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Some Acronyms in This Issue

ILO-	International Labour Organization,
IB-	Infantry Battalion,
TPDC-	Township Peace and Development Council,
VPDC-	Village Peace and Development Council,
LIB-	Light Infantry Battalion,
NMSP-	New Mon State Party,
MNLA-	Mon National Liberation Army,
Pyithusit -	People' Militia' force,
Viss-	The local mesurement in Burma. 1 viss is about 1.6 Kilograms

News

Rice mill owners were forced to pay for the battalions' rations

15 June 2007, Mudon Township

Rice mill owners in Mudon Township, Mon State are at the receiving end of extortion. The Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC) have demanded money from the mill owners for funds for the Burma Army.

If the rice mill owners don not pay the TPDC, the township authorities have ordered the police to arrest them, a mill owner said.

"On June 9, the TPDC ordered each rice mill owner to pay 50,000 Kyat per mill by June 15." The TPDC authorities called a meeting of mill owners in the town and gave them the deadline to pay the money, he added.

The TPDC said at the meeting that the fund is meant for the Burmese Army's rations. "It is impossible that the money is meant for army rations. It is likely that he is raising the money for himself because U Kyaw Kyaw Maung, the chairman of TPDC in Mudon is being replaced by the end of this month," the owner alleged.

"Large mill owners can pay that kind of money." Most owners have already paid the TPDC. But I couldn't pay that amount because my



A Rice mill run by a Mon family in Da-Gon-Dai village, near Mudon Township, Mon State

SPDC Ignores Role of International Community

In the recent Statement by ICRC has shown that the ruling Burmese military regime, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), has rejected to improve of human rights record that violated by State authorities and members of State armed force, Burmese Army or *tatmadaw*.

ICRC unveiled that the SPDC top authorities do not have strong willingness to engage with them in order to halt all human rights violations happened to prisoners and local ethnic civilians such as use of forced labour in development projects and porters in the battle fields.

This is a strong evidence that the SPDC even assigned to Universal Declaration of Human Rights to respect the rights of its citizens and promote economic, social and culture rights, it has been failed out to response for decades.

During 18 years rule of the current regime (the previous with name of State Law and Order Restoration Council – SLORC), the people in the whole country of Burma have lost most of their human rights along with economic deterioration and civil war. Population displacement and refugee problems have seriously occurred for decades.

HURFOM wants the international community anyhow to engage in Burma in order to help humanitarian assistance and help solve political problems including for the improvement of human rights.

mill operates just one or two days in a week,” the rice mill owner in Mudon Town said.

Mudon Township has over 100 rice mill owners and they have already given about 100 to 200 tins of their quota of paddy to the army as rations about three months ago.(IMNA)

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Junta embarks on fresh round of ethnic cleansing

June 6, 2007, Mon State

In what is being viewed as a fresh attempt at ethnic cleansing, the Burmese military junta has denied permission to five more local cultural organizations from operating in southern Burma. The regime did the same to eleven local NGOs in Yangon.

”Moulmein’s Mon Literature and Culture Sub-Committee (MLCC), Kyaikmaraw’s Mon Literature and Culture Committee and three other local organizations in the area were denied permission to continue,” said an MLCC member.

”The government will not renew the permit for next year, when MLCC applies,” he added.

”This is the military’s suppression of ethnic rights which helps develop its own literature and culture. It is ethnic cleansing,” said a doctor who found the MLCC and who did not want to be identified for reasons of security.

”Not only Mon, but all other ethnic local organization were denied permission to operate,” the MLCC said.

”It is wrong. I again say that the military government is repressive. It has banned community welfare organizations and developed its own organization, the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA),” said Nai Suthorn Chairman of Mon Unity League.

MLCC is a Mon organization founded in 1970 by Mon university students in Rangoon. Similarly, other ethnic university students also founded their organizations.

MLCC in Moulmein is led by Nai Sike, the representative to the National Convention.

MLCC is a university students’ organization that has been conducting Summer Mon literature schools for children in Moulmein and neighbouring townships.(IMNA)

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Report

Continuous Use of Forced Labour by SPDC Authorities and The Burmese Army In Mon State and Tenasserim Division

I. Background Information

Since the involvement of the International Labour Organization (ILO) from 1999-2007 to eradicate forced labour in Burma, which has taken place for decades since the Independence of Burma, cases of using massive forced labour and the use of forced labour in big cities have been reduced. However, the SPDC, especially the local military commanders from various military battalions who are based in rural areas, have never changed their behavior in terms of using the local ethnic Mon, Karen and Tavoyan villagers to contribute unpaid labour.

During 1999 and 2000, the ILO informed the ruling Burmese military regime, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) to issue Order 1/99 and Supplementary Order. However, the ethnic people who lived in the rural areas or in semi or complete zones of conflict did not receive the information. Hence, the use of forced labour has remained as normal practice in most parts of the rural areas of Karen State, Mon State and Tenasserim Division, areas which encompass the homes of many ethnic peoples including the majority of Mon and Karen people.

HURFOM has found that although the massive use of civilians to contribute their unpaid labour in government infrastructure projects has lessened, the use of forced labour on a smaller scale is still perpetrated by SPDC authorities. This is especially so in the case of the commanders of the Burmese Army or *tatmadaw*¹.

In 2002, following the unstable ceasefire agreement between the main armed Mon political party, New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the SPDC, continuous violations of human rights against the ethnic Mon people led to the formation of many smaller Mon splinter groups. These were based in Ye Township (*in Mon State*) and Yebyu Township (*in Tenasserim Division*). These groups declared their intention to fight back against the Burmese Army. Therefore, the whole southern part of Ye Township and whole of Yebyu Township became a conflict zone once more. The civilians in the areas not only suffered from inhumane treatment as suspected rebel-supporters, but they also suffered from the commanders' constant conscription of forced labour for some development projects, for example guarding of gas-pipelines and villages, and for porter services.

In 2005, the Burmese Army under Tactical Command No. 3 of Military Operation Command No. 19 based in Ye, used Mon civilians as forced labour when trying to control the whole area of Ye Township in their attempt to install an administration in the area. First, the Burmese Army upgraded a local Mon village, **Khaw-za** turning in into a Sub-Town and installed their administration in this Sub-Town. Civilians from Khaw-za and surrounding villages were been forced to build a road that connects Ye Town and Khaw-za, build a public hospital and high school, police station and housing for government servants.

Since 2005, along with the SPDC's militarization policy and self-reliance program², land and properties belonging to civilians have been confiscated without compensation and the local villagers have been forced to contribute to the self-reliance program. Land and properties confiscation have happened in various parts of southern Burma.

¹ The military regime (then SLORC – State Law and Order Restoration Council and current SPDC) used hundreds of thousands of civilians in Mon State and Tenasserim Division in the construction of 110 miles long Ye-Tavoy railway road. This railway road was built with human labour under the official conscription of forced labour by the regime.

² The SPDC's militarization policy means to extend its armed troops up to a half million (500, 000 troops) and the regime allowed the local military command especially Southeast Command in Mon State and Coastal Region Command in Tenasserim Division to take any lands which are strategically important. Then, they order the local commanders to have a self-reliance program which means to support the soldiers and their families in the battalion in accommodation and other survival needs. Because of this plan, thousands acres of valuable lands with crop or orchard trees were confiscated. HURFOM also issued a report called: NO LAND TO FARM, on the situation of land confiscation. Please visit: www.rehmonnya.org

There are two gas pipelines laid in southern Burma. The first gas pipeline “Yadana” is connecting from off-shore of the west (in southern Burma) in order to sell gas to Thailand³. This gas pipeline was constructed in 1998 and the local Burmese Army troops still provide security for the pipeline. In military operations, the Burmese Army troops also used civilians as porters because they have insufficient logistics to provide the service themselves. Second gas pipeline is Kanbauk-Myaingkalay, and it belongs to Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise in order to supply gas to a cement factory in Myaingkalay village in Karen State.

II. Continuous Use of Forced Labour in 2006 and 2007

During late 2006 and 2007, the conscription of forced labour by the local authorities and commanders of Burmese Army continued in southern Mon State and Tenasserim Division. Along with the increase number of soldiers in these areas, the use of forced labour also increased.

Since HURFOM is based on the Thailand-Burma border, its human rights workers frequently meet with forced labour victims who have fled from their homes. Our human rights workers sometimes collect information from the rural areas especially in Ye and Yebyu Townships and have conducted interviews with victims.

From its human rights data collection and documentation, HURFOM proposes that the situation of forced labour in Mon State and Tenasserim Division is comprised of the following:

- Forced labour conscription in bridge construction on highways
- Forced conscription for security in guarding villages, specific areas and gas pipelines
- Forced labour in providing firewood to army’s brick kilns
- Forced cultivation of castor-oil plants
- Forced recruitment into militia forces

Note: The Burmese Army still uses porters in their military operations. This situation is described in the Interviews with Forced Labour Victims on page No.8 of this report.

III. Details of Forced Labour Use

A. Forced Labour in Bridge Construction along Highways

From the end of January, 2007, the local residents of **Khaw-za Sub Township**, Mon State were forced to work as unpaid laborers on bridge constructions along the Ye-Tavoy highway until April. The SPDC’s Infantry Battalion No. 31, based near Khaw-za Sub Town, forced villagers in Ye Township to work on the construction⁴. With the cooperation of the local Township’s administrative authorities, the commander of the local Infantry Battalion coordinated two groups of unpaid villager labourers and demanded each group be made up of 15 people. The groups had to include some local carpenters from the villages in the Khaw-za Sub Township.

Nai Dot, a 45 year old man from Yin-ye village (in Khaw-za Sub Township) who had already been forced into bridge construction work three times previously, reported that in the third week of January, 2007, **Lt. Colonel Kyaw Myint from Infantry Battalion No, 31** and his troops from the Southeast Command based in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, called a meeting with villagers from Yin-Ye and Toe Tat Ywa Thit at Yin-Ye village hall urging them to participate in government development projects. Later on, the local army officers from IB No. 31 and Khaw-za Sub Township’s PDC Chairman U Kyaw

³ This Yatana gas pipeline was constructed by multinational oil and gas companies: France’s Total, US’s Unocal, Thailand’s PTTEP and Burma’s Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE). This gas pipeline has about 65 miles on shore from Kanbauk area to the border point of Thailand.

⁴ Ye-Tavoy motor road is about 115 miles long and it connects Mon State and Tenasserim Division. The 110-miles long Ye-Tavoy railway crosses three townships — namely 13 miles in Ye Township of Mon State, over 70 miles in Yebyu Township and over 20 miles in Tavoy Township of the Tenasserim Division respectively.

Moe demanded that the villagers work on building bridges. They required the villagers to rebuild 14 bridges on two highways (1) Ye-Tavoy, and (2) Ye-Danikyar (new).

According to the Yin-Ye villagers, about 140 people, including 80 from Yin-Ye and 60 from Toe Tat Ywa Thit village, have been forced to build a bridge in northern and southern Toe Tat Ywa Thit village which is located on the new 35 mile long Ye-Danikyar highway, which connects Ye Town and a village called Danikyar, on the border of Mon State and Tenasserim Division. In the first week of February 2007, the local authorities also ordered to the villagers to collect sand, stone, rock, and cement for bridge construction along this motor road. Villagers said that the local military unit gave them only 20 bags of cement with which to repair each bridge. This proved to be insufficient. The villagers had to contribute a lot of cement in order to get a complete concrete bridge built with cement, sand and rocks. Therefore, the local administrative authorities or village headmen collected Kyat 15, 000⁵ xfrom each house in Toe Thet Ywar Thit, and also collected between Kyat 2,000- 8,000 per house in Yin-Ye village.

In some cases, the local villagers were busy with their farming work, and they had to hire substitute labourers to go in their place. A local carpenter (who is still in his village) said:

“It is a very difficult situation for me to survive as a carpenter in this village. They (the local authorities) need me to work in their bridge construction projects. But I have my private work to do for my family to survive. How can I refuse their orders? I decided to hire another man who goes and works instead of me at a cost of Kyat 5,000 per day. I have to pay for 15 days to complete my obligation. If people don't participate in the bridge construction work, they have to contribute cement for the bridge. So people are afraid of punishment”.

Hla Maung, a 35 year old Yin-Ye villager said: “My village has four quarters. Three of the quarters had to procure three huge poles for the bridge and the fourth quarter had to collect construction material such as sand, stones, cements and wood for the bridges construction”.

According to a source close to the Township PDC authorities in Ye, the bridge construction projects were ordered by the State's Military Operational Command No. 19, based in Ye in order to upgrade the Ye-Tavoy military transportation routes. The bridges and roads are SPDC projects that are alleged to bring about equitable development nationwide and ensure national unity.

B. Forced conscription of security guards

(1) In Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division

From the first week of June 2006 until the end of 2007, the Mon and Karen inhabitants from each village who live between Alesakan and Mayan-chaung village in Yebyu Township (northern part of Yebyu Township), were ordered to provide security along Ye-Tavoy motor road by Light Infantry Battalion No. 409 led by Lt. Col. Aung Naing Myint. LIB No. 409 is based in Yebyu town.

Village headmen from Alesakan, Kyauk-ka-din, Kywe-ta-lin, Yapu and Mayan-chaung villages were ordered to send 8 villagers per day to guard the highway. After armed clashes between a Mon rebel group and Burmese troops at the end of April and the beginning of May 2006, the authorities and the military battalions in this area have been concerned about possible attacks on bridges. As a result, they instructed the villagers to guard the highways and bridges.

The village headmen also demanded that the villagers take knives, sticks and weapons from their homes in order to protect themselves while they were on duty. Sometime, the troops from the LIB 409 performed surprise checks on the security guards to make sure they carrying out their orders.

Accordingly to a villager from Aleskan:

⁵The unofficial exchange rate is : **1 US Dollar = ~ 1, 250 Kyat**. The average daily wage of a labour in Mon State is about **2.5 US Dollar or about Kyat 3, 000**.

“Village headman demanded that I guard the highway. Today is our turn to guard and tomorrow will be the duty of another village. Normally, we have to walk along the highway and report any unusual activities, particularly the Nai Chan Done (Mon rebel) group’s activities. Each village has to build at least one hut in the selected places that can be used for the rotations of security groups”.

Another villager, Ko Htun Lwin from Kyauk-ka-din village about the situation created by forced labour below:

“We have been facing many difficulties because of this duty. We have no time to do our own work. My village and the selected security site where I have to guard the road are very far away. Sometimes, I also have to porter (for the Burmese Army) and sometimes I have to go to work for them (the Burmese battalions)” said, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division.

Recently, in order to cut all supplies to the rebel armed groups, the Burmese Army battalions had tried to restrict the movement of the civilians and have issued curfew orders in some villages. They have also been checking all travelers to ensure that they are not rebel supporters or robbers. This movement restriction has also affected the livelihoods of the local villagers who have rice farms or orchard plantations outside of the villages. Due to these movement restrictions, the troops from local battalions also had opportunities to collect crops or fruit in villagers’ farms and plantations and made their own profit by selling these goods.

(2) Forced recruitment of women and children: guarding gas-pipelines

In August 2006, the Burmese Army battalion, **Infantry Battalion No. 62** based near Kwan-hlar village in **Mudon Township** continued forcing local inhabitants, including women and young children, to patrol the Kanbauk-Myaingkalay gas pipeline⁶ in Mudon Township, Mon State, according to a local source.

“They (the SPDC soldiers) did not point out men, women or children. They said they want everybody to take responsibility for guiding the gas pipeline,” said Nai Zaw Tun from Hnee-pa-daw village in Mudon Township, Mon State. The villagers in Kwan-hlar, Hnee-pa-daw, Kalort-tort, Yaung-daung and the villages along the gas pipeline in Mudon Township are being forced to send five villagers from each quarter of the village for day or night patrol on rotation, the source added.

“I have to patrol the gas pipeline and the railway route the whole night (from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m) because my parents are too busy with their paddy farms,” said Maung Min Aung, 13 year old boy from Yaung-daung village, Mudon Township, Mon State. Similarly, many children patrol the gas pipeline because their parents are busy with paddy farms and some parents have migrated to neighbors countries, he explained.

“If I fail to perform patrol duty, I have to pay 2000 Kyat,” he added. After the last gas pipeline explosion in February near Kwan-hlar village, Mudon Township, the authorities collected Kyat 4,000 from each household and said that they would not ask villagers to patrol the gas pipeline. But the villagers are forced to patrol even three months after they paid the security tax, said Nai Zaw Tun.

Since the gas pipeline was laid in 2000, villagers along its route have been suffering from various kinds of human rights abuse such as restrictions on movement, forced labor, patrol duty and are forced to pay taxes for security expenditures.

C. Forced labour providing firewood for army’s brick kilns

On the first week of January 2007 until May 2007, local inhabitants from Khaw-za Sub Township, Mon state, southern Burma have been forced by the Burmese Army to provide timber/wood for a local military’s brick kiln, operated by Major Kyaw Ze Ya from IB No. 31.

⁶ Kanbauk-Myaingkalay gas pipeline is long about 144 miles and it passes Yebyu Township (in Tenasserim Division); Ye, Thanbyuzayat, Mudon, Moulmein Townships (in Mon State); and Pa-an Township (in Karen State)

Now local people are collecting wood for the factory which makes bricks as part of the many business ventures that the army runs.

“We know that this brick factory is owned by Bo Ba Lay (nick name of Major Kyaw Ze Ya), the commander of IB No. 31. He and his troops ordered all villagers to collect wood to use as fuel in his brick kiln. We have no chance to work our own jobs. All villagers have to go to the forest nearby and cut small trees to complete their duty. He warned that if someone failed to do their duty, he or she would be punished by the battalion” reported by Nai Yaung, a 38 year old farmer, who was made to collect wood from Khaw-za Sub Town, in the southern part of Ye township.

According to Mi San Yin from Yin-Ye village, the former village headmen U Sein Yin was involved in business activities with the Army. He ordered that each four households of Yin-Yae must provide four square feet of wood. The timber has to be placed beside the main road of the area for easy transportation, said a source.

“Army officers are now carrying the wood to the factory in Khaw Zar town. The factory produces 10,000 bricks per day,” said an anonymous member of the village administrative staff.

The deputy commander, Major Kyaw Ze Ya has ordered four villages in the area to collect the same amount of wood for his personal brick kiln in Yin-Ye village. The villages are: Yin-ye, Singu, Toe Thet Ywa Thit and Taung-khun. The villages have a total of 1, 000 households in the area.

Major Kyaw Zay Ya seized a 1.5 acres of farmland from the Mon family of Nai Tun Gyi and Mi Mae, in order to set up his kiln and is forcing 15 villagers to work in his factory every day, said a Yin-Ye villager.

There are more battalions in Ye township Mon State who operate brick kilns as part of the army’s business. The current price of a brick is Kyat 50.

D. Forced cultivation of castor-oil plants in Mon State

From May 2006 up to August 2006, the Township authorities of Mudon Township and local battalion LIB No. 61 forced civilians to buy the branches of castor-oil plants and demanded that they be grown around the villages, houses and along the road, and on the farms close to the roads.

It was reported that people from each household from the following villages along Mudon-Moulmein motor road were required to buy branches of castor-oil plants from the local authorities at the rate of 350 kyat per branch, and grow them especially along the motor road, in front of their houses including in gardens, fields and farms. The villages which were required to cultivate the castor-oil plants were:

1. Mudon-Oo, 200 households
2. Ba-yan, 300 households
3. Kwan-tar, 250 households
4. Kaw-ka-pone, 350 households
5. Hmaine-ka-naine, 200 households
6. Myaing-gone, 180 households
7. Kway-wan, 350 households
8. Naing-pa-raing, 320 household and
9. Tha-yar-gone 180 households.

According to the source from Ba-Yan village, those households who could not grow the castor-oil plants had to hire others to fulfill the responsibility had to buy 70 plants at the rate of 350 kyat each from the village PDC. “It is too much for us already to work for them. I need to work on a daily basis to earn enough to sustain my family. Now, I can’t do my own job for my family’s income.” a local source explained.

Reports stated that residents from southern part of Mudon Township such as Kyone-phyite, Kan-ka-lay, Wet-tae, Nyaung-gone, Naing-hlone, Set-twae, Taw-guu, Thagon-aing and Kamar-Wet villages were also required to buy branches of castor-oil plants at the rate of 350 kyat per branch and were forced to grow them in front of their house and along the road.

E. Forced recruitment into militia forces

From November 2006 until January 2007, under the SPDC's militarization policy, the local Burmese Army battalion has ordered every village headman in Mon State to send approximately 35 villagers for militia or *Pyithusit* training. Many villagers were forced to attend this training after abandoning their work at farms or plantations.

The military trained people how to fight armed insurgencies, how to break up groups if there are protests or if the country were to experience another uprising or if overseas countries were to invade Burma. To protect the country, the military trains the people in how to use weapons. The people are trained by the local military, based in their areas.

Civilians in Southern Ye Township were forced to participate in the training. To avoid joining the People's Militia Force in southern Ye Township, residents had to bribe the Infantry Battalion (IB) No.31 Kyat 400,000 (US\$ 304) per family.

The residents are being chosen to join the people's militia through a voting system. Each village has to send 35 villagers to join the people's militia, but larger villages like Khaw-za sub-town have to send 40 people, the residents said.

"They (the troops) told us 'people have to be responsible for doing their duty for the country' and they named the Mon splinter armed group as the enemy of the people or insurgents. I don't want to kill my own people, so I fled to Thailand," said a villager.

The IB No.31 has staged three rounds of selections of villagers to join the people's militia to fight insurgent groups but most people are running away from the village when they are assigned to join the Pyithusit.

Southern Ye Township area often witnesses fighting between the regime's troops and the armed rebel groups. A Mon rebel group has been active in the jungle since 2000, although the main Mon political party, the New Mon State Party concluded a ceasefire agreement with the military regime in 1995.

IV. Cases and Interviews with Forced Labour Victims

Case I: Porter Service

Personal data:	
Name -	Nai Mon Chan
Parent name	Nai A-Chaw, Mi Shwe
Age -	25 years old
Native -	Kywe-ta-lin village, Kalain-aung Sub-Township, Yebyu Township
Occupation-	Farmer
Race -	Mon/Buddhist
Civil status-	Marriage
HRVs -	Forced Labour in Porter Service
Interview date-	July 22, 2006
Source	Lawi Ong, HURFOM

Who used you as porter and when?

"While LIB No. 409 lunched their major offensive against a group of thirty members of the Mon armed group led by Nai Chan Done in Kywe-ta-lin village during June 6 to June 14, 2006, I was used as a porter to carry military supplies and some materials. It took about nine days."

How did they find you as their porter?

"When I was working in my farm

which is about 1 mile from my village on June 6, 2006, the village headman came and ordered me to follow the Burmese troop's of LIB No. 409. I dared not refuse and I did not want my family to get in trouble because of me. So, I promised to follow them. The headman also told me that it was just three days work but in reality it took nine days to be released from work."

How much weight did you have to carry and how long did you have to walk?

"I did not see inside the cargo. It was already packed in black plastic. I think all loads were communication materials. A Burmese soldier said to me not to drop any load or I would be punished. Its

weight was about 38 *visses* (the local measurement 1 viss is about 1.6 Kilograms) I guess. I am sure that its weight was more than one and half baskets of rice which I have carried before.

I had to walk along with the LIB 409 troops toward the south west of Kywe-ta-lin village to Kyaik-dae-marn hill, Ye Township. The distance is approximately 32 miles. On June 8 and 9, 2006, the troops walked the whole day without taking a break when they crossed the rebel controlled areas between Kyauk-ka-din, Akasakan and Kywe-seik villages, Yebyu Township.

Do you know how many porters the troops used?

I don't remember. I was confused because I saw four men with no army uniform and two young guys with only army shirts with Longyi (garment worn by men). I thought those four men without army uniforms were porters like me. I heard some Tavoyan languages (an ethnic language) from them. We were not allowed to talk each other. I was the only one from my village.

Did you suffer any abuses from the troops or did you see anyone abused by the troops?

No. They used a lot of abusive language when I walked slow and when I asked for water. But when we reached a Karen village (he did not remember the village name) near Kywe-seik village, the Commander and his troops asked the villagers to provide five chicken and two baskets of rice for food. At first, the villagers did not understand what the commander needed. I had to translate with my poor Karen language. The villagers collected food supplies for the troops. In the evening, I had to collect some wood and water to cook with. When we prepared to leave, I saw one other Karen villager with a load on his shoulder. I thought he might be a porter like me.

Did they feed the porters well and how did you manage to sleep at night time?

No. They provided just a plate of rice with some vegetables. For me, it is not enough to get full. Normally I am a giant rice eater. I know that if I asked for more, I might get a black eye instead of rice. It was not a problem for me. But I could not forbear the body pain. Due to the whole day of walking, sometimes, when I slept, my whole body was hurting badly. When I tried to ask for some pills from the troops, they said they have no drugs or pills.

It was difficult to sleep when it was raining at night time. I had to collect some banana leaves and managed to sleep. But it was still hard to sleep because of mosquitoes.

Case II: Forced Labour and recruitment into militia forces

Personal Data:

Name -	Nai Win
Native village -	Khaw Za Sub-Township, Southern Part of Ye Township, Mon State
Age/ Sex -	35 years/ Male
Nationality -	Mon
Religion	Buddhist
Family status -	Married
HR violation -	Forced Labor
Perpetrator -	U Kyaw Moe, Chairman of Township PDC au thorities
Effectuated Date -	1 st September – 13 rd September 2006
Interview Date -	November 2006

Can you tell who forced you to work and what type of work you did?

“Since the 1st of September 2006, residents from Kaw-Zar Sub-Town were forced to work as unpaid laborers by the Township Peace and Development Committee led by Chairman U Kyaw Moe and his troops. It took me about 13 days, working seven days a week and eight hour per day. We worked to fence the Township PDC office, clean the grassland and bushes, cut the bamboo and wood and to make the frames for the fences.

Do you remember how many villagers suffered from this work?

Including myself, we had about 15 persons from our quarter and we had to bring our own food and water from our house. If anyone cannot work they hire someone else instead. The current labor fee is about 3,000 kyat for one person. I could not afford to pay the fee, so I had to go and work there. Since I am working as a farmer, I could not go and work for myself.

How were you treated by the authorities and the Burmese Army?

A friend of mine, Nai W++ ++, was also forced to join the village security militia force and patrolled the whole Town for nights with no payment. Since the authorities upgraded Kaw Zar village to Sub-Town level, there are many types of forced labor by many administration groups. Some villagers were also forced to patrol for Infantry Battalion No 32. Another man who is also my friend, Nai K+++ ++, was tortured by members of the militia force because he was found sleeping during night duty.

Case III: Forced labour for army businesses

Personal Data:

Name-	Nai Ajit
Native village -	Taung-ponne village, Northern Ye Township
Age/ Sex -	22 years/ Male
Nationality -	Mon
Religion -	Buddhist
Family status -	Single
HR violation -	Forced Labor,
Perpetrator-	Commander Min Min Tun and Captain Htwe Khant Light Infantry Battalion No. 587
Effectuated Date -	14 th September 2006
Interview Date -	November 2006

Please tell me how the Burmese Army used you and your properties for their own business?

On the above mentioned date, while I was on the way to my parent’s paddy farm, Burmese troops, approximately about 15 soldiers led by Captain Htwe Khant from Light Infantry Battalion No. 587, and some village administration members from our village stopped me and ordered me to carry bricks for their battalion. The reason they asked me was because I have an old truck which is operating with a Chinese engine (known as “Phut-Chat truck” in Mon). They needed my truck in order to carry their bricks from

their brick production site, which is based outside the village, to their battalion. But the problem was that I could not afford to buy fuel anymore since the price of fuel has gotten higher and higher. I told them I could do it if they bought fuel for my truck and they said “yes”. Actually, I did not want to work for them because I have worked without payment for them several times.

Are any other villagers and their trucks being used by the army commanders?



Villagers, included women were forced to carry rock to repair the Khaw zar - Magyi road. Photo No.2

When I got to their brick production site, I found about 30 truck owners with their trucks from our village and Taung-pyin, a neighboring village. Captain Htwe Khant announced the instructions from Commander Min Min Tun from LIB No. 587, that each truck owner should carry 1400 bricks to the battalion. For me I told the Captain Htwe Khant that my truck was very old and not in good condition and he should let me carry just 700 bricks in my truck. Unfortunately he replied that he could not change the order of the Commander. In the end I had to take two loads to finish my duty. At first, they promised that

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 2237, General Post Office
Bangkok 10501, THAILAND
E-mail: hurfomcontact@yahoo.com
Website: <http://www.rehmonnya.org>

With regards,

Director
Human Rights Foundation of Monland

they would pay for the fuel costs. But when I asked them they said no truck owners would receive the fuel costs. I have been used like this five times already. This is the sixth time. I realize that this is the main reason that a lot of truck owners quit their transportation jobs and changed jobs or went to Thailand as migrant workers.

Did you find help in order to stop using your truck?

I told my problem to the village administration group and they replied that they themselves are scared of the Burmese Commanders. One of the village administration members who is a friend of mine told me that the village administration is the first victim if they could not complete the instructions of the local commander. So they have to follow the order of the local Commander.

Can you tell me more about your livelihood and the negative impacts of the troops of the Burmese Army?

For me, I have shifted jobs from a truck driver to a farmer since the beginning of this month. Now, I am working on my parent's farm. I want to sell my old truck, but no one wants to buy it because they are afraid of being used by the local battalion. Being a farmer in my village is not easy. Since last year Commander Min Min Tun, of Light Infantry Battalion No. 587 ordered all farmers via the village administration group to give 40 baskets of paddy per year to the battalion as food supply. If anyone failed to complete this responsibility they would be punished. Moreover, we villagers have to cover the cost of the village militia force which is known as the "village security fee". Included in the fees are their salary, food supply and materials. Our family has to pay 2-3,000 Kyat for the village militia force. Most villagers are facing an economic crisis because of various types of taxes, unpaid labor and movement restrictions which were implemented by the Light Infantry Battalion No. 587. My individual opinion is, I recognize that currently, I am living in hell and I really don't know what I am going to do.

V. Conclusion/ Suggestions

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



Forced labourers in a bridge construction near Yin-Ye village, Ye Township, Southern Mon State.
(photo:HURFOM)

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

- As a local human rights organization that has monitored 'human rights and labour rights' of the people in southern Burma, Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) would like to suggest the following:
 - ▣ ILO in Rangoon office should try to gain greater access to the rural areas where the requisition of forced labour is frequently committed by the authorities and members of the Burmese Army. Meaning that the ILO needs to appoint local representatives in more rural areas, in order to cooperate closely with the community, monitor the activities of the authorities and Burmese Army on a constant basis, with a purpose to halt the practices of requisition of forced labour. Another purpose is to reduce the socio-economic impacts on Burma's civilians resulting from the use of forced labour.
 - ▣ The ILO in coordination with the international community should try to pressure the Burmese military regime to form an independent labour or trade union in the country. ILO should provide technical assistance to that organization, in order to protect labour rights in general, including the requisition of forced labour; practice the right of freedom of expression and protect the right to organize among the workers and labourers.
 - ▣ If the regime still refuses to comply with the ILO Convention 29 and Convention 87, the appropriate pressure by the international labour unions should be applied to the regime as punishment.

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Printed Matter



Address Correction Required

⤴ REMINDER: HURFOM's mailing address has changed