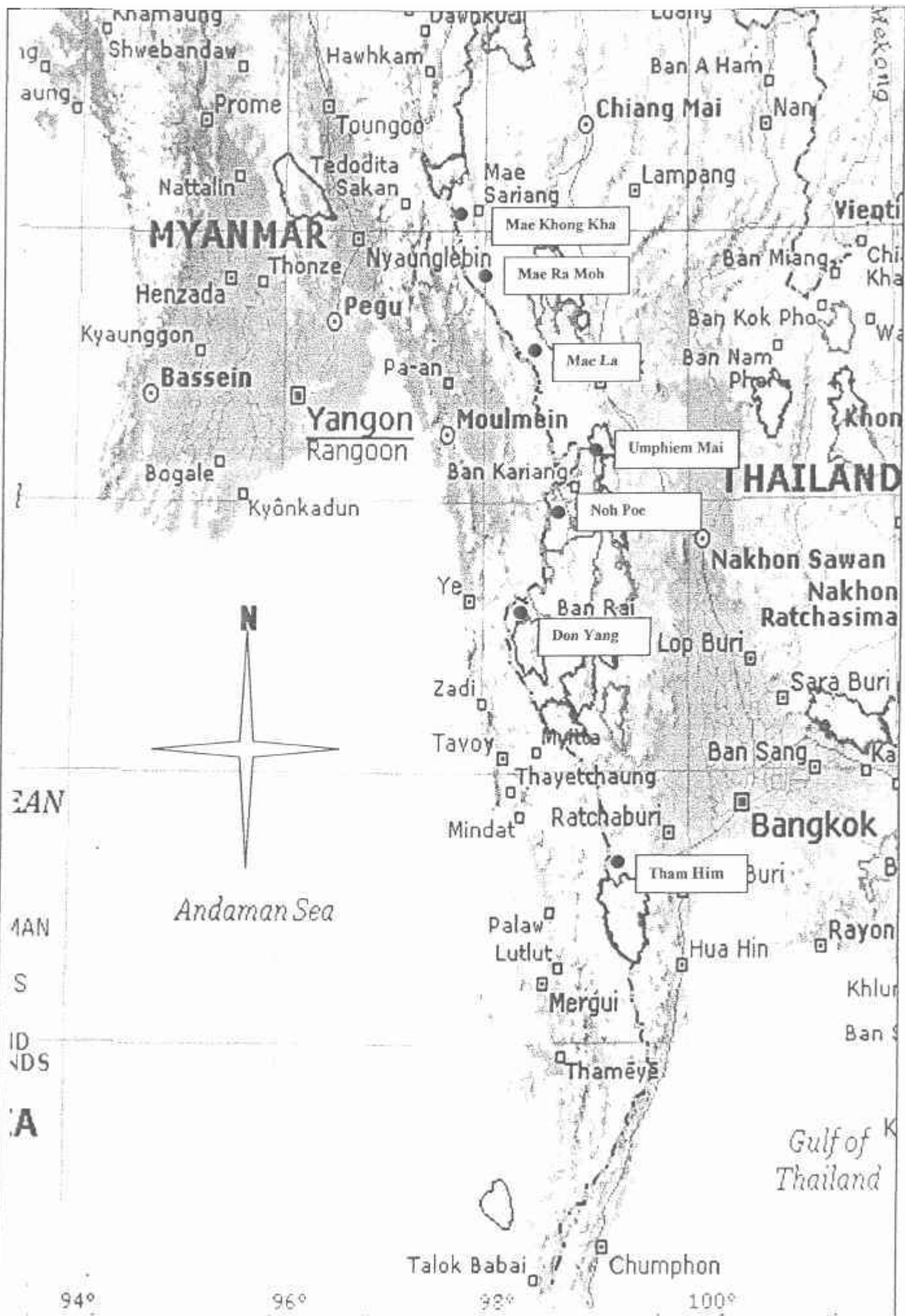


KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

DECEMBER, 2003



## Karen Refugee Committee December, 2003

With this December 2003, we again have come round to the month, dedicated to Peace and Good-will. This was the Month, where, in the Karen Mountains, Church Bells used to Toll, ushering in the arrival of Sweet December, but which had fallen silent, since many years ago, due to dissent, ill-will and confrontation between peoples, who had been living together for many centuries. Most people are agreed that because of the contentious activities between diverse groups in Burma, the country suffered severely, sliding back towards rock bottom with the passage of time. Now Burma, as a whole is in a very pitiful situation, being classed with some similarly affected countries, as "Least Developed Countries" in the World.

For Refugees in this Border Region, it's another Life-year passed by, adding to the many years of "Away Living," living lives of uncertainty, frustration, restrictions, deprivation, dreading the fear of the unknown future. Many simply cannot answer, where they belong, where their home is.

Now People are talking about the need for change, change for the better in Burma. Even the Military Rulers seem to sense the need for Change. Neighboring Countries and Governments sense the need for change in Burma. They *are* even willing to support and participate. They are willing to support with Road Maps. Burma's recently installed Prime Minister, the same SPDC secretary General Khin Nyunt, has put up a Road Map -to be processed in Seven steps, the First being the calling of the National Convention. Many people came to feel that there is trouble already with this First Step as sincerity in the reconciliation process is still wanting. They say continued detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as insincerity on the part of the SPDC.

This month, People remember without any hint of sympathy, the death of General Ne Win on the 4 of December, Last year, at the age of 91. His was the Authoritarian Rule, that brought on the chaos, and which was to continue unto this day, under the misrule of like-minded successors.

This December 17<sup>th</sup> is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the First Flight by man-On December 17<sup>th</sup> 1903, the Wright Brothers were able to achieve that Flight in their Flying machine, at Kitty Hawk in North Carolina, U.S.A. It lasted only 12 seconds, but it was to usher in the Era of Flight, with longer, better, efficient Flight conditions. Today, Flight has come into many diverse uses, for travel, for transport, for sport, for helping in disasters, for defence, for assaults, and for killing too. Still most vivid were the Air Battles of Modern Day Warfare of World Wars I and II, the Falkland Islands and the Persian Gulf wars. There was the Japanese Air Assaults on Pearl Harbour and the Air-droppings of Atomic Bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Then there was the plane hi-jacks, and to top them all, the September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 suicide assaults on the World Trade Centre.

This month, Humanity is being reminded that there are other forces, other than weapons, explosives and planes that can kill en-masse. The reminder came in the form of a massive earthquake at Bam in

South-Eastern Iran with information that the deaths have reached Twenty- Eight thousand with the expectation that it may increase. This together with still other natural Forces, are the kind of killer strokes that will be quite impossible to avoid and escape from'.

But, Front Page News of the Moment around the World, would be the Final Chapter of Saddam Hussein. He was trapped and apprehended by U.S, Troops in a little house, not far from his birth-place. The Man, who only some months ago, was the most feared, in his country and the Region as well, was arrested in a most unexpected and uncompromising setting, in a small underground cellar, with no companions or protectors around, putting up no resistance. It was quite different from the Last chapter of Uday and Qusay Hussein, who died fighting to the last breath, and who can never feel pride in the way of their father's exit.

One good news, coming out from the Region, is the announcement by Colonel Kaddafi of Libya, of his renunciation of the WMD ( Weapons of Mass Destruction) program. This will help greatly with Regional stability and Peace.

For us Karen Refugees, it's hoping to see the light, through the darkness of living for long years as non-persons, living the lives of undesirables, not knowing what the future is. Most Refugees, especially the young, know only that they are living away from home, because of the Military Junta Rule , and persecution,because of their Karen Identity.

At the end of the year, and with the coming in , of the New Year, it's wishing to see change for the better, change towards resolution of this prolonged, unrelenting process of disaffection and enmity. Our country, and our People, have suffered much, and for too long already.

Trust, based on Sincerity is truly needed from all Parties Concerned. Reconciliation and peaceful Co-existence is what would be most welcome in the New Year.

So, with the end of the year, we would like to sincerely express our profound Gratitude and wishing for all the Best, to the People and Government of Thailand, and to the Individuals and Groups that have been supporting us all through these hard years, in Good-will, sympathy and understanding.

## K.R.C Refugee Camps - Activities - December 2003

### **3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> December 2003.**

There was Trainings/ Workshops in Refugee Camps with regard to educational Administration, Co-ordinated works, Reportings and Improvements.

5/12/2003

The King's Birthday Celebrations were held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, in all Refugee Camps, to Honour the King and the Royal Family.

### **December 10<sup>th</sup> 2003**

An Eight Member U.S fact finding delegation led by U.S Congressman Mr. Elton Gallegly visit K.R.C in Mae Sot where matters related to Karen Refugees and K.R.C Coordination works processes were discussed. The delegation had visited some Refugee Camps before they visited KRC. Real concern for the Refugees was manifested. There was also Commitment by the Delegation to continue supporting the Refugees.

### **Mae Kong Kha Relocation—**

The process to relocate Mae Kong Kha Refugee Camp in Mae Sariang District, to a new site, beginning with the first week has been stalled and now postponed to the date which is still as yet unknown. Meanwhile, reports are that up to the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2003, (177) families comprising of ( 1117) persons from Mae Kong Kha Camp, have crossed back to the other side, of their own free will.

23/12/2003.

Karen New Year Day was Celebrated in All Karen Refugee Camps.

### **25 / 12 / 2003.**

Christmas Day was Celebrated by all the Christian Communities in the Karen Refugee Camps.

## NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS DECEMBER, 2003,

MAE	CAMP	No. of	Over-		13 Yrs		6-12 Yrs		Under 5Yrs		Total
		families	M	F	M	F	M	F			
SOT	Mae La	5,427	10,832	10,573	3,547	3,336	2,373	2,255	32,916		
AREA	Um Pheim Mai	3,512	5,631	5,407	2,838	2,716	1,273	1,176	19,041		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8,939</b>	<b>16,463</b>	<b>15,980</b>	<b>6,385</b>	<b>6,052</b>	<b>3,646</b>	<b>3,431</b>	<b>51,957</b>		
NORTH	Mae Ra Mu Luang	1,911	4,168	3,687	1,282	1,126	760	736	11,759		
	Mae Kha & Sa la	2,671	5,597	5,107	1,729	1,611	1,163	1,093	16,300		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,582</b>	<b>9,765</b>	<b>8,794</b>	<b>3,011</b>	<b>2,737</b>	<b>1,923</b>	<b>1,829</b>	<b>28,059</b>		
SOUTH	Noh Poe	2,768	4,151	3,945	1,470	1,310	766	839	12,481		
	Ban Dong Yang	736	1,039	1,163	412	379	310	327	3,630		
	Htam Him	1,652	2,040	2,186	1,421	1,395	934	937	8,913		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5,156</b>	<b>7,230</b>	<b>7,294</b>	<b>3,303</b>	<b>3,084</b>	<b>2,010</b>	<b>2,103</b>	<b>25,024</b>		
	<b>Grand total</b>	<b>18,677</b>	<b>33,458</b>	<b>32,068</b>	<b>12,699</b>	<b>11,873</b>	<b>7,579</b>	<b>7,363</b>	<b>105,040</b>		

### 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 Itr	Charcoal 30 kg sacks	Charcoal 25 kg sacks
B.B.C	UmphiemMai	5,849	7,600	1,266	298	2,371	89	-	6,167
	Mae La	14,207	18,450	3,070	723	5,760	219	12,128	-
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.

VISF - 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.