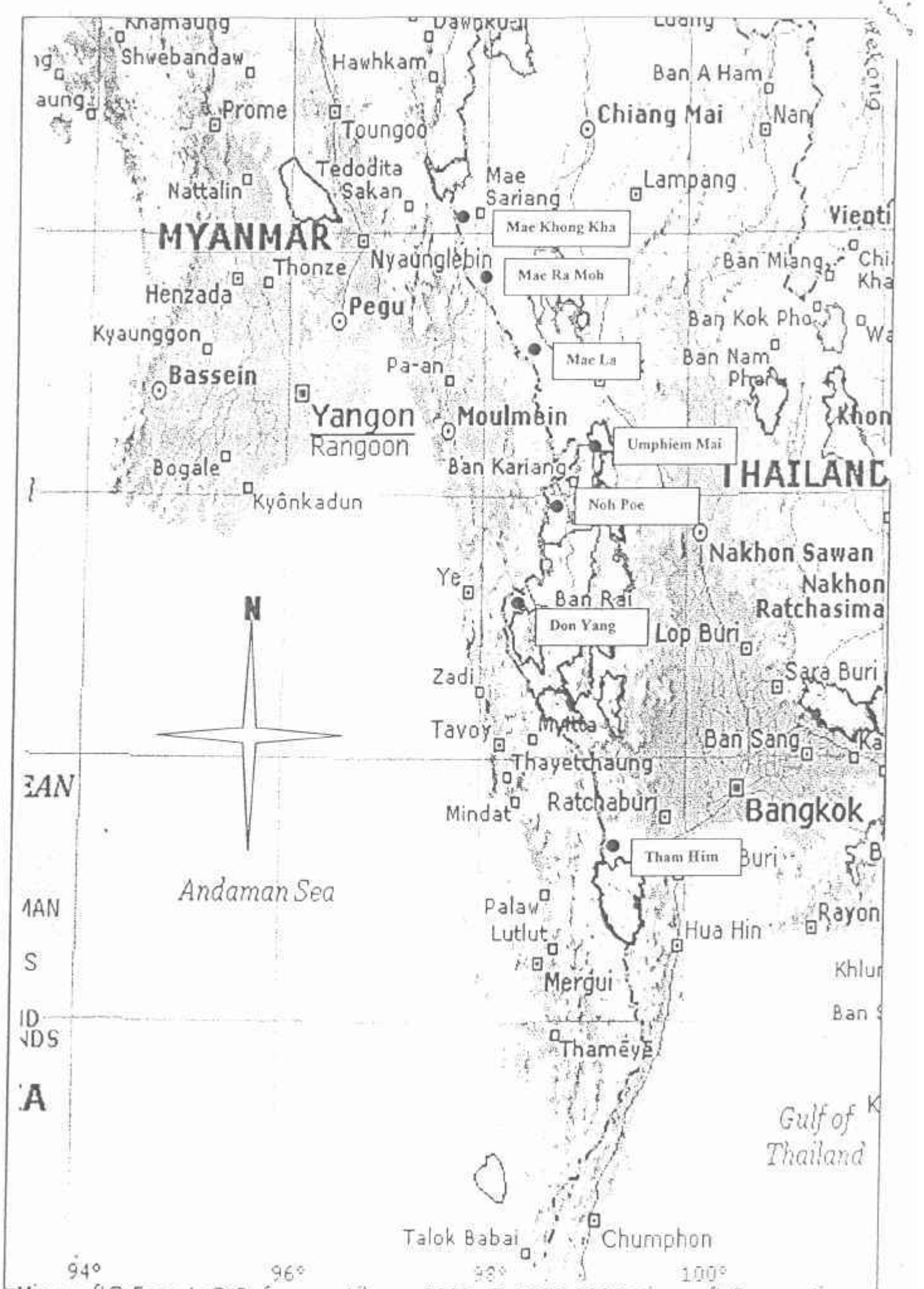




KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

FEBRUARY, 2003



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Monthly Report.

February 2003

On February 12 1947, an agreement was signed at a little town, in the Central Shan State, called Pang Long (Pin Lon in Burmese). Participating in the Signing were the Burmese AFPFL Party. (Anti Facist People's Freedom League) led by General Aung San, the Shan Saw Bwas, the Kachin chiefs and Chin chiefs, together with Representatives of the British Government. The Karens, Karennis and other Ethnic Groups didn't participate in the signing, only attending the ceremony as observers. That was most surprising, for the Pang Long Agreement was to be the cornerstone, for the whole of Burma to achieve complete Independence from British Rule. It is still a mystery why other Ethnic Groups were not signatory to the Agreement. One notable provision of the Agreement was that any Ethnic State have the Choice of separation from the Union after (10) years, if membership was found to be unacceptable. When there was comment as to the wisdom of allowance for separation, General Aung San was reported to have remarked that, if after (10) years of living together and the Ethnic States still want separation, it would simply be failure on the part of the Burmese. But what most people see, through all those years, are attempts at living together, which was effected only through coercion and imposition of force. February 12 was commemorated as UNION DAY, but with diminished importance with the passing of years.

Burma achieved Independence from British Rule on the 4 of January 1948, thanks largely to the Pang Long Agreement. General Aung San, the architect of "Pang Long Spirit," didn't live to see the Day of Independence, as he and many other leaders were assassinated on July 19 1947. Signs of imminent contention and conflict was foreboding even before Burma achieved Independence. Many People believed that granting of Independence for Burma by the British Government was rather premature, doing things in a rush- without adequate groundwork for stability and harmony. Still, Independence for Burma began with abundance and good living. The carefree, easy-going life, was the norm for those days. A salary of Kyats 300 per month which an average worker received meant good living for a family. That would be comparable to to-day's salary of Kyats 60,000, whereas the majority of workers these days are getting Kyats 10,000 or less., which would mean a worker family living on U.S. \$ 10 or less a month.

For the country, a new leaf was turned with the seizure of Power by General Ne Win on March 2, 1962. After experimenting with Ne Win's "Burmese way to Socialism" and with the Military's incompetence in dealing with the, country's problems, Burma had sunken to such a condition as to warrant recognition as one of the

"Least Developed Countries" in the world. Burma has now gained notoriety as a country of Forced Relocations, Forced Labor, Confiscation, incarcerations, deprivations and Narcotics. Then, on reflecting, what is seen is that, after more than half a century of living together, very little can be found of trust and mutual understanding between "Blood Brothers of the Union."

This month the SPDC is calling on the U.S. to participate in peace and reconciliation moves in Burma. For many people, it would be just a ploy by the Junta, trying to achieve what they want on their own terms and at their own pace.

The Junta is releasing political prisoners and at the same time arresting and imprisoning peaceful dissenters, including students and Nuns. Up to now, the Junta is refusing to talk with Daw Aung San Su Kyi and Co- and the Ethnic Groups for that matter. The Junta had made cease-fire agreements with some Ethnic Groups and then, hit them with Drugs. Reminds People of the Burmese saying "Let Nek Yay, Khyay nek Phyet"(လက်နက်ရေး၊ နှစ်ချက်ပေး) which would mean " Write with Hand - Rub out with Leg." What People usually see is that the SPDC is saying something positive and then ended by doing just the negative.

For Thailand, this month it's the start of the War on Drugs. The problem has become so acute for the country that the Authorities find it necessary to clamp down on it with full force. It is arguable whether outright dangerous people need have access to sympathetic considerations, like observance of Human Rights. There is little reason to feel the need for people related to " Drugs" to be condoned. Drugs- simply is Dirty and Deadly. Still its wishing the Authorities every success.

For the Refugees, its wishing to go back to their simple and unaffected living. But where, when and how will be a big question for them. Many are displaced for upwards of 20 years. Many are born, while on the run. Many are born in Refugee camps. Many will not know where they belong. Home for many is in the realm of imagination. Still we have many reasons to thank People who are really sympathetic and understanding. The Host Country, People and Government and The sympathetic Donor Countries and Peoples, the UNHCR, the Support NGOs, sympathetic Groups and Individuals.

K.R.C and Camps Committee Activities

13-2-2003 - K.R.C and Mae La Camp Committee members met to discuss deteriorating social relations in camp. Some activities and exposures are affecting family relations, neighbourly relations as well as character and school attendences. To that end, it was found necessary to close down video shows, gambling and betting facilities-including lotteries. Sales shops are allowed to operate but only under simple and controlled transactions.

19-2-2003 - According to the Government's Policy of War on Drugs, the Camp Commander imposed restrictive measures related to containment of Drugs and Drugs related problems. People related to Drugs are called upon to come out and renounce usage, abuse or peddling narcotics and then accept corrective jction and education, withdrawal treatment and help in prevention. Support to be solicited from the NGOs for correction / treatment for 84 Drugs addicts and related people.

A Protection Workshop was held in Mae Sot, Where UNHCR, NGOs and KRC participated. Discussion was centered on the provision of an "Incident Report Form " by which abuses and misdeeds in Camps can be reported in a uniform and acceptable process and form, and upon which, proper action can be taken.

24-2-2003 - Beginning 24 -2-2003 - Mae La Camp Committee and (SRWG) Social Relations Work Group will set up in every household a Manifest Card- board, showing the Number of the House, Head of the family, and population, male and female, Zone and Section. This Manifest Card-board will help responsible people with readily available data and access to individual houses and families. This can also prevent mix-ups and errors.

- KRC and Camps Education Committees are meeting and making preparations for conducting, Final Annual Examinations in each Individual Camp. KRC -KED & Camps Education Coordinators will Co-ordinate towards holding of Board Examination. Examination date being fixed at 18-21 March 2003.
- For Mae Ra Ma Luang, Mae La, Um Phiem, Noh Poe and Ban Don Yang Camps, 4 standard students will be made to sit for the same question paper.
- During the last week of March and the month of April, ZOA, ABWaid and Consortium will take responsibility for holding of Teachers Refresher Course.
- Pre- Service Teachers Course will be provided for New Teachers and Interest Personnel.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS FEBRUARY, 2003.

	CAMP	No. of	Over- 12Yrs		5 -12 Yrs		Under 5 Yrs		Total
		families	M	F	M	F	M	F	
MAE SOT AREA	Mae La	5,435	10,524	10,196	4,108	3,819	1,903	1,853	32,403
	Um Pheim Mai	3,487	6,260	5,958	2,052	1,928	1,117	1,047	18,362
	Total	8,922	16,784	16,154	6,160	5,747	3,020	2,900	50,765
NORTH	Mae Ra Mu Luang	1,831	3,714	3,261	1,404	1,312	725	674	11,090
	Mae Kha & Sa la	2,497	5,395	4,878	1,444	1,350	1,614	1,536	16,217
	Total	4,328	9,109	8,139	2,848	2,662	2,239	2,210	27,307
SOUTH	Noh Poe	2,696	3,759	3,579	1,593	1,433	823	936	12,123
	Ban Dong Yang	739	1,102	1,197	405	391	265	268	3,628
	Htam Him	1,652	2,049	2,190	1,322	1,395	793	797	8546
	Total	5,087	6,910	6,966	3,320	3,219	1,881	2,001	24,297
Grand total		18,337	32,803	31,259	12,328	11,628	7,240	7,111	102,369

RICE AND OTHER ITEMS RECEIVED DURING THE MONTH

FROM	CAMP	Rice 100 Kg Sack	Salt Kilos	F -paste 15-Kg Tin	Yellow Bean-60 Kilo-Sack	Chilies Kilos	Cooking Oil 200 ltr	Char-coal	Fire wood M3
BBC	Umphiem Mai	5,608	7,250	1,208	284	2,280	85	5,675	258
	Mae La	13,101	16,950	2,827	664	5,310	199	10,181	-
COERR	Um Pheim	250	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

We shall always be grateful to the Thai people and Government for their sympathy and understanding in allowing us safe refuge.

We are also indebted to the NGOs for their Supports and Services.

BBC- Support in Food and Shelter Material. BBC is also supporting with warm clothing for all the camps.

MSF - Support in Medical and Health facilities.

AMI-

ARC-

MHD-

ZOA (ABWaid) - Support in Educational facilities Teachers' Training.

Consortium - Support in Educational facilities. Teachers' Training and Education for Deaf/ Mute / Blinds.

TOPS - Support in Educational facilities.

ICS-Asia- Support in Educational facilities and school buildings.

COERR - Rice and Educational support. EVI- to be involved with Extremely Vulnerable People.

H.I - Support for Refugee Handicaps with Prosthesis and rehabilitation and also year- end sporting events for Handicaps.

NCA- (Norway Church Aid) has been providing KRC with administrative & Organizational Support.

It has also supported with remuneration for KRC members and workers.

UNHCR- For Registration Process Protection and Ultimate Safe Repatriation.

SMRU - Support with Malaria Control, Prevention and Treatment.

SVA- to support with Libraries in the camps.