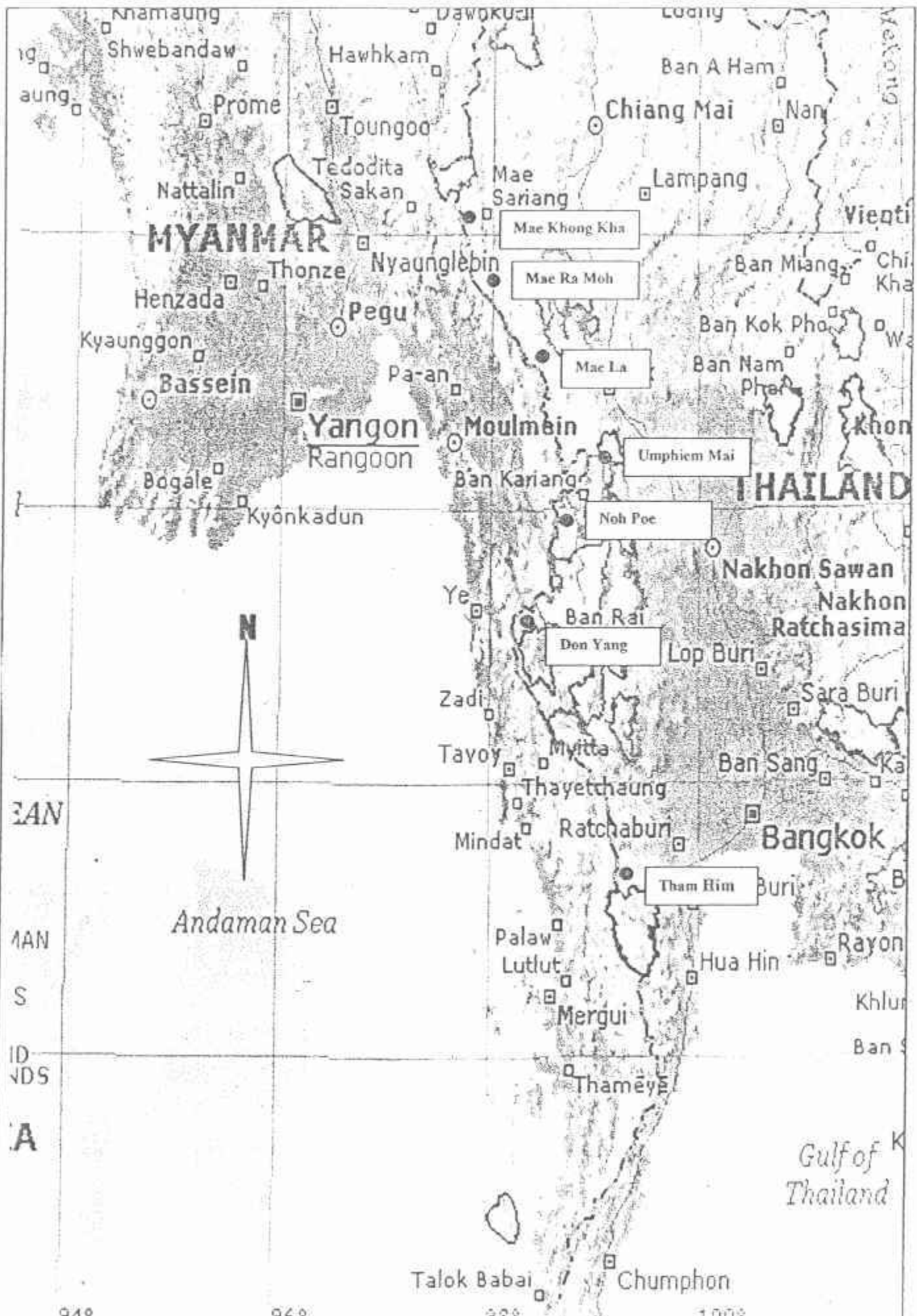


KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE.

MONTHLY REPORT

MAY, 2003



Monthly Report May, 2003

May 1st is Workers Day. The Day was dedicated to workers around the World. Together with Workers' Rights and Privileges, "May Day" encompasses the whole range of workers' related Issues. Workers are builders of Nations, yet they have become resources to be exploited, exemplified by "Voluntary Labour" in Burma, where workers are forced to contribute unpaid labour as "Porters" in Military Campaigns by the SLORC/ SPDC. The SLORC/ SPDC always denied this, but they always practiced it. The Burmese Military didn't move without Porters, for various reasons.

This May 27th is the 13th Anniversary of the General Elections held in May of 1990, and which, the NLD, led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, won by a landslide Majority. It was a matter of record, that the Military Junta refused to recognize the Election Results, although which process they brought into being in the first place. They refused to go back to the "Barracks" as promised and then flouted the international community with their imposition of illegitimate Rule, through use of Force. After that, it was a matter of counting for the oppositions, to be put under arrest, then released, then re-arrested. May 6th 2002, was the day, when Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was released after 19 months of House Detention although that was not the first time, she was put in Protective Custody.

Now, the SLORC / SPDC is in a some what solid control of the country, thanks to many powerful friends who support them, but who are also hoping for working towards change for the better. This would seem far-fetched as the Military Junta is still very much against sharing of power with others, and are not even showing interest at talks for reconciliation.

Around the world, developments are rather more discouraging than encouraging. We hear of suicide bomb attacks on an expatriate compound in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia which kills many. That was followed by another suicide bomb attacks in Casablanca, Morocco, with the same multiple deaths and injuries. Then we hear of bomb explosions in isolated places like Pyu, in lower Central Burma and Tachilek, in the Shan State, near the Thai Border. Together with bombings in, Bali, Chechenya, the Philippines, South - Asia, the Middle- East, many people are questioning whether bomb attacks have become a fashionable way of calling for justice. Now, again, we hear of many countries, threatened by SARS, following on the heels of HIV/ AIDS. We hear of severe floods in China and Sri Lanka,-with more, yet to come. We hear of the Quake in Algeria with many deaths and great destruction. We hear of heat waves hitting 50° C and above in Andhra Pradesh, killing over one thousand. Man has more than enough to contend with.

Near the end of this month, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her NLD Colleagues visited the Kachin State and then Mandalay and Sagaing Divisions. There were great welcoming receptions by the common people although the visiting Party was harassed throughout their travel by the USDA (Union Solidarity and Development Association) adherents. Rumours was that even hardened criminals are released from jails to harass the visiting NLD with the incentives of cash rewards and unconditional release. It was not without precedence, however, because hardy criminals were reported to be released to do the dirty works in the 8-8-88 Repression.

The visit culminated in the little town of Taba Yinn, in upper Sagaing Division, where at an assembled meeting, there was some commotion, resulting in 4 deaths and 50 injured. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was put under "Protective Custody" reportedly for her own safety. 19 of her colleagues were also arrested. The SPDC now has good cause to make arrests. Many are of the opinion, that it was a strategy pre-planned by the SPDC. Aung San Suu Kyi may be frail and unassuming, but her soft tongue can be very punishing and severe on the Generals, on what they have done and achieved. In fact they are very much in fear of her. Fear and hate may overlap.

This May is the Anniversary of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's release from "House Detention". Barely 3 weeks after the Anniversary, she was again re-arrested, which shows that the SLORC/ SPEC will never tolerate interference with their Repressive Rule.

For Refugees, its sympathy for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi - Refugees are in closed Camps for safety. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is now behind bars for her own safety. Life behind bars can be safety for some, but for many, it will simply be persecution. But then Daw Aung San Suu Kyi had no lack of experiencing life behind Bars- and the world will be watching. There's a saying in Burmese "(Kyoo Bin Khok, Kyoo Ngok Ma Chan)" meaning "When you cut reeds, never leave a stump". Tongues are in fear of being cut off!

May 2003. KRC- REFUGEE CAMPS ACTIVITIES.

Um Phiem Camp.- May 1st, May Day Celebration was held in Um Phiem Refugee camp. There was a community meeting where school Teachers, Health/ Medical Workers and Camps People assembled. There were speeches, after which there were Debate contests, Football matches and other Festive activities.

24/5/03- On 24* May 2003. A Donor Group headed by Mr. Jack Dunford from Burmese Border Consortium visited Um Phiem Camp. They were on a fact-finding Tour of Refugee Camps getting information on camp living with regard to Support Food, Health Medical Services, Education, Drugs and Camps, Relations with Thai Authorities and NGOs.

On 11- 5 - 03. There was heavy Rain and Strong winds at Mae Kong Kha Refugee Camp. (58) houses were totally destroyed and (222) houses- partially damaged. 2 schools and 1 office were destroyed- (7) schools partially damaged (14) people were injured. Luckily, there was no death. There was immediate support from Thai Authorities, UNHCR and NGOs.

20/5/03- Noh Poe Refugee Camp. Post Camp Committee Election activities. (10) Committee Menbers designated coordinating Responsibilities. There are (5) Women members in the Camp Administrative Committee.

At the End of this months, schools in all Refugee Camps will begin with their Academic year 2003-2004, Education. Education NGOs have finished sending in Teaching Material Support, have Renovated School Buildings, Help prepare Teachers and Curriculum.

*Sponsored by BBC, IRC, Consortium and the Karenni Refugee Committee, there was a Training on Community Agriculture and Nutrition at Mae Hong Son, Karenni Refugee Camp (1) - from May 5th to May 30th 2003. The Karen Refugee Committee selected and sent (10) Trainees to that Training Session.

*The Aims of the Training are-

To help Rural village People in using environmental resources to produce food commodities and which will lead to long-term development. It will help to educate people in how best to procure Nutrition from food-stuff available.

In this way, Trainees, after their Graduation, will return to their respective camps, and with Guidance and Counsel from KRC apply their knowledge to give Trainings or implement beneficial works processes for the Camps People.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS MAY, 2003.

	CAMP	No. of	Over-	12Yrs	6-12	Yrs	Under	5 Yrs	Total
MAE		families	M	F	M	F	M	F	
SOT	Mae La	5,416	10,873	10,579	3,549	3,329	2,102	1,990	32,422
AREA	Um Pheim Mai	3,596	6,358	6,065	2,081	1,961	1,200	1,137	18,802
	Total	9,012	17,231	16,644	5,630	5,290	3,302	3,127	51,224
NORTH	Mae Ra Mu Luang	1,884	4,072	3,578	1,272	1,144	727	701	11,494
	Mae Kha & Sa la	2,751	5,558	5,064	1,436	1,358	1,704	1,582	16,702
	Total	4,635	9,630	8,642	2,708	2,502	2,431	2,283	28,196
	Noh Poe	2,804	3,878	3,707	1,709	1,576	702	773	12,345
SOUTH	Ban Dong Yang	736	1,116	1,197	411	395	266	272	3,657
	Htam Him	1,652	2,049	2,190	1,322	1,395	793	797	8,546
	Total	5,192	7,043	7,094	3,442	3,366	1,761	1,842	24,548
	Grand total	18,839	33,904	32,380	11,780	11,158	7,494	7,252	103,968

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	5,766	7,450	1,241	291	2,340	88	-	6,248
	Mae La	13,011	16,850	2,808	659	5,250	198	10,020	-
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.

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