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Some Acronyms in This Issue

MOMC-	Military Operational Management Command,
NMSP-	New Mon State Party,
MNLA-	Mon National Liberation Army,
SLORC-	State Law and Order Restoration Council,
KNLA-	Karen National Liberation Army,
KNU-	Karen National Union
PTTEP-	PTT Exploration and Production Public Company Limited
MOGE-	Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise
LIB-	Light Infantry Battalion

News

Terrible prison condition and death of a Mon political prisoner

(Rangoon, September 2005)

After imprisonment in a notorious prison for over 2 years in In-sein jail, outskirts of Rangoon, the capital of Burma, a Mon political prisoner, Nai Ong Lorn (45 years), died with an unconfirmed case on September 28 morning in a hospital in Rangoon.

He was arrested with Nai Yekha and other Mon activists from New Mon State Party and Mon National Democracy Front, two main political parties, with the accusation of trying to assassinate the Burmese military leaders in July 2003.

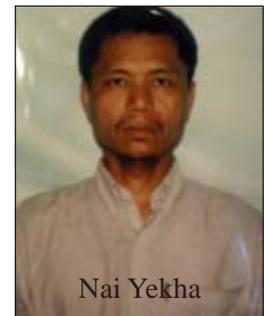
He and other two prisoners, Nai Yekha and Nai Myo Thawe, were imprisoned for life for their involvement accordingly to the trial from SPDC. But they said through their wives, who could meet them, they were not guilty and conspired by the SPDC's Military Intelligence in order to arrest them.

According to source, he died about 9:00 a.m. in the morning of September 28 and military leaders sent information to NMSP leaders to conduct his funeral ceremony.

Source believed he could be probably died with HIV infection, but it was not confirmed. He took treatment in private hospital in Rangoon with the permission of military government. But after he recovered, he was sent back to Inn-sein prison again. But this time, he became serious and so the prison authorities brought him to hospital.

Nai Ong Lorn left his wife Mi Tin Hla and two children in Moulmein, in Myaing-thar-yar quarter. According NMSP source, his family traveled to Rangoon for his funeral ceremony.

Nai Ong Lorn
45 years



Nai Yekha

Ethnic Nationalities are ready to solve the political problems

In the course of over five decades long civil war in Burma, the ethnic nationalities people who lived in the frontier areas are the most suffering groups by the abuses of State authorities.

Ethnic nationalities' political parties have demanded for the greater rights to self-determination or autonomous State in a Federated Burma, but it has been constantly rejected by the central governments in Rangoon.

Now, the ethnic nationalities have coordinated each other in a coordinating body, called Ethnic Nationalities Council (ENC) recently and prepared for a political dialogue in order to cease the armed conflict and attain peace in Burma.

They have constantly requested for a tri-partite political dialogue that includes military government in Rangoon, the main democratic opposition like National League for Democracy led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the ethnic nationalities.

Now, ENC is preparing for a readiness in this political process and have asked the international community to create a 'dialogue' situation for Burma in order to solve the political problems peacefully.

According to NMSP leader, Nai Yekha, the leaders of the group is also under unhealthy condition and he has been restricted to get foods from his family and medical care.

Nai Yekha was faint in August due to lack of nutritional foods he received and he lost consciousness about two hours in toilet.

Nai Ong Lorn was arrested when he went to Rangoon with Nai Yekha and about 8 people were arrested at the same time.

Among them, the 3 Mon prisoners, Nai Than Tun; Nai Shwe Marn (Youth leader in Pegu) and Nai Min Kyi a leader of Mon National Democratic Front leader (Pegu) were released. They were arrested with SPDC's accusation of contacting to ILO and providing mis-information on the use of forced labour.

During the arrest of the whole group was led by Nai Yekha and all of them were sentenced to death. Military government also hold a press conference for the Nai Yekha case and reasons of arresting and detention.

According to the released prisoners, they said they were not culprits of assassination of SPDC leaders and explosions in Rangoon, but the accusation against them were totally made-up by the Military Intelligence. All of the weapon, explosives and ammunitions shown in the conference were arranged by military intelligence of SPDC.

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More restriction to the civilians' movement

(Mon State, September 2005)

The SPDC authorities in Mon State have set up many check-points in Mon State's main roads and bridges and then checked more to the passengers, said the passengers.

The beefing up security and making restriction against the civilians has made to the civilians to face more difficulties in their daily livelihood and traveling.

The reason of checking the passengers was they were informed that some people tried to set bomb in Rangoon, the capital of Burma, like in May bomb blast, and they said these culprits came from Thailand-Burma border. But the local communities in Mon State believed this is just a made-up case and the SPDC tried to show to the publics that how they are still important for the security of the country and how are bad the oppositions to destroy the country.

Accordingly to a passenger, he said that the authorities set up more check-points and searched every passenger and their bags. They have to show their ID cards and informed the authorities, the reason of their travel.

He added that they also have to pay more tax to the check-points to the authorities. The authorities do not say for what reasons they have collected money from the passengers. But most of them think the SPDC do not provide any accommodation cost for those authorities and they have to find way to get this cost.

After movement restriction, the civilians could not travel easily and are disappointed to travel because of search and bad communication by the authorities. And, they also have to pay about 1000 Kyat in each check-point and so that they have no choice except to pay when they traveled.

Report

Human Rights Violations Effects to Civilians in Yebyu Township

I. Background of Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division

Yebyu Township situates in the northernmost of Tenasserim Division, which is also the southernmost region of Burma. In this Township, the local inhabitants are the ethnic Mon, Karen and Tavoyan people. Ethnic Mon and Tavoyan ethnic people are living along the seacoast in western part Township while the ethnic Karen people lives in mountainous areas of eastern Township areas.

There are over 50 (big and small) villages of these ethnic people and their main livelihood is agriculture (of paddy growing farms; rubber, palm and orchid plantations) and fishing. Therefore, the Township is rich with natural resources and food products.

However, the civilians in this Township has been suffered under armed conflict for several years since the Burmese Army seized the political power in 1962 after the fighting escalated. The various groups of armed groups like the New Mon State Party and its armed force: Mon National Liberation Army; the Karen National Union and its armed force: Karen National Liberation Army are the main armed the groups which have been active in the area for years. Since 1980s, the troops of Burmese Army have tried to deploy more troops in the area and intensified its military offensives against the rebel groups. At that time, the Burmese Army normally used the tactics of 'four-cuts campaign' against the civilians who were always suspected as 'rebel-supporters' or 'sympathizers to the rebels'. As the local ethnics are the same race to the 'rebels', they are always under the suspicion of the Burmese Army.

In order to cut off all contacts or supports from the civilians to concerned rebel groups, the Burmese Army relocated many villages from remote areas onto the main motor road, where they could control over the civilians easily. Therefore, since 1980s, there were many 'concentration camps' in this Township created by the Burmese Army and the ethnic Mon and Karen villagers who lived in eastern part of Ye-Tavoy motor road.

In 1988, after the current military regime under the name of 'State Law and Order Restoration Council – SLORC' seized the political power from the popular democracy demonstrators in bloodily, it opened up the country to sell the rich natural resources in order to earn foreign currency to run the country.

After the SLORC seized the political problem, it plans to sell out logs, fishes and natural gas to the neighbouring countries – Thailand, Malaysia, China and others. In the case of selling the natural resources especially gas to Thailand, SLORC needed to beefed up or increased up the number of its troops in southern Burma. At that time, the Burmese military regime required a lot of 'foreign money' and the neighbouring countries had supported the regime by exploiting the natural resources from Burma under the name of 'constructive engagement'.

II. How the effects by multinational investment

In 1990s, the SLORC/SPDC decided to select Yebyu Township as an area to put on-land gas pipeline to sell gas to energy-hungered Thailand for it's industrial booms in many sectors of the countries.

UNOCAL oil firm from United States and TOTAL oil firm from French, buy cooperating Thailand PTTEP and Burma's MOGE in gas exploration, digging gas, constructing gas pipeline to Thailand and transporting gas from off-shore station to Thailand via an on-land gas pipeline in Yebyu Township.

Since 1990, before the people in Yebyu Township knew the SLORC's plan with the multinational oil and gas companies from western countries and neighboring countries, they had been seriously affected in the military operations by the Burmese Army to clean up the gas pipeline route to build gas pipeline and to secure the whole area.

During 1990, nearly the whole area of Yebyu Township are under the control of the guerrilla force, KNLA and MNLA, and so that the troops of Burmese Army adopted a plan of up-rooting all activities of the rebel troops. In 1992, under the command of South-East Command, the Burmese Army launched military operation against the Karen and Mon guerrillas and deployed about 10 military battalions in Tavoy District – that including Yebyu Township and they deployed about 6 battalions along Ye-Tavoy motor road where the gas pipeline passes through.

In order to strengthen the security force, the Burmese Army under the command of SPDC had built a 110 miles long Ye-Tavoy railway road that would help them to get access into the area easily and then supported for their logistics. In building this railway road, the troops of Burmese Army used hundreds of thousands of civilians from Mon State and Tenasserim Division to contribute their labour without payment for over 4 years. All different ethnic people in the area are forced by the army to contribute their labour.

During the Burmese Army was constructing the railway road, they also tried to overrun of the rebel army's camps and pressured NMSP and its army, MNLA, to have ceasefire talks via Thai authorities and Thai Army. After the refusal of NMSP to deal in ceasefire with the regime, some thousands of Mon refugees were forcibly repatriated by Thai authorities. At the same time, the troops of Burmese Army operated military offensives against the Mon troops and Mon people in the rural areas. In mid-1995, the NMSP agreed for ceasefire with regime.

After the completion of Ye-Tavoy railway in 1988, by the protection of military regime, the multinational oil and gas firms started constructing 'Yatana' gas pipeline, which they needed to bring gas from off-shore 'Yatana' gas field. Before building this gas pipeline, while the troops of Burmese Army were finding the route of gas pipeline and providing 'security' for the oil and gas firms in the jungle of Yebyu Township, they had used 'hundreds' of civilian porters to carry their food supplies and ammunitions in the jungle ways. Some porters died during this operation.

During the Burmese military regime and the multinational gas and oil firms are planning exploited the natural gas from Burma's Andaman Sea, thousands of ethnic villagers were suffered from more gross human rights violations committed by not only the troops of Burmese Army, but also by the authorities of the regime. But this is not the end of the story, the local civilians have continuously suffered from the gross human rights violations by the troops of Burmese Army in its militarization plan and security in the area.

III. Armed conflict and Gross Human Rights Violations

After the troops of Burmese Army used thousands of villagers to work in the railway construction soon after 1995 ceasefire, many villagers dissatisfied to the Burmese Army. Although the New Mon State Party has asked the SLORC to discontinue using 'forced labour' in the railway construction as it promised in ceasefire agreement, but the troops of Burmese Army did not want to listen.

Even the NMSP agreed for ceasefire with military regime, Karen National Union and its armed force, Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) has fought until 2004, after the KNU and SPDC agreed on gentlemen agreement for ceasefire.

Since 1990s, the troops of Burmese Army has intensified its troops in the area and deployed about 10 battalions in Yebyu Township alone because they needed to protect gas pipeline and Ye-Tavoy railway.

Along with the deployment of Burmese Army, the local ethnic civilians are inhumanely treated by the soldiers. They have been suffered from human rights violations such as conscription of forced labour, forced relocation and destruction of houses, looting and taxation, sexual violence against women, and other abuses.

VI. Gross Human rights violation

A. Villagers forced to attend military training

Since the beginning of 2005, the Burmese Army in both Mon State and Tensasseim Tenasserim Division to recruit the local villagers and trained them to become militiamen in the local security force. Many villagers would like to deny to become militiamen and many of them paid fine to the Burmese Army.

After the bomb explosion in Rangoon, Burmese government put tight security along the routes entering Rangoon. They also rearmed retired military members in Mon state and drilled with some military training, where they believed the suspects would flee after the explosion. In Tenassrim, the military government ordered villagers to attend the training.

On June 7, 2005, the Burmese Army in Yebyu Township of Tenasserim Division ordered villagers to attend basic military training. The villagers had to pay 1, 000 Kyat each to army if they could not join the training, according to villagers.

The army based in Tenasserim Division ordered villagers in Yebyu Township to attend short term, 14 days long, basic military training last month. "We were ordered to attend one person per

household. Army does not care it is youth or elder person or woman. They take everyone. If we could not join, we have to pay 100,000 Kyat," a former village headman from the area said. "If we are late in informing whether our family's member could join the training or not, we were fined by the army," he added.

Burmese military got around 8 million Kyat on fining villagers who were absent and informing late for the training, according to the headmen. The villagers who don't want to join the training nor want to avoid paying the fine, fled from their villages. One fifty villagers from Aleskan village moved away from their village, according to the village headman.

"We heard people from this area fled to Tavoy and Megui District," said a Mon Relief and Development field worker who recently reached the border. According to villagers from Ya-pu village, the Burmese army had started the training and the villagers have to join it in their village tract. Infantry Battalion No.282 of the Burmese Army conducts the training at Aleskan village. The villagers were ordered to attend the training are from: Ma-yan, Mile-chort-zae (60 miles), Ya-pu, Kwe-tha-lin, Lort Thaing, Kwe-ka-din and Alae-sakharn, said a villager from Alae-sakhan.

The local Burmese Army LIB No. 271 bases in Kalain-Aung village tract, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division, forcibly recruited the local villagers who are between 15 to 50 years old, to form "People Vigorous Association" to attend the basic Military schools and even women much include participating in the training if needed.

The order released that each family much send average 5 family members from 6 villages. The villagers which are under the LIB No. 271 order to attend the basic Military training are; Ywa-thit, Yar-ywa, Kwe-that-lin, Kyauk-kin, Alesa-khan and Kaloh-taing villages.

"In our village, we have to give them (the local LIB) money about 10,000 Kyat per family to cover the cost of food and other fee during the training. But I still can't guess how many villagers from our village were attended in the Military Training School" Said a villager from Kalain-aung village. In some household, there are no adult and so that family much find the person who are able to attend the training by voting system and later the family have to pay for the substituted person.

Some local villagers guess that the training would hold by LIB No. 271 and some men who were in the list of trainees, fled to the border areas and some also fled to the monasteries and robed as monks. However, most young men are in the neighbor countries, Thailand as migrant workers and so that the Burmese Army could not recruit them all.

However, because of the Military Training School which arranged by LIB No. 271, the remaining family members were faced a couple of difficulties and also they could not find the ways to continue their life unless their sons and husbands go to work.

In 2002, 2003 and the end of 2004, the military government had also forced villagers including some school children from this area and Tavoy township area to join the military training, claiming to defend the country from foreign invasion.

Because of intensive military offensives, the Mon rebels withdrew from the area and moved to the border areas. Although Mon rebels withdrew from the areas, Burmese soldier are still violating human rights violations such as conscription of porter, forced labor; taxation and looting; land and properties confiscation from the local civilians.

B. Destruction and Burnt of Civilians' Houses

Accordingly to villagers, who fled from Yebyu Township informed to HURFOM that the troops of Burmese Army burnt down three villages in southern Ye Township and in northern part of Yebyu Township on the house-by-house basis on each day in January and February of 2005. About 100 houses in these villages were already burnt down and hundred of villagers escaped away from the villages. The houses those burnt down were suspected as 'shelters' provided to the soldiers of the splinter group in the past.

South-East Command's No. 3 Tactical Command and troops of MOMC No. 8 has been burning down the civilians' houses in Wae-kwao (Paukpingwin) in Yebyu Township (in Tenasserim



Houses were destroyed by the troops of Burmese Army

Division); Magyi, and Dani-kyar villages in Ye Township (in Mon State). All of these villages are Mon villages they have from 100 to 300 households in the village.

Burmese soldiers burned down the houses in which the Mon soldiers from the splinter group or the NMSP authorities have used them as their temporary shelters during their past activities in the area.

According to villagers, the Burmese soldiers have been investigating from the villagers which houses were used by the Mon soldiers as shelters and burnt those houses. About 40 houses were already burnt down in Paukpingwin village and about 60 houses in another two villages.

“Before they burned down my house, they told me to collect our properties in the house. Then they burnt down it. But in some houses, before the house owners completed collecting properties they burnt them down,” a villager whose house was burned down said.

According to villagers, the soldiers normally burned down the houses in the evening time after night dark fell. After they burning down, the house owners and neighbors were forced to clean the damages, so that when the villagers came to the house in the morning they did not know what were happening to the house.

About 70 homeless families fled to a Mon IDPs village in Tavoy district under the control of NMSP. Some homeless villagers run away from the villages and stayed with their relatives in another villages.

According to an escaped villager, “if the Burmese soldiers are continuing burning down the houses and torturing the villagers, nobody are dare to live in the villages. The villages will be empty soon.”

Paukpinkwin, Magyi, and Dani-kyar villages are recently used as bases by the Mon splinter group, which already moved from the area.

C. Banning Mon Schools and Mon Education system

On March 16, 2005, hundreds of Mon children has lost their education in Mon villages, Yebyu Township, for nearly 6-months, after the Burmese Army's pressure on NMSP (New Mon State Party) restricting its administration and banning the operation of Mon National Schools.

In order to speed up its pressure against ceasefire group, the local Burmese Army commanders arrested two NMSP officials in Yebyu Township (in Tavoy District of Tenasserim Division), and five Mon schools were totally banned to operate, according to the Mon teachers.

The Mon National Primary Schools from Aleskan, Yapu, Kyauk-kadin, Mae-taw and Kwe-ta-lin villages were ordered to stop their operation.

"We (the Mon teachers) normally don't know how to oppose even Mon soldiers were arrested and sentenced to prison," a Mon teacher from Mae-taw village said. Since October 2004, NMSP's Judicial Branch Office, which based in Aleskan village, was banned to operate and two NMSP officials were put in prison. Moreover, one school in Aleskan village and four schools from other villages were totally banned, said Nai Ah Ban, a villager from Aleskan.

"The Burmese Army have put pressure on us since we have started attending the National Convention. They ordered us that they wouldn't allow the Mon soldiers to wear uniform and take gun during their travel in this (Tavoy District) area," said a senior leader of NMSP. "If the school operation is not stable, it is not good at all?" expressed a youth member from Aleskan village.

Five villages were ordered to close the Mon schools down and children from those five villages have no chance to have examination and to attend the schools again.

In 2004, under the management of Education Department of NMSP and the local Mon communities in various parts of southern Burma – Karen State, Mon State and Tenasserim Division

– operated about 200 Mon National Schools and provided education to many thousands of Mon children to where the military government's administration has no access. Since the Burmese Army understood that the local NMSP officials are supporting the operation of these Mon schools, they also arrested the NMSP officials.



photo: IMNA

Mon national school running at Thai-Burma border area.

D. Taxation and providing forced security

While the troops of the Burma Army are guarding gas pipelines, motor road and railway road in southern Burma especially in Yebyu Township, they consistently violates human rights by forcefully collecting taxes from poor villagers.

Especially the troops in the area do not have sufficient wages and income from their military commands and they also tried to get extra money from the villagers in order to cover all of their expenses. Accordingly to the instructions by senior commanders, the battalion commanders have to take responsibility to seek income for expenses in the battalion or during military operations.

In order to collect tax from the villagers, the local commanders have shown a various reason of security and then tried to get money from them.

As an instance,

On 7th May, 2005, the battalion that took security for gas pipeline, LIB No. 282, forced the villagers from Kyauk-kadin village, Lot-thaing village, Kvae-ta-lin village, Yapu village, 60 miles village, Sanpya-mon village and Ma-yaung village to guard the Ye-Tavoy motor road. In early May, the commander from the LIB No. 282 ordered the village headmen from 7 villages to send 4 villagers per village for everyday to guard the motor road. No food and any assistance were supported by LIB No. 282 and villagers themselves have to bring their own food and water from their home said a source from Aleskan village who fled to the Thai-Burma border.

The Second Commander of LIB No. 273, Maj. Moe San Winn, demanded Kyat 200,000 from two villages for allowing the local villagers to hold their own villages' traditional Buddhist festivals in January.

The village headmen from Ohn-pin-gwin and Paung-daw villages are in the area, near Total Company's gas station in Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division where the LIB No.273 is in charge of providing security to the pipeline, were forced to pay this amount of money.

According to a headman who spoke under condition of anonymity, the villagers were not allowed to celebrate annual festival and were threatened with a security reason. The commander told them that he was responsible for the security of the gas pipeline and it should not be interrupted because of the crowd in the festival. But later the village headmen negotiated with him and paid a bribe of 200, 000 Kyat.

Besides the tax collection from the local villagers, the troops from LIB No. 273 also looted civilians' belongings. Accordingly to a trader, about 13 buffalos belonged to villagers (from various villagers) were seized by the Burmese troops in January 2005 and the owners were brutally tortured being accused of trying to transport them across the border to sell in Thailand.

Sometimes, when the troops of Burmese Army could not find any income from the other sources, they also forced the local farmers who have rubber or orchid plantations to pay them for their crops.

As an instance

As the first time in Yebyu Township, a battalion that took security for gas pipeline, LIB No. 282, collected tax for betel-nut crops from the people who belonged the plantations and they instructed the farmers must give 1000 betel-nut from each betel-nut plantation who belonged some plantations, but the other villagers who have bigger plantation need to give more for the tax.

"The military Infantry battalion No.282, ordered to village headman in Yebyu Township by order letter to collect the tax," a village headman said. "I sent to village headman home 2000 betel-nuts by myself with motorbike for the tax. My village headman took from our family two thousands because we have 6000 betel plants in our plantation," Myint Htwe explained.

Village headmen have to manage for collecting the tax, which orchid plantation owners have to provide through them.

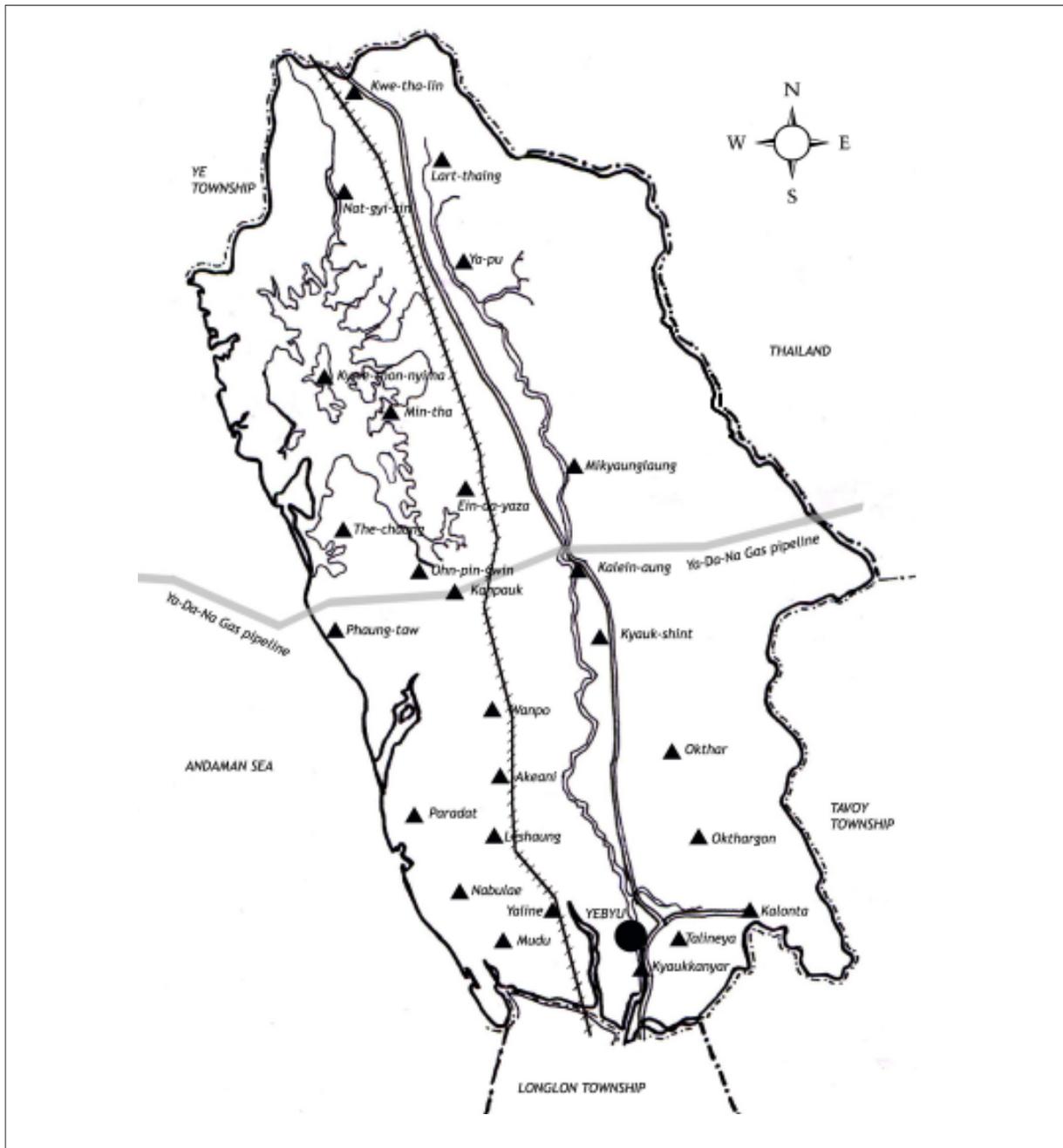
In order, the commander said that they collected the betel fruits for planting, but the villagers do not believe them and they think they collected for the battalion's fund or to cover their expenses in the battalion.

In Yebyu Township area, many villagers belonged the betel trees plantations and this is the main livelihood of the villagers. They can sell one betel-nut fruit for 7 Kyat per a fruit and they also produced many fruits from the plantains. For a thousand betel trees owner, they will have income more than 1 Million Kyat a year.

Accordingly to the villagers, the local Burmese Army commanders will receive many million Kyat from selling the betel-nut fruits in town, because they would get some million pieces of betel-nut from this collection.

Some area, the Burmese Army's soldiers also stole the villager betel-nut fruits while they are restricting the local villagers to not go to their farms. "Sometimes they stole even in front of us. But they do not ask any permission to collect the fruits. We also afraid of making complaint to the high ranks commanders, because the military lunched military operations against the Mon splinter groups in our area and the soldiers are very cruel to people," said a woman.

Although the troops of Burmese Army those taking security for the gas pipeline are instructed to not collect tax from the local villagers by higher command in order avoid the complaints from the gas and oil companies, some of



Map of Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division

these troops which launched military activities as military columns outside of 'gas pipeline corridor' have also involved in collecting tax from the civilians by many ways.

On March 10, 2005, The village headmen in Yebu Township, Tenasserim Division has demanded illegal tax from villagers with a reason of village security, but they forced villagers to guard their villages for security at night time. Tax demands are depending on the property of each family that who have gardens and large houses have to pay 4500-5000 Kyat per month, while the slightly poor family has to pay 1500 Kyat per month to heads of the village in the area. The villages in Yebu Township that have to pay taxes to heads of the villages are Mayan, Chauk-sae-miles, Kwe-ta-lin, Ya-pu, Ya-pu-ywa-thit, Law-thaing, Kyauk-ka-din and Aleskan.

The extorted taxes are not really spent for the fee of village security. Heads of villages have to spend in buying foods and other materials for troops of Burmese Army when they come to villages, said a village headman of Kwe-ta-lin village. A villager earns only 1500 Kyat per day, and no one wants to pay the taxes, but they are afraid of the abuses by the soldiers or do not want to be in prison if they refused to pay. This is the main reason why they have to pay to headmen, accordingly to a villager from Kwe-ta-lin village.

Moreover, the villagers themselves have to guard their villages at night time by the instruction of the local military battalion's commanders. If someone failed to perform his duty, they have to pay 1500 Kyat instead as compensation.

They have to guard at the entrance or crossroad of two villages that are close and they have to bring their personal homemade guns, said a villager from Kwe-ta-lin. Without the helps by Burmese Army, the villagers have to guard their villages in the entrances, main road that connects from one village to another. If they found some activities or strange people in the area, they have to suddenly inform the army outposts nearby or battalion bases immediately. Additionally, the Burmese Army also instructed for the movement restriction against the villagers in order to cut their contacts to the rebels. "While we have to guard our village, we also are not always allowed to work at our gardens (or plantations and rice-fields). We also have to pay 100 Kyat per day to get travel documents by the troops," added by the village from Kwe-ta-lin.

Burmese Army's Military Operation Management Command (MOMC) No. 8 and its 10 battalions based in Yebyu, Tavoy and Long-lon Township and those battalions has to take outer security for Yatana gas pipeline, railway road and motor road in the area. Those battalions have intensively involved in extortion from villagers via heads of the villages to cover for all of their expenses during their military operations. On the other hand, they also forced the villagers as 'militia force' to guard their own areas.

E. New Rule for Rubber Export

On August 18, 2005, to get official permission of rubber export, the rubber exporting companies have made friends with rubber plantation owners in Mon State and in Tenasserim Division after new order came out that the rubber exporting companies must belong rubber plantations.

Generally, the rubber companies deal with rubber plantation owners and have a mutual understanding of some rubber plantations are belonged to the companies. Then, they reported to the authorities that the companies owned rubber plantation in order to officially export rubber compound sheets to foreign countries, said Mr. Nai Toe Myint, representative from Ye Township's rubber export company.

"To operate a business this year is more difficult than last year. Our company has planned to grow rubber trees in 1000 acres of Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division. We have already asked to Township authorities. If we get permission from the Township office, our company has to plant rubber trees," he added. It is not easy to get the virgin land in Ye Township and the company has to find in Yephu Township. The location is south of Ye township. The area that the company asked to plant rubber trees has good soil in wild lands but the lands are already belonged to the local villagers, said Mr. Nai Thit Lwin, a local resident from Yebyu Township. "We will negotiate with the owners of the lands as much as we can and we will buy it," Mr. Nai Toe Myint added. The SPDC's Ministry of Agriculture has ordered that the people those belonged the virgin lands or wild lands without trees have to grow rubber trees within 3 years if they do not want to sell their lands to the company.

In Yebyu Township, the virgin land owners are planting rubber trees urgently after the order from the Ministry of Agriculture. To allow of exporting rubber compound sheets, the companies have to plant rubber trees even though they do not want to. The companies exported rubber compound sheets especially to China and imported corn from there accordingly to the traders.

"The more Burma can produce rubber, the government will get more income. The government took 10 percent of tax from rubber exported companies," said Mr. Nai Toe Myint. In Mon State and Tenasserim Division, there are four Companies exporting rubber compound sheets to China. They bought rubber from farmers in Mon State.

F. Forced Labour

In order to support themselves for food supplies and for battalion expenses, the local battalions LIB No. 408 from Hnan-kye village, Yebyu Township of Tenasserim Division, ordered to the local villagers forced to work in the lands which they confiscated from the local farmers without payments.

As results of self-reliance programs of the SPDC, hundreds of the local villagers from Hnan-kye village were forced to cultivate the land to grow paddy. Every adult from every house have to work in the battalions' farm and even old people and un-adults child were included.

"Since we were ordered to work here, the soldiers told us to cultivate the farmlands to grow paddy crops for food supplies for them in next year. The soldiers also explained that one-third of the benefit would be for local villager but I don't think so. They just lie and let us works their duties. In our village, every households need to participate to work here even the elder person, women and child. They give us no food supplies, medicines and other expense. We have to bring our own from our village" said by a villager from Hnan-kye village.

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

Moreover, to support for the deployment of the battalion, LIB No. 408 troops also collected various types of taxes from the local villagers. The villagers also get responsibility as four villagers per village to guard the communication and security duties for no paid. Additionally, because of land confiscation and more unpaid labors by the local Burmese Army troops, many families face a couple of difficulties and fled to other villages.

Security for Yatana Gas Pipeline:

On June 4, 2005, Villagers have been forced to guard the road close to the Yadana gas pipeline in Tenessarim Division, Mon state, since the third week of April. Despite a settlement reached in the California courts in March between Unocal and Burmese villagers in which promises were made to improve human rights for local villagers living in the area, Burmese authorities are ordering villagers from Aleskan village in Yebyu Township to attend military training to protect areas around the Yadana gas pipeline, the single largest investment in Burma.

"Over 50 Mon, Tavoyan and Karen villages situated along the motor road are ordered to keep watch while buses are traveling during the day," a Mon humanitarian worker told HURFOM.

One person per household from 10 Mon and Karen villages attended one-month training provided by Burma Army Light Battalions No. 282, No. 409 and No. 410. During the training the villagers had to provide their own food and drinking water," he said. LIB No. 282 has been responsible for the pipeline since it was first built in 1998.

"The Burmese Army ordered one unarmed villager per post to protect against any attack by the KNU (Karen Nation Union). They watch out for any troublemakers," a local villager said. "Some women are also required to keep watch. They have to walk to remote areas along the motor road to get to their post," he explained.

The Burmese Army battalions are also extorting and forcing the villagers to work and using them to porter their supplies. Those with the money to bribe military authorities pay up to 10,000 Kyat if they want to avoid the training. The road is 100 miles long, 50 miles of which is in northern Tenessarim Division close to the KNU area where local buses were attacked last April.

Accordingly to the villagers, after the military government planned to lay a gas pipeline in the area, the villagers have faced a lot of trouble from the troops of Burmese Army. They said that even the company personnel are not

photo: IMNA



Local People were forced to fencing the Gas Pipe-line along Kan Bauk -- Myaing-kalay

involving in the abuses, but they founded that the troops those guarded the pipeline have seriously involved in violations against villagers.

VI. Conclusion

Currently as the Yebyu Township is rich with natural resources and the main income for the regime from selling gas to Thailand, it is the most important area of Burmese Army in order to protect their interests.

Therefore, SPDC and the Burmese Army do not allow any rebellion activities and they have punished the local villagers if there is some activities of Burmese Army's troops in the area. Therefore, where the local civilians are supporters to the rebel groups or not, they are always suffered from many types of mis-treatment by the soldiers. More troops of Burmese soldiers have been deployed after the military regime and multinational gas and oil companies planned to construct gas pipeline since 1990s. Accordingly the local people, when there are more troops in the area, they have faced more suffering.

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