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Some Acronyms in This Issue

SPDC-	State Peace and Development Council,
SLORC-	State Law and Order Restoration Council,
APTD-	Agricultural Products Trade Department,
IB -	Infantry Battalion (<i>of Burmese Army</i>),
LIB-	Light Infantry Battalion (<i>of Burmese Army</i>),
MOMC-	Military Operational Management Command
PDC-	Peace and Development Council,
USDA-	Union Solidarity and Development Association

News

The regime's new plan to re-buy paddy at low price from farmers

(November 2003, Mon State)

In April 2003, although the Burma's military regime, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), promised that they would not no longer buy paddy at low-price from the local farmers, however, it currently adopted a new plan to buy paddy from farmers.

The main body of SPDC's paddy-buying organization from farmers, Myanmar Agriculture Products Trading (MAPT) department, even it does not directly involve in buying paddy from farmers at low price like previous years, but it has used 'Chambers of Commerce' to buy instead of the department.

In order to buy paddy at low price from farmers, Mon State's MAPT encourages 'Chambers of Commerce' from Township levels to village levels. The authorities also trained them how to buy paddy from farmers.

The local authorities organized the local traders who involved in buying paddy from farmers with normal price and forced them to form the 'Chambers of Commerce' and then instructed to buy paddy from farmers at set low-price. The Chambers of Commerce also have to use the old



"Tarana (No. 3/03)", a paddy-buying center of local authorities in Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State

How the SPDC's treatment to farmers?

After the military regime in Burma, SLORC or SPDC came into power, they have seriously made profit from the local farmers, who are about 80% of the country's population.

Since 1990s, the regime gradually increased buying more amount of paddy from farmers at low price. In buying paddy at low-price, they have increased from 8 baskets to 15 baskets per acre of land. From buying paddy at low price from farmers and selling to foreign countries at high price, the regime has much profit by exploiting from poor farmers.

During the SLORC and SPDC era, the regime confiscated more lands farmers in order to deploy new military bases, for the implementation of infrastructure projects, for national and multinational businesses and investments and Burmese Army's 'self-reliance' projects and resettlement of soldiers' families.

The recent land confiscation in Mon State has forced hundreds of Mon farmers to suffer after they lost their lands. Similar land confiscations have also happened in many other parts of the country, especially in ethnic nationalities' areas.

Low price paddy-buying and land confiscation also created serious economic deterioration in agriculture sector and the followed problems of 'food insecurity' in general in the rural areas. '

Therefore, the rights of farmers to have access to 'lands', 'free to sell their products' and 'food security' is so importantly to monitor in Burma.

system in buying paddy and so the farmers have to sell the set amount of paddy depending on how many acres of lands they belonged.

According to the decision adopted in meeting between the military leaders and the Chambers of Enterprises, they farmers must be restricted in transport of their crops and husking of their crops, if they do not agree to sell the set amount of paddy to the Associations.

Local SPDC authorities also set the order to the Chambers of Enterprises in every Townships in Mon State, how many tons of paddy from which Townships they need to buy.

The Association would pay about Kyat 170, 000.00 (approximately 170 US Dollar) for 100 baskets of paddy (about 4600 pound weight) and the authorities allow only traders from the Association to buy paddy from farmers in Mon State. The price of paddy in the market is about Kyat 300, 000.00 (approximately 300 US Dollar) for 100 baskets of paddy.

The Township Chambers of Enterprise have full right to buy crops from farmers and they also have to pay Kyat 10, 000.00 for membership fee to the authorities.

The SPDC is still planning to obtain thousands of tons of paddy from the local farmers in various parts of the country at low-price and sell to the foreign countries at a better price.

But in southern part of Ye Township, in where the regime has no firm control, the local military battalion ordered the farmers to give 4 baskets of paddy per acre to the Burmese Army as tax, without receiving

any cash. Looting of paddy by soldiers in the rural areas where the armed conflict situation is on-going situation also make 'food insecurity' for the local ethnic civilians.

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Further reduction of compensation for the confiscated lands

(November 2003, Mon State)

Although the Burmese Army last month promised to pay compensation cost by counting the total numbers of fruit and rubber trees to the landowners for their confiscated lands in Mon State, but now the army makes further reduction of compensated cost and will pay only Kyat 4000.00 (4 US Dollar) per acre of land.

Last month, before the UN Human Rights Special Rapporteur went to Burma, the local battalions of Burmese Army called a meeting with the local landowners who lost their lands due to the confiscation and discussed for the compensation. They promised in the meeting that they would compensate with money accordingly to the numbers of trees.

In the promise, the Burmese Army would pay 250 Kyat per one tree, but now they changed their decision and declared they would pay only Kyat 4000.00 per acre of lands.

If the army pays the compensation cost on number of trees, the landowners could get more money. In one acre of land, there are about 500 rubber trees and so that the landowners would get about Kyat 125,000.00 (125 US Dollar) for one acre of land. Now, the army



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The confiscated paddy lands by the local Burmese army's LIB No. 210 in southern part of Ye Township, Mon State.

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decided to pay them in number of acre and they will get only Kyat 4000.00 (4 US Dollar) of lands.

Some landowners are also forced by the army to sign a promising document that they are offering their lands permanently to the army. Some farmers have denied to sign while the army lied some illiterate farmers to sign on it.

Additional land confiscation was conducted by LIB No. 588 in northern part of Ye Township in order to create a village for soldiers' families and so about 28 farmers lost their lands. Those 28 farmers are forced

to sign that they are offering their lands to the army but 3 farmers have constantly refused to sign.

Accordingly to our Human Rights Foundation of Monland's recent report, NO LAND TO FARM, about 8000 acres of lands in various part of Mon area have been confiscated during 1998 to 2002. Further confiscation of civilians' lands in the southern part of Burma have continuously happened under the regime's 'self-reliance' policy that encouraging all army battalions to find their own income.

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Disastrous flame burnt down 280 houses in southern Ye Township, but no relief program arranged

(November 2003, Ye Township, Mon State)

On November 19 after about 280 houses in Kaw-hlaing village locates in southern part of Ye Township, Mon State, were burnt down, there was only promise by the local authorities, but relief program was arranged and the local authorities also tried to arrest some villagers for their carelessness.

Flame started at 1:00 afternoon time from the middle of the village and then it burned one house to another. The cost of properties that lost in the flame is huge and there were over 1000 fire victims, who are in the situation of homeless and helpless.

The authorities from Ye Township, No. 5 Military Intelligence Unit, policemen and firemen from fire-brigade also came to the village on November 20 and promised to the victims they would arrange for the relief program.

"They said they would help the victims and so we expect their helps. But most villagers would not like

to believe them, because there was no evidence that the authorities were helping the fire victims. You see, now they tried to arrest the villages or victims, from which (village section) flame started", explained by a villager.

Accordingly to the village headmen, the fire flame started from burnt dusts and then separated to many households in the village. Flame could easily separate because the villagers' roofed thatches were drought. On the other hand, village is far from the fire brigade, which is in Ye Town.

At afternoon, it was a hot time and windy, so that the flame could easily moved from one house to another. About 25% of total houses in village were burnt down, confirmed by the village headmen.

Kaw-hlaing village has about 1000 households and this was a very first time of fire disaster in village and the villagers lost over 1000 Million Kyat for their houses and properties.

Report

Lawlessness in Rural Areas in Southern Burma

After the current military regime seized the political power in 1988, it named itself as, “State Law and Order Restoration Council”, with an objectives to maintain the country to have “rule of law”. Later after 9 years of repressive rule, the regime believed that ‘rule of law’ was maintained in the country and therefore they gave names the regime as “State Peace and Development Council”. In this new name, they thought Burma has peace and could implement development projects in both urban and rural areas.

But in reality, no ‘rule of law’ is maintained in various parts of Burma, and no genuine peace has taken place in most non-Burman ethnic areas bordering with Thailand, China, Bangladesh and India. Most developments, which are implemented by the regime, created a lot of suffering to the people, because they have to contribute unpaid and money for various types of projects. Gross human rights violations have occurred in various parts of the country and lawlessness situation created by the local SPDC authorities and troops of Burmese Army widespread in the rural areas.

Under the rule of military government, the local Burmese Army’s commanders are as ‘war lords’ in the rural areas and they can order the village headmen, local authorities what they liked. The commanders and troops of Burmese Army have mainly created the lawlessness and violated ‘the rule of law’ in the country. For example, when International Labour Organization (ILO) coordinated with the regime’s Ministry of Home Affairs, to eradicate all practices of ‘forced labour’ in the country, the Minister also issued the serial orders to the government servants, regime authorities and commanders of Burmese Army, to stop use of forced labour. Although many government departments and the authorities have stopped use of forced labour, however, the commanders and troops of Burmese Army have still continued ‘use of forced labour’ in types of porters in the offensives and security guards along the main road.

Additionally, by learning the behaviour of the Burmese Army, the local village headmen and member of village militia force have also involved in creating the lawlessness situation in the rural areas. If they received one order from the Burmese Army’s commanders, they tried to show their power and abuse the people.

Among various types of lawlessness, the looting, extortion, stealing and corruption are involved. For the ethnic civilians in the rural areas, they could not find any legal aid to protect their rights at all. Even they found their properties are looted in front of them by the soldiers, they could not stop that happening and could not ask for help for the village headmen in their communities.

The detail information of various types of lawlessness situation are mentioned as below:

Stealing the civilians’ properties

In general situation in Mon State, the local villagers have to provide all necessary salaries to village headmen and militiamen to protect the local villagers’ properties. Villagers have many properties such as lands, fruit and orchid plantations, paddies, livestock and others outside of the villages, where they could not guard all the time.

Village headmen and their armed factions normally have to take responsibility for the safety of all these belongings and to not disappear. However, the village headmen and militia force could not bar the Burmese Army’s troops, if they came and steal these things.

The local village headmen and militia force also learned these abuses from the battalions of Burmese Army and they also involved in stealing the villagers’ belongings, especially livestock like the troops from the Burmese Army. Hence, for the villagers, they totally lost the protection from the village headmen and militia force to those they contribute monthly salaries. Additionally, they also could not seek any protection.

Some Mon villages which has more educated persons and who understand the laws also tried to complained about these lawlessness activities of the village headmen to the higher authorities or higher military commanders. However, the local civilians do not see any punishment to those who involved in stealing or robbery of the villagers’ properties.

As an instance,

“With dated on October 14, the villagers from Kaw-dot village, Ye Township, also wrote a letter to Maj. Gen. Thura Myint Aung, the Chairman of Mon State Peace and Development Council to punish their village headmen and militia force for stealing of properties.

“In the letter, the villagers informed about 27 cases of stealing happened inside and outside of the villages during 8 months of the year, from January to August 2002. The villagers lost especially cattle, which they raised at farms outside of the villages and other properties, such as bi-cycles, gold wares, gasoline, and others that they kept in the villages. 9 cases of stealing happened outside of the villages and the remaining 18 cases happened even in the villages.

“Unsurprisingly, the villagers believed that the village headmen or village militia force would involve in these stealing or they protected the thieves. The villagers believed that the village headmen anyhow must know who were involving in stealing, but they did not make any arrest.

“Kaw-dot village has about 1500 households and it has good businesses, however, the security to the civilians posed a very terrible. The village complained even though they have provided a full salaries and foods for the village headmen and members of village militia force to protect the villagers’ belongings, however, these village security force involved in stealing. The villagers have provided salaries to 17 village militiamen (most village headmen are also village militiamen) and they also collected 500 Kyat from each household. Additionally, the villagers also had to provide 100 baskets of paddy each year for foods to the village militiamen.

“In most cases, when the village headmen and militiamen stole the villagers’ properties, they came at night time and took what they liked at homes. As they came with guns and stole the properties at night time, although the villagers found, they were not dared to shout because they were afraid of being killed.”

These village headmen also seriously involved in corruption (see the topic below: corruption by the authorities). Similarly to this village, the headmen and militiamen in many other Mon villages also involved in stealing the civilians’ properties. Although the villagers informed to the higher authorities or high rank military commanders, those village headmen were not really punished.

In Burma, since the regime has oppressed the democratic force, which try to restore ‘democracy’ in the country, no real people representatives are elected. Hence, all Township authorities, village headmen and militiamen are selected or hand-picked by the higher authorities. The State/Division SPDC Chairmen are normally military commanders and therefore, they appoint only the retired soldiers or commanders from the Burmese Army in the positions of Township authorities or village headmen. Even the villagers do not like these authorities, however, they could not put the case for the dismissal of those corrupted officials.

In some cases, many corrupted village headmen also bribed money to the higher authorities (State/Division or Township) to appoint them village headmen for years. Or, they can also bribe the army commanders in the areas to appoint them as headmen. When they became village headmen, they can find money by involving in corruption.

Stealing and Looting by the Burmese Army

Besides the village headmen and militia force, the troops of Burmese Army has constantly involved in stealing and looting of the civilians’ belongings in the rural areas. In the rural areas of conflict zones, the Burmese Army suspected all villages as ‘rebel camps’ and they looted the villagers’ properties as they liked when they went into villages.

In some villages, when the troops of Burmese Army came into their villages, all men fled and tried to escape not to be arrested as ‘porters’ or faced torturing. Hence, when the Burmese troops arrived into their villages, they looted things and properties what they liked. They took not only livestock: chicken, duck, cattle and others for their foods, but they took other properties such as gold wares, silver wares and others in the villages.

Currently, southern part of Mon State, various parts of Karen State and various parts of Tenasserim Division are in the conflict zones and the Burmese Army’s troops looted various things from these areas, when they arrived into the villages.

Some Burmese Army troops from some battalion have continuously involved in looting of civilians’ belongings from one village to another. There were some looting cases by the Burmese Army’s troops from LIB No. 433, in Yebyu Township of Tenasserim Division and they are:

Case 1:

On July 4, 2003, about 9:00 night time, about 10 soldiers from LIB No. 433 Captain Ye Lin went into The-chaung village, Yebyu Township, and the soldiers climbed every house in the village and took properties that they found. The soldiers took livestock and other valuable properties that they found on houses and under houses even the villagers were presence. It was likely robbery and the villagers were too dissatisfied. Hence, the villagers also informed to the column commander of that battalion, Maj. San Myint Oo, to punish the soldiers. But the commander replied that their soldiers did not commit any looting in village.

Case 2:

Again, on July 25, 2003, the same troops from LIB No. 433 led by Captain Ye Lin went into another village, Kwethalin, and looted the properties about Kyat 700, 000 worth. They arrived into village, about 8:30 p.m. and they took livelihood and some household properties. Soon after they arrived into village, they gathered all men in one place and then climbed onto every house and committed looting. On the next day, although the village chairman complained about the looting in the village, but the commander, Maj. San Myint Oo, never punished his men.

Similarly to LIB No. 433, many military battalions in the conflict zones similarly committed looting in ethnic villages. They looted foods generally for the meals but they looted other valuable properties for their income or for their families.

After May 30 killing of NLD members in Depeyin, upper Burma, the SPDC and the Burmese Army's local battalions propagandized there would be foreign invasions to Burma. If those foreign troops came into the country, they must come into the border areas of southern part of Burma and therefore, the Burmese Army has supplied more troops in southern part of Burma, by sending more troops from other parts of Burma.

When thousands of troops poured into southern part of Burma, those soldiers were involved in looting of the Mon people's foods and properties in a widespread situation. The Burmese Army also sent the commando troops to the areas and the village headmen in the areas have to provide more foods for those troops. Besides they asked food cost, they also looted foods and other properties in the village.

As an instance,

"In August 2003, the Burmese Army sent a hundreds number of commando troops to Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State. They have taken bases in many Mon villages in the Township area and asked food costs from the village headmen every day. As most village headmen were afraid of being mistreated by the soldiers, they have paid the requested amount of money to the soldiers.

"In Kaw-panaw village, about 20 commando troops led by Sergeant Htet Naing asked Kyat 2500 per day for foods. The troops took bases about one month in there and the village headmen have to provide food costs for them everyday. The headmen have to collect money every day.

"Even the village headmen were providing food costs to the villagers, however, the soldiers also stole livestock in the village as they liked. Even daytime, they went to some and shot the chicken which were raised under houses. They also gathered vegetables in the villagers' gardens without asking any permission."

Similarly to Kyaikmayaw Township in Mon State, the Burmese Army also brought troops from other parts of Burma into Mon State with an objective to prevent foreign invasion. Looting of the Mon villagers' properties by the Burmese Army's soldiers have been similarly happened in Ye Township and Thanbyuzayat Township in Mon State.

As another instance,

"In second week of July 2003, the Burmese Army brought and deployed about 10 military battalions including some artillery units and heavy motors in Mon villages along the motor road between Thanbyuzayat Town and Ye Town. There are about 30 villages along the route and they deployed 20 to 50 troops in each village. The soldiers said that they were deployed to protect the foreign force.

"But in reality, no foreign force came and occupied Burma. However the villagers who have to receive the troops in their villages were suffered. They soldiers looted and killed their livestock such as ducks, chickens, pigs and even cattle for their foods even in front of the villagers. They did not ask any allowance from the village headmen, but just shot and took them away.

“Even the villagers were complaining about the looting by the soldiers to the commanders concerned, but the commanders never punished their men. They shot livestock mostly in the villages and shot to cattle, oxen, cows and water buffaloes, outside of the villages. The Mon communities normally raise their livestock in the village and raise the cattle to use them in the farms.

“Besides the looting committed by the soldiers, the Burmese Army also restricted the movement of the local villagers. They were not allowed to stay at their farms at night time, and were allowed to work only between 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. It was quite inconvenient for the farmers who have farms far from the villages, and many of them could not work in the limited time in their farms. While the farmers were not in their farms, the soldiers are shooting the livestock and cattle as they liked.”

In any troop deployment conducted by the Burmese Army, the villagers were not only suffered from the looting committed by the Burmese Army, some soldiers also attempted to rape women if they have chance.

As an instance,

“While the 10 battalions of Burmese Army (mentioned in the above instance) are taking bases in villages between Thanbyuzayat and Ye Towns, some low rank commander also tried to rape women. On April 4, 2003, at night time, Sergeant Hla Win from LIB No. 355 also tried to rape a Mon woman, Mi San Aye (34 years old), in Waekarat village, Thanbyuzayat Township.

“Troops have taken base in there for many days and the Sergeant tried to get chance to rape because her husband was away. On July 4, when he went into her house and tried to rape her, she shout loudly for help and so that the villagers arrived to her house. However, the battalion commander did not punish his man even warning to not create the problems.

From July to September 2003, while the Burmese Army were deploying thousand number of troops, the local civilians in Mon State and the government servants, government supporters such as USDA members, village militiamen had been recruited to attend military training.

Setting gambling dens by the authorities

Accordingly the traditional laws in Burma, setting gambling and let the people play gambles is illegal. The Buddhist monks and the religious persons, elderly people and women in the communities do not like gambling and they believe that this gambling activities would destroy people’s good behaviour. It is also against the Buddhist philosophy and practices.

The people in the community believe if the men are spending their time in playing gambles, they would no longer work in their farms or plantations to produce foods and other for their daily income. If they lost in the gambling, they would also try to steal from homes. Hence, many women in the communities do not like their husbands are involving in the gambles. While the husbands are in the gambling dens, they forget their responsibility to feed their wives and children at homes. If they lost they also steal properties from homes or commit domestic violence.

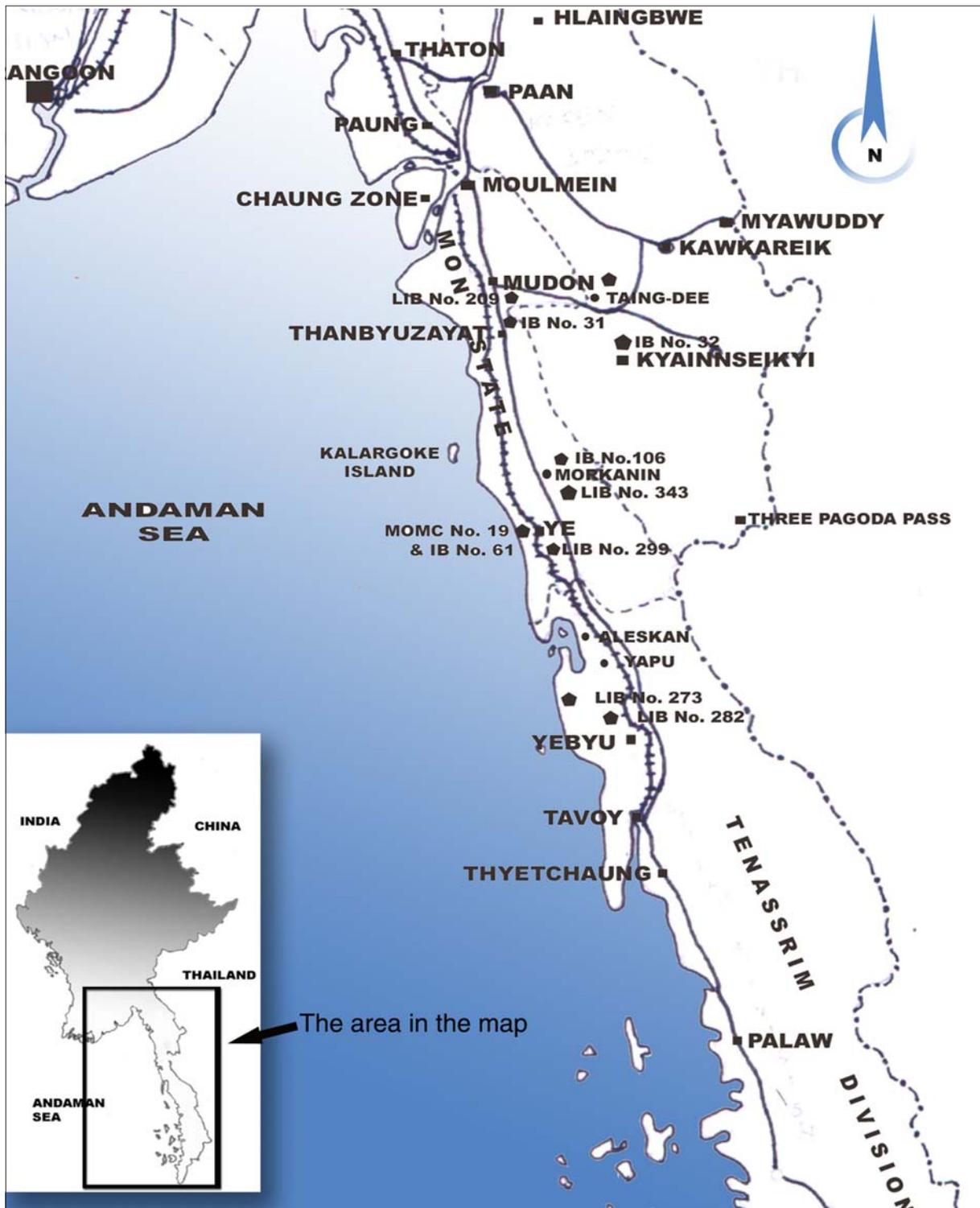
In the society of Burma, the community people accept the gamble is not a good game and mostly oppose. However, the army commanders, the village headmen and militia force have set gambling dens in various parts of Mon State, Karen State and Tenasserim Division in southern part of Burma and they have planned to collect money or illegal tax from these dens.

Sometimes, the troops of Burmese Army also tried to rob money from these gambling dens, which were set up by the village headmen.

As an instance,

“In March 2003, village headmen from Kwan-hlar village in Mudon Township set gambling dens near village and collected money from dens. The village headmen had set the gambling dens for many days and get a lot of money. While the village headmen are getting money from the dens, the nearest army commander from Infantry Battalion No. 31 heard about this. On March 26, the troops of IB No. 31 led by Sergeant Myint Swe also came and robbed from the gamble players.

“They took about 80000 Kyat from the gambling den accordingly to the villagers. But they did not any arrest to the people. They just came and took money, because the local village headmen, who set the dens never gave them money.”



Location Map of Southern Burma and Troop Deployment of Burmese Army

Similarly to this village, the village headmen from many villages in Mon State, also set gambling dens and collected money from players. Even in Town wards, the Township authorities have allowed ward leaders or militiamen to set the gambling dens as they liked and let them collected money or tax from there.

In most situation, when there is pagoda festival in a village or in a town ward, the village or township authorities always set gambling dens and tried to collect money from the gamblers.

As an instance,

During March and April 2003, like every previous years, the villagers in most villages in Chaung-zone Township, Mon State, continuously held their village's pagoda festival. While the villagers and religious leaders, Buddhist Monks, were arranging for festival, the village headmen set gambling dens during the

nights of the festival. Although the elderly persons and the monks do not like these gambling activities, most village leaders or Township authorities did not care them.

“From 27 March to April 3, 2003, the Township authorities in Chaung-zone town continuously set various types of gambling dens from one Town ward to another, where the pagoda festivals were celebrated. In every Town ward, the authorities set about 50-100 dens and they collected 3000-10000 Kyat per den as tax per night. Hundreds of villagers especially men involved in these gambles.

“Many became addicts of gambling and they went and played cards or involved in other types of gambles every night. When they lost, they also stole money and properties from their houses and wasted the money in gambling. For the authorities, they just tried to get more money from the gamblers. Due to the continuous nights of gambling, most gamblers failed to work for their daily income and spent money from their homes. Bad behavior among the people such as stealing other people’s properties and selling their own properties unnecessary also occurred.”

Not only the local village headmen are involving in setting gambling dens and collected money from the civilians, but the local police department and Township authorities in most Township of Mon State also allow the operation of illegal lottery from copying legal lottery from Thailand. The authorities have allowed these illegal lottery and collect money from those who operated the lottery or ‘lottery dealers’.

In Thailand, although the lottery is legal and it declared the results in every fortnightly, it is illegal in Burma, because Burma also has its own lottery game. Later the authorities in Mon State and Karen State continuously have allowed the daily illegal lottery, which are operated by the local dealers. They have collected money from dealers.

According to a dealer from a border town, Three Pagoda Pass, she explained that:

“Here it is illegal lottery. The government authorities could arrest you any time if you deal it, but you have to pay. We (the deals as a group) have to pay many departments to get permission to sell our lottery sheets and to release the results openly. We have paid ‘police department’, ‘commander of the local military battalion’, ‘No. 5 Military Intelligence (MI) Unit’, and ‘Township authorities’. If we don’t pay, we would be arrested anytime.

“We invested about 2 million Baht (in Thai currency, Editor note: the civilians in the border area with Thailand normally use Thai currency even in Burmese towns), but we have to bribe these authorities and army about 100, 000 Baht. Besides the bribes, we also have to pay the regular donations to Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), Women Affairs Association and Veteran Soldiers Association and for the development projects in the town.”

If compared with towns inside Mon State, the authorities in the border areas took more bribes from the local civilians, because they are not much monitored by the higher authorities or high rank military commanders.

This illegal operation of lottery separated in most Townships in Mon State and Karen State, the illegal tax or the bribes from the dealers are the main incomes for the local authorities, Burmese Army and law enforcement police officers. Although the higher authorities or high-rank Burmese Army commanders know these illegal activities, but they have kept silence, because all of their men have profits from these activities.

What are the affects to the civilians? Because of this lottery operation, the people have involved more in dealing in crimes. They spent their money in gambling in lottery on the daily basis. They have mostly spent their times in thinking and finding the number for the lottery. In 1000 numbers of the lottery sheets, only ONE number is the results. Hence, the gamblers normally give most of their free money to the lottery dealers. The more they involved, the more they lost and therefore, some regular gamblers became with high debts. Some persons, who lost too much money in this lottery, sold their lands, houses and other properties. Some also involved in stealing and robbing after they lost a huge amount of money in lottery.

What are the profits to the regime? In reality, the regime does not want the people are thinking about politics or condemn, when they face economic hardships and unemployment. By allowing the illegal lottery, the regime let the people addict in about the lottery and lottery, then they forget about the politics, economic hardship and unemployment conditions. Otherwise, they would against the regime.

One another profit, that the regime achieves is that they have received hundreds of thousands Kyat of money as illegal tax that goes into their government departments, regime-supporting groups and Burmese Army. Generally, the regime could have not allocated a sufficient budget for the government departments’ operations for years since 1997. They have secretly instructed to the authorities and army that to collect money from the

civilians and operate their own activities. Because of this order, the Township authorities in lower part of Burma have found many ways in finding sufficient income to operate their departmental activities.

Illegal gambling or illegal lottery always created negative impacts to the civilians and it create the capital flows from the civilians to the authorities' pockets. Even though the SPDC's higher authorities do not allowed these gambling activities officially, but they have been blind their eyes.

Corruption in all levels

In Burma, the corruption among the authorities is the common behaviour and they call them as 'outside money', which means the income that the authorities received besides their regular salaries. All levels including the State/Division authorities have taken bribe from the various employers and professionals. When those business programme planned to operate their businesses, they always asked the permission from the authorities.

Depending on the sizes of their businesses, they needed to ask the permission from the different levels of the authorities. For example, If some company or business tries to get 'contract' for the road construction in a government planned project, the company personnel need to approach 'the Chairman of State/Division Peace and Development Council. Similarly this example, many other businesses such as operating the logging concession, operating private clinic, selling the foreign products, etc, the business owners always have to bribe top level of State/ Division PDC authorities.

As an instance,

There were some evidences that the Commander of Southeast Command (the main command in southern part of Burma), Maj. Gen. Thura Myint Aung involved in a wider corruption by taking bribed money from the medical doctors in the capital of Mon State, Moulmein, to permit them operating their private clinics. Many well known medical doctors in Moulmein would get higher income from the patients because the city has crowded population and the people are always suffered from various diseases because of unclean water and sanitation, and additional lack of vitamin.

“Accordingly to the reliable source, he took millions Kyat of money from these medical doctors to permit them operating their clinics in the period during he is taking positions as Chairman of Mon State PDC (The Commander of Southeast Command automatically became as 'Chairman of Mon State PDC', the Administrative body of Mon State – Editor Note). The commander took about 2.5 Million Kyat (about 3000 US Dollar) from Dr. Nyein Kyaw, an expert of diagnosis research and took about 2 million (about 2500 US Dollar) from Dr. U Tin, a surgery expert. Other ordinary medical doctors also have to pay at least 0.5 Million Kyat to 1 million Kyat depending on the locations of their clinics. Due to unconfirmed calculation, he would receive at least about 15 Million bribe from medical doctors in the city alone.

“Nobody know whether he shared these bribed money to other authorities in Mon State PDC. Because of the expensive bribe payment to the Commander, the doctors also charged more medical treatment costs from the patients.

“Not only from the private clinic operation, many other businesses also has to bribe the Commander to get permission for doing business without troubles from all levels of the authorities. In the capital city of Mon State, there are various kinds of business and commercial activities such as trading, fishing, logging, etc., the Commander Maj. Gen. Thura Myint Aung and the members of Mon State PDC would receive many Million Kyat of bribed money.

As the people in Burma could not get access to the military government's information, no one can estimate how much money, which are in the corruption cycle among the authorities of the SPDC. Since the people have no freedom of expression, they have to keep for their bribes to the authorities or army commander to get allowance for their business.

While the SPDC's high rank authorities or army commanders take many Million Kyat of money from the civilians, the Township level authorities, village level authorities, battalion commander, unit commander and other low rank low ranks always take bribed money from the civilians. Bribing becomes as a practice and therefore, the people automatically know that they have to bribe the authorities or army commanders for what businesses they wish to do.

Since the authorities or army commanders do not have to perform 'accountability' for the money they received from the civilians, they also collect over amount of money from the civilians, while they planned to implement

Information on HURFOM and Invitation for Feedbacks from Readers

Dear Readers,

Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) was founded in 1995, by a group of young Mon people. The main objectives of HURFOM are:

- To monitor human rights situations in Mon territory and other areas southern part of Burma,
- To protect and promote internationally recognized human rights in Burma,

In order to implement these objectives, HURFOM has produced "The Mon Forum" newsletters monthly and sometimes it has been delayed because we wait to confirm some information. We apologize for the delay.

However, we also invite your feedbacks on the information we described in each newsletter and if you know anyone who would like to receive the newsletter, please send name and address to our address or e-mail as below:

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With regards,

Director
Human Rights Foundation of Monland

the development projects or for the security purposes or for military training schools. Recently, when the SPDC authorities and Burmese Army cooperated opening the military training schools by recruiting the government servants, the government supporters and the civilians, they have collected many thousands Kyat of money from civilians for expenses in the training. The village headmen, trainers, army commanders and authorities, who received money from the civilians did not have to do any 'accountability' to the civilians.

As an instance,

"In November, 2003, during Kyaikmayaw Township authorities arranged for a military training school for 'Swan-ar-shin', a group of government supporters, they have ordered the villagers from various villages to collect money for the training. The Township authorities ordered the village headmen from three villages, Kaw-done, Kaw-panor and Wae-pa-ngae, to collect Kyat 100, 000 and provide for the training schools. However, those 3 villages have about 700 households, the village headmen collected Kyat 1000 per household. Therefore, the village headmen took about Kyat 600, 000 into their pockets or they might share some to the Township authorities to maintain their positions."

Whenever the village headmen collected money, they collected more than required amount of money and so that they could put the money into their pockets. Similarly, when they collected crops or paddy from the villagers, they also collected more than the required amounts.

As an instance,

"In Kaw-dot village, when the village headmen are collecting money from the villagers, they always collected more money than they spent. When they collected the crops, they also collected more crops than they needed. In the village, there are about 17 village militiamen and the villagers have to provide them with 100 baskets per year apart from their monthly salaries. In Kaw-dot village, there are about 1,500 households and they collected paddy 1.5 to 3 tins per household and they received 3, 000 baskets of paddy every year. However, the village headmen just give 1, 700 baskets of paddy to the militiamen and take 1, 300 baskets every year.

"Accordingly to the villagers from that village, the village headmen regularly collected money from the villagers for road construction and buying a cooperative truck. For those collection of money, they never reported to the villagers, how they spent it. From a cooperative car, which they bought with villagers' money, they also do a business and have income every day. They did not make any 'accountability' for that money."

Besides, the village headmen are involving in the corruption, the local SPDC authorities, police officers and soldiers from Burmese Army, which are taking guards along the motor road also took a lot of money from the passengers in every route of main roads in southern part of Burma.

As an instance,

“The officials which included the polices, army, MI officers and authorities, in Kya-inn-seikiyi town, Karen State’s boat station, they always threatened the passengers, who came from border area with Thailand to pay them money. Accordingly to the passengers, they took 1000 Kyat money from every passengers while they were checking the materials, which were brought by the passengers.

“If they found the photos shot in Thailand or materials with Thai trading marks, they have threatened them more and asked more money from passengers. If they did not receive available amount of money from them, they also threatened the passengers to detain them. Those types of passengers have to pay up to 10000 Kyat to the group of State authorities.”

More terribly, the soldiers, the police officers and the government authorities set various check-points along the motor road and have collected various types of taxation from the truck owners or drivers. These tax are mostly illegal and they do not to make any ‘accountability’ to the government or to transport associations.

Conclusion

Even the military government has claimed they have created ‘rule of laws’ in the country, but the lawlessness created by the government authorities and soldiers from the Burmese Army has widespread. In both administration body and Burmese Army, the number of corrupted authorities and soldiers is over 90%. Those officials never follow ‘rule of laws’ and their laws only come out from their mouse. They are the main people, who created ‘lawlessness’ situation.

Under the rule of military regime, the majority of the people has to tolerate for the incorrect behaviour and, almost the creation of lawlessness situation by the authorities is always relating to the human rights violations.



Passengers who came from Myawaddy to Paan Township, Karen State.

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