

The Mon Forum

Issue No. 10/2007

October 31, 2007

The Publication of Human Rights Foundation of Monland (BURMA)

Contents

News:

- (1) Listeners arrested by Burmese soldiers in Mon State
- (2) Authorities collect physic nut from people
- (3) Military scrutinizing guests in monasteries

Commentary:

Welcome to Mr. Gambari and Suggestion to UN Mission

Summary Presentation:

Struggle for Survival of Mon Literature and Education in Monland

Report:

- (1) Movement Restriction and Abuses behind the Pro-government Rallies in Mon State

Some Acronyms in This Issue

BCP-	Burma Communist Party,
LCD-	Least Developed Country,
IB-	Infantry Battalion,
GAD-	General Administrative Department,
VPDC-	Village Peace and Development Council,
USDA-	Union Solidarity and Development Association,

News

Listeners arrested by Burmese soldiers in Mon State

20 Oct, 2007- Kaw-Zar, Ye, Mon State

A 45 year-old Kaw-Zar villager, Nai Aung Khin, was arrested and imprisoned with a seven year sentence for listening to news from exile-based broadcasting services, including BBC, VOA and RFA.

On the 20th of October the People's police forces at Kaw-Zar police station arrested Nai Aung Khin as the owner of a Kaw-Zar satellite phone. They brought him to Ye Township on the 21st October and on the 22nd he was sentenced to seven years imprisonment. His crimes were an association with anti-government rebels, and listening to news broadcasts from services banned within Burma.

Following this case local villagers have reported feeling so threatened they dare not listen to the radio. "It is one of their methods to make people fear until they do not dare to move," said an anonymous political expert.

Generally villagers are not interested in news from the propaganda-peddling state-run media, however watching or listening to any other broadcasting services must be done in utmost secrecy, as they live in fear of being discovered by soldiers. Nai Aung Khin will serve his sentence in Ye Township's prison.



Security tightened in Mon State: Commander from SPDC LIB No. 587 met his troops during September demonstration in Kon Du battalion

HURFOM

Welcome to Mr. Gambari and Suggestion to UN Mission

HURFOM believes that decades long protracted political and economic problems in Burma (Myanmar) only based on 'tripartite political negotiation' which included all parties involved, the current military regime SPDC, pro-democracy force led by National League for Democracy (NLD) and non-Burman ethnic opposition. The responsibility of UN Mission is to drag the regime to negotiating table like it did in North Korea. So that UN Under-secretary Mr. Ibrahim Gambari and UN Mission in Burma.

Although there are many groups and different names with different objectives, all democratic parties including 88 Generation Students want to build a genuine democratic Burma as a common goal while all ethnic nationalities can agree on common ground for the rights of ethnic people. But due to serious restriction, these parties cannot meet independently and on other hand, the ruling regime also manipulates among the groups not to have truth each other. Sometimes, they also create conflict among them.

The regime may have complained there are many groups in ethnic political parties and many factions in democratic oppositions, they do not talk to whom. That will be a good complain. But for UN Mission, it needs to persuade the regime to have allowed freedom of assembly of these opposition parties and they can select among themselves who would be 'dialogue partners' to SPDC. Similarly, UN Mission also needs to arrange for the meeting of all ethnic nationalities to gather and select their own dialogue partners. Since the ethnic nationalities have their own united fronts and umbrella organization, they can compromise easily in selecting right representatives. The people in Burma are suffered enough, and it is time to help them.

Authorities collect physic nut from people

Yepyu Township, October 30, 2007

The Yepyu Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC) in Tenasserim division, southern Burma is forcibly collecting physic nuts from people, said residents.

Yepyu TPDC ordered the Village Peace and Development Council to make the collection from the villagers and send it to TPDC office.

According to the TPDC order, each VPDC has to collect two Tin (Burmese basket) of nuts from their villagers and if they cannot send it, they would have to pay 120,000 Kyat.

"No village has nuts to give. Because villagers do not bother about the nut plant and are not interested in growing it," a VPDC member said.

Most VPDCs paid the money instead of giving two Tins of physic nuts because they could not find it.

According to a VPDC member villagers in the township were forcibly ordered to grow the physic nut last year. The TPDC also extorted money from the local people for the Township project that planned by the Burmese military junta.

The TPDC ordered each family to grow 10 to 20 plants and took at least 2,000 Kyat from each family as cost for the seed.

Military scrutinizing guests in monasteries

Rangoon, 16 Oct 2007

Burma Army officials in Shwedagon Pagoda area in Rangoon have started scrutinizing guests in the monasteries and are checking where the guests came from.

Many monasteries around the Shwedagon pagoda which have guests are being inspected. Monks believe that the military is looking for dissidents and those who took part in the protests against the junta last month.

Questions like "Where have the guests come from. Why are they here? What is the relation between the guests and the abbots or monks in the temple?" are being asked a monk said.

"It is not just the overnight guest list submitted to the authorities that are being inspected. Officials are examining the abbots, monks, and guests," he added.

The military officers are visiting each monastery in the area and asking pointed questions to abbots, monks and the guests.

"This is the first time this is happening. We never faced such a situation before," the monk added. According to the monks, about a hundred guests stay at some monasteries when they visit the former capital

See page No.11

Summary Presentation by
Nai Kasauh Mon, Director, Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM)

To International Conference on Discovery of Ramanya Desa (Monland): History, Identity, Culture, Language

and Performing Arts

10-13 October 2007, Mahitaladhibesra Building, Chulalongkom University, Bangkok, Thailand

Struggle for Survival of Mon Literature and Education in Monland

The Mon people are very proud of their great historical background including Mon literature role in the past for many centuries. In the past, when the Mon kingdom rules it's own kingdoms in lower Burma, teaching of Mon literature and language was particularly centered in Mon monasteries, in royal administration and in communication.

After Mon people lost it's country, Hongsawatoi Kingdom, the development of Mon literature and monastery education had disappeared. During post-independent days, Mon people had demanded from preservation of Mon literature and Mon education. For over 10 years, democratic government in Burma (from 1948 to 1962), allowed preserving Mon literature in both Mon monasteries and government schools in Mon areas, southern part of Burma. The Mon people satisfied for the government's policy.

In 1962, after Burma's military strongman, Gen. Ne Win seized political power, the new Revolutionary Council and the then Socialist government in Rangoon, prohibited teaching of Mon language in government schools and did not allow teaching of Buddhism in Mon which the Mon monks have practiced for many hundreds years. That was an intensive 'assimilation policy' adopted by Burmese military regime.

Prohibition of Mon people's rights to preserve their identity pushed many young Mons and Mon students to join armed struggle led by New Mon State Party (NMSP). In a response against government's assimilation policy, NMSP also established many Mon schools in rural areas, where the (military) government could not get access.

In mid-1995, when the NMSP discussed ceasefire with current military regime, the Mon leaders also included about the preservation of Mon literature and recognition of Mon education. But the government authorities have refused. But NMSP's Education Department and Mon National Education Committee (MNEC) continuously operate Mon national schools, although the government authorities have tried to prohibit that activity.

With the supports of Mon people in rural communities, about 200 Mon schools were operated in courage. Some Mon teachers also involve in teaching in mixed (both Mon education and government education are operated) schools by sharing time with government's teachers. Sometimes, they have tensions in these schools. At the same time, in order to preserve Mon literature, Mon Buddhist monks launch a summer Mon literature campaign in many villages in every year's April and May. This 2007, about 60, 000 young Mon students joined to this Mon literacy campaign.

Burmese military government implements their assimilation against Mon people and other ethnic nationalities. But all the ethnic nationalities in Burma or Myanmar try hard for the survival of their identity.

• • •

Report

Movement Restriction and Abuses behind the Pro-government Rallies in Mon State

I. Crackdown on the Peaceful Protests

In Burma, in the second half of September an uprising demanding the reduction of commodity prices, as the government had dramatically increased the price of fuel. The demonstrations spread throughout the whole of Burma. Many people from all levels of society within the former capital Rangoon, the second capital city, Mandalay and many other big cities like Pegu and Moulmein (the capital of Mon State) in Burma participated in peaceful protests demanding a reduction in commodity prices. The protests were led by students and then by the Buddhist monks.

The SPDC responded violently to these peaceful demonstrations with armed forces, and made no attempt to solve the problems of commodity prices or work with the civilians. Due to their strength, combined with the strength of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), there were between 200 and 300 protestors killed estimated by oppositions and diplomats in Rangoon. According to the Assistance for All Political Prisoners in Burma (AAPPB) secretary, Ko Tate Naing, there have been approximately 3000-4000 people arrested to date. But nobody exactly knows how many demonstrators including were killed during protests and how many of them are detained. AAPPB can estimate the closest approximate number.

At the end of September a peaceful **saffron revolution** led by Buddhist Monks built great momentum in Moulmein, capital city of Mon State. Even though the SPDC did not observably restrict and threaten people in Moulmein, they instructed the local military officers, police force, SPDC authorities, USDA and *Pyi-thuu-swan-ar-shin* Association (People Power Association) to restrict the movement of people and the flow of information and to closely monitor the activities of the local people.

Since the early of protests, HURFOM human rights workers based in Mon State has closely monitored how the SPDC authorities and their hand-picked organizations have actively involved in various oppressive measures against the people. Herein, we are going to report on the actions of the military regime in lower Burma during the peaceful revolutions.

II. Abuses occurring behind the rallies in each Township

Rallies to support the SPDC's National Convention held in many different cities across Burma were directly manipulated by the SPDC, and led by the relevant State and Division authorities and their followers. The purpose is to against the recent protests in which the people and Buddhist monks had expressed their real desires. Thousands of the people clearly sent the message that they need economic development and political reform.

“These rallies were held to cover the retaliatory actions of the government following the peaceful demonstrations in September. They were pursuing violent crackdowns, so held rallies to appease the United Nations envoy, Mr. Gambari, who was here to assist Burma,” said an anonymous political expert.

However, there were many different sorts of human rights abuses occurring behind the rallies. Human rights reporters have been able to collect news about the abuses during rallies on the 6th October in Mon state. **Moulmein, Capital of Mon State:** According to one source close to the General Administrative Department (GAD) in Mon State, they originally planned to hold these rallies in support National Convention, the first point in SPDC's 7-point road map, in early of the month, however heavy rain delayed them until the 6th October.

The details of story are:

“The chairman of the Mon State Peace and Development Council was instructed to organize the rally as quickly as possible, and then supervise it. The District Peace and Development Council (DPDC),

Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC), and Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) were ordered to hold the so-called People's Rally in line with the instructions from the GAD. The relevant authorities directly instructed USDA's organizers, members of the fire station and Women's Affairs Groups to organize participants in cities, townships and villages. There are approximately 100,000 participants who joined the People's Rally," stated a member of the GAD who asked to stay anonymous for security reasons.

A former teacher in a government school, U Aye Naing, said that every Quarter Head in Moulmein was ordered to collect a list of potential participants in their quarter. They were then required to call a meeting of those people and order them to join the rally. He added, "They gave us instructions in the form of threats. For example, at least one person from each house had to attend the rally or at least three people from each house if there is a student in their family; each person would be fined 20,000 kyat if they failed to attend and they would be added to the black list. Therefore, we were not in a position with choice, we had to rally or flee."

An education staff, Ma Thet Thet (not their real name), said that U Min Ye Htun, executive officer of the GAD, had glued the statement in the Quarter Peace and Development Office in Myine-Tar-Yar where she lived. USDA's organizer in Pack-Khin quarter, U Aye Myint, also held a meeting to organize the participants.

"One person from each house had to attend without fail and ideally more than one would attend. If anyone cannot attend they were required to pay the 20,000 Kyat fine before the rally or accept they will be blacklisted. I think they were pushing us and threatening us until we had no choice but to attend the rally," said Ko Naing who lived in Pack-Khin quarter.

A HURFOM reporter said that in every quarter the authorities and their followers, including USDA members and the People's Forces, were preparing for the 'People's Rally' in Moulmein. The GAD had been providing flags to use in the rally since late September. In October, they were producing cardboard placards to be held by the participants in the rally. "USDA members wrote propaganda slogans on cardboard sign boards," said a source close to the GAD.

"They were writing about opposing the National League of Democracy (NLD), opposing any international broadcasting and supporting the policies which are the result of National Convention. I think they were from the USDA because they were not staff from our office," said a GAD staff.

The riot police, military members and uniformed police have been closely monitoring the highway bus station, Bo-Kone quarter where the government offices are situated and other locations like monasteries, shopping strips, railway stations.

Mudon Township: At least 300-500 Villagers from every village in Mudon Township were forced to attend the National Convention Rally which was led by People Power Association and the members of Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA). The order was secretly given by administrative officers of the Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC).

The details of story are:

"Government staff, teachers and students were given a compulsory order to attend the rally. If students from tenth standard do not attend the rally, the application form to apply for taking their final exams will be not available for them," said one student's parent.

A villager from Sein-taung village, in Kamawet village tract said, "We did not want to join their rally at all because we know they killed a lot of innocent people and were forcing us to 'support' them. However, we had to join otherwise they would impose a fine on us."

"Nai Tun Tun, Secretary of the Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) and USDA's chairman ordered us to attend the rally. He told us that anyone who did not attend would be added to the 'black-list' and punished later," said Mxx Ox, a Htaung-Kay villager. He added, "One villager called Aung Naing is a USDA organizer, who took on the responsibility of organizing people. He collected 2500 Kyat from each person who failed to attend the rally and hired other people to replace them. However, just 50 people actually attended the rally. As for me, I just gave them the 2500 Kyat to avoid having to join their rally."

A USDA organizer from Gon-Nyin-Than called U Aye Maung (40 years old), ordered that one to two members from each house had to attend the rally. Most villagers in this area work in rubber plantations for their livelihood. They had to leave their daily work in order to attend the rally because they were afraid of punishment, and could not afford the fine the authorities imposed for not attending. Therefore they had to join the rally, holding the sign-boards they were given and listening to what was said. But the villagers had to make all of their own travel arrangement.

Ye Township: Similarly, in Ye Township, the southern part of Mon State, the Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC) has been taking money from the villagers who refuse to go the rally denouncing the monk-led protests in Ye Township Mon State on October 24, 2007.

The detail of story is:

According to Nai Min Tun (not his real name), 45, who lives at Aung Myitta quarter, the SPDC's township administration groups are taking money from Ye township residents who were absent from the rally which was held on October 24.

The orders from villages and quarters level administration groups mentioned that all households in each quarters from Ye Township have to attend the rally, according to reporter. "Officials in the quarters in Aung Myitta, Ye said they are taking four bags of cement from each house hold that refuses to go to the rally," an unnamed source in Ye township, Mon State said.

The Ye Township authorities also ordered each village to send their participants at least 100 villagers per village. Most villagers are not willing to join the government's rally. Some villagers who did not want to participate also required to pay 3,000 to 4,000 Kyat per households in Kyaung-ywa village, reported by a villager. In Andin village, the villagers paid 3,000 Kyat per household while some village paid 1,500 Kyat. Fines are different from one village to another, it was depending on the decisions of village heads.

The rally to denounce the monk-led protests was held in the precincts of a pagoda at the center of Ye Town. The authorities told rally participants to leave their homes around 5:30 a.m. "The pagoda ground is used for festivals such as rice donation to give alms to the monks by residents," the source said. However the authorities banned the donation festival and held the rally at the ground.

The authorities took signatures and the names of the people before they went to the rally. The people who refused to attend the rally paid fine to the authorities.

Thanbyuzayat Township: The authorities in Thanbyuzayat Township assembled villagers in the township by force and held a rally to denounce the monk-led protests and support their National Convention and 7-points roadmap. The authorities told villagers that if they are absent they would have to pay a fine.

The details of story are:

"They held the rally in a play ground in Thanpyuzayat town," a resident said. Poor villagers attended the rally because they could not afford to pay the fine. "Yesterday villagers did not shout the slogan that authorities told them to. Only pro-junta people shouted slogans. Others just walked in the rally," said a resident.

A majority of the people said they would rather pay the fines than joining in the rally because they do not support the regime's brutal crackdown on monks. Some villagers said they would not go to denounce the Buddhist monks even if the authorities' fine them 1000 Kyat per household.

III. Movement Restriction in Mon State

Since the beginning of protests in 3rd week of September, Mon State PDC authorities deployed more police force, soldiers in many check-points in the entrance of towns and cities in Mon State. They also allocated duties to members of USDA and members of 'People Power Association' to closely active Buddhist monks and students from Moulmein University. Therefore, HURFOM human rights reporters have noticed the following restriction against the normal civilians as below:

On the 22nd September 2007, travelers were rigorously checked by SPDC military forces, riot police, regular police and militia at the Ya-khaing-gone check-point, right outside Moulmein. According to one HURFOM reporter, a female resident from Mudon Township reported that soldiers were checking everyone's purses, wallets and bags at the gate.

"They checked my paper bag and asked me to show my Identity Card. They also asked me to unfold the calendar which I bought from the town. I think they suspected that it was a letter motivating people to demonstrate. They also warned us to stay quiet, mind our own business and stay away from political activities. Otherwise, we would be put into jail. They did not give my calendar back after checking it and I did not ask them for it because I was afraid of problems occurring," she added.

In September, the momentum of demonstrations was high in the whole of Burma. At that time, people who moved around from one place to another were exhaustively checked by soldiers at the gate. Nobody was allowed to continue his or her journey if they were unable to show them his or her identity card.

"We have to inform the Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) who will go where and why they need to travel," said a Ka-Mar-Wat villager, Ma Hla Myo, 32 years old.

He added, "A Ka-Mar-Wat village head and the leaders of USDA declared that every villager must inform them of any travel plans. We have to tell them all the facts including where we will go and how long the journey will take. Now the villagers dare not go anywhere unless it is absolutely necessary. They now travel only when they have to send a patient to the hospital in town."

There were riot police, militia and the regular police force in railway stations, bus stations, harbours and ferry sites in Moulmein. The followers of USDA and their people's forces have been holding emergency meetings once a week in their offices in villages, in line with orders from the district level. According to one person who has a close relationship with members of USDA, the leader of the Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC) had collected some members and followers of USDA and called for weekly meetings in order to put them on alert. In the weekly meetings, those attending were taught how to break up and disperse groups of people, with methods including the use of bamboo sticks, physically beating and fighting people. Training was conducted by militia leaders.

"Now they are forming militia forces in villages. These orders came directly from the township level. The trainers from the military instruct the militia forces in fighting, shooting and breaking down the masses. Within the militia forces, they choose people who are Mon who have authority and power among the local people. They appoint these people after confirmation of their background," said Nai Ba Myint, 40 years old, who lives in Paing-kamar village, Mudon Township.

If the strikes continue in Mon State, these appointed militia forces and the USDA and their supporters have responsibilities to stop all types of protest activities. HURFOM field reporters who arrived in Mudon Township state that the local people are being closely monitored with all information reported to the upper levels.

"They especially monitor the monasteries in Moulmein city. The followers of USDA and the riot police go around on motorbikes in the monasteries where many monks stay, including Sein-mama, Thin-baw-lae, and the Thadana 2500 Monastery. They monitor each quarter this way. During the Buddhist monks' protests, the National League for Democracy (NLD) office was under obvious watch, as well as the members of political parties and the houses and offices of ceasefire group members. If an NLD member goes to Rangoon, their family members will be questioned about the reasons for that person's travel," said one political activist, currently living in Moulmein.

A member of the Mon Liaison Office in Moulmein, who contacted HURFOM by phone, reported that the New Mon State Party (NMSP) gave a statement in late September giving support to the protests. As a result activities of the NMSP are now being closely monitored.

"After the NMSP declared their statement of support for the monks and protesters in the strike we are feeling under great pressure. They often come around our offices, especially the Mon Liaison Office and the Mon Commercial Office. One army truck and a motorbike purposely came and stopped in front of the office and watched our activities. I think these people are probably local

USDA members. This took place a day or two before the protesting happened in Moulmein. In our office, we had to warn our members to contact each other wherever they went. We feel restricted staying in Moulmein," he added.

Before the SPDC closely observed the NMSP offices, they carried out many cases of human rights abuses in Ye Township, Southern Burma. In late September a HURFOM field reporter outlined how the Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No.(31) which was under Military Operation and Management Command 19 (MOMC 19) abused the human rights of local people, such as restriction on movement and the flow of information.

"Now the villagers in Yin-Ye, Yin-Dain and Ka-Loh village, near Kaw-Zar village, have been ordered to inform the military whenever they leave and come back to the village. Strangers are not allowed to come into the village. LIB No. (31) also ordered the senior monks not to go anywhere," said a Kaw-Zar villager, Nai Chae, 55 years old.

A Yin-Dain villager, a teacher of Mon National School, reported that the curfews and restrictions on leaving and entering the villages in southern Ye Township were related to the demonstrations occurring throughout the whole country.

"The purpose of these restrictions is to prevent the demonstrations from spreading into these areas. If the demonstrations happen in these areas, it would be very hard to control because they are black areas and the authorities are afraid of splinter groups," said Nai Chan Ong, a teacher, in a phone interview.

In late September commodity prices increased, and insufficient goods and the flow of trade in southern Mon state also occurred due to the restrictions imposed by local authorities who were worried about the spread of demonstrations.

Ma Myint May (not her real name), 35 years old and the mother of four children, told a HURFOM field reporter, "There are not enough goods available in Moulmein, such as garlic, onion, oil, chilli, ginger and tamarind. There is also a shortage of groceries in Kaw-Zar village. Shop owners said that goods which they bought from Moulmein were stranded in Thanbyuzayart and Htinn-Yuu village. As our village cannot access commodities from Moulmein, prices have increased to a great extent. Everybody knew that the commodity prices would not drop again quickly following the increase. Now, our family has been eating without oil for several days."

Some greengrocers said that trading of local products from one place to another had been stopped due to imposed movement restrictions. Local people and consumers have not been able to obtain commodities and are unable to trade local products because the fish and prawns they usually send to Ye Township could not be transported any more.

"The movement restrictions were not only in place in response to the uprising. As they are black areas, Junta have been oppressing the people in these areas for years. Villagers were not allowed to go outside the village or sleep in their plantations and gardens. They always have to inform authorities wherever they go and they often have to pay for permission to move around. Because of the recent monk-led uprising the restriction of movement in these black areas increased greatly. Many youth in our areas fled to foreign countries due to the effects of these restrictions; they had no freedom to move around," said a Ayu-taung village (in Ye Township) head, 50 years old.

According to news photos collected by HURFOM the Battalions under the command of MOMC No. 19, instructed their Battalion Commander, Division Commander and soldiers to take action when momentum for the uprising was high.

According to one villager, who was close to the Light Infantry Battalion LIB No. 587, in Ayu-taung village- Ye Township, the Battalion commander called the local authorities and the people's forces to the emergency meeting everyday from the second week in September until the end of the month.

"In these meetings, he instructed the participants to control the strikes in the area, to take action if a strike occurred and to check on military members. He also instructed the village heads to submit their monthly report to the Battalion commander," reported a HURFOM field reporter who also collected photos.

IV. Aggressive Activities of Regime Supporters

Near Moulmein and nearby area

The local people complained that many check-points were set up along the outbound routes in Mon State after the 25th September when the monk-led uprising took place in Moulmein city, Mon State.

According to one HURFOM reporter from Moulmein city, the pro-government groups including the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) members, people's forces and local intelligence took photos of protesters with digital cameras during the demonstration. On the 29th of September, they were using these photos to arrest all the leaders and monks who led the demonstrations.

“Recently, the SPDC set up many checkpoints, especially, in Zar-tha-pyin, Karen State, at the edge of Attaran bridge, near Kyaik-ma-yaw circle. There are many groups, such as Special Police Branch, Internal Security Force, militia, and soldiers from the South East Command, authorities from Ministry of Immigration and Population and police and riot police. They have appointed between 20 and 40 members at every check-points. Before the protests they would check identity cards and ask for money if we could not show them. However now they check all bags and pat down our bodies too. They specifically ask and record where we are going and where we've come from,” said Maung Myo (not their real name), a 23-year-old who lives in Kyike-ma-yaw Township.

Likewise at the entrance check-points, especially in Karen State including Pa-an (the capital of Karen State), Ein-duu village, Zar-tha-pyin, they ask all travelers to get out of cars and be thoroughly checked. A bus passenger, who asked to remain anonymous, said, “...it took a long time for us to travel because of I.D. Card checks and answering guard's questions at several checkpoints along the way.” He added that the authorities had set up more checkpoints at cities' gates than ever before.

“In Moulmein city, Mon State, there were many people with telephones monitoring and checking in crowded places, such as Myine-ya-nar public market, bus station and harbors. I think they are Special Police Branch, Internal security force and USDA members but they were wearing civilian clothes,” relayed Ma Aye Thein, a 45 year old shop keeper.

According to one monk, a protester, a member from the administration department of Moulmein addressed the senior monks on the 30th of September asking them not to participate in the political activities anymore.

“We received some news that they were arresting people but we could not confirm who was arrested and which quarters they were from. Some people estimated they were arresting NLD members in rural areas,” said a human rights observer based in Moulmein.

Mudon Township

The Burmese authorities have increased their checks and restrictions in Mu-Don Township after the uprising occurred in Moulmein, the capital city of Mon State.

A driver of a Yamanya Motor Association said, “If we leave from Moulmein, we will be firstly checked in Ya-khaing-gon check-point. There is another checkpoint at the edge of Yo-go Pagoda Road. They are thoroughly checking all passengers at that check-point; the people checking are from Special Police Branch, Internal Security Force (or Military Intelligence), militia and regular police women. Every passenger is asked to get out of the bus and queue along a line that they bar with bamboo. They detain anyone without an Identity Card. Before, they just imposed a 500 kyat fine and asked the passenger to buy them a bottle of mineral water, but they have stopped doing that now. If they suspect a woman passenger, the police woman takes her inside the gate and checks her thoroughly. They are very strict with everyone since the demonstrations.”

According to Nai Lone (an alias), a 28 year old from Mudon Township, there was another gate which was set up by military intelligence, Special Police Branch and authorities form Ministry of Immigration and Population at the edge of Gyone-gyone-kya Forest Monastery road near Mudon town. They examined the passengers, asked them to show their Identity Cards and recorded the passengers' biography.

“In my view, the purpose of the authorities examining everyone this way is that they are investigating people who flee from other places trying to avoid being arrested. For example, the authorities ask everybody whose ID cards show that he or she is from Yangon and Pe-gu city, to get out of the car and receive a thorough examination. Even the monks have to show their monk cards, which are

provided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. I have never seen them act like this before. In Mu-Don Township, USDA members and the people's forces often have meetings in order to seriously discuss this issue," stated a former member of the New Mon State Party (NMSP) regarding the movement restrictions.

Kyaik-ma-yaw Township

The monks from Kyaik-ma-yaw Town, Tarana, Kaw-done, Kaw-pa-naw, Jon-ywa and other villages went to Moulmein to join the demonstrations. The demonstration in Moulmein stopped after the military regime's crackdown on the masses in Rangoon and Mandalay. Later on, "...in the USDA office the authorities examined the monks from Kyaik-ma-yaw Township and other people who joined the demonstration in Moulmein," relayed a local person.

"On the 26th of September, Mon monks in Kyike-Ma-Yaw monasteries and monks from other villages took part in the demonstration in Moulmein. On the 30th of September, they held the USDA monthly meeting in the USDA office at night. The participants in this meeting were Township secretary-U Hla Htun, joint-secretary- U Chit Oo, Township executive committee members and 20 villagers who assumed responsibilities. In the meeting, they discussed about investigating and arresting suspicious people and using weapons including bamboo sticks and heavy choppers. They also coordinated with militia for security," said a source from Htone-pho who asked to remain anonymous.

Chaung-zone Township (Island Township)

After the September demonstration in Moulmein, a local security groups were set up, even in Chaung-Zone. Not many people from Chaung-Zone participated in the demonstrations. U Khin Maung, chairman of Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC), had organized the members of People Power Association. A HURFOM reporter said that USDA members from three administrative units on the Island had been called, along with local militia, to the daily emergency meetings which were held in the TPDC office. These meetings occurred during and after the demonstrations.

He added, "before and after the uprising, the USDA members, people's forces and militia from three administrative units (Ywa-lut; Mu-doon and Mu-yit) received fighting training, advocacy training and training in how to effectively spread propaganda. The Chairman of TPDC- U Khin Maung Myint, made a display of authority when he stated that demonstrations would not go ahead in his area".

Chaung-zone Township is known as Baluu Island because it is an island, west of Moulmein, the capital of Mon State (look at map). The people in Chaung-zone have to cross over the river by boats to go Moulmein and other towns in Mon State. Therefore, the authorities appointed military, militia, USDA members and the people's forces to monitor harbors and the places where any ferries stop. A local person said that the authorities had stopped all telephone and money transfer services.

Crackdown on dissidents in Mon state

Started from October 30, 2007, SPDC authorities in the Moulmein are still cracking down on protesters and trying to figure out how information is flowing out. Special Police Force and military intelligence officials are searching for people who were involved in last months protests on the basis of photographs they had taken.

"A shop in the new bus station called 'New-ze-gyo' has already been investigated. The shop was closed after the questioning," the customers said.

Government backed organizations such as USDA and People Power Association are helping the authorities to find the leaders of protesters. The search is being done secretly by the authorities and many monks have left their monasteries. But I don't how many monks were arrested, an abbot said.

Currently authorities are searching for the photographer who took pictures and video clips of the protests in Moulmein and distributed them. According to residents, four monks from a monastery in Mudon town were interrogated and severely beaten up. Local residents in Moulmein claim about 200 monks from Moulmein have disappeared after they returned home to upper Burma.

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

Situation in Karen State (Kya-inn-seiki Township)

There was a river route in Kya-inn-seiki Township to go to Three-Pagodas Pass on the Thai-Burma border. Therefore, the authorities systematically barricaded this to prevent monks and protestors who fled from other towns attempting to escape arrest. Since the 30th of September, the authorities have blocked more gates a long the highway to go to Mu-Don Township, including Chaung-Na-Khawa and Kya-inn-seiki.

"Military intelligence force, Special Police Branch, Militia, Ministry of Immigration and Population and USDA members strictly checked all the cars and buses entering or leaving the town, and checked the passengers one by one whether they were local villagers or not. If someone was without an ID card, they detained him or her and didn't allow that person to continue his or her journey. They asked many questions to strangers," said a local Karen man.

There was a checkpoint at the edge of the Three-Pagoda Town ferry landing. At that checkpoint they asked the passengers to sign a document after explaining where they were going and why. Moreover, members from the Moulmein Navy were examining all passengers at the mouth of the Za-mi River.

"Before, soldiers from the naval forces asked the owners of ferries just for sea-route and security taxes. Now, they also check ID cards and ask us why we're going to Three-Pagodas. The changes began after the protests," said a witness who works as an oil trader from Chaung-htit-kwa.

The SPDC regime have been barricading and checking villages which lie along the way to Three-Pagodas from Kya-inn-seiki, such as Mae-za-lee, Ah-nan-gwin (Wae-naing in Mon), Apalone and Mae-ta-bwe. Extra attention has been given to the ferry landings around Mae-za-lee and Apalone. "Col. Win Htay, from Military Column No. 2 under Central Command of Southeast Command, led a column checking passengers' biographies, ID cards and their reasons for traveling," said a young motorboat driver who drives from Mae-zar-lee to Apalone.

"The soldiers, who are led by the Commander- Aye Chan from the Light Infantry Battalion LIB No. 51,

News from page No.2

Rangoon. Some stay for medical treatment and personal visits.

Some students from rural areas stay in the monasteries for further studies in the city because it is cheaper to stay with the monks.

Traditionally Burmese people stay in monasteries as guests when they are visiting.

The military regime is continuing its crackdown on dissidents and the people who encouraged the dissidents. But fewer monks are being arrested.

The junta has deployed more soldiers and security personnel in the city because of rumors that people are going to start renewed protests against military junta on October 18, according to resident in Rangoon.

which is set up in Three-Pagodas, are checking the passengers at the motorboat landing. They not only check all bags but also take any food they find in the bags without permission from the owners. However, nobody dare to question them. In this place there are other groups, such as the New Mon State Part (NMSP), Haung-Ta-Yaw ceasefire group and Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) but they don't respond to these Burmese soldiers for us," said Ma Hla Hla Win, a passenger from Ya-lae village.



Buddhist monks who forced to send back from Moulmien were studying in their village's monastery in Ye Townshp, Mon State

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, political experts have analyzed the situation and concluded that the main purpose of the authorities placing great restrictions on movement, barricading the gates and prohibiting civilian trading is due to the September monk-led uprising. After they violently cracked down on the masses, the junta has continued to arrest monks and protesters, with the accusation of participating in the demonstration, accomplishing the uprising and protesting against the outcomes of the National Convention in several places including Rangoon, Mandalay and other cities including in Moulmein.

Due to forcible recruitment to rallies to support National Convention and accompanied movement restriction and political oppressions, there are some stresses among populace and negative in economic situation as below:

- Many government servants, including teachers, who refused to attend Rallies, are forced to express their reasons for not attending rallies and some of them will face to dismiss from works.
- Some IT professional services like Internet shops, photo developing shops are threatened to shut down and stop their businesses.
- Buddhist monks are totally restricted in their travels and in some areas, the ferries are instructed to not receive any monks in their service.
- Due to movement restriction, trading in Mon State and other parts of Burma has dramatically decreased, the people face shortage of some commodities for their daily life.

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

Printed Matter

Address Correction Required

⤴ REMINDER: HURFOM's mailing address has changed