



The Plight

OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN BURMA

Women and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma)

Issue No. 1, 2005, September, 2005

REPORT :

The ongoing and increasingly shameless use of the sexual violence by Burmese Army's troops

I. Sexual Violations against Women: Common Abuses by Burmese Army

The current Burmese military government, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), signed the Convention of the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 22nd of July 1997. The Burmese Government does not comply with the convention by neglecting women rights instead of protecting the women from all discrimination and abuses committed in the communities, additionally the soldiers from the Burmese Army have raped many women especially in the ethnic rural area of Burma. In many sexual assaults against women those live in rural areas close to the bases of Burmese Army or women in the conflict area if armed fighting have suffered more.

In order to avoid this sexual violence or assaults some families who have daughters or girls have tried to move to towns, cities and other places where they felt safe. But some families just sent their daughters to towns and parents are remaining in villages. As many of them are poor families, so that they are not able to send their daughters to other places, as they could not afford for living cost.

Even the main Mon armed political party, New Mon State Party (NMSP) and its armed faction, Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA) has agreed for ceasefire, there are serious gross human rights violations, such as land confiscation, sexual violations against women, conscription of forced labour and tax extortion, summary execution, torture and other abuses are still committed by troops of Burmese Army.

Majority of civilians from southern part of Ye township most suffering people in the previous years from 2003 to mid-2005, as the total population in the area were accused as rebel-supporters. Especially women were suffered from sexual slavery and sexual violence by low-rank commanders to ordinary soldiers from the Burmese Army.

Sexual violations were normally originated from fulfilling the sex appetite of the soldiers and commanders in army to using rape as 'weapon to win war' on the ethnic nationalities' armed force in order to punish these women to not contact the armed groups concerned or showed to armed groups that if they kept fighting, their women can be raped.



REPORT:

The ongoing and increasingly shameless use of the sexual violence by Burmese Army's troops

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Message From

Woman And Child Rights Project (Southern Part of Burma)

Woman and Child Right Project (WCRP) is an cooperative activity with Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) and it has main activity in collecting the information related to the human rights violations of women and children in southern part of Burma (Myanmar). It also aims to get world community's awareness for the protection of the rights of women and children.

The Burma's military regime, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), ratified the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1997 to guarantee the rights to women in Burma. Similarly the regime also ratified Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1991 to guarantee the rights to children in Burma. However, the regime has failed in their implementation of the conventional rights and the human rights violations against women and children systematically.

WCRP is dedicated to inform the world community what happens to general women and children in Burma and plans to educate them to know about their rights as the following objectives.

1. To monitor and protect the woman and child rights, by collecting information about their real situation by referencing the CEDAW and CRC, and distribute information to world community.
2. To strengthen women and children community, by providing on their rights accordingly to CEDAW and CRC ratified by regime and encourage them to participate in the struggle in the protection of their own rights.

II. Catwalks to the Barracks

In July 2005, in the coordination with Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), our Woman and Child Rights Project (WCRP) produced a report that compiling information about the conscription of women for sexual slavery and other practices of sexual violence by the troops of Burmese military regime in Mon area under the name of 'Catwalk to The Barracks' in English language and expressed to the world how serious of sexual violations against Mon women.

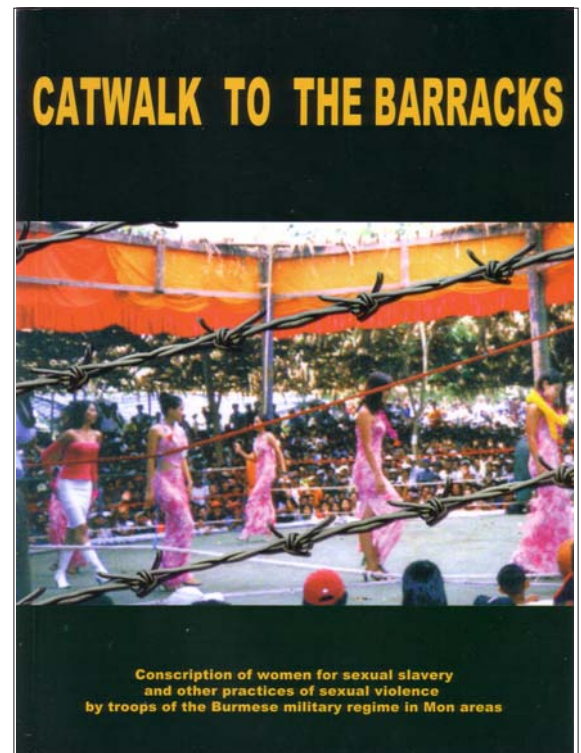
This report exposes the ongoing and increasingly brazen use of sexual violence by Burmese Army troops in Mon areas of Burma. This is despite the ceasefire between the main Mon political party, the New Mon State Party, and the Burmese military regime, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) since 1995, and despite the regime's repeated denials during the past few years that its troops are practicing systematic sexual violence.

The report details 37 incidents of sexual violence against 50 women and girls, aged 14 to 50 years old, and reveals evidence of widespread conscription of women into sexual slavery by Burmese Army troops. Since many women are unwilling to reveal that they have been raped owing to fear of stigma and reprisals by the army, detailed information has only been collected about a small portion of the actual number of women who have been raped.

The report corroborates the findings of earlier reports on sexual violence in Shan and Karen States, showing the use of rape as a strategy of control by the junta's troops, and revealing a pattern of abuse that provides strong evidence that rape has become systemic under military rule in Burma. The lack of rule of law and climate of impunity for military rape has caused SPDC's troops to become increasingly emboldened in their acts of sexual violence.

Many rapes took place during military operations against armed groups still active in southern Burma, such as the Karen National Union and a Mon splinter group; SPDC troops gang-raped, beat, kicked, slashed and killed women as "punishment" for supporting rebel groups.

However, sexual violence is not only occurring in areas of conflict, but in "peaceful" areas under full SPDC control. The SPDC has deployed 20 more battalions in the southern Mon area since 1998; these troops have seized land from local villagers and forced them



to work on military plantations and guard infrastructure projects such as gas pipelines. The increased troop presence has caused increased incidents of rape of local women.

During operations in 2003-2004 against rebels in southern Ye township, SPDC troops brazenly conscripted scores of “comfort women” from nearby villages, who were forced to work for the troops by day and were forced into sexual slavery at night. They also forced about 30 young women, including schoolgirls, to stay at their base and take part in a military “fashion and beauty show.”

Over half of the documented cases of rape were committed by military officers, often in front of, or together with their troops. Many of the rapes took place in the women’s homes or in other villagers’ houses, frequently in the presence of other family members.

In contrast to the SPDC’s claim that “effective action is taken against those who commit rape according to the existing laws of the Myanmar Armed Forces,” in none of the cases in this report was legal action taken against the perpetrators of sexual violence. In most cases, the community leaders did not dare to report the incidents of sexual violence to the military battalion commanders for fear of reprisals. Those that did were scolded, beaten or threatened to be killed. In one case complainants were forced to sign a written statement pardoning the rapist.

III. Continuous sexual violations in 2005

Use of the rural women as ‘sexual slavery’ and sexual violence against women in 2005 are still continuing in Mon areas as the senior leaders of SPDC did not take serious actions or punishment to rapists. However, information on the sexual violations against women have been always collected by the human rights groups and released in the media in 2005 in Mon areas and top leaders of Burmese Army from South-East Command have aware on the issue and they also tried to warn their troops to not commit like this crime.

After the release of ‘Catwalk to The Barrack’ report, we founded that the senior commander of Burmese Army explained to the villagers that they will punish those who raped women. But no public trial have been arranged officially by the commanders and they just informed to the community they are punishing the rapists.

In 2005, Woman and Child Rights Project (WCRP) could also gathered information on the following rape cases happening in the same areas of northern and southern part of Ye Township and Yebyu Township. Some information are from 2004 and are not described in the report of ‘Catwalk to The Barracks’. The cases are as below: (Note: for the security and dignity of the rape victims, we do not describe the names of women and girls and their native places. We kept all these information.

Case I

In July 2004, about 8 women from different villages in Yebyu Township were raped in different time. No case reached to higher authorities or to senior commanders of Coastal Region Command, based in Mergui, Tenasserim Division. 3 women were from (aaa) village, 2 were from (bbb) villages and another 2 women from (ccc) village and one was from (ddd) village.

The female witness explained to WCRP as:

“The 3 women from (aaa) village asked by the (Burmese) army were asked by the soldiers from Infantry Battalion (IB) No. 273 in July, 2004 for cooking and were raped. When the soldiers including low-rank commanders arrived

to a house in (aaa) village, they drove people from that house and occupied it. The soldiers called 3 women with age of 16 to 18 years old for cooking to the house from that (aaa) village.

“Girls had to stay with soldiers at that house for two days and were released. On the next day, they asked another two women who were sisters from (bbb) village and took them to the house. Girls were raped again.

Sisters also informed to their fathers about that rape case. Father of girls could not tolerate and he went to Moulmein (Mawlamyaing), the capital of Mon State, to inform the case to the Judges. But unluckily uneducated man did not reach to anyone and had to return home. When father of girls and his friend arrived to village, the soldiers took and detained them in a jail in the army base in Koe-mile village.”

After putting their father in jail, the soldiers went to their homes and asked them to follow with them to that house again. They threatened the sisters to not move from the houses and to not go to other villages. They were repeatedly raped again.

“Any body couldn’t speak out about women raped by soldiers, if they heard about that they will beat those out-spoken person” she said.

One headmen from the area said the soldiers threatened to them that if someone spoke out about the rape case happened in the area, he or she must dig his/ her holes to bury his/her funerals.



Forced Labour in motor road, in Mon State

Then the soldiers continuously raped girls and young women. They brought another 2 women from (ccc) village and put in the house for 2 nights and released them. Then they brought another young woman from (ddd) village and put in the house while the soldiers are staying.

Case II: Rape Case in Thanbyuzayat Township

This rape case happened in the night of 2nd July in a village called (zzz) village eastern part of Thanpyuzayat Township, which is on the road to Three Pagoda Pass. A middle aged woman with 3 children Ms. Txxx was raped by a commander, Captain Lin Oo, the former company commander of LIB No. 343. Before he raped the woman, he took the husband of victim for a while with an unknown accusation. Then, he raped her. He also shot to her husband after the rape.

After the rape, the commander just kept quiet, but the woman also informed about the case to senior commander of IB No. 62 based in Thanbyuzayat Town. Captain and the Burmese Army’s outpost near village tried to close down the case by threatening to the family, they also went to Thanpyuzayart Town for safely. The husband also entered to be monk hood in order to escape the threats and the victim woman stayed at her mother’s house temporarily.

According to the family, the victim was regularly investigated by the local battalion commander for the case and late they founded the guilty of commander and tried to response positively to the human rights groups about the case and planned to put him on army’s internal trial.

Therefore, the Captain tried to negotiate with the victim family to close down the case. But the family denied and asked help from the New Mon State Party. NMSP leaders also spoke out about the case and informed to the commanders from South-East Command in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State. Therefore, he was detained at IB No. 62, but the commanders from IB No. 62 did not speak how a trial for him and punishment.

“Last week we were appointed and met by the local commander for investigation of the case in local battalion office in Thanpyuzayat Town,” said a victim family member in early September 2005.

Senior commanders tried to keep him and planned to put trials as NMSP leaders knew about this very well and after the report ‘Catwalk to The Barracks’ was released. But the family admitted they did not really know how the trial and punishment will be applied to the commander, but they are happy with the proceeding of justice.

Case III: Three Women Raped in Southern Ye Township

In the first week of June 2005, 3 women from (kkk) village, (southern) Ye Township were raped by the soldiers of Burmese Army during they were conscripted to to work in battalion’s base.

On 2nd June 2005, they were conscripted to work in battalion of LIB No. (31), for cooking the foods for soldiers, giving massage and entertaining the commanders and soldiers. Then they were raped by the officers and soldiers. Three women Ms. Yxxx, Ms. Kxxx, and Ms. Cxxx and their ages are 17 years, 20 years and 23 years old respectively.

“Everyday, about 7-8 women were conscripted to work at in the army base and old women or not so beautiful women were allowed to return, but beautiful women were not allowed to return their homes”, said a Mon woman who helped 3 conscripted young women to escape from their village. She helped 3 women prior to the conscription into their bases as she sympathized on them. As the soldiers knew, she brought some women form village, she also had to flee from her village.

This rape case was very common but for women they could speak out what happened to them because of shame and traditions in the communities. Some women also fled from their communities and then fled into Thailand and Malaysia, where they could not face their villagers, who knew their cases longer.



Child forced labor in Ye - Tavoy motor road

Case IV. 13 years old woman raped

On June 5, 13 years old a school girl Mi Axxx Txxx was raped by Burmese commander, Sergeant Myint Maung from LIB No. 587, during the troops’ patrol in the area and met the girls and her relatives outside of the village. The rape case happened just outside of (kkk) village, while the girls and her relatives tried to go and work in their fruit plantations.

She is a student from the villa- ge’s Basic Education School and she is under the care of her parents. Her parents are farmers and during her holidays she went to her gardens to help her parents. While she was colle- cting and splitting woods to use for firewood, the patrolled soldiers saw her. Then, they went into her plantations and asked her relatives about the permission letter to stay at plantations and to get outside. They threatened her and her by guns and took them a bit distance from their huts. Then the soldiers divided elderly people and ordered to take out her cloth. While two soldiers were guarding for the people coming to the location, then the commander raped her.

Her parents also knew very well that she was raped by the commander as they heard her 'shouting for help' for a short distance. But they could not help her as the two soldiers are guarding their commanders and had guns at their hands.

After the incident, the girl also explained to her parents what was happening to her and then her parents informed to her teachers at schools. By the help of her teacher, they also complained about the cases to battalion commander of LIB No. 587 in the village. But they did not find any proof of the local battalion commander would punish his man and collaborators. So that the teachers went to Ye Town and complained about the cases to commanders from MOMC No. 19.

After a week, a commander from MOMC No. 19 came into village and took the perpetrator and two collaborators and declared to the villagers that they would punish the commander that involved in the rape and promised to imprison him for 7 years. But the victim, her teachers and teachers did not make any confirmation about 'trial' and the senior commanders never asked them to have an official complaints to the rapist. They are just informed that the rapist commander will be put in jails.

IV. Impacts to general women in the community

A. Get early marriage in the community:

The people in the Mon communities feel that if the girls get marriage with any man in village and if they become as 'married women', their parents feel safer than they are in single life. Accordingly to their experience, the soldiers of Burmese Army always have asked the girls those who are not married yet and have used them as 'comfort women' and suffer from rapes.

According to one of female interviewee, she explained: "if they (the girls) were raped in her status of virgin, their parents and their family member got ashamed in the communities and they believed that any man would not like to marry their daughters again. So that they tried to get marriage to their daughters before the girls' virgin status is destroyed by the (Burmese) soldiers."

This has been a systematic violation to girls in the community and so that the parents decided they should arrange marriage to the daughters to some men in the villages. Then they could escape from the rape. But another problem they are facing is there is very lack number of unmarried Mon men in the villages and many of them fled to Thailand and Malaysia in order to escape from the gross human rights violations committed by troops of Burmese Army and to seek works in the neighbouring countries. But many of unmarried men from southern part of Ye Township fled from their homes and communities for the first reason.

Because of population migration to neighbouring countries because of both reasons, there are less number of young Mon men in villages and so that the Burmans from different parts of Burma replaced them in working in farms or plantations. As the Mon farmers are demanding labour, the Burman labourers are ready for them.

After good chance for the Burmese migrant labourers is just having 'rape' to the Mon girls and they could get marriage. After the rape, most women or girls are too shame to speak out and complain and therefore, they just decide to marry the rapists. They believed that if they complained the rape case by a Burman migrant labourers to the authorities, the communities will know all about her and she feel ashamed in the community and many of them kept quiet and agreed to marry to rapists. Another problem, if they complained to the authorities, they are so sure that nobody will punish the rapists.

Additionally, some Mon families also arranged 'forced marriage' of their daughters to Burman men in order to avoid from the sexual violations against their women. At the same time, the Burman labourers also brought Burmanization policy in the area by collaborating with the Burman commanders from the battalions or commands concerned. They could persuade their wives and their parents-in-law to speak more Burmese language and use them to against the Mon nationalists' activities for the maintenance of Mon literature and culture.

B. Displacement and Migration to Thailand

Another serious problem is hundreds of girls and unmarried women from Ye Township and Yebyu Township fled into Thailand and Malaysia to escape systematic sexual violations by the troops of Burmese Army.

Even though many women have run away from their own towns, villages, communities in order to escape the abuses but they had to seek work in Thailand and Malaysia. Then they become migrant workers in there. Although they are fleeing from their homes with a systematic persecution because of they are Mons and their identity are similar to the Mon rebel soldiers, but they are not re-recognized as 'refugees'. (Note: since the main Mon armed group New Mon State Party dealt ceasefire with military regime in Rangoon, SPDC, in mid-1995, the Mon refugees living in Thailand are repatriated by the authorities of Thai government.)

However, virgin or married women, if they were raped by the Burmese soldiers they were facing many difficulties to live in their communities. After rape, they wanted to commit suicide because they are too shameful or suddenly they wanted to run away from the people who know them. Most of them decided to stop their communications with their neighboring houses and their friends. They have only one choice is to flee from their communities.

When the victims decide to flee, they decided to flee as far as possible. They wanted to flee to the places where their community people could not reach and meet them for some years until they forget their cases.

According to our information, even a local Mon relief organization, Mon Relief and Development Committee (MRDC) set up some villages for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and allowed IDP families to settle there, but no rape victims planned to stay in there. Many of them believed that the locations are not safe as the troops of Burmese Army could come in the area and some of their villages could come and meet them.

Their only and one choice is to flee to neighboring countries and just tried to disappear themselves. Many of them, some are including their families, when they fled into Thailand, they communicate to traffickers and just try to get deeper into Thailand and work in any type of industries.

V. Legal system and community responses

A. Community's views on rape victims

After the release of the report "Catwalk to the Barracks", WCRP Field Workers also collected the information on the responses of communities toward rape victims.

According to one interview: the man explained, "Generally we feel sympathy to those women, for a reason that all of us had been differently persecuted by the Burmese soldiers, but they faced the worst case in their life. We also have daughters and other female relatives and so we always worry about them."

Most community people said, although they are sympathizing to the women because they live in the same community, but they could not help each other and could protect them from the Burmese soldiers, because they must be killed or badly treated if they prevented or do something against the soldiers.

"Another way, what we can give suggestion is to run away from their villages or flee as far as possible. Because of no justice (in Burma) and no place to complain the rape cases against women and girls have continued all the time", another man explained how 'injustice' situation affects the continuation of rape.

"Law is in the hand of the government officials or commanders of Burmese Army and it is not come from regulations and norms. Even the commanders of the battalion are involving in the crimes, how could we find a justice in a rural village", added by the man.

The community people all agreed that they have founded that many rape victims try to stay from the community people and never speak out to community in the closed culture of the Mon communities. Most victims believed that 'rape' is a killing of their future life. Only just their families are taking care of them and stopping doing bad things such as suicide and making of self-disappearance.

Sometimes, the community people also founded that even the rapists also threatened the victims again after rape, to not speak out about the case. Threats also like if the victim speak out, they will kill her. Therefore, she has to keep silence for any case.

B. Legal System in Competent Armed Group

WCRP also inquired about the NMSP's legal statue on the sexual violations against women and sexual assaults. Accordingly to their regulation and laws, they can punish someone who involved in rape case against a woman if the evidence is strong and the woman herself come and complain, the different level of Justice Department can put the rapists from 7-10 in prison.

But the community people said that "we never heard about NMSP members or MNLA soldiers or the soldiers from the Mon splinter group are committing a rape to the women. Not only Mon women but also ethnic women like Karen and Tavoyan. We believe that it will never happen because they base on patriotism and fight against the central government with their own political commitment."

Many of the community people are well-informed that if male villagers commit a crime of 'rape' to a woman in the community, he can be imprisoned up to 7-10 years imprisonment as capital punishment if the woman or community people complain the case to the local court.

If the rape case commit by the villagers, village headmen and the NMSP's local judges will deal with this criminal case and try to find justice for rape victims. In the old day of NMSP's legal proceeding, the judge also asked victims and perpetrators whether they agreed to marry each other. In many cases, the women agreed to marry men or perpetrators in order to cover their shames.

In this case, the criminals have to pay compensation to rape victims or can be imprisoned depending on the negotiation with the parents of victims and sometimes, they agreed on each other at low level.

In the Mon community, if some rape happens if the woman is raped by Mon man, the victim and their parents do not have to worry to complain their cases to the NMSP's Justice Department and NMSP's appointed local judges that includes both respected persons in the community and experienced NMSP members. The judges always deal with these cases. As the Mon community lack of use of lawyers, or some lawyers are afraid to work at the rural areas, some respected community leaders or elderly women are acting likely 'lawyers' for the victims.

All people that we interviewed confirmed that the Judicial System of NMSP is strong and they rarely heard about the NMSP members and MNLA soldiers are committing rape against women not only Mons but also other ethnic women.



News:

MNCWA and MCWA involves in forced recruitment of members

Burma military regime, SPDC's Government Organized Non-Government Organization (GONGO) for women and children, Myanmar National Committee of Women Affairs (MNCWA) and Maternal and Child Welfare Association (MCWA) have recruited young girls over 10years old to join the association in order to extend their organization to have more members in order to get political supports to Burmese Army, which plans to take political leading role after a new constitution is completed from National Convention. The SPDC plans to hold the NC again in December 2005.

As an instance, the leaders of these two organizations in Chaung-zone Township, Mon State, ordered village track level leaders to organize and have about 100-600 members from each village depending on the village's size and population. (Note: the Mon villages in Chaung-zone Township have over 1, 000 households).

At first, although the women who wanted to join the Associations have to pay for admission fee 350 Kyat per head, but now, the Township PDC authorities agreed to pay for this admission fee in order to have more members as possible. But at the same time, they collected money from the villagers in the whole village for the amount of admission fee in each village. Even many young women would not like to join in the associations, they are forced to join.

As the same case, MCWA also extent its members by forcing women just in age range of over 10 years old, who could not decide by themselves and never know how good and bad of the associations. Women who understand the associations is nothing, would not like to join, but are forced to join in.

Forced recruitment of members has started in July 2005 and the associations have a plan of organizing 100 members in each month. The names of elderly women are automatically put in the list of membership by taking from household registration.

The MNCWA was founded on July 6, 1996 by the current military government, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). The formation is also to response its ratification the 24 resolutions of the Convention of the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The regime ratified the Convention in 1997.

There are eights sections to MNCWA's working committees. There are some programs such as: Women and Education, Women and Health Care, Women and Domestic Violence, Women and the economy, Women and Culture, Women and Children, Women and Media, and Women and Environment. But MNCWA and MCWA are not independent bodies and are under the total control of the regime and not independent to protect Women's rights in reality.

But if the women those refused to be members of MNCWA, the association does not give any help for them.

In Mon State and Karen State, MNCWA also tried to solve the conflicts and domestic violences happened in the community, but they just keep silence, when the women are abuses by troops of Burmese Army or SPDC local authorities.

But in some villages, women entered to MNCWA as members in order to avoid tax payment to the authorities and free from some abuses committed by authorities and soldiers. The associations themselves never explained about the rights of women especially on the discrimination and sexual violence against women, as they could not protect them practically.



Members of MCWA

Although the political analysts and the ethnic cease-fire groups are realizing why the SPDC instructed these associations to have more members, but the junior leaders in the associations themselves do not well understand the objective of the regime and top leaders of MNCWA and MCWA.

"I don't know why they need a lot of membership for associations. I have to make a list of women for association for our village," said a member from MNCWAIII. Continuous sexual violation in 2005



Activity:

I.Basic Human Rights and Environment Training Completed.

Basic Human Rights and Environment Training course was delivered for four days from 9th to 12th September by trainers from Woman and Child Rights Project (WCRP) and Mon Relief and Development (MRDC), a local relief organization. About 16 participants from the displaced Mon communities along Thailand-Burma border attended training. Among the participants there were 5 men and 11 women and their age range is between 20 and 45 years.

The aim of training is to have the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are able to understand their rights and how can effectively use their environments – forest, water resource, lands - during their displacement for sustainability in their life.

The trainers also have to find ‘teaching technique’ in the training as they had to communicate with some illiterate persons from the communities. They also used teaching assisting materials such as posters, drawing papers and other materials that they could describe about their community.

The participants have founded more interested in the training as most of them are facing some negative environmental impacts for some years – too drought and shortage of water in dry season (from February to May) – in their communities. Some of their forests were destroyed as many of displaced persons have used ‘slash and burnt’ method of cultivation in the hilly area where they are displaced.

“Our parents are also destroying the environment, if we know about environment it is so important to maintain it. We can protect and use the environment in sustainable way. Our next generation can use the environment for their needs in their future”, said one young participant from the village.

On 1st day, the trainers introduced the participants about general human rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). In order to have the participants understand on the human rights, trainers also used the posters with pictures and explained them for each article. They also explained the article with their situation at their homes, villages and experience in their life. Trainers also asked participants’ experience and their knowledge acquired through hearing in human rights abuses in their community and let them draw some pictures related to the abuses. They also expressed the experience from the abuses with their own drawing pictures.



Basic Human Rights and Environment Training

On 2nd day, the trainer explained about environment including their villages, communities, forests nearby, streams, mountains and provided them the activities let them discuss in small groups how important of these resources and let them draw about their own communities. The trainers also reflected what real situation happened to their community and let them discuss how to improve the life to have harmony with their environment. Participants verbally reported back what their discussion in this issue. In Environment study, the participants also provided some thinking how the protection needs for the community level and State level in the small groups.

Human Rights and Environment relation was explained on the 3rd day including its background history and each article in the Rio Summit on Environment and explained with plain language by using posters and let them conduct some activities. In the afternoon of that day, the trainers and participants mainly discussed and shared the idea how they could cleverly involved in monitoring and protecting Human Rights and Environment in their community level. They also discuss about how to raise the animals or live-stocks in their community to have sustainability of foods during their displacement.

On the last day, the trainers brief the basic points of the training for three days and tried to analyze how much they understood on the issues of human rights and environment. Then, they also asked the feedback and commends of the participants. They said that they need more training related to the Environment in the future and to seek some more technique of protecting human rights and environment in their communities.

II. Women Empowerment Workshop Completed by WCRP

In order to educate the general women to understand on the rights of women and empower them to protect their own rights in the community level and State level, Woman and Child Rights Project (WCRP) arranged a ‘Women Empowerment Workshop’ in a border village called (Pxxx) in the border area under the control of New Mon State Party (NMSP). As NMSP has ceasefire agreement with the regime, SPDC, the location was safe to conduct the workshop.

Invitation for Feedback to Our Publication
"The Plight"
of Women and Children in Southern Burma

Dear Readers,

With objectives to monitor the situation of women and children in southern part of Burma and to empower them with the rights described in CEDAW and CRC, which are both ratified by the current military regime in Burma, our "Woman and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma)" came into existence since 2000.

Under this project, "The Plight" Newsletter is produced quarterly and this newsletter especially describe the general situation of women and children in Burma and how their human rights are violated by the ruling regime and its army.

In a plan to evaluate our publication, we wish to get the FEEDBACK of our readers. Hence, you can kindly send your feedback. If you know anyone who would like to receive the newsletter or if you wish to send your feedback, please feel free to contact the following mailing and e-mail address.

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With regards,

Project Coordinator
Woman and Child Rights Project - Southern Burma

As the participants could not have much time and difficulty in travel because of rainy season, WCRP could arrange only 7-days workshop that combining lectures on the human rights, rights of women and some activities – games, questioning, role-play, drawing, etc. As the levels of education among the women are different, the trainers: WCRP Coordinator and her co-trainer had to select the suitable 'technique' in expressing about human rights and rights of women in plain language and other activity tactics to have them understand the concept deeply.

Workshop started on September 4 and ended on September 9, and about 20 participants from Mon State and Karen State attended to Workshop and all of them are women. Most women came from former conflict areas, but they still suffer from the gross human rights violations committed by Stat authorities and dismissal of the rights of women in their own communities.

On the 1st day, workshop started with Introduction and let the participants introduced each other to have warm relationship among them. Without moving to the text of 'human rights', 'women's rights', the trainers let them discuss on the nature of 'power' among the participants. They involved in discussing and try to understand the nature of power in their families, communities and then State levels. They also used some experience related games and activities to well understand what is 'power' and how it created discrimination among human beings.



Women Empowerment Workshop

Acronyms

CEDAW-	Covention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
GONGO-	Government Organization Non-Government Organization
HURFOM-	Human Rights Foundation of Monland
IB-	Infantry Battalion (<i>of Burmese Army</i>)
IDP-	Internally Displaced Persons
LIB-	Light Infantry Battalion (<i>of Burmese Army</i>)
MCWA-	Maternal and Child Welfare Association
MNCWA-	Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs
MNLA-	Mon National Liberation Army
MNSP-	New Mon State Party
MOMC-	Military Operational Management Command
MRDC-	Mon Relief and Development Committee
SPDC-	State Peace and Development Council
UDHR-	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
WCRP-	Woman and Child Rights Project

On 2nd Day, about the basic principle of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was explained in discussion in plain language and picture posters. Before started discussing on human rights, let the participants talked on the definitions of 'human', 'human dignity', others related to human being. Then they discussed on the human rights background shortly and completed the second day workshop.

On 3rd Day, by the facilitation of trainers, the participants deeply discussed on the 30 Articles of UDHR with the help of a poster written in Mon language. They discussed one Article to another and questioning on the articles and compared with their daily life and situation in the community. The whole day ended with the 30 Articles of UDHR.

On 4th Day, the participants were divided into two groups and let them discussed and write down in paper how many points of UDHR are relating to women. Then, they presented what they have founded the relation of UDHR to women. Then, the trainers or facilitators briefed them how the women could have the political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights similarly other human being and explained to them about 'gender equality'.

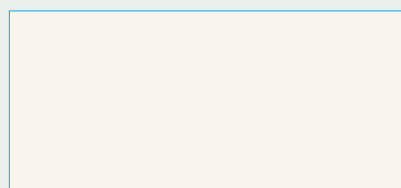
On 5th Day, the participants were divided into two groups and let them discussed on the role of women in the community, 'how the behaviour of best women in the community', what the definition on the gender in the community's views, etc. In afternoon time, the trainers explained about the rights of women accordingly to Preamble and Articles in 'CEDAW' by the help of posters written in Burmese language.

On 6th Day, the participants discussed how challenges they could face if they involve in fighting for the rights of women. They used an activity of game in order the participants deeply understand on the issue of struggling for the rights of women.

On the last Day, the trainers and participants just reviewed their levels of understanding on the human rights and rights of women. Let them give feedback and then talked about how the rights of women are violated in the community by community people and State authorities. Then, they discussed how to protect the rights

of women in their community's ways and about documentation on the violations against women. Workshop was ended with evaluation from trainers.

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