



KAREN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

MONTHLY REPORT

MAY, 2007

Karen Refugee Committee
Monthly Report
MAY, 2007 – Newsletter

In 1889, the International Socialist Congress designated the First of May as the International Labour Day, in Honour of Workers all around the world. These days, the Day is a Major Holiday, celebrated in many countries. It has become the occasion for many Political Demonstrations, with workers showing unity, together with calling for Worker's Rights and Privileges. The ILO, the International Labour Organization, which speaks out for the cause of workers, has always been calling on for observance of these Rights and Privileges together with safety in Works conditions, propriety and protection.

Still, in many countries around the world, workers are just "Tools" in the hands of those in power, with workers, manipulated and exploited for benefit and image. For one, Burma's Ruling Junta can be considered the worst offender of these Worker's Rights, where Authoritative orders can force people to work in unpaid, dangerous conditions in the name of voluntary service for State Security, for Improvement. Objections by highly placed Bodies, including the I.L.O is simply neglected by the Military Regime. It can do so and get away with, as it has the full support of likeminded Powerful friends, who will go all the way to help them.

This May, we remember May 4th of 1989, when 100,000 plus workers and students, demonstrated, marching to Beijing to demand Political Reforms, towards improvement. Unrest spread and Martial law was imposed on May 20th. Soldiers had a free hand to shoot, which led to the Tian An Men Massacre. Thousands perished in that severe crackdown on workers and students. It was comparable to Burma's 8-8-88 Crackdown.

Again, this May, peoples in Burma still remember the Day – May 27th 1990. There was the General Elections held throughout the country, with the Military Junta promising to go back "To the Barracks" after the Election .The Generals were quiet sure that the party they fielded, the TA-SA-NYA (Union Solidarity Party) will surely win. What transpired was totally unexpected. The opposition National League for Democracy, led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi won a landslide Victory getting over 80% of the votes. The Junta reneged on their promise to go back to the Barracks. Unto this day, they are continuing with their illegal, repressive rule over the country, thanks to the Heavyweight Supporters who benefited from this suspect friendship. And the people suffer.

With the closing of the month, we remember what happened on one particular Day, four years ago. In May of 2003, the National League for Democracy Party, under the leadership of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other members were on a political organization Tour of upper Burma. On May 30th,2003, near the Town of Dee Pae Yin, their Tour convoy was forcefully stopped and set upon by a group of ruffians with plain intent to do away with the leaders. Over 80 young party members died, trying to protect their leaders and make

possible their rush to escape. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other NLD leaders barely escaped with their lives, suffering injuries only.

To all evidences, the assault was pre-planned and carried out by the SPDC underlings, the master-mind being one senior official, who after the incident was promoted to a still higher position.

For NLD leaders, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, it was another round of arrest and detention. They are still in Detention unto this day. This May, there was calls from around the world and world leaders, for the release of the NLD leaders, especially Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. But all these calls fall on deaf ears. However, one response from the SPDC was to extend the Detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for another year.

This month, for Displaced / up-rooted Peoples, otherwise, Refugees in these Border Camps, its time to make decisions that can mean a big change in their lives. The U.S will begin accepting these peoples for Resettlement. Many Humanitarian Peoples and Governments have already made such Resettlement openings, but not on such a big scale and which can be most surprising to many. Common knowledge is that all countries are having troubles with their own peoples, and adding more people in trouble can be questionable. Some people are even looking for ways to find fault, like “selective Service” for its citizens.

For us, displaced/uprooted peoples, we can look and think deep and know what will be best for our future. Our conditions, situations are such that, now we can see ourselves as having no country, no Government, No Identity, no self support, No Home. Back Home are piles of ashes and decaying bones. Living as non-peoples, no image, no responsibility, where you don't belong, where you don't own, can be very trying. You starve, you hunger, for acceptance, for participation, for recognition, to be Human. That can happen only with a new “Home”. Then again, looking at it, resettling countries, will surely have little benefit in accepting troubled people – they can expect only more trouble.

So for us, we can see Resettlement Openings only as a God-send. Especially for our young, who can hope for a future that can be very positive. Also, with Countries and People offering Resettlement, we see that there is Good Governance, Freedom, Equality and where Democracy has been rooted firmly. But then, we can accept life as it is. The Good will come to the Good. The Bad will go to the Bad. However, each and very one need not forget that they owe responsibility to themselves and society where they hope to belong. That can only be reality.

K.R.C – Camps – Activities – Report.

MAY – 2007

- ▲ 2/5/2007 - K.R.C Education Coordinator, together with I.C.S Field Coordinator Visit Um Phiem Camp. There was distribution of Education, Teaching material to schools for the Academic year 2007 – 2008.

- ▲ 3/5/2007 - K.R.C Education Coordinator, together with I.C.S Field Coordinator Visit Mae La Camp, where there was distribution of Education / Teaching material to School for the Academic year 2007 – 2008.

- ▲ 3/5/2007 - Meeting – Participation
K.R.C Executive, Camps Committees, C.M.P work Group Monthly meeting and discussions focused on Camps Management Works Process. For propriety, for improvement, looking at weaknesses, failures, proper effective communications, Reports and Returns. The C.M.P works Process is seen to be helping a lot with Camps Administration, Management, Distributions and Statistical Figures. Over all improvement seen.

- ▲ 4/5/2007 - K.R.C Executive Committee Meet with Karen Elders Advisory Board. There was wide ranging discussions relating to filling up of Vacant Posts in the K.R.C Committee set up, together with Staff, who are to be resettled in some third Country. There was also discussions on ways to help with Performance improvement for those with responsibilities.

- ▲ 4/5/2007 - K.R.C T.B.B.C, C.M.P work Group, Camp Committee, NGOs took Part in a friendly Football match, for the purpose of building Good relationship. Although the foot ball standard was not much to be admired, it was quite an attraction, drawing a lot of spectators, who are looking for fun.

- ▲ 18/5/2007 - Mae La Camp, Executive Committee meet with K.R.C to discuss matters related to some people asked to volunteer Labour. The K.R.C stood firm on its stand that there will be no Volunteer Labour demanded on Camps People.

- ▲ 21/3/2007 - Meeting – Presentations Discussions at Mae Sot Hill Hotel. Participants Donor Field Visitors Group, Thailand M.O.I Representatives; CCSDPT – T.B.B.C, K.R.C CCSDPT – T.B.B.C Mr. Jack Dunford made the General Presentation, with regard to Their support works related to Displaced/Refugees in this Thai – Burma Border Region. Year by year support works, Funding – Finance, Camps Situation – Conditions Statistical Figures.
Thailand's M.O.I Representative explain the position that Thailand is in, being in a position, surrounded by countries in Trouble, People, looking and coming to Thailand for Refuge, life support. Thailand helping with the utmost best in Humanitarian concerns which has become quite a heavy burden. Thailand is helping with ways to provide works

income to Displaced Peoples in Temporary Camps. Also starting to help with Resettlement in Third Countries for these People in Cooperation with O.P.E(U.S). K.R.C also made a presentation with regard to the Displaced Peoples, Conditions and situations and which can be called Positive as they are having wide ranging sympathy and support together to help with the Future.

▲ 21-24 /5/2007 - K.R.C and C.M.P work Group, Visit Mae Ra Ma Luang and Mae La Oon Camps. The purpose being to build up Good relations, to share information and work towards propriety and improvement in all Camps activities, beginning with Administration, Management, Distribution, Statistics Relationships and Stability. The Plan was to activate with these Participatory efforts in Camps every month, throughout the year.

▲ 24/5/2007 - Meeting at Pi Man Mae Sot

Participants- The U.S Embassy Representatives, the UNHCR, The K.RC the K.W.O.

Meeting focused on Resettlement of Displaced Peoples to the United states. Looking at difficulties to be faced. Those who are going and those who are remaining. Those going will be faced with a new, strange environment, Language, Speech, manners, ways of culture, religion tradition. Which would need intensive preparation, and to take time. There is also the difficulty for those remaining, to fill in work places, personnel, for those who are going for Resettlement. Seen many people with skills and capacity will be going.

Resettlement to the United States is starting with Mae La Camp. Plans for Um Phiem Mai and Noh Poe Camps will start next month.

Over all, Resettlement can be seen as the best opening for the Displaced Persons, many of whom are in this very uncertain and deprived situations for many years.

▲ 31/5/2007 - K.R.C members and Staff meeting. The Meeting was for the purpose of improving of relationships, shared responsibility and improved work efforts. This was also effort to help with propriety, discipline and smooth works processes

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS MAY, 2007.

MAE SOT AREA	CAMP	No. of families	Over - 12 Yrs		6 - 12 Yrs		Under 5 Yrs		Total
			M	F	M	F	M	F	
	Mae La	9,891	16,950	16,371	5,072	4,668	3,409	3,273	49,743
	Um Pheim Mai	4,054	7,364	7,129	1,941	1,800	1,501	1,311	21,046
Total		13,945	24,314	23,500	7,013	6,468	4,910	4,584	70,789
NORTH	Mae Ra Moe	2,823	5,625	5,367	1,711	1,502	1,128	1,151	16,484
	Mae La Oo	2,709	5,627	5,094	1,661	1,537	1,076	1,018	16,013
Total		5,532	11,252	10,461	3,372	3,039	2,204	2,169	32,497
SOUTH	Noh Poe	4,573	5,688	5,158	1,664	1,668	939	969	16,086
	Ban Dong Yang	963	1,486	1,597	425	419	355	357	4,639
	Htam Him	1,474	2,355	2,408	821	837	557	474	7,452
Total		7,010	9,529	9,163	2,910	2,924	1,851	1,800	28,177
Grand Total		26,487	45,095	43,124	13,295	12,431	8,965	8,553	131,463

We shall always be grateful to the Thai people and Government for their sympathy and understanding in allowing us safe refuge.

We are also indebted to the NGOs for their Supports and Services.

TBBC – Support in Food and Shelter Material. TBBC is also supporting with warm clothing for all the camps. TBBC is Supporting with Camps Management program to help with Administration, Management Stability improvements in all (7) Camps.

MSF – Support in Medical and Health facilities.

AM I – Support in Medical and Health facilities.

ARC – Support in Medical and Health facilities.

M. I (Malteser International) formerly MHD – Support in Medical and Health facilities.

ZOA (ABW aid) – Support in Educational facilities Teachers' Training.

World Education / Consortium – Support in World Educational facilities, Teachers' Training and Education for Deaf / Mute / Blinds.

TOPS – Support in Educational facilities.

ICS – Asia – Support in Educational facilities and school buildings.

COERR – Rice and Educational support. **EVI** – To be involved with Extremely Vulnerable people.

H.I – Support for Refugee Handicaps with Prosthesis and rehabilitation and also year – end sporting events for Handicaps.

NCA – (Norway Church Aid) has been providing **KRC** with administrative & organizational Support.

It has also supported with remuneration for **KRC** members and workers.

UNHCR – For Registration Process Protection and Ultimate Safe Repatriation.

SMRU – Support with Malaria Control, Prevention and Treatment.

SVA – To support with Libraries in the camps.

PPAT – Parenthood Planning Association Thailand – Supporting with Family Planning and Preventive/ Education in Refugee Camps.

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