

KAOWAO NEWS NO. 137

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Readers' Front

Dear readers,

We invite comments and suggestions on improvements to the Kaowao newsletter. With your help, we hope that Kaowao News will continue to grow to serve better the needs of those seeking social justice in Burma. Additionally, we hope that it will become an important forum for discussion and debate and help readers to keep abreast of issues and news. We reserve the right to edit and reject articles without prior notification. You can use a pseudonym but we encourage you to include your full name and address.

Regards,
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Migrant Watch

Students face threat of Thai security crackdown

Kaowao: December 28, 2007

Only a handful of migrant students are able to attend their classes due to the Thai crack down on migrant workers, according to local sources in Maharchai, near Bangkok.

Mon teacher Nai Tun Wei in Maharchai, said, "Classes had been scheduled for every day with great success, students were happy to get some education, but the crack down has forced the students out of the classroom fearing imminent arrest by Thai security. We have only one class during the week now."

Thai Mons and Nai Tun Wei founded the Thai-Mon Literature Promotion Club with the goal to help educate the migrant community and provide quality language instruction by teaching them Thai, Mon and English languages.

The arrest on migrant workers with or without proper documentation continues with many youths fearful of being arbitrarily picked up by the Thai security. Oftentimes, Thai security resorts to illegal acts and forces bribes on migrants by taking their cards from them. This type of behavior is typical of Thai police who work in migrant areas. "It is very difficult for Burmese migrant workers to live under constant threat by Thai security, it forces people into unsafe conditions," says a Mon social worker.

On several occasions, under the Royal Thai Government, police forces chase down migrants fleeing arrest with migrants jumping into rivers or out of windows and either seriously injuring themselves or dying. Upon arrest, migrants are transported in unsafe conditions with many people crammed into trucks. In 2004, a truck full of

migrants went over a steep cliff, killing 8 migrants. No compensation is ever offered to migrants' families by the Thai government.

Several thousand Mon live in Mahachai working to support themselves and their families back home in Burma. The majority have had very little education due to the increasingly dire situation in Burma with Burmese government troops forcing people off their land or into forced labour for the building of infrastructure and military battalions.

Mahachai is one of the largest communities of Mon migrant workers who work in the seafood factories. Much of the seafood is for export to developed countries, including Canada and the United States.

In cooperation with some Mon supporters, Nai Tun Wei and Nai Montri Pongcharat had supervised classes for migrant workers as a basic educational program in the fishing community.

The program is self-supported by the founders and from the Mon community. Nai Tun Wei, who compiled a Mon English Dictionary, is a volunteer teacher from Australia and, a retired Thai Navel officer Nai Montri is an active member of Thai Mon community. They rented a house and renovated it for the classrooms for migrant workers' education.

Access to education for migrants is limited in Thailand who face restrictions regardless of reformed policies. The migrant school is a good chance for migrants so they can gain access to the labour market and other educational opportunities in Thailand and abroad, a chance they would never have in Burma.

“Some local gangsters work in cahoots with the police and extort money from migrant workers. The policemen without uniforms are always scouting out for migrant workers in the market and at bus stops hoping to make some extra cash from extortion. When they find some workers without legal documents, they ask for money and send them to the police station if they can't pay the amount requested,” said a Mon community worker. “We are very happy to teach the migrants, this is a community endeavour, everyone including overseas volunteers, has pitched in and promoted the language instruction.”

Mon refugees arrested on Xmas Day in Malaysia

Kaowao: December 28, 2007

Kuala Lumpur -- Seven refugees were arrested on Christmas Day, December 25th by the Malaysian police while out visiting friends, according to a source from Mon Refugee Organization.

The police picked up the friends, Nai Shwe Kyar and Nai Khemar who hail from Durae of Ye Township and five other refugees from Mon State and have not been heard from since, say worried friends.

A Mon social worker of the MRO reported some refugees have been detained in the camp for over two years. Mon refugees Nai Banyar 35, Nai Aawo 18, and Nai Aung Kyaw were taken to Semenyin Detention Camp near the Thai-Malaysia border. Nai Aung Kyaw was arrested on December 28, 2005 while holding a solo protest in front of the Burmese Embassy in Kuala Lumpur and Aawo was arrested in August, 2006 in Sungai Long after playing a soccer game with his friends. The three men are legally registered with the UNHCR office as refugees.

Their legal status is in limbo and their release is still unknown according to Mon social workers, Piung Chan and Nai Ong Mon who recently visited the 3 men.

The MRO, based in Kuala Lumpur, is assisting refugees who have been arrested. However, due to an increase of Mons needing help, only limited assistance is available for the office that operates on a shoestring budget with many thousands of refugees living under duress due to their illegal situation and Malaysia's draconian system in assisting the refugees from Burma.

Mon social workers, Malay NGOs, and the UNHCR office occasionally visit the refugees near the capital, Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysian NGOs and advocacy groups, including Amnesty International, have called upon the Malaysian government to restructure their strict immigration policies to be more orderly, fair and responsible, as the current system is based on fear and discrimination. Burmese migrants in Malaysia face beatings, extortion, kidnapping, and caning by Malaysian authorities. The migrants are hunted down by the infamous Rela (an abbreviation for Ikatan Relawan Rakyat -- People's Volunteer Corps) in the

early morning hours and turned over to authorities. It has been reported that the authorities cane young people, children in their teens.

“It is very unfortunate that Nai Khemar and Shwe Kyar, both activists from the Durae Mon community, were arrested by the Malaysian police force while on a social visit over the public holidays,” said Aung Dama who came from the same community in Ye Township.

Mon Canadians hold Annual General Meeting

Kaowao: December 26, 2007, 2007

Calgary -- The Annual General Meetings of the Mon Canadian Society (MCS) and Mon Women’s Organization of Canada (MWOC) were held on Sunday, December 23 at the Mon Buddhist Temple in Calgary, Canada.

According to a participant who attended the meetings, activities and financial reports of 2007 were reported and the Mon community members secretly voted for their new leaders. The strengths and the weaknesses of the community were reviewed.

Nai Simon (Chit) won the seat for the position of MCS Chairman and Min Sai Root was voted for Vice-Chairman with Pamoik Chan as Secretary.

Ms. Anjalii Mon was elected as the Chairperson of MWOC followed by Ms. Ong Mon Chan as a Vice-Chairperson and Ms. Pyah Sorn as Secretary.

The aims of the MCS and MWOC are to promote and preserve the culture, literature, and social life of the Mon, to cooperate with the international communities in ending the civil war and to establish a federal union in Burma, and to assist the Mon in the homeland and in exile.

The Mon Community in Canada was first founded in 1995 by a small group of Mon who resettled in Canada from Burma. Even though the Mon community in Canada has expanded into different locations, Calgary hosts the largest Mon community due

to high employment and the booming economy in Alberta. Mon Buddhist Temple of Canada was established in 2003 and the Temple was built this year.

Canada: Mons prepare for 61st Mon National Day

Kaowao: December 23, 2007

Calgary -- The Mon community in Calgary, Canada is preparing for the upcoming 61st Anniversary of Mon National Day to be held on February 23, 2008.

According to the MND celebration organizer Ong Chem Tala Zobbu, the 61st Mon National Day will be held as a special event because the Mons in Canada started to celebrate the great event 10 years ago. In 1998, the Mons in Vancouver celebrated this event for the first time in a hall with a band, live culture performances, and speakers by community leaders.

The MND reaches out to all Mons around the world with a great outpouring of hope and motivation for the Mons living in every corner of the globe. Local Canadians also participate in the event and bring along their families.

The prep-meetings for MND are held in the new Mon Buddhist Temple in Calgary where talent volunteers are selected to organize the social event that draws hundreds from the Burmese community from across Canada. The gatherings formed a Main Committee and Sub Committees for Finance, Reception, Information, Decoration, Cultural Performance, Music Band, Food Preparation and Inspection. Among those elected were Nai Cham Toik as Chairman, Ms. Ong Mon Chan as Vice Chairperson, Ong Chem Tala as Secretary and Nai Simon as Joint Secretary.

Worldwide, Mon communities from Europe, North America, Australia, and Asia celebrate the national day around February. Back home in Burma, various Mon communities celebrate the event with a military parade, sports, literacy competition, and cultural performances including traditional Mon dance and music, and political statements.

After the fall of Mon Headquarters in the Three Pagodas Pass border, the centers of the Mon National Day spread overseas. The biggest events are Thailand's Maharchai and Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur where thousands of migrant workers and refugees seek haven.

Forced name change for Mon Cultural Museum by SPDC

Kaowao: December 21, 2007

Moulmein -- The Mon Cultural Museum which had been opened to the public in Mawlamyine for many decades, has now been renamed by the SPDC, reported a source from the capital city of Mon State.

The SPDC Cultural Ministry made the decision to change the 'Mon Cultural Museum' to the 'Literature and Cultural Museum'. This museum is under the control of the cultural minister within the Archaeology National Museum and Literature Directorate.

The Mon Museum, located at number 50 Htawai Bridge Road and Baho Road in Mawlamyine, was established over thirty years ago with the aim to encourage the Mon people to do research on the past and discover more about their history that dates back centuries, being one of the oldest civilizations in South-east Asia.

According to a Buddhist Monk from Mawlamyine, "The SPDC first consulted Mon historians and Mon monks but went on ahead and changed the museum's name. Because of the complete disregard shown to the Mon people, knowledgeable Monks now disagree with the government ideas in many ways; the government has consistently shown us they don't care about our rights and participation in Burmese society."

A prominent Mon historian stated that the museum is a Mon museum and should therefore contain the word 'Mon' in the title so everybody knows this as everything in the museum is related to the Mon. He went on saying that, "Although this Museum was not named in the Mon Language we could understand what it was, but others won't. Now the government has removed the word 'Mon'. This is very confusing and shows how deceitful they can be, but it also proves how untrustworthy they are in handling our affairs."

A university student in the area said, "The Mon university students are unhappy and dissatisfied with the government's attempt to destroy and dissolve the Mon culture. Moreover, the symbol of Mon nationality in Mawlamyine is being eroded away. At major points in the capital city of Mon State the highly symbolic Mon Brahminy Ducks (Golden Sheldrake) have been substituted with lacquer. Sadly our Monks, Mon Historians and the New Mon State Party (NMSP) couldn't prevent our culture from being repressed by the Burmese government; the only Mon symbol left is a big shop near the Than Lwin River (Salween)."

Shot TPDC Chairman heads back to Three Pagodas Pass

By Mmoore Ah – Kaowao/ December 21, 2007

The Chairman of the Township Peace and Development Council, who was shot last November by two gunmen on a motorcycle, has arrived back from Kanchanaburi hospital to Three Pagoda Pass in recent days.

A hospital source said, "Last December 14th, the chairman U Tin Win (50) arrived with a bullet wound to his lower body."

According to a source close with TPP authorities, "they were waiting for the military South East Command's order to send him to a Yangon Hospital. Explaining that, before sending him to a Yangon Hospital we had to wait for orders from the highest security to travel there, overall his health is not good."

After U Tin Win was ambushed and hospitalized, a head policeman, Kyaw Thar, in TPP took over his responsibility as chairman of the Council. Last week the TPDC selected another person who will take his place permanently, but so far the new TPDC chairman hasn't arrived. "We heard they already selected the new chairman but this person does not dare come here to start his new job, so the policeman, Kyaw Thar, will have to stay in charge for the time being," said a businessman from the Thai Burma border town.

Last November 28th two men riding on a motorcycle roared up to U Tin Win and shot him with a gun and took off. The bullet was removed as soon as he arrived at the Hospital on the Thai side, but his situation was not good because of high blood pressure and diabetes. According to the news reports from the TPP, the gunmen were

riding a Suzuki motorcycle with a yellow "smart stamp". So currently, Suzuki motorcycles owners dare not ride around on their motorcycles in case they are mistaken for the shooters."

The SPDC authorities are unable to find the suspect or determine any leads on the identity of the shooters and villagers from Three Pagodas Pass and the cease-fire groups are finding it difficult to travel anywhere.

TPDC chairman U Tin Win had a notorious reputation for corruption and heavy gambling. There are many cease-fire and ethnic groups that make up the population of TPP. All are associated with New Mon State Party (NMSP), Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), Karen Peace Force (KPF), Hon Tar Raw, which is a Karen group, and other SPDC military troops based in the Three Pagodas Pass border town. This colorful population numbers around 15,000 two years ago, most of them are Mon, Karen and Burman.

DKBA issue motorcycle license "Ah-Hta-Da-Tha"

Kaowao: December 8, 2007

Karen State -- The Burma military government allies and ceasefire group, the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), recently issued a licensure recommendation for unlicensed motorcycles in their control area, requesting licenses called "Ah-Hta-Da-Tha", according to a local source.

A large number of unlicensed motorcycle owners in Karen State have raised the issue, asking for freedom to travel around the State and border towns. According to a motorcycle owner from the region, Major Chit Thu from DKBA is assuming responsibility for these new licenses.

"The man who initiated the recommendation is Major Chit Thu from DKBA. I paid 3,000 Baht for my license fee. They (DKBA) gave me a recommendation letter and a number plate for my bike, written as 'Ah-Hta-Da-Tha' or the longer version of 'Ah-Htoo-Dae-Tha' which in the Burmese language means 'Special Region'. They said they were available throughout their control area," he said.

He said they (DKBA) told him that motorcycles could now travel not only in Karen State but also in Mon State. However, due to tollgates and restrictions he will not travel beyond Karen State.

Another motorcycle owner who received the "Ah-Hta-Da-Tha" license at the DKBA-based Min Lat Pan village, Myawaddy area, Karen State said he had spent 50,000 Kyats for his number plate and that it was worth it as he could now cross easily through the area.

According to the DKBA, motorcycles can travel until Kyait Hto, Bee Lin and Ye townships that is situated at the edge of Mon State where DKBA have some control and so prevent the Burmese Authorities from taking away their motorcycles. Motorcycles are the primary means of transportation for the Burmese as they are easier to handle over some of the rugged terrain and more economical than a truck.

Since 2004, the military government hasn't issued any licenses for new motorcycles in Mon and Karen State, and motorcyclists from Thailand and China had to enter the country illegally with the help of the ceasefire groups.

The responsibility for trading in Thai cars and motorcycles falls on the ceasefire groups, especially the DKBA and Karen Peace Force (KPF), another ceasefire armed group, and also a businessman with links to the New Mon State Party (NMSP).

The SPDC often overlooks the DKBA illegal motorcycle and car trading activities, but if an accident occurs they not only confiscate the vehicle but also issue a hefty fine.

Modern 2007 motorcycles at the Myawaddy and Three Pagodas Pass border towns cost between 1400,000 – 1500,000 Kyats, while those in Mon and Karen State are a bit higher at between 1700,000 – 1800,000 Kyat. Because the price of a licensed motorcycle is now close to 3000,000 Kyat, it is twice the cost of an unlicensed motorcycle, so many are forced to drive modern but unlicensed motorcycles.

In 1994 the DKBA led by a monk, U Thuzana split from the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), the military branch of the Karen National Union (KNU) and allied itself with the SPDC in 1995.

Burmese refugees face funding cuts for food

Kaowao; December 8, 2007

Thai-Burma Border - A humanitarian relief and development agency working on the Thailand-Burma border have had to drastically decrease rations to refugees because of a reduction in funding brought about from the failing US Dollar-Thai Baht exchange rate.

The increasing number of new arrivals to the camps also plays a big part in the lowering of food rations. Funding has now dropped to around 80 million baht, or 7 percent of their 2008 budget according to the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC).

The TBBC has been providing food, shelter, and other non-food items to Burmese refugees and displaced persons helping the Burmese refugees for around 20 years.

A TBBC officer based in Mae Sot told Kaowao that if they are unable to find further funding soon, TBBC will have to cut by half the supplies sent out, including staple ingredients for cooking such as chili, fish paste, oil and soup.

In this position, Burmese refugees will face more difficulties than ever before, especially given that food provisions this year have already been much less than in previous years.

The Mon Relief and Development Center (MRDC) based in Sangkhlabri confirmed they have also had to decrease rice rations to Internally Displaced Persons (IDP).

"Already this year we have been forced to cut down rice rations for IDPs. They have received only five months' worth for the year. Now because of this 2008 budget decrease, we will have to make further ration cuts," said an officer of the MRDC.

Nai Taw, a refugee at Halockhani Mon refugee camp said if the TBBC needs to make further cuts, they should seek other options for refugees wanting to earn money outside the camp. "In our camp, we get less food and other items than any other camp, including nearby Ban Don Yang camp. If more cutbacks are going to occur TBBC could help in other ways. We could find work outside so we can support ourselves," he said.

Nai Plai, a two-year refugee resident from Nu Po camp added, "At the moment we cannot go outside the camp to get food so we rely heavily on the TBBC. If we try to leave the camp the security forces arrest us. So if our supplies are cut or reduced further we will face even more problems."

Commentary

Studying diversity, conflict and internationalizing Burma

By Nehginpao Kipgen

The Union of Burma consists of 7 states and 7 administrative divisions. States are predominantly inhabited by minority ethnic groups while divisions are largely dominated by majority ethnic Burmans.

Burma gained independence with adopted name 'Union of Burma' in 1948 and later changed to Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma on 23rd September 1974, but reverted to the Union of Burma on 23rd September 1988. On 18th June 1989, the State Law and Order Restoration Council adopted a new name called 'Union of Myanmar' with which the country is now officially known at the United Nations.

The country's total land area is 261,970 square miles. Ethnic minorities occupy roughly two-thirds: *Arakan/Rakhine* state- 14,200 square miles, *Chin state*- 13,907 square miles, *Kachin* state- 34,379 square miles, *Karen/Kayin* state- 11,731 square miles, *Karenni/Kayah* state- 4,530 square miles, *Mon* state- 4,747.8 square miles, *Shan* state- 60,155 square miles.

As of July 2003 estimate, population according to the military is 52.4 million; last official census which occurred in 1983 reported just over 35 million (35,442,972). The same source puts religious affiliation in percent as: Buddhism (89.2%), Christianity (5.0%), Islam (3.8%), Hinduism (0.5%), Spiritualism (1.2%) and others (0.2%).

The military regime identifies "135 national races" of which the major ones are Arakan/Rakhine (7 sub-groups), Burman/Bamar (9 sub-groups), Chin (53 sub-groups), Kachin (12 sub-groups), Karen/Kayin (11 sub-groups), Karenni/Kayah (9 sub-groups),

Mon (1 group), and Shan (33 sub-groups). The appellation "135 races" is codified on dialectical variations.

Although the accuracy is questionable, the 15th November 2007 update of the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook gives ethnic composition in Burma as: Burman 68%, Shan 9%, Karen 7%, Rakhine 4%, Chinese 3%, Indian 2%, Mon 2%, other 5%. Figures slightly vary from source to source.

Burma was administered as a province of India from 1886 until sundered from British India in 1937. This was the year when settlements of the Kuki (also synonymously recorded in literature as Chin and Lushai) people were divvied up into two countries- Burma and India. With the creation of Bangladesh in 1972, the Kukis were further dispersed into three countries.

A number of research findings concluded that "Kookies" or "Kuki" is a Bengali word meaning hill men or highlanders. These people have a tradition of passing on their history orally; and as a result, today's researchers have to rely substantially on the works of British writers who wrote extensively on the Kuki people during the colonial era. Their traditional government 'chieftainship system' has been abandoned in Burma, but still retained and practiced in India.

In the context of Burma, *Kuki* is an unpopular terminology and so is the term *Chin* in India. The military junta recognizes "Thado" and "Kaung Saing Chin" under Chin nomenclature. In India, particularly in the state of Manipur, "Thado" is widely written as *Thadou* and "Kaung Saing" as *Khongsai*. The connotation may sound different, yet it refers to the same people. In local dialects, they also call themselves as eimi, laimi, zomi/mizo, etc.

Prior to independence, ethnic minority territories were not part of Burma proper. Considerable effort was mobilized for the materialization of Union of Burma at *Panglong* on the 12th day of February 1947. The nullification of this historic Panglong Agreement and 1947 constitution had annihilated the essence of forming the Union of Burma.

Burma had a parliamentary democracy from 1948 till General Ne Win seized power in 1962. A broken promise of Panglong Agreement was one important factor that led to the rise of armed movements. Ethnic minorities' demand is greater autonomy under a federated structure and not secession or disintegration.

Neither the bloodless coup of 1962 nor 1988 mass uprising was the root cause of today's conflicts in Burma. As early as 1948, the Karen National Union under its armed wing Karen National Liberation Army had begun rebelling against the Burmese government.

The struggle in Burma is basically of 2 stages – restoration of democracy and rights of ethnic minorities. To attain the latter, the former has to come first. Any democratic set-up sidelining ethnic minorities would not bring an end to decades' old political imbroglio.

Within the status quo states and divisions, there are sub-ethnic groups advocating for autonomy or separate administration. Although every demand of every sub-group may not be feasible, criteria for eligibility and legality need to be established. One should not expect the Union of Burma to remain forever 7 states and 7 divisions, or 8 states as envisaged by some.

For many years since independence, Burma political crisis remained a microscopic issue to the international community – either as a result of the country's insignificant role in international politics or her too little importance to the interest and security of other nations. However, this concept has changed dramatically since 1988 mass uprising and countrywide general elections.

Non-recognition of 1990 election results led to intimidation and imprisonment of several Member of Parliament elects – which became the genesis of many of the opposition groups in exile, including National Council of the Union of Burma and National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma.

Deadliest attack on the entourage of Aung San Suu Kyi at Depeyin in 2003 and her continued detention was one reason behind the passing of Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 by the U.S. Congress. The act bans the import of Burmese products and freezes the assets of senior officials.

In recent years, Burma has attracted unprecedented attention of the international community. The successful placement of Burma situation as permanent agenda of the United Nations Security Council on 29th September 2006 was a historic moment. It was followed by an unsuccessful attempt to pass a Security Council resolution on January 12th of this year.

More recently, the 2007 uprising incredibly got international community's attention - headlines in many leading world newspapers, electronic medium and on television screens. Several world leaders and human rights activists around the world spoke up in support of Burmese democracy movement.

The entire world watched the brutality of military on its own people. The uprising immediate success was the attention it received from the world community and subsequent intervention by the United Nations Secretary General's office through its special envoy Ibrahim Gambari.

The United States and European Union were quick to respond in taking tougher sanctions on the military generals and their businesses. Although there is no doubt about the powerful message it carries, unilateral sanctions seem to have limited impact. The vacuum created as a result of western sanctions has been filled by Burma neighboring countries.

Only western sanctions without cooperation from neighboring Asian countries have given enough space for the army generals to move around. Conflicting interests of two different approaches will continue to prolong the survival of military regime at the depletion of the country's natural resources and collateral environmental damage.

While western powers pursue stick diplomacy, the Asian powers opt for carrot. Under such circumstance, the U.N. special envoy's mission has become a little more than lip services with no substantive results to follow. The adamant stance of the 2 veto wielding powers (China and Russia) of the Security Council makes the world's highest enforcement agency bootless.

The removal of Burma's military regime could probably take less than a month or so. But unlike Iraq, the United States would not reign in its fighter jets and ground troops for reasons including: (i) Burma is insignificant importance to the U.S. national interest and security (ii) U.S. foreign policy toward Burma is more of policy oriented than strategic (iii) Rapidly advancing Asian super power is docking at the military's backyard.

Though there is close to a zero percent chance of military intervention either by the United States or by the United Nations, this would be the swiftest action to bring change to Burma should it be pursued. However, this would be a naïve prediction or suggestion for any political analyst at this point of time.

Meanwhile, the international community could consider the model of a six party talks on North Korean nuclear standoff. Six parties involving the United States, European Union, ASEAN, China, India, and Burma could break the iceberg of political crisis. Due to geographical proximity, enormous economic and diplomatic influence over Burma, China's participation is pivotal.

If the international community continues to pursue two diametrically opposing views of western sanctions and Asian engagement, the military will continue to run the country with any resources available. Either concerted sanctions or collective engagement is needed to bring the military to a negotiating table.

Down the road, the culpable individuals in the military clique will be held accountable. Dayton Peace Accords of 1995 is one distant example that can be cited: carrot diplomacy brought warring parties to negotiation in a well devised plan.

However, stick diplomacy took its own course and the once powerful Serbian and Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic was tried for crimes at the International Criminal Tribunal in Hague, Netherlands.

On the death of Slobodan Milosevic in his detention cell, Richard Holbrooke, the then U.S. envoy who brokered the Dayton Peace Accords said, "I'm not going to shed any tears."

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ABOUT US

Kaowao Newsgroup is committed to social justice, peace, and democracy in Burma. We hope to be able to provide more of an in-depth analysis that will help to promote lasting peace and change within Burma. Editors, reporters, writers, and overseas volunteers are dedicated members of the Mon activist community based in Thailand.

Our motto is working together for change and lasting peace.