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Some Acronyms in This Issue

- NC- National Convention
MNCWA- Myanmar National Committee for Women Affairs ,
MCCA- Maternal and Child Care Association ,
USDA- Union Solidarity and Development Association,
SSNA- Shan State National Army (the ceasefire group),
SSA- Shan State Army - North
NLD- National League for Democracy
NUP- National Unity Party
SNLD- Shan National League for Democracy
KIO- Kachin Independent Organization

News

The local villagers' payment for gas pipeline security

(Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State)

In order to secure about 150 miles long Kanbauk-Myaingkalay gas pipeline that provides energy for a cement factory, a local military battalion, IB No. 61 that bases in Thanbyuzayat Town collects a half million Kyat every month from 7 Mon villages near the town.

7 villages, which are in southern part of Thanbyuzayat Township have to provide payment for the battalion as they have demanded for several months. The soldiers said that they have needed to spend money for foods and other facilities including hiring the labour in taking security for the pipeline.

7 villages that have to pay for the pipeline security fee are: Wae-ka-dar, Sa-kan, Chaw-plai, Wae-ka-made, Wae-to, Kalaing-padaw and Ywa-thar-aye.

Each household at least has to pay 2000 Kyat to the battalion through the village headmen in their villages. Then the headmen have to bring these payments to the battalion commander in town.

Similarly to these villages, the Mon villages situated in the north of Thanbyuzayat Township also have to pay the same type of security fee.



Kanbauk-Myaingkalay gas pipeline, which was built in 2000 by taking gas from Yatana gas field and provided energy to a cement factory

Call for ASEAN's responsibilities for Democratization in Burma

Although the current military regime in Regime, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), declared in its National Convention that it moves forward for the restoration of multiple party system, but there is no sign of democratization in Burma. Just oppression against the democratic opposition has continued, and thousands of pro-democracy activities and leaders of National League for Democracy (NLD) are in detention.

However, in order to have business and investment opportunities in Burma, some ASEAN countries do not want to see political reform in Burma, as their companies could exploit rich natural resources in Burma.

Anyhow, the SPDC remains as burden for ASEAN in their trade and business relationship with western countries especially with United States. The US government strongly oppose Burma's chairmanship in ASEAN in 2006, without a political transition to democracy in Burma.

Therefore, ASEAN has a responsibility to pressure Burma's military government to listen the international community, and initiated political reform in the country, which the people in Burma expect to see.

Additionally, the troops of Burmese Army also put a serious restriction against the local farmers who needed to cross along the pipeline. They allowed the farmers to cross the pipeline at day-time. Some farmers were also inhumanely treated by the soldiers if they crossed the pipeline at late evening time if the dark falls.

Since 2002, after sabotage of gas pipeline by a rebel group, the Burmese Army allowed the local farmers in area to cross the pipeline or to stay at their farms only between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The local villagers from the villages in both northern and southern part of Thanbyuzayat Town were also forced to fence the gas pipeline after every the end of rainy season. Hundreds of villagers were forced to cut bamboo and other building materials, send to the locations where the pipeline discovered on group, and fence along with route.

This Kanbauk-Myaingkalay gas pipeline was built in 2000 by taking gas from Yatana gas field and then have provided energy to a cement factory. During the construction of this gas pipeline, many houses along the route were destroyed and the villagers were forcibly relocated.

After the construction of this pipeline, the local villagers have continuously paid for various types of fee demanded by troops and commanders of Burmese Army.

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Civilians' Houses in Ye and Yebyu Townships Are Burnt Down

(February 2004)

Over 100 houses belonged to Mon families which are suspected to the Mon rebels' shelters have been gradually burned down by the SPDC's or Burmese Army's troops in order to punish the local villagers, said a village escapee from Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division.

The families whose houses were burnt down by the soldiers also fled from their homes and escaped into New Mon State Party's area where a local relief organization, Mon Relief and Development Committee (MRDC) provides shelters and foods.

The villages that face this destruction of families' belongings are: Pauk-pin-gwin village in Yebyu Township (in Tenasserim Division), Magyi and Danikyar villages in southern part of Ye Township (in Mon State). A Mon splinter group that was seriously oppressed in the 2004 Burmese Army's offensive ever stay in these villages and therefore the Burmese Army burnt some houses down.

From their intelligence source, they have inquired which houses had been receiving the rebel soldiers before the offensives and then noted down for some months. But the burning down these houses was

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Report

SPDC's National Convention: Silencing down the ceasefire groups' voices

Introduction:

While the current military regime, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), has been holding the National Convention, as the same time, it has seriously the freedom of association, freedom of expression and freedom of movement conducted both ethnic armed oppositions and ethnic political parties – although some of the groups to attend the NC.

After the new group of commanders – led by Sr. Gen. Than, Gen. Maung Aye and Gen. Shwe Murn, came into power after toppling down of the former Prime Minister, Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt, the local troops of Burmese Army and the SPDC authorities have put more pressure against the ceasefire groups including the New Mon State Party, Shan State Army (North) and other groups.

At the same time, the SPDC and Burmese Army have encouraged and allowed its controlled organizations such as Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), Maternal and Child Care Association (MCCA), Myanmar National Committee for Women Affairs (MNCWA) and others, to have more activities among the public in order to support its National Convention's political agenda to support the Burmese Army to have a leadership role in politics.

While many other organizations are seriously restricted including their members have been arrested, the USDA, MCCA and MNCWA and other SPDC branched organizations have more opportunity to launch their activities. The State/Division/Township authorities have encouraged them to launch more of their activities in order to organize the people to support the regime in the future's political agenda.

In order to oppress its oppositions especially the ceasefire groups those agreed to attend the National Convention (NC) and those applied a proposal for the separation of power, the SPDC or the local Burmese Army also arrested some of organizational leaders, their officials, and even their soldiers and tried to restrict all of their activities in administration, judicial and tax collection.



SPDC's National Convention

The members of New Mon State Party (NMSP) – that participated in the NC, also expressed that the oppression or restriction by the SPDC authorities or Burmese Army have intensified even they agreed to attend the NC. However, they have not withdraw from the NC and tried to solve the political problems by means of politics in the NC and have waited for the final solutions.

Additionally, the SPDC or Burmese Army also applied its pressure to the democracy oppositions and still keep hundreds of the political prisoners in jails and keep the leaders of National League for Democracy (NLD), Aung San Suu Kyi, under house arrest. There have been more arrests to other politicians.

After the government reshuffle – toppling down Burma's military intelligence chief Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt and his followers, hundreds of MI officers, the current leaders in the SPDC has increased up its pressure to the ethnic ceasefire groups and the political opposition parties in the country.

Accordingly to a Mon political analyst,

The military junta is always treating not only other people, but also their own people (like Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt and MI officers) cruelly and inhumanely. Khin Nyunt has served and protected the role of Burmese Army in the whole of his life. But he and his family is badly treated by another group of army. I think therefore they might not sympathize or decrease the oppressive measures to another groups whether ethnic oppositions or pro-democracy opposition.

SPDC or the current military leaders have not only seriously involved in the oppression of the political activities, but also education, health care, social and economic activities of these groups. Generally while the SPDC has involved in systematic persecution against the opposition groups, at the same time, it has consolidated its strength to grasp in power.

Therefore, the violations against freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of movement have been seriously oppressed recently. The following are accounts of these violations.

History of conflict

Shan State situates in eastern part of Burma and it has long border with Thailand. Historically, Shan State and Shan leaders were well-known for their political movement – formation of Federal Union of Burma during the pre-Independent day of Burma, that it retained Independence from Britain on February 4 1948.

As Burma has 8 major ethnic nationalities including the majority Burman, who live in the central part of Burma and other ethnic groups who lives in the frontier areas and so that the non-Burman ethnic leaders and Burman leaders agreed to form a Federal Union of Burma on February 12, 1947. They have signed the agreement in “Pang Long”, a small town in Shan. But before Burma retained Independence, the Burman leaders who signed the agreement pact were assassinated and since then and after Independence, the formation of a Federal Union of Burma has not been implemented. Armed conflict



Shan delegates at National Convention – source: shanland.org

between the central governments that built-up armed force – Burmese Army and ethnic armed oppositions have geared up after the armed force led by Gen. Ne Win seized the political power in 1962.

In early 1962, the ethnic nationality leaders demanded the democratic central government for the political regime, to review back the Pang Long Agreement in 1947 and to re-consider for the effective management or power sharing between the Union Government and State governments in the different ethnic State. Democratically elected government also offered to discuss about it in details and agreed for a new possible arrangement. Before the result came out, the Burmese Army’s military leaders, who though they would have less important if the formation of genuine union occurred, they seized the State power from the democratically elected governments and many Burman and non-Burman leaders who involved in negotiation for the political reform were arrested and detained for many years in jails.

After the ethnic nationalities’ demand for the racial equality rights was totally rejected, many more ethnic nationalities joined hands with former armed revolutionary groups and have revolved military government in Rangoon. Gen. Ne Win formed ‘Revolutionary Council’ after it seized the political power and ruled the country until 1974 when a constitution was drawn that allowed a single party rule – the rule of Gen. Ne Win led ‘Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP)’.

In 1988, because of protracted civil war in Burma, the BSPP government faced a serious economic deterioration and hundreds of thousands of civilians under the leadership of students came onto streets and demanded for the restoration for democracy. But over one and half month long pro-democracy demonstration was totally crushed by the Burmese Army and they seized the power from pro-democracy demonstrators on September 18, 1988. Then the Burmese Army formed a military government, ‘State Law and Order Restoration Council – SLORC’ and then changed it’s name to ‘State Peace and Development Council – SPDC’ and has ruled the country until now.

During the period from 1988 to 1990, the Burmese Army has intensified its offensives against different ethnic armed groups along Thailand–Burma border and along China-Burma border regions and planned to

control the whole length of border. At the same time, the regime SLORC/SPDC also offered the ethnic armed groups to have a ceasefire with Burmese Army. About 15 armed groups including such large armed political organizations – like Kachin Independent Organization (KIO), Shan State National Army (SSNA), New Mon State Party (NMSP) and others – reached ceasefire agreement. But some many large armed groups still did not agree for ceasefire agreement and have fought against the Burmese Army seriously.



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi gave a speech in Thanbyuzayat Town, Mon State

The ceasefire is not a political solution and SPDC also pointed their fingers to the National Convention even it came into a halt since 1998 to the ethnic ceasefire groups when they demanded the regime to hold a meaningful political talks to them. Ceasefire without an official political dialogue in Burma took over 10 years and at the end in May 2004, when the regime SPDC held the National Convention, the SPDC invited all ceasefire ethnic armed groups to attend the NC. The SPDC also promised they could discuss what they liked in the NC.

Until now, the ethnic nationalities are still demanding for the formation of genuine 'Union' that is equal to Federal Union. All ethnic nationality groups that comprised of ceasefire groups (CFs), Non Ceasefire groups (NCFs) and legal ethnic political parties (EPPs) have the same voice of political agenda and they all have struggled to have 'equal racial rights'.

Role of ceasefire groups in the NC

As mentioned above, as the SPDC promised that the ethnic ceasefire groups could apply their political agenda in the NC, many of armed ceasefire groups including large and small groups plus those officially suffered to the regime agreed to attend. They are under the name of 'other invited representatives' by the regime and allowed them as a group to discuss in the session.

The main aim of the NC was to draw a draft constitution and hold a referendum from the people to confirm it. Even the SPDC argued to complete a genuine and disciplined constitution, it did not invited the representatives from Burma's biggest democratic party, National League for Democracy (NLD), and still put many of their members in jails. Similarly, it did not invite the ethnic political parties which won 1990 general elections like NLD. Only less than 10 representatives from a former BSPP party – National Unity Party (NUP) – were invited in the NC.

Although the SPDC announced that the NC was to lay down the principles for the new constitution, but it instructed the representatives to not against the NC's six main objectives and 104 principles. Among other objectives, one objective – the participation of the military in the leading role of national politics in the future State – is totally blocked for the democratization. That means the military can have the rights to involve automatically. While the pro-democracy in Burma and international community condemned the NC which did not aim for the restoration of genuine democracy, the ethnic ceasefire groups agreed to attend the NC in order to present their political opinions.

Even before the NC started six ceasefire groups including Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), New Mon State Party (NMSP), Shan State National Army (SSNA), Palaung State Liberation Organization (PSLO), Shan State Army (SSA) and Kayan New Land Party, sent a letter to Chairman of NC Convening Commission and presented 7-points agenda to have genuine NC and produce a good result of constitution. 7-points political demands are:

- As the Objective No. 6 is against the basic principles of democracy and the desires of the people, it is needed to re-discuss.
- In the adopted 104 principles, it is needed to re-discuss those are against the principles of democracy.

သို့

ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ

အမျိုးသားညီလာခံ ကျင်းပရေးကော်မရှင်

အကြောင်းအရာ ။ ။ အမျိုးသားညီလာခံနှင့် ပတ်သက်၍ အပစ်အခတ်ရပ်စဲကာ ငြိမ်းချမ်းရေး ရယူထားသော တိုင်းရင်းသားလက်နက်ကိုင် အဖွဲ့အစည်းများ၏ သဘောထားကို ထပ်မံတင်ပြခြင်း။

၂၀၀၄ ခုနှစ် နိုဝင်ဘာလ (၂၃) ရက်နေ့တွင် အမျိုးသားညီလာခံ ကျင်းပရေးကော်မရှင် ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ၏ မိန့်မှာရှင်းလင်းချက်များတွင် အမျိုးသားညီလာခံအား ၂၀၀၅ ခုနှစ် ဖေဖော်ဝါရီလတွင် ပြန်လည်ကျင်းပမည်ဟု သိရှိရပါသည်။ သို့ပါ၍ အမျိုးသားညီလာခံ ကျင်းပရေးကော်မရှင်အနေဖြင့် မိမိတို့အပစ်အခတ်ရပ်စဲထားသော လက်နက်ကိုင်အဖွဲ့အစည်းများ၏ သဘောထားကို ပြန်လည်စဉ်းစား ပေးနိုင်ရန် ထပ်မံတင်ပြအပ်ပါသည်။

အပစ်အခတ်ရပ်စဲထားကြသော တိုင်းရင်းသားလက်နက်ကိုင်အဖွဲ့အစည်းများသည် အမျိုးသား ညီလာခံ ပြန်လည်မကျင်းပမီ (၁၁-၅-၂၀၀၄) ရက်နေ့စွဲဖြင့် အချက်အချာချက်ပါ သဘောထားအမြင် တင်ပြမှုကို အမျိုးသားညီလာခံ ကျင်းပရေးကော်မရှင်သို့ ပေးပို့တင်ပြခဲ့ပါသည်။ အမျိုးသားညီလာခံ အတွင်းတွင်လည်း ပြီးခဲ့သောအမျိုးသားညီလာခံက ချမှတ်ခဲ့သော အခြေခံမူများနှင့် အသေးစိတ် အခြေခံရမည့်မူများအပေါ် မိမိတို့အဖွဲ့အစည်းများက ထားရှိသောသဘောထား ရပ်တည်ချက်များကို (KIO၊ NMSP၊ KNPLF၊ SNPLO၊ KNLP) တို့မှ သီးခြားစာတမ်းများဖြင့် တင်ပြခဲ့ကြပါသည်။ ၂၀၀၄ ခုနှစ် အမျိုးသားညီလာခံကျင်းပစဉ် လုပ်ငန်းကော်မတီက တင်ပြလာသော “ ဥပဒေပြုရေး ၊ အုပ်ချုပ်ရေး နှင့် တရားစီရင်ရေးဆိုင်ရာ အာဏာခွဲဝေမှုအပိုင်းများအတွက် ချမှတ်သင့်သည့် အသေးစိတ်အခြေခံရမည့်မူများ” အပေါ်တွင်လည်း မိမိတို့အဖွဲ့အစည်း (၁၃) ဖွဲ့၏ သဘောထားများကို စုစည်းပြီး သဘောထားအမြင်များကို တင်ပြခဲ့ကြပြီး ဖြစ်ပါသည်။

Letter sent by ceasefire groups to SPDC on National Convention

- During the NC, (we) need to discuss with any expert or organization that can provide ‘advice’ benefiting the Union.
- During the NC, the representatives should be allowed to independently communicate to their mother organizations.
- Allow the representatives from all ethnic ceasefire groups that really represents their people and immediately arrange for ‘peace talks’ to non-ceasefire group to let them have opportunity to attend the NC.
- Withdraw the Order 5/96 (which describes the NC will not allow NLD again to attend after the representatives left the NC in 1996) which was issued on 7th June 1997 because it was an order just protecting the NC.

However, the regime SPDC has not seriously replied to this 7-points political demand presented by the ethnic ceasefire political parties. But it cleared that the ethnic political parties wanted all ethnic organizations and pro-democracy parties to attend that NC to solve the political problems by means of politics.

On May 17, 2004, the military regime, SPDC re-convened its 'National Convention' and the ceasefire groups sent one to five representatives depending on the strength each organization to the NC. There were about 17 ceasefire groups including some surrender groups in the NC and all of them are in the same session.

Those ceasefire groups tried to organize each other and planned to put a proposal in the NC that reflects separating power between the individual ethnic state government and the center government. Brief of proposal by the 13 ceasefire groups out of 17 groups (3 groups had their own political agenda) can submit a historic proposal, which demanded for greater ethnic people's rights:

According to a copy of the proposal submitted by 13 ceasefire groups at the NC to include in the new constitution included some following main points of sharing or giving more power to the (ethnic) States are as below:

- Self-administered regions and areas like Wa and Kokang (*another ethnic group in Shan State – eastern Burma*) to have a separate legislative schedule
- Separate finance and taxation for the states
- Separate state constitutions
- Power of the states to select and appoint state service personnel

The delegates also submitted the remaining power that excluded from the power of the central governments should be refined by adding them to the other legislative schedule reserved for states and divisions. The powers are:

1. Defense and Security (that includes organization of local police forces)

2. Foreign Relations

- Border crossings
- Social affairs
- Commerce

3. Economy

- Hotel
- Tourism
- border trade

4. Agriculture and livestock

- Management of land
- Production and use of fertilizers and pesticides
- Research
- Fishing

5. Energy, Electricity, Minerals and Forestry

- Natural gas
- Hydropower
- Minerals and precious stones

6. Industry

- Medium and small industries
- Home industry
- Industrial zones

7. Transportation

- Inland waterways

8. Social affairs

- Education and health activities

- Child care
- Rescue and rehabilitation

9. Administration

- General administration
- Border areas development
- Census

However, the National Convention Convening Working Committee U Aung Toe also meet with delegates and informed them that the principles in the proposal were against to the NC's objectives and other principles and therefore, the ethnic delegations need to re-write it to fix to objectives and principles. And, the ethnic representatives re-wrote them and took out some points which made unhappy to the regime such as State defense force, ethnic education curriculum, surplus taxation to the central government and etc. The ethnic representatives toned down their strong points and reduced some points, and then they represent to the NC Convening Working Committee again.

While the ethnic organizations were processing their proposal, the regime announced for a standstill of the NC for a while on 9th July 2004. Therefore, the ethnic representatives did not receive any reply after the close down of the NC. However, the SPDC local authorities, commander of Burmese Army have geared up their pressure or oppression against Mon and Shan ethnic people as a indirect punishment for their proposal.



Chairman, Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD)– source: shanland.org

Arbitrary arrests and detention of Shan leaders

On February 9, 2004, when the Shan leaders from Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD), Shan State National Army (SSNA – the ceasefire group), Shan State Army – North (SSA – North) and other pro-democracy leaders were gathering for a meeting of 'Advisory Expert Group', the SPDC's Special Police Force came and arrested the Shan political leaders and have been hold under detention.

Shan and other pro-democracy leaders who were arbitrarily arrested on that incident are:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| U Hkun Tun Oo | - Chairman, SNLD |
| Sai Nyunt Lwin | - General Secretary, SNLD |
| Sai Hla Aung | - Executive Committee, SNLD |
| Sai Tha Ut | - Executive Committee, SNLD |
| General Say Htins | - President, SSNA |
| U Shwe Ohn | - Veteran politician (who was a organizer during the Pang Long Agreement) |
| U Myint Than | - New Generation – Shan State |
| U Nyunt Maung | - |
| U Ba Thin | - |
| U Thu Wai | - Democracy Party |
| Daw Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein | - Daughter of former AFPFL politician, U Kyaw Nyein |
| Ma Ohnmar | - Daughter of Daw Cho Cho Kyaw Nyein |

After the arrest of Shan leaders, the SPDC kept them for only one-night in Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State, and then they brought them to Rangoon (or Yangon), the capital of Burma. Soon after the arrest of the Shan leaders, the political parties concerned have urgently demanded the SPDC leaders to immediately release them. But the SPDC authorities took them away and did not give back any reply to the parties concerned.

Therefore, the leaders of SLND and SSNA urgently went to Rangoon and tried with the senior leader of SPDC leaders and requested to release them. Vice-President of SSNA, Col. Gaifah, also had opportunity for the meeting with SPDC's Secretary No. 1, Lt. Gen. Thein Sein and SPDC's new MI Chief Gen. Myint Swe and demanded them to release their President. But the SPDC did not give any guarantee or promise to release them.

Accordingly to Col. Gaifah who told the media (Democratic Voice of Burma):

SSNA President, Gen. Say Htin was allegedly told by the commander of Eastern Military Command that he violated one of terms of ceasefire agreement in which SSNA leaders were not allowed to have contacts with the political leaders. He also described that how would they attend the NC, if their leaders are in detention.

In the ceasefire agreement with SSNA, the SPDC also pointed out a point that SSNA leaders do not have opportunity for the meeting with other political leaders. But the SSNA denied that point and replied they just went for a meeting with 'Shan Advisory Expert Group', which consists of Shan educated persons who planned to involve as mediator or negotiator for the peace and national reconciliation in Burma. Col. Gaifah also refused that the meeting was not related to politics and that was also a advantaged meeting for SPDC to have Shan delegates to attend the NC.

Similarly to SSNA, SNLD leaders also called a urgent meeting and sent a letter to SPDC Chairman, Lt. Gen. Than Shwe, on 14th February, in order to release their leaders immediately. Accordingly to Vice-Chairman of SNLD, Sai Moe Kyi, told the media (DVB) that:

The release of their leaders is depending on the goodwill of the junta and that SNLD members are carrying on working for the non-integration and unity of the union and the emergence of true political dialogues.

However, until the end of February 2005, it seems that the regime did not have any plan to release these leaders and they did not care much whether they attend the NC or not. The SPDC has planned to put them trials on the case in emergency act for their meeting discussing the political issues.

Because of the arrest, SSNA, the main ceasefire group in the northern part of Burma postponed their plans to attend the NC. The SSNA's decision also made unhappiness to another ceasefire groups in order to stay on the NC.

SPDC intends that it is also a lesson for another ceasefire groups to be cautious in their activities for the meeting, coordination for the political opinion, joint-presentation in the NC, and regular issuance of joint-political statements, and others. Since the arrests, the ceasefire groups' leaders have been careful, and they have to avoid some of their activities that could create other arrests.

Since 1998, after the ceasefire groups' supports to the formation of Committee for Representing the People Parliament (CRPP), the ceasefire groups have contacted each other and coordinated each other to have a common political position. As they have tried, they have succeeded in many cases and issued a lot of their opinions on the current political opinions. In brief of their political views:

- They have called constantly for the peaceful political dialogue – especially tripartite dialogue – that consists of SPDC, pro-democracy parties and ethnic ceasefire groups.
- They have called for countrywide ceasefire in order to stop war happened in the whole country and initiated the political talks.
- They have demanded for the national reconciliation as protracted war for five decades have damaged the 'unity' among the people, ethnic nationalities, the military and civilians, and non-Burmans and Burmans.
- They have called SPDC to reconsider the role of Burmese Army (*or tatmadaw*) in the leading role of future politics of the State.
- They have openly declared for the establishment of 'genuine union' that bases on federal system and equal racial rights.

During these ceasefire groups have main communication with the former PM Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt, they have better opportunity to communicate and coordinate among themselves. After the political reshuffle in Rangoon, the SPDC leaders from military faction has strictly prohibited the ceasefire groups' political activities. Soon after the political reshuffle, the SPDC said that the ceasefire groups must follow accordingly to agreement.

Tensions between SPDC and NMSP

The relationship between the regime SPDC and the New Mon State Party (NMSP), the Mon ceasefire group, has been also intensified even during the National Convention was held in Rangoon. While the 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 trail. 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 Moulmein, 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 villager from that village.

On June 29, 2004 (*on the day of 9th Anniversary of NMSP-SPDC ceasefire*), 8 NMSP members were in Lamine village and they were levying 'yearly tax' or 'revolutionary fund' like every year's practices and set the price as 2000 to 4000 Kyat (2 Dollar to 4 Dollar) per household, depending on the households' business. Because the NMSP officials came into village for the purpose of levying tax, they also informed to the village PDC authorities. While they were in the villages, the soldiers from Burmese Army, Military Intelligence Personnel and village headmen came and arrested them.



Mon National Libration Army

After the arrest, the SPDC authorities also accused them that they were involving in threatening the villagers to pay by pointing guns. However, the local villagers said that they did not find any threat from the NMSP members by using guns or other equipment. The NMSP members who arrested were: Nai Ron Nai, Nai Tala Lawi and Nai Aung Yin and other 5 staff and they were taking responsibility as 'administrative officials' in northern part of Ye Township.

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

After, 8 NMSP were arrested, they were detained in South-East Command's headquarters in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, and some of them were also sick due to insufficient of foods and sheltering, and lack of care by the NMSP, according to the NMSP's General Secretary.

According to the NMSP's General Secretary, they still demanded the Burma's former appointed Prime Minister, Lt. Gen, Khin Nyunt, to release their members. But there has been no reply until the end of August. However, on September 28, the Southeast Command released them after bringing a short trail and imprisoned for 3-months. As they were already in detention for three months and therefore, were released unconditionally.

Additionally, SPDC local authorities and local commanders of Burmese Army have serious disturbed the Mon National Schools in southern part of Ye Township and in Yebyu Township. SPDC has totally restricted that they would not allow any NMSP's administrative officers to have their movements in these areas in order to provide education activities, health cares, and juridical affairs for the Mon people in the area. For over 3 decades, the NMSP's administration have benefited to the people in the area.

In order to disturb the NMSP's education and health supports, the commanders of Burmese Army in the area also forced the local Mon civilians to build up the government's schools (*which teach only Burmese language*) and hospitals. They also declared to the villagers and village headmen to not give any supports to the well-established Mon schools. Those who disagreed with them must be punished.

Soon after the order, there were many mis-treatment occurred to the Mon education workers and health workers as below:

- Mon schools teachers in southern part of Ye Township were forced to leave from the Mon schools or to convert the Mon schools to be government schools. The local Burmese military commanders also forcibly took out the Mon schools' signboards and replaced with government schools' signboards.

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: [hurformcontact@yahoo.com](mailto:hurfomcontact@yahoo.com)
Webpages: http://www.rehmonnya.org/monforum_main.php

With regards,

Director
Human Rights Foundation of Monland

- Two NMSP's Yebyu Township administrative officers were arrested in October 2004 who supported the school facilities in the area, about five Mon national schools in Aleskan, Kwe-ta-lin, Mae-taw, Yapu, and other one Mon village. About 500 Mon children lost their education as the government could not reply their schools.
- In October 2004, one Mon medic who provided health care in Kwe-ta-lin village was seriously tortured and the Burmese soldiers confiscated his clinics and took all his equipment.

The situation of creation of tension occurred even the NMSP leaders in the NC. Although NMSP has been strongly opposing the mis-behaviour of the SPDC local authorities and members of Burmese Army, the situation has not been improved. The NMSP sometimes sent the official leaders for the human rights violations or sometimes directly talked to commanders in South-East Command.

As Yebyu Township is in the area of Tenasserim Division or under the command of Coastal Regional Command, the current commander of that command, Maj. Gen. Myo Myint have ordered NMSP leaders to not operate any of their administration activities and military activities in Yebyu Township. This is also a new restriction that the previous commanders never instructed.

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instructed just recently by No. 3 Tactical Command that operates military activities in both townships.

Accordingly to a village from Pauk-pin-gwin village, he explained that the soldiers came into their villages and inquired which houses took the Mon rebels. After they can make sure they burn them down. Only in that village, the soldiers already burnt down about 40 houses already.

Three villages have household number from 100 to 300. Pauk-pin-gwin village has about 300 households in total, but many families already fled from the villages, only a half of households remained in the village, added the villager.

About 60 houses in another two villages are also burnt down. The escaped villagers, during the

soldiers were burning down their houses, some of them allowed to collect the properties and while some of them did not allow to do so. They just suddenly arrived and burnt the noted houses down in the evening time.

Accordingly to estimation of a local relief worker, about 70 families of those 100 burnt down houses have fled from their homes and some of them arrived into the villages set up for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and the returned refugees, while some of them resettled in another villages.

The villagers said although the activities of the Mon splinter group are no longer in the areas, the villagers are still forced for porter service, road construction and others and also suffer for paying huge amount of taxes to the soldiers.

Current situation of ceasefire groups the NC

After the arrests of Shan leaders, the situation created reluctance for another ethnic leaders from ceasefire groups in the NC. Many believed the NC would not provide them any equal racial rights and political reform. However, the ceasefire leaders have to be careful. If they boycotted the convention, the ceasefire agreement will be broken out and the Burmese Army's troops will suddenly reach into their areas. Therefore, they have to tolerate and attend the NC.



The meeting between Mon leaders and Shan leaders

On the other hand, the SPDC's the NC Convening Working Committee does not put the 'Special Invited Delegates' from all ceasefire groups in one long halls like May – July 2004 Convention and separated them in different halls that slightly are far. This is the purpose of SPDC to provide the ceasefire groups' night-time unofficial discussion among themselves.

In the 2004 Convention, the ceasefire groups' delegates have opportunities to discuss their disagreement or negotiate the common political idea during evening time after dinner and it produced a lot of profit to them. Now, the delegates are far to meet each other and if they went they have to pass many other groups' delegate halls, the news of their coordination can separate out. On the other hand, it is not safe for them to talk or discuss each other among other delegates' halls.

Some delegate groups also do not send their senior leaders as they thought the NC would not produce a political reform, but send their junior leaders who could not decide anything. New delegation teams always have to communicate their headquarters concerned and it also made delay. Until the end of February 2004, the NC Convening Working Committee did not reviewed the proposal applied by the ceasefire groups.

Anyhow, the proposal of ethnic nationalities under the agreement and coordination of ceasefire groups must remain in the historical records that they always attempt to solve the Burma's problems peacefully.

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