

**News, Personal Accounts, Report & Analysis on Human Rights Situation
in Mon Territory and Other Areas Southern Part of Burma**



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**Some Acronyms
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- SPDC-** State Peace and Development Council,
- SLORC-** State Law and Order Restoration Council,
- IB -** Infantry Battalion (*of Burmese Army*),
- LIB-** Light Infantry Battalion (*of Burmese Army*),
- ILO-** International Labour Organization
- MOMC-** Military Operational Management Command
- KNU-** Karen National Union
- NMSP-** New Mon State Party
- NLD-** National League for Democracy
- DKBA-** Democratic Karen Buddhist Army
- KPF-** Karen Peace Force
- MI-** Military Intelligence

News

The pressure to the Mon National Schools intensified

(August 2004, Southern Ye Township. Mon State)

After the visit of SPDC's leader, Lt. Gen. Maung Bo, from Defense Ministry and Commander of South-East Command to Ye Township area, the local authorities have stepped in more in pressuring the Mon National Schools (MHS) to close down and replace them with government schools.

Maj. Gen. Maung Bo paid a visit to southern part of Mon State on July 30, and ordered the local village headmen in the area to have more government schools in order to compete against the MHS which have existed for about 30 years. For the local authorities, it is a full authority to them to against the MHS and therefore, the local military battalion commanders have ordered the village headmen to uproot the signboards of MHS in some villages and replaced with the new 'government school signboards'.

Accordingly to a local Mon teachers, the Burmese Army commander, Col. Nyi Nyi of No. 3 Tactical Command (*under the command of South-East Command bases in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State*) ordered to take out MHS's Signboards from Khaw-za, Yin-ye and Mi-htaw-hla-kalay, Kyone-kanya and Pauk-htaw village primary school and replaced them with the government's schools signboards.



The SPDC authorities believed that teaching of Mon language would create more nationalist thinking and they tried to definitely close down these schools.

Commentary

Human Rights and Justice for Future Burma

During the course of over five-decades long civil war in Burma, hundreds of thousands of the people, especially the ethnic nationalities people who live along the borders with the neighboring countries, have lost their rights: to survive, live, belong the properties, sufficient food, economic activities, etc. During they are seriously suffering, most of them think for a 'revenge' against the perpetrators in the future.

However, when the time take years, the innocences who have suffered from the serious violations in both urban and rural areas always dream for the restoration for democracy and human rights in the country. Only under the democratic system, the people believed that there would be stable of 'rule of law' and 'justice' would be existed.

Many people are asking how about the past human rights violations in the future Burma. Thousands of people suffered from the violations of various armed groups and how to reflect their cases in the future Burma. Whether we give amnesty to all perpetrators or punish them all in the courts? Whether we give amnesty to some and punish others?

The decisions must be so much relied on the victims. However, to keep maintain the justice in the future, and to not repeat the worst historic situation in Burma, there is a need to at least say 'truths' during the political transitions to democracy in the country. All of us needed to abolish the worst corners of the history and should move forward for justice, protection of human rights and establishment of reconciled and peaceful Burma.

On the other hand, the local Burmese Army commanders also ordered the local village headmen to collect money from the local villagers in order to supplement expenses for the building of new government schools. SPDC leaders, Lt. Gen. Maung Bo and South-East Command's Chief Commander, Maj. Gen. Thura Myint Aung, have donated a few amount of money for some villages to build the schools, but the amounts are mostly insufficient. Therefore, the local commanders also forced the village headmen to collect money.

Due to the previous Burmese Army's offensives against a Mon splinter group, hundreds of villagers fled from their villages. The situation made hard for the local village headmen to collect money from the villagers: as range of 1000-3000 Kyat per household, from the poor villagers. The restriction of movement against the villagers to not go and work in their farms or plantation also made them a serious problem to villagers to get regular income.

SPDC authorities and the Burmese Army's local commanders have tried in many ways to abolish the MHS, which mainly used the Mon language in teaching at schools. The SPDC and the Burmese Army's commanders believed the teaching of Mon language would create more nationalist thinking and they tried to definitely close down these schools.

In March, the command of No. 3 Tactical Command, Col. Myo Win called a meeting with Mon teachers and pressured them to change the Mon schools as government schools, and to change themselves as Mon teachers to be government teachers. The Mon teachers disagreed with the commanders and applied the cases to NMSP's Education Department. NMSP leaders also complained the cases to South-East Command and then the tension reduced.

However, as the original plan, the SPDC tried to control the whole area. While the SPDC leader, Lt. Gen. Maung Bo, paid a visit to the area, he also brought a plan of extending government control in southern part of Ye Township and abolishment of Mon education, that have been operated by the local Mon communities and NMSFs Education Department.

8 New Mon State Party are arrested without a trial

(August 2004, Moulmein, Mon State)

While the Mon ceasefire group, New Mon State Party (NMSP), was attending and supporting the Burmese military regime, SPDC, sponsored National Convention, some of its middle-rank and low-rank

level 8 officials were arrested without an exact trial, and they are still under detention without trial.

Even though the NMSP has asked to release their members while refusing they are not criminals but performed the organization's duties, but the SPDC's South-East Command, based in Moulmen, the capital of Mon State, still refuse to release.

The SPDC local authorities and Military Intelligence (MI) Officers have accused them that they were frightening the villagers during they levied taxes in a rural village, in northern part of Ye Township. But there was no strong evidence and any villager did not found of the NMSP members' threat against the villagers, said a local villagers.

The NMSP's General Secretary also expressed that the levying tax from the local Mon people in the community is a normal practice from the NMSP and they did not forced the villagers to pay for it. Accordingly to him, the NMSP's revolutionary fund has relied on the Mon people and they have supported the NMSP for years.

The NMSP's Township level officials are: Nai Ron 'Nai, Nai Tala Lawi and Nai Aung Yin and other 5 are the low-rank officials who are taking for the administration of northern part of Ye Township. Currently, they are detained in South-East Command's headquarters and some of them are also sick due to insufficient of foods and sheltering, according to the NMSP's General Secretary. •

According to the NMSP's General Secretary, they still demanded the Burma's self-appointed Prime Minister, Lt. Gen, Khin Nyunt, to release their members. But there has been no reply responded until the end of August.

The NMSP, the main Mon armed political organization that has waged war against the central successive

military government in Burma, agreed for ceasefire with the regime in June 29, 1995. On the same day of 9th Anniversary ceasefire day, the local SPDC authorities and MI officials came and arrested their members.

There are about 1500 political prisoners from pro-democracy political parties in Burma's notorious jails that excluded the prisoners whom belonged to ethnic armed groups. There are many still ethnic political prisoners who has been detained with trial of supporting the armed groups, and involving in the armed forces opposing the government and Burmese Army.

The NMSP has collected tax since ceasefire and the organization members did not face arrest from the SPDC. Since ceasefire, although the NMSP has asked for the political talks to settle the political problems, but the SPDC refused and persuaded to attend the National Convention. In the recent National Convention that was held in Rangoon, the capital of Burma, the NMSP and other 12 ceasefire groups has applied their proposal of 'equal power seperation' between the central and local governments. The SPDC stopped the National Convention in early July and has not officially replied the proposal of ethnic ceasefire groups.

Burma has 8 main ethnic races and many dialects who live along the borders with Thailand, China, India, Bangladesh, and the majority Burman ethnic people, who have strong armed force Burmese Army and dominated the political power, stayed in the middle and lower parts of Burma.

The establishment of federal union among the ethnic nationalities came into a failure, after the Burmese Army seized the political power in 1962.



Troops of the MNLA in Ye Township, southern part of Mon State.

Report

Continuous Conscription of Forced Labour in Mon Areas¹

I. Briefing after Order 1/99

Although International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Community have appealed the ruling Burma's military government, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), for years since 1998 to stop the massive use of forced labour in Burma - in development projects, militarization, city/village beatification and military operations and others, however, the SPDC has no serious 'political will' to practically stop the use of forced labour.

The regime also issued the Order 1/99 in 1999 in order to halt the requisition of forced labour, but the order does not specify the types of forced labour. Thus, in late 2000, the SPDC issued a Supplementary Order to Order 1/99 and it included specific types of works that the government authorities and members of Burmese Army needed to halt all requisitions. The Order 1/99 and its Supplementary Order were put and stick in city halls and villages' notice boards. Some authorities sincerely went around to many villages and explained about the halt of using forced labour, which was well-known as *loke-ar-pay*' in Burmese term. But many local authorities in Mon State and southern part of Burma did not make well explaining to the rural civilians who have low education. As the conscription forced labour or calling of *loke-ar-pay* has taken for several years in Burma, many people thought it is a normal practice in Burma and many authorities have tried to keep quiet and have not explained to the people that the use of forced labour is a 'guilty' or 'abuse'.

Hence, some SPDC authorities are still involving in forcing the civilians in the rural villages to work in their 'self-help' farms or plantations from which the authorities generate 'income' for their administration expenses and personal uses.

On the other hand, Order 1/99 and its Supplementary Order have not influenced much to the members of Burmese Army, the armed faction of the SPDC. The commanders and the soldiers of Burmese Army, who are operating the military offensives in the rural areas of southern part of Burma still conscripted forced labour from the remote villages in order to build roads that providing better communication and use the villagers as 'frontline civilians porters' that helping the out-dated logistic system of Burmese Army².

Therefore, after the official issue of Order 1/99, its supplementary Order since 2000, the use of forced labour has not dramatically reduced in the whole Burma. It has been a bit reduced down in the cities and towns to where the ILO and other international organizations have access. The conscription of forced labour in the remote areas still remain as normal, and there are still great social and economic impacts to the civilians because the continuous use of forced labour³.

II. Forced Labour in 2004 in Mon Areas

There are THREE main categories of requisition of forced labour by the members of Burmese Army and the local SPDC authorities IN THIS REPORT which are serious in the recent months since the beginning of 2004. They are described as below:

- (1) Since December 2003, after the Burmese Army's Southeast Command operated a military offensive against a Mon splinter group, in southern part of Ye Township, and it could control the whole area in March 2003. After overrunning the whole area, the Southeast Command has adopted the 'nationality race region and border area development program' and planned to deploy its administration. In the plan of adopting administration, Southeast Command's Tactical Command No. 3 led by Col. Myo Winn (*and later Col. NyiNyi*) also instructed the villagers to build about 10 miles long all seasons used motor road that connecting two Mon villages. Based on the village names, the motor road is also well-known as Khawza - Magyi **Motor Road** and

1. Mon areas means the geographical locations where the Mon people lives. Some Mon people lives in some part of Karen State while some of them live in northern part of Tenasserim Division, in southern part of Burma.

2. In logistic system of the Burmese Army, it has used the civilians to carry ammunitions and food supplies in the frontline since Burma retained Independence from British. Until now, the Burmese Army has not improved the system in order to avoid using human in the operations.

3. After long days conscription of forced labour, the local people could not get to involve their livelihoods, that make them to face poverty, lack of access to health care and sufficient education, etc.

used hundreds of villagers from 8 Mon villages in the area to build this road. As the villages have not received any payment for their manual labour and have not been fed with food while they are in work-site, the act of using the villagers is totally defined as 'forced labour'⁵.

Additionally, as the Burmese Army's No. 3 Tactical Command, which bases in the area and Military Operational Management Command No. 19 (MOMC No. 19) which bases in Ye planned to adopt the development in the whole area, the Burmese Army also forced the local villagers to repair the existing road between Ye Town and Khawza village. In the **Repairs of 15 miles long Ye-Khawza Motor Road**, the Burmese Army used hundreds of villagers from over 15 villages to complete the road repairs from January to June 2004. After the construction of Khawza-Magyi motor road that connecting the existing Ye-Khawza motor road, the Burmese Army could complete the whole length of road from Ye to Magyi, which has about 25 miles long.

- (2) During the Burmese Army (Southeast Command's Tactical Command No. 3) launched the military offensives against a Mon splinter group in southern part of Ye Township, Mon State, 5 military battalions under the command of **Tactical Command No. 3 has used hundred men as frontline civilian porters** to carry ammunitions and food supplies for the army. Some villagers were mistreated and mostly were fed with insufficient food. The Burmese Army never provided them any payment for their labour in the serious and inhumane porter service, and it is a serious conscription of forced labour. In this offensive, the 5 battalions which came into the area also temporarily deployed in some villages and used the Mon women in the area to do the daily works for soldiers.

Although there was a cease-fire declaration between KNU (*Karen National Union - a Karen ethnic armed opposition*) and the military government SPDC, some local battalions of Burmese Army still used Mon and Karen ethnic civilians in Karen State as porters to carry ammunitions and food supplies during their troops' exchange.

- (3) Through southern part of Mon State, an SPDC's about 120 miles long gas-pipeline passes via four townships⁴ in order to supply gas energy to a cement factory operating in Myaingkalay village, Pa-an Township of Karen State. The SPDC brings the gas from Yatana gas field and buys from Total and Unocal oil and gas companies which operate Yatana gas fields⁵. Since the regime brings from Kanbawk, Yebyu Township of Tenasserim Division, the gas pipeline is also well-known as 'Kanbawk-Myaingkalay' gas pipeline.

As the gas pipeline was recently sabotaged by the armed rebel groups and it was sometimes exploded naturally because bad quality of iron pipeline and lack of skill in the construction, the local Burmese Army's battalions constantly forced the local villagers to guard the pipeline for the security, fence along the route, cover the unveil route of the pipeline. For the various types of labour contribution to this construction related to this gas pipeline, the Burmese Army or SPDC authorities concerned did not pay any labour from the civilians who are forced to work.

III. Detail Cases of Using Forced Labour

A. Forced labour in Road Construction

Case 1: Construction of Khawza-Magyi Motor Road

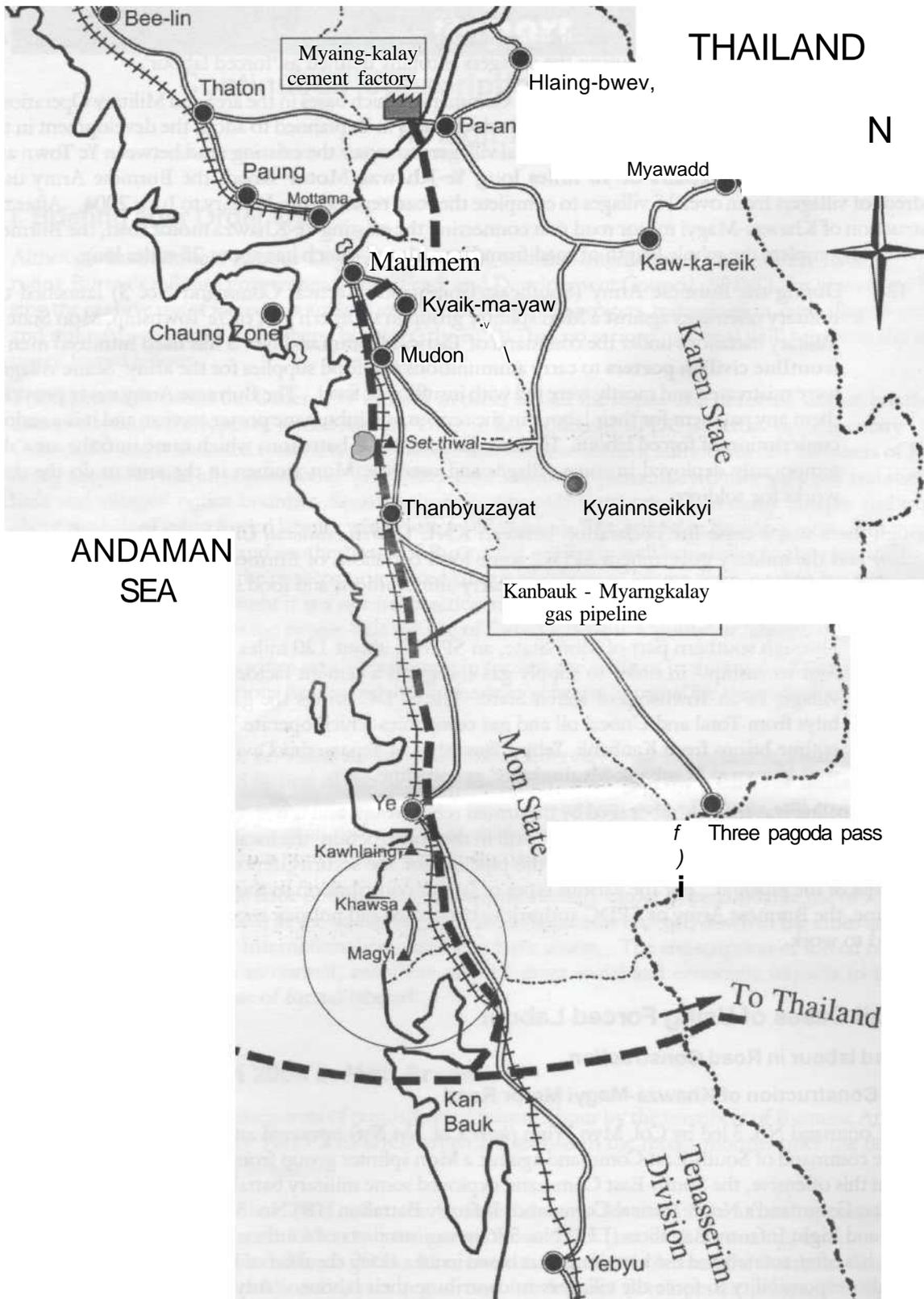
Tactical Command No. 3 led by Col. Myo Winn (*later Col. Nyi Nyi*) operated an intensive military offensive under the command of South-East Command against a Mon splinter group from December 2003 until June 2004. In this offensive, the South-East Command deployed some military battalions under the command of South-East Command's No. 3 Tactical Command: Infantry Battalion (IB) No. 31, IB No. 97, IB No. 61, IB No. 299 and Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 586 in various parts of southern part of Ye Town⁶ and those battalion has often rotated and the battalions that based in area along the road of Khawza-Magyi Motor Road had to take responsibility to force the villagers to contribute their labour. Anyhow, this road construction project is under No. 3 Tactical Command.

In this road construction, the (*Burmese Army*) No. 3 Tactical Command used the villagers from 8 Mon villages on a rotation basis. The villagers from (1) Khaw-za; (2) Khaw-za Chaungwa; (3) Kyone-kanya; (4) Mi-htaw-hla-kalay; (5) Mi-htaw-hla-gyi; (6) Danikyar; (7) Doe-baung; and (8) Magyi villages suffered for the constant construction. There are about 1800 families in these villages. The Burmese Army had conscripted them on

4. Mon State has 10 Townships, four Townships in which the gas pipeline passes through are Ye, Thanbyuzayat, Mudon and Moulmein. Moulmein (Mawlamyaing by SPDC) is the capital of Mon State.

5. United States' UNOCAL and France's Total companies have sold gas from Yalana gas field of Burma to Thailand by a gas pipeline, which also known as 'Yatana Gas Pipeline'.

6. The Burmese Army used over 1000 troops in order to uproot all rebellion activities launched by less than 100 troops of the Mon splinter group.



Map of Khawsa-Magyi motor road construction in Ye township, Mon State, Southern part of Burma

a rotation basis and at least one person from each family had to contribute their labour when their duty rotation reached to them.

The road was an old oxen-track route and the Burmese Army commanders ordered the villagers to build a new higher embankment and widen it. The Burmese Army commanders required the local villagers to build up a 12 feet in width and 3 feet in height embankment. Accordingly to the villagers, the Burmese Army commanders firstly provided the villagers with pieces of works in January and February 2004. Each family had to complete constructing 6 feet of embankment (*with 12 feet in width and 3 feet in height*). Generally, the

villages had to dig earth from outside of the embankment, carry it to fill to embankment and press the earth to have strong embankment. But after the end of February, the road construction was not really completed. Then, the commanders of Burmese Army continuously forced the villagers to complete the construction, but the instruction from March was on a rotation basis. A member of each family had to go and work in the set workplaces for 3-7 days depending on the piece of works under the guard of the soldiers. The conscription of forced labour continued until June.

Besides the road construction, the local military commanders of Burmese Army also requested some building materials in order to build the bridges along the motor road. Accordingly to a villager from Khawza village, each household had to provide about 0.16 - 0.2 ton of wooden lumbars to the Burmese Army's battalions in January and February in order to use them in building bridges across the river along the road.

Additionally, the Burmese Army also fined the household who failed to perform their duties on the set dates and in the set workplaces. The fine is around 800-1000 Kyat (~ 1 US Dollar) per day for their failure of duty performance.

Case 2: Repairs of Ye-Khawza Motor Road

Since early 2004, Mon State PDC planned to upgrade Khawza village, which has about 600 households to be a Sub-Town level, which is bigger than a village tract. When the village became as Sub-Town, the SPDC put all administration departments as a Town in Khawza, they have planned to build public hospital, police station, basic education high school, and other administration departments.

In order to stabilize their administration, the local battalions of Burmese Army also have to create better communication between Ye and Khawza village. Even there was an existing road built about 3 years ago by forced labour, again No. 3 Tactical Command have re-constructed or repair the former Ye-Khawza Motor Road, to have the similar level and embankment like Khawza-Magyi Motor Road.

No. 3 Tactical Command started forcing the villagers in the area since March and the conscription of the forced labour is on a rotation basis. Depending on the sizes of the villagers, the number of conscripted villagers would be varied. At least 10 to 20 villagers from each village were forced to work everyday.

Accordingly to a villager who escaped from the use of forced labour, and other worst situation from the southern part of Ye Township said:

"The villagers from 4 villages in our area: Hangan; Singu; Baround; and Toetat-ywathit had to take responsibility to re-build 3.5 miles (3 miles and 4 furlongs) long the road from Hangan and Baround village. It is like we had to build a new road. The Burmese Army (from No. 3 Tactical Command) needs to build 18 feet width and 3 feet height embankment. The old road's embankment level is too low and then we had to fill a lot of earth.

"We also had to dig the earth from the rice-fields outside of embankment, carry them and filled up on the embankment. As we had to dig the earth from both sides of the embankment, some rice-fields are also destroyed. About 10 feet of farmlands of both sides of the route totally became as water-canals, and the farmers (concerned) lost it. But no farmer could complain to the soldiers."

Accordingly the man, when the Burmese Army set the route of the motor road, sometimes, they did not take the old route and just build across a lot of paddy-fields. In this case, the new route divided up many farms into pieces and created the problems to the local farmers.

As the work duty is as one member from every household had to go and work in this road repairs or new construction, many women and children also involved in contributing of unpaid labour for the Burmese Army

A villager from Baround village also explained that within one-month, his family had to go and work for 4 times, and each time it takes 1 to 3 days. For both the labour contribution and loss of the lands, the Burmese Army or the local military commanders did not provide any compensation to the villagers.

In the re-construction of this motor road, some villagers who take a rest during work were also inhumanely beaten by the soldiers, said by a witness. Accordingly to the man from Khaw-za village:

"Everyday, the Burmese Army that takes base in the village forced 10 villagers to work in the road construction near our village. The villagers were always beaten by soldiers. They beat at least one every day. There are about 3-5 soldiers guarded when the villagers were working. They beat the villagers if they did not like them.

"A week ago (*around August 12*), when our group (*from Khaw-zar*) are forced to work, three men: Nai Take, Thein Zaw and an 60 years old uncle (described as Nai Pu's father) were inhumanely beaten until nearly death because of they took a while rest.

"While you worked in the construction, even you feel so tired you should not look up to the soldiers. If they found, they would come and beat you by sticks or kicked with their jungle-boots."

Similarly to Khawza village, the villagers from Hangan village also had to work for this road construction, and about 15 villagers everyday were forced to work on a rotation basis.

The villagers from villages: Hangan, Kalort-gyi, Singu, Baround, Toetat-ywathit, Yindein, Yinye, Yindein Chaungwa, Shwe-hintar, The-kon, Kaw-hlaing were suffered from the constant conscription of forced labour for this road construction. There are nearly 6000 households in the whole area and many families abandoned their villages and fled into Thailand or NMSP's control area in order to escape forced labour.

On the other hand, as the villagers are not allowed to go and work in their farms while the Burmese Army is implementing its 'four cuts campaign', the villagers have less access to their livelihood. At the same time, they have been continuously forced for the road construction or road repairs ordered by the Burmese Army.

B. Conscription of porters in offensives and military operations

Case 1: In southern part of Ye Township

During the Burmese Army was launching a military offensive against a Mon splinter group⁷ in southern part of Ye Township in the period from December 2003 to June 2004, all battalions under the command of No. 3 Tactical Command, had taken 'front civilians porters' from over 20 villages in the area. The civilian porters were taken by the various battalions on a rotation basis or on the random arrests in villages or outside of the villages.

Like Khawza village, which has about 600 households, where the Burmese Army took a temporary base, the commanders of No. 3 Tactical Command ordered the village headmen to arrange 10 to 20 men ready every day in order to provide the required porters for the troops that came into the village. Those men were taken for a few days (*3 to 7 days*) along with troops, and when the troops arrived back to the village, they were replaced with another group of porters.

But in some villagers, as the Burmese Army always suspected the local Mon villagers as 'rebel-supporters' and the soldiers always beat and interrogated the villagers as soon as they met them. As the villagers were afraid of beating and other mis-treatment by the soldiers, they always fled when they heard about the approaching of the soldiers to their villagers. In this situation, the soldiers have constantly arrested them suddenly soon they arrived into the village.

As in late July 2004, while there was a flood in a Mon village, Hangan, south of Ye Town, the Burmese Army still arrested the villagers to be porters, said the villagers who fled to the border area. He added the soldiers came suddenly into the villagers and arrested some villagers and took them away as porters.

In some cases, if some villagers or village headmen were suspected as 'rebel-supporters', the soldiers took them for many days or even months along with them as 'permanent porters'. This was one type of punishment to those who were suspected as 'rebel-supporters' and they were also used as guide to show the routes and locations where they the rebels have activities. Often they were beaten by the soldiers during the porter service.

As an instance,

In late December 2003, the Burmese Army's LIB No. 586 led by Maj. Hla Khaing, arrested a village headman from Kaw-hlaing village, Mr. Nai Win (*about 50 years old man*) and took him along with them for 2 months as a porters. He was forced to carry ammunitions or food supplies all the time and the soldiers also beat him when they dissatisfied for his guidance of the roads and locations, and sometimes for his explanation about the rebels' activities.

Normally, during the porter service, the civilian porters are not fed with sufficient foods. They have to walk for many hours, at least 10 hours and up to 16 hours a day, and also have to climb mountains and cross the rivers or streams.

7. The splinter group is led by Nai Hlein and Nai Bin, they are the former commander of Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA), the armed faction of the New Mon State Party - which agreed for ceasefire with SPDC in mid-1995.

Hence, the porter service in Burma is the most serious and inhumane type 'forced labour' in Burma.

Case 2: Along Three Pagoda Pass - Thanbyuzayat Motor Road

The Burmese Army's South-East Command, which bases in the capital of Mon State, Moulmein, also arranged in exchanging of troops in Three Pagoda Pass town⁸, on a quarterly basis. The whole battalion (*about 200 troops*) exchanged with another whole battalion every three months, those troops have almost traveled by trucks in the dry season or by foot in the rainy season. When they launched for troops' exchange, they always take the civilians to be porters to carry the ammunitions and other logistics.

When the troops of Burmese Army moved between Thanbyuzayat and Three Pagoda Pass which has a distance of 37 miles long, they always take civilians porters from the villages along the road. If in the rainy season, they have to walk nearly 7 days because the road conditions are so bad and have to cross several streams. Sometimes, they have to twist the ways to avoid the ambush attacks by the rebel soldiers.

The last incident of using the civilians as 'porters' are on June 1, 2004. When Infantry Battalion No. 289 went back to Three Pagoda Pass Town to Thanbyuzayat, that battalion took about 30 porters from the various villages near Three Pagoda Pass town.

Accordingly to a man, Nai Myaing (about 40 years old) who was arrested as porter from Chaung-zone village, which is about 5 miles from Three Pagoda Pass border town, he explained as:

"The Infantry Battalion No. 289 took 9 men from their village by ordering the village headmen to provide. The commanders also gave promise to the village porters and village headmen that they would pay 130 Baht⁹ (~ 3000 Kyat or 3 US Dollar) per day to them at the end of porter service. But at the end of service, the army did not pay them.

"They had to walk along with soldiers for 3 days by carrying food supplies and ammunitions. They had to walk about 35 miles. As the KNU (*Karen National Union*) agreed cease-fire with the Burmese Army, there was no ambush attacks by the rebel army on the way, he said. After they reached to a village near Thanbyuzayat Town, they returned to their homes without payment as promised by the commanders."

While the Burmese Army was using the villagers in the dangerous porter service along this motor road, some military battalions paid them if they could collect money from town residents or villagers.

In various towns and villagers in the remote areas, the civilians are still serving for the payment of porter fee to the Burmese Army, but the army battalions still use the civilian porters in their military offensives and patrolling.

C. Forced Labour along Kanbauk-Myaingkalay Gas Pipeline

As every in the beginning of rainy season, the Mon State's local SPDC authorities have forced hundreds of civilians who live along Kanbauk-Myaingkalay Gas Pipeline to fence the pipeline and to cover the pipe with earth in order to prevent the attack from the rebel armed force and protect water flood during rainy season. Additionally, the villagers are also forced to clear grasses and bushes along the pipeline.

Accordingly to a Wae-thon-chaung villager from south of Thanbyuzayat Town, the local military battalion based in the town, Infantry Battalion No. 32 ordered the villagers from villages near gas pipeline route to fence the pipeline route which across rivers or streams and cover the disclosed parts of the route with earth.

Because of the rain at the early monsoon weather of Burma in June, water flood threw away earth and soil covering some of the pipe route and some parts of pipeline were disclosed on earth. The local authorities are so concerning about the possible sabotage of the pipeline by the rebel armed force and then ordered the villagers to cover them with earth.

When the pipeline crosses on the rivers or streams, it is totally exposed to the scene, and so the local military battalions ordered the villagers to fence the parts of pipeline across streams and river. The villagers themselves have to find building materials and bring them to the closest river or streams. And, they have to manage to fence the pipeline with their own materials.

8. Three Pagoda Pass is a border town with Thailand in the opposite of Kanchanaburi Province, central Thailand.

9. Most people in cities, towns and villagers along Thailand-Burma normally used Thai currency, Baht, not only for trading but also for daily expenses.

In the conscription of forced labour, the Burmese Army's local commanders ordered the village headmen directly, the headmen concerned had to inform every household to send one of their family whether to find building materials or fence the pipeline or cover the pipeline with earth.

Accordingly to the villagers in the area, the Burmese Army in the area have monthly collected money from the villagers as 'security fee' of the pipeline. The fee was just use for the food expenses of the soldiers who took the patrol in the area, but the local authorities and Burmese Army never provide the villagers with labour cost and the cost for their building materials.

Additionally, the local authorities and Burmese Army also ordered the villagers to clear grasses and bushes alongside of the gas pipeline route. They ordered them to clear about 30 meter in width in each side of the route in order to prevent if the rebel soldiers approach the pipeline.

Even though the local battalions of Burmese Army has collected 'security fee' from many villages along the pipeline route on a monthly basis, some villagers have been still forced to guard the pipeline. The villagers have to set up small huts along the route. 3 huts in one-mile distance and they have to guard the pipeline for 24 hours each on a rotation basis.

This gas pipeline was many times sabotaged by the rebel groups since the construction in 2001. The pipeline is starting from Kanbawk village, carrying gas from Yatana gas field and bring to Myaingkalay, where a cement factory is operating in order to provide energy for the factor}.

This gas pipeline exploded in mid-2003 near a Mon village in Mudon Township and the local SPDC authorities also accused some ethnic armed group, especially KNU (*Karen National Union*), for the involvement of sabotage. But the local villagers said, it exploded because of lack of skill in the construction of pipeline and bad quality of pipeline. Gas explosions also occurred many times in the recent years and there were serious environmental impacts to the local communities.

IV. Other Types of Forced Labour

A. SPDC and Burmese Army's Income Generating Projects

As mentioned above, after the SPDC instructed the government departments and local military battalions to set up self-help programs in order to support some expenses in their administrations and help the government servants' families or soldiers' families. Because of this program, the local authorities and the battalions of Burmese Army intensively involved in the confiscation of lands that includes rice-fields, orchid plantation, fish-pools, peanut-fields and other properties. From these confiscated lands, the SPDC local authorities or battalions of Burmese Army set up 'income generating activities' and try to raise money from them.

During the whole cultivation of the crops - paddy, peanut, corn, cane and others - the local authorities or the Burmese Army's battalions always use the farmers or the civilians in the area to contribute their labour.

The villagers or the local civilians are forced to work in the workplaces on a rotation basis and they could not get any payment from the local authorities or Burmese Army. Normally, this type of forced labour starts in June when the rainy season begins and ends in November/ December of harvest season.

In most cases, the villagers are not often forced to work. During the time when they need to prepare the lands: ploughing and crushing the soil; planting the small crop plants; providing fertilizers and clearing small grasses among the crop plants; and reaping the crops; the farmers and the civilians are forced to work on a rotation basis.

In most cases of using the labour from the farmers or other civilians, the authorities or the army never pay for the labour cost of them. During the authorities or the army are forcing the farmers, they are also quite busy at their farms or plantations and the conscription is totally against their will.

B. Basic Military Training Schools

Soon after Depayin Massacre on May 30, 2003, in which the pro-SPDC group of the people killed some members of National League for Democracy (NLD) and made injures to many other members of it, the SPDC has propagandized that 'there could be foreign invasion' to Burma. In order to protect the sovereignty, the local SPDC authorities and the Burmese Army have informed the people that all citizens must know how to use guns and other fighting equipments to protect foreign invaders.

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:

HURFOM, P. O. Box 11, Ratchburana P. O.
Bangkok 10140, THAILAND
E-mail: hurfomcontact@yahoo.com
Webpages: http://www.rehmonnya.org/monforum_main.php

With regards,

Director
Human Rights Foundation of Monland

Since June 2003, the Burmese Army has forced thousands of villagers, USDA members, government servants, and village headmen in Mon State to attend the basic military training, which takes 2 weeks to 4 weeks. Normally, the Burmese Army battalion arranged for the training and some low-rank commanders acted as trainers. The trainers ordered the village headmen concerned to send trainees to the military schools.

All men between 18 years and 50 years old in villages, town wards and city quarters were registered by the Burmese Army and the commanders forced them to attend training school group by group. All USDA members and government servants - teachers, health workers, post officers, members of fire brigades and other - including women have been forced to attend this training.

Even though some USDA members and government servants are interested to attend training, many of the local villagers would not like to attend this training, because they are so busy with their own livelihood. But they could not refuse to the order instructed by the SPDC authorities or the village headmen.

Military training is an on-going process and the trainees are again re-trained after 3 months or 6 months. The civilians are recruited again after they complete the basic course, but to attend advance course of training.

As the recruitment of trainees against the will of civilians and no payment is provided during the period of training, it becomes one type of forced labour in the militarization policy of the regime. Conversely, The trainees also have to give payment for their food costs to the Burmese Army during the training.

V. Conclusion

Even Burma ratified the ILO Convention 29 on Forced Labour and ILO Convention 27 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize in 1955, during Burma was under the rule of democratic parliamentary government, the current military regime SPDC has had no 'political will' to eradicate all practices of requisition of forced labour and offer the right to freedom of association.

Since there is no independent labour union in the country in order to organize for workers' rights and protect the requisition of forced labour, the SPDC has cleverly ignored the advices and technical assistance provided by ILO.

As a local human rights organization that has monitored 'human rights and labour rights' of the people in southern part of Burma, Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) would like to suggest as:

ILO in Rangoon office should try to have more access into the rural areas where the requisition of forced labour is serious committed by the authorities and members of Burmese Army. It means ILO needs to appoint its local representatives more in the rural area, in order to cooperate closely to the community people, monitor the activities of the authorities and Burmese Army in a



constant basis with a **The local villagers from Khawza were forced to work in the road construction purpose to practically by SPDC's No. 3 Tactical Command in Ye Township of Mon State.**

halt the practices of

requisition of forced labour. Another purpose is it also reduces the socio-economic impacts of the Burma's civilians resulted from the use of forced labour.

2. ILO in a coordination with the international community should try to pressure the Burma's military regime to form an independent labour or trade union in the country. ILO should provide technical assistance to that organization, in order to protect labour rights in general including the requisition of forced labour; practice the right of freedom of expression and protect of the right to organize among the workers or labourers.
3. If the regime still refused the ILO Convention 29 and Convention 87, the appropriate pressure by the international labour unions should be applied to the regime as punishment.

On the other hand, the local human rights organizations and labour organizations which base in the border areas, the media groups, pro-democracy also to intensively educate the grass-root community people about the guilty or abuses related to the forced labour. They also needed to inform them the use of forced labour is totally against the international recognized labour principles.

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