soldiers and that he many times had witnessed other porters being ill-treated.

He reported that he himself at some times was sick during porter service, but he had to continue the service anyway.

Porters who fell over were beaten until they stood up again or died from the beatings. During the last year in Burma he witnessed four porters being shot, some during attempts to escape. Four were beaten to death and seven left exhausted in the jungle.

In December 1996, a 27-year-old cousin was ordered to do porter service and had never been seen afterwards.

In the autumn of 1996 the army ordered the inhabitants to leave a nearby village. An uncle, 48-year-old, an aunt, 43-year-old and a cousin 15 years old were shot by the soldiers because they did not comply.

In June 1997 he reported that he was arrested by the army and kept in military camp. He was accused of supporting rebels.

He was interrogated about his activities and was beaten with hands and fists and bamboo sticks all over the body including head, arms and legs. While he was lying supine two soldiers forced a bamboo stick up and down his shins, while they pressed the stick with all the force of their bodies unto his legs.

During torture he lost consciousness. In the following days he vomited and noticed that the vomit contained fresh blood. The following months he had difficulties in swallowing. Furthermore, he reported that fellow prisoners were tortured likewise, some furthermore with electrical shocks. One was beaten to death and the body thrown into a nearby river.

After some weeks he succeeded in fleeing from the military camp. Thereafter he fled to Thailand.

Clinical examination

On the anterior aspects of both calves there were numerous small scars, the largest 2 by 2 cm.

Conclusion

There is good agreement between the described torture, the ensuing symptoms (loss of consciousness, upper gastrointestinal bleeding and difficulties in swallowing). The latter symptom is probably caused by inflammation of the oesophagus induced by gastric acid. This

condition may very well be provoked by abdominal traumas together with vomiting, exhaustion for days in lying position.

Furthermore there is good agreement with the reports of torture and the remarkable scars on the anterior aspects of the calves.

There is good agreement between the general description of human rights violation in Burma given by the examinee and similar information given by many other refugees from various ethnical regions in Burma.

Examination of patients from institution X November 1997 (Landmine victims)

Case M-1.

Nineteen-year-old male Karen, admitted to the hospital September, 20 in the surgical department, approximately one day after a landmine injury in the Karen part of Burma. He was transported approximately 200 kilometres to the hospital by friends. The mine was flat and round. He knows the form of the mine because he was planting it himself when the accident happened.

At the **clinical examination** his eyes were empty. There were multiple 2 to 5 cm scars in the face and on the neck. Left hand was amputated at the level of the wrist, right arm amputated on the level of the upper arm.

Conclusion

Heavily traumatised by a landmine which he was planting himself.

The localisation of the lesions (face, hands and arms) is in agreement with his history.

The fact that the examinee was transported a long way through Burma by his friends to get treatment in a hospital in Thailand and not admitted to a hospital in Burma, can only be seen as an indication of membership to a guerilla group.

Case M-2

34-year-old Burmese male, who stepped on a landmine in the Karen part of Burma near the border November 9, 1997. By his family he was carried through Burma and from the border he was transported by car to the hospital. The period of transportation was 7 hours.

He has no ideas who placed the landmine or what kind of landmine he had stepped on.

At the **clinical examination** his right lower leg was amputated. There were hundreds of small scars on the medial aspect of the left lower leg and left lower arm. The left second finger was amputated, and there were still sutures in this wound on the hand. There was a bandage on the right amputated leg (figure 5).

Conclusion

Typical traumatisation caused by landmine explosion.

Case M-3

28-year-old Burmese male admitted to the hospital October 30, 1997. The day before he had

stepped on a landmine, he was carried by friends to the border and thereafter transported by car to the hospital.

He had no idea who placed the landmine or what kind of landmine he had stepped on.

On one occasion he has seen landmines consisting of bamboo like sticks connected to a tripwire.

At the **clinical examination** there was an amputation on the left lower leg with a bandage. There were hundreds of small scars on the anterior aspect of the left thigh and on the medial aspect of the right calf. There was a somewhat larger slightly infected lesion on the medial aspect of the right thigh. There were numerous small scars, 3-4 millimetres in size on the medial aspect of both lower arms.

Conclusion

Typical traumatisation caused by landmine explosion.

From the case records of the institution, we found the following cases of landmine injuries.

Case Ma:

24-year-old male Karen admitted to the hospital May 26, 1997. Amputation of left foot.

Case Mb:

42-year-old Thai male admitted to the hospital May 26, 1997. During a visit to Burma he stepped on a landmine. The right foot was amputated.

Case Mc:

42-year-old Burmese male admitted to the hospital June 16, 1997 after a landmine incident four days earlier in Burma. The left foot was amputated. The patient died due to loss of blood.

Case Md:

40-year-old male Karen admitted to the hospital August 29, 1997 five hours after a landmine injury in Burma. He had wounds on the legs, but no deep traumatisation and he was not amputated.

Case Me:

27-year-old Karen man admitted to the hospital September 18, 1997 after landmine incident in Burma. He had multiple wounds in the face, on the abdomen, chest and hands. He had lost both eyes. Discharged alive from the hospital.

General conclusion from patients described in the case records

The first four cases seem to be ordinary landmine injuries with lesions of feet and legs. The fifth case resembles in the description of the lesions of the eyes, the face, hands and

anterior aspect of the body, our case M 1. We find it likely that this man likewise has tried to plant a landmine or produce it, and that the landmine exploded during this activity. As in case number M 1 we find it highly unlikely that he was member of the Burmese army since he got treatment in a Thai hospital, i.e., he was part of the guerilla movement.

Table 1

			All		Total
	Shans	Non-Shans	Migrated more than 12 months ago	Migrated 0-12 months ago	
Number	46	46	58	34	92
Median time from migration	1.8 years	2.0 years	5 years	5 months	1.5 years
Age, Median (Range)	30 (15-70)	33 (18-68)	32 (18-68)	31 (15-70)	31 (15-70)
Sex Male/Female	40/6	39/7	50/8	29/5	
Farmers	43 (93%)	37 (80%)	50 (86%)	30(88%)	87%
Forced labour	35	26	32	29	61 (66%)
Porter Service	29	31	36	24	60 (65%)
Relocation	28	19	31	16	47(51%)
Arrests	6	15	13	8	21 (23%)
Assaults to family	6	4	5	5	10(11%)
Torture	3	10	6	7	13(14%)
Killings, family	20	13	20	13	33 (36%)
Killings, other	17	11	14	14	28 (30%)
Rape, family	4	3	3	4	7(8%)
Rape, other	5	7	8	4	12(13%)
Disappearences, family	3	2	3	2	5(5%)
Disappearences, other	5	3	5	3	8(9%)
Landmine incidents, family	6	17	19	4	23 (25%)
Landmine incidents, other	12	21	23	10	33 (36%)
Score	6,1	6,1	5,9	6,4	
p	> 0,9			> 0,30	

Table 2

Migration	Karens		All		Total
	More than 12 months	0-12 months	More than 12 months	0-12 months	
Number	24	30	58	38	96
Male/Female	7/17	17/13	27/35	20/18	43/53
Farmers	15	29	36	34	70 (73%)
Family break down	6	4	14	6	20(21%)
Forced labour	8	14	18	16	34 (35%)
Porter service	11	21	18	24	42 (44%)
Relocation	2(n=19)	15 (n=25)	9 (n=40)	15 (n=33)	24 (33%) (n=73)
Killings of family members	4	12	16	12	28 (29%)
Rape in village	10	3	16	4	20(21%)
Land mine incidents	11	19	26	20	46 (48%)
Average score	2,63	4,40	2,52	3,74	
P	< 0,005		< 0,02		



Figures 1a and 1b: Lesions allegedly caused by pressure of heavy loads carried during porter service.



Figure 3: Young woman with scars after gunshot lesions. Both the entrance and the exit of the bullet can be seen.



Figure 2: Chronic ulcer allegedly caused by bayonets introduced into a wound from a landmine fragment.



Figure 4a and 4b: Young man with signs of a neglected fracture of the thigh-bone and a scar, allegedly caused by torture.

Figure 5: Victim of a landmine explosion. Right lower leg and left index finger were amputated. Numerous small scars caused by landmine fragments.

