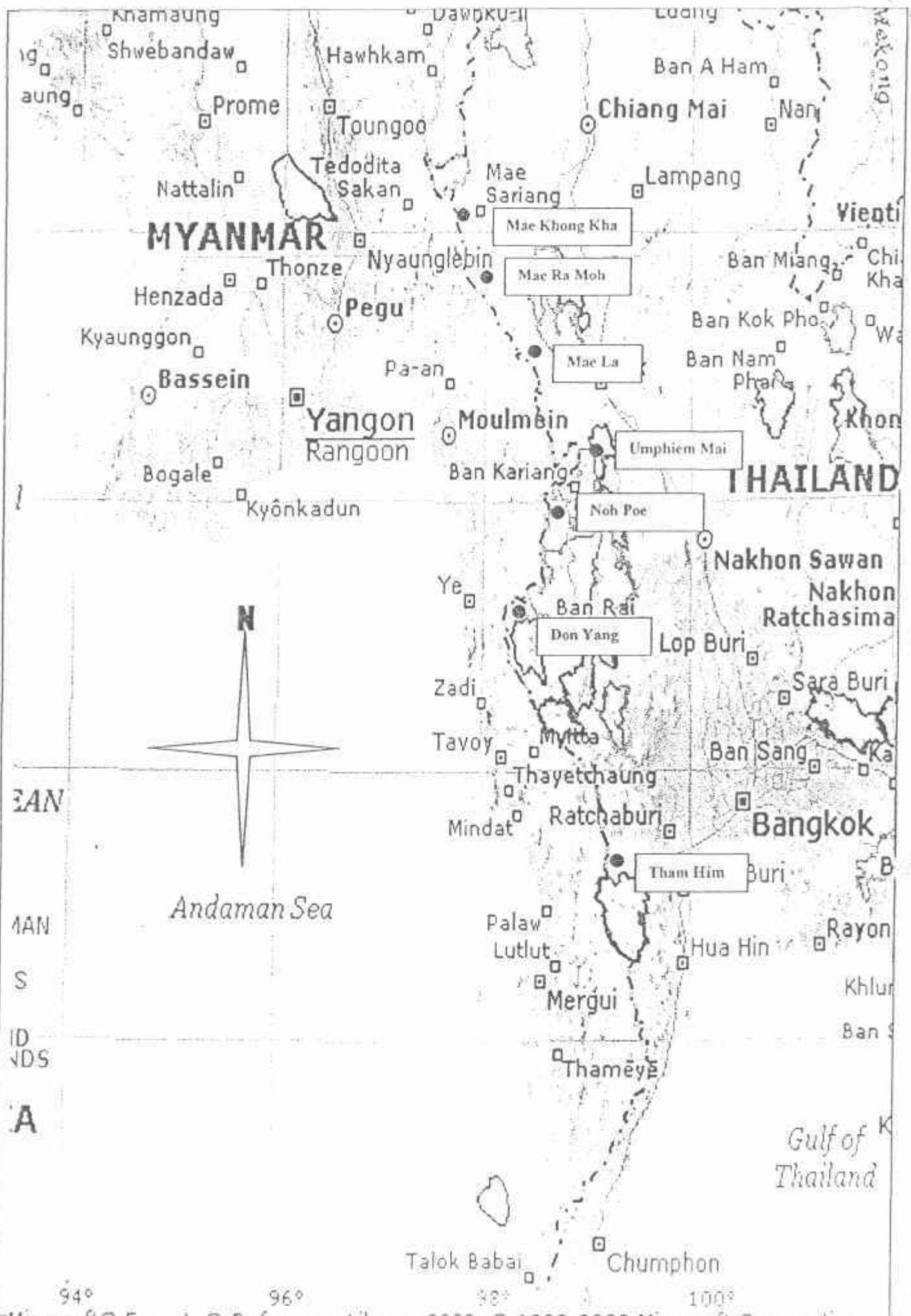




KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

APRIL, 2003



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April, in the Buddhist Calendar, is the New Year, which is welcomed by the Water Festival or "Thin Gyan", where People throw Water on each other to show Friendship and Goodwill. It is also time for reflection, to learn from the Past and to Pray for the Future. This is the Time when many men entered the monkhood and when many young boys are novitiated. Elderly People are shown veneration by being washed, bathed and offerings made. Many People take time to meditate or make merit to cleanse themselves of past misdeeds.

But this April, we see the War in Iraq at its height. There is the danger of great loss of life and Material Destructions, as weapons of great precision and destructive power are being used. There is the danger of more suffering, more animosity and more spreading conflicts. To all evidence, this would not be the War to end all Wars. We still see smouldering spots in the Middle East, Central South Asia, East Asia and Africa. Still from this War in Iraq, we see indications of a lot of people, being rid of a very Despotic and Repressive Regime. But then there is the danger of the more Repressive Shin Gyi (Great Spirit) replacing the Tiger, which again would be a repeat of the Cycle of Repression, Resentment and Conflict. However the fall of Saddam Hussein will show that Despotic Rule is becoming more unpopular, more unacceptable.

Elsewhere, we are seeing this SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) which put fear into many Peoples and Countries. One sure result is that many Country's Economies will be severely affected, because of the regulatory impositions and limitations of travels and transactions. Even now, there is great fear of this much dreaded Disease spreading.

In Burma, it was another visit- another attempt by United Nations Envoy Mr. Paulo Sergio Di Pineiro to help bring Reconciliation and Peace to the Country. He was said to have ended his visit and left the country abruptly, when on his visit to meet and talk with political prisoners, he found out that the meeting processes were secretly tape-recorded. It was trespass that he can ill-tolerate. Some people are remarkably good at making patient people impatient.

At the same time. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her Party's political visit to the Chin State, was met with authoritative harassments and hamperings all along the way. This could only mean that the SPDC is not yet ready and willing to accept dialogue and change for the better. Then again, the SPDC announced that there will be no State Sponsored Paddy Purchase, this coming season. This must be one way of Political Play by the SPDC, but which few will understand and have trust. For changes are regularly made from time to time although the situation continues to be deteriorating rather than improving. What is needed is that, change, if it were to come, must come with the People. Many knowledgeable observers have come to the conclusion that it's the underlying "Conscientious Objection" in people that have become obstacles to overall improvement.

Meantime, one old and frail Political Prisoner, an Ethnic Christian Chin, is conducting solitary hunger strike in Insein Jail. This in no way will move mountains. But then, little incidents are often seen to have wrought great historic changes.

The confrontational undercurrent between the Regime and People in Burma has gone on rather deep and protracted and which continued presence will do little to help restore Reconciliation and Peace in the whole of the country.

For Refugees though, with this New Year, there is very little of knowing what the future will be. For that matter, there can only be gratitude to the Host Country, People and Government, and to the support Organizations and NGOs who are always there to help. A Friend in Need, is a Friend Indeed.

K.R.C. Camps Activities

On the 2nd of April, due to misinformation and hasty action, there was an incident in Mae La Camp in which 2 camp Medical workers were sacked on the spot. The sacking took place without proper notification and inquiry processes. But the matter was settled amicably to the satisfaction of all concerned.

23-4-03 - A fact finding mission headed by Mr. Frank S Jannuzi of US Senate Foreign Relations Committee visited Um Pheim and Mae La Karen Refugee Camps. They promised to continue providing support with regard to Education, Vocational and Higher Learning Processes for the Camps young population.

25-4-03 - Led by the Camp Commander (MOI) Mae La, the KRC, Camp Committee and COERR, there was contribution of labour by Mae La camp Population in cleaning and clearing the Mae La stream, which was badly affected by wastes, litter and refuse- especially from the Camp. COERR will initiate measures to uplift sanitation and waste disposal measures in Mae La Refugee Camp.

29-4-03 - There was Noe Poe Committee Elections conducted under the supervision of KRC. The Camp Commander (MOI) and the special Force Commander were also present as observers. The result of the Elections was that of the 15 members elected, 7 were old members and 8 were new members 5 women were elected to the committee.

This month, BBC is supporting with its annual provision of building material in Bamboo, leaf Roofing and Eucalyptus Poles for Shelters repair and renovations.

This month- efforts are being made to be prepared for Refugee Camps, 2003-04 Calendar Year Education. The population of students in Camps for the Academic Year 2002-2003 totalled - 33,557 (Males- 16,917 & Females 16640). The total No. of schools being 71 and the total number of teachers being 1059.

Camps Education is being supported by Educational NGOs namely. ZOA, CONSORTIUM, ICS, COERR, TOPS. Teachers subsidies supported by ZOA and Consortium Support include School Buildings, Furniture's, Teaching Facilities, Material and Curriculum.

-One support Group has provided support for initiating a Programme to provide Basic Engineering and Electrical Technology to young Refugee in Mae La Camp. Plans are being laid for implementation of the Programme in the near future.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS APRIL, 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	5,417	11,446	11,056	2,984	2,859	2,063	1,948	32,356
	Um Pheim Mai	3,526	6,303	5,998	2,061	1,942	1,162	1,097	18,563
	Total	8,943	17,749	17,054	5,045	4,801	3,225	3,045	50,919
NORTH	Mae Ra Mu Luang	1,871	4,009	3,536	1,280	1,146	712	677	11,360
	Mae Kha & Sa la	2,497	5,395	4,878	1,444	1,350	1,614	1,536	16,217
	Total	4,368	9,404	8,414	2,724	2,496	2,326	2,213	27,577
SOUTH	Noh Poe	2,696	3,754	3,574	1,593	1,433	835	950	12,139
	Ban Dong Yang	739	1,103	1,197	405	389	267	270	3,631
	Htam Him	1,652	2,049	2,190	1,322	1,395	793	797	8,546
Total		5,087	6,906	6,961	3,320	3,217	1,895	2,017	24,316
Grand total		18,398	34,059	32,429	11,089	10,514	7,446	7,275	102,812

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	Charcoal 30 kg saks	Charcoal 25 kg sacks
B B C	Umphiem Mai	5,739	7,400	1,234	290	2,310	87	-	6,219
	Mae La	13,154	17,050	2,838	666	5,310	200	10,129	-
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,

Hf - 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.

PPAT- Parenthood Planning Association Thailand -Supporting with Family Planning and Preventive/ Education in Refugee Camps.