

Flight, Hunger and Survival



Repression and Displacement in the Village
of Fapan and Nanyang District

Asian Human Rights Group

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Preface

Since 1997 the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) military junta ruling Burma has been involved in an intensive campaign to consolidate control over the rugged hills and river valleys of Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts in northern Karen State and eastern Pegu Division. The entire campaign has targeted the civilian population rather than the armed resistance. In order to undermine any possibility of resistance and gain complete control over the subsistence Karen farmers who inhabit the region, the SPDC has destroyed over 200 villages, driven thousands of villagers out of the hills to garrison villages, and continues to hunt and kill the villagers who have fled into the hills to hide from the forced relocations. Over 40 Battalions have been sent in, new roads have been established, and all of the villagers now living under SPDC control must do forced labour supporting these battalions. Since 1999 more and more troops have been sent into the hills to hunt out the villagers trying to hide near their villages, and since 2000 these troops have focused most of their efforts on destroying the crops and food supplies which the displaced villagers need to survive. Villagers are shot in the fields at harvest time, crops are trampled or burned, and fields and abandoned villages have been landmined. The situation for the internally displaced is desperate. In the SPDC-garrisoned villages things are little better, as the Army's constant demands for forced labour, money, food and materials and its arbitrary torture of village elders and others drives people to flee into the hills and become displaced themselves. The situation for all of the villagers in the region is becoming increasingly desperate, but there is no sign of any decrease in armed resistance activity and therefore no probability that the campaign will end anytime soon.

Instead things appear ready to get even worse. KHRG's latest interviews with villagers from Dweh Loh township of Papun District indicate that SPDC Battalions have issued orders to at least 25-30 villages that no one is allowed to leave their villages for the three months from September to November 2001, not even to go to their fields. The rice harvest is about to arrive, but this order means that none of the thousands of people in these SPDC-controlled villages will be able to harvest. People who have just fled these villages say that the people there are preparing for starvation.

Soon after this campaign began it was documented by the Karen Human Rights Group in the report **Wholesale Destruction** (April 1998). This was followed in May 1999 by the report **Death Squads**

and Displacement, which focused on the situation in Nyaunglebin District and documented the emergence of the SPDC's 'Short Pants' execution squads which were deployed against villagers. This report updates both of those reports, providing a detailed analysis of developments in the human rights situation in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts from 1999 to the present. It is based on over 300 interviews conducted by KHRG researchers during that time with people in the SPDC controlled villages and relocation sites, in the hill villages, in hiding in the forests and those who have fled to Thailand to become refugees - villagers who have witnessed the destruction of their villages and shootings of their relatives, people who are still doing forced labour and those who have escaped from it. These interviews have been augmented by interviews with former SPDC soldiers, SPDC order documents selected from among the hundreds we have obtained from the region, along with field reports, casualty lists, maps and photographs from KHRG's field researchers and Karen relief workers in the region. The 2,500 pages of direct testimony recorded by KHRG field researchers has been condensed into the 235 interviews quoted directly in this report. All of these interviews were conducted between March 1999 and June 2001.

The area covered by this report covers part of northern Karen State and part of eastern Pegu Division, bordered by the Salween River and the Thai border to the east and the Sittaung River to the west (see maps on pages 7-10). The boundary between the two districts runs north-south through the hills, but all of these rugged hills can be considered a single area due to their shared geography and the similar situations existing in both districts. Most of the area is mountainous except for the lower Yunzalin and Bilin River valleys and the plains along the Sittaung River. The villagers in the area are almost entirely Karen, living in small villages of 10 to 20 families dotted throughout the hills and surviving by subsistence rice farming, mainly hillside rice. The majority are Animist and Buddhist, with a minority of Christians. In the more central plains on the eastern banks of the Sittaung River, there are also Burman and Shan villages. All of these people are very strongly tied to their land and are trying to cling to it even as the situation becomes more desperate. However, with the SPDC becoming more successful this year at wiping out their food supplies and their ability to produce food, they are rapidly running out of options as their families go hungry and fall victim to disease.

The report below begins with an Introduction and Executive Summary. Following that, we have broken

down the detailed analysis into topics under the main sections of *The Military Situation*, *Displaced Villages*, *Villages Under the SPDC*, *Flight to Thailand*, and *Future of the Area*. In these sections we let the villagers tell most of the story using direct quotes from their testimonies. At the end of the report are several Appendices: a list of 313 villagers killed directly by SPDC and DKBA soldiers since 1998, a list of 190 villagers injured by SPDC and DKBA soldiers since 1998, a list of 226 villages destroyed or abandoned due to the SPDC's operations, a list of 42 relocated villages, a list of SPDC military units involved in the campaign and finally an index listing summarising the interviews used in this report. The full text of the interviews and field reports upon which the report is based is available as a separately published Annex which is available from KHRG upon approved request.

Additional background on the situation in this region can be found in **"Wholesale Destruction: the SLORC/SPDC Campaign to Obliterate all Hill Villages in Papun and Eastern Nyaunglebin Districts"** (KHRG, April 1998), **"Death Squads and Displacement: Systematic Executions, Village Destruction and the Flight of Villagers in Nyaunglebin District"** (KHRG #99-04, 24/5/99), and **KHRG Information Update #2001-U3** (9/4/2001). Additional photographs related to the situation described in the report can be seen in **KHRG Photo Set 2001-A** (September 14, 2001), **KHRG Photo Set 2000-B** (October 18, 2000), and **KHRG Photo Set 2000-A** (June 1, 2000). These are all available on the KHRG website (www.khrg.org).

Notes on the Text

In the report all names of those interviewed have been changed and some details may be omitted where necessary to protect people from retaliation. False names are shown in double quotes; all other names are real. The captions under the quotes in the report include the interviewee's (changed) name, gender, age and village, and a reference to the interview or field report number. These numbers can be used to find the full text of the interview or field report in the interview annex.

The text often refers to villages, village tracts and townships. The SPDC has local administration, called Peace and Development Councils, at the village, village tract, township and state/division levels. A village tract is a group of 5-25 villages centered on a large village. A township is a much larger area, administered from a central town. The Karen National Union divides Nyaunglebin (Kler Lweh Htoo in Karen) District into three townships: Mone (Mu) in the north, Kyauk Kyi (Ler Doh) in the middle and Shwegyin (Hsaw Tee) in the south. Papun (Mutraw) District is also

divided into three townships: Lu Thaw in the north, Dweh Loh in the southwest and Bu Tho in the east. The official townships and village tracts used by the SPDC do not correspond to the Karen townships and village tracts; for example the three Karen townships of Papun District are all known as Papun township by the SPDC. In this report we have used the townships and village tracts as defined by the Karen because these are used by the villagers.

In the interviews villagers often refer to **'loh ah pay'**; literally this is the traditional Burmese form of voluntary labour for the community, but the SPDC uses this name in most cases of forced labour, and to the villagers it has come to mean most forms of forced labour with the exception of long-term portering. Testimony from villagers suggests that even this form of portering is now to be called 'loh ah pay' by the SPDC. 'Set tha' means forced labour as messengers at SPDC Army camps. Other Burmese, Karen and Pali terms are explained where they occur in the report, and some of the more common ones can also be found in the list of **'Terms and Abbreviations'** below. Villagers often refer to the KNU/KNLA as **Kaw Thoo Lei** (the name of the Karen homeland), the DKBA as **Ko Per Baw** ('Yellow Headbands'), and SPDC troops and officials as **'the Burmese'** or **'the enemy'** (the latter being a habit that they have picked up from the local KNLA). SPDC officers often accuse villagers of being **'Nga Pway'** ('ringworm'); this is derogatory SPDC slang for KNLA soldiers. Villagers, particularly those in the hills, do not keep track of dates or ages, and as a result sometimes different people give different dates for an event or different ages for the people involved. Wherever possible KHRG has attempted to establish and indicate the most accurate dates and ages possible. Villagers sometimes mention 'last year'; this often means the time before the latest (June-October) rainy season, rather than the previous calendar year. All numeric dates in this report are in **dd/mm/yy** format.

Terms and Abbreviations

Military/Political

SPDC	State Peace and Development Council, military junta ruling Burma
PDC	Peace & Development Council, SPDC local-level administration
VPDC	Village Peace & Development Council (abbreviated 'Ya Ya Ka' in Burmese)
TPDC	Township Peace & Development Council (abbreviated 'Ma Ya Ka' in Burmese)
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council, former name of the SPDC until Nov. 1997
IB	Infantry Battalion (SPDC), usually about 250-500 soldiers fighting strength
LIB	Light Infantry Battalion (SPDC), usually about 250-500 soldiers fighting strength
LID	Light Infantry Division (SPDC); ten battalions, usually for offensive operations
Sa Ka Ka	Abbreviation for SPDC's Military Control Commands; ten battalions, usually for offensive operations
Company	Military unit of about 100 soldiers, though often understrength in SPDC Army
Column	Combination of Companies, assembled for operations; usually 100-300 soldiers
Camp	Army base or outpost; from remote hill posts of 10 soldiers to Battalion HQ camps of several hundred soldiers
Bo Muh	Literally 'major', but also used to refer to all officers
Saya/Saya Gyi	Literally Teacher/Big Teacher; terms of respect used to refer to Corporals and Sergeants respectively
NCO	Non-commissioned officers; lance corporals, corporals and sergeants
Sa Thon Lon	"Three S's"; abbreviation for SPDC's Bureau of Special Investigations, but used locally to refer to the <i>Dam Byan Byaut Kya</i> ("Guerrilla Retaliation") execution squads in Nyaunglebin District
Baw Bi Doh	"Short Pants", name used by villagers for the execution squads in Nyaunglebin District
DKBA	Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, Karen group allied with SLORC/SPDC
Ko Per Baw	'Yellow Headbands', common name for the DKBA
KNU	Karen National Union, main Karen opposition group
KNLA	Karen National Liberation Army, army of the KNU
Nga Pway	'Ringworm'; derogatory SPDC slang for KNU/KNLA
Ko Per Lah	'Green Headbands', name used by some villagers for the KNLA
Ko Per Thu	'Black Headbands', KNLA commandos
Kaw Thoo Lei	Karen name for their homeland, also often used to refer to KNU/KNLA

Village Terms

IDP	Internally Displaced Person; villagers who have become internal refugees
loh ah pay	Voluntary labour to make merit, but used by SPDC for most forms of forced labour
set tha	'Messengers'; forced labour as errand-runners, messengers, and for some odd jobs
wontan	'Servant(s)', used by SPDC officers to mean forced labourers, usually porters
paddy	Rice grain still in the husk
rice	Rice grain after pounding or milling, with the husk removed and ready to cook

Measurements and Currency

Viss	Unit of weight measure; one viss is 1.6 kilograms or 3.5 pounds
Kyat Tha	16 grams; 100 <i>kyat tha</i> equals 1 <i>viss</i>
Pyi	Volume of uncooked rice equal to 8 small condensed milk tins; about 2 kg / 4.4 lb
Bowl	Volume of uncooked rice same as a <i>pyi</i>
Tin	Also 'big tin', volume of rice or paddy of 8 <i>pyi</i> ; about 17 kg / 37 lb of husked rice
Basket	Volume of rice equal to 2 big tins; 25 kilograms or 55 pounds if rice, less if paddy
Taun	Burmese unit of measurement equalling 1.5 feet or ½ metre (elbow to fingertip)
Twa	Burmese unit of measurement equalling 8-9 inches or 20-22 cm (one handspan)
Kyat	Burmese currency; US\$1=6 Kyat at official rate, 700+ Kyat at current market rate
Baht	Thai currency; at time of printing US\$1 = approximately 44 Baht

Honorifics

Saw	Karen personal prefix used for men
Naw	Karen personal prefix used for women
Pa	'Father'; Karen suffix attached to names to indicate someone's father, also used as male personal prefix
Mo	'Mother'; Karen suffix attached to names to indicate someone's mother
Pati	'Uncle'; Karen term of respect for male elders of middle age
Mugha	'Aunt'; Karen term of respect for female elders of middle age
Pu	'Grandfather'; Karen personal prefix used for elderly men
Pi	'Grandmother'; Karen personal prefix used for elderly women
Thra	'Teacher'; Karen term used for any teacher, pastor, senior or respected person
Ma	Burmese personal prefix used for young women
Ko/Maung	Burmese personal prefix used for young men
U	Burmese personal prefix used for older men
Daw	Burmese personal prefix used for married or older women

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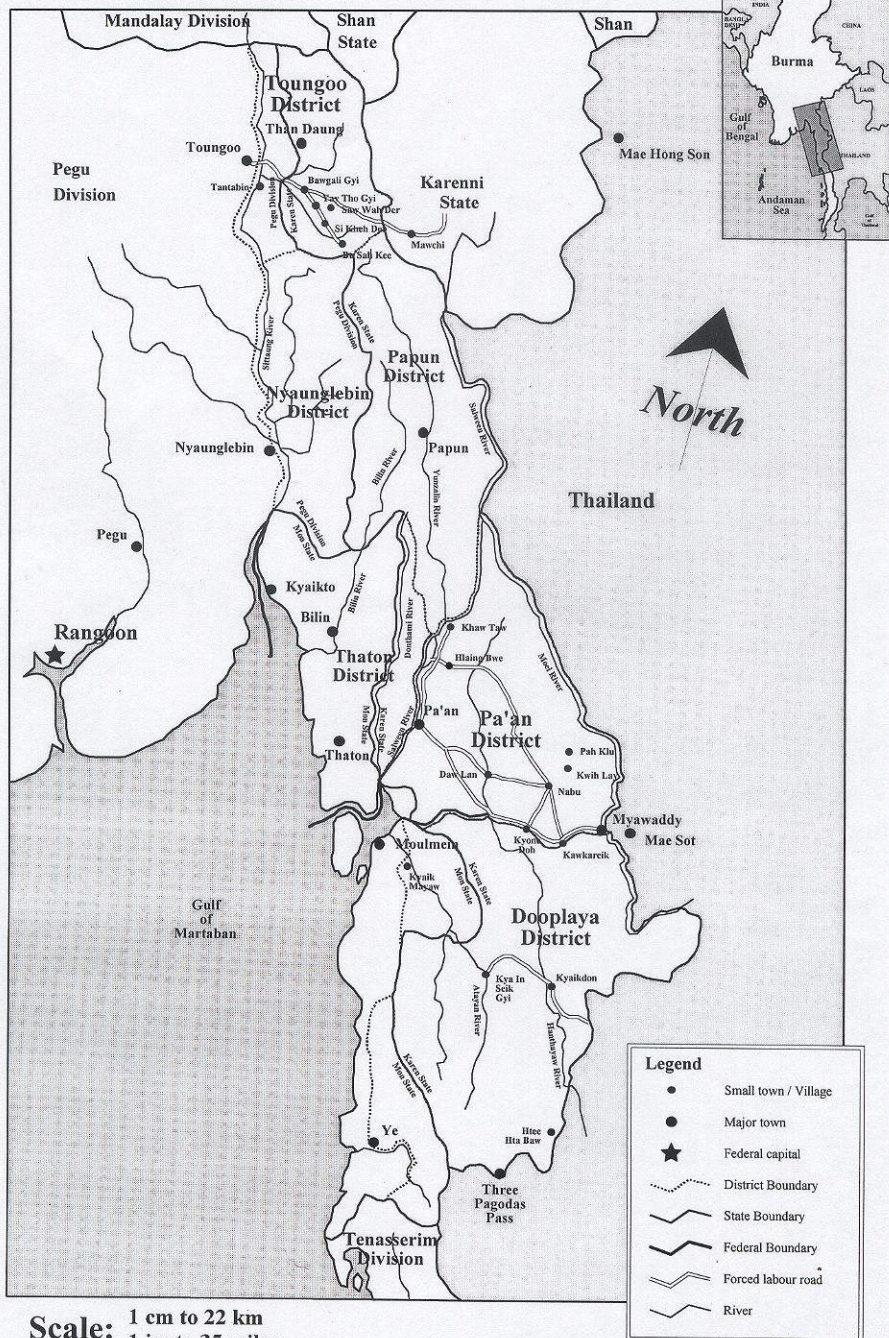
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Districts of Karen State



Map by KHRG, Karen Human Rights Group

Papua District



I. Introduction and Executive Summary

For the past four years Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts [known as *Mutraw and Kler Lweh Htoo in Karen*] have been under intense pressure by the SPDC. Administratively the area is divided into Nyaunglebin District to the west and Papun District to the east bordering Thailand. These two districts are also known as the Karen National Liberation Army 3rd Brigade and 5th Brigade areas respectively. Nyaunglebin District is divided into three townships: Mone township [*Mu in Karen*] in the north, Kyauk Kyi township [*Ler Doh in Karen*] in the middle and Shwegyin [*Hsaw Tee in Karen*] in the south. The Sittaung River plains form the western half of Nyaunglebin District. The villages in the plains are larger than those in the hills to the east and the terrain lends itself to the more efficient flatland irrigated rice farming. To the east rise the rugged Papun Hills which make up the eastern portion of Nyaunglebin District and most of Papun District. The hills of the two districts are dotted with small Karen villages of 10 to 20 houses which practice hill rice farming on the sides of the mountains. Among these hills, some small areas near the Bilin and Yunzalin Rivers (such as Ler Mu Plaw and Yeh Mu Plaw) are flat enough that flat rice farming can be practiced and the villages here tend to be larger. Papun District is also divided into three townships: Lu Thaw in the north, Dweh Loh in the west and Bu Tho to the east.



A house continues to burn in Tee Ler Kee village, Papun District after SPDC soldiers torched the village. [KHRG]

While the plains along the Sittaung River have been under some degree of Rangoon's control for a long time, the hills are more remote and SLORC/SPDC control has been for the most part confined to Papun town and isolated posts in the hills. Offensives in 1992 and 1995 saw the SLORC take control of the lower Bilin and lower Yunzalin River valleys. The weakening of the KNU after the creation of the DKBA and the fall of the KNU headquarters at Manerplaw in 1995 allowed the SLORC to solidify its control over Bu Tho township and eastern Dweh Loh township of Papun District. The lower four village tracts of Bu Tho township are under complete SPDC control.

The SPDC's present policy is to bring all rural villages under direct military control. This policy has meant

establishing more Army camps throughout most of the Karen areas, and forcible relocation of villages too remote to be controlled by an Army camp to Army-controlled villages. The relocated villages are then destroyed by the soldiers. This has happened in the plains along the Sittaung River, in parts of Papun District along the lower Bilin and Yunzalin rivers, and near Papun town where the Army already has some control. Most people in the small villages in the rugged Papun hills have never been under SPDC control and usually disappear into the hills before the soldiers can get to them, so the SPDC began to systematically destroy hundreds of these villages in 1997 without even formally ordering them to relocate. The villagers are still in hiding in the hills, so the soldiers search

out and destroy their food supplies and shelters and shoot them on sight to force them to come down to the SPDC-controlled relocation sites. They also leave 'Peace Passes' in the destroyed villages to encourage the villagers to come down, saying **"Do not think, take this pass and come to the nearest Army camp"**. While this continues, the SPDC is pushing in new roads and upgrading the existing ones to further solidify its control and to supply the new Army camps in the area. These roads are heavily patrolled, fenced and landmined to give them the added effect of blocking and 'cornering' villagers and resistance forces who find it difficult to cross.

¹ See Order #1 on page 33 in 'The SPDC's Campaign of Destruction' section of this report for the full text of this 'Peace Pass'.

Once the SPDC's new camps are established, the officers want to have villagers around for forced labour, so they want some of the villages to be re-established. At the same time, villagers who were forced to SPDC-controlled villages find that they cannot survive there because the SPDC provides nothing, they have no land and no jobs and are constantly taken for forced labour, so after a few months they escape back into the hills or to the sites of their home villages. Without stronger control the Army is unable to prevent this, so after a year or two the villages become partly re-established. The Army eventually recognises them as *de facto* villages but because they are not under direct control of an Army camp they will eventually be relocated again. These cycles can happen again and again until enough new Army camps are established to bring the villages under direct control.

The SPDC then designates these villages as 'white' or *Nyein Chan Yay* ('Peace'), villages and allows them to remain, although under threat of further relocation. The Army increases its presence making it very difficult for the villagers to contact the resistance groups. The new 'stability' of these villages allows the SPDC to demand more forced labour from them, while also allowing it to demand more formalised taxes, fees and crop quotas from the villages through both the Army and the local township administration, the Township Peace and Development Councils. Throughout all these phases the Army hunts down, and shoots on sight, those villagers who choose to live outside its system in the forest and hills. The end goal of this is the regime's 30-year-old policy known as the 'Four Cuts': for the KNU to be completely pushed out of the area by denying it access to the food, funds, intelligence and recruits provided by the villagers.

The key element in this SPDC campaign for control is that it consists almost solely of targeting the civilian population. There are almost no attempts made to seek out the armed resistance groups or engage them in battle except for skirmishes deep in the jungle which usually occur when resistance forces ambush SPDC patrols. There are also no attempts made to develop the villages or conduct any sort of 'Hearts and Minds' campaign. In the hills of northern Papun District and eastern Nyaunglebin District, at least 200 villages have been destroyed or abandoned in the past four years and tens of thousands of villagers are still in hiding in the forest. Where the SPDC has partial control in western Dweh Loh township of Papun District, the military has recently intensified relocations of hill villages to Army-controlled villages. Nearby Bu Tho township and the eastern portion of Dweh Loh township are well into the cycle of relocation, return, and repeated relocation which was described earlier, as the SPDC progressively increases its control. They are presently in their villages but face heavy demands for forced labour, materials and money, and could be relocated again at any time.

Furthest to the west, the plains of the Sittaung River are under the strongest SPDC control; villagers there faced a wave of forced relocations and forced road-building in 1998-99 and most of them are either still in the SPDC-controlled relocation sites or have fled eastward into the hills to join the internally displaced. In 1998, the SPDC created the *Sa Thon Lon* execution squads to hunt out and execute anyone suspected of present or past contact with the resistance, a final step in subjugating and 'cleansing' the area.

For the villagers the SPDC's campaign for control of the region means continued displacement, forced labour, food shortages, abuse and killings. Tens of thousands have been displaced into the forests by the forced relocations and the systematic destruction of villages, and they have been joined in flight by thousands of villagers who can no longer face the forced labour and extortion imposed upon them in the SPDC-controlled villages. The result is a displacement of a large part of the population into the forest, to relocation sites, or to refugee camps in Thailand. Villagers hiding in the forest stay in small groups of a few families, sleeping on the open ground or in small shelters and trying to eke out a living working small hill fields. They watch all the time and run whenever Army columns come near, which can be several times a month. Even so they are often surprised, their shelters are burned and they are shot on sight or killed by landmines on a regular basis. Since early 2000 the SPDC has tried to force them out of the hills by targeting their food supplies: trampling, burning and landmining any crops found in the fields, seeking out and burning or dumping the rice grain held in the villagers' hidden rice storage barns, and sending out dozens of battalions at harvest time to shoot at groups of villagers harvesting the hillside fields or to force people to flee and abandon the harvest. Food is very scarce, with many villagers wondering how they will make it to the next harvest. Medicine is almost completely unavailable, and more villagers die from easily treatable diseases than are killed by the SPDC columns. Yet even under these conditions very few head down out of the hills to the SPDC-controlled sites, partly because they would then be treated as 'suspected rebel supporters' and partly because the people living in those sites are fleeing them to head into the hills.

Villagers living under SPDC control in Papun District, while not hunted down and shot on sight, are still subject to displacement whenever the Army decides a relocation of villages is necessary. Forced labour is demanded from all the villages under SPDC control, despite the SPDC's claims internationally that they have banned the practice. SPDC Army units frequently enter the villages and demand food and money or simply steal it. This is in addition to the bribes villagers must pay to avoid the excessive forced labour, crop quotas, and other 'taxes' which the local

Army units demand. Most Karen villagers are subsistence farmers, growing enough rice for their family with little surplus, keeping small livestock and vegetable gardens, and hunting and foraging in the forest, so they do not have access to enough money to pay the SPDC's demands. The food situation is not much better than in the forest. The constant labour for the SPDC leaves very little time for villagers to plant and take care of their crops. Cash crops and livestock are stolen or demanded by the Army, leaving very little to eat or sell to buy rice. After paying all the fees there is very little money left to buy food to eat either. Villagers are also not free of physical abuse and are arrested for supposed contact with the resistance or for not meeting the Army's demands. This is especially true of the village heads who, because of their positions, must regularly meet with the soldiers and are thus the first people to be abused when the Army does not get what it wants. Arrest usually means at least a beating if not more brutal torture, and sometimes execution. Many families reach a point where they find they can no longer meet all the demands and still survive, so they flee into the hills to join the internally displaced despite the risks. This is especially true for those who have been forcibly relocated and are living in SPDC-controlled villages with no access to their own land.

Making the situation even worse, SPDC Battalions have issued orders to everyone in Ka Dtaing Dtee, Tee Tha Blu Hta, and Ku Thu Hta village tracts of Dweh Loh township, a total of at least 25-30 villages, that they are not allowed to leave their villages for the 3 months from September to November 2001, not even to go to their fields. The reason given is to mount a major operation against the KNLA, but this time period covers the last part of the growing season and the rice harvest. This order will result in the complete eradication of the rice harvest for thousands of people and will lead to starvation within the next few months. People who have recently escaped these villages have already told KHRG that those still there are desper-

ately afraid of imminent starvation. Though we have thus far only obtained reports of this from the 3 village tracts mentioned, it may be more widespread than that. [For additional details see the '**Restrictions**' section on page 93].

The SPDC has deployed more than 50 battalions, totaling around 15,000 soldiers, to the area to carry out its campaign. The battalions from the Southern and Southeastern Commands provide garrison troops while battalions from the offensive Light Infantry Divisions and Military Control Commands (*Sa Ka Ka*) are rotated in and out of the area, ostensibly to seek out the KNLA, but it is more often the villagers who are the real target of their operations. The SPDC's campaign to consolidate its control over the region has been ongoing since 1997 but has picked up in intensity in the past year. According to KNU officials, radio intercepts indicate that the soldiers are under orders to clear out all the villages to the west of the Bilin River. The Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) is still strong in the area with a combined strength of about 1,000 soldiers in two brigades. Its units operate in small groups throughout the hills and are still able to penetrate into the plains near the Sittaung River. KNLA soldiers conduct guerrilla operations against SPDC columns and outposts as well as providing a small measure of security for some of the displaced villagers. The SPDC's *Sa Thon Lon*, especially created in 1998 in the Sittaung River plains to hunt down and execute villagers for the slightest suspected contact with resistance groups, has not recently been as active as in previous years. They have been very successful in instilling fear among the villagers, and their decreased level of activity probably results from their having killed most of the people they were after, while others who feared execution fled the area. The Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) has meanwhile been expanding its presence in the area. However, their activities in the area seem to be focused more on business projects than expanding their political or military power.



A group of villagers from Nyaunglebin District who fled SPDC columns which had toup from the west to burn their villages and destroy their crops cross the Bilin River to Papun District in January 2001. [FBR researcher]

The SPDC's campaign to solidify its control over the region will take years to complete, if it ever succeeds. More camps will have to be established and more roads built to support them. More soldiers will have to be brought in to the region to man those camps and keep up the patrols of the hills. Increased SPDC control of the area means increased militarisation of the area and more forced labour, crop quotas and fees to support the occupying troops. Even if the SPDC succeeds in eliminating the KNU from the area and controlling the villages, they have already shown throughout Karen regions that their subjugation of villages is unsustainable. The demands have already reached the point where villagers no longer have the

money to pay the fees and don't have the time to grow their own food much less 'donate' it to the SPDC. Even people living in villages surrounded by fertile rice fields are being faced with starvation and are taking the desperate step of fleeing to the hills to live in hiding. In the hills and forests, desperate to stay close to their ancestral villages and fields, the displaced villagers will continue to struggle to survive on the run, growing whatever food they can while many are killed by SPDC troops, landmines, and illness. Unable to survive under SPDC control and increasingly prevented from entering Thailand, they are cornered in a situation which leaves them very few options for the future.



A child peeks out from her parents' tiny hut hidden in the forest of Papun District.
[KHRG]

II. The Military Situation

“[W]hen I arrived in the Karen area I behaved as a Burmese soldier. Now I was the one who was bad.” - “Saw Tha Ku” (M, 21), Karen Private from Infantry Battalion #xx, who deserted in Papun District (Interview #225, 3/00)

The SPDC

“The LIB’s [Light Infantry Battalions] and IB’s [Infantry Battalions] operate for three months at a time and then they rotate to another place. In 2000 they were operating in the Baw Kyo Draw [Baw Kyo Valley], and to the west of the car road from Papun to Ka Ma Maung. They abuse and force the villagers to work until the villagers don’t have time to do their own work. The villagers are also unable to give food to the KNU soldiers. The plan of the SPDC is for the KNU to disappear. In this plan, they don’t fight the KNU themselves. They fight the villagers, women and widows. [The SPDC says] If they don’t restrict the villagers, the KNU soldiers will shoot them very often and they can’t endure that. For the same reason, if KNU soldiers shoot and one of them is wounded, they will kill ten villagers. If they don’t do that it will not be easy for them to travel [they will be ambushed]. If one of the SPDC soldiers dies, they will kill at least ten villagers.” - field report from KHRG field researcher (Field Report #16, 7/00)

While Papun town has been under Rangoon government control since 1955, the Burmese military has never had a strong permanent presence in the hills of Papun District and eastern Nyaunglebin District. Currently the SPDC can only claim to control the Sittaung River plains and the lower Bilin and Yunzalin river valleys, and even this is not absolute. Prior to 1996, Burmese military units mounted dry season offensives into the hills but were forced to retreat with the onset of the rains due to lack of supplies and the extreme difficulty of movement in the rain-soaked hills. The last few years have seen a change in that strategy. Roads have been pushed into the hills and camps set up along them. Once the roads and camps have been set up, supplies are trucked up the roads as far as possible, from where they are portered up to the smaller camps in the hills to be stockpiled there so the units stationed there can operate all year long. The roads are only passable in the dry season, so porters are used to carry the supplies the rest of the year. Another more recent aspect of this change in strategy is that the Burmese Army no longer just moves through an area destroying villages and fields, they now move into the area, establish their camps, bring supplies up and mount sweeps out of the camps to round up any villagers who have fled. To supply these new camps new roads are built. Often fenced, with wide killing grounds cleared on either side, protected by landmines and patrolled by troops, these roads are a formidable obstacle to fleeing villagers who need to cross them, and also constrict the movements of KNLA forces. Very little of the Burmese Army’s efforts are aimed at seeking out the KNLA and engaging it. Most of the

Army’s operations are aimed at destroying the KNU’s civilian support by hunting down the villagers who still live outside SPDC control, relocating villages not within easy reach, and stamping its authority on those villages which are already under its direct control.

“If we compare the past to the present, there are more and more problems now. There is so much oppression, because now they patrol in both the dry and the rainy season. We still have some people in hiding there, and I think their heads will turn this way, too [they will come here]. They do not have enough food to eat and the conditions are very bad. They don’t have any medicines either. We’ve had to stay like that for many years already, moving around until all of our belongings are gone. All the things our grandparents gave us are gone, and when those are gone we can do nothing. Our animals have all been shot and killed by the Burmese. Our legs and arms are bound.” - “Saw Lay Pa” (M, 39), refugee from Tee Mu Hta village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #66, 1/00)

“They have come near us, but right now they have a new plan. In the past, they came up and destroyed everything and went back. Now, they come and after destroying things like rice and paddy, they plant landmines. They have planted a lot of landmines in this area. Many of our villagers have already stepped on them. In the future it will not be easy to stay here.” - “Saw Maw Htoo” (M, 31), internally displaced villager from D—village, Shwegyin township (Interview #71, 2/00)

“The enemy is operating always. They come up and operate, then go back to rest and rotate their units. They are always rotating. When the enemy goes back [to their camp] they get their rations and rest then come up and operate. The people [KNU/KNLA] got an intercept [from the radio] that they [the SPDC] are going to clear the west side of the Bu Loh Kloh [of all Karen villagers; Bu Loh Kloh is the Bilin River]. They are going to clear the area step by step. They will do it until the villagers and soldiers [KNLA] can’t stay there anymore and then they [the SPDC soldiers] will come to stay. They have already come to stay in one or two places. They have already established their Byu Ha [Operations Command headquarters] at Ka Baw Tu.” - “Saw Lin Yone” (M, 32), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #2, 2/01)

“In the resistance areas they were going into the jungle. When they were moving, they saw paddy barns. They [the officers] didn’t know that they belonged to civilians [the paddy barns all belong

to civilians]. The officers said they were the paddy barns of the Nga Pway [Ringworm, i.e. KNLA], then they burned them. When they saw the paddy barns they burned them. They ate what they could and what they could not eat they burned. Sometimes when they saw villagers in the jungle area far from the [SPDC] area of control, they shot them dead. When they saw villagers in the areas that they controlled they called them Nyein Chan Yay [‘Peace’ villagers]. In the place where they shot people dead, they didn’t let anything happen. When they saw villages, they burned them down. When they saw the people, they killed them. They said that those people were giving them the chance to kill them [by remaining in the area, the villagers are inviting the soldiers to shoot them]. I have seen this.” - “Soe Tint” (M, 18), Lance Corporal from Light Infantry Battalion #xx, Papun District (Interview #226, 11/00)

“They stay at 2 or 3 places close to us. They stay at Dta Kaw Kwih Hta, Der Kay Hta, Dta Kaw Kwih and Tee Nya Hta. They are making camps one by

Life Within an Army Camp

Army life for the common soldiers in the camps is anything but easy. Many of the soldiers never wanted to be in the Army and were either tricked or forced to join, others volunteered. After four months training, in which the soldiers are beaten and forced to labour for their trainers, the privates are sent to a frontline battalion.

At the frontline they are cut off from any communication with their families or friends back home, as well as any news from the radio or newspapers. The officers deduct money out of their salaries for items like their uniforms and boots as well as charity projects that do not exist, until there is very little left for the soldiers to use. The soldiers also have many of their rations stolen by the officers, who sell them for their own profit. They must then resort to stealing food from villagers, while the officers simply have to issue an order to receive pork or chicken from a village. Some soldiers are so ashamed of this that they try to steal villagers’ livestock and rice at night, and many villagers relate how they can sometimes chase off a soldier by shouting even though the soldier has a gun.

Officers usually prefer to remain in their camps and make money. Going out on operations to hunt down the KNLA means the possibility of being injured or killed in an ambush or by stepping on a landmine. When they are forced to go out on an operation, they usually attack civilian villages instead because they are easier targets. Officers sometimes stage ‘battles’ by forcing civilians to wear soldier uniforms and then taking photos of the ‘dead rebels’, or demand guns or walkie-talkies from the villagers which they can report as being captured in combat. The privates are forced to fight what is only explained to them as ‘the enemy’, who shoots at them out of the forest and lays landmines for them to step on, and they are pushed to believe that this ‘enemy’ includes the villagers.

On a normal day in the camp, villagers on rotating shifts of forced labour are present to construct defensive works like trenches and bunkers, build barracks and fence the camp. The soldiers are ordered to oversee the villagers while they work. One or two people from each local village are kept around the camp for use as ‘set tha’ (messengers) by the officers to send written orders to the nearby village heads. Both villagers and soldiers are forced to be hand servants to the officers by cooking for them, washing their clothes and performing other menial tasks. The villagers at the camp are also forced to gather firewood and carry water, which is hard work because the camps are usually on

one.” - “Saw Thay Doh” (M, 28), internally displaced villager from P— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #81, 3/00)

More than 50 SPDC Battalions have been sent into the region to carry out these operations (see Appendix E on page 195). SPDC battalions normally have a fighting strength of between 250 and 500 men. Though many of these battalions only have one or two Companies assigned to the region, the total number of SPDC troops is at least 10,000 to 15,000. Currently, up to 13 battalions of the Southern Regional Command and four battalions of the Southeastern Command are stationed in the area (these are two of Burma's 12 Regional Commands). Battalions and Companies usually rotate in and out of the frontline areas every three to four months from base camps further west in firmly SPDC-controlled areas. A few units such as Infantry Battalion (IB) #19 and Light Infantry Battalions (LIB) #340, 341 and 434 of the Southeastern Regional Command are permanently stationed in the area. In addition to these units, since January 2001 units of the Southwestern Regional Command (normally based in the Irrawaddy Division),

Military Operations Commands [*abbreviated as Sa Ka Ka*] #10 and #1 and Light Infantry Divisions [*LIDs*] #44, 66 and 77 have been operating in the area. The Sa Ka Ka's and LID's each have 10 battalions divided among three Tactical Operations Command headquarters. These units do not come under the regional commands and are brought in from their bases elsewhere in Burma for offensive operations. Since 1997, Sa Ka Ka's #3, 4, 6 and 12 and LID #11 have operated in the area for periods of time [*see Appendix E for a more complete list of SPDC military units in the area*]. These units do not rotate their battalions but are usually moved into an area until the operation is finished. Some of the battalions have been in the area for eight months or more [*for more detailed information on the Burmese Army see also “Abuse Under Orders: The SPDC and DKBA Armies Through the Eyes of Their Soldiers” (KHRG #2001-01, 27-3-01)*].

“The first battalions that came were LIB #308 and IB #36. They are from Bassein [in the Irrawaddy Division]. They are not the same as the battalions which have come up now, LIB #356 and #357. The

hilltops. Village heads arrive during the day after being summoned to receive orders, or to supervise deliveries of food and materials which have been demanded by the officers. On a bad day, one or more village heads or villagers may be sitting locked in mediaeval-style bamboo leg stocks or locked in a pit in the ground, being punished for some failure to meet the officers' demands.

All of the extortion money and forced labour fees exacted from the villagers go into the hands of the officers who kick a portion of it upstairs to their superiors, while the privates receive nothing. Officers are always thinking of new ways to make money. Villagers are forced to work on farms and plantations for the officers, who take all the food for the Army or sell it and pocket the money. Orders are sent out to villages demanding thatch, logs, planks and bamboo, some of which is used to maintain the camp while the officers sell the rest for profit. The soldiers are also used as forced labour on the officers' personal projects, which usually include brick-baking and fishponds. For brick-baking the villagers are forced to bring cartloads of firewood, while the soldiers are forced to dig clay and bake the bricks all day. The officer then sells the bricks for 5 Kyat each for himself. After baking bricks all day the soldiers have to stand sentry at night, and if they get caught asleep they are usually beaten severely and tied up in the hot sun the following day.

The foot soldiers are sent out led by the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO's) on patrols or to carry supplies to outlying camps using villagers or convicts as porters. They are told they will be punished if they arrive late, and the fear of this drives them to push, kick and abuse the porters who they think are going too slowly. The soldiers are beaten by their officers and senior NCO's for any real or perceived mistakes, and any leniency shown to the villagers is met with scorn and even physical abuse from the officers. The officers and senior NCO's instill such a climate of fear in the private soldiers that they will do almost anything to avoid being punished. This includes torturing and killing villagers.

It does not take long before the privates find it hard to continue bearing the physical and other abuse they face. Many of them also realise that what is happening is wrong and that they are at the bottom of a system wherein they are forced to abuse the civilians for the profit of the officers. Morale in the Burmese Army has suffered correspondingly and is very poor. There are very few ways out. The soldiers are constantly warned that they will be brutally executed if they flee and are caught by the opposition. Suicides are not uncommon and the desertion rate is already high and getting higher.

Battalion Commander of LIB #356 is Nyunt Tin and the Deputy Battalion Commander is Thu Rain. The name of the LIB #357 Battalion Commander is Zaw Win Aung.” - “Saw Ra Doh” (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #199, 6/00)

“Battalions #547, 356, 231 and 548 [all LIB’s except #231 which is an IB] arrived in 2000. Now, Division #44 [Light Infantry Division] has come up. In the 2000 dry season it was [IB] #36 which stayed along the main road and in Taung Thon Lon camp. Later, LIB #308 came up and replaced #36. There were so many commanders that I can’t remember them all.” - “Mya Aung” (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00)

“The people call that unit #366, Kalay Myo Tactical Operations Command #10 [LIB #366 of Sa Ka Ka #10 from Kalay town in Northwestern Burma].” - “Saw Maw Ku” (M, 48), section leader from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #155, 12/00)

“Their Byu Ha [Operations Command] stays with [LIB] #340. It is close to #341. There are four battalions in this area, the Papun area. They are #19, #341, #340 and #434.” - “Saw Lu Lu” (M, 54), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #224, 5/01)

“Right now Division [LID] #77 is operating there but I don’t know which LIB’s or IB’s. Division #77 is staying below Meh Way and Division #66 is staying above Meh Way.” - “Saw Eh Doh” (M, 25), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #3, 2/01)

“At present, the Burmese #366 has come up from Pyu. It is an IB [it is actually an LIB; Light Infantry Battalion] from Sa Ka Ka #10. They wrote ‘No. 1 Tactical Operations Command’ [on a sign] when they settled down at Wa Mu camp. The name of their operations commander is Kyaw Zin Oo. Wa Mu camp is to the west of the river [Bilin River] and behind Wa Mu village. It is an hour and a half walk from Kwih T’Ma. It is a five mile walk and south of Kwih T’Ma. They have made their Tactical Operations Command headquarters there and there are about 50 soldiers. Those 50 soldiers stay in the camp and another about 25 or 26 soldiers came up and are operating around Poh Kheh Hta, Nya Hsa Ghaw Hta, Kwih T’Ma, Ma Lay Ler and Kay Kaw. The whole division came up. In October their unit settled down in Doh Koh Wah for a while. In the past they changed the soldiers every six months, but now the unit there has been there for eight months and they haven’t been changed yet.” - “Saw Maung Sein” (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

Despite this large number of soldiers, equivalent to the number of units involved in the large-scale military offensives against Manerplaw in 1995 and Doooplaya in 1997, there has been no major military operation directed against the KNLA. The patrols and sweeps conducted by the soldiers have been directed primarily at the civilians, to remove any possibility of support for the KNU by entirely depopulating the region. Karen villagers have become so impoverished that most villages are able to give little or no support to the KNLA besides intelligence. A basic analysis of the area by military intelligence would tell the Burmese Army this, yet the villages are still wiped out. SPDC units rarely actively seek out and engage KNLA units. Most of the operations are geared towards seeking out villagers hiding in the forests or in villages which the SPDC does not control and killing or capturing them, destroying their fields and hidden food caches and looting their property. There have even been several instances of SPDC officers faking engagements with the KNLA and falsifying reports to their superiors. Villagers have told KHRG of being forced to put on uniforms, lay on the ground, have blood poured on them and then be photographed as a ‘dead’ KNLA soldier. A more common occurrence is the demanding of weapons and walkie-talkies from villagers, which are then reported as being captured in combat. Both the photographs and the weapons or walkie-talkies are used by the officers to prove to their superiors their skill in battle and hopefully gain themselves a promotion or other reward. In areas under SPDC control the Army spends quite a bit of effort on money making projects. This usually involves civilian labour with the profits going to the officers. However, morale among the rank and file in the Burmese Army is very low and desertion is becoming increasingly common.

“They are staying there but LIB #369 went back to operate around Thay Koh Hser Der. They came to stay for a month then went back. Right now LIB #365 and LIB #367 still remain. LIB #365 is active at the frontline [doing the patrolling and fighting] and LIB #367 is sending the food. They go back and get it from Koh Sghaw and send it to Yoh Po Loh. They are stockpiling their food in one place. ... They have set up their camps at Saw Hta, Thee Mu Hta, Kyauk Nyat, Oo Dah Hta, Meh Ka Hta, Oo Thu Hta, Thaw Leh Hta but I don’t know about south of Thaw Leh Hta. There is also one at Manerplaw.” - “Saw Eh Doh” (M, 25), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #3, 2/01)

“They took two villagers from N--- but I didn’t ask their names. They had to guide the soldiers. After they took the two villagers they were going to climb K--- Mountain, but they didn’t dare to climb it so they shelled it with two big mortars. They wanted to go that way but they didn’t dare to go so they shelled it. They were worried that the

KNLA was there so they shelled the mountain.” - “Htaw Say” (M, 43), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #210, 2/01)

Everywhere that SPDC units operate they use large numbers of civilian porters to haul their ammunition and supplies, and this is especially true in Papun and Nyaunglebin districts due to the lack of roads and the difficult terrain. Thousands of porters are being used in the present operations in the region. Many of these are taken from the SPDC-controlled villages in the two districts, but there are not enough people in these villages to supply all of their needs so they have also been rounding up young men in nearby areas of central Burma, including Pegu, Rangoon and the Irrawaddy Delta. Some of these men have told KHRG that troops surrounded tea shops or cinemas, doused the lights and loaded all the young men onto trucks for transport to the frontline, or that they were

approached in a train station and offered work only to find themselves sold to the Army by a labour agent. To get even larger numbers, the SPDC has been bringing convicts from all over Burma to the frontlines as porters. Some are promised early release or reduced sentences for going as porters, others are simply forced to go, and there is evidence to suggest that some are innocent people arrested and convicted on false charges simply to provide the Army with more porters. The conditions for all porters are horrendous, but are especially bad for convict porters, with an extremely high death rate. Many of the civilian and convict porters flee because they fear that they will otherwise be held until they die. *[For more on the use of convicts as porters see the report “Convict Porters” (KHRG #2000-06, 20/12/00)].*

The Sa Thon Lon

“[W]e dare not go back to our village because the Baw Bi Doh [Short Pants] are always wandering there. When they see anyone they don’t like they kill them, even if they have letters of recommendation with them.” - “Saw Plaw Doh” (M, 25), refugee from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #7, 2/00)

The *Sa Thon Lon* *Dam Byan Byaut Kya* [*Sa Thon Lon Guerrilla Retaliation*] units began appearing in the villages in the Sittaung River plains of Nyaunglebin District in September 1998 and quickly established a reputation for brutality. ‘*Sa Thon Lon*’, or ‘Three S’s’ in English, is the Burmese abbreviation for the Bureau of Special Investigations which is one of the bureaus of the Directorate of Defence Services Intelligence (DDSI). The *Sa Thon Lon*’s original function was to crack down on the black market, but the Guerrilla Retaliation force has been nominally placed under it. The DDSI is controlled by Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Secretary-1 of the SPDC, and this may have been a move to place the Guerrilla Retaliation force under his control. The *Sa Thon Lon* units were originally created from the Non-Commissioned Officers of the battalions in the Southern Regional Command, but this command seems to have little operational authority over them. KNLA sources have said that the *Sa Thon Lon* reports directly to Military Intelligence Unit #3 in Toungoo and Burmese officers have told villagers that they have no control over what the *Sa Thon Lon* does. The total strength of the force is about 200 soldiers who operate in small groups of from five to ten soldiers. The groups were originally known by names like ‘*Moe Kyo*’ (‘Lightning’) and ‘*Nagah*’ (‘Dragon’), but villagers now refer to them more by the names of their commanders, although these are usually aliases.

“They don’t have any place that they settle down [a camp]. They are always moving. In each group there are 7, 8, or 9 soldiers. There are about 7 or 8 groups. Each group has a name, and most of them are from IB #264. Thra Mya Zaw Tint is one of those who comes. As far as I know, they come from Battalions #264, #57, #350, #349, #440, IB #60, and #351. They gather and collect the corporals and soldiers one by one from each battalion. They are gathered from all the battalions. The people who come to Kaw Tha Say are called Na Ga [‘dragon’] troop.” - “Saw Mu Wah” (M, 40), refugee from xxxx village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #9, 4/00)

“[T]he Baw Bi Doh are more cruel than the Army. The last time people were threshing paddy, they provided recommendations for us and each one cost 500 Kyat. If you didn’t pay to get it, they would kill you if they met you.” - “Saw Plaw Doh” (M, 25), refugee from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #7, 2/00)

“[A]fter they do bad things when you see them you become afraid. It is very horrible in our area, because the worst two [Baw Bi Doh] groups are in our area: the groups at T’Kaw Pwa and Gko Nee [villages]. They never wear any unit badges, they just wear whatever they want to wear.” - “Saw Daniel” (M, 43), refugee from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #8, 2/00)

Originally they did not have fixed bases but were constantly on the move taking their food from the villagers. The soldiers do not wear uniforms but civilian clothing. Villagers have nicknamed them the *Baw Bi Doh*, which is Burmese for 'short pants', because of their preference for wearing the type of gym shorts which villagers commonly wear under their sarongs. Operationally they do not actively seek out the KNU and its soldiers in the KNLA but instead act as execution squads, killing those villagers who are known or suspected of being KNU or having helped the KNU. They have also targeted villagers who had been KNU in the past but had left years before. Many, particularly former village heads, have been killed simply because they had once portered supplies for a KNLA unit or provided rice, whether voluntarily or not, to KNLA units. Villagers arrested by the *Sa Thon Lon* are usually taken away from the villages and summarily executed in the forest. The *Sa Thon Lon*



A *Sa Thon Lon* unit tried to kill this man with knives but he escaped and fled into the hills.
[KHRG]

prefers to stab or slit the throats of their victims rather than shoot them. Some villagers have said that at least some of the *Sa Thon Lon* soldiers can speak Karen and have been known to sit under houses at night and listen in to the conversations of the villagers inside [for more on the creation and methods of the *Sa Thon Lon* see *"Death Squads and Displacement: Systematic Executions, Village Destruction and the Flight of Villages in Nyaunglebin District"* (KHRG #99-04, 24-5-99)].

"When they didn't see what they were searching for, they called the village head and demanded poultry. Sometimes they demand money in the village. At some villages they demand 4,000 or 5,000 Kyat. Some villages must give more than this. They had to pay a lot. The villagers paid them, but they dare not tell anybody because the guerrillas [Sa Thon Lon] said they would kill anybody who told. At each village they have to pay at least 3,000 to 4,000 Kyat. The whole village has to pay. The village head has to collect it. ... They said that they would make the villagers stop contact with the KNU and then they would make it become a white area [an area firmly under SPDC control]. They spoke like that, but we only see them killing more and more. They have only that plan. Sometimes they call a meeting in the village. They say, 'You villagers will stay peacefully in the village, don't contact the KNU. If you contact them, we are going to kill you. When we know that you have contacted them, we are going to kill you. Even if you do not go to them but they come to you, we are still going to kill you.' They are threatening us like that." - "Saw Mu Wah" (M, 40), refugee from xxxx village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #9, 4/00)

"Around the area of our village now, the group that is oppressing people is the Baw Bi Doh [Short Pants]. They kill people without using guns. They just use daggers and knives, or if they want to beat you to death, they do it. They do not waste bullets to kill you." - "Saw Daniel" (M, 43), refugee from Gko Nee village, Mone township (Interview #8, 2/00)

"There's a group in our village called the Baw Bi Doh ['Short Pants', i.e. Sa Thon Lon Dam Byan Byaut Kya], and they wander around and look everywhere in the village. Then for example, if Saw Thu hasn't paid his quota, they come and write down his name. Then they provide the list of names [to the regular SPDC unit], and if that person can't pay his quota they arrest him. That group [the Baw Bi Doh] do whatever they like. They have guns with them but they don't usually use them, instead they carry bared daggers around and they take them out and flash them at you. They go around in small groups, only about 5 of them at a time. They don't have a camp. They patrol, and when they arrive at a village they sleep there. The Baw Bi Doh are always staying around our village." - "Saw Plaw Doh" (M, 25), refugee from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #7, 2/00)

"Maybe they hate dogs because they want to steal things in the night, or for their security, we're not sure. But people realised that at night they were sneaking under people's houses to listen secretly. They can understand Karen though they are not Karen, so maybe they've learned the Karen language. They can speak Karen but not fluently,

and they can understand most things. So after 6 o'clock in the evening we don't dare talk to each other about the persecution, because if we do and they hear it then you'll be finished. We can only talk about persecution in the daytime, when we can see all around us - at night we can only talk about our work." - "Saw Daniel" (M, 43), refugee from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #8, 2/00)

Information obtained through interviews with villagers and KHRG field researchers indicates that the activities of the *Sa Thon Lon* have decreased in 2000 and 2001. They still operate in the district as well as in Toungoo District, but they now stay in SPDC or DKBA bases and do not move about as much. The number of killings attributed to the *Sa Thon Lon* has also drastically decreased. A possible reason for the decrease in the level of activity and number of executions attributed to the *Sa Thon Lon* is that they have already killed everyone they were able to catch in 1998 and 1999. Many others, particularly former village heads, who feared that they may be included on the *Sa Thon Lon*'s 'list' fled to the hills beyond their reach. The *Sa Thon Lon* is still active in making demands on villagers for money and other things. One KHRG researcher has received information that they may have moved to the west side of the Sittaung River to the area of the Rangoon-Mandalay road, the rail line from Nyaunglebin to Theh Za Lone, and the area from Nyaunglebin to Kyauk T'Ga. The KNU has not operated on the west side of the Sittaung River since the 1970's so it is unclear why the *Sa Thon Lon* would have shifted their focus to that side of the river.

"I don't go to the plains area and they stay in the plains area. Only the battalions [regular Army units] come and operate in the mountains. The Sa Thon Lon are active along the Sittaung River. I heard that they are going to stay on the other side of the river [the Sittaung River] in the area of the car road [Rangoon-Mandalay road] and the rail line from Nyaunglebin to Theh Za Lone. They are going to stay there and kill all the people who are popular [people who are working with the KNU]. They are active and there are many villages between Kyauk T'Ga and Nyaunglebin. They look and the people they suspect they kill." - "Saw Lin Yone" (M, 32), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #2, 2/01)

"The guerrillas [Baw Bi Doh] have come to the village occasionally. Last year they came and hit some civilians but we haven't heard of it this year." - "Saw Bo Lweh" (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #10, 4/01)

"They threaten villagers; they have guns but they just carry unsheathed daggers around in their hands. Everyone is afraid when they see the things that happen, and if people see them they dare not show themselves and go to hide. If they see people, they interrogate them and threaten them with daggers, so people fear them. When they interrogate people they beat and abuse them - but not like a human would beat another human, more like a human would beat an animal he is angry with, even though the villagers have done nothing wrong." - "Saw Daniel" (M, 43), refugee from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #8, 2/00)

The DKBA

"When I stayed with the DKBA I thought that it had no meaning for me. That's why I came up here. I saw that in the future it would not be easy for the DKBA. The SPDC is watching them and their situation. If they misstep, it will be difficult for them. A couple of years ago, the SPDC gave them priority [supported them strongly], but now they do not give priority to them. Some [DKBA troops] just have to follow the SPDC wherever they go. They don't feed them. They just call and order them to follow." - "Saw Po Kyu" (M, xx), Private from #xxx Brigade DKBA, Papun District (Interview #7, 12/99)

The Democratic Karen Buddhist Army split off from the KNLA in 1994 after internal disputes in the KNU. It immediately allied itself with the SLORC after being promised control of Karen State if it helped the Burmese Army to defeat the KNU. Most of the former KNLA soldiers later defected back to the KNLA or simply went home after the level of SLORC involvement in the DKBA became clear. The DKBA's founder, the monk U Thuzana, is now rarely at the DKBA headquarters of Myaing Gyi Ngu (known as Khaw Taw in Karen) on the south side of the Salween River in Pa'an District. The DKBA has never had a

strong central command structure and most units operate as a law unto themselves. New soldiers are mostly recruited from the villages. Most of the DKBA's activities have lately been turning towards making money from checkpoints, forced labour projects, extortion, logging and possibly now also drug running. Relations between the SPDC and the DKBA have never been good, but it is a marriage of convenience for both sides as the SPDC uses them to fight the KNLA and the DKBA uses the SPDC's protection to make money and acquire military supplies.

The Democratic Karen Buddhist Army is not as strong in Papun District as it is to the south in Pa'an and Thaton Districts. For the most part it is confined to Bu Tho and Dweh Loh townships with a very small presence around Papun town in Lu Thaw township. Militarily the units in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts are under the #777 DKBA Brigade but they are mostly small, local and disorganised with the exception of the Ka Hsaw Wah [*'White Elephant'*] Battalion which seems to issue the bulk of the DKBA written orders which KHRG has received from the area. Recruitment is mostly local and new recruits are promised pay and exemptions from forced labour for their families. The soldiers rarely receive their pay, many of the soldiers do not have uniforms, and their weapons are for the most part cast-offs from the Burmese Army.

Many of the villages of Bu Tho township and some of the villages in southern Dweh Loh township were forcibly relocated to the DKBA headquarters at Khaw Taw [*Myaing Gyi Ngu in Burmese*] during 1995. After 1996 the SLORC gradually discontinued supplying rations to the population in Khaw Taw and said it would henceforth only provide rations to the soldiers and families of DKBA members. For the next few years the villagers around Khaw Taw tried to exist by farming where they could on overcrowded land. Eventually the villagers from villages near Khaw Taw were granted permission to return and work their fields. In 2000, the DKBA has apparently looked the other way as most of the population of Khaw Taw has either returned to their villages in Bu Tho and Dweh Loh townships or gone to the refugee camps in Thailand. This has resulted in a repopulating of the area, but has also weakened DKBA control over a large number of people [*for background information on Khaw Taw see "Abuse Under Orders: The SPDC and DKBA Armies Through the Eyes of Their Soldiers" (KHRG #2001-01, 27-3-01), "Uncertainty, Fear and Flight: The Current Human Rights Situation in Eastern Pa'an District" (KHRG #98-08, 18-11-98), "Inside the DKBA" (KHRG #96-14, 31-3-96) and "SLORC's Northern Karen Offensive" (KHRG #95-10, 29-3-95).*]

"Many people went to stay at Khaw Taw [also known in Burmese as Myaing Gyi Ngu] when the DKBA started [in 1995]. ... Now they don't like to stay there and they have come back. ... It was this year, 2001. The villagers want to come back. They didn't want to stay in Khaw Taw, but they didn't dare come back. They were being threatened. The DKBA were threatening them and told them, 'If you go back the people there [the KNU/KNLA] will kill you.' Some people who had already gone back said that the people [KNU/KNLA] hadn't killed them. They were frightened of us. We [the KNU] told them, 'You can come back and stay.' One of the families recently came back [from Khaw Taw] because they could no longer find food and it wasn't easy to stay there." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

"In the beginning everybody who went to stay there received things, but in 1997 they [the DKBA] divided the people and those who worked got it [food and other things]. The people who take responsibility [the leadership] get it. The civilians have to work [for themselves] to eat. They have to find a way. Some people whose villages are close went back to work in their villages." - "Naw Si Yu Paw" (F, 37), villager from xxxx village, Pa'an District (Interview #208, 10/00); talking about the situation in Myaing Gyi Ngu.

"In the past the DKBA didn't allow us to stay here. They forced us to flee down from the mountains and go stay in other villages. We went down to stay in other places and only came back to stay here in the last three years." - "Naw Say Paw" (F, 46), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #195, 6/00)

Nyaunglebin District has never had a strong DKBA presence and the soldiers here remained loyal to the KNU after the split. Recent years have seen the DKBA expand its presence in Kyauk Kyi and Mone townships. They maintain a headquarters at Klaw Maw in Kyauk Kyi township as well as camps at Shwe Dan and Kaw Tha Say in Kyauk Kyi township and at Kyun Bin Seik and Maw Lay in Mone township. It may have more to do with business than power, as one DKBA deserter who had spent some time in the area noted when interviewed by KHRG (see below). There is virtually no local support for the DKBA in the area and many of its soldiers and even the commander seem to have been brought in from other areas. Villagers have commented that the commander's accent is a Pa'an accent and not a local one. There is no love between the DKBA and the SPDC so it is difficult to see why the SPDC would allow this expansion. The DKBA soldiers, like the *Sa Thon Lon*, do not seem to operate in the hills to the east, but stay close to the plains.

"We were just there to sell the logs that their people sent to us. We had no other purpose. They come and get the logs from the mountains and then cut them in Myaing Gyi Ngu. Then they sell them wherever they can. For one tonne of teak they can get 60,000, sometimes 70,000 Kyat in Shwegyin. They just sell logs and do business. They also work in the cattle and buffalo black market. ... They don't come to fight the KNU. They just do their economic business and if they meet with the KNU, they shoot. If they hear that people have helped or joined the KNU, they arrest them. Other than that, they just do their business. I think that they have no other aim." - "Saw Po Kyu" (M, xx), Private from #xxx Brigade DKBA, Papun District (Interview #228, 12/99)

“Ko Per Baw [DKBA] is there. They stay in the plains area. They cannot come into the hills.” - “Saw Ghay Hser” (M, 26), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #1, 2/01)

“Only that the Ko Per Baw [DKBA] is active and making camps like at Shwe Dah. The Ko Per Baw stay in Shwe Dah and Thayet Chaung. It [Thayet Chaung] is between Shwe Dah and Kaw Tha Say. We call it Thayet Bin Maung Na Ma. It is on the car road. The Ko Per Baw stays in four places. The Burmese stay from Klaw Maw to Baw Ka Hta and the DKBA stay at Kaw Tha Say. The Burmese soldiers stay at Baw Ka Hta. They don’t stay in Kaw Tha Say. The DKBA have stayed there for three years already. Klaw Maw is the Ko Per Baw headquarters [for the area]. A lot of them stay there at Klaw Maw Paya Gyi [Klaw Maw Pagoda].” - “Saw Lin Yone” (M, 32), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #2, 2/01)

“Their commander is from Myaing Gyi Ngu [DKBA headquarters in Pa’an district], and his accent is lilting like people from Pa’an area.” - “Saw Daniel” (M, 43), refugee from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #8, 2/00)

“The DKBA soldiers stay at Kaw Tha Say camp. It is beside the village, on the other side of the fence. There are about 10 soldiers from #777 Brigade, Battalion #1. They call their officer ‘Gaung Gyi.’” - “Saw Mu Wah” (M, 40), refugee from xxxx village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #9, 4/00)

After the DKBA's connections to the SLORC became more apparent its initial popularity declined drastically. Most people would rather support the KNU if given the choice. The DKBA has become increasingly corrupt and more interested in business than in fighting the KNU. DKBA commanders are heavily involved in logging in Papun District and Nyaunglebin District. DKBA deserters have told KHRG that the wood is cut in these areas and processed to be sold in Myaing Gyi Ngu or Pa’an to whoever will buy it. The DKBA is also involved in the black market cattle and buffalo trade within Burma and to Thailand. DKBA deserters interviewed by KHRG have said that the DKBA regularly violates its four aims of “protecting the nationality, protecting the religion, obeying those in authority and retaining good morals in the populace.” One deserter commented that DKBA members, especially the leadership, spent most of their time chasing women and trying to get rich. Another said that the families of the DKBA commanders were getting rich but the soldiers could barely feed their families.

“They have an understanding with us, and sometimes they say that we are all Karen and that they love the Karen people. They say that if anyone gets into trouble to go to their camp and they will

take care of us. But after we go to them they tell us, ‘Now that you have come to us, you have to believe in our beliefs’, so not a lot of people go to them. We can get a little bit of protection from them, but we are Christians so we can’t consider it [changing their beliefs to get protection]. If we need to run to someone, we would prefer to run to the Ko Per Thu [‘Black Headbands’ - KNLA commandos]. Some people who stay there [with the DKBA] have to do ‘loh ah pay’ [forced labour], but they don’t have to pay porter fees and such things, so it is a little better for them.” - “Saw Daniel” (M, 43), refugee from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #8, 2/00)

“They do it a lot, and so does the SPDC. Teak. I know that the DKBA sells it at Pa’an and Thaton. They sell it to anyone who will buy it - Burmans, Karens, Indians - many people are buying it. I don’t know if they sell it to other countries.” - “Saw Po Kyu” (M, xx), Private from #xxx Brigade DKBA, Papun District (Interview #228, 12/99)

“They have 4 aims. To protect nationality, to protect religion, to obey those in authority, and to retain good morals in the populace. But they were doing different things than this. ... They are indulging in women. The money that he received he didn’t give out for pocket money. During the training he gave me only two hundred Kyat. The other troops received a lot. When he received money or gold, he gave it to women. Pa Than Aung and Bo Hla Gyaing were indulging in women. The women came from Myaing Gyi Ngu.” - “Saw K’Thay” (M, 25), Private from #777 Brigade DKBA, Papun District (Interview #229, 4/00)

“I see that the KNU is working for their nationality, while the DKBA is working for their economic benefit. If they could make money day by day, that was enough. I don’t think they have any aims. It is enough for them if they can feed themselves. They do not look out for their nationality. If they have to torture their own nationality, they do it. They are friendly with the civilians from the Myaing Gyi Ngu area. But when they go outside, they do as they want. They tortured some people. I don’t see what they are doing for the civilians. I see the DKBA calling themselves ‘K’Nyaw Bah Thawka Thu Mu Doh’ [‘Karen Buddhist Army’] and they are protecting their religion, only Buddhism, not others. I saw the DKBA doing things that were not good. They do enough to get enough for themselves. They don’t care about civilians. It’s enough for them when they can feed their wives and children. Their families are staying everywhere, some in Myaing Gyi Ngu. The families of DKBA commanders are fed well, but the soldiers are not able to feed their families well.” - “Saw Po Kyu” (M, xx), Private from #xxx Brigade DKBA, Papun District (Interview #7, 12/99)

Relations between the DKBA and the SPDC are also on the decline as the usefulness of the DKBA declines. As the SPDC gains more control over the region there is less need for the DKBA and Burmese soldiers are told not to associate with the DKBA. Both villagers and DKBA deserters have told KHRG that they felt the DKBA's time was coming to an end. The DKBA is being supplied less and less by the SPDC, and without those supplies the DKBA will be helpless. There is also little chance of the DKBA reaching a formal agreement with the KNU or rejoining the KNU, as any movement in this direction would be instantly noticed by the SPDC and stopped. DKBA camps are usually near SPDC camps and the soldiers normally operate in joint columns. One villager even claimed that the SPDC had lists of all the DKBA members, which would make it very difficult for there to be a mass defection without putting the families of DKBA members in the villages at risk.

“He [his sergeant] didn’t like me to be friendly with the Ko Per Baw [DKBA]. He warned the soldiers about this. He said, ‘It is because they are Karen and stay in the mountains. In the past, they were our enemies, but they have come back to work with us, so we can’t trust them. That is why. Don’t fraternise with the DKBA. If you have

relations with them, they will be friendly with you and call you into the jungle. They will take your gun.’ They don’t like it that we are friendly with the DKBA, however, some soldiers still meet each other secretly.” - “Saw Tha Ku” (M, 21), Private from SPDC Infantry Battalion #xx, Papun District (Interview #225, 3/00)

“They don’t have a good relationship. The Ko Per Baw’s time is coming to an end, they are not friendly with the Burmese and some day soon the Burmese Army will wring their necks. The Ko Per Baw say that even though they eat rice from the Burmese, their hearts will never become like the Burmese. But they torture the villagers more than the Burmese do. ...

Q: Do they buy their own rice or get it from the Burmese?

A: How would they buy it? If the Burmese cut off their rations and their [supply of] weapons, what would they do? They could do nothing. All of their names are written down on a list [by the SPDC].” - “Naw Say Muh” (F, 54), refugee from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #203, 7/00)

The KNU and the KNLA

“The job is going well. There are no other problems I have to face. Just the one thing that they [the KNU/KNLA] aren’t free anymore so it isn’t easy for transportation and we have to face problems. We hope for them [the KNU/KNLA]. If it is possible we would like to ask for help. They have no strength so they can’t help us anymore.” - “Saw Ko Suh” (M, 54), internally displaced village head from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #58, 3/01)

The Karen National Union enjoys much popular support in the hills of Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts and until 1995 controlled much of the Papun hills. Only the southern four village tracts of Day Wah, Kyaw Pa, Meh Prih and Tee Th'Daw Hta in Bu Tho township of Papun District are under full SPDC control. In the rest of the two districts the KNU still maintains a political infrastructure with officials at the village head through district level and departments covering forestry, information, education and other areas of government. KNU officials are active in organising at the village level both in the hills and in the villages under SPDC control. A few schools in the area are also supported by the KNU. Where it can it provides medical and food aid to the internally displaced and occasionally to villages under SPDC control. This amount of aid is small and is in no way enough for every villager. The KNU also arranges for safe places for internally displaced villagers to make their camps and establishes routes for the villagers to get food or even to flee to Thailand. The KNU does place demands on the more stable villages for food, money

and porters, although in most areas the villagers are too poor to give anymore. Villagers, while not always happy about giving their money and food to the KNU, generally feel better about it than giving to the SPDC since the demands are not usually accompanied by threats and they view the KNU as fellow Karen. It does place the villagers in a difficult situation because they have no choice but to comply, then after they comply they are accused by the SPDC of supporting the resistance. Villagers who go as porters are also treated much better by the KNU and are usually only taken as far as the next village. The greatest complaint that most villagers have is that the KNU does not come around as much anymore as they used to. Some of the villagers, especially those living in hiding in the hills, feel as though they have been forgotten or are no longer important now that their situation is no longer stable enough to contribute rice or money to the KNU. While not all villagers are happy with the KNU, most do support its goal of autonomy for the Karen people. They are recognised by many villagers as their leaders and are often referred to as such.

This support exists not only in the hills but extends down into the Sittaung River plains as well, despite the strong control the SPDC has exerted there for a long time. Villagers in the SPDC-controlled areas often hide KNU officials or KNLA soldiers who come to their villages, despite SPDC threats of punishment.

“Our leaders are the KNU. The SPDC are not our leaders. ... We still have our leaders so they arrange it for us. We haven’t dared to go back [to our village] and take our food since we fled. The leaders know we have troubles so they look after us. They have looked after us since the beginning when we fled two or three months ago. We live under their control. If it wasn’t like that it would be too hard. They also look after the students for everything. We hope the leaders will help us somewhat, and we will work to get food to eat ourselves somewhat. We have decided to make hill fields here.” - “Saw Yo Tha” (M, 56), internally displaced villager from xxxx village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #101, 3/01)

“Yes, we go and carry for them sometimes when they ask us to carry and send them when they come and go. Sometimes we carry about 4 or 5 viss [6.4-8 kg / 14.4-18 lb] and sometimes it is about 7 or 8 viss [11.2-12.8 kg / 25.2-28.8 lb]. The heaviest is about 10 viss [16 kg / 36 lb]. The people have to do it for them because they ask. ... We can eat when we arrive somewhere. We ate together with them. We ate salt and fishpaste. They just mixed salt and chillies and ate like that, so we ate like that also. ... They didn’t scold us.” - “Saw Pleh Wah” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from xxxx village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01); talking about conditions while portering for the KNU.

“The people who stay outside [KNLA] demanded a goat, and they didn’t give money for it. They didn’t ask in anger, they asked for it from the village head in a polite way, so people were pleased to give it to them. They stayed in the village for a while and then left the next morning. People were worried that we’d face problems [if the KNLA stayed longer], so we tried to find a goat for them before the Burmese or Ko Per Baw could arrive. ... It is much better when the Kaw Thoo Lei [KNLA] enter the village, because they are Karen like us. If T— [the KNLA commander] asks for food to eat, people want to give it to him. The Ko Per Baw are just the dogs of the Burmese, so they are even worse than the Burmese.” - “Naw May Wah” (F, 40+), refugee from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #204, 7/00)

Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts are designated as the KNLA 3rd Brigade and 5th Brigade areas, respectively, of the Karen National Liberation Army.

The KNLA is a guerrilla army and does not have the strength to directly confront the Burmese Army, but it does still operate extensively in both areas conducting guerrilla operations and harassing Army camps. The 3rd Brigade consists of the 7th, 8th and 9th Battalions as well as militia units. Numbers are hard to confirm but there appear to be several hundred KNLA soldiers. 5th Brigade has one battalion, the 102nd Battalion, which also has several hundred soldiers. These battalions are supported by local part-time guerrilla soldiers who often act as guards for the hiding places of internally displaced villagers and villages still under KNU control. The KNLA no longer controls fixed territory in the area, but they do hold *de facto* control of large areas in the hills; SPDC troops do not dare enter these areas except in large columns, and when they do the KNLA and the villagers clear out of the way until they are gone. KNLA units in the 3rd Brigade regularly go down into the plains to carry out hit and run raids and to ask for food. How successful they are can be seen in that a new road has been built from Na Than Gwin to Mone; the old road ran along the base of the hills and the *Sa Thon Lon* were afraid to travel along it because they knew they were KNLA targets. Ironically, many of the villagers forced to build the new road had been forced out of the area of the old road, making it uninhabited and easier for the KNLA to operate in. KNLA ambushes and raids also still occur in areas of Papun District which the SPDC has declared as ‘white’ or free from resistance activity. Trucks going to and from Papun are ambushed or hit by landmines on the Ka Ma Maung-Papun car road, and SPDC camps are occasionally attacked. When the KNLA still held stationary positions and controlled territory before 1995, many of its soldiers were conscripted, but since that time it has become a much smaller guerrilla force and no longer practices conscription, though there are still many child soldiers among its ranks. The morale of the KNLA soldiers is generally high and their weapons are well maintained, however the weapons are old and ammunition is in scarce supply. To make up for their great numerical disadvantage and their lack of ammunition, the KNLA manufactures its own basic landmines and uses them extensively to protect their supply lines and to restrict the movement of SPDC units. Landmines are also used to protect hidden sites of displaced villagers and escape routes for refugees. The KNLA notifies villagers of roughly where the landmines are, but many villagers are still wounded and killed by KNLA mines (see the **‘Landmines’** section below). When they can, KNLA soldiers warn villagers of approaching SPDC columns and the villagers pass intelligence on SPDC activities in return. The KNLA sometimes ambushes these columns to allow the villagers time to escape. Often upon hearing of an approaching column, the KNLA and the villagers simply move out of its way, coming back after the column has passed through. Some displaced villagers on the run follow along with KNLA units for a small measure of protection.

“The resistance people who stay around there. They try to provide security, and we tell each other things. They try to protect us, but when the Burmese come there are 70 or 80 of them [so the KNLA doesn’t take them on].” - “Saw Lay Pa” (M, 39), refugee from xxxx village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #66, 1/00)

“They are travelling around there. They shoot the Burmese sometimes. The Burmese last came three years ago and at that time the people [KNLA] shot them. When they came recently, the people also shot them.” - “Saw Ghay Hser” (M, 26), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #1, 2/01)

“They are active and go down to the plains and shoot [the DKBA and SPDC soldiers]. If they meet the soldiers they shoot and if they don’t meet them they arrange for rice from the plains area. They go to get rice from the plains. They go to buy it.” - “Saw Lin Yone” (M, 32), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #2, 2/01)

“The soldiers from the KNLA do not come. Only one or a few soldiers come at a time. If they see their enemies they fight, but they don’t harm the villagers, beat or hit the villagers. They don’t force us but we do as they say.” - “Saw Ber Kaw” (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)



Hill rice fields in Meh Thu village tract of Dweh Loh township, Papun District. The constant patrolling through the area by SPDC battalions in June 2001 forced most of the villagers to abandon their fields and many of them are facing starvation as a result.

[KHRG]

III. Displaced Villages

“They say that the KNU relies on the villagers. The soldiers will fight them until the KNU loses. They will fight until the KNU has lost so we have to flee. All of us fled with the cats and insects. If we didn’t flee like this, then they would have killed everything when they saw it. Only the cockroaches don’t flee. If the soldiers see things, they burn them. They burned the huts and houses and even burned the little beds. They didn’t leave anything. We couldn’t do anything. We know the situation of the enemy when they come. If they arrest us they beat us. So we fled and hoped that they won’t try to destroy us until two or three years from now.” - “Myo Nyunt” (M, 20), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #141, 9/00)

The SPDC’s Campaign of Destruction

“There is no plan to get peace. The enemy has a plan, though. It is that when they come we have to flee and escape. If we do not escape, we must die. That is the only plan. Because we are staying inside the country and we can’t flee to another country, we can’t do anything. We feel that we were born here, so if we live, we work and eat, and we die, it is finished. We can’t do it any other way.” - “Pu Law Tee” (M, 70), internally displaced villager from xxxx village, Shwegyin township (Interview #78, 3/00)

Prior to 1997 the SLORC had made sporadic relocations in various parts of Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts but they didn’t last for very long. Columns also went into the hills burning villages but the soldiers usually went back down at the onset of the rainy season, allowing the villagers to move back into their villages. In 1997 the SPDC made the decision to consolidate its control over the region once and for all. The new campaign began by destroying about 200 villages in northern Papun and eastern Nyaunglebin districts. Army columns approached villages and then began firing mortars and small arms into the villages. Once the villagers had fled the attack, the villages were looted and the houses and paddy

storage barns burned, after which the soldiers moved on. Everyone fled into the hills where most of them have been surviving, on the run, ever since. (For more information on the 1997 campaign see the KHRG report ***“Wholesale Destruction”***, April 1998.) Each year since 1997 the SPDC sends increasing numbers of battalions into the hills to hunt down the villagers.

“In the training, they said to not steal people’s things and to not abuse the civilians. They taught many things, but when we arrived here [at the frontline] they were doing it and it hurt the villagers. That is why I don’t like it. I came here when I arrived at the frontline. When they saw a

paddy barn, they burned it. They burned whatever they saw. They are doing it under duress. So, I don’t like this.” - “Soe Tint” (M, 18), Lance Corporal from Light Infantry Battalion #xx, Papun District (Interview #226, 11/00)



Saw Aw Hta village, Nyaunglebin District not long after it was burned by LIB #5 in March 2000. [KHRG]

“We heard that they are going to clear the west of the Bu Loh Kloh [remove all the villagers living to the west of the Bilin River]. It means they are going to clear out the people who stay there. If the soldiers see them they will shoot to kill and drive them out. The leader [KNU] told me. They received that information from a radio intercept [the KNU often monitors and intercepts SPDC radio communications].” - “Saw Ghay Hser” (M, 26), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #1, 2/01)

“They threw everything out of the houses and kicked the walls out. The houses were broken and there were just the pieces of the houses left. They destroyed too much in the village. We couldn’t stay in the houses anymore even if we had to. The houses are already broken.” - “Saw Pleh Wah” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

When SPDC columns come to destroy villages, the villagers often have to flee quickly, carrying nothing but their children and a small quantity of food. Most of their belongings are left to the mercy of the soldiers, who generally loot and destroy them before burning the houses. Nothing is left which may be of use to the villagers. Livestock is shot and what can’t be eaten is just left to rot. Matches, axes, saws, machetes, farm tools, clothing, and jewellery are all stolen by the soldiers, presumably to give to their families or to sell. Cooking utensils are taken away and pots are pierced with bayonets to make them unusable. Clothing is also destroyed. The crops are destroyed in the fields and if the paddy storage barns are found, the soldiers take what they or their porters can carry and burn the rest [see the section below on ***“Crop Destruction and Food Shortages”*** for more information]. The corpses of villagers who have been shot dead are often robbed of money, jewellery, tobacco and even cloth bags and clothes. Without any income, the villagers have almost no way to replace their belongings or food supplies, and even those who manage to retain some jewellery or money often cannot dare go to buy things in SPDC-controlled villages, where they risk being arrested as outsiders and therefore ‘suspected rebels’. Even those who somehow manage to replace some of their possessions and grow some new food often lose it the next time they have to flee.

“Everybody has had to suffer because we live in the same village. When they come they immediately destroy things and eat people’s paddy and rice. ... They destroyed the flat fields. They already came and destroyed some and the dew also destroyed some of the paddy, so we are in big trouble. We have to find food to eat, ask for food to eat or buy food to eat. When the soldiers come and see the paddy they destroy it in the field. We get a harder and harder life. They already

came and destroyed things so people bought new things and came back and kept them. We have no money, we just borrow and owe people, but we can’t pay them back anymore. They themselves have to buy salt and chillies to eat, but they can’t buy them anymore. We can’t give them anything anymore. We have no clothes and we live naked.” - “Saw Ta Pla Pla” (M, age unknown), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #60, 3/01)

“They [the SPDC] said they were going to come and make their house [build their camp] so we told them that we dared not stay in our houses anymore. Then we took up our belongings and all of us came up to stay in the upper place [in the mountains]. But the soldiers come to block us always. The foolish Burmese. We are living without knowing anything and they want to shoot us. They took our machetes and baskets and threw down all our things and took all the good things. There was one of them who threw the things down and took a pot and spoon that he liked. They had already come and burned our houses so we don’t have pots and spoons anymore. So we bought them and they took them and we bought them and they took them again and again.” - “Naw Mu Lu” (F, 50-60), internally displaced villager from S— village, Mone township (Interview #62, 3/01)

“This time when they came everything was destroyed. It has been three years since they entered the last time. At that time we had everything. We had cattle, buffaloes, matches, axes, Mateo saws [a brand name] and many supplies and animals. They came and destroyed it all. Now it has been just three years and we get a little paddy each year by year. For me I’m not free to go and clear my hill field. This year if it is good I will clear my hill field. I have no money to buy cattle or buffaloes right now. I think I will try a little by little. But I didn’t do it yet because the SPDC came and destroyed it again. We couldn’t work anymore. If the responsible leaders can help us we are going to stay and listen to the situation. If other people can live their lives, we can also live our lives.” - “Saw Htoo Lay” (M, 53), internally displaced village head from T— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #89, 12/00)

“At that time they took chains, earrings and boxes of clothing. At that time they were #77 [Division]. This time they took 2 pots that they saw when we fled and hid under a bamboo tree. They take it all. Nephew, when they see our things it is not enough for them. They grabbed our old clothes and threw them away. They took all the good things, even the good clothes and sarongs. I guess it is for their wives and children. They took all the chickens. That was #44 [Division].” - “Pu Law Tee” (M, 70), internally displaced villager from S— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #78, 3/00)



A burned house in Pah Ko village, Naw Yo Hta area, northern Papun District. Two SPDC columns combined to burn 10 villages in the area.

[KHRG]

"It is good if they don't see things. If they saw things and wanted to take or destroy them, they took or destroyed them. They left nothing. They destroyed it all. If they see a tin, they take it. If they see a

"In December [1999] they came down and did things again. At that time they burned down peoples' gardens, farmfield huts, and the places where people thresh the paddy, including every house and hut. ... They came to destroy all of the buildings where people stay when they come back to work the fields, and they also burned all the mats that people use when they thresh the paddy [people thresh the grain onto huge mats of woven dried grass]. They burned everything they could. They didn't burn down the paddy barns because they didn't see them, but they would have if they'd seen them. They burned down all of the huts that they saw." - "Pa Say" (M, 41), internally displaced villager from W— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #40, 1/00)

"They did not burn it but they ate it all and took all the things that I kept in my paddy barns, including wooden boxes and other belongings. Our new clothing, because we didn't keep old clothing in those boxes. There was one Kyat [16 g.] of gold and 5,000 Baht. They took all the pots. People saw our old pots that they had thrown away along the path, along with our machetes and hammers. Before, there were 150 baskets of paddy. When we went back, all of the paddy that they had scattered on the ground had already sprouted. We dared not go back to look [for a long time afterwards]; they went to stay very far from the paddy barn, but we dared not go back. They did this to everyone the same way, to all of the people in the Saw Mu Plaw village tract. They destroy humans, buffaloes, paddy, and shelters. They do it to all of them until they disappear, and they do it very harshly." - "Saw Lah Htoo" (M, 40), refugee from Ko Say village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #35, 1/00)

knife, axe, tools, or clothing, they take them all. If they don't want to take it, they destroy it. They came and took boxes, tins and other things. They took three tins, ten viss [16 kg / 36 lb] of salt, two or three viss [3.2-4.8 kg / 7.2-10.8 lb] of chillies, a big pot and a big jar. There were many other things taken like a machete, an axe, a knife and other stuff." - "Saw Mu Kaw" (M, 23), internally displaced village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #145, 9/00)

While the campaign has continued, the SPDC has now added a new tactic; rather than move on, the soldiers now establish a camp in a central village from which they can control the surrounding area. Many villagers reported in 2000 and 2001 that they had left their villages before the SPDC soldiers arrived and then stayed in the forest nearby, but after watching the soldiers build a camp, they had decided to move farther away. Many of the villages are left intact by the soldiers as their mere presence is enough to depopulate the area, and thus bring it under their control. The SPDC has also shifted its focus from burning the village, since most of them are destroyed or abandoned anyway, to destroying the villagers' food supplies and crops. Paddy storage barns are looted and burned and the villagers' livestock is shot and killed. Crops still in the fields are burned, trampled on and uprooted. Increasingly the soldiers are making it difficult for the villagers to even plant crops by burning the brush in the fields before it has been properly dried. Hill fields rely on the ash from the cut and burned brush to provide nutrients as well as to protect the seeds. Burning the fields early results in an uneven burnoff and only parts of the fields are usable. Hill fields have also been landmined by the soldiers to deny their use to the villagers. At harvest time from October to December more battalions are sent in and

go on patrol, because groups of villagers harvesting rice in the hillside fields are easily visible from one or two hilltops away. The patrols sneak as close as they can and then open fire on the harvesting villagers with small arms, shoulder-launched grenades and 60-millimetre mortars. Many villagers have been wounded or killed this way, and it has the added effect of making villagers through the whole area too afraid to harvest, so the crop is abandoned. After driving the villagers off of their crops, the troops often trample or landmine the fields. The targeting of the food supply is done in the knowledge that the villagers cannot survive in hiding or support the KNU without those crops. This is not lost on the villagers, who have commented to KHRG that the loss of the villagers will mean the defeat of the KNU.

"They think that they will do this until the Karen nationality has disappeared. We don't know whether they will take the KNU's place or not. Right now they can't stop yet because they are still staying close to us. They have their place and have built their camp well. They stay there now so we can't stay there anymore and we have to leave our region." - "Saw Dee Ghay" (M, 45), internally displaced villager from T--- village, Shwegyin township (Interview #90, 1/01)

"It is not only my village but every village in xxxx village tract. It happened also in K---, M---, P---, L---, T--- and S---. They have fled to stay in the jungle and are cornered. None of them dare to stay in their villages. They also don't dare to go back because the soldiers stay there. They just go back to visit sometimes and after that they go back to stay in the jungle. They never go back to visit anymore." - "Saw Pleh Wah" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T--- village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

"The Burmese unit which has come up to Per Kee Der is LIB #365. In the beginning three of their battalions came up. LIB #369 came up from Thay Koh Hser Der in 3rd Brigade. LIB #365 came up from the Koh Sghaw camp. Then they came up to Po Wah Der, Yoh Po Loh and Per Kee Der. When they arrived at Per Kee Der they made their camp there. They are operating and patrol in that area and they have nearly arrived to the village. They came up at the same time, on November 14th 2000." - "Saw Eh Doh" (M, 25), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #3, 2/01)

"When they saw us, they wouldn't let us live, they killed at once. When they saw our things, they burned them. When they saw small pigs or small chickens, they ate them all. The enemy came in the paddy growing time, so people dared not grow paddy. When they see paddy growing, they always come around. When they see the people, they arrest and kill them including the children."

When they come to one place, we have to flee to another." - "Saw Meh Wah" (M, 35), refugee from S--- village, Mone township (Interview #28, 11/99)

"I would like to report some information about what we have to bear from the SPDC. We fled from our village, L---, to the place where we stay now and we will have to flee again. We have to face difficult troubles. They destroyed our paddy in L--- and will still destroy it in the place where we stay now. If Battalions #388 and #386 come they will do the same things to us again. They torment us by eating our animals, taking our belongings and burning our houses. We hope to find peace. We want to stay peacefully. If that doesn't happen we will have to face a lot of troubles. If they see us, they shoot to kill. They never help us. If they helped us, we would be happy and think that they are good to us. But their way is not like this. If they see people they shoot them dead. If they see men, women or children they shoot them all dead. They don't go into battle, they just come and fight the villagers. Some of the villagers get hurt and some of the villagers die. It happens very often. This is the last of the information I would like to report." - "Saw Nu Nu" (M, 37), internally displaced villager from L--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #51, 4/00)

"They flee to stay in the areas that are a half hour or one hour away. They make hill fields. They take a few things with them so they can live. We take what security we can. We take security so they have time to flee. The soldiers come and shoot us dead in the fields when we are cutting the grass or harvesting the paddy. That is why we have to suffer. Some people are still suffering." - "Saw Tha Pwih" (M, 38), refugee from T--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #56, 2/01); villagers often send out a few people to act as security watching for approaching Army columns

"They are staying around the village in the jungle. It is difficult for them to find food. They are making little hill fields, but that is not enough. They are foraging for food between visits from the enemy. When they get enough for one or two bowls, they come back. When they eat it all, then they go to get more. They don't know where they will move next, because the enemy follows them every time." - "Saw Meh Wah" (M, 35), refugee from S--- village, Mone township (Interview #28, 11/99)

For much of the last four years the IDPs (internally displaced people) have been moving back and forth across the Nyaunglebin and Papun District borders depending on the movements of the SPDC columns. For example, 1999 saw the movement of people out of northern Lu Thaw township into Mone township, while early 2001 saw large scale movements of villagers from northeastern Shwegyin township into

southern Lu Thaw township. Villagers and KHRG field researchers have said that KNU radio intercepts in 2001 indicate that the SPDC soldiers in the area are under orders to clear out all the villages to the west of the Bilin River. Increasingly the villagers are being hemmed in by the SPDC strategy of building new camps in newly occupied territory and constructing roads across the two districts. The camps allow the patrolling of the surrounding countryside, even in the rainy season, to hunt down the villagers and destroy their crops. The roads have camps placed along them and are fenced, landmined and heavily patrolled, making them an effective barrier to the movements of both villagers and KNU. The new road running eastward from Kyauk Kyi (near the Sittaung River in Nyaunglebin District) to Saw Hta on the Salween River has effectively cut off northern Lu Thaw and Mone townships from the rest of the two districts, which has made it almost impossible for villagers from northern Lu Thaw township or from Toungoo District to get to the Thai border.

“We flee and stay in the jungle. We look and listen for any news. We look at the heads of the enemy [the direction in which their columns are moving/looking]. When their head is directed toward us, we turn to the other side. When their head is directed toward another place, we turn to this side. When they come from the east, we flee to the west. When they come from the west, we turn to the east. We avoid them up and down, and we have escaped each time. We go between the rocks and the valleys, and to the sources of the streams.” - “Saw Maw Htoo” (M, 31), internally displaced villager from D— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #71, 2/00)

“We have fled from place to place until now. I have come and stayed at P— village for the past 3 years. I can’t count all the places I have fled from. I have fled and stayed everywhere on the rocks and among the rocks. We flee to one place and the Burmese come. We flee to another place and the Burmese come. We have to find food in the jungle and sometimes we buy it from the rich people. We don’t have medicine to treat the sick. There is no one coming to sell it here. We just stay in the jungle and treat them with bitter gourd leaves. Sometimes we eat boiled rice soup. When our children cry, we have to close their mouths because the Burmese are staying close to us. We are living like wild birds and chickens. We don’t have huts and fences. We make roofs from leaves to keep the ground dry.” - “Saw Thay Doh” (M, 28), internally displaced villager from P— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #81, 3/00)

“I want to tell how the Burmese have arrived again and again in our village of T— and they have taken everything belonging to the villagers, so we have problems. No pots to cook with, nothing to eat, no blankets to warm ourselves in the cold and no money to buy anything, so I think that T— village needs help. Our village has already been destroyed many times, and other villages in Lu Thaw township have had to face the same problems as us, so all of Lu Thaw township needs help to free us to do our work, to have clothes to wear and food to eat. Some people can’t even afford shirts for their sons and daughters, and many small children have to go around naked with their penises and their bottoms showing. We only have some pieces of old blankets, and they have to wear those to keep warm. The parents worry

A villager stands in the ruins of his house in Tee Tho Kee village, Nyaunglebin District, burned by SPDC troops from LIB #6, Column 2, in late March 2000. [KHRG]



for them. Mostly we have to use fire to keep us warm. Parents can't buy pots to cook for their children, and if they buy one the Burmese come and destroy it, so everyone has problems. Our people also face many diseases from many different things. These problems have spread throughout Lu Thaw township and everyone now has to face them, these very big problems." - "Saw Lu Doh" (M, 30), internally displaced villager from T— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #32, 1/00)

"The troops who entered our village have only come to do bad things and oppress the civilians. They can't win victory over the [KNLA] soldiers, so they're driving the civilians into hunger. If there are no civilians then the [KNLA] soldiers can't survive either, that's why they're trying to starve us." - "Saw Lay Ghay" (M, 34), internally displaced village head from P— village, Dweh Loh township, (Interview #127, 12/99)

"The areas in Ku Thu Hta, Ma Lay Ler and Meh Way village tracts suffer worse than us. The villages in the mountainous areas are fleeing in different directions. In Ma Lay Ler village tract villagers from L--- have fled to M--- and K---. ... In the beginning [of 2000] they were staying in the mountains [as IDP's], but the Burmese were coming up two or three times a month and they couldn't endure it anymore. They couldn't search for food. Some were hungry for rice and salt last year." - "Saw Maung Sein" (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

"We fled up to S--- village tract. We then went to L— village. We then crossed into the area of 5th Brigade [Papun District], the people call it B—. We slept five nights on the way. We met with problems for a few days on the way. Our people who have responsibility [KNLA] took security for us and we came." - "Saw Dee Ghay" (M, 45), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #90, 1/01)

"It is dangerous to cross the car road [the Saw Hta – Kyauk Kyi car road]. ... It is about one hour by walking [it takes one hour to pass through the danger area]. The area starts from K— to the car road. The car road is on a hill in the forest. To cross the road we have to cross the valley and then go up to the car road. After we cross we will be on the north side. There is another valley on the north side of the car road. It is another half hour walk to be safe from danger [on the north side after crossing]. It is safe, no danger anymore. It is safe after H—." - "Bo Tha Ku" (M, 45), KNLA military officer from Papun District (Interview #57, 3/01)

The SPDC has begun to leave 'Peace [Nyein Chan Yay]passes' behind when they go through the villages. They have also given these to people they have captured and then released in the jungle. These cards

come in various colours and styles, most having some sort of picture of an SPDC public work like a bridge, or a picture of happy Karen people enjoying talking to SPDC soldiers. Whatever the style, they all have messages written on them in Karen and Burmese asking the villagers to come down to the relocation sites. They promise that the holders of these cards will not be harmed if they show them to the soldiers. One villager was told by the soldiers that if he was carrying the pass the other Burmese units wouldn't harm him when they saw him. Most villagers find this unconvincing, because the cards are often left behind after the soldiers have opened fire on the villagers and looted their rice and belongings, or given to people who have just been detained and beaten. Many villagers wonder at the SPDC's promises of safety and help when they are confronted daily with the realities of the SPDC's shooting of villagers, looting and burning of their villages, destruction of their food, and landmines. Some of the language in the 'Peace passes' is aimed at KNU leaders and soldiers, encouraging them to 'exchange arms for peace', but the several which KHRG has obtained have all been given to villagers.

"They wrote it in a letter. For the 'Peace Pass' the Burmese make it look like a book. My uncle, he is the brother of my father, is old and didn't flee. When the people fled he stayed in the village. It wasn't in T— village but in a place above the village with only two houses and a building. When the people ran away, he stayed there. When the SPDC soldiers came they passed by and saw him. They poked him with a gun barrel but he wasn't afraid because he was old. They searched him and then called him to sleep with them. Then they cooked chicken curry and pork curry from animals they had taken from the village and beaten [to death] and fed him. Then they searched his bag and took his Nationality Card. He asked them to give it back, but they said they would give it back to him the next day. The next day they gave him a Nyein Chan Yay ['Peace'] pass, so he didn't ask for his Nationality Card anymore. Then they asked him his name and other things. He told them everything. They said, "Don't be afraid. If you are holding this pass and the other Burmese see you, they won't do anything to you." It was in November 2000." - "Saw Ghay Hser" (M, 26), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #1, 2/01)

The following page shows a translation of a 'Peace Pass' distributed in Papun District. It is a small card which folds out into 8 panels. Panels 1-3 are written in Sgaw Karen. Panels 5-8 are a rough translation of Panels 1-3 into Burmese. [This 'Peace Pass' was also published as Order #413 in **"SPDC & DKBA Orders to Villages: Set 2001-A"** (KHRG 2001-02, 18/5/02)]

Panel 1:

Peace Pass

This is a Peace Pass. People who hold this Pass provide information to the hands of the Army, or to the responsible government authorities.

As a representative of peace, people will accept you. The Army will accept and welcome you peacefully, this is a promise.

Army

Panel 2:

Directive

The one who holds this Pass is designated as a representative of Peace. They must be taken care of well. They must be sent quickly to the hands of the responsible authorities. Do not torture, take the belongings of, or abuse the one who holds this Pass.

If these prohibitions are disobeyed, serious action will be taken.

Army

Panel 3:

The Peace Road

Kay Eh Nyu [KNU] leaders and soldiers, the areas where your siblings are staying have peace and are experiencing development and improvement. Your siblings and relatives want peace. Your siblings are always waiting for the day when you will come back.

For the Karen State to develop and improve it is necessary for the whole Karen nationality to live peacefully. It is time to exchange arms for peace.

For the benefit of the Karen nationality, look ahead to the goal of the taste of peace, come back to join and work with the civilians and Army, brothers and sisters.

Do not think, take this Pass and come to the nearest Army camp.

Panel 4:

[Panel 4 is a photo of a suspension bridge, presumably to show the wonders of development.]

Panel 5:

The Peace Road

KNU leaders and soldiers -

The areas where your siblings are staying already have peace and are experiencing development and improvement.

Your siblings, parents and relatives want peace, and are waiting day by day for the day when their siblings will come back.

If their siblings want the Karen State to develop and improve it is necessary for the whole Karen nationality to live peacefully. It is time to exchange arms for peace.

Panel 6:

**The Peace Road
(2)**

For the benefit of the Karen people, look ahead to the goal of the taste of peace, come back to join with the civilians and Army.

Brothers and sisters...

Do not think...

Hold this Peace Pass and come quickly to the nearest Army camp.

Stamp:

Strategic Command Group (Base, Papun)
Military Operations and Intelligence

Panel 7:

Directive

The person holding this Pass is designated as a representative of Peace. They must be taken care of well. They must be sent quickly to the responsible authorities.

Do not torture, take the belongings of, or abuse the one who holds this Pass.

If these prohibitions are not obeyed, serious action will be taken.

Army

Panel 8:

Peace Pass

This pass is a Peace Pass.

If you carry this Pass and bring information to the Army or government authorities, you will be designated as a representative of Peace. The Army will not make trouble for you and will welcome you warmly, this is a promise.

[Graphic of a handshake between 2 hands in business suits]

“About the enemy, they also wrote one letter. My daughter, Naw K—, went to P--- [village] and the Burmese gave her one paper. They wrote on it in Karen. They wrote to come back and make peace with them. ‘Even though you stay there, [former KNU President] Bo Mya can’t take care of you enough. Come back to us.’ They said it doesn’t matter, even soldiers can come and put down their weapons. ‘Come back and work together. We don’t need to fight anymore,’ they said. ‘You do your language and I will do my language. You hold my hand and I will hold your hand. If we hold hands it will be finished.’ I myself don’t like things like that.” - “Po Naw” (M, xx), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #61, 3/01)

“It was Major Htun Myint’s group who came. At that time we were gathering the paddy while some people acted as sentries. We worked in groups of two, and in the afternoon we stopped. When they came, people [the villager sentries or KNLA] saw them first, so we didn’t get injured. After they



Internally displaced villagers on the run in Dweh Loh township, Papun District. When this photo was taken the SPDC soldiers were only 10 minutes’ walk away. [KHRG]

finished shooting, they went down to sleep in our new farmfield huts. We hadn’t put the roofs on them yet. They wrote a letter on a piece of split bamboo and left it there. It said to exchange weapons for peace. It said that the villagers must go back to them, and when the villagers go to carry our paddy they will guard us. They also said that when they saw us they wouldn’t kill us. They signed it ‘Major Htun Myint, Meh Way patrol unit’. They say they don’t search for us, but whenever we go to watch their camp we see all the ways that they use to go up on the mountains

to where we are staying. They are searching everywhere.” - “Pu Taw Lay” (M, 56), internally displaced villager from M— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #80, 3/00)

The SPDC’s Army has succeeded in the destruction or forced abandonment of most of the villages in eastern Nyaunglebin District, Lu Thaw township and western Dweh Loh township of Papun District since March 1997. KHRG’s first report on the situation [***“Wholesale Destruction: the SLORC/SPDC Campaign to Obliterate All Hill Villages in Papun and Eastern Nyaunglebin Districts”*** (April 1998)] contains a list of 192 villages which were partially or completely burned by the SPDC based on interviews, independent monitors and KNU reports. For this report KHRG has compiled a new listing, now including 226 villages which have been destroyed or abandoned and another list of 42 which were given specific orders to relocate [*these lists can be seen in Appendix A and B on pages 170 and 173*]. These lists are not complete and many more villages are unreported. Most of the villages from Lu Thaw township and central

Nyaunglebin District on KHRG’s 1998 list, as many as 150, were destroyed in 1997 or 1998 and have been on the run, living in hiding in the forest ever since. In 2000 and 2001 the SPDC began moving up from the west into the far eastern portion of Nyaunglebin District along the border with Papun District, and these villages have now become displaced as well. Most of these villages were not burned but were abandoned when the soldiers approached. The new SPDC strategy of building camps among these deserted villages and landmining the villages and fields means that many of these will never be reoccupied. A wave of forced relocations in western Dweh Loh township in 1999 and 2000 resulted in many of these villages also being destroyed as the villagers fled and the SPDC burned the villages. Much of the best rice-producing land has now been

occupied and/or landmined. The number of villagers affected is hard to confirm but a least 30-35,000 are now living in the forests, while at least 10,000-20,000 have fled to the refugee camps or the illegal labour market in Thailand.

“Naw Yo Hta village tract. There are 22 villages in the village tract. Every village can live near their village, but all the villagers have to flee around [the villagers have fled but are still staying near their villages]. The SPDC who operate around here do a lot of activity in this tract. They have

made their camp in Ler Mu Plaw village tract [to the west]. They always stay there. The greatest production of paddy is in Ler Mu Plaw, Saw Mu Plaw and Toh Thu Plaw. The SPDC has taken all those places so our civilians have to stay poor and cannot eat anymore.” - “Po Naw” (M, xx), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #61, 3/01)

“When they came to Ler Mu Plaw the villagers had to flee. They went to Saw Mu Plaw but those villagers had to flee also. The other villagers from around Saw Mu Plaw had to flee too, but I don’t know the village names. They are the villages around the Ler Mu Plaw area. They are Ler Mu Plaw, Bler Ghaw, Tee Mu Kee, Loh Koh, Hser Tee, K’Neh Mu Der, Khaw Kho Hta and K’Baw Kee villages. ... Now we live in B—. The villagers from Loh Koh and Hser Tee fled to stay in H—. The villagers from Khaw Kho Hta and Yu Loh Der fled to K—. The villagers from Bler Ghaw fled to stay in H—. All of them had to flee to stay in a new village. ... In B— village there are over 1,000 people including the children. In K— there are nearly 1,000 people. In H— there are about 400 to 500 people. In H— there are over 1,000 people.” - “Saw Nu Nu” (M, 37), internally displaced villager from L— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #51, 4/00)

“Q: How many villages did they burn in Meh Thu village tract?

A: They burned all the villages near where we stayed. They also burned Nya Hsa Kee, Ler Toh Po, Ker Kaw Law, Meh Gha Law and Paw Wah Der. They burned them. I didn’t go there but the people told me that. The soldiers destroyed all that they saw. All the villagers had to run and stay in the jungle.” - “Pa Kah Lay” (M, 39), villager from W— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #132, 5/00)

“They went to P---, Y---, T--- and K---. These are the most serious villages. They are the same as T---. People say that the soldiers still live there, they haven’t gone back yet. At our village the soldiers came one time and went to stay close to our village and came again to carry the food from our hill fields. They came twice like that. At P---, Y---, T--- and K--- the people live nearby and spy on the SPDC and saw that they live there all the time. We can’t tell what they destroyed. They destroyed everything. Everything was destroyed in those four villages.” - “Saw Htoo Lay” (M, 53), internally displaced village head from T— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #89, 12/00)

“They are Tee Lee Kha Kee, Li Pway Kee, K’Bu Kee, Blaw Ko, Tee Baw Kee, Hsi Mu Heh Der, Shway Mu Der, Toh Pwih Der, Baw Gho Der, Paw

Khay Ko, Bee Ko Der and Ko Say Der. There are 12 villages in the village tract. Presently in Saw Mu Plaw village tract none of the families from those villages can stay in their villages anymore. They are all destroyed.” - “Saw Tha Pwih” (M, 38), refugee from T--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #56, 2/01)

“They’ve burned many villages, like Lay Hta, Maw Pu, Tee Thareh Kee, Meh Gha Law, Paw Wah Der, Dta Kaw Hta, Da Baw Kee, Ka Pu Soh, and Maw Thay Hta villages. They’ve burned them down place by place. They go to one place and burn it down, then stay there for a month. Then they go to another place and stay there for a month, eating and destroying everything, then they burn it down and move to another place. The first two villages they burned were Dta Kaw Hta and Meh Gha Law. Paw Wah Der, Lay Hta and Maw Pu were burned at about the same time, and Tee Thareh Kee was the latest place they burned.” - “Saw Bway Htoo” (M, 42), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #130, 4/00)

“The villagers from Khay Kee, Tee Ler Kee, Kler Ka Plaw, and Klu Thay Der villages all fled. Whenever they came, the villagers from Thaw Pi Der, Plaw Ghaw Kee, Deh Bo Hta and Dta Law Ploh fled. Sometimes everyone fled together and sometimes all separately, to places nearby like P—, T— and T—. Some fled over the hills together. If you added it all up, there would be 500 or 600 villagers who fled [just around his village].” - “Saw Toh Wah” (M, 32), internally displaced villager from K— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #39, 1/00)

Living Conditions

"Too many years. It has been four or five years. We are poor in everything. We live naked and our testicles and penises are hanging down. We have no clothes anymore, we are in trouble about everything." - "Saw Ta Pla Pla" (M, age unknown), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #60, 3/01)

Life on the run for the displaced villagers is very difficult, although many do prefer it to living in the relocation sites and performing forced labour at the whim of the local SPDC commander. Others were not given the choice and were forced to live on the run when their villages were burned down. The hiding places of the internally displaced villagers usually consist of no more than two to four families in small shelters in the forest, as this makes them more difficult to find by the SPDC soldiers. A few sites are much bigger with twenty or more families and have become almost like villages. Some of these larger sites have been arranged by, and to a degree supplied by, the KNU and are better protected by the KNLA. This security is by no means permanent and the villagers have to be ready to move at all times. For most displaced villagers there is little or no protection. The only warning is from villagers who have been posted on the trails around the site to give warning of the approaching columns. These 'sentries' are usually unarmed and they themselves have often been shot dead. The KNLA does warn the villagers if they have information about SPDC movements, but they are not always around and do not have the numbers to directly confront the SPDC columns. The villagers usually don't wait to see the soldiers but flee as soon as they hear a gunshot or a landmine explode, whether it is nearby or not. Most of the time the villagers play a cat and mouse game with the soldiers.

"We stayed near the village and listened. We hid in fear of our safety. The soldiers climbed the trees and bamboo and walked around the field looking for us. We saw that they were very close to us. They searched for us around the fields for a while. When I came back I saw the place where they had searched. Maybe they were searching for a gun. If they had seen a gun it would not have been easy for us. Maybe they would have killed us if they had seen us. The commander ordered them to shoot so they shot. When the soldiers went back we still stayed there [in the jungle near the village]. Only the men came back and secretly watched the village. We saw that they had written a letter and left it." - "Saw Nuh Po" (M, 23), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #143, 9/00)

"We have to stay and listen [to whether the soldiers are coming or not], stay and listen like that. We don't stay very far from them so we can hear the sounds of mines exploding or the sounds of

shouting. We have to be careful and afraid of them. When are they going to come to us? Are they going to come secretly in the nighttime? We don't know so we are living in fear." - "Saw Pleh Wah" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

"The Burmese came along the river, and when they saw my house they started to fire a lot of guns - people yelled out 'P'Yaw!!' ['Burmese!!'] Even though my son is bigger and taller than me, I started carrying him. The Burmese were firing their guns, and my back was becoming very hot but I had to keep going. My son called to me,

Climate and Seasons

Nyaunglebin and Papun District are in the southeastern portion of Burma. This region has three seasons; a rainy season from June to October, a cold season from November to February and a hot season from March to May. In the first half of the rainy season it rains almost constantly, varying between steady drizzle and downpours for 18 hours or more every day, making the pathways through the hills almost impassable. Dirt roads are washed out and rivers and streams rage in flood, but this is also the rice growing season so villagers spend a lot of time in their fields and field huts. In the second half of rainy season the rains sometimes let up for a few days, but in the hills it still rains from 6-12 hours a day. Temperatures in rainy season are pleasant, though it can be chilly and damp in the hills. After rainy season the air is clear and temperatures slowly drop into cold season. This is the most pleasant time in the plains, with daytime temperatures usually under 30° C and cooler nights. In the Papun hills it gets very cold in January and February, with daytime temperatures reaching 20-25° C but nighttime temperatures dropping as low as 5° C and below, making it very difficult for displaced villagers out in the open. From March onward it warms up and becomes hot and dry, with daytime temperatures well over 30° C in the plains and 25° C in the hills.

‘Father, drop me and leave me!’ but I thought, I will never drop you, because if I can save you we all need you. When I reached the top of the hill I didn’t even know how exhausted I was, and the sound of gunfire went quiet.” - “Saw Kleh Wah” (M, 45), internally displaced villager from T--- village, Mone township (Interview #42, 2/00); his son had injured his knee previous to the attack.

“They have laid landmines in those areas, and whenever we heard the explosion of landmines, we had to run. If we tried to burn off our hill fields and the smoke went up, then their bullets started flying. If they weren’t firing too many bullets or shells, we stayed and hid in a valley [otherwise they had to keep running]. We were working under horrible conditions and having to flee all the time. If we could work there, we’d have enough food to eat each year. But now we can’t work there.” - “Saw Thay Muh” (M, 45), refugee from P--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #67, 1/00)

“The villagers from Koh Lu Der village tract are mostly suffering because they have to live in fear of the SPDC. The villagers have to make their hill fields quickly so sometimes they don’t have enough food. Because they have to work hurriedly, they can’t take enough time. At the time when people harvest paddy, the SPDC soldiers are sometimes beginning to be active. The villagers have to fear [the soldiers] like that so we don’t have the right to work. It is causing us a problem. That is not only in May Per Hta village, it also happens in Baw Peh, Hsaw Moh Hu Der, and down to Tee T’Kay Hta and T’Bo Hta and all

the places close to the enemy.” - “Bo Tha Ku” (M, 45), KNLA military officer from Papun District (Interview #57, 3/01)

Flight from the soldiers is the most difficult time for the IDPs. They are usually forced to leave most of their possessions behind, taking with them only some food, a machete, a cookpot and whatever small items they can carry. Families with small children must also carry their children when they flee. The fleeing villagers sleep on the ground until they can build huts again. Sometimes they don’t even have a tarpaulin to shield themselves from the rain. One villager described to KHRG how after placing a tarpaulin over his wife and children, he then crawled halfway into a tree to seek shelter from the rain and to sleep. The huts are usually small and temporary as the villagers know they will probably have to flee again soon anyway. Sometimes the escape routes are between two Burmese units or camps and the villagers have to move in complete silence. The adults have to cover the children’s mouths to keep them from crying and alerting the soldiers. Some of the villagers have been fleeing like this off and on since the early 1970’s, and some have been living in the forest continually for five years or more.

“We have a lot of problems. We can’t do it. We have to sleep on the ground under the huts. We didn’t have time to build huts so we have to sleep in the rain. The insects and mosquitoes bite a lot. We slept on the ground last night. We have no huts or tarpaulins. We slept in the damp and the mosquitoes and insects bit us. ... We have to build

We had our hopes on farming...

“Hey, if I have to tell you everything then I can speak all day. I have had to suffer in many ways until my children had to go in the mud and their heads were dirty from mud and the leeches went in their ears and eyes and it was raining. In May 1998 when we were ploughing a flat field the soldiers came and destroyed things so we had to run away. Some people had tarpaulins [to make shelters] and some didn’t. They used blankets instead and when it rained a lot the water passed through the blanket and it was heavy. We ran like this all day and in the evening when it was dark I could do nothing. I had an old tool so I dug the ground on the hillside for my wife and children to sleep. For me I could do nothing. I put my machete inside a tree and I also put my head inside the tree. My legs were still outside the tree. I slept like this all night. I covered only my head and I covered my children with the tarpaulin but they were very wet. I had dug the ground enough for them to lie down and sleep. We suffered like this but I don’t know if it is usual for people to suffer like this. For people who do not usually suffer like this they would not be able to endure it. We stayed on the mountain so we had our hopes on farming. If we can farm we can eat rice. We didn’t have a flat field so in the rainy season we went to find bamboo shoots. We cut the bamboo shoots into small pieces and mixed it with one tin cup of rice for six people. One tin cup and six people, so there were more bamboo shoots than rice. We ate like this until paddy harvesting time and we didn’t die. We started to eat like that in June or July [at the beginning of the rainy season].”

[- “Saw Tha Pwih” (M, 38), refugee from T--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #56, 2/01)]

huts in one place then move to another place. Build one day and stay for one day. Way! We can't go. The malaria and the headaches are caused by the places where we build our huts. We build in one place then have to stay in another place. The SPDC is doing this to us. Recently two Army units came up and are staying close to us. Right now, after we are finished talking, we have to flee again. The troops are coming and burning the villages, burning the huts and pulling the paddy out of the ground. We can't eat. The rice is uncooked and the water not boiled [for drinking]. The SPDC comes and oppresses us and the animals. I can't think about the SPDC. This SPDC unit is saying they represent the government but why do they have to do this? They call themselves the government but they come to oppress us and beat us. They treat us like animals and it is not right. They don't think that we are human. They call themselves the government but they know nothing. ... We are still on the move. We will continue to move forward. We sleep one or two nights and then we must move again. If they search for us we have to flee again. We don't dare to suffer so we have to flee. We dare not go down and stay inside [the relocation area] because the villagers there are tied up and forced to porter. ... We can't suffer this but we also dare not go and stay among them. We fled but they came up and saw us and beat us. They chased us and shot at us with guns. Way! They shot and it hit people and they bled. ... They have done it for a long time, since the Ko Per Baw [DKBA] began [in late 1994]. They always do this. If we go down or up from here, the SPDC are all the same. We just hide nearly in front of them. Sometimes we stay between two of them [two units]. When we live between two units, we travel at night. We go together with our children and we can't see the way. If the babies cry, we close their mouths. We can't do anything. They don't like it if the babies cry because if the SPDC hear the babies they will kill us." - "Myo Nyunt" (M, 20), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #141, 9/00)

"We just think that the Burmese come and oppress us and eat our things so we always flee when we can. We flee and we are sick and lie down and we have to bear the cold, we have no medicine to eat. We have no hats, no tarpaulins. We have to flee and sleep in the night in the dew and the leeches bite us also. So we are poor. We have no clothes and no blankets to cover ourselves. Our babies and children are sick and we have no medicine to give them to eat." - "Saw Ta Pla Pla" (M, age unknown), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #60, 3/01)



Villagers fleeing their homes in northern Shwegyin township, Nyaunglebin District in March 2001. [KHRG]

"I have faced and borne these troubles for a whole year. We don't have our hut anymore. We sleep in the jungle and have to worry that ants, termites or snakes will bite us. We are afraid but we can't do anything. Even if the ants bite us, we can't do anything. We sleep in the damp. It was raining the whole year. We couldn't burn off our hill field and we just stayed like that the whole year. We couldn't do anything because of the Burmese. If it were not for them, we could live our lives. Before, we never stayed like this. But now we have to stay like this always. We can't do anything. ... It was calm for just one or two days. Most days we have to flee. Now we have to run away again. If it calms down longer than this and we can stay longer, it will be better. I hope the Burmese will go quickly and then we can go back and stay at our place. Now we have to stay on the ground because we can't go to our huts. If they see any huts they burn them. There are no good huts left. We have to live on the ground in the summer. We can't build a good hut because they will burn it. They even burn little huts. If we roof it with tarpaulin, it doesn't stay dry and the water comes in. It is very unpleasant. If we make a more pleasant house, when they see it, they will burn it." - "Naw Mu Lay" (F, 36), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #142, 9/00)

“There has been a lot of the enemy coming and torturing. They come to our village and we can’t just stay and live. Sometimes we had to flee in the nighttime. We couldn’t drink or eat and the women fell down in the rain. We had to deal with the mist, the mosquitoes and insects. The children were crying so the people had to scold them, beat them or put clothes or blankets over their mouths. We dare not face the soldiers because they are making life difficult for us. If they see us, they torture, beat and do many things to us. I have seen it and I have suffered it myself.” - “Aung Aung” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #150, 11/00)

“Then on February 15th [2000] they went through the hill fields. When they come, we see the smoke from the fire and we all watch together. If the



Villagers fleeing from Nyaunglebin District into western Papun District in January 2001. [FBR researcher]

situation is bad, we move and flee into the jungle. We come back later and look around. If their column did not come to our place, we go back to work again. After we finish working, we go back to the jungle. We stay there until finally they come to shoot us there.” - “Saw Kler Htoo” (M, 51), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #77, 3/00)

Some villagers interviewed by KHRG indicated that it was only the young who can stay in the jungle and that many of the elderly or families with small children are forced by the difficulty of the situation to go down to the relocation sites or flee to Thailand. Villagers have been forced to leave the elderly behind on the

trails when they flee because they are too slow. Sometimes they catch up later and sometimes they die there on the trail. Elderly villagers have also been left behind in the villages when the villagers have to flee, especially if the person is too frail to walk. The fate of these people is uncertain; some have been left unharmed after being forced from their houses before they were burned, others have been killed by the soldiers when they arrive, and still other elderly villagers have been burned along with their houses when the soldiers set the village alight. The handicapped have also, on occasion, been left behind if they cannot keep up and are too heavy to carry. A mentally handicapped man in Bu Tho township who didn’t listen when his siblings told him to flee the village was shot five or six times and killed when the SPDC soldiers came to his village.

“In the rainy season, all of the children, young people and old people are the same. But the young people like us are a little better because we are young and a little stronger. The old people are cold and the young children cry because they have fever when they are sick and malarial. We can’t do anything because we have no medicine so some of them died. We don’t know how to get the medicine to heal them. We just go through this kind of thing day by day.” - “Saw Mu Kaw” (M, 23), internally displaced village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #145, 9/00)

“If there are old women and men who can’t flee, we carry them. When we can’t carry them anymore we leave them. We don’t know if they can eat or not. They just die like that. We do not dare to go back and look for them. We saw some of them when they had already begun to smell. Like Auntie Nya Da and Grandfather — [inaudible], they already smelled bad when we saw them. Maybe they died because they were hungry or sick, we don’t know. We didn’t dare to go back and look after them. The other children know nothing. Nobody went back to see them.” - “Naw Mu Lay” (F, 36), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #142, 9/00)

“On May 4th 2001, Battalion #19 killed a villager in his house at Paw Dee Der village, Bwah Der village tract, Bu Tho township. His name was Saw Pa Dway, 38 years old, and he was mentally handicapped. His mother and father are dead and he was staying with his siblings. His siblings told him to flee and stay outside the village when the Burmese came, but he didn’t listen. He stayed in the house. The people fled for two days and he didn’t get any rice to eat. He didn’t die from hunger though. The Burmese shot him dead. They shot him five or six times. The next morning the people buried him.” – field report from KHRG field researcher (Field Report #21, 5/01)

“They came and when they arrived at xxxx they burned down about 10 of the villagers’ houses. They burned the houses of T—, K—, N—, L—, and L—, and also the school and an eating place, and they burned one old woman to death. The villagers couldn’t find her later. The Burmese had burned her in the fire. Her name was Pi Toh Loh, and she was 70 or 80 years old. She already had grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The Burmese came very quickly and her children and grandchildren couldn’t carry her. When they came back to find her, she had disappeared along with their house and all their things.” - “Po Tha Dah” (M, 31), internally displaced villager from B— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #46, 2/00)

Families living as IDP’s in the hills include many small children. Women often give birth in the jungle without the benefit of even a midwife to assist. Many babies do not live through their first year. The mothers are also at risk, both during their pregnancies due to malnutrition and vitamin deficiencies, and afterwards when they are forced to flee without adequate recovery time from childbirth. The children are more susceptible than the adults to diseases in the forest, and without medicine many have died. It is not as easy for the families with small children to run as the children have to be carried, and it also means the family can’t carry as much rice or belongings. Children are not spared by the SPDC soldiers and many have been shot or wounded by shrapnel when the soldiers open fire on the villages. There have been many instances when the soldiers were close enough to see it was children they were shooting at, but they continued shooting anyway.

A villager and his young child fleeing in Nyaunglebin District after SPDC soldiers occupied his village in May 2001.
[KHRG]

“Aye! We faced problems. It was terrible for the old people. It was nighttime and we had to sleep in the jungle, so people got diseases. The children were coughing and it was raining. We couldn’t make fires in the night.” - “Saw Ghaw” (M, 32), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #98, 3/01)

“The enemy was already coming close to us. They had arrived at D—, which is only half an hour from our place. I had gone back to harvest. When they moved up to L—, I came up to send my wife to the bank of the Mwh Loh Kloh river. When we arrived there, my wife gave birth. The same day, the enemy entered Maw Pu. All of the villagers were fleeing, but some were left behind. I told the leader of KNDO [Karen National Defence Organisation; village militia] that we must flee. He asked me, ‘Can the mother of your daughter walk?’ I answered that either way it wouldn’t be easy for us. We were afraid but we stayed there. We couldn’t flee. If we fled, it would have been very terrible for her. We waited, and if they had come to shoot us, it would all be over. If they couldn’t shoot us, we would run. ... My child was born in the jungle. My child was born smoothly, but we were afraid. After the birth, the mother was in the delicate state of health of a woman after childbirth. She went to take a bath and got sick. When she got sick, we couldn’t do anything. We were afraid, but we still stayed there. At night, the [KNLA]





The bell is all that is left of this Christian church in Tha Baw Der village, burned down by SPDC troops in 1999. [KHRG]

“Back when I could stay in my village, my villagers built me a monastery. But since 1997 the SPDC battalions have driven us up and down and burned the village. They drove some of the villagers to Meh Way and others to

people were talking and then a person went and fired a gun. I thought that the enemy must have arrived near us. We fled and carried [our belongings] in the dark. We could walk but it was slow going. I thought, ‘As long as we are alive, we will keep going. If we die, it is finished.’”
- “Saw Lay Ghay” (M, 34), internally displaced village head from P— village, Dweh Loh township, (Interview #127, 12/99)

“If we must tell about the enemy, they are very terrible. We can’t even tell about how they are torturing us. When we were fleeing, we fled at night and then sat in the jungle. The children didn’t dare to cry. When they cried their mothers put their breasts to their mouths. The children were shouting, ‘Euuu. Euuu. Ahhhh. Ahhhh.’ We were hungry for rice and salt. The next morning, we ran and ate rice in another place. We met with our friends there and we got rice to eat.” - “Saw Maw Ray Heh” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from M— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #151, 11/00)

Christian churches are among the first buildings burned by the troops, and Buddhist monks and monasteries are not exempt. Monasteries have been looted and the monks shot at on sight along with the villagers. The monks don’t dare to confront the SPDC soldiers and flee along with their villagers. This is despite the fact that most of the soldiers are also Buddhist. Among the displaced villagers who have little or no food, some of the monks have had to begin working their own fields because their followers can no longer provide for them. This is unusual and illustrates the seriousness of the situation because monks normally are forbidden to work fields for fear of killing an animal or insect while digging.

Pway Day, and some villagers fled into the hills. Right now we who live in the jungle don’t have hill fields anymore, because every time we try to work them two or three battalions come and burn it. We can just get a little for each of us after they burn it. The troops searched for all of our things, they saw all of the things which belonged to the monastery that my villagers had provided and they took it all. All of the things they took would cost 200,000 Kyat. The SPDC battalions don’t fight other armies anymore, they just attack the villagers. It’s not easy for me to be a monk anymore. They shoot all the people that they see. Right now even though I’m a monk I have to work a hill field, because the villagers can’t feed me anymore. We have to work for ourselves. We don’t have our monastery anymore. We have to live in the jungle, and if they see us they will shoot us. If they capture us they will torture us and kill us.” - “U Myint Oo” (M, 37), internally displaced monk from P— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #144, 9/00)

“Yes, they are Buddhists, but when they are struggling for their country they don’t treat the monks the same, they will oppress them. It wouldn’t be easy for me if they came and saw me again. They would think I am the Nga Pway’s monk [‘Nga Pway’ is the derogatory SPDC name for the KNU/KNLA]. The only way is to run. They have not seen me yet so I will continue to hide.” - “U Than Dah Sara” (M, 41), internally displaced monk from M— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #114, 3/99)

Shootings

"We stay in the jungle like this so it is better if they do not see us. If they see us everything will be cut off [they will all be killed]. They treat the civilians just like their enemies. They will kill all the Karen, every man or woman, every time they come up into the mountains. For the children, they will kill them all, even the little babies who are still drinking from their mother's breast." - "Saw Pleh Wah" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

"My children's father was injured in his arm and came to me and told me he had been injured. When I looked at him his arm was bleeding. I thought he was only wounded in the arm so he couldn't die. Then he showed me his stomach and there was a big wound. I told him that this time you are going to die. At first he dared not tell me about his wound. He thought that if he told me he didn't know how I would feel, so he dared not tell me. Then he told me. When he told me he was resolved and told me to call his children and grandchildren to come back." - "Naw Mu Lu" (F, 50-60), internally displaced villager from S— village, Mone township (Interview #62, 3/01); he died soon afterward.

A common reply villagers give to the question, "What would the soldiers do if you faced them?" is "They would kill us." This is borne out by the numerous testimonies of villagers who have said that the soldiers opened fire on them on sight. The shootings are intended to make the villagers so afraid that they will come down out of the hills, but actually have the opposite effect of driving them further into the mountains. Villagers flee whenever the soldiers come close, even if they do not actually come to the village, because they know that if they are seen they will be shot at.

"No, I don't dare to meet them. If they see me, they will shoot me and I will die immediately. They won't capture me or call to me anymore. They have shot many people everywhere. If they see people making a hut or reaping paddy or cutting grass, they shoot them every time. They don't care if they are men, women or children. They shoot them all." - "Saw Nu Nu" (M, 37), internally displaced villager from L— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #51, 4/00)

"I don't know why they shoot villagers when they see them, but when they shot at people on February 21st 1999, we weren't carrying anything, we were just working in the hill fields with working machetes. There were girls and boys together in the fields, but as soon as they saw us they shot at us. We had no guns in our hands, but they don't only shoot at soldiers - they also shoot at villagers. ... Right now the enemy [SPDC] does not only shoot at soldiers, they also shoot at villagers like us, so what do you think about their behaviour toward us? I want to know. Do they think villagers like us are their enemy? Maybe they think we are their enemy. If their porters [i.e. Burmans, like the soldiers] run to escape to us villagers, we try to save them as far as we can, we give them food

and show them the way. But if they see us they shoot to kill us. Why? If we see their [Burman] villagers should we do like they do?" - "Pa Maw Htoo" (M, 27), internally displaced villager from P— village, Mone township (Interview #41, 2/00)

"They try to shoot us. They say we are the enemy and they really shoot at us. I don't know what to think. They shouldn't do that. If they are really searching for their enemy, they only have to shoot their enemy. Now they are shooting the villagers. The villagers are not their enemy. When the Burmese shoot like this we can't shoot back because we don't have anything to shoot with." - "Saw Muh Dah" (M, 30), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #87, 4/00)

"Q: But doesn't the SPDC say they won't hurt or shoot the other nationalities anymore?"

A: Yes, they said that, but they still shoot us." - "Thein Shwe" (M, 35), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #55, 4/00)

The soldiers usually don't call out to the villagers before they open fire. If the soldiers call out to the villagers it is usually only a split second before pulling their triggers, and the villagers are given no time to respond. Attacks on villages and IDP hiding places are carried out as military operations, sometimes including supporting mortar fire. The soldiers sometimes arrive quietly and silently observe the villagers before attacking them, giving them ample time to see that it is unarmed villagers they are about to attack. Other times outright ambushes are laid to trap and kill the villagers. In most cases the soldiers come so close to the villagers that there can be no doubt that the people being shot at are unarmed civilians, including women, children and the elderly. Villagers automatically run whenever they see the



Maung Thay Paw from Tee Thu Der village, Papun District, who was shot on sight and killed on March 23rd 2000 while working in his hill field. The soldiers then looted his body. [KHRG]

soldiers or hear gunfire because they know that to remain would probably mean being shot, or at best being detained and tortured or taken as a porter.

“They just come, and if you hear about them you have to run, and you can never have legs long enough to run. ... In those areas, even if you heard them firing weapons very far away, you had to run further away. We had nowhere to run to in the jungle. If there was some place to run to, it would be easier. But through the whole Saw Mu Plaw and Ler Mu Plaw area, through the whole area of Lu Thaw township, we didn’t dare face them. Sometimes you saw them at a distance when you were staying in the bushes. But if they saw you they came towards you and they got angry right away. They started shooting right away. They shot to hit us, but if we weren’t hit we could run to escape. But if they hit us, it’s finished, and they even treat your corpse very cruelly. ... They shot to kill people even if they knew they were villagers who had gone to hide in the jungle, whether they saw them or even if they just heard voices among the bushes, they always shot at them. I want to tell you about all of the people they shot, but I can’t tell about all of them. According to the order that they issued us from the battalion in Pwa Ghaw, in the area of Saw Mu

Plaw village tract in Lu Thaw township, no women or men would be safe if they saw them. They designated that area as the main place of their enemy [a KNLA stronghold], so no woman, child, or man dares to face them because if they see them, they shoot them all.” - “Saw Lah Htoo” (M, 40), refugee from K--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #35, 1/00)

“They shot us when we were carrying our paddy. It was the time when people carry their paddy [from the threshing ground to the paddy storage barns]. We didn’t see them, they just came and immediately started shooting.” - “Naw Paw Si” (F, 11), internally displaced villager from D— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #38, 1/00)

“In 2000 they’ve shot two people dead; their names were K’Paw Htoo [a woman a.k.a. Nay K’Paw Mo] and Eh Roh [a man]. Naw Kyu Eh [a woman] was injured. The Burmese shot dead K’Paw Htoo after they had burned down her paddy barn. She had gone away to try to find food last year, and she arrived back in time to plant but the rains came early so she couldn’t plant much. She had just finished her harvest, and the Burmese burned it all. She set out to find some paddy, but she encountered them and they shot her dead. Life was very difficult for her, because she has very young children and she had to work very hard. She knew that the situation wasn’t good, so she’d hidden her paddy. She hoped that she could earn money cutting grass in people’s fields until her paddy was dry [newly harvested paddy takes time to dry and cure properly before it is considered good for eating]. She had to do things like that because they had nothing to eat, but then they met her and shot her, and now it’s finished. Now her husband and two baby children do not know what to do.” - “Saw Kleh Wah” (M, 45), internally displaced villager from T— village, Mone township (Interview #42, 2/00)

“There were U Traw and Pa Ghaw Khay. They are related to us. U Traw was 50 years old. The other one was 35 years old. They were from Ler Wah village, Ler Wah village tract. The SPDC soldiers shot them dead. They shot at them many times because we heard the sound of shooting many times. Pa Ghaw Khay was alone. He was going to listen to the news for us [see whether the SPDC soldiers were coming or not]. He was staying at T---. He didn’t know that the Burmese were waiting on the path. Then the Burmese shot him. The people didn’t see it. The sound of shooting lasted for a while and they thought he had disappeared. The people then went to find him. The Burmese



Woman from northern Papun District who was shot while burning off their fields. She was hit by a bullet in the back which exited just below her left shoulder. She also had multiple wounds from grenade shrapnel. Her husband was also wounded in the attack.
[KHRG]

didn't bury him so his elder brother went to bury him. It was last year after we had finished preparing the hill field [about May or June 2000]."
- "Naw Mi Mu Wah" (F, 35), internally displaced villager from K— villager, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #94, 3/01)

"It was on March 28th [2000], at the same time that they came to M---. He had received information that the enemy was coming but he didn't know exactly when, so he stayed there and listened for them. He thought the Burmese would pass far from him. The villagers said that when the Burmese arrived at his house his son was keeping watch, but his son suddenly heard gunfire explode behind him, in the hut. His son hid, then left at 6 in the evening to K--- and followed the villagers from there. I don't know why they shot his father. They couldn't have seen anything unusual, because he was just a villager and a farmer."
- "Pa Hla" (M, xx), internally displaced villager from M— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #85, 4/00)

"They also shot dead one of my elder sisters just 4 or 5 days ago, on the evening of the 14th [of March 2000]. Her name was Naw Eh Muh. Three of them were coming back and carrying their paddy. They didn't know that the path wasn't safe. When the enemy saw them, they shot them. The other two fled and escaped, but she was shot in the head and fell right there. Later we didn't see her rice and paddy there. They had taken everything, and they also tore her clothes and sarong to shreds."
- "Saw Lay Doh" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #76, 3/00)

"We don't know why the SPDC troops came and shot at us. We don't know their plans for us. We just work on our hill fields. We just know there was the sound of shooting, and some people were injured. Maybe they have bad plans for us because we are Karen people. They would like to destroy and torture us. ... We are just farmers. We just work on our hill fields and flat fields. We have no weapons to fight them with. We just have our machetes, knives and axes for doing our hill fields. We never shoot them or shoot at their town. It is not fair for them to come and hurt us. If we hurt them we could bear the consequences, but we never hurt them. They just came and shot us. We don't know what their plans are for us."
- "Pa Mer Ler" (M, 25), internally displaced villager from T— village, Mone township (Interview #49, 4/00)

"When he was wounded we were almost on top of the guns [he was very close to the soldiers when they began shooting]. We threw down our machetes and baskets. We looked at them and knew that we couldn't flee anymore. We fled into the bushes and the bullets were flying in front of us, 'fee-fee-fee' [the sound of the bullets]. Hay aye, hay aye! The brush was being cut down [by the bullets] 'preh-preh-preh'. It sounded like an elephant eating, it was so noisy. 'Hay-hay-hay'. There was light in front of our noses, red-red-red, red-red-red [tracer bullets]. Hey, hey! We couldn't flee anymore. I was carrying my grandchild and she was crying too much. Below us there was the sound of groaning. There was the sound of someone calling in the river, Hey! It was too noisy above and below us. There were a lot of people. I thought they had already fled away but they had come back. Then we stayed together. Then I asked who was making the groaning sound there. Someone said it was his child. He said there were

two people [wounded]. Then he said that if we take that other person's child it would be hopeless. So we were going to leave the child there. We didn't know whether we would live or die. If the Burmese had come and seen us at the higher place they would have killed us." - "Naw Mu Lu" (F, 50-60), internally displaced villager from S— village, Mone township (Interview #62, 3/01); describing an attack in which her husband and another man were shot dead and herself, her daughter and her grandchild were wounded.

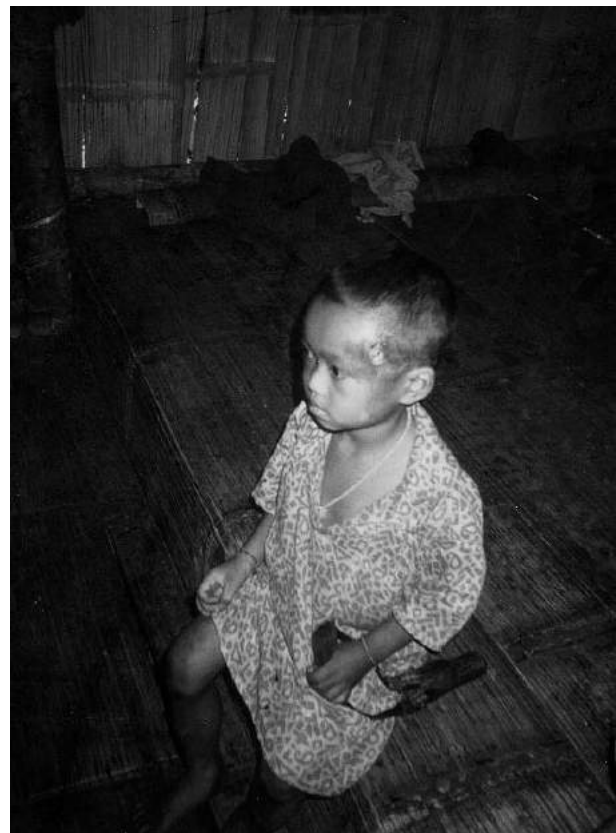
"[W]e never saw their faces - anyone who saw their faces died." - "Saw Thay Muh" (M, 45), refugee from P--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #67, 1/00)

The soldiers shoot at men, women and children even when it is obvious that it is women and children that they are shooting at. It is difficult to see very far in the forest so most shooting incidents occur at close range where it should be obvious that the targets are women and children. In the open fields it should also be obvious to the soldiers who their targets are. Children make up a large percentage of the people shot dead or wounded by the SPDC's soldiers. A villager from Lu Thaw township related to KHRG how the soldiers came upon her hut in the forest and immediately opened fire on her three children. There were no adults as they were away in the fields. As her two sons were running, one of them 7 years old and obviously not an adult, a rifle grenade landed behind them and wounded the 7 year old boy in the leg. He was carried away by his brother and survived, but many others have not. Some villagers have lost whole portions of their families. During an attack on an IDP site in Shwegyin township in January 2000, "Saw K'Baw's" [not his real name] 6 month old son was shot in the head and killed while suckling milk from his mother's breast as she was fleeing. After another shooting in late 1999 in Lu Thaw township a villager interviewed by KHRG learned that he had lost his 13 year old daughter, his 11 year old son, his brother and his uncle. Villagers often express their bewilderment as to why the soldiers are shooting at them when they are unarmed civilians and have done nothing to the soldiers or to Burman villagers. Most villagers believe it is a part of a plan to exterminate the Karen people.

"We had gone to work our hill fields. When they shot at us, all of our children were at home. There were three of my children there. The three children were home playing. When they shot my babies, the eldest was cooking and the two boys were playing far from their sister [who was cooking]. They left the pot on the stove and fled without anything. When they started shooting, my daughter, the eldest child, fled away. She couldn't wait for her two brothers. When the two brothers got to the hut a kway boe [a rifle grenade] dropped behind them. It was not far from them and the

younger one was wounded in his leg. Then they helped each other run away. We found all of our children but the youngest one was injured in the thigh. He is a seven year old boy. When I got back people asked me if I had seen my child. I told them that I hadn't seen my child yet. They told me they had carried each other and gone to another place. I went to take my children and send them to another house. His name is Christ Nay Thay. He is 7 years old. He was injured about one month ago already. ... We have no guns. We have nothing. We don't work against them. We just work in our hill fields. We don't understand the SPDC. We are just farming our hill fields and living among the hills. If we think about it, it is not fair that they come and shoot our babies." - "Meh Bya" (M, 37), internally displaced villager from L— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #54, 4/00)

"One of my sons was killed while his mother was carrying him. They shot him on January 20th [2000], at 9:10 a.m. They shot him in the head and it was broken. He was not so big. He would have been 6 months old in two days. They came very close when they shot at us. We didn't know they had come. The enemy are finding civilians to shoot at like this. If they chase their enemy



This 5 year old girl was shot in the head and left behind in the confusion when SPDC soldiers opened fire on her family's hiding place. This photo was taken one year later, but her wound had still not healed properly. [KHRG]

[KNLA soldiers], they have to chase them their way [they have to use military tactics and fight]. But they know we are civilians without weapons, so they chase us like pigs and dogs. They chase and shoot us like this. They are not chasing their enemy, they are chasing the civilians.” - “Saw K’Baw” (M, 31), internally displaced villager from H— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #72, 2/00)

“They had fled and stayed at the source of a river named the Saw Theh Loh Kloh. It was time to cook for the afternoon and they thought they would cook. They chopped some firewood. The enemy came to watch and listen, then came out of the jungle and shot at the place where they were living. When the soldiers opened fire, they fled. “Saw K’Baw”’s wife was carrying their small son, who was in her arms and sucking milk. When the enemy shot him, it hit him directly in his neck and a part of his head chipped off. She threw down her child and fled to escape herself. He was 2 years old [according to his father he was only 6 months old]. LIB #5 did it.” - “Saw Maw Htoo” (M, 31), internally displaced villager from D— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #71, 2/00)

“I know that in W—, they came and shot up P—’s house once. They [SPDC] surrounded it and shot it. They didn’t see anything unusual [there were no KNLA]. There were only villagers there. They shot and killed one of P—’s children. He was a ten year old boy.” - “Pa Kah Lay” (M, 39), villager from W— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #132, 5/00)

“[T]hey shot my children dead. Two of my children and my brother and uncle. My uncle’s name was Bee Wah Htoo. He was 43 years old. He has six brothers. I don’t know where he was injured. The second one was my daughter, Meh Hsa Htoo. She was 13. She was shot by a small gun [a rifle] in her thigh, in the head and again in her buttocks. The other one was La Kaw Mu, my 11 year old son. He was wounded in the head and in his buttocks. The last one was April Htoo. He was 20 years old. He had 8 brothers and sisters. He was wounded in his thigh by a bullet from a small gun [a rifle]. They were going to work in the hill field. The soldiers shot them when they were in the field. It was in the afternoon during the time when the paddy was ripe [harvest season; November or December]. ... They see us and shoot us. I have never gone and shot or burned their village. They just came and shot us. We don’t know the reasons why they came to shoot us. They just came and did it.” - “Thein Shwe” (M, 35), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #55, 4/00)

“They shot Bee Wah Htoo and his three nephews at Tee Th’Waw Kee [actually two nephews and a

niece]. They hadn’t done anything; they just went to thresh their paddy. Their names are Meh Hsa Htoo, Lah Kaw Muh, and Pa Thu Ko. After they’d finished threshing the paddy, Bee Wah Htoo filled one big tin of paddy for each of his nephews and three for himself, and said, ‘Come on, let’s go’. They were just villagers and weren’t carrying any guns, just small knives, small bags and a tobacco box. But the Burmese came secretly. Pa Thu Ko was carrying the paddy and when he was coming back he met the Burmese on the path. He was just carrying one or two bunches of bananas and a big tin of paddy. They shot him and he fell down and died. When Bee Wah Htoo lifted some paddy up onto his head and started carrying it, they shot him and he fell right there with his paddy. Meh Hsa Htoo started running but he was hit, and he fell down under the trees and died. The other nephew Lah Kaw Muh ran, but when he arrived near the path he was hit and fell. All of them died. When they were dead, there were only a few armspans between them. Then the Burmese came up and took Meh Hsa Htoo’s necklace and bracelet and everything from Bee Wah Htoo, like his bag and his tobacco pipe. He didn’t have money because he was just going to thresh his paddy. One of his other nephews [Lah Kaw Muh] was only young, so he just had a little bag with a slingshot, and they didn’t take that.” - “Naw Ghay Muh” (F, 42), internally displaced villager from P— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #48, 2/00)

“There are many things. For myself I had 11 brothers and sisters. There were four men and seven women. The four men are all dead because of the SPDC’s oppression. The one man left is my old father. I would like to see my brothers but I can’t see them. Why not? Because of the SPDC’s oppression. They killed all my brothers.” - “Naw Paw Paw Htoo” (F, 30), internally displaced villager from K— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #59, 3/01)

Hillside rice fields are open patches in the forest and are clearly visible from one or two hills away. At weeding time (August) and harvest time (October-December), more SPDC patrols are sent out to look for groups of villagers working in these fields and open fire on them. Working in family groups, they make an easy target even from a distance. Troops also watch for smoke from the burning off of hillfields in March-April, and smoke from cookfires at the villagers’ hiding places. Some displaced villagers have resorted to harvesting only by night with KNLA troops posted for security. When the SPDC soldiers are too far away to use their small arms they have used mortars to shell the villagers. If they see cooking smoke in the distance they fire a mortar shell at it. Even when they cannot find any villagers, they sometimes ‘walk’ their mortar shells up the valley of a stream (meaning to shell the whole streambed,

Massacre Beside the River

"They shot at us at 12:10 p.m. one day when we were preparing the hill fields [in February 2000]. When the soldiers came we were bathing and washing our clothes. The people sent news to us but we thought we didn't need to worry. We took and packed our things and put them into our baskets. We thought that if the soldiers came we would hear them coming. After we washed our clothes, we put them out to dry and that's when they shot at us. The men had gone back to get the sharpening stone and only the women were left behind. When they heard the shooting, the men left the sharpening stone in the jungle and came back to join the rest of the villagers, but they couldn't catch up to us. The villagers were all fleeing separate ways. We dared not go back to get our things. We couldn't see each other.

The Burmese met me first. They shot at me with a small gun [assault rifle]. They shot at me with a small gun two times when they started shooting. After that, they shelled us with a big weapon [a mortar]. It hit a young girl, an older Auntie and me all at the same time. It hit me in the hand. The shell hit the girl in her thigh. She fell down and didn't speak anymore when I looked at her face. Her name was Naw Dah. The whole side of her thigh was broken. She didn't die well [quickly]. They shot and killed her with a small gun later. ... The other one is Auntie K—. She is the daughter of Uncle P—. The shrapnel cut off her ear and a patch of her hair above her ear. It also hit her daughter in the back. They also shot M—'s mother in the arm when she went back to get her machete. When the bullet hit her she fled. The Burmese almost caught her, but she fled and escaped. Pa Bway Htoo Pa was killed. We saw the enemy shoot him. The bullet hit him in the thigh and he couldn't flee very far. He was hiding, but when he went back along the path they saw him and shot him dead there. Then they pulled him into the jungle and buried him on the other side of the river. He was too old and couldn't walk. His son-in-law always carried him when the Burmese came. ...

The villagers were searching for each other for two days. I was so hungry. I didn't eat rice for two and a half days. I didn't eat anything. I was afraid and didn't dare to make noise. We stayed like that. We thought if people found us we would get rice to eat, and if they couldn't find us we would die of hunger. When the whole group fled, I couldn't follow them. Some of them were carrying and holding their children. If we are alone, we can flee quickly. If we have children, we have to carry them on our backs and one in our arms. I fled and slept alone. I slept under a log. I was afraid and tried to cover myself. There was no light or knife with me. Nothing with me. I only had one bag. ...

Nobody treated me. We asked the [KNLA] medic to look. I told him about my injury and he could see it with his own eyes. He checked it and it didn't need to be treated. It is painful in the bone, on my wrist. I don't dare raise my hand up. I can raise my hand up only like this [raising her hand a little]. It is so painful. ... We arrived back and looked on the rocks; the Burmese had thrown all the old clothing, machetes and blankets beside the river. They had taken all the good things. The Burmese had come from upriver. We'd thought we would be able to stay safely among the rocks and stones in this difficult situation, but now there were only two ways to run. One way went up the mountain and the other way down to the fields. The villagers had fled and we didn't see them. We worried about what the Burmese had done to our families. We only saw the places where they had been. Did the Burmese capture them or did they escape? We didn't have any rice so how could we survive this? We found the villagers family by family. It took us 3 days before we could find them all. Each day we could only find 2 or 3, or 3 or 4 families. We searched for them for 3 days." - "Pa Ler" (M, 30), internally displaced villager from K--- village, Shwegyin township (Interview #84, 3/00)

aiming progressively further away) on the assumption that villagers may be hiding there. This method of attacking the villagers is more to harass them, but it does kill and it certainly can't be claimed that the soldiers were trying to capture anyone.

"They tried to find people in the hot season along the river valley. Civilians had run to stay along the river, so they tried to follow the river and they searched through the forest. If they saw smoke rising up [from cookfires], they shelled with big weapons. They do this to our civilians, so people couldn't stay there. I heard people say that they also planted landmines. I am not sure, but I think that they plant them to get both the KNU and the villagers who stay outside the villages." - "Saw Wah Pa" (M, 33), refugee from S--- village, Mone township (Interview #30, 1/00)



Saw Dee Mu, a 17 year old villager from Lu Thaw township, Papun District, who was shot dead by SPDC soldiers. The soldiers had positioned themselves in bushes nearby, then opened fire without warning. His mother was also killed in the same attack. [KHRG]

"They never caught us, but they saw us and fired guns at us one or two times. Whenever they saw the smoke from villagers' cookfires, they fired big weapons [mortars] many times to hurt the villagers. If they see you they shoot, they don't capture you. If they are close they shoot with small arms, and if it is farther they shoot at you with big weapons." - "Saw Toh Wah" (M, 32), internally displaced villager from K— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #39, 1/00)

"Sa Ka Ka [Military Operations Command] #10, [LIB] #366 led by Commander Maung Set Oo from

Meh Way comes to search for us regularly. When they come and see us, they usually shoot at us. When they came and saw us, they shot at us with their small arms [rifles]. No one was injured and the ten families fled together. Sometimes they shoot at us with small mortars and the children flee everywhere among the trees. Right now, we are going to start fleeing again. We took a rest for one or two days and now we are going to start fleeing again." - "Saw Nyunt Htin" (M, 20), internally displaced villager from P— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #135, 9/00)

Villagers shot by the soldiers are sometimes able to escape after being shot, only to die later from loss of blood. The soldiers often don't bother to take the time to see what happened to the person they shot at. Other wounded villagers have fallen where they

were hit, but rather than capturing them the soldiers have finished them off by shooting them at close range or stabbing them with their bayonets. The dead are often searched and robbed of whatever valuables they have on them. Sometimes the soldiers have mutilated the corpses. A villager from Kyauk Kyi township who was shot dead in January 2000 was later found with his liver and intestines cut out and his penis and testicles cut off. Even if the villagers are able to escape with their wounds there is little or no medicine to treat them and recovery is slow. Many die later from complications due to inadequate treatment, lack of proper medicines, infection or the need to continue fleeing, even if their original wound was relatively minor. [See also the section ***'Health and Education'*** on page 70].

From the hundreds of interviews and field reports used in this report, KHRG has compiled lists

of 312 civilians in the region who have been killed by SPDC troops in the region since 1998, and another 190 who have been wounded. Even these terrible numbers only reflect a portion of the cases, most of which go unreported. These lists can be seen in Appendix C and Appendix D on pages 175 and 186.

"He was going to find food. We fled and were staying in the jungle, and we didn't have food to eat. He was going to find some paddy. His name was Pa Maung Dah. He was 28 years old and he had a wife and a child. They shot him at Tee Der Aw in Maw Pu village on December 14th [1999], at

4 o'clock in the afternoon. He was with his 2 friends. One is Pa K— and the other one is K—. They escaped. After they shot him, he didn't die at once. It hit his calf. He couldn't flee to escape, and he died. We didn't see his body there. We don't know if they buried him or not. He disappeared and we couldn't find his body. We only saw the place where he had bled. We haven't seen him again, but we always think about it. I can't tell you what it has done to my heart." - "Saw Po Thu" (M, 30), internally displaced villager from M— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #128, 12/99)

"When they came they saw us and shot at us. They didn't call to us first but I saw them. They killed two people. One was hit in his leg and the other in the stomach. The one who was injured in the stomach died immediately but the other one didn't die until later. He fled, dragging his leg along the ground. They didn't see him anymore. When they found him he was already dead in the jungle. He had fled into the forest and nobody saw him. He was bleeding and then died from lack of medicine. The older one's name was Maung Nay Tu and the younger one was Saw Pah Htoo. They were brothers. They were 30 and 25 years old. They both had wives and their old father is still alive. They were shot in the month of Wa Kaun Lah [July-August 2000]." - "Saw Nuh Po" (M, 23), villager from xxxxvillage, Dweh Loh township (Interview #143, 9/00)

"The Burmese shot at them and two of them were killed. After they were killed, the Burmese put sand in their mouths and then wrote a letter in their language and hung it on their bodies saying, "Kayin nga yeh, t'may theh" ["In the Karen spirit world, sand is rice"; normally people put money in the mouth of a dead person for their use in the spirit world, but the soldiers stuffed their mouths with sand to send them with nothing, and also to insult the spirit world of the Karens]. They must have hated them a lot. One of them was named Saw Paw Htoo - he was single, he was my nephew. He was from Ko Say village." - "Saw Lah Htoo" (M, 40), refugee from K--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #35, 1/00)

"After they released the children they shot dead a person right there. His name was Maung Dta. He had a wife and two children. His wife has a lot of relatives so she is able to rely on them and stay with them. After they killed him, they mutilated his body. They took out his liver and intestines, and cut off his penis and testicles. This happened on January 4th 2000. They usually shoot at villagers whenever they arrive someplace. They shoot and it hits people randomly, even people who have gone to watch the paths." - "Saw Plaw Doh" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from M— village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #75, 3/00)

"Then they entered the place where the villagers were hiding and they starting shooting their guns. The villagers fled and one woman died. Her name was K'Paw Htoo. Two bullets hit her, and she couldn't even scream before she was dead. She had 2 children. They are girls; one is 6 and the other is 4 years old. They took everything in her bag: some money, earrings, and everything else. Then they dragged her body. After shooting her, they shot another woman and it hit her armpit, then came out through her back. Her name is Naw Kyu Eh. She didn't die, but she has still not healed yet because the wound is very deep. It's a terrible wound - it's already been 3 weeks but it still hasn't healed, because there is no medicine." - "Naw Si Si Po" (F, 49), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #47, 2/00)

"Just two of us were staying there. We were staying in the hill field. They shot at us in the afternoon at around 3:30 on April 17th 2000. Both of us were wounded. We were shot in the hill field. After we were wounded we came home. The other person who was wounded was Naw Lah. She is my wife. She is 31 years old. She was shot by a little gun [a rifle bullet]. She was injured in the shoulder and it went through to the other side. She was wounded by a G3 [assault rifle]. She came back home herself, but we went and carried her when she had almost arrived home. ... At first we had no medicine. I couldn't find medicine for a whole month. My friend and I each tried to look for a little. They [other villagers] gave a little medicine to her when she was at home, but none of them had any training. We just looked after her ourselves. She is a little better now, but she has not recovered yet. She was severely wounded but she will recover in maybe about a month. ... It has been two months between the last time they shot at us and this time. They come and shoot at us regularly. The first time my wife was injured by a big gun and a kway boe [shrapnel from a mortar shell and a rifle grenade] in the hill field. She was injured behind her ear, on her nose, inside her ear, twice in her thigh and twice in her leg. After she fled to another place, she was shot in the shoulder by a small gun [this is the time he described above]." - "Thein Shwe" (M, 35), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #55, 4/00)

"We didn't know that the SPDC was coming to shoot us. Suddenly there was gunfire and the children were running back and forth. When they shot their small arms [their rifles], nobody was injured. But when they used the big gun [rifle grenades] some people were wounded. The people were very close to the enemy when they were wounded. They fled and hid, suffering with

their injuries and the bleeding. When we looked at the Dta Kho Thee Loh Kloh [the Dta Kho Thee River], it looked like a battlefield, but it wasn't. The small river was full of the blood of villagers. The wounded people went over to the south side of the river and stayed there. They stayed very close to the unit of the SPDC which had just shot them. There was a little child named Po Naw Htoo who was wounded in the head. She fainted and was left during the gunfire. Nobody dared to go and take her. At that time her father, Maung K— quickly came up with his wife. His wife was very pregnant and brought one injured baby. They came up during the gunfire. They left their injured child the whole afternoon. At 7 p.m. in the night they went and took their child back. They felt hopeless because they were in the jungle and we had no medicine to heal their child with. The child's whole body was covered in blood. It looked like she was soaked in blood. After they took their child back they just left her like that. Nobody treated the child. They couldn't do anything because there was no medicine. ... The SPDC said that they wanted to hurt the villagers. The soldiers saw that the children were going to die. They kept pulling the triggers of their guns and shot the children until they died. Then they went directly back to their camp. After that, the villagers collected the injured. Some of them were saved. The two people who died were just shot to pieces. The first one was shot to pieces but the second one was just seriously injured and died at 8 p.m.”

- “Pa Mer Ler” (M, 25), internally displaced villager from T— village, Mone township (Interview #49, 4/00)

“He went on his own, and he heard someone calling him so he looked. A Burmese was calling him and said, ‘Uncle, don’t run. Uncle, don’t run.’ Then he shot him, and Uncle ran. His thigh had been hit, and he fell down. ... His younger brother came back, got some people from his house and then went back to his elder brother. When they got there, it was already 8 p.m. When they got him back here, there was no one to treat him. His thigh was broken, and we couldn’t do much. We treated it with salt, and the elders bound the wound with yellow [turmeric] powder and spit. Until now, he still can’t walk. I don’t understand what could have been wrong with the heart of that Burmese? He just saw someone going to find a buffalo, and shot him. ... My child came and told me, ‘Mother, the Burmese shot Father. His thigh is broken.’ At that time I was fetching some water. I asked, ‘Is he dead?’ and my child said, ‘I don’t know if he has died or not’. Then his brother arrived and I asked, ‘Is he dead? If he is, tell me truly.’ Then I started crying, and I asked again, ‘Is he dead?’ He said, ‘He isn’t dead, but his thigh is broken.’ ... I followed him when people went to carry him back, but I had nothing with me [no medicine]. People gave a little yellow powder and

Po Ghay Mo gave a tablet of penicillin. That was all. After that, people treated it with traditional medicine and it healed, but he still can’t walk yet.”

- “Naw Ghay Muh” (F, 42), internally displaced villager from P— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #48, 2/00)

“Infantry Battalion #48, Column #2, came to shoot in our village on April 14th [1999] at 2 p.m., led by commander Soe Min. They shot 7 villagers dead, captured 10 others, and the rest of us escaped, but we couldn’t escape with any of our belongings. After they had entered the village, they took all of our belongings and burned down our houses and the church. As for the villagers they had killed, they threw all their bodies into a pile as though they were animals. They took the villagers they had captured to their camp, and then wouldn’t let them come back to the village.”

- “Saw Thay” (M, 49), internally displaced villager from T— village, Mone township (Interview #25, 5/99)

“They took everything and burned down the whole village where we had gone to stay [Saw Baw Der], and then they killed those 7 people. ... They said that their Operations Commander had ordered them to kill all the men, but those people had done nothing to them. No one shot at them [the KNLA did not attack the SPDC]; they just came and captured villagers and burned down the whole village, including the schools and the church. Then they tied up all of the men and shot them all to death. They killed them horribly, and then piled their bodies all in the same place. They didn’t bury them.”

- “Saw Wah Pa” (M, 33), refugee from S--- village, Mone township (Interview #30, 1/00)

“Muh Doh Paw Pa had gone to thresh his paddy at Ler Daw Kee and had just taken a small [cloth] bag. He was in his field on the threshing mat with a bundle of paddy and a stick, and he was beating the paddy, ‘peh, peh, peh’. He wasn’t looking around, and while he was beating the paddy they came and shot him. He fell down on the mat, and the Burmese left him there. One of his nephews was harvesting but stopped to eat some cucumber [villagers usually grow cucumbers among the paddy plants in their hill fields]. He took a cucumber and ate one or two bites standing up on a stump, and they shot him. He fell. The uncle and the nephew both died.”

- “Naw Ghay Muh” (F, 42), internally displaced villager from P— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #48, 2/00)

Detention and Torture

“They captured an old man named Saw D---. He was paralysed from polio. His children didn’t have time to carry him, so he was left behind and they found him and tied up his feet. They booted him down on the ground in front of their commander, and then they tied his hands behind his back and interrogated him. They pushed a gun into his mouth and banged his temples, and they kept him tied through the night in the rain. He stayed like that through the whole night until people came back and found him. It was on the 16th of June that they entered the village and abused him. They didn’t kill him, they just tied him very uncomfortably. When people found him the next day they untied him, but a month later he died because of the torture.”

- “Saw Lu Doh” (M, 30), internally displaced villager from T— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #32, 1/00)

Occasionally the soldiers are able to capture villagers whom they have surprised or wounded and decide not to kill them. After being captured, these villagers are usually beaten and tied up, then taken back to a relocation site or Army camp. Nooses are sometimes placed around their necks which are then used by the soldiers to pull them along. Once they arrive at the relocation site or an Army camp the villagers are sometimes released after interrogation, but other times they are detained for a while longer and may be tortured. A villager from Dweh Loh township who was captured in 2000 related to KHRG how he was locked up in a pen for pigs, kicked, beaten, shot, and had water forced down his throat. He was kept like that for more than a month, and by the time he arrived home his wife was pale and had wasted away to skin and bone because she was unable to find enough food without her husband. Those who are told to remain in the relocation site may be provided with a one-time handout of rice and then left to fend for themselves. No other assistance is given, even though some of them have been captured only after being wounded and unable to escape. A 70 year old man from Dweh Loh township told KHRG how he had been shot in the arm and then captured with his children and grandchildren by the soldiers in early 2000. His bag was taken and money was stolen from him and his children and grandchildren. They were taken to a relocation site, where he was put in mediaeval-style leg stocks and left like that overnight despite his age and his wound. In another incident in 2000, the SPDC soldiers shot dead a villager and then took his three young children back to the relocation site. It is not known what happened to the children.

“They questioned me a lot. When we arrived at K--- they kicked me, trampled on me, poured water down my throat and shot me. I was wounded in the shoulder. They treated my wound but because I was not their people, they still hurt me. Then they put me in a cage and kept me there. The cage was like a pen where they keep pigs. They still kept me tied tightly. ... Yes, they jabbed me with a knife. It was just a little knife. It almost cut me and sometimes I was injured by their servants

[the soldiers]. They hurt me behind the back of their officer. I spoke to them, but they didn’t listen to me. They stared at me. They grabbed me and pulled me [by the rope tied around his neck]. It made it difficult to breathe because they tied my neck. I had to stay in that cage for more than one month. ... My wife couldn’t do anything. When I came back her skin was white. She had only bone and skin. There was no food.” - “Win Naing” (M, 31), internally displaced villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #140, 9/00)

“We heard the sound of shooting, ‘raw raw raw raw’ and then we jumped. They came and searched secretly for us and they saw us. I don’t know why they shot at us. They shouted at us and told us not to flee. Suddenly I heard the sound, ‘tak’ and looked at my arm and saw that it was broken. I got hit on my left arm. When I sat down they rushed toward me. I picked up my bag, my pipe and my basket. I told them that if I die then I die, and if I am alive, then all right. Then my children and grandchildren came back and sat beside me. My arm started bleeding and bleeding. ... They took our bags and our money. They took a lot of things. I couldn’t ever ask for them back. They took things from everybody. They started questioning me. They asked me about the hills and the valley. They picked up a stick to beat me. It was bamboo, a very long piece. It was the commander who did that. I don’t know his name but the ones who shot me were Division #66 [LID #66], Infantry Battalion #14 under Major Tun Myint. ... They put a little medicine on it. They just took care of me once at the beginning but after that I had to look after myself. I had to bandage it myself. I pounded some turmeric and tied it around the wound. ... They just told us to come and stay here. They didn’t tell us anything else. Anyway, they were going to beat us and punish us. When we went along the way, he [the officer] kicked me one time. He kicked me twice with his boots. I didn’t look at him. He had his head raised. I had a wound but they kicked me anyway. ... They made me sleep in the camp and locked my legs

[in mediaeval-style bamboo leg stocks]. They locked me for one night. They locked me like that and put everyone else inside the camp. They only locked me alone. All of my children and grandchildren slept beside me. There was no roof, so we slept on the ground. They said we were bad people. They released us the next morning and let us sleep in the camp. ... The village head came to vouch for us. They agreed and we came back and ate our own rice. We stayed in our cousins' houses." - "Saw Tha Dah" (M, 70), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #137, 9/00)

"In the Burmese month of Da Boh Dweh, on the 7th [February 23rd 2000] at 3 p.m. they came to M--- to shoot us. One man was killed, Pa Maung Tu. He was 40 years old. His wife was already dead but he still had three children. The enemy arrested them, they shot their father dead and called the three children to M— [relocation site]. The eldest is a daughter, 11 years old. His wife had gotten sick and died." - "Saw Ner Kaw" (M, 45), internally displaced villager from M— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #149, 11/00)

"The next morning we went directly to W---. There, they tied me with nylon rope. I didn't bleed but the wounds became swollen and felt like they were burning. I couldn't feel anything and it was very hot. P— was there and he said, 'Hway! You tied this person very tightly. Release him. Untie the rope a little bit. He hasn't done anything. He is a villager. You have tied him very tightly and that is not our way.' The SPDC replied, 'He is Nga Pway and I will do as I like. Don't tell me anything.' Then the village head from W--- came to vouch for me. He [the SPDC officer] said, 'Hay! We can't release him like this. You must give me 1,000 Kyat. I will release him when I get 1,000 Kyat. I won't release him if I don't get 1,000 Kyat.' Then he released me." - "Aung Aung" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #150, 11/00)

"They shot at us in our houses, not outside the village, and we couldn't run because our children were with us. About 10 people escaped, but they captured over 10 people. As soon as they captured us, they took all of the earrings and bracelets that we were wearing, they grabbed and searched our bags, and some of them tore the bags apart. ... They took everything from everyone, but that was not enough for them. One woman was carrying her child, and they hit her back with a rifle butt so hard it went 'Dtuh!' ... They didn't even allow us to keep our baskets. They turned them upside down, and when our sacks of paddy dropped out they threw all the paddy on the ground. ... After they captured us they tied us up. They tied our hands together in groups of two or three, and then

they tied all of us together with a rope. They tied the married women as well as those who were single, and some of the women who were very old too. They tied us and then left us to sleep that night like that. At night the rains came, but they had already taken our plastic sheets. So the rain came down and the ground became wet, and we just had to sit like that. We had nothing to eat, and they didn't give us any rice or water. We had to stay like that for 2 days and one night. The next day they pulled us up and untied us, and forced us to follow them." - "Naw Lah Muh" (F, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Mone township (Interview #43, 2/00)

Sometimes the captured villagers are taken along as guides or as porters for the soldiers. This is especially the case if the soldiers are not going immediately back to their camp. The soldiers constantly ask the villagers questions, and then threaten or hit them whenever they don't know the answer. Most villagers in the Papun hills either cannot speak Burmese at all or speak very little of it, which angers the soldiers and results in serious beatings. Captured villagers have also been forced to walk in front of the soldiers to act as human minesweepers or to deter ambushes. While the villagers are with the soldiers they are often given little or no food. They are also usually hit, punched and kicked along the way. They are left tied up for much of the time, even while sleeping.

"[T]hey forced me to go directly there. They forced me to go to M---. We had to sleep two nights along the way. It wasn't comfortable, I just laid down on the ground. We slept together among the trees and bamboo. They didn't give us food, we had to eat our own. They guarded us and asked us many things. They asked us about the hills, the valley and peoples' names. They asked us very threateningly. We were afraid of them and we couldn't speak loudly. In the morning after breakfast they drove us down here [to M---]. We asked them to go first but they told us we had to go first [villagers are often made to walk in front of the soldiers in case of landmines or ambushes]." - "Saw Tha Dah" (M, 70), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #137, 9/00)

"They captured me on January 5th [2000] at 11 a.m. They captured me on the path when I was carrying betelnut. They punched me, beat me and kicked me. My whole body was bleeding. They beat me and jabbed me with a gun. He [the commander] kicked me with his leg and big shoes [boots]. He kicked me with both his right and left legs. He also punched me with his hands, both right and left. I don't know his name but he was an officer. After they beat me they tied me up and questioned me. They put my hands behind my back and tied me. They also tied my neck [a noose was placed

around his neck with which they could pull him along]. They tied me firmly with a kind of nylon string. After they tied me they told me to go and show them Th'Waw Kha. ... They asked me why I didn't go and stay inside [the relocation site]. I told them, 'We are afraid of you so we don't dare go and stay there.' I just told him like that. 'We are afraid of you. You force us to work so we don't dare to go.' ... They met with the KNU and they fought with them. Then they asked me, 'Who is shooting at us? You have to know them because you know people around here.' I told them that I didn't know who shot at them. Even if I knew some of the people, there were a lot of people that I didn't know. I told them, 'I am just following you and I don't know who shot at you.' Along the way they were asking me questions. They kept me in front of them when they heard the sound of shooting. They asked me questions while I walked." - "Win Naing" (M, 31), internally displaced villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #140, 9/00)

Captured villagers are sometimes accused of being KNU or KNLA and summarily executed by the SPDC soldiers. No evidence is presented against them and they are never given a trial. The villagers are simply killed for the crime of living outside the SPDC's control. Of one group of six villagers who were captured in 2000 by SPDC soldiers, two were released but the other four were tied up by the soldiers and taken to

an Army camp. They were accused of being KNU and then executed after five days.

"They [the soldiers] organised the people and they surrendered to the soldiers. They were from my village. The soldiers captured them at W—. I don't remember the date but it was many days ago. They lived a little far from the village so maybe they didn't have food anymore and went to find food and salt. Then they met the SPDC and were captured. They captured six people and let two go. One of them was a little boy. They tied the other four up with plant fibre and pulled them along to their camp. I didn't see this happen myself but I heard from the other two who were released. One of their names was Naw P--, 27 years old, and the other was M---. ... After they pulled them to their camp, they needed someone to guarantee for them and then they would be released. But the person who would guarantee for them would be giving his life. They couldn't guarantee the other three. They were just villagers and they weren't against them. They had nothing with them. They were just villagers. They only had their bags, pipes and tobacco. The SPDC believed that they worked together with the KNU and the KNU are the people who have weapons and are against them [the SPDC]. So they let the villagers stay for four or five days and then they killed them." - "Saw Mu Kaw" (M, 23), internally displaced village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #145, 9/00)

Landmines

"They put them every place when they come: in the village, beside the path and in the forest. They put them every place they go. The Burmese do it. They [the landmines] hurt and kill the villagers and they hurt and kill the soldiers. They lay the landmines in the villages and outside the villages. Everywhere where they are going to stay they lay landmines all around. When the people [the KNLA] couldn't find them all, it is mostly the villagers who step on them and die." - "Saw Tha Pwih" (M, 38), refugee from T--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #56, 2/01)

Landmines are extensively used by both the SPDC and the KNLA in the hills of the two districts. A tactic used by SPDC soldiers which is becoming more and more common is the placing of landmines in deserted villages and in the hill fields. Villages are often mined by the SPDC soldiers after the villagers flee to prevent the villagers from returning, and the landmining of the fields prevents the harvest of those fields or any future use of the fields until the mines have been cleared. Burned villages are sometimes landmined because the soldiers know the displaced villagers will return to forage for their belongings. Abandoned villages are sometimes landmined instead of being burned. Landmines have been placed next to people's houses and even at the foot of the ladders up into houses. The use of landmines has become so common and

the fear of them so great that villagers are unwilling to go back to their villages after the soldiers have been there out of fear of them.

"They planted landmines. The [KNLA] people saw one. They went to clear the place and saw it at the foot of the steps, so they took it out before the owner went back to the house." - "Naw Si Si Po" (F, 49), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #47, 2/00)

**"Q: Do you think the SPDC lays landmines?
A: Yes. There are some in the P'Nah Ay Per Ko area. We heard one of the porters who came back say, 'They [the SPDC soldiers] said they had come and laid 30 landmines in Ler Mu Plaw village tract**



A villager killed by a landmine in mid-April 2001 in Bu Tho township, eastern Papun District. [KHRG]

at P’Nah Ay Per Ko.’ If we step on these 30 landmines we will die immediately. None of their mines allow us to live if we step on them. We will die on every mine.” - “Naw Paw Paw Htoo” (F, 30), internally displaced villager from K— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #59, 3/01)

“Right now they are also planting a lot of landmines. They plant them everywhere they go. They already planted some at Aw Mu Kee, Aw Mu Hta, and Ghaw Kee.” - “Saw Lay Doh” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #76, 3/00)

“On February 22nd 2000 they entered the big village of M--- and planted landmines. The people don’t know how many landmines they planted, but people found 3 landmines. They do this to decrease the space where we can live - they have many kinds of tricks to do that.

Q: Do they plant landmines close to the village?

A: They plant them very close to the village, some are even right next to people’s houses. A landmine exploded on January 13th 2000 near Po Khaw Der village and it hit Hser Ghay Htoo who died. And on January 23rd 2000 another landmine exploded in Po Lah forest. A villager named Maung Yay Han stepped on it, and he died. We do not know why they do this. People don’t know and can’t see how many they have planted, so people have to worry and be afraid. People have already taken out 7 landmines that the Burmese planted. If we include these with the ones which already exploded, there are 14 landmines that we have already found, just in the Kheh Der village tract area.” - “Saw Plaw Doh” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from M— village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #75, 3/00)

“We don’t dare go back to stay there, because they’ve come and planted landmines. We know that they’ve planted them, but the area is very wide and we can’t find them. That’s why people don’t dare go back and stay there. They haven’t found any landmines there yet, but the mines have hurt people. Pa B--- stepped on one, last Friday [January 28th 2000] at 4 o’clock in the afternoon. He lost his leg.” - “Saw Pwih” (M, 31), internally displaced villager from H— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #31, 1/00)

“If the Burmese had already arrived at your hill field, you had to leave that hill field and you couldn’t dare work in it anymore. If you worked there again, maybe you would step on a landmine. If you clear your hill field by burning it, maybe bombs will explode beside you.” - “Saw Thay Muh” (M, 45), refugee from P--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #67, 1/00)

“We still dare to work the hill fields. The villagers go, but the Burmese plant landmines. Some villagers have died, and some have survived. The Burmese know all because they are not far away and they can look down on us [from their high position they can see the villagers working the hillside fields].” - “Saw Tha Say” (M, 35), internally displaced villager from T— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #33, 1/00)

Landmines are also placed on trails used by the villagers to restrict their movements. This is especially so on trails which the SPDC knows the villagers are using to get rice and other supplies. Some are buried, while others are attached to a trip wire which has been strung across a trail. Landmines have also been used as booby-traps. In one instance a woman was

raped and then killed by an SPDC officer. A landmine was then placed beside her body which later killed her brother who had come to find her.

“They didn’t torture the villagers because we were able to flee and escape. But when the civilians went back to search for food [in the village] the soldiers had planted landmines and one of the villagers stepped on one. His name was Kaw Ka. He was about 60 years old and has a wife and children. His wife and children are here [with them]. She has married again.” - “Saw Dee Ghay” (M, 45), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #90, 1/01)

“They plant landmines on the main path which people use for transportation. After planting them, they just move on. It is the path that the villagers usually walk on because it is a very big, red path. When people go on it, they step on the mines. They [the SPDC] don’t care about that. It’s a main path, and after they pass along it they lay landmines on it. If you lay landmines on a main pathway that the villagers use, you can’t fail to hit the villagers. So it strikes the villagers.” - “Saw Lay Pa” (M, 39), refugee from T--- village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #66, 1/00)

Neither the SPDC nor the KNLA has signed the International Treaty to Ban Landmines. In the mid-1990s the Chinese government supplied the SPDC with a factory to produce landmines domestically, so the regime no longer needs to rely on supplies of Chinese or American-made mines. The SPDC now produces two main landmines: the MM-1 and the MM-2. The MM-1 is a copy of the Chinese-made PMOZ-2 or ‘corncob’ mine, and the MM-2 is a copy of the Chinese-made PMN mine; both of these Chinese models have been heavily used in Cambodia [photos of these mines can be seen in ***KHRG Photo Set 2001-A*** (September 2001), available online at www.khrgh.org]. Prior to the introduction of the MM-1 and MM-2, the SLORC/SPDC primarily used PMN mines and American M76A1 mines. The MM-1, roughly the size and shape of a soft drink tin, can be buried or rigged to a tripwire, while the disc-shaped MM-2 is buried so that the flat top surface is at ground level. Of the two, the MM-1 is the more powerful.

Landmines are often removed by the KNLA if any of their units are around. Sometimes it is the villagers themselves who remove them. Neither the KNLA nor the villagers have any mine detection equipment or body shields, so landmine removal is very dangerous and numerous KNLA soldiers and villagers have been killed or maimed while removing them. In the past 5 years the KNLA has also become a heavy user of landmines. During this time American and Chinese mines have become much less available on the black market, so the KNLA makes most of its own out of simple materials like PVC piping, scrap metal and

shotgun pellets. Hugely outnumbered by SPDC troops and short of ammunition, the KNLA has become heavily reliant on landmines to restrict the movements of SPDC troops and keep its own supply and movement lines open. The KNLA also uses its mines to ambush SPDC columns and protect KNLA positions, and vehicle mines are also made and used to ambush SPDC supply trucks on the roads. KNLA landmines also keep open some routes used by villagers and protect some of the larger IDP sites. Neither side, however, keeps maps of where their mines are laid. The KNLA tries to tell villagers which pathways are mined, but their efforts always prove insufficient. The result is that while most villagers are killed or wounded on SPDC mines, many also step on those laid by the KNLA.



Two SPDC landmines unearthed by KNLA soldiers in Papun District in March 2001. On the left is an American-made M76A1 mine and on the right is an MM-1 mine made in Burma. [KHRG]

“The soldiers [KNLA] who stay there went to take them out. The soldiers [KNLA] stepped on it, but no villagers did. The chickens and pigs don’t go there and I haven’t seen them [SPDC soldiers] lay landmines in the village. The people [KNLA] haven’t seen any landmines there yet. ... They [the SPDC] laid them at Loh Day and on the path between Per Kee Der and Thay Koh Hser Der. They laid the landmines when they came up. They lay them outside the village on the path. The people

[KNU/KNLA] went to take one out on the path between Ta Keh Pu and Baw Kwaw and they also removed two landmines between Thay Koh Hser Der and Khaw Lu. ... Kaw Thoo Lei [villager slang for KNU/KNLA] plants landmines and the Burmese also plant landmines. The Kaw Thoo Lei plant landmines near the Burmese camps.” - “Saw Ghay Hser” (M, 26), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #1, 2/01)

“When they came to the village they burned down our houses. After they burned the houses they went back. They stepped on a landmine planted by our brothers who take responsibility [KNLA]. Two of them were injured. They then went back to their place and stayed there for a few days and then went down [to the plains].” - “Saw Dee Ghay” (M, 45), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #90, 1/01)

“We couldn’t stay in our place anymore. It is not fair, but because we couldn’t defend well against them, whether it is fair or not we have to let them. This was in 1999. In 2001 they oppress us hard but because the people [KNLA] defend us with landmines, they can’t come and oppress us anymore. But they always will still have their plan for us.” - “Naw Paw Paw Htoo” (F, 30), internally displaced villager from K— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #59, 3/01)

“They planted landmines at Loh Day. They planted them on the path and they hurt the buffaloes. The people went and saw the landmines and took them out. The KNU took them out. They took out two landmines at Thay Koh Hser Der and one at Loh Day.” - “Saw Ler Wah” (M, 26), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #5, 6/01)

The toll on civilians has been high. In these remote areas with no clinics or hospitals and almost no medicine, stepping on a landmine almost always means death as there is no way to treat the extensive injuries. Of the 313 villagers KHRG has documented as being killed by the SPDC and DKBA since mid-1998 (see list in Appendix C), 35 of them died as a result of stepping on landmines. This number is far from complete and reflects only those areas where KHRG was able to gather information; the real number is probably two or three times higher. During the same period of time, only six villagers in the area were documented as surviving landmine injuries. Some villagers do survive, but there is no treatment for them and prosthetic limbs are scarce. If they survive their best hope is to reach a refugee camp in Thailand where there are prosthetic and rehabilitation programmes, but this means a long and difficult flight through even more minefields.

“A villager also stepped on one, and that also happened in December. People called him Kyaw Yeh. He was about 30 years old. He was going to

feed his pig in our village and stepped on a landmine. He died, but he didn’t die immediately. He suffered for 3 days.” - “Saw Bway Htoo” (M, 42), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #130, 4/00)

“On the 18th they crossed to Po Kler/Ber Baw Kee and planted landmines. A villager stepped on one. His name was Saw Pweh Kaw. He stepped on it on the 18th at 2 p.m., and he died that night. He wanted to see his wife and children, that’s why he was coming.” - “Po Tha Dah” (M, 31), internally displaced villager from B— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #46, 2/00)

“Usually they come up and burn the paddy, and now they are also planting landmines. They are doing this the same way elsewhere as in our area. In Ler Doh township, [KNLA] Battalion #9 area, they are planting landmines. We’ve seen 6 or 7 of our villagers step on them. I don’t know how well the people are surviving in the other areas, but I would guess that they are the same as us. The enemy was operating everywhere around here during harvest time, so I guess that their survival is not different from ours. They must be the same as us.” - “Saw Maw Htoo” (M, 31), internally displaced villager from D— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #71, 2/00)

“That second time they came to plant landmines. Two people were killed when they stepped on those landmines, between the Neh Loh Kloh and Khoh Loh Kloh [Salween River]. There was another person who stepped on a landmine at Wah Tho Day, his name was Yu Po. I think parts of his body were blown off, and then he died. He was young and a good worker.” - “Saw Lay Thu” (M, 38), internally displaced villager from D— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #36, 1/00)

Animals are not immune either; many pigs, buffaloes, cattle and even elephants have fallen victim. For villagers doing flatland irrigated rice farming buffaloes are essential for ploughing the paddies, and raising and selling livestock is the only way villagers can get money to buy rice in difficult times or pay SPDC extortion fees. Elephant owners derive their entire living from hiring out their elephant to haul logs and do other heavy work. The landmines do not usually kill the elephants because they are so big, but they do destroy at least one of the legs and the animal then slowly dies from lack of treatment and medicine.

“People, elephants and buffaloes. There is one elephant that was hurt by a landmine. It happened in July 2000. After one of the people stepped on the mine, two weeks later the elephant was hurt by the landmine. It hasn’t healed and it doesn’t walk. It doesn’t work anymore and it is getting thinner. It has three legs left. The owner couldn’t

treat it. He just gives it penicillin injections. He has already given it a lot of penicillin injections. He just treats it with turmeric and ginger and vegetables and bamboo leaves boiled in water. - “Saw Ko Suh” (M, 54), internally displaced village head from P— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #58, 3/01)

“Another landmine exploded on January 5th 2000 at Poh Kyo and killed Pu M—’s buffalo. On January 8th 2000, another landmine exploded near Po Khaw Der village and killed a pig. A landmine exploded on January 9th 2000 above Paw Taw Lay Ko and also killed a pig.” - “Saw Plaw Doh” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from M— village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #75, 3/00)

“They come and landmine our area. When you go out [of the village] you get hurt. When you go out you get hurt often. So our families and our villagers are fewer and fewer. There have been 30 or 40 buffaloes hurt by the landmines. This is both the male and female buffaloes. One of my sisters had four buffaloes but all of her buffaloes are dead because they stepped on landmines. Her husband also died at that time. So my sister has to remain a widow with three children. We couldn’t help her in any way.” - “Naw Paw Paw Htoo” (F, 30), internally displaced villager from K— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #59, 3/01)

Crop Destruction and Food Shortages

“Their aim is to destroy the paddy so the civilians won’t be able to stay anymore. Then the KNU leaders won’t be able to rely on us and if the leaders can’t rely on us and there are no civilians, they [the SPDC] will think they have gotten their country. So they are cutting off everything.” - “Saw Pleh Wah” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

“They came up and destroyed things often. If they came and saw something they destroyed it and if they saw our hill field they destroyed that too. If they saw our storage barn they destroyed that. ... They also burned the hill fields that people hadn’t burned off yet. It was during the time when people were cutting their hill fields [in January or February 2001].” - “Saw Wih Kyay” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #111, 4/01)

A key element of the SPDC’s strategy since 1999 has been its sustained effort to deprive the villagers of their food supply. This has been a much more effective tactic than the shooting or capturing of the villagers. The SPDC’s columns have already burned down most of the villages in the area, but the villagers simply moved to live spread out in smaller shelters in the forest. The new strategy targets not only the rice storage barns but also the fields themselves. The soldiers go through the fields and trample, burn or landmine the crops just before or at harvest time, and also sabotage the fields before they can even be planted. Without their food supplies, and with no hope of growing more food, the villagers try to survive on roots and jungle vegetables, but eventually face the choice of going down to the relocation sites, fleeing to Thailand or dying of starvation in the jungle. In the testimonies gathered by KHRG for this report, it is apparent that the villagers are very aware of the SPDC’s strategy and that without food they will be forced to leave the area. Whether or not this would actually bring about the end of KNU/KNLA activity in the region, as the SPDC believes, is not easy to predict.

“They came over 2 months ago, when the villagers were harvesting. They destroyed our paddy and rice. They destroyed the paddy from many villages: Meh Gha Law, Da Baw Kee, Lay Hta, Maw Pu, Dta Kaw Hta, Si Pa Leh, Meh Kyay Hta, Nya Peh Hta, and Eh Hta [some of these villages are in northwestern Dweh Loh township, such as Meh Gha Law, others in Lu Thaw township, such as Dta Kaw Hta, and others in Shwegyin township, such as Si Pa Leh; however, they are all in the same Bilin River area]. Those villagers had to flee and hide, so they came to our area.” - “Saw Po Lay” (M, 50+), internally displaced villager from K— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #69, 1/00)

“Then when I had not yet finished cutting my hill field last year, the Burmese came and burned it again. We had to run during the hill field burning time. We also had to run during the grass-cutting [weeding] time and also during the paddy-planting time. We were late in burning the field and planting the paddy. The paddy wasn’t good and there wasn’t enough, so we thought that if we stayed there this year the way would be closed for

us. The Burmese came and stayed in Khaw Kyo so if we needed rice we could not come and carry it from here every time [from safer areas in Papun District]. That is why we came and stayed a little closer to here, because we think we will carry rice to eat.” - “U Gah Lu” (M, 46), internally displaced villager from S— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #102, 3/01)

“When we look back on last year and this year they have been worse than the previous one or two years. Last year we couldn’t work for a living. We had to work and run, work and run. That is why we don’t have enough paddy. We should have gotten 10 or 20 baskets of paddy [after the harvest] but we only got one or two baskets. This year it is the same as last year. The soldiers come to operate near us. It has already been one or two years. The situation is much worse. We can’t stay in our own village and we can’t work easily. We have to flee and work in the jungle. We don’t have as much food as in the past. In the past, we had enough food some years and some years not enough. If there was not enough food in the past it was because the mice and birds destroyed it. Now the mice and birds don’t come and destroy it much, it is because the enemy is always coming up and oppressing us. We haven’t finished doing our work [they hadn’t finished the harvest]. When we run away the birds, pigs and buffaloes eat the paddy. Everything has been a problem for many years.” - “Saw Tee Ko” (M, 50), internally displaced village head from H— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #91, 2/01)

“We don’t know anything about what they will do next. We thought that they would go back, but the [KNLA] people said that they will continue to

work here for 3 months. They think that they will eat all of our paddy and everything that belongs to us, so that we will starve to death. When we all die, they will go back. If they don’t go back, they will stay forever and rule this area. They do not come to develop the future of the civilians. They just come to break us all.” - “Saw Lay Ghay” (M, 34), internally displaced village head from P— village, Dweh Loh township, (Interview #127, 12/99)

Much of the SPDC’s efforts are now concentrated on destroying the villagers’ crops. For much of the June-October rainy season the villagers are left in peace as the rain and mud makes it difficult for the SPDC to keep up their patrolling of the hills. The end of the rainy season means two things: the villagers can now harvest their crops and the SPDC’s Army can now send its columns through the hills. The hill fields by nature are very easy to see, the trees have been cut down to make the fields and the golden paddy at harvest time stands out in contrast to the green of the forest around it. A month before the harvest can begin, SPDC patrols already start looking for planted fields and trample down the crops or landmine the fields. The movement of these patrols through the hills also puts the villagers on the run, taking them away from their fields just at harvest time. Even more patrols are sent out when harvest time starts to look for the family groups working in the fields. When the SPDC columns see villagers harvesting they sometimes open fire from the adjacent hill, but they usually try to approach right to the edge of the field, then open fire without warning using assault rifles and rifle grenades. Once the villagers have fled, leaving their dead and pulling along their wounded, the soldiers don’t actively pursue them but concentrate on destroying the crops. The unharvested paddy is burned or trampled down by the soldiers. Some of



Part of a hill rice field in the Meh Gha Law area burned by SPDC troops. Note the paddy dumped on the ground (left foreground) which has gone to seed.
[KHRG]

the paddy may also be harvested and taken away by the soldiers. In some cases, villagers have resorted to harvesting at night with KNLA soldiers posted around the field to avoid being shot at by SPDC patrols.

“We left last year [2000]. We worked and had a hill field. After we finished working, the Burmese ate all the paddy in my paddy barn. During the rainy season I ate my brother-in-law’s paddy. When we carried up my brother-in-law’s paddy to the place where we pound the paddy, the Burmese came and chased us and got 10 baskets of paddy. The Burmese ate it all.” - “U Gah Lu” (M, 46), internally displaced villager from S— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #102, 3/01)

“It was during the time when the paddy is getting ripe [October/November]. Before the paddy was ripe they passed through it and ripped off all the grains. They didn’t even keep the grains that were already ripe, they just stripped them off and destroyed them like that. Everywhere they went, they destroyed all of it. I think they hit the paddy stalks with sticks and the grains scattered, because we didn’t see any sign that the plants had been trampled.” - “Saw Lay Pa” (M, 39), refugee from T-- village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #66, 1/00)

“[T]hey harvest, pound, and carry it away. They send it to their battalion camp where they are based. They harvested the best rice and trampled on the rest. They beat it down with a stick. They are destroying all the hill fields. The villagers dare not go back to harvest, because the Burmese are capturing porters.” - “Puh Ghay” (M, 60), internally displaced village head from N— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #125, 11/99)

Once the villagers have been able to harvest at least some of their crop, they carry it to small storage barns hidden in the forest. The soldiers then seek out and destroy any of these paddy storage barns they can find. The soldiers first loot as much paddy and rice as they can carry from the barns. The rest is then thrown on the ground or burned together with the storage barn. Paddy which has been harvested but left on large mats in the fields to dry is also taken away or destroyed.

“We managed to reap some of our paddy, but then we fled. We had to leave all the paddy that we couldn’t reap. We dared not go back and touch it. Animals like pigs and buffaloes have eaten it all. The paddy that we got was not enough for ourselves, and we hid it in the jungle. The enemy troops came and searched and found our paddy barns. When they saw the paddy barns, they took everything. The villagers keep boxes [wooden boxes of clothing and other belongings] and rice inside and they took it all. They burned down all

The Rice Cycle

Villagers in Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts practice two forms of rice farming; irrigated flat field rice farming where there is flat ground in the plains and along rivers and streams, and hillside rice farming where the only fields available are the hillsides. Hill rice farming is less efficient and the harvests are much smaller, but this is the form practiced by most people because there is usually little or no flat land around. While some slightly sloping land has been terraced, the villagers have never terraced the steeper hills, and to do so now would be time consuming and require a degree of stability which the villagers don’t have.

Outsiders often mistakenly call Karen hillside farming ‘slash and burn’, which it is not. ‘Slash and burn’ farming means to cut virgin or second growth rainforest, use it for 2-3 crops until the soil is drained of nutrients, then move on. Karen farmers use a system of rotating fields instead; a family in an established, stable village will usually have as many as eight or ten fields which they use in rotation from year to year, leaving each one fallow for several years before using it again. When a field is to be used, it is prepared by cutting the brush and small trees which have grown there since its last use. The brush is then left to dry where it fell in the field. This happens in January-February. After the brush has sufficiently dried, it is burned in March or April. The ash from the burnoff provides some nutrients, and will protect the seeds from the winds after planting. After the first rains in June, the paddy seeds are sowed in the fields by placing them in small holes made by a stick poked into the soil. The rainy season from June to October is also the growing season. The villagers must keep watch over their fields to keep away animals who may eat the crop, and to cut the weeds away. During this season, the villagers usually sleep in field huts away from their houses in the village. The fields are thoroughly weeded in August. The harvest begins in November or December, although villagers sometimes harvest some paddy which is already ripe as early as October, especially if they are in urgent need of food.

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The paddy is harvested by cutting the stalks below the grain and tying them into bundles. They are later threshed by hand or walked on by buffaloes to separate the grains from the stalks, and the grains are sun-dried, after which they are winnowed by throwing the grain into the wind. The grain is then packed carefully into huge woven bamboo containers in the paddy storage barns, small roofed structures raised on posts which usually have metal collars to keep out rats and other pests. The grain is taken from the barn in small quantities (preferably the day it is needed) and pounded in large mortar bowls with heavy levered foot-operated pounders in order to polish off the husk (rice mills are virtually nonexistent in this region). Despite the extra labour required, those who have been raised on hillside rice say it tastes much better and is more nutritious than flat field rice. The current situation has caused many problems for hill rice farmers. Once displaced, many people no longer have access to their fields and are forced to clear virgin forest to plant, which is so difficult that only very small areas can be cleared. In the past year, the SPDC has been sending out patrols to burn off people's cleared fields in February, before a proper burn can happen. Once this is done, the field will not burn properly and cannot be fully planted. Finally, villagers planting and harvesting in hillside fields are visible from a great distance, and SPDC patrols go out deliberately at these times to shoot them on sight.

The irrigated flat rice fields follow a slightly different cycle, and the fields are not usually rotated. The fields are divided into rectangles and other shapes ranging from 10 metres to 50 metres in length divided by low dirt dykes, each rectangle separately irrigated. The fields are burned in April or May to get rid of the remaining stubble left from the last harvest. Just after the first rain, the villagers begin ploughing the fields with their water buffaloes. One or two of the rectangles of the field are reserved as a nursery. They are flooded and heavily fertilised with manure, and the paddy seeds are initially sown there to sprout simply by scattering them by hand. The rest of the fields are then flooded and ploughed.

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the paddy barns that they saw. They leave nothing. When they see our chickens, pigs, and buffaloes, they eat some and some they don't eat, they just shoot them dead." - "Saw Maw Htoo" (M, 31), internally displaced villager from D— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #71, 2/00)

"They came to destroy the rice because it was harvest time. They threw away the rice that people had stored in their rice barns. They destroyed some, threw some and pounded some [to eat themselves]. They dug a hole and laid the paddy from the sacks in it and then cut a tree and used it to pound the rice in the hole. They carried as much as they could and pounded it. The paddy that they couldn't carry they threw away." - "Saw Ghay Hser" (M, 26), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #1, 2/01)

"They didn't catch or hurt anyone or burn the rice barns but they took all the paddy. There was only one rice barn. It was about 20, 30 or 40 baskets and they carried it all. I don't know what they do with the things they take. Maybe it is a gift for their wives or children, I don't know. They can do whatever they want to do." - "Saw Mu Kaw" (M, 23), internally displaced village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #145, 9/00)

"They destroyed all the paddy they didn't carry away. They threw it all on the ground. The other people are the same and don't have any paddy anymore. It was in the second week of harvesting paddy, so we hadn't taken it from the hill field yet. We have to dry it before we put it in the rice barn. It happened too fast. We heard the news [that the SPDC soldiers were coming] and it was not more than three days before they arrived." - "Saw Pleh Wah" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

"They came up one time when the villagers were harvesting. We were trying to harvest the paddy, but in fear. We were able to finish. After that they came up, and we fled. The people [KNLA] shot at them and followed them. Their trail led to the paddy barns and the Burmese had already burned them..." - "Saw Muh Dah" (M, 30), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #87, 4/00)

The last two years has also seen the soldiers using a new tactic; burning the cut brush off the fields before it has properly dried. Before a hill field can be used the trees and brush which have grown up on it since it was last used must be cut down. This cut brush is then left to dry where it fell in the fields for a month or two. When it has fully dried the villagers then burn it. The ash provides both nutrients for the soil and protection for the seeds against the wind and the

coming rains. When the soldiers burn the brush beforehand it burns unevenly because much of it has not yet dried sufficiently. If the villagers try a second burn, the fire will keep going out. The result is that the villagers can only use those parts of their fields which did burn properly, drastically cutting down the area that can be planted and thus the possible amount that can be harvested.

“There is a problem among the people where I am staying. Most of them don’t have enough food. There is not enough because last year they did their hill fields at Tee Tha Reh Kee and Kaw La Wa Lay and before they were finished clearing their hill fields the Burmese came and burned them. The people didn’t have time to burn their hill fields because the Burmese came up and they had to flee. The Burmese burned the ‘kaw’ [the cut brush and trees which must be fully dried to ensure a complete burn so the villagers can use all of the field]. They burned the ‘kaw’ and then in the rainy season they came again. When it was time to cut the grass and plant the paddy, they didn’t have time to plant the paddy. Some people planted late so their paddy was no good. When the paddy was gold [ripe] the soldiers came again and the people fled again. When the soldiers left the people went back to harvest and could only get a few baskets. Each person who has come now only got 10 baskets. It is because they couldn’t do large or long hill fields. It was not enough to eat, so the people moved here to hire themselves out and harvest the paddy for other people. One of my friends didn’t even get 10 baskets. He has come and hired himself out here. The people don’t dare do their hill fields anymore.” - “U Gah Lu” (M, 46), internally displaced villager from S— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #102, 3/01)

“Now we don’t have food to eat. We can’t find it. We can’t even go to look for it. We want to clear the hill fields now, but we don’t have any rice to eat and we can’t burn off the fields because the Burmese came and burned them already. ... We don’t know what we will do because we don’t have any rice. If we had rice [to plant], we would go to burn off the hill fields. This year we don’t have rice to eat, but next year will be worse because we won’t even have our fields.” - “Saw Muh Dah” (M, 30), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #87, 4/00)

Sometimes the villagers are forced to abandon their fields when the Army columns come close. Depending on the movements of the columns the villagers may have to stay away from their fields for weeks. By the time the soldiers have moved on, much of the crop has been destroyed by animals which have trampled it or eaten it. SPDC soldiers also sometimes harvest the ripe paddy themselves and take it with them. If they are able to go back to the village, the villagers

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When the nursery is thick with vibrant green shoots over a foot high, they are uprooted and bundled, and the villagers move through the fields painstakingly transplanting each bunch spaced throughout the larger fields. Small irrigation canals, as well as the rains, keep the paddy in water until the harvest. Too much water is bad for the paddy and flooding can wipe out a crop.

While the paddy is growing the villagers usually sleep in their field huts to monitor and adjust the irrigation, weed as necessary, and keep animals away. The paddy can be harvested in from October to December, and harvests are usually earlier than for hill rice fields. Harvesting, threshing, winnowing and storage then take place using the same methods as for hill rice farming. Flat field rice farming is still labour intensive, and farmers have problems if they are kept away from their fields due to forced labour or restrictions. In addition, many have had to sell their buffaloes to pay SPDC fees, and do not have enough money to hire buffaloes for ploughing. The rice quota demanded by the SPDC is also much higher for flat fields than for hill fields.

try to harvest as much of their paddy as they can before the soldiers come again. Too often the amount they are able to harvest amounts to only a few baskets, or enough to feed a family for a month or two. The SPDC’s new tactic of establishing camps in the villages and landmining the fields makes it almost impossible for the villagers to go back and harvest their crops or to return to take harvested paddy from their storage barns, leaving them with very little food for the coming year.

“Since we started working on the hill fields, the Burmese have been coming up during the harvest time when the paddy turns gold. They hadn’t arrived yet, but we dared not harvest the paddy so pigs destroyed it all. When we went back to harvest it the next time, we finished but they [the soldiers] came again. They searched our things and slept at our places. They saw everything [they found all their belongings and paddy barns] and we just fled and escaped. We couldn’t stay there so we started to come up [to the refugee camp].” - “Pa Kah Lay” (M, 39), villager from W— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #132, 5/00)

“When the SPDC came the people were harvesting their paddy at that time, but none of them had



A villager stands in his hill field which was prematurely burned by SPDC troops. His field is no longer usable to plant rice in the rainy season and he will be unable to grow a crop. [KHRG]

have seen droughts followed by early and heavy rains and also insect infestations. This is in addition to the other problems mentioned above caused by the SPDC's policies.

"The problem in the country is about working to eat. Some people's paddy is no good. The rain doesn't fall and the weather is not right. The enemy is operating. It is not easy to work. We can't do the hill fields anymore, so they have become destroyed. Some people made large hill fields but they only got 10 or 20 big tins [of paddy]. Some people got 40 or 50 big

finished harvesting their paddy yet. All of them had to leave their hill fields like that [half harvested]. They ran to stay with us. None of them could carry and bring their food, so when they came to stay among us they had a food problem. ... They can't go back to get food. They don't dare to go back to their village because the Burmese have made camps step by step to Per Kee Der. They just go and ask for a little bit from the villagers in our village." - "Saw Eh Doh" (M, 25), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #3, 2/01)

"We could only send the old people and children, so we couldn't bring the food. We had to find food at K---. When we started to flee we still had food in our village, but the Burmese ate it. The paddy was ripe but we couldn't do anything, we had to leave it and flee. We worked the whole year and when we saw the paddy ripen, we had to leave it for the Burmese."" - "Saw Ghaw" (M, 32), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #98, 3/01)

"Most of them don't have paddy anymore. Among ten people there will be one who still has paddy. When there is enough time [when the SPDC columns aren't around] they run and carry the paddy away quickly."" - "Saw Kyi Po" (M, 37), internally displaced villager from L— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #107, 3/01)

Another problem for the villagers is the environment, which has not been kind to them over the past few years. Hill rice farming does not produce the same volume of paddy at harvest time as irrigated flat rice fields. Even in good years, villagers are usually only able to harvest enough to take them through to the next harvest with a small surplus. The last few years

tins. Some people have to work in the water [flat fields] so they are faced with a problem because sometimes there is no water. When there is water there is a lot of water. We can't work anymore anywhere."" - "Po Naw" (M, xx), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #61, 3/01)

"This year it rained and the villagers couldn't burn the hill fields anymore. They couldn't cut or work anymore. When is it going to dry? If it doesn't dry we can't eat rice anymore. The only thing is for all of us to go to the refugee camp. If we go, Kawthoolei will be finished. ... Insects destroyed a lot of the paddy this year [the harvest in December 2000]. It will not be easy to get past this."" - "Saw Lin Yone" (M, 32), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #2, 2/01)

"In the past, we had to work in fear and terror but we could get enough food for each year. But last year, we couldn't work our fields because they kept destroying things, and then the rains came before we'd burned off our fields so we worried that we wouldn't get enough paddy for seed [for next year]. This year no one in the whole village got enough food, out of 40 households in Saw Ka Der village tract."" - "Saw Kleh Wah" (M, 45), internally displaced villager from T— village, Mone township (Interview #42, 2/00)

When the SPDC soldiers arrive at a village they shoot and eat any of the livestock which they find including chickens, pigs and buffaloes. The animals which they can't eat or take, they kill to deny them to the villagers. One SPDC deserter told KHRG that he and the other soldiers had been ordered to kill the chickens and pigs when 'clearing' villages. In one village of Lu Thaw

township a note was left by the soldiers on the carcass of a dead buffalo, after its heart had been removed and its eyes stabbed with a knife, which said that the buffaloes and other animals were also their enemy because they were used to feed the Karen people who were their enemy.

“They ate them all. They also ate the cattle and buffaloes they shot dead. They ate everybody’s pigs and chickens. There was nothing they didn’t eat. There were many chickens so I can’t remember how many. ... [T]hey shot and ate them. Some of the buffaloes they didn’t eat, they just shot them dead. I don’t know why, maybe they [the buffaloes] were against them. It is because they couldn’t control us so they fight us with food and with the animals. They killed seven buffaloes. There were big female buffaloes and there were also male buffaloes.” - “Saw Ta Pla Pla” (M, age unknown), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #60, 3/01)

“They also shot some buffaloes, then cut open the body of one of them, took out the heart and stabbed out its eyes with a knife, and then left a note that said: ‘Buffaloes are feeding Karen people, and Karen people are my enemy, so all the buffaloes and other animals that feed Karen people are also my enemies. Everything that feeds Karen people is my enemy.’ ... [T]hey said that Karen people use them [cattle and buffaloes] to plough and plant, and that’s why Karen people can survive from our work - and that all of these things which help Karen people to continue our lives, they will see as their enemies. They shot to kill all of them. They shot pigs and chickens to eat, then wandered through the villages and burned down all the villages. None of those villages are safe. They [the SPDC soldiers] eat the paddy from our barns and if they cannot eat it all, they throw it away, and if they don’t scatter it, they set it on fire. So we could not stay there anymore because what they are doing to Karen people is very hateful. They deal with Karen people as terribly as they want to, they beat us and tell us

that they consider us their main enemy, so we Karen can’t tolerate it.” - “Saw Lah Htoo” (M, 40), refugee from K--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #35, 1/00)

“They ate some and destroyed the rest. They shot one buffalo dead but didn’t eat it, it just rotted there. In our area, they carried away about 200 tins of paddy. They ate it in the place where they slept, and destroyed what they didn’t want by just leaving it there.” - “Saw Kweh Pa” (M, 34), internally displaced villager from L— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #45, 2/00)

“[A]t T--- the people fed the animals when they fled, but when the soldiers came they ate all the animals. This time when they came maybe some of the soldiers ate them. People said that when they saw the soldiers pass into the fields they destroyed them all. There are no cattle or buffaloes anymore in the village. There were cattle and buffaloes but the last time the soldiers came they ate them all. There were about 20 cows and buffaloes altogether.” - “Saw Htoo Lay” (M, 53), internally displaced village head from T— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #89, 12/00)



A buffalo lies dead in an abandoned village in the Meh Gha Law area, Dweh Loh township, shot by an SPDC patrol. [KHRG]

“They ate the buffaloes and pigs. All! I just had three pigs and three chickens. One of the pigs was 30 viss [48 kg / 108 lb] and the other two were about one viss [1.6 kg / 3.6 lb] each. People sell them for 500 Kyat per viss. They also ate the other people’s poultry. We didn’t see anything when we arrived at the village. They had eaten them.

We went and saw the blood. They ate all the pigs and chickens. They ate H—'s buffaloes, B—'s buffaloes and B—'s buffaloes. They ate some and some stepped on landmines and died. A lot of the buffaloes have stepped on landmines and died. They are the SPDC's mines." - "Saw Pleh Wah" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

"There are no chickens or pigs in our village. When they came the first time they ate them all. They ate everything they could capture." - "Saw Dee Ghay" (M, 45), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #90, 1/01)

"They cut up and ate one of Saw P—'s cattle, and they shot dead 9 cattle and buffaloes including 3 of mine. They just shot them dead, they didn't eat them." - "Saw Pwih" (M, 31), internally displaced villager from H— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #31, 1/00)

In many locations the villagers try to grow cash crops in small plots in the jungle like betelnut trees, coconut trees and betel-chewing leaf plants. The villagers can then sell or barter the produce to villagers from the SPDC controlled villages in order to get rice. Because of this, these crops are also targeted by the SPDC. Cash crops which the soldiers find in the jungle are stolen or destroyed by the soldiers when they come upon them.

"They destroy our things too. When they come if they see rice, they pull it [the plants] out. If they see betelnut trees, they cut them down. If they come upon a hut they burn it and destroy everything. I had 1,500 betelnut trees. The battalion that came and cut down my trees was Infantry Battalion #11, Division [LID] #66. Their Commander was Major Tun Myint. They cut down the trees in five betelnut plantations. Just on my plantation there were 1,500 trees. I could get 200,000 to 300,000 Kyat for the betelnuts [per year] on my plantation. ... In the past we worked on our hill fields and betelnut plantations. We sold the produce and we were able to feed all 13 people in our family. Since the SPDC destroyed our betelnut plantation, burned our hut and destroyed our things we have had no idea what we will do for our future. Now we have a very hard life. We have to eat boiled rice soup [this is eaten as a last resort to make the rice last longer] and bamboo shoots. I have no idea about the future. I don't have a betelnut plantation anymore. We have no jobs to do. The SPDC came and destroyed all our things and now we can't do anything." - "Saw Mi Taw" (M, 41), internally displaced villager from P— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #138, 9/00)

"We are not against them [the SPDC], but when they come they destroy everything they see. They burn the huts, cut down the betelnut trees, and cut down any plant which is useful. If they see a durian tree they wait until the fruit is ripe. If they can't watch over it, they cut it down. They have cut down a lot of durian trees. If they see rice barns they burn them. If they see people they shoot to kill them. What are we going to do? If we have to endure it for much longer we are going to die." - "Saw Nyunt Htin" (M, 20), internally displaced villager from P— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #135, 9/00)

"They cut the yellow durian out of the trees. We couldn't eat durian anymore. It seems like they want to make all the native inhabitants poor. When they came we couldn't eat chillies anymore. They pulled out all the chillie bushes and collected all the chillies. When we went back to look there was nothing left. They said that they would do things like that until the KNU military collapses. So they drove all the villages together." - "Myo Nyunt" (M, 20), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #141, 9/00); durian is a highly valued seasonal fruit

"We were going to grow dogfruit, betelnut and pepper [to sell or barter for rice]. But when the enemies saw these things, they cut down the dogfruit trees and pulled out the pepper plants. Then we couldn't find any money and we didn't have food to eat. That is why we had to make our way, step by step, to here." - "Saw Maw Ray Heh" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from M— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #151, 11/00)

The villagers in the hills of Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts practice a subsistence form of agriculture which provides them with enough food to make it from harvest to harvest. A bad harvest would normally mean that a villager would have to borrow or barter for rice from his neighbours or from the next village. Rarely would a villager starve or be in danger of starving. Villagers with more paddy helped those who didn't have enough. The chaos caused by the many years of dislocation due to fighting, forced relocations and fleeing into the jungle from the Burmese soldiers has destroyed this mostly self-sufficient system. The harvests are too small and it is becoming more difficult to borrow rice because no one has enough rice anymore. The shortage of food has become a serious problem for the villagers. Boiled rice porridge mixed with whatever they can forage in the forest is traditionally eaten by Karen villagers at the end of the rainy season to make the rice supply last until harvest if the harvest was a little small the previous year. It is often used by villagers as a measure of how bad the situation in an area is. In many areas villagers now talk of eating boiled rice porridge at the beginning of

the rainy season, or even while they are still preparing their fields. The fact that they are eating it this early in the year means that they will probably run out of rice long before the harvest.

“It is because of the SPDC. If they didn’t do this, the people could live year to year. If the SPDC soldiers hadn’t come to operate we would not have had to come to this place. We could work and eat year by year. If we didn’t have enough and needed a bit, we could ask for it from our brothers and sisters. In the past, sometimes the soldiers weren’t active. For example, when they weren’t active ‘Saw Thu’ had enough, and if ‘Saw Thu’ didn’t have enough and needed two or three baskets, the villagers arranged with each other and they were okay.” - “U Gah Lu” (M, 46), internally displaced villager from S— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #102, 3/01)

“Last year no one among us needed to eat boiled rice soup [a last resort when the rice has to be made into a porridge in order to stretch the supply], but I think that by the middle of this year a lot of people will need to eat boiled rice due to the Burmese oppression. Even just finding rice to boil will be a problem.” - “Saw Dee Ghay” (M, 63), internally displaced villager from S— village, Mone township (Interview #70, 2/00)

“Sometimes people go and borrow food from their friends who stay near them. They have a little. Sometimes they have no more and their children beg for rice to eat. They go to ask their friends for one or two milk tins of rice, and they eat that. Right now we don’t dare go back to get any [rice from their village], so we can only ask for some from our friends from villages around ours. If they don’t give any, we will be hungry and die.” - “Saw Lay Ghay” (M, 34), internally displaced village head from P— village, Dweh Loh township, (Interview #127, 12/99)

“This year we don’t have enough food, because the enemy came up during the paddy harvesting time and we fled. We don’t dare reap our paddy. The paddy that we did reap, they came up and burned in our paddy barns. This year and in the future it is going to be a very big problem for us. Right now, we can’t say exactly how we are going to get food. In the future, if the enemy moves down [back into the plains to the west] our leaders will find a way to arrange food for us. We were going to find food from P—, but right now we can’t go anywhere. We are hiding so the enemy doesn’t see us, and we are borrowing food from each other. If they don’t go back [out of the hills] in the rainy season, it will be very difficult. When the bamboo shoots come up, we must eat bamboo shoots and wild banana trees. We must mix them and eat it as ‘dta ka baw’ [a type of rice porridge].

After the bamboo shoot season, we will eat ‘gher mee tee’ [a taro-like root].” - “Saw Maw Htoo” (M, 31), internally displaced villager from D— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #71, 2/00)

“The suffering that our civilians here have endured is very hard. Every village is suffering. The enemy entered our area and tortured us hard, but we couldn’t do anything. We fled to the jungle. Some people have run out of paddy and rice. We run to borrow it from other people. If we can borrow it we can eat, but if we can’t borrow then we don’t eat for two or three days. The Burmese SPDC people came down and burned all our paddy and rice in our village. We have to suffer hard. We are one of the groups which has had to flee to stay in the jungle.” - “Naw Paw Paw Htoo” (F, 30), internally displaced villager from K— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #59, 3/01)

The lack of food has left the villagers increasingly desperate. Much of what the villagers eat consists of vegetables and roots, like bamboo shoots, which they can gather from the forest. Items like salt and chillies have become luxuries for most villagers, and meat is unobtainable except for whatever can be hunted in the forest or caught in the streams, or the occasional chicken among villagers lucky enough to have carried one or two chickens with them. Some villagers have resorted to eating roots and vegetables which they know to be unhealthy but which at least make them feel full and give some energy. One example of this is the *klee* root. Eating this root involves a long preparation process, but even after this villagers say eating it can result in dizziness and nausea and tiredness for two to three days afterward. Although villagers told KHRG no one had died from eating the root, they recognised that it can’t be healthy for them and that all it really did was make their stomachs feel full. Villagers sometimes can’t even make fires to cook their food because the firewood can’t be kept dry. Just gathering the firewood can be dangerous because the sound of the villagers cutting the wood may bring the soldiers, as can the smoke from the cooking fires.

“Sometimes the food was finished and we had to borrow one or two pots from the other villagers. We ate that for one or two days and it was gone again. We can borrow because we have to take care of each other. When we need salt, we borrow salt. When we need fishpaste we borrow fishpaste. We even need seasoning crystals and chillies. We have to borrow everything we eat. Things are bad. We don’t dare go fishing in the river. We cannot do that unless the situation gets a little better. It was better in the dry season.” - “Myo Nyunt” (M, 20), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #141, 9/00)

“That night when they shot him dead, we fled and slept in the jungle, under the bushes. Our six or seven households couldn’t find our friends. Sometimes we ate boiled rice [porridge] and sometimes we didn’t even have boiled rice to eat so we ate May Kweh Thoe [rice boiled until there is no water and mixed with salt] and sometimes we ate rice. We stayed like that and we didn’t know what to do. We searched for our fellow villagers from M—and went to them. But before we got to them we were thirsty for boiled rice. We hungered for boiled rice for three days, but we didn’t get any to eat. After three days we met with them. They had some seed paddy. The village head told us, ‘Take it to eat. You must eat it since you are in such poor condition. If you don’t eat it, the women and children can’t continue. You must eat.’ We ate it. Then we searched for things to eat here and there and lived day by day.” - “Saw Ner Kaw” (M, 45), internally displaced villager from M— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #149, 11/00)

dizzy [it has to be properly prepared or it is mildly poisonous]. We eat it but it doesn’t give us energy. We are dizzy and we have to suffer for many nights. It is not like rice. It lets us live for a little bit. It looks like a kind of sweet potato or tapioca. It is white. There aren’t any in the hot season, it grows in the rainy season. We have to go and dig the root and wash it with water. After we wash it we have to scrape it into pieces with a spoon and have to soak it in water again. After that we have to boil it. After we boil it we have to put it beside the fire the whole night. If we put it beside the fire and it is not cooked, we become dizzy when we eat it. When we are dizzy we sleep for two or three days. People don’t die. If they did we wouldn’t dare to eat it. There is no medicine when we get dizzy, we just have to bear it. We don’t know any other food anymore. We just eat klee and bamboo shoots.” - “Naw Paw Paw Htoo” (F, 30), internally displaced villager from K— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #59, 3/01)



A displaced villager in Nyaunglebin District cooks rice in her hiding place in the forest after SPDC soldiers burned her village on February 28th 2001. [KHRG]

“They are also still not happy with me about food. They come and burn my paddy every year. I couldn’t work very well this year. I can eat until the month of July and then the food will run out. We can’t get new rice yet in the coming month so we don’t know what we will do in the middle of the year. I believe we will have to eat klee [a kind of root] and bamboo shoots. When it is bamboo shoot season we will have to eat boiled bamboo shoots. When it is klee season we will have to eat klee again. When we eat klee a lot of people get

“No, I’m not comfortable. We face a problem from a lack of food. The pots are dry [there is no curry in them]. We can’t eat rice or drink water anymore. We just go and eat trees and bamboo leaves. We can’t live. There is no food so people have to eat that kind of thing. If there is food people don’t eat that kind of thing. We also eat klee roots and bamboo shoots. Even though we eat the klee roots there aren’t many of them. The klee roots are far away from us there are none close to us. We can get it only in the rainy season. ... Yes, we eat bamboo shoots. I don’t cook them together with rice. I just boil them and eat them with salt and chillies. Sometimes I have to eat that for one or two days and sometimes for three or four days. We have to eat boiled rice. I go and ask for it from my brother and sister and sometimes they give me one or two milk tins

[condensed milk tins; 195-391 grams / 6.8 – 13.6 ozs.] and I come back and boil it and we can eat together with the children and grandchildren.” - “Saw Ta Pla Pla” (M, age unknown), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #60, 3/01)

“I can’t cook rice. I can’t light a fire. When I blow on the fire, if the fire goes out, all of the coals go out. We dare not cut wood loudly. We have to cut the wood with a little knife so that we can cook just for a short while before the fire goes out. I can’t blow on it. I blow until my mouth is swollen

but there is no fire. If we are at home we keep the firewood dry so we can cook.” - “Naw Mu Lay” (F, 36), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #142, 9/00)

There are limited ways to get food once the villagers’ own rice supply runs out. Villagers in the hills near the Sittaung River are sometimes able to go down into the plains to buy rice, but this is becoming increasingly risky as the SPDC solidifies its control of the area. In other areas the villagers are able to purchase or barter for rice from villagers who come up from the SPDC-controlled villages around Papun, along the Bilin River or the Papun-Ka Ma Maung vehicle road. This is also risky and the SPDC attempts to shut these supply routes whenever it can. The new camps which the SPDC has been establishing also have the effect of blocking these supply routes. Villagers carrying rice in the jungle are shot on sight by the patrolling soldiers, even if they are from SPDC controlled villages. Finding the money to buy the rice is also difficult. Some villagers find work on other people’s fields, while others sell any heirloom jewellery they may have or try to make money by going to buy rice to bring back and sell.

“If they can go and get it to the front [in the plains to the west] they will go and get it, but if they can’t go and get it from in front, then they are going to go up to S—. They go to the places like between Battalion #9 and Company #1 [both KNLA units]. If the way is open they can go and get paddy to eat, but if the place isn’t open they can’t. It is two days away. There was danger all along the way. We had to pass two of their Army camps.” - “Saw Kyi Po” (M, 37), internally displaced villager from L— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #107, 3/01)

“When the villagers who have fled T— to stay in the forest have no more rice, they must go to carry it from among the Burmese [they must go to buy it from the Burmese controlled villages]. The villagers had hill fields but the paddy didn’t yield enough rice.” - “Saw Lin Yone” (M, 32), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #2, 2/01)

“I don’t have money. When I came recently I bought a few tins [of rice]. I think that in the future if others hire people [to work their fields] I will work for daily or monthly wages. I can carry baskets for people. If there is a fee and I can carry it two or three times then I could get one big tin of rice. I think like that. I can’t think of another way.” - “U Gah Lu” (M, 46), internally displaced villager from S— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #102, 3/01)

“They carry things to sell. They carry and sell bread. They go and get it at K— and come back

to sell it around their place.” - “Saw Ler Wah” (M, 26), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #5, 6/01)

“In the rainy season the Burmese open the ways [they patrol less often and don’t man all their camps] so people from T— can come and do their hill fields and we can go and take a little bit of rice to eat. Right now it is the hot season and the Burmese have shut the way so the people from T— can’t come up anymore.” - “Sein Maung” (M, 52), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #109, 3/01)

“They can’t go on the small paths to the front [to the west]. We have talked to people who go to carry [rice] from T—. It is two days between here and there. There are dangers along that path. It is three hours by walking. The way is dangerous.” - “Saw Wih Kyay” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #111, 4/01)

“I don’t know, but they asked me about the contact place. They said that people were coming and selling things and people were contacting [the IDP’s and KNU/KNLA]. I told them I had never come and carried things and I didn’t know about it. I told them I sold goods in my house and if they didn’t believe me, they could see it when they went back to K—.” - “Saw Peh Yah” (M, 30), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #211, 3/01); from an SPDC-controlled village, he was arrested and forced to guide the soldiers to the place where the villagers trade things with the internally displaced villagers

“If they have some money they buy rice which comes up from Papun at K— village. They go to buy a little bit of food from K— where people bring and sell it. They have a little of their own money, but they can’t buy things to eat for long. The villagers who don’t have money will have a problem.” - “Saw Eh Doh” (M, 25), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #3, 2/01)

Limited outside assistance does reach the villagers from the KNU and other Karen organisations which bring in small amounts of rice and other things from Thailand to the villagers. These groups are only able to bring in what can be carried on a person’s back, making the amounts inadequate to feed the large numbers of IDP’s living in the forest. In some cases these organisations give the villagers money with which to buy food instead. This also is usually not enough; one villager noted that he had been given 7,000 Kyat to use to buy rice for the year, but 1 big tin of rice [12.5 kg / 27.5 lb] is 2,000 Kyat thus allowing him to buy three and a half tins. In normal times one adult villager would be able to eat one big tin of rice in a month, so he must get by on three and a half tins for

himself and his family for a year. When rice is bought it is usually only in small amounts, about 1.5-3 kg [3.4-6.8 lb], so the villagers must make the dangerous trip to buy it many times before they have enough. These are just stop-gap measures and cannot be supported indefinitely.

“Q: Is the IDP group [a Karen group which sends food and other supplies to IDPs] in L— village tract?
A: Yes, they help us sometimes when they come. They come a few times [a year] but not often. If they are needed they come.” - “Saw Ghay Hser” (M, 26), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #1, 2/01)

“In the beginning they arranged food and rice for us. In the waxing of this month [the beginning of January; he is using the traditional lunar calendar] they gave us money and we went to buy food ourselves. We get it at K—. It is one day away [by walking]. For now it isn’t dangerous. There are no [SPDC] camps. In the past we could go for a few days and get enough for one load, but we don’t know about the future. We go and buy it from other people. Sometimes if the people have rice to sell then we can take it to eat. If they don’t have rice to sell we can’t take it to eat. It is difficult and we don’t know what will happen.” - “Saw Pleh Wah” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

“We could carry it one time and it was difficult. We carried one or two big tins [12.5-25 kg / 27.5-55 lb] of rice each time. We ate for a few days and it was all gone. We went to go and carry it again but we didn’t have money to buy it. I get the rice from K—. They sell one big tin [12.5 kg / 27.5 lb] of rice for 1,500 Kyat. We can buy it to eat but it is very difficult.” - “Naw K’Ser Tee” (F, 48), internally displaced villager from K— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #100, 3/01)

Wherever the IDP villagers run to they try to clear new fields to give themselves some measure of self-sufficiency again. They are limited in where they can plant and are sometimes forced to make fields on slopes which are too steep or on ground that is too rocky. Some villagers don’t even have any seed to plant, but they prepare their fields anyway in case they can find or buy some. The harvests are small and still inadequate. Many times, however, these fields are also destroyed by the Army when it comes through, forcing the villagers to move again and try to make another field elsewhere. Some villagers are forced to move three or four times a year and never get a field prepared before the rainy season comes.

“We are just cutting the hill fields but we don’t get enough paddy so we have to find paddy to buy and eat. We can’t do anything anymore. Some people can cut [a field] and get enough

paddy every year, but this year we didn’t get enough paddy. The hill fields are just up and down [they are too steep]. They are not like the ‘kyew’ hill fields [more gradually inclined]. If it was a ‘kyew’ hill field, even if there wasn’t enough we could grow it more easily. We try to cut the hill fields but in the end we only see leaves, all of the grains are lost. ... Only some of the paddy is good. It is because the paddy is young. We don’t have enough old paddy seeds and we just plant them on the rocks and beside the rocks where we look up a cliff. We can’t grow it anymore. If we could do a field on a plain it would be a little better.” - “Naw Mu Lu” (F, 50-60), internally displaced villager from S— village, Mone township (Interview #62, 3/01)

“The people who stay there work but it is difficult. They have to cut the hill fields with difficulty between the hills. They have to make their hill fields in the hidden places like that.” - “Saw Wih Kyay” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #111, 4/01)

“Q: Can the villagers go to the SPDC and ask for food when they don’t have enough to eat?

A: Don’t even think it. They don’t even care. They are going to step on your neck and cut off your head. It is not an easy thing. We don’t dare to go and face them like that. They even say that they are going to take care of us, but they lie to us for a few days and then step on us. It is not the correct way to go and meet them. It isn’t easy because they are against us. When they see your head or leg, they destroy it. If we must tell all, they don’t even want to keep our footprints.” - “Saw Tee Ko” (M, 50), internally displaced village head from H— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #91, 2/01)

“The second thing is that the villagers can’t eat anymore. They can’t go and ask to borrow food. Some of them steal. We know, but we don’t want to tell anymore. It is because we can’t do anything anymore. I told them to share among each other. A frog cannot live alone and a fish cannot live alone, so we need to live together. The leaders should give us suggestions for the things that don’t go the right way.” - “Po Naw” (M, xx), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #61, 3/01)

“Even though I have made a hill field, I don’t know what will happen. Whether I will be able to finish cutting it or not I don’t know. Even though I have cut the hill field, I don’t have any paddy seeds. I am just cutting it.” - “Saw Pleh Wah” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

The shortage of food has reached very dangerous levels in many parts of the hills. Malnutrition is rife

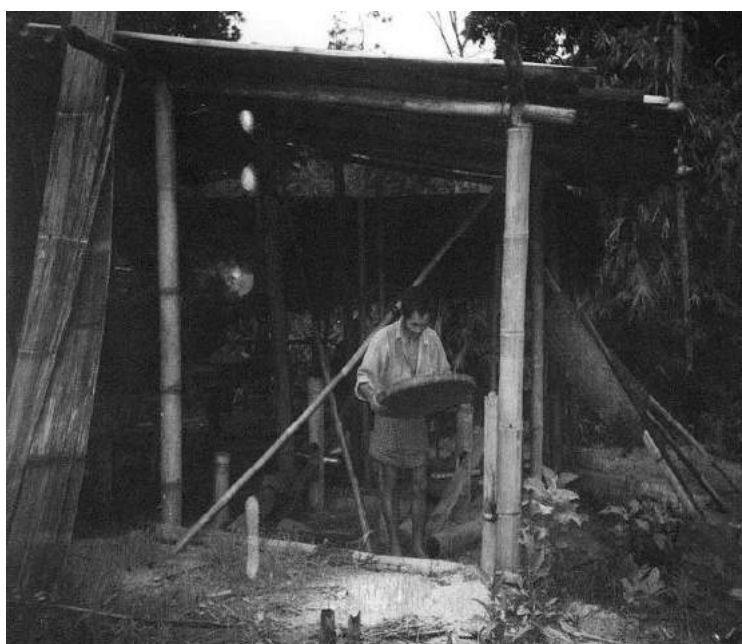
and starvation a very real possibility for some IDP's in the upcoming year. The IDP's are being slowly worn down by the exhaustion and illnesses from the lack of food and constant stress of trying to find food. One villager from Shwegyin township commented to KHRG that a walk that would have previously have taken him and his villagers a day now takes two or three. Many of the villagers are willing to endure fleeing, being shot at and suffering from diseases as long as they can remain on or near their land, but it is the lack of food which eventually makes the IDP's choose to try to reach the refugee camps in Thailand or go down to the SPDC-controlled relocation sites. The villagers try to hold out as long as they can, but when there is no more rice, no more seed to plant and no more land where they can safely make their fields there is no choice but to leave.

“They are planning that when they can no longer search for food to eat in the rainy season, they will come up to the refugee camps. One family came recently to Meh Ka Kee refugee camp. The other people have planned to come up. They will continue staying there for one or two months with the rice they already have and then if they can find food from other places they will continue staying there. If they can’t find any food, the enemy is operating and the rainy season comes then they will come up here [to Thailand].” - “Saw Lin Yone” (M, 32), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #2, 2/01)

“There was not enough food to eat so I had to find work. I worked in the landmine assembly shop. The people step on the landmines and their legs are broken. Then a landmine exploded and didn’t destroy anything else but it did destroy one of my eyes. After that I have always been getting sick until now. This happened in 1989 in the Saw Ka Der area, 8th [KNLA] Battalion. It was a Karen landmine. They [the KNLA soldiers] didn’t go and lay it, I thought I would go and lay it. It was because of the Burmese operations and I thought I would go and lay it but it wounded me [he set off his own landmine while laying it]. It exploded and wounded me. My health has not been good since then. I need my children to learn and get an education. For me also I will get food, and the third thing is to get medicine and maybe I will be healed.” - “Saw Tha Pwih” (M, 38), refugee from Tee Lee Kha Kee village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #56, 2/01); he was partially blinded in the explosion.

“We flee and suffer troubles, rain and wind. We have now returned from fleeing and the whole group is sick. We can’t even walk. It was a one day walk to come back here, but it took us 2 or 3 days. We had to climb the mountain when we fled recently. We also didn’t take any rice to eat when we fled. We just ate boiled rice soup. We asked to borrow some from people who had a bowl of rice left. We shared a little with each other.” - “Saw Muh Dah” (M, 30), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #87, 4/00)

This man was among a group of villagers from Shwegyin township who sneaked back to their village in May 2001 to take rice from their paddy storage barns. They brought it back to a location halfway to where they are hiding in the forest to winnow and pound the rice. [KHRG]



Health and Education

“Health is the most important thing. I think that if it is possible and we can build a clinic it would be good. Health is a big weakness. For example, if I am seriously sick and I go to ask for medicine from the medic they say there is no medicine. It is difficult. I also think about other things. The way is difficult. The medics have to cross the car road [the Kyauk Kyi – Saw Hta car road which is heavily guarded and mined on both sides] among the enemy. It is a problem. If the medicine arrives there are a lot of people and they can’t share it out to everybody, so the medics apologise. Some of the villagers went to get ‘kyaw pi’ [a type of leaf used to make herbal medicine] and some of them are healed. Some of the villagers who believe in animism treat the animist way and people are also healed. Some people can’t be treated and die. Some of them were single, some were old.” - “Po Naw” (M, xx), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #61, 3/01); the medics he refers to are from the KNLA and from Karen organisations operating from Thailand

Medicine and people trained in medicine are almost nonexistent in the Papun hills and eastern Nyaunglebin District. Most villagers rely on traditional medicines made from roots, leaves and tree bark which can be foraged in the forest. People do occasionally come up into the hills and sell medicine to the IDP’s, but it is usually only in small quantities and not very strong. Most of the medicine consists of Burmese patent over the counter drugs which are often of low quality. Injections and other high quality medicines, usually from Thailand, are difficult to obtain and very expensive. It is very risky for the people to come up to sell medicine because any villagers caught carrying medicine in the hills can be executed by the SPDC soldiers after being accused of aiding the resistance.

“No clinic and no medicine. They find plants like Na Paw Kyaw and they boil them to drink [as an herbal medicine]. The other medicines are Khoh Bay and Noh Bay [types of bark made into medicines]. In the case of malaria they use boiled Theh Ka Po [a small plant used as an herbal medicine] and drink it and they are cured. We don’t have medicine. We cannot come and buy medicine from this side [in Thailand] because there are a lot of problems on the way to come and bring medicine. They cannot go and buy medicine from the SPDC.” - “Saw Po Hla” (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

“They cannot do anything. The people who have money can buy it. Sometimes people carry injections and sell them. The people from xxxx [village] or other places must carry and sell it. For the people who don’t have any money, they just suffer and suffer. If they are blessed to be alive then they are alive, and if they are not blessed with life then they die.” - “Saw Tha Pwih” (M, 38), refugee from T--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #56, 2/01)

“We can’t do anything. We just boil bitter things, roots and leaves [make traditional herbal medicines] and drink it. Sometimes they are healed but there have been some people who died and were lost. Recently Naw Lay Li Paw died. She died because she had just given birth to her baby and she was very weak. The Burmese came and oppressed and threatened us so she couldn’t stay in her house and get warm. People had to flee and carry her into the jungle when it was raining and she got wet. Because of that she became sick and afterwards she couldn’t bear it anymore and died. ... Her family feels bad. They think of her always. She had two children, three children including the new one. The eldest is Saw Kaw Blut. He is four or five years old. The other one is Naw Kya Wee La Paw. She is three years old. The youngest one is Saw Day Kyaw. He was two months and two days when his mother died. Now in March he will be ten months.” - “Saw Ko Suh” (M, 54), internally displaced village head from P— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #58, 3/01)

“Many people were sick. There were no shelters from the rain. There were no fences or huts. We are staying among the trees and bamboo. When it rains we get wet and sick. We don’t have any medicine. We just treat them with traditional medicine from the jungle. Some people who know about medicine treat and cure the diseases. Some buy medicine from their friends who have kept some. They take it and are sometimes cured.” - “Paw Paw Mo” (F, 45), internally displaced villager from M— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #86, 4/00)

“We have a little medicine, but it is not enough. When we get sick, we take it. Mostly, when we get a fever or headache, we eat Nya Baw Saw, when our bodies have pain, we eat Blaw A’Mu, and when we get a cough, we eat Paw Pwaw. [These are herbal medicines made from plants and roots found in the forest.] Sometimes we are cured

and sometimes not. Not only the children die from disease; the old people are also suffering from disease, and many have died in our area." - "Saw Maw Htoo" (M, 31), internally displaced villager from D— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #71, 2/00)

"Some people from the town sell medicine, but they just sell Mingala, Ngwe Maung, Lay Kweh Say, and Ko Baw Say [over-the-counter Burmese patent medicines]. The Burmese don't allow them to sell medicines that need injection, which come from Thailand, because they think such medicines would be useful to the KNLA. The Burmese don't support the people with medicine or food at all." - "Pu Taw Lay" (M, 56), internally displaced villager from M—village, Shwegyin township (Interview #80, 3/00)

The KNU and other organisations do maintain small mobile medical teams which move about the area, but these can't reach everyone and many villagers have never met them. These medical teams are made up of trained medics but usually don't have much medicine, and what they do have has to be rationed to the point of sometimes turning away all but the most seriously ill people. Villagers don't dare to take sick or wounded people down to the towns for treatment for fear of being arrested. The hospitals are too expensive anyway, and in Burma the sick are turned out of the hospital as soon as they run out of money.

"Before when the medicine was finished we were told there is no help, so the sick people suffered. But then when the people [KNU] have medicine, we get it." - "Saw Dee Ghay" (M, 45), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #90, 1/01)

"No, there is no one. During the whole year there are only some times when the medics [KNU medics] stay with us for a while. They just arrive once a year. I got medicine the last time but it wasn't enough. We just got enough for two or three days." - "Saw Ko Suh" (M, 54), internally displaced village head from P— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #58, 3/01)

"This is because of the SPDC. If it weren't for the SPDC, the civilians could go and buy medicine and take it like before. The villagers don't say too much anymore. They say we can't do anything anymore. If sick, then they just die. Even if you go and ask for medicine, they have no medicine for you. If they look at you and let you go, you can go get medicine, but if they don't let you go then you have to go back [to the village]." - "Po Naw" (M, xx), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #61, 3/01)

"Q: Can you take the serious patients to town? A: No, we can't because the Burmese are living there, so nobody dares to go." - "Pa Lah" (M, 35), refugee from M--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #52, 4/00)

"People haven't died but many have illnesses. Some villagers want to go to the hospital, but they can't. If they went their families couldn't carry the pots, food, and bedding for them. They do not have enough food or cookpots." - "Saw Lay Ghay" (M, 34), internally displaced village head from P— village, Dweh Loh township, (Interview #127, 12/99)



A woman arrives with her sick daughter to seek treatment from a KNU mobile medical team in early April 2001. The young girl died a few days later. [KHRG]

"In the beginning when we fled there were a lot of children, old people, women and men who were sick, but because our leaders arranged for medicine for us there was nobody who died from sickness. There are KNU health workers." - "Saw Yo Tha" (M, 56), internally displaced villager from K— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #101, 3/01)

The result of this is that many people are dying from treatable illnesses. Malaria, fevers and diarrhoea are common and deadly. Small children and the elderly are especially susceptible to illness and many

newborn babies don't live past the first few months. The constant movement, poor diet, stress and general living conditions leave the villagers especially susceptible to many diseases and infections. Villagers wounded by SPDC bullets or shrapnel have to make do with traditional medicines. Those more severely wounded, especially people who have stepped on landmines, usually succumb to their wounds due to lack of treatment. A typical example is Sho Per Ko village, a cool highland village of 70 families high in the hills of northern Lu Thaw township. It was abandoned and then destroyed when SPDC troops set up a base at nearby Ler Mu Plaw in 1997, and one of the village elders told KHRG that since then 28 adults from his village of 70 families have died of treatable illnesses - more than one from every three families, leaving at least 50 orphaned children. The following quote is from an IDP villager who kept a list of villagers from his area who had died of illness in his village tract in Lu Thaw township in 1999-2000 alone.

"We always have sick people in this place. We can't find medicine anywhere. I don't know what kinds of diseases they have, mostly fevers. They are seriously sick. Some of them have died. More than 10 people died last year. [He is reading from a list.]

1. ***Saw Maung Thu Heh, 20 years old. Married.***
2. ***Naw Dah Lu, 28 years old. Single.***
3. ***Saw Say Pweh Paw, 30 years old. Married.***
4. ***Saw Pa Bee, 20 years old. Single.***
5. ***Saw Pa Yuh, 28 years old. Single.***
6. ***Saw Way Thaw Heh, 25 years old. Single.***
7. ***Naw Mu Kher Pee, 50 years old. Married.***
8. ***Thaw Nay Paw Pu, 55 years old. Married.***
9. ***Saw Eh Baw Pee, 50 years old. Married.***
10. ***Pee Maung Aye Mo, 45 years old. Married.***
11. ***Pa Tay, 50 years old. Married.***
12. ***Hsa Kwa, 30 years old. Married.***
13. ***Naw Boh Lay, 45 years old. Single.***
14. ***Du Ther Htoo Pa, 50 years old. Married.***
15. ***Pee Kay, 55 years old. Married.***
16. ***Nay Mu Lah, 7 years old.***
17. ***Hsa Mu Thaw, 2 years old."***

- "Meh Bya" (M, 37), internally displaced villager from L— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #54, 4/00)

"There are a lot of sick people. One by one, one by one. Children and old people are sick. We can't treat them. We just go and take medicine from the District [KNU health workers]. It is about two hours away. The medics give the medicine

and some of the people are healed, but some of them have fevers all the time. We can't do anything. There was one person who has already died. He was old. His name was Saw Kaw Naw."

- "Saw Pleh Wah" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

"Yes, there were people who were sick when we fled to W— and came back. We thought we were going to go back and look at the situation, maybe there was some rice or paddy left. ... It was about one or two days later and people informed us and said, 'Grandfather, one of your grandchildren is seriously sick.' Then we turned around and went back, but she had already died before we arrived. She was my granddaughter. She was four years old. Her name was Naw Mu Si. ... We did [have medicine], but not enough. We asked for some from a doctor [a KNU medic] and he gave us some. I thought that I would go and call a doctor also, but it was already too late. People told us, 'Peh Wah Pu [Peh Wa's grandfather; another grandchild] your grandchild is already dead.' There was some medicine they still had with them, but it wasn't enough. They had only a little bit. Maybe they couldn't have treated her. There were only our children and grandchildren living there. She died before we arrived. They had already buried her when we arrived. The parents were upset." - "Saw Htoo Lay" (M, 53), internally displaced village head from T— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #89, 12/00)

"People get sick and die. My mother and two or three children have died. I only know Her Lay Wah and my mother, Kaw Naw, but there are many others whose names I don't know. My mother got sick and died. She took some medicine but not much. I just found a little bit for her." - "Saw Thet Wah" (M, 30), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #97, 3/01)

"There are a lot of diseases. The children and old people are fleeing and staying on the ground and in the mud. We can't make fires and we can't roof the huts. We sleep on the ground and get sick. There is no medicine so we take the leaves of the trees and bamboo [to make herbal medicines] but they do not cure us. Two or three people have died. Hser Lay Wah and one of my nephews died. My nephew was small and I didn't know his name. Hser Lay Wah was five years old. The other one was my mother, Kaw Naw. She was old and had to flee in the jungle and got sick. She became swollen. She had to sleep on the ground and maybe she got sick from the steam of the earth. When she had stayed at home [in her village] nothing happened. She was 80 years old." - "Saw Ghaw" (M, 32), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #98, 3/01)

“Aye aye! Many people. When we went up to Khaw Mu Kee many people were getting sick and some children died. I don’t know their names. Some children died after they were born. The sick people took medicine but I don’t know what kind.” - “Naw K’Ser Tee” (F, 48), internally displaced villager from K— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #100, 3/01)

“We can’t get any medicine. We just got sick and managed to cure it each time. We don’t know how we got better, maybe it was the Lord [Buddha] who helped us, because we were praying. If the Lord wasn’t helping us we would surely have died, because we don’t have any medicine. We can’t find any medicine because we are fleeing in the jungle.” - “Saw Muh Dah” (M, 30), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #87, 4/00)

“There was no medicine. We just took the roots of trees. People died in the jungle and also in the village. Mu Ler Wah Mo’s child died when they fled to the jungle when the Burmese came. He was over one year old, a boy. They fled in the cold. It was not so long ago. I saw his body. There were 4 villagers who died in the village because of illness. They were coughing but there was no medicine, so they died.” - “Pa Lah” (M, 35), refugee from M--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #52, 4/00)

Education is important for many villagers but finding time, teachers or books in the forest is not easy. Some villages had their own small unofficial primary schools, with one of the parents (who usually only had 3 or 4 years of schooling themselves) teaching the children part time. Since being displaced, many of these teachers have heroically continued their efforts, and in hiding places deep in the forest it is still common to see a group of children sitting on the ground with notebooks being taught by a woman holding her own baby, possibly writing on an impromptu blackboard. In some more established and larger IDP sites there may even be a temporary shelter serving as a school and a couple of teachers. These schools only go up to the 2nd, 3rd or 4th standard (grade). The only educational materials available are whatever has been salvaged from the village, which is not enough for all the students. The parents try to help, but their means are very limited. The instability of the situation means that the schools often have to close or be moved due to the movements of SPDC



A 10 month old baby from Papun District who has been on the run in the forest with his parents since shortly after birth. He is now showing signs of serious malnutrition and is not growing properly. [KHRG]

soldiers. Eventually the schools are rebuilt again in a new place, but children will have already lost a few months or a year of education. Even this is better than the situation for most children in the region, who receive no education once displaced.

“We can’t get education now, and people are sick but there is no medicine. We had a school in our village, but not now, because the SPDC came. Now the children just stay together with their parents in the jungle. The schoolteacher has also fled to stay under the trees, and he is old so he is not happy to teach here.” - “Saw Po Lay” (M, 50+), internally displaced villager from K— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #69, 1/00)

“The students had to run in December, but they are opening the schools again. There is a school in T—. It is only a primary school with three standards [grades]. It is a village school [on supported and run by the villagers and not the SPDC].” - “Saw Lin Yone” (M, 32), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #2, 2/01)

“I couldn’t study well because the Burmese were coming up. The teachers moved and then set up a new school. Then I went to study again. The new school wasn’t built nicely. It is on the ground and we laid straw on the ground. We have books.” - “Naw Paw Ghay” (F, 11), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #95, 3/01)

“Now we don’t have the school anymore. We couldn’t build our school anymore because of the SPDC’s work. The SPDC came and burned our school. There were a lot of schools that were burned. They were high schools and middle

schools. The teachers couldn't teach anymore because the SPDC came and burned their schools down. They were destroyed and the teachers scattered. The teachers have gone to teach here and there. There is just a primary school left; Kindergarten A and B and 1st and 2nd Standard [grades]. The villagers are scattered here and there. We couldn't look after the children anymore. There is no food to go and send to them. If we teach in the houses there are no teachers. We couldn't find teachers anymore. It is difficult to go and call the teachers. We need to spend money for the trip. We have no money to hire them, so we can't call them. Now, we just close our eyes and stay like this. ... There is one school in T—. There are schools at T— and at K—. Today the school is here and in the nighttime in another place [meaning that the schools are often moved]. It is because the SPDC oppresses us, so they can't build them in stability. They just build them [quickly]. Sometimes when the SPDC comes they flee together with the students into the jungle and teach in the jungle. They just do like that. When the SPDC has gone they go back to their place and their school." - "Po Naw" (M, xx), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #61, 3/01)

"We have problems getting them [books]. We can't get enough for all the students. We have problems getting books, pens, or blackboards. The parents are willing to help, and I am also willing, but we don't have enough." - "Pu Ko Wah" (M, 67), internally displaced villager from M— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #129, 1/00)

"There is a little school, just one standard [grade]. There were two teachers, but now there is one teacher left. The other teacher went up there [to the refugee camp] already. They can't learn regularly because they have to run often. They go to school and run, go to school and run." - "Saw Kyi Po" (M, 37), internally displaced villager from L— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #107, 3/01)

"There is a school at the Brigade [at KNLA 3rd Brigade headquarters]. There is no school in our village anymore. Even though we don't have a school our Kler Lweh Htoo District [KNU district office] has arranged it for us so the students can go back to finish school this year. So we do have a school [the students were sent to continue at the school at the brigade headquarters]. If the situation improves, they will make it a middle school. We don't know what will happen in the coming year. ... He [his son] couldn't go to school for one or two months but because the leaders arranged it he went back to finish school. The school is closed now [school holiday]. Even though they have to learn in the jungle they can learn well. There is no school in the place where we stay now,

but because the leaders arranged it I let him go to the KNU government school." - "Saw Yo Tha" (M, 56), internally displaced villager from K— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #101, 3/01)

For most children even these schools are beyond their reach. If they receive any education it is most often from a more educated villager, usually someone with a third or fourth grade education, who lives in the same IDP site. The children gather together from the different families and learn in someone's shelter. For these children there are usually no books and no pencils. The children themselves often find it difficult to study after all the pressures of life on the run. Many of the children are eager to learn, but the situation and the weight of their problems make it very difficult. Often there is no time to study, as everyone in the family is needed to work the field or look for food. Many villagers have told KHRG that they did have schools in their villages before the Burmese soldiers arrived. Most of these were KNU-run or village-run schools, but most of these have been destroyed as the SPDC's path of destruction swept through the villages. A villager from Lu Thaw township explained to KHRG his disappointment that his children couldn't even read the Karen alphabet.

"They don't have a school. When I write down ka kaw tee or ya aw htaw [names used for Karen letters roughly corresponding to 'k' and 'y'] my children cannot remember them. They cannot tell which letter is ka kaw tee and which one is ya aw htaw. ... They couldn't study in the village. There was a school in the village when the situation was good. The school has been gone since 1976 when I was young until now when I am 38 years old. It was a long time ago. I didn't tell my children they would see a school, even I didn't go to school. None of my children have been to school. There are no schools in the jungle." - "Saw Tha Pwih" (M, 38), refugee from T--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #56, 2/01)

"There is a school but we can't open it. The children do nothing because the school can't open so they can't learn in school. There are 10 or maybe 20 children. If there is no need to flee then they can learn in the school. The school was open for almost one year last year. It closed because the Burmese came up. If they hadn't come up it would have finished." - "Saw Wih Kyay" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #111, 4/01)

"They could learn in the past. Because they were just little children, we only had primary school. Since 1999, we haven't had any school. The SPDC came and hurt us so often that we didn't continue with the school programme anymore. It's because we have to flee so often and we don't have a place or a village where we can be sure to live. It is very

difficult for us to build a school.” - “Pa Mer Ler” (M, 25), internally displaced villager from T— village, Mone township (Interview #49, 4/00)

“It is not easy to have a school. Some people have built a small school for their children’s education. From three or four houses they try to find a teacher in the forest. They can’t pay money for the teacher. The teacher just gives his time for the children. The parents also help teach as they are able.” - “Saw Po Hla” (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

“Before they [the KNU] helped the teachers for a long time. Now just the civilians help the teachers themselves. The leaders don’t send money to them anymore. The parents of the students give one big tin of rice and 10 or 20 [Kyat] of money and go to help the teacher by cutting the grass. They just work and eat like that. They don’t receive enough help anymore. ... If the leaders will help, I would like to build a school. If the children can get a little education they will be a little improved. To tell the truth there are a lot of children who can go to school, but we don’t see the teachers anymore. The parents also don’t have anything to pay the school and the teacher with. So we can’t build a school.” - “Po Naw” (M, xx), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #61, 3/01)

“I can teach in the bush, but I dare not go back to teach in the village. I am teaching in the jungle. We teach in the jungle because a group of SPDC soldiers are oppressing and coming to torture us. Therefore we fled to escape, and now we try to teach the children in the deep jungle as we can. I have 18 students in all. ... Now I am getting old and I can’t help people do other kinds of work, so I will help them by working as I can. I give support to them by teaching the children so they will be educated. ... The students are willing to learn, but they are afraid because of the problems made by the SPDC. They are very excited to become educated adults in the future. Since I was young and finished school, I have never cared about the salary. I love my people and I am interested to teach our children. While growing up and until now, sometimes I have lived happily and sometimes poorly. However, I love my nationality and giving knowledge to them.” - “Pu Ko Wah” (M, 67), internally displaced villager from M— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #129, 1/00)



Children studying in a makeshift school in the forest after fleeing Nyaunglebin District into Papun District in January 2001. [FBR researcher]

Reason for Living as IDP's

"When they came up they posted an order and said we must go back to them. Der! We dare not go back because they are not our nationality. ... They said it is better if we go back to them and we are fleeing and getting sick and dying. They said we must go back to them and we must unite with them. It will be better, they said. But we dare not go back. We don't face them and when they see us they shoot us. We dare not face them. If we face them they are going to hurt us. They even shoot people who don't carry guns. ... If we can't work in the future we will have to leave. If we can work, we must work and eat. We dare not go among the Burmese. We don't know whether they will continue to be active or not. We are farmers and don't understand about that. If the people [the KNU] say that the soldiers will be active then they will, and if the people say they won't, we are very happy to make hill fields." - "Saw Ghaw" (M, 32), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #98, 3/01)

Karen villagers have a deep attachment to their land and their villages. They do not want to be relocated from their villages nor do they want to leave them to live in the forest. The villages are where they were born and for most, where their parents and grandparents were born. Karen villages sometimes shift location due to land conditions but never go very far, and most of the villages have been in their present locations for fifty or more years. While the plains along the Sittaung River contain Karen, Burman, Pa-O, Indian and Shan villages, the population in the hills of Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts is more than 95% Karen. The area has long been a stronghold of the KNU and governments in Rangoon have never had much centralised control over the Papun hills. Even during the colonial period this area was administered separately from the rest of Burma. The first significant incursion of Burmans into the area was as part of Aung San's "Burma Independence Army", who entered the area as part of the Japanese occupation force during World War Two, and committed such brutal atrocities against the local villagers that even the Japanese had to rein them in at times. The villagers still remember those days. The SPDC and its Army of predominantly Burman soldiers are seen as outsiders and an occupying force of a foreign nationality; most villagers refer to them simply as "the Burmese", because this is the only side of the Burmese people they have ever encountered. They speak of going "down into Burma", because Burma is the country that sends "Burmese" soldiers up to kill them, not their home Karen hills. Many villagers in the area refer to the KNU as their "leaders", and even if they don't, they do usually agree with its aims.

"We can't do anything. Our paddy is all gone. We will flee further up [into the hills], but we don't want to go to another country. If our leaders [KNU] support us with food and we can look for some food on our own, we will last out the year, so we won't have to go. ... Anyway, we don't want to go. Since 1994 when the Burmese started the Four Cuts here [the program to undermine opposition by wiping out villages and villagers' food

supplies], I have never gone. I thought that I would work and stay here. The other people have gone when they had no more paddy. I also didn't have any paddy, but I was still working and surviving." - "Pu Taw Lay" (M, 56), internally displaced villager from M— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #80, 3/00)

"Some people only came to stay here two years ago. Other villagers came many years ago. K'Neh Khaw Hta village is 30 or 40 years old. It started when Kaw Thoo Lei started [1949]." - "Htun Htun" (M, 42), village head from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #213, 3/01)

"If the enemy doesn't oppress us a lot we will stay in the country and die in the country. But if there is a lot of oppression and if we can't bear it anymore and we have to go, then we will go. If we can bear it we will stay. If it is still a little bit like this [stable enough that they can make small hill fields] we will stay and work like this. If we have to go to another place we won't go. We don't want to go. We will stay in the country and die in the country. It is our own country. We will fight by ourselves. We will do it by ourselves. If the other countries pity us, help us. If the other countries don't pity us, we will fight until everything is ruined and it is finished. Nobody can eat. It will be finished at that time." - "Po Naw" (M, xx), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #61, 3/01)

Many villagers tell KHRG that SPDC units have called them to "come back to them" or "join hands with them", an idea which they find absurd because it comes from the mouths of the same soldiers who burn their villages and shoot them on sight. They speak of going to live under SPDC control like they would speak of volunteering for a long prison term with hard labour. They know what life is like in SPDC-controlled villages and relocation sites, both from their own experience and from the stories of others who have fled those places into the hills. They know it means having no

land, trying to find elusive paid labour, doing forced labour regularly for the SPDC, having their food and livestock looted, paying never-ending “fees” and “taxes” to the local Army units, and being treated by the SPDC with suspicion as “someone from the hills”. Many who have tried it have found they could not survive or bear it and have fled back into the hills. If their villages have already been abandoned or destroyed, they end up internally displaced in the forest once again.

“I think that if I have to go and stay with the Burmese, I don’t want to go. This is why we flee. If we can’t flee and we have to go back and stay with the Burmese, I don’t want to go. I think that if we flee and then after that we go and stay with the Burmese it makes no sense. That’s why we don’t want to go. If it is safe for us to flee like this, then we will flee. ... We had to go [for forced labour] all the time when we stayed in the village. We have many brothers and sisters so we rotated to go with them [the SPDC] one by one. Now we don’t go, we flee. We flee regularly. I don’t dare go to my hut. I flee every time. The other people have to go [the people who stay in the relocation site]. We don’t go when they order us to work because we don’t want to be their slaves. We just stay with our brothers and sisters among the caves and stones in the jungle. If they see us they will kill us. We are afraid of them and we don’t dare go anywhere. We don’t even dare to go wash in the river. We just wash ourselves like cats [they wipe themselves off with a little bit of water].” - “Naw Mu Lay” (F, 36), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #142, 9/00)

“We had no food to eat. We had to search for food and work and we didn’t have enough for our families. Moreover, they ordered us to porter and work for ‘loh ah pay’ and they demanded food. We had to feed them. They ordered us to leave our work and go work for them. Because of this, we couldn’t live under their organisation. We had to live in the jungle.” - “Saw Mu Kaw” (M, 23), internally displaced village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #145, 9/00)

“It is in a ‘black’ area [an area considered by the SPDC to be under the control of the resistance

forces]. We always have to flee. We never face them. We don’t dare to face them because they are not doing good things. They are doing bad things all the time so nobody dares to face them. No one from my place dares to face them. All the people are fleeing.” - “U Gah Lu” (M, 46), internally displaced villager from S— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #102, 3/01)

“[W]e can’t dare stay without running. They will kill us, because they always say, ‘We couldn’t call these villagers to come down and stay here [at a relocation site]’. They can’t call us to go there because we dare not stay there. If we go to stay there, they force us to be their slaves. We can’t do it, so we don’t go. So we were staying around



This family in northern Papun District was forced to a relocation site, but could no longer bear the conditions there and fled back up into the hills. [KHRG]

our village, and if they came, we fled. Sometimes they came up to shoot us, but they failed. We fled and escaped from them, and we stayed in the jungle. Now many groups of villagers are staying in the jungle.” - “Saw Dee Wah” (M, 28), refugee from T--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #64, 6/99)

“They wrote a letter telling us to go back and cooperate with them. We did not go back, and they said if we did not go back to cooperate with them by the deadline which they told us, they would do worse and worse things to us. They said they will cut off our roots and energy [destroy their houses and food]. They always say these kinds of words to us, but according to our

experience they never do what they say. If they want us to go back and cooperate with them, then they shouldn't be planting landmines in our villages and shooting dead all the people, including women and children. If we compare what they do and what they say, it does not make any sense. Most of the time they see villagers now, they shoot at them. On the [deadline] date that I mentioned before, they came and planted landmines again, but they said that they never plant landmines. They do, though, and we should all see through what they say. ... There is no one here who will go back, but maybe you will hear some people teasing each other about it. For the people who can really endure and have strong feelings about it, whether they die or not, they will never go west [to the relocation site] or east [to the refugee camps in Thailand]. But, if we can't do anything else and if we have to move, we will go east as our leaders have arranged for us. No one will go west. Nobody wants to go back." - "Saw Plaw Doh" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from M— village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #75, 3/00)

The villagers prefer to live near their villages and sneak back to work and harvest their fields. If that is not possible due to the Army's presence then they prefer to at least live somewhere in what they consider to be Karen land. Displacement is forced on the villagers, most of whom just want to live in peace farming their fields, but in spite of the shootings, frequent bouts of malaria, fevers and diarrhoea, extreme poverty and the ever-present threat of starvation, they still prefer to stay near their land rather than go down to the SPDC controlled villages or flee to Thailand. Thai government authorities always claim that refugees from Burma come only because they have heard of an 'easy life', but for these hill villagers the idea of fleeing to Thailand is extremely frightening. To them Thailand is a very foreign place where they have no land or relatives, and without land to grow food or relatives people starve. They have heard that the refugee camps are not safe from Burmese attack, that conditions there are not good, that Thai authorities regularly force people back across the border, and they know the trip is long and difficult, dodging SPDC patrols and landmines. Most only undertake the trip if their food supplies have run out and the SPDC patrols make it impossible to stay anywhere near their village, when they see the only choices as flight or death.

"The SPDC still plans to come and make problems at this place. But we think that we will try and stay here until the end of this year. If they come and shoot us often it will not be easy to stay here anymore. If there is no plan for us then we have to find a new place again. But I will never go and surrender to them. I do not dare. They try to hurt us and we are already hurting. We can't bear to hurt much more than this. So we won't ever go

and surrender to them. If the SPDC still comes and hurts us like this and we can't stay or if it is not easy for us to work here anymore, we will move up and stay with our brothers and sisters. Maybe we will move to Naw Yo Hta or Kay Pu [both are to the east in Papun District]. If there is some space for us we will go and work there. We will protect ourselves. We have to flee and hide like this." - "Pa Mer Ler" (M, 25), internally displaced villager from T— village, Mone township (Interview #49, 4/00)

"They classify our village as people who are hiding in the forest. They ordered the villagers to go and stay at their place. The villagers didn't go so they are chasing us. They are oppressing us. We are afraid of them so we flee." - "Saw Dee Ghay" (M, 45), internally displaced villager from T— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #90, 1/01)

"We can't work if they are active, it will not be easy for us. Right now they stay a little far from us and if they are active they come up to our place so it is not easy to work. If we can't stay here we hope we can go to a refugee camp. We can't do anything else if they are still oppressing us like this. We dare not accept them. Accepting them is not the way." - "Saw Tee Ko" (M, 50), internally displaced village head from H— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #91, 2/01)

"Q: If the situation is like this do you want to go to the refugee camp?

A: We don't want to go to that side [to Thailand]. We are not happy to go. We love our country and we would like to stay in our country. Even if we can't eat good food or are faced with a food problem we are going to endure it. We just eat 'dta p'ghaw po' [boiled rice porridge with vegetables]." - "Saw Ko Suh" (M, 54), internally displaced village head from P— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #58, 3/01)

"Some of them said to go to the refugee camp, but the villagers said, 'No, we don't want to go. We will work in the country and eat in the country, have our life in the country and die in the country.' I also think like that. I think if they won't go then I won't go also. But if everyone goes then I have to go also. I dare not stay alone anymore." - "Po Naw" (M, xx), internally displaced villager from S— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #61, 3/01)

"Q: The SPDC says they love their civilians and look after them very well so why do you flee?

A: They just talk like that. All of the women and men, if they see us they kill us, moreover they also kill all the children. ... We saw it recently when they came to Bler Ghaw and cut off three women's heads. One of them was named Naw Kler Htoo, but I don't remember the other two. They were all from Bler Ghaw village. I don't know

it all, but I will tell you what I know. The soldiers came and saw them [the three women] when they went to work their hill fields. They weren't doing anything else. They just went to their hill field. When the enemy came they saw the three women and cut all their heads off and they were dead. The people didn't see it directly. Afterwards the people went to see and they saw the three women with their heads cut off. They were married. Naw Kler Htoo was taking care of her family, her husband and her sister. The SPDC came the next time and killed her husband. I don't know which battalion. We are women and don't know about the military. Their families feel bad and cry because of the SPDC's torture, but they can't do anything anymore." - "Naw Paw Paw Htoo" (F, 30), internally displaced villager from K— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #59, 3/01)



Internally displaced children during flight from one hiding place to another, April 2000. [KHRG]

IV. Villages Under the SPDC

“They designate it as a ‘white’ area. Even though they call it a white area they do whatever they want to do when they come so the villagers don’t know what to do.” - “Pa Taw Thu” (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #152, 12/00)

SPDC control over Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts is limited to a few areas; the villages in the plains east of the Sittaung River in Nyaunglebin District, the area of Papun town, the villages along the lower Yunzalin River and the Papun - Ka Ma Maung road in Papun District, and the relocation sites along the lower Bilin River in Dweh Loh township of Papun District. Outside that the Army has many camps, but does not firmly control the hills between those camps. The SPDC has created a system for classifying villages; ‘black’ being resistance controlled, ‘brown’ being not fully controlled by either side, and ‘white’ being under full SPDC control. ‘White’ areas are supposed to have little or no resistance activity, but the reality in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts is that even ‘white’ area villages have some contact with the resistance and there is military activity in the surrounding hills. The SPDC often refers to ‘white’ area villages as *‘Nyein Chan Yay’* (‘Peace’) villages, and sometimes tells village elders in ‘brown’ areas that their villages are to be ‘Peace’ villages. This is supposed to mean that the village will not be relocated or destroyed as long as all of the demands of the Army and SPDC authorities are met.

“They call it a ‘white area’. This means they can control everything. It means there are no more enemies. The SPDC say they do not have any more enemies. It is the area they can control so they call it a ‘white area’. They can force the people there [to do things] as they please. The village heads can’t take a rest and do their own work. The Ya Ya Ka or Ya Wa Ta [Village Peace and Development Council, or Village Law & Order Restoration Council (the latter is the pre-1997 name)] often calls the village heads to come.” - “Saw Po Hla” (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

“They call it a ‘white’ area but they oppress the villagers. Whether we live in a ‘white’ area or a ‘black’ area they still force us to work for them. They hurt the villagers and oppress them.” - “Saw Eh Muh” (M, 40), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #154, 12/00)

A general characteristic of villages under SPDC control is that there are one or more Army camps in or near the village. The villagers are called upon to provide forced labour, food, materials and money, and troops visit the village on a regular basis. The population consists of people originally from the village

who have lived under SPDC control for some time, and those from the surrounding areas who have been forced to move there. Many of the people in SPDC-controlled villages have been through repeated forced relocations within the past 20 years. The relocations generally follow the same pattern. SPDC battalions issue orders to the surrounding villages to move closer to the Army camps, to major villages or to new sites along roads. This is to be better able to control the villagers as well as to provide pools of forced labour. Some of the villagers flee into the forest rather than go to the relocation site. Those who go as ordered are almost immediately forced to go as porters for the soldiers and to perform other forms of labour. In some cases the villagers are ordered to fence the relocation sites, and their access to their fields is either restricted or completely prohibited, at least at first. The relocated villagers eventually begin fleeing secretly back into the jungle near their old villages as they run out of food and the forced labour becomes too much for them. Local officers often see the relocated villagers starving and do not want to deal with the situation, so they turn a blind eye to their escape. If the villagers are lucky, they manage to re-establish some form of their home village without being hunted down by the Army, and in some cases the the Army begins to treat them as *de facto* villages and once again begins issuing orders to them. Eventually a higher commander may decide that the area is still not resistance-free and that these villages are supporting the resistance, so they will be ordered to be relocated again and the process starts all over again. When this happens, even the relocation sites and ‘Peace’ villages can find themselves suddenly ordered to move.

‘Peace’ villages are also regularly threatened with burning, shelling or forced relocation if they fail to comply with demands for forced labour and money, so there is no security in living in a ‘Peace’ village. Villagers throughout the region now avoid building anything but simple and poor-looking houses, partly because of this insecurity and partly because ‘nice’ houses are the first targets for looting and extortion by SPDC troops. As the SPDC expands its network of camps and roads throughout the region, it can be expected that villagers will be allowed to re-establish villages which are near the roads and camps, provided they are useful to the Army as forced labour and as a source of food, money and materials.

“They ordered us to move to B---, N---, P---, and T---. It was four years ago. Later, some families came back to stay. They didn’t give them permission, but they just came back to stay. But if there is more activity they will not allow people to stay in the village. They order them to stay along the road.” - “Saw Thay Po” (M, 31), villager from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #186, 4/00)

“I haven’t decided to go back and stay in my village again, but some people went back to build their huts to come back and stay in. They are temporary. Even though they built their houses, they don’t know what will happen.” - “Saw Bo Lweh” (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #10, 4/01)

The Role of the Village Head

“None of the villagers want to be the village head if that is possible, but the villagers like us and need us to do it. They help us and we do this work. If it weren’t like this we wouldn’t want to do the work. The villagers, village mothers and village fathers selected us. ... For me, I don’t like to do this job. The villagers elected us so we have to look after the villagers for everything. We have to face the [SPDC] leaders, like the soldiers who are very cruel, and when the other people dare not see them we have to go. When the orders arrive they don’t arrive for the villagers, they arrive for the village head.” - “Saw Ber Kaw” (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

The position of village head is perhaps the most difficult. Traditionally the village head is a respected individual in the village who is elected by the other villagers to be their leader. The village head can remain in that position for years. Villagers often distinguish between the KNU village head and the SPDC village head; these can be but are not usually the same person. The KNU village head is responsible for dealing with the KNU, while the SPDC village head is the one who has to face the SPDC soldiers. Dealing with the SPDC can be difficult, and the village head is the first one singled out for abuse when demands are not met or if fighting occurs in the area. Moreover, village heads often have to pay the SPDC’s demands out of their own money or livestock if the villagers cannot meet the demands in time. For these reasons many villages have worked out a system whereby the villagers rotate being the village head every month or two. Many of the village heads are now women, particularly elderly women, because the soldiers are less likely to physically abuse a woman than a man or accuse her of being a rebel. Respect for one’s mother is very strong in Burmese culture, and SPDC officers tend to be ashamed to behave too badly with village headwomen who remind them of their mothers; many village headwomen have become adept at exploiting this to lessen the demands placed on their villagers. However, officers who are not pleased with a village head often order that they be replaced with someone else, and the villagers have no choice but to comply. Answering the demands of the soldiers as well as handling administration of the village leaves very little time for the village heads to work their own fields. The village head also receives no salary, despite the SPDC’s claims of paying them. The villagers support the village head by providing the head and his or her family with rice and other food as a form of ‘salary’.

“I have been faced with many problems because I am the village leader. We have to deal with the upper leaders [the township leaders and the military] which is sometimes good but sometimes there is a lot of trouble. It is because we can’t pay the taxes or we don’t have enough porters to give them. If we don’t have enough they say many things to us and we have to suffer what they say. In addition to this we don’t have enough time for our own work and our families have problems and complain to us. ... Sometimes we have to suffer from the sticks they hit us with. ... I don’t get a salary but I get many sticks. The villagers understand us and love us. They look after us and help us with rice and paddy. Like the last time when my brother and I didn’t have any rice the village leaders, village mothers and fathers [village elders] and the villagers looked after us and we had rice. We didn’t have time to work [for ourselves] and sometimes we are hungry and sometimes we starve. Because of this the villagers arrange it for us and we get good luck. About the government giving us a salary, even if we went and asked them to give us a salary maybe they couldn’t give it to us.” - “Saw Ber Kaw” (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

“The KNU elected me. The villagers were in agreement about me. I can’t ask to leave. In the beginning I worked only temporarily, but later I couldn’t leave.” - “Zaw Min” (M, 26), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #220, 4/01); he is both the KNU and the SPDC village head.

“We only dare to be the village head for a month at a time. Two people take turns at being the

village head each time. It was our turn to be the village heads and we couldn't argue, we had to take our turn as village heads. The villagers chose us to be the village heads. Everybody has to do it, two people at a time." - "Saw Pa Aye" (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #18, 4/01)

"I have been the village head for two years. ... I don't know yet. I don't want to be the village head but the villagers chose me to be the village head. It is not that I wanted to be it. I asked to be allowed to resign because I can't run up and down anymore, but they don't let me go. I was not chosen by the SPDC government." - "Saw Nyi Nyi" (M, 37), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

"In the present situation, if a man is the village head and the soldiers are not satisfied with something then he will be tortured. They torture the men so the women have to do it. Women are a little weaker so they [the soldiers] don't do anything to them. If they are not satisfied they bother us a little bit. They haven't punched or beaten us [the village headwomen] yet. We change the head once a year." - "Naw Lah K'Paw Mu" (F, 48), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #198, 6/00)

"The villagers thought I should be the village head so they elected me. That is why I can't do anything. We are of the Karen nationality and we have to love each other and stay united. The villagers believed that I should be the village head so they elected me and I have to do it. The villagers accept me because I can speak Burmese to the SPDC and the soldiers are happy with that. The villagers are united, but when they have to do so much forced work, they are tired. When they can't do it, they sometimes find and hire other people. The civilians are very miserable. ... They don't give me a single Kyat. They have never given me any Kyat. I am not lying about this. Go and ask. I dare to speak about this. Go and ask all the people living along the Baw Kyo Draw.

Q: The SPDC says they give 6,000 or 7,000 Kyat per month.

A: That isn't true. When they come to my home I have to cook and feed them chicken [which he has bought or raised himself]." - "Mya Aung" (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00)

It is the village head who must directly confront the soldiers when they come to demand workers, rice or chickens. Order documents from the SPDC Army or authorities are always addressed to the village head, also called the 'Village Peace and Development Council Chairperson', and most of them contain

phrases such as "Do not fail [to comply]. If you fail it will be the Elder's [your] responsibility." He or she must decide which people have to go for forced labour each time, or how a demand is to be divided among the villagers - a difficult task which can lead to bitterness. The SPDC considers the village head to be responsible for the villagers, so it is he or she who is the one blamed when demands are not met, money is not paid, or workers are not provided. The village head is often beaten on the spot, or if the soldiers deem it more serious, taken back to the Army camp and tortured. The torture can sometimes be very severe and village heads have been executed. Village heads are required to report regularly on all activities of their villagers and any resistance activities in the area, and whenever KNLA activity occurs in the area the village heads are accused of providing support. Occasionally village heads are forced to flee the village when they feel that the soldiers will kill them the next time.

"The villagers do not dare to become village headman. When the situation was bad, they did it for 15 days or one month at a time. All the villagers have been the village head. The Burmese try to force us to choose a village head, but none of the villagers dare become village head now. Right now, a villager who becomes the village head must worry that they will have to face demands for 'loh ah pay', 'htain chaw' [porters kept in the camps to carry things whenever it is necessary], and also the Burmese guerrillas [Sa Thon Lon] who are killing the villagers." - "Saw Mu Wah" (M, 40), refugee from K--- village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #9, 4/00)

"'Loh ah pay' is during the time when the [Army] trucks come and we have to go and clear the road. If your villagers are not united [everyone working], it is the village head's fault and he has to pay money. So if they told us to finish within a certain amount of time and we couldn't, we had to hurry. If we didn't hurry, the SPDC thought that we wouldn't work for them because we had contact with and were supporting Kaw Thoo Lei [KNU/KNLA]. If that happened they tied us up and beat us. We couldn't suffer that, so we had to go and do 'loh ah pay' for them." - "Pati Htay Htoo" (M, 35), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #189, 5/00)

"Sometimes I don't even have rice to eat. They order me to go and change the porters. They write two letters to me every day. I dare not sleep in my own house. The heart of a Burmese is the same as the Burmese themselves. If they kill, then we must die. If they slap my head and my face, I must suffer. I have become afraid of them." - "Saw Than Htoo" (M, 51), village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #190, 5/00)

Village heads are called as often as several times a week to go to the Army camp to receive orders, and they also receive written orders almost every day, delivered by villagers doing forced labour as messengers. Some of the villages receive orders from more than one camp at a time, making it difficult for the village head to answer all the demands at once. In some areas the demands of the DKBA and the Sa Thon Lon must also be met. Once the village head receives an order he or she must decide whether to comply immediately or try to put it off. Putting it off allows the village head to buy some time to assemble whatever it is that has been demanded, but it also usually results in another order being sent. If this one is also ignored, the soldiers may come and the village head is punished. At other times the village head is summoned to the Army camp to talk with the commander there. This also usually leads to punishment. The head is also usually instructed to accompany the people sent for forced labour and supervise their work, and is held directly accountable if the work is not to the satisfaction of the officers.

In many villages the village head is forced into debt to cover porter fees or other fees for the villagers. The villagers understand the village head's difficult position, but they are struggling to feed their families so they will try to avoid the labour and demands whenever possible. Some village heads have informed their villagers that the Army has demanded workers and that if the villagers don't want to go then they can flee, but the soldiers will come and capture someone.

"The Burmese do not live around all of them. The villagers live on the side of the road. It is the enemy's area. The other villages are a little farther away. Even the farther villages are considered Nyein Chan Yay villages [by the SPDC] and the soldiers can control them and hold their hands. These villages have a village head and the village head must go to them when the Burmese demand it. If the Burmese order the village head to come and the first time he doesn't come, they will order him a second time. If he still doesn't come, the soldiers will go to the village and call the village head and all the villagers [at this point the village head is often beaten and the villagers taken for forced

labour anyway]. They go and call the villagers to work, they force them. The villagers in the plains area are ordered to work by letter. In the letter they say, 'Village head, you must come up.' If they write that you have to come on the date they give. Even if you are afraid you must go. If they do not go the Burmese go to them." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

"He demanded five people to go and porter in the jungle but I didn't send any at all. ... After three days, he [the officer] came and threatened to kick me. I told him that I was sick and he said, 'Is the whole village sick and about to die? The whole village? Everyone will die?' He was very cruel." - "Saw Tee Maung" (M, xx), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #133, 5/00)

"They write orders to the villagers to come and repair the road and cut the scrub, but they never come themselves. Usually they order the village head to go to them [to receive orders]." - "Naw May Wah" (F, 40+), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #204, 7/00)

"The village head can't rest. Today he arranges for me [to go and work]. On the next day he must arrange for another person. That is why he can't take a rest. He must go and arrange like this and if he gets a new person he must go again to the SPDC. He must go and come back like this and cannot take a rest. He must arrange the villagers and send them [take them to the Burmese]. After changing the people he must come back alone." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

"The Ko Per Baw [DKBA] elected me. Nobody dared to do it because the people are afraid the Burmese would torture them. Everybody is afraid of them. ... I am really

suffering. When the Burmese come they eat chickens and pigs. They demand to eat chicken. When we don't have them we have to look for them until we are able to get them. They are always coming to ask if their enemy [the KNLA] is far or close. We have to tell them truthfully. If we

<p>To:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Chairperson Xxxx Village</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The loh ah pay [people] from the Elder's village flee very often, so as soon as this letter is received the Elder yourself must come to send 2 loh ah pay people to the sawmill near K—, to arrive on 20-1-2001. If [you] fail, the Elder will be tied up with rope.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">For the loh ah pay who fled, [bring a fine of] 2 packets of jagger and 2 bowls [4 kg/8.8 lb] of sticky-rice.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Sd.] (for) Column Commander</p>	<p>Date: <u>20-1-2001</u></p>
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A translation of an order sent to a village in Papun District.

don't tell them truthfully, they will kill us. ... We are working in difficulty because of the Burmese. We have to look for many things. The Burmese are often demanding things. When the Burmese are not demanding the Ko Per Baw are demanding." - "Htun Htun" (M, 42), village head from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #213, 3/01)

"They demand them but they don't get enough because the villagers can't do it. Sometimes the villagers know the situation early because the Burmese wrote an order to the village head and demanded 'loh ah pay'. The soldiers demand 70 or 80 people. Some people have just gone and recently come back, but then they have to go again. The village head looks and doesn't want to force them to go. So the village head says to the villagers, 'Do as you like. If you don't go, the Burmese will come and capture you.' Some people flee early, and the people who are left are all captured." - "Saw Maung Sein" (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

The villages are still visited by KNLA units in search of food and by KNU officials doing community organising, and their demands have to be met as well. Although the KNU is fairer in its demands and does not abuse the villagers, the villages don't have much food, money or other things anymore and it is up to the village head to decide how to answer the KNLA's demands. Village heads in SPDC-controlled villages are under standing orders to report any KNU/KNLA activity in or near their villages. If a village head reports that a KNLA column came and demanded rice from his village, he is punished for supporting the KNLA; but if he doesn't report it, he is punished for withholding information. Village heads explain to the SPDC soldiers that because they live at the frontline they have no choice but to deal with the KNU/KNLA as well. This sometimes has an effect on the soldiers but is often simply ignored. Whenever fighting occurs or SPDC troops step on landmines the local village heads are blamed for helping the KNLA in the attack, giving intelligence to the KNLA, and withholding intelligence from the SPDC. Some SPDC units even tell the village head to tell the KNLA not to shoot at their soldiers. Whenever SPDC soldiers desert, all village heads in the area are accused of harbouring them. In some areas this is complicated more by the presence of the DKBA, which also punishes the village heads for contact with the KNU or casualties from engagements with the KNLA. Worst of all are the Sa Thon Lon execution squads, who have already shown their willingness to execute village heads for even the slightest contact with the KNU. The village heads are forced to walk a thin line between their support for the KNU, the welfare of their villagers and the demands of the SPDC, DKBA and Sa Thon Lon.

"If we see the KNLA, we tell them [the SPDC] that we saw them. When we didn't see them we told them so, but then they got angry. They said, 'You saw them but you are not telling us. You are the same kind of people as the KNLA.' I told them, 'I am not the same kind of people. I am a farmer and a villager. I do not have a gun.' They told me, 'That's not true. You hide them and feed them rice.' I answered them by saying, 'When I feed them rice it is the same as when I feed you rice. You ask for rice and I have to give it. They also have guns and I have to give them rice because I am afraid of them. As for you, you come and demand food and even if you don't ask for something you grab, destroy and burn. We can't do anything - just suffer. If you burn our things we can only watch the fire. If you destroy things, we just have to look on. We don't dare to complain to you and we can't complain to you.' ... We stay here in fear. We can't do anything because we are just villagers. When the Burmese come to threaten us, the only thing we can do is suffer. For example, if I am a villager, and the village head asks me to porter for three days, then I have to go. Some of my friends are not well. If no new porter comes to relieve me after many days, I flee. When I flee, they [SPDC] see me and fine me. So the villager suffers and also has to pay a fine to the Burmese. Sometimes they can't do it because they have to feed their own families." - "Saw Than Htoo" (M, 51), village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #190, 5/00)

"The villagers elected me to be the village head on the SPDC side. It used to be a man but the Burmese beat him and he fled. He doesn't dare to be village head anymore. They haven't beaten me but they shout at me a lot. They even planned to shoot me. They pointed a gun at me, chambered a bullet but didn't shoot me. They said to me, 'You are the village head. If the Ko Per Thu ['black headbands'; villager slang for the KNLA] come and you don't tell us, we will do to you as we want.' I had to show them the Ko Per Thu's place. They accused me like that. As for me, how can I show them because I have never seen their place? I told them that I don't know where their place is and I couldn't show them. I just saw them travelling up and down. They said the KNLA had better not shoot them when if they did, they would burn all the villages." - "Naw Eh Kri Mu" (F, 34), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #196, 6/00)

"It was because we couldn't stop loving our people [the KNU]. If they came back, we hid them and they [the SPDC] say we give them food, taxes and rice. ... When the Guerrilla Retaliation Group [the Sa Thon Lon] came up they hit my head with a

coconut. Another time I had to go up to P— village and I had to stay in the stocks [mediaeval-style leg stocks]. I have been tied up with a rope because we gave first priority to our nation [to the Karen]. They complain to us many times that we have contact with them [the KNU].” - “Saw Ber Kaw” (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

“It was because we didn’t send a message and we had hidden the rebel people. We hid the KNU. They blamed us when a bullock cart was burned. They blamed us because the incident happened near our village. We didn’t send a message when they came in the village and destroyed the bullock cart. They said our Karen people love each other and were hiding each other and not providing information.” - “Saw Kee Aye” (M, 39), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #23, 4/01); he was detained and badly beaten in April 2001 because of this incident

“I would like to tell a little more about when Division #11 came. They had seen that I was a village head and had contact with the KNU. I told them that we have to step on both sides of the boat. These are the words of the elders. Now we are stepping on both sides of the boat, but now there are three sides [before there was only the SPDC and the KNU, but now there is also the DKBA] so it is difficult to step on them all. We have to endure whatever they say because we are civilians. ... When they [the SPDC soldiers] come to the frontline we have to prohibit the KNU from shooting them, but we can’t prohibit it. The KNU are their enemies and the SPDC comes to fight so

the KNU will fight them.” - “Mya Aung” (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00)

“I try to live a good life, but they took my buffaloes and accused me of contacting the KNU. We live at the frontline so we have to contact them [the KNU]. We can’t stay here without contacting them, but when we contact them they [the SPDC] see it as our fault and make trouble.” - “Saw Nyi Nyi” (M, 37), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

“They said that if the Kaw Thoo Lei shoot them it is because of the village head and villagers. They told us to tell the Kaw Thoo Lei not to shoot at them. We do not dare because they [KNLA] have guns and bamboo sticks. We are just villagers, so all we do is tell them [SPDC] if we saw any soldiers come. If we didn’t see anyone, that’s that, but they [SPDC] won’t believe us anyway. If we didn’t see anyone, they tell us that we saw them. But if we never saw anything, we can’t tell them we did. ... They also told me this; they told me that if the [KNLA] people shot them near B— village, they would consider it my fault. They said that they would lay responsibility on the village head. I told them, ‘There’s nothing I can do if we don’t see people coming to shoot you. If we see them but can’t tell you, we can’t do anything. And since you shoot your enemies when you see them, we dare not tell you. You are making life terrible for us, we can’t suffer like this.’ We can’t suffer but we have to suffer. Suffer and then die.” - “Saw Than Htoo” (M, 51), village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #190, 5/00)



Villagers in south-western Dweh Loh township, Papun District, bring shingles of thatch and stack them on a bamboo raft for delivery to an SPDC Army camp in late April 2001.
[KHRG]

Nyein Chan Yay Villages

“They call the village a Nyein Chan Yay [‘Peace’] village. When they come to this area they say they have arrived in a Nyein Chan Yay area so there should never be the sounds of gunfire, bamboo or bombs. If they hear that sound, they will take action on the village head and they are going to relocate the village and burn down the huts. When they arrive in this place they demand to eat chickens and pigs. As for us, we have to try to keep our place running well. We are afraid and we have to work for them.” - “Saw Tha Htwe” (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #206, 9/00)

One aspect of the SPDC’s pacification programme is the labelling of villages under SPDC control as *Nyein Chan Yay* or ‘Peace’ villages. The *Nyein Chan Yay* villages began when village elders struck individual deals with local commanders that the villagers would comply with SPDC demands for food, goods and labour as well as provide information concerning the resistance groups in return for not having their villages burned down or relocated. *Nyein Chan Yay* villages first sprung up in Toungoo District, but by 1999 villagers in Mone township of Nyaunglebin District and in Lu Thaw and Dweh Loh townships of Papun District were referring to their villages as *Nyein Chan Yay* villages. Now local SPDC commanders no longer seek such agreements, they simply impose the label on a village and order it to cease all contact with resistance groups, provide regular intelligence, and comply with all SPDC demands, or be burned and forced to relocate. Villagers have told KHRG that the *Nyein Chan Yay* villages are considered as ‘white’ villages by the SPDC. ‘White’ areas are an older SLORC/SPDC designation, meaning areas under their control where there is little or no opposition activity [*‘brown’ areas are contested and ‘black’ areas are under resistance control*]. This is wishful thinking on the part of the regime since KNLA units still do operate around these villages. The *Nyein Chan Yay* villages do not have any affiliation with the various SPDC-named ‘Peace’ groups organised from surrendered KNLA and KNU members which have appeared in Karen areas over the past four years. The labelling of villages as *Nyein Chan Yay* seems to be limited to those villages in the area of the Southern Regional Command, which encompasses Toungoo, Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts.

“As they say, these things shouldn’t be occurring but they have their enemies. That is why the Nyein Chan Yay agreement came about. At that time, they [the KNLA soldiers] planted landmines between Papun and Klaw Htaw village. The SPDC came up to the area to operate. The people [KNLA] went to plant landmines near their camps. Some of the [SPDC] soldiers were injured by the landmines. They also ordered the villagers to go and send messages and information. They forced them to cut wood and bamboo to fence their camp. Our villagers were also hurt there [near the SPDC camps] by landmines. At that time, they

[SPDC] saw and knew that there were problems in the Nyein Chan Yay area. So they took action. They ordered the village elders and the village chairperson to come. The chairperson’s name is Saw T—. When the chairperson went, he [the SPDC interrogator] told him that he must know who came to plant the landmines and shoot their guns. The chairperson told him, ‘They didn’t come to me when they shot or planted landmines. Just as you didn’t come to me when you went after them. So I don’t know and I am not able to know.’ But the soldiers told him, ‘You must know about it.’ The village head didn’t know so he told them he didn’t know. He told them truthfully and honestly. ... They wanted the village head to accept their accusations, so they took one action. They put him into a dark room in the munitions dump. They say it is a munitions dump but when you go in it feels very cold and dark. You can’t see anything. They put him in there for four hours and then took him out and interrogated him about the event again. They said, ‘You must know about this. If you don’t, you have to sign this [written statement]. Today and in the future, bombs better not explode and guerrilla fighting better not occur. If anything does occur, we will take action. That is why you must write your signature.’ The village head told him that he wouldn’t dare sign it. They told him that he must but he was afraid to sign it. But he signed it when he [the SPDC officer] forced him and looked angrily at him. He [the village head] was worried that they might hurt him, so he signed it. After he signed it, he thought that if the SPDC went up, their enemy [KNLA] would attack them. So he dared not come back. If he came back, he would have problems because he signed it. So he stayed in Papun for three or four days, nearly a week. ... Later, the SPDC government needed the civilians to do ‘loh ah pay’ and work as messengers and porters. They demanded this and told the village head, ‘Right now, you have to go back and tell your villagers to come and bring people for ‘loh ah pay’ and portering.’ The village head responded, ‘I dare not go back. I signed it and if I go back and your enemy does something, I will suffer. So I dare not go back.’ He was supposed to get porters and ‘loh ah pay’ workers. Then the Burmese commander changed to a

different one [the battalion rotated out and a new one came] and that one went to see the village head. He told the village head that the first commander asked him to sign the statement but he didn't do it sincerely. The commander said, 'Right now, there is a new one [commander] and the other left and it is not your fault. Go back and arrange 'loh ah pay' and porters for me.' When this other commander told him this, he came back and he arranged it. Before he came back, the civilians also dared not move." - "Saw Tha Htwe" (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #206, 9/00)

"They classify it as a 'white' area because this is a Nyein Chan Yay area. It is a Nyein Chan Yay area but sometimes they don't care. They are torturing a lot. It is no different from the 'black' area. Sometimes the soldiers come often and sometimes rarely. The unit which has come [now] stays not so far away. They are the military unit in this area. They stay here and sometimes become brutal. Sometimes they do things like this and sometimes they do stronger than this. They are always doing it. There is no time when they don't." - "Saw Kaw Kwee" (M, 23), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #212, 3/01)

Nyein Chan Yay status only benefits the villagers in that they are less likely to have their villages relocated or burned down. The villagers are still subject to demands for food, thatch, bamboo and wood. They must also go as porters, messengers, guides, and do *loh ah pay* at Army camps and on the roads. Villagers are threatened that if they are seen outside the Nyein Chan Yay area they will be shot on sight

and they have been. They are also told that their villages will be burned and the villagers killed if fighting occurs or landmines explode near their villages. Despite being labelled as 'Peace' villages, these villages are constantly faced with threats of violence from the SPDC soldiers.

"We are staying in the mountains. They come to us and tell us to do Nyein Chan Yay with them [to become a 'peace village', agree to cooperate with the military in exchange for not being forcibly relocated or having their houses burned]. Then they ordered us to work as porters. Moreover, they forced us to do it. Sometimes, we couldn't go and we dared not go but we had to. They called porters and people for 'loh ah pay' and 'set tha' [forced labour as messengers]." - "Saw Tha Htwe" (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #206, 9/00)

"Even the people who work together with them have to flee - the Karen villagers who are staying in Nyein Chan Yay ['peace'] villages. We were staying in many groups in the jungle. The villagers from the Nyein Chan Yay places, like K'Neh Khaw Hta and Klaw Hta, were also fleeing to our area because they were taking the people from those villages to be porters. They have to pay money even though they can't pay, and they have to carry as porters even though they can't carry, so they fled from their villages. They are all fleeing, because they have to pay 2,500 or 3,000 Kyat every month for each household, and the Burmese are using them like slaves." - "Saw Dee Wah" (M, 28), refugee from T--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #64, 6/99)

Villages in the Plains of Nyaunglebin District

"There were a lot of villages which they forced to move. We live in separate places [separate relocation sites]. They can't go back to stay in their villages yet and they also don't allow them to go back and work for food to eat. But for our villagers, we can go back and work." - "Saw Bo Lweh" (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #10, 4/01)

The plains of the Sittaung River have long been under some form of control of successive Burmese regimes. The Burmese Army has, however, never really been able to solidify its control of the area. KNLA soldiers regularly come down into the plains and are able to penetrate as far as the river itself. The SPDC even built a new road from Mone to Na Than Gwin because the old one ran along the base of the mountains and was too vulnerable to KNLA attack. Villages here are much bigger than those in the hills to the east and there are also Burman and mixed Burman/Karen villages as well as Muslim and Shan villagers. Few people fled this area before the late 1990's because the area is relatively fertile and prosperous and the

villagers preferred to stay in their villages. In 1997 new heavier restrictions were placed on the villagers, heavy taxes and crop quotas were demanded, extortion increased and demands for forced labour became more frequent. Added to this was the appearance in late 1998 of the *Sa Thon Lon* execution squads which began hunting down and killing villagers with the slightest past or present connections to the KNU. New waves of relocations also occurred from 1997 through 1999 which resulted in many of the villages in the plains relocated to areas near SPDC Army camps. The living conditions in these relocation sites were such that the villagers began fleeing from them.

In 1999 KHRG documented the forced relocation of 16 villages in the area [see ***“Death Squads and Displacement”*** (KHRG #99-04, 25/5/99)], and most of these villages still lie abandoned. [Photos of some of these abandoned villages and of Lu Ah relocation site can be seen in ***KHRG Photo Set 2001-A*** under ***‘Forced Relocation and Restrictions’***]. However, due to the unsustainability of life at relocation sites such as Yan Myo Aung and Lu Ah, many of the villagers there have escaped and returned to stay in farmfield huts near their villages. The SPDC officers seem to have turned a blind eye to some of this, causing some villagers to rebuild simple huts in and around their old villages. Some of the villages in the northern part of Mone township were allowed by the SPDC to return to their villages in 2000, but they are still under the constant threat of being relocated again. They have also not rebuilt their houses as before but have built smaller ones or temporary huts in case they are ordered to move again.

“The Burmese don’t allow them to stay in their village, but now they are coming back [they have secretly come back and are staying in their field huts]. They have had to relocate two or three times. When they relocated the first time they came back, then they had to relocate again. It was two or three years ago already. Now they have come back to stay in their village. They have just built small huts. They said the Burmese allowed them to come back, but it is not a sure thing. They just came back to build temporary huts. If they force the villagers to move again then they will move again. They don’t dare to come back and build nice houses yet.” - “Saw Ler Wah” (M, 26), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #5, 6/01)

“Yes, they allowed it. I just came back to stay. I moved back and told them that when I stayed there [in the relocation site] I couldn’t work and get food to eat. So I came back to stay in my own village

where we have our own places and we can work to eat.” - “Saw Nyi Nyi” (M, 37), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

The activities of the *Sa Thon Lon* appear to have decreased, with villagers reporting that they are killing less often [see the ***‘Sa Thon Lon’*** section above]. The DKBA, however, appear to have expanded their presence and have become yet one more group which the villagers have to satisfy. The demands for forced labour, extortion money, food and taxes have not lessened. Even villagers who are still in their villages are tightly restricted in their travel, and even in which of their fields they can work. Village heads reported to KHRG that many of the villagers have insufficient food and that some have been surviving on thin rice porridge despite the fertile fields in the plains around them. The SPDC has also apparently been able to instill in many of the villagers that same sense of fear which is prevalent in central Burma. Villagers told of people being informed upon and one villager said that they must now always look around before speaking to see who might be listening. A KHRG field researcher who travelled to the area commented that the villagers don’t even trust their cousins or other relatives. This is unusual in Karen villages, where informers to the SPDC are far less common than in the Burman villages and towns of central Burma.

“I think about them alone and I dare not tell. In my heart they are useless. If they are going to rule like this there will be no improvement. ... I want to report a lot of things but I dare not say them. Sometimes when we talk we have to look around before we talk.” - “Saw Bo Lweh” (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #10, 4/01)

“The villagers from the lower places, like Twa Ni Gone, do not trust each other. When we went to them they didn’t let their friends know about it. They are afraid someone will report them to the

SPDC. Their cousins and relatives do not trust each other. It was a problem for me. I had to go in the nighttime and I also had to be afraid of vipers. I wore slippers, nobody wears jungle boots there.” - “Saw Ler Wah” (M, 26), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #5, 6/01)

A group of villagers heads off to do forced labour at an Army camp in southern Papun District in late April 2001. Note the young girls and boys in the group. [KHRG]



Relocation Sites

“They kept us in the fields at H—and K—. There were 138 families from our village. They had already built little huts for us, and they had built a fence around the place. ... Every day we had to submit an exact family registration. They didn’t give us food to eat, we had to find it ourselves. The place flooded, and our rice, pots and other things were destroyed. ... When we stayed there we had no way to plant any crops, that’s why we came back to stay in our own village. All of us came back. They forced us to give them 80,000 Kyat so that we could come back, and we paid them and then came back.” - “Pu Taw Lah” (M, 68), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #27, 7/99)

Areas which the SPDC does not feel are under its complete control are usually subjected to periodic relocations until firm control is established. The villages relocated are those which are too far away from Army camps to be effectively controlled or which are believed to be assisting the resistance. Villages which have never been under SPDC control before are only notified of the relocation when the soldiers arrive in the villages, burn them down and leave notes in the ruins that the villagers should come to one of the relocation sites. Villagers notified in this way do not usually go but flee into hiding in the surrounding forest. Most of the villagers in western Dweh Loh township were relocated in this fashion. The SPDC then sends out patrols to capture the villagers and bring them in. The villages under some form of SPDC control are sent orders telling them to move to a particular relocation site, usually a larger village or a site along a vehicle road, and setting a deadline. On or shortly after this date the soldiers come to make sure the village is abandoned. Villagers who don’t move fast enough and whose houses are not yet fully disassembled have seen their houses burned by the soldiers. Villagers in Mone township did not report much violence during their forced relocation moves but they were shouted at to keep them moving. Some villages have been able to avoid having their villages moved by paying large bribes to the local military. Yay Leh village in Mone township has been paying large bribes to the soldiers for four years now to remain in their village while all the other villages around them have been relocated. This is too expensive for most villages and sometimes the Army relocates the village anyway despite having already been paid off.

KHRG has compiled a list of 42 villages in Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts which have been relocated since 1998-99. This list is not complete and only contains those villages which have been reported to KHRG in interviews and field reports. Many more villages have been relocated and the relocations are continuing in some areas. Some of these villages may have been allowed to return, but most are still in the relocation sites. The list can be seen in Appendix B.

“In the past before the SPDC came and destroyed the things in the village, we just worked our hill

fields and betelnut plantations so that we could live. Since March 28th 2000, the SPDC came to our P— village and didn’t allow us to stay in the village. If they see somebody, they shoot. If they do not shoot, they catch them. If they see families, they capture them and drive them [to relocation areas]. For example, if the SPDC troops are from Pway Pwah then they drive the villagers to Pway Pwah. If the soldiers are from Wa Mu, then they drive the villagers to Wa Mu. If they are from Meh Way, they drive the villagers to Meh Way. They don’t let us stay in our villages anymore. Right now, the people who remain don’t know what to do.” - “Saw Mi Taw” (M, 41), internally displaced villager from P— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #138, 9/00)

“I thought that I would live there [outside the village] and work because I couldn’t do anything when I saw their letter [the order telling them they must move to the relocation site]. We saw that they wrote a letter and left it there. They said for us to come down and live together in the place they have arranged. ‘If you live there, you can’t flee anymore,’ they said. All the villagers thought together but couldn’t do anything. We thought about it together but we couldn’t do anything. We couldn’t live there anymore. Even though it is hard for us to live, we had to try to live. ... No, I’m not happy to stay here. It is not my place. I am happy to stay in my own place. My own place is at my village. I have my own work to do and I have a field to work. I live in xxxx, but it is the other people’s place. I have no place to work. They don’t give me any job to do.” - “Saw Nuh Po” (M, 23), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #143, 9/00); interviewed after he had been captured by the SPDC soldiers and forced to go to a relocation site.

“Why don’t know exactly why they don’t have to move. We heard that they went and met with the officer and fed him [paid him a bribe] so they didn’t need to move. I heard they fed him duck and chicken and money. They asked the leader from our village [the village headman] to go and see them, but he ran away and none of us dared to go

and see their faces so we had to move. We didn't need to feed them." - "Saw Bo Lweh" (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #10, 4/01)

"First the battle occurred on the other side of K— village, so they [SPDC] shot dead a village headman, and then they asked for money. At the time they demanded 200,000 Kyat and 30 baskets of rice, then they forced us to move. They gave us a deadline of 10 days to move. Then they came and forced us to the new place. ... First they forced us to relocate to N—, but the villagers didn't like staying there. That's why the villagers went to stay at K— beside N— [a.k.a. M— village]. They [SPDC] said that we could stay there if we paid them money. We had to pay them 50,000 Kyat, and then we stayed there in a field beside the car road. They forced us to build small huts. 150 families from K— village moved there. ... They didn't feed us. The water wasn't clean. We had to drink dirty water. There was very little water there. We dug a well, but it didn't produce any water. The villagers faced problems with hunger and sickness. They didn't give medicine, we had to cure ourselves." - "Saw Law Po" (M, 35), internally displaced villager from K— village, Mone township (Interview #26, 7/99)

Villages are not always relocated for control, it is also used as a punishment for not providing workers for forced labour, not meeting demands for money, food or materials, or if fighting occurs near the village. A village head in Mone township was told that his village was to be relocated under Article 17/1, and that if they failed to move as ordered the villagers would be killed. Article 17/1 of present Burmese law prohibits contact with 'unlawful' organisations, but it is imposed upon individuals and does not authorise forcible relocation of villages as a punishment. Another village in Dweh Loh township was told that it was being relocated to be near a school which the SPDC was building as a development project. The school wasn't built. A village head from Bu Tho township was told by the SPDC that the villages had to be relocated so that the Army could go into the area and attack the KNU.

"They came and told us that it was by Law 17/1, that we had contact with rebels [Article 17/1 prohibits contact with 'unlawful' organisations, but does not authorise forcible relocation of villages as punishment]. That's why they forced us to relocate. We had to move everything within 10 days. We had to move within the prescribed time, by military order. If we didn't move, they ordered that we be 'cleared' [killed]. They allowed us to take whatever we could to K—, and whatever we couldn't take with us, they took for themselves." - "Pu Taw Lah" (M, 68), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #27, 7/99)

"They were going to force us to B— again. They said, 'If we leave you villagers like this, it is the same as if we were feeding Kaw Thoo Lei. Kaw Thoo Lei is eating rice and gaining strength.' They told the village head this. They have never called a meeting with all of us. They just called the village head, and then the village head repeated it to us. They told us, 'In your village, live well. If you can't live well and then we can't eat, we will pour sand over you.' If they can't eat, they will destroy our village." - "Naw Ghay Paw" (F, 40), refugee from P— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #185, 4/00)

"They said that if the KNU shot at them, we must relocate. But that has never occurred so they haven't forced us yet. They said that they would burn down the village and shoot dead all the villagers. That was Battalion #356." - "Naw Eh Kri Mu" (F, 34), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #196, 6/00)

"They say that they will build a school as a development project so they need to drive the villagers together. But up to now, nothing has changed so people don't listen to them anymore and have fled." - "Toe Hlaing" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from P— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #139, 9/00)

"They said that once we stayed gathered together [in relocation sites], they would go to shoot the Nga Pway [KNU/KNLA] and the Nga Pway would run. They said it before we left. They said we must come to stay gathered together because if we stayed like this [spread out in separate villages] they couldn't shoot the Nga Pway." - "Pu Ler Ku" (M, 60), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #221, 4/01)

The years 1997-99 saw large-scale relocations in Mone, Kyauk Kyi and Shwegyin townships of Nyaunglebin Districts. Interviews conducted by KHRG in Mone township indicate that many of these villagers have been allowed to return to their villages. Villagers in the southern part of the township who relocated to Yan Myo Aung and Lu Ah relocation sites, have not yet been allowed to permanently return to their villages. They have been allowed to go back and farm their fields and even to stay in their field huts for limited amounts of time as long as they have passes to do so. KHRG has been unable to obtain information from Kyauk Kyi and Shwegyin townships, but it is likely that some of the relocated villages in these two townships have also been allowed to return to their villages [For more information on these relocations see also **"Death Squads and Displacement: Systematic Executions, Village Destruction and the Flight of Villagers in Nyaunglebin District"** (KHRG #99-04, 24/5/99)].

“On the 6th of April two years ago [1999] we had to relocate and they took us to a new place at Kwek Thit [‘New Section’]. It was near Y---. They made Kwek Thit beside Y---. It is in the flat fields beside the car road. Y---and here are one hour apart by bullock cart. If we walk it is half an hour. Five villages had to move there; N---, B---, Aung C---, K--- and A---. They are from our village tract. They all went to the same place. ... We went there in April [1999] and came back in January [2000]. It was 10 months in all.” - “Saw Per Per” (M, 45), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #24, 4/01)

“We had to relocate two times already since I was born. The first time was in 1974 and the second time was in ’99. We had to go and stay between the H--- and N--- flat fields. Not all our villagers have come back yet. Some went to stay in T---, some went to stay in M--- and some went to K---. The houses are not full like before. There used to be more than 200 houses, now we only have 74 houses.” - “Saw Ber Kaw” (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

“We had to move because the big nationality [the Burmese] came and forced us to move so we had to go. They were the Burmese Army, not the Ko Per Baw [DKBA]. They forced us to move to xxxx. If we had to walk it, it is a three hour walk. ... They are H---, B---, T--- and T---. They moved at the same time as us. We went to stay in the same place [they all stay at xxxx but in separate places around it]. There are over 200 houses.” - “Saw Bo Lweh” (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #10, 4/01)

Many of the villages in eastern Dweh Loh township, southern Lu Thaw township and Bu Tho township were relocated to bigger villages with Army camps and even to Papun town in 1997. The villagers remained in those sites for up to three years and then slowly escaped and filtered back to areas around their home villages, living in hiding as IDPs. Some managed to re-establish small villages in some form and began to fall once more under the control of nearby Army camps, so the Army began treating them as villages again and making demands on them. In Bu Tho township, some of these ‘new’ villages have now been ordered to move to bigger villages near the Yunzalin River and the Ka Ma Maung-Papun car road simply because they are not marked on the SPDC’s maps. Because they weren’t marked on the maps the SPDC reasoned that they must be ‘rebel’ villages. One village moved on its own accord after being repeatedly threatened with relocation. The final straw was an effort by the DKBA to get the villagers to sign a document declaring themselves responsible for any

trucks destroyed by ambushes or landmines along the road. They didn’t want to sign the document and chose to move instead.

“I don’t know if they do that now, but in the past they drove people. They drove the villagers from K--- to go and stay with us at xxxx. They [the SPDC] didn’t take care of them. They didn’t feed the villagers. There was no medicine. The villagers had to work themselves. It was difficult for the villagers from K--- to do flat fields. They went back and worked their own fields secretly.” - “Saw Peh Yah” (M, 30), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #211, 3/01)

“We have been suffering a lot for many years. We stay at P---, but 3 years ago the Burmese forced us down to B---. B--- is a one hour walk away. We went down to stay at B--- and we couldn’t suffer it. We stayed there for two years, then we came back to stay in our village over a year ago, and now we have come here. They didn’t allow us to go back [to their village], but we went secretly.” - “Naw Ghay Paw” (F, 40), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #185, 4/00)

“The other villagers are coming to stay in our village. They forced them to come and stay there. They can’t move. Those villagers are living very poorly. ... M---, P---, T---, T---, P---, and L---. The Burmese forced them to come and stay in our village. Some are already going back. They came to stay over one, maybe two years ago. Some have gone back to stay in their own villages, and some never left them, because they couldn’t suffer it [life in a relocation village]. They go back to stay there secretly, then if they hear that the Burmese are coming, they flee. They don’t face the Burmese.” - “Naw Wah Wah” (F, 41), refugee from B--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #182, 4/00)

“It was below, at xxxx [village]. In the beginning the Ko Per Baw wanted to relocate us. Then the Burmese also wanted to relocate us, so we couldn’t stay. The Burmese said, ‘This village is Ywa Bone, Ywa Shaung [‘hiding village’, a village not under SPDC control]. This village has not been here for a long time and it is not on the map. You villagers are staying as Ywa Bone, Ywa Shaung. We are going to drive you out to xxxx [village].’ Later, the Ko Per Baw said, ‘The landmines are always damaging the trucks. You must sign [an agreement that the trucks wouldn’t hit any landmines, making the villagers responsible for any that do]. If you don’t sign, we are going to drive all of you out to the main road or to the lower place. That is why we gathered and decided that we would move to xxxx village. The

monk also helped us. He said, 'You will move, but they [the DKBA and SPDC] are going to drive you to the main road. Never mind, I will speak with them and help you. Come and move to xxxx village.' We moved to xxxx. It is on the map." - "Zaw Min" (M, 26), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #220, 4/01)

"They told us we couldn't stay in the village and had to go to stay in xxxx [village]. They gave us one week. We had to move everything within one week. We could carry all our belongings. They asked us to build our houses. They said to stay there when we finished building the houses. They didn't come to watch us, they stayed in their place. ... They just said that if we stayed there [in our home village], it was not on the map and illegal. We had to go back and stay in xxxx [village] because it is on the map and legal they said. Where we stayed was a Nga Pway [slang for the KNU/KNLA] place, they said." - "Pu Ler Ku" (M, 60), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #221, 4/01)

Villages in western Dweh Loh township were forcibly moved to relocation sites at Meh Way, Wa Mu, Meh Thu, Kwih T'Ma, Ku Thu Hta, Ma Lay Ler and Meh Thu in 1998, 1999 and 2000. While many of the villagers have gone to the sites, many more have fled into the jungle. Villagers have had to build their own houses at the sites with no assistance provided by the SPDC. After the houses are built the villagers are immediately put to work by the soldiers. Food is not usually provided, though some villagers said that they were given one sack of rice and 1,000 Kyat at first but never given anything after that. The villagers must then try to make a field if there is land available, or work for daily wages to get enough money to buy food. The demands for forced labour are usually so heavy that many of the villagers don't have time to do either of these things. In existing villages as well as relocation sites, the soldiers have forced the villagers to build fences around the perimeter and allow only two to three gates. This is not so much for the defence of the village as it is to restrict the movement of the villagers, and so that a few soldiers can block the gates while the rest of the patrol sweeps the village to catch forced labourers. At the time of writing this report, many of the western Dweh Loh villagers had fled into the hills or to Thailand but some were still in the relocation sites. The villagers have not been allowed to return to their villages and those who have are hunted down by the SPDC's soldiers.

"Q: Which villages have they relocated to W---?
A: T---, N---, K---, N---. They drove them all to there, to Wa Mu. When they arrived they had to build houses and the enemy forced them to work. They don't have time to work anything else. The SPDC doesn't feed them. They have to hire themselves out day by day and they eat very poorly.

They don't have places to plant rice or do work. ... They don't have time. They [the SPDC] don't allow us to go. They closed us in with a fence. When they need 'loh ah pay', porters or messengers they force us and then close the gate. There are only two gates, one way to enter and one way to get out. They arrest the people at their houses. They call the people down and force them to work. They are forcing the villagers to work until they don't have time to work their flat fields. They have always done this, until now." - "Saw Tha Wah" (M, 42), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #146, 9/00)

"[T]hey don't feed them. Some people who have entered there are given one sack of rice and 1,000 Kyat. They are just given that one time. After that they are never given anything again. We work and we have our own food. It is enough for us to eat, but there are some people who don't have enough food. We are not free to work for food anymore. We can't work freely like before. We have to search for food ourselves. They just give it to us once and then that's it." - "Aung Baw" (M, 50) villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #148, 10/00)

"There was no help. After they drove the people we had to build houses for the soldiers, we had to make fences for them, and we had to go for 'loh ah pay' [general forced labour] and 'set tha' [messenger forced labour]. People couldn't work their hill fields anymore. This year no one got any paddy." - "Saw Thi Oo" (M, 60), village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #157, 12/00)

"This was in January this year [2001]. The villagers from Meh Thu Kee and Ler Wa Ko have all gone to the refugee camp, to xxxx refugee camp. Last year they stayed in the jungle. The villages in Meh Way village tract such as Ka Hser Ghee Tee, Wa Law Kloh, Noh Bo Law, Wa Tho Law, Day Law Pu, Kloh Kee and Toh Kyaw Kee have been driven by the SPDC to below Meh Way in the plains fields. They have built many houses close together. It was three years ago. They have all built their houses there. ... For 'loh ah pay' now they are forcing every village to fence around their villages. This started on November 3rd or 4th [2000]. The villagers have finished fencing it now. The villages which had to make fences are Wa Mu, Poh Kheh Hta, Nya Hsa Ghaw Hta, Kwih T'Ma, Ma Lay Ler and Kay Kaw. They haven't fenced Pway Pwa village yet. They also haven't fenced the villages to the south of Wa Mu. ... Kwih T'Ma has three gates; the way from Nya Hsa Ghaw Hta and Wa Mu is one gate, to Ma Lay Ler is another gate and the third gate is for fetching water from the Bu Loh Kloh. In Poh Kheh Hta, Ma Lay Ler and Khwih T'Ma it is all the same. There are three gates at

Poh Kheh Hta and two gates at Ma Lay Ler. One gate is for fetching water. ... They don't guard the gates because there is no camp there. They planned to make the fences because when they need people from the village [for forced labour] they can capture them easily. Sometimes they come very quickly into the village, close the gates and capture the villagers. The always come to capture people. They come to capture people when they need people to carry things." - "Saw Maung Sein" (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

"We were forced to build a fence around our village. I have no idea what their plan was but it may be that it could block the Nga Pway [KNLA] if they come. They ordered us to make only four entrances, but we keep more than four. We must try to be clever. It is difficult for us [to do our work] if we do everything as they order." - "Saw Tee Maung" (M, xx), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #133, 5/00)

Restrictions

"Starting last year and during this year the soldiers don't allow the people to go. They are conducting military operations sometimes. They give the villagers an opportunity when they are making the hill fields. The villagers can go and cut [their fields] and sleep in their field huts but when it is harvest time, the soldiers do it another way. They tell the villagers, 'If you go to your hill field, get a letter of recommendation [a pass].'" - "Saw Maung Sein" (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

Even in SPDC-controlled villages, restrictions are placed on the villagers with the supposed intention of making it difficult for them to contact the resistance forces. The methods and extent of these restrictions varies between villages and areas, primarily depending on the local Army officers. The restrictions often change when one unit rotates out and another one moves in. Villagers are sometimes allowed by one battalion to go to plant their fields, but when they rotate out and the next battalion comes they are suddenly forbidden to go to their fields and the crops are destroyed by animals and insects.

"They don't ask the villagers to move. The villagers stay in M—. The enemy entered the village and ordered the villagers not to go outside the village. The enemy stays around the village so the villagers don't dare to go outside the village. It was at the time when the transplanting should have almost been finished, but they didn't allow the villagers to work until September [the delay throws the growing cycle off which will result in a much reduced harvest]. They allow the people to work at that time but it is too late for people to work their fields. That is why the villagers face a big problem. The villagers cannot suffer but they must suffer like this." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

"[T]his year they allow us to plant, but last year, 1999, we planted, and they wouldn't allow us to

work on our fields so it was useless. They said, 'If we see that you are working in your fields, we will shoot all of you dead. We told you already not to work on them again.' We had already cut and burned the fields, we just needed to clear a few things and plant, but they told us not to work on them anymore." - "Saw Shwe Pa" (M, 37), villager from xxxx village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #73, 3/00)

Karen villagers have their main house in the village, but during the growing season they spend more of their time living in their farmfield hut, a smaller and simpler house in their fields which may be an hour or more's walk from the village. The field work is all done by hand so it is labour intensive and time-consuming, requiring their almost constant presence. However, most SPDC units restrict the amount of time they can spend in their fields by issuing passes for only short time periods and/or restricting the amount of food they can take with them. Some villagers can get passes for up to 3 or 5 days, but others are only allowed to stay outside the village overnight, or from dawn to dusk. This makes it very difficult, especially for those with fields far from the village. Even the process of repeatedly getting passes for each family member can be time-consuming and expensive. Making things worse, the Army frequently stops allowing the villagers to go to their fields at all for periods of days or weeks. Villages are limited in the amount of time which they can spend in their fields. Depending on the place, the situation and the Army

unit villagers are sometimes allowed to sleep in their field huts for up to a week, sometimes allowed to sleep there only for a day, sometimes not allowed to sleep there and in some areas they are not allowed to go to their fields at all. This has a direct impact on the crops. During their absence, weeds can overtake the crop or animals come and eat or trample it. Some villagers have said that they were allowed to go and plant their crop, but when harvest time came they were forbidden to go to their fields. The number of people who can go to the fields at one time is also sometimes restricted. In order to limit the time the villagers can spend in the fields, and supposedly to prevent them taking food to the resistance forces, some Army units only allow farmers to take small amounts of food when they leave the village. Villagers complain that in some cases the Army allows them a pass to stay in their fields for 5 days but only allows them to take one day's food along. If the villagers are caught at their field huts with more food than allowed, even if it is food they had stored at the hut, they are usually arrested and accused of supplying food to the resistance.

"They allow us to work on our own fields, but if they see people in the field huts, they don't like it very much. They misunderstand us and threaten us. We can go to the fields at 7 a.m. and come back before 5 p.m. They limit the time. They don't allow us to sleep in the field huts. We also can't take rice to the fields. We can just go to work and come back to eat at home." - "Saw Ra Doh", (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #199, 6/00)

"They only allow the one person who has to tend the cattle and buffaloes to sleep there. They don't allow many people go and sleep. They don't allow the people who don't have cattle or buffaloes to sleep in the field huts. They said that if we take a lot of rice then we are taking it for the KNU and if

we go to sleep in the field huts, we are going to give information to the KNU. They said like that." - "Naw Eh Kri Mu" (F, 34), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #196, 6/00)

"They have hill fields. Every house has a hill field which they cut. After they have finished cutting, burning and planting the enemy doesn't allow them to go outside the village when it is time to cut the brush [they have to cut the weeds away from around the growing paddy halfway through

the growing season]. The enemy allows them to go outside the village after the paddy is all covered with scrub and the paddy is destroyed." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

"Because they force us to work. We can't work our flat or hill fields. Some people work their flat fields

or hill fields for food, but at the same time they have to carry things [as porters] so when they go back and look at their fields, the pigs have eaten it all. The pigs and buffaloes eat it. We are not free to sleep in the fields to guard our huts and fields from the pigs and buffaloes. They don't let us sleep there. We also don't dare to guard [the fields] because the soldiers are around the fields. If they see us they will shoot us. We have to work for them. We have had to work for them for a whole month now." - "Aung Baw" (M, 50), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #148, 10/00)

For villagers in SPDC-controlled villages of Dweh Loh township the situation just became much worse. In late August and early September 2001, at least 3 village tracts were issued orders that no one is allowed to leave the villages for the three months from September to November 2001, not even to go to their fields. They were told to bring their livestock into the village and that they would not be allowed to go out

<p align="center"><u>Stamp:</u></p> <p>#x Tactical Command Military Operations Control Group Kalay Town</p>		<p>To:</p> <p>Chairperson xxxx [village]</p>
<p>Subject: <u>To carry the hill paddy to the village</u></p>		
<p>The villagers who have planted paddy in the hillfields must carry it to your villages by the deadline of 15-12-2000 to your villages [<i>"to your villages" is stated twice</i>].</p>		
<p>After that date, if [we] see any paddy in the hillfields [we] will use it as Army rations, you are informed.</p>		
<p align="right">[Sd.] 2/12/2000 <u>Stamp:</u> Control Supervisor #x Tactical Command Military Operations Control Group</p>		

A translation of an order sent out to a village in Papun District.

for any reason. These three months comprise the end of the growing season and the harvest season, so if this order is enforced the entire rice harvest will be wiped out. There are at least 30 villages in these three village tracts (Ka Dtaing Dtee, Tee Tha Blu Hta and Ku Thu Hta) populated by well over 5,000 people. These are the only 3 village tracts which KHRG has definite information about thus far, but the order may be even more widespread than that. People from the area interviewed by KHRG just before this report went to print in October 2001 stated that everyone still in the villages is expecting starvation to set in within months. The local SPDC Battalions which issued the order stated that the purpose is to mount an all-out operation against the KNLA, but it is more probable that they simply want to wipe out the harvest in order to undermine the KNLA, and if the villagers starve in the process then they will simply be considered as 'collateral damage'.

"Starting on August 31st [2001] they stopped allowing the civilians to go outside the village. They did it in two village tracts, Ka Dtaing Dtee and Tee Tha Blu Hta. There are twelve villages in each of those village tracts and more than 3,960 people. It is Infantry Battalion #51 that prohibited it. They don't allow people to go outside the village. They ordered the people to bring their cows and buffaloes into the village and look after them inside the village. Children under 12 years old can go outside the village, but they don't allow people older than 12 to go outside. ... When I came here people could no longer go to their hill fields or flat fields. It is nearly harvest time, but we can't harvest our paddy anymore. I don't know what I will do. I can't eat anymore. All the paddy will be destroyed. ... They [the soldiers] say they have a three-month plan to cut the strength of the Kawthoolei [slang for the KNU/KNLA]. If they can't cut the strength of the Kawthoolei, then they are going to relocate all of the people living in the Baw Kyo Valley [the lower Yunzalin River valley], starting from the top and working their way to the bottom. They are going to drive the people to Baw Kyo Leh [village] where they have their big Army camp." – "Saw Eh Kaw" (M, 34), village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #240, 10/01)

"They started to do it on September 9th [2001]. They prohibited the villagers from going outside the village. They don't allow the villagers to go to their hill fields and flat fields. We have to stay in the village. They don't allow us to go to work. When people go outside the village, the soldiers say they are going to contact the Nga Pway ['Ringworm'; slang for KNU/KNLA]. ... People have to stay like that because they ordered it. If people don't stay [inside the village] and they see us in the forest, they will torture and kill us. So people are afraid and have to stay. ... If they make a

prohibition like this all of us are going to starve. They said it would be for four months, until December. It is only in Ku Thu Hta village tract. ... We can't go to the hill fields so all the paddy will be destroyed. We are going to starve. When everything is destroyed there is no way for us to live. We will have to go to buy rice in Ku Thu Hta. It is difficult to find money. We have to find vegetables and go to sell them. Then we can get money and we can go to buy rice. There is no other way for us." – "Saw Mu Htoo" (M, 26), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #239, 10/01)

Whenever villagers want to leave their villages to go anywhere they must get a letter of recommendation. These letters are passes usually written and stamped by the village head but also sometimes by the military. The passes have written on them how many people are allowed to go, to where, and for how long. When villagers are stopped on the paths or in the fields the soldiers demand to see their passes. Villagers who can produce a valid pass are allowed to go, though even the pass will not protect them if the patrol needs porters or if they look 'suspicious'. Those who have no passes are arrested and beaten, then either taken as porters or detained until the village head can vouch for them and pay the ransom for their freedom. If no one comes on their behalf, they may be executed. Village heads usually charge a small fee of 10-15 Kyat for these passes. The money is then used to help cover the costs of chickens and other things which are stolen or demanded by the soldiers.

"From the Burmese [SPDC-appointed] village head. The villagers from Wa Mu have to go and get it from them. One letter is 10 Kyat. At K— we get the letter from the K— village head. The Burmese seal it. If it is M— village, M— village tract, then they have their own seal. The soldiers say, 'If you don't get one, when we go up and operate and go around the mountains and see villagers with no letter of recommendation, then you will not be good people. You will have to suffer whatever I do to you.' ... One letter is 10 Kyat and the village head takes it because the village head doesn't have time. The village head says, 'I write the letter and ask you for 10 Kyat. It is because sometimes when the Burmese come they ask for poultry. I don't want to collect it from you. I will gather the money and when we need to use it, we will use it. If they demand 1 viss of chicken, I will take that money and buy 1 viss of chicken.'"— "Saw Maung Sein" (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

"We are not free to do our own work. They force us to do their work, so we have to do it. We can't do our own work. We are not free to look after our buffaloes. We have to work in fear of them. It is like we live in the bushes. If the soldiers are

around us we do not dare to go anywhere. We have to sneak. We can't go and work like before when we looked after our buffaloes. We are afraid to meet with the soldiers. If they meet us in the village they smile at us, but if they meet us in the forest, they do whatever they want to do. We have to be afraid of them. There was one time when I went to carry cane [for making baskets] and I met them. They questioned me a lot. They asked us things but nobody could speak Burmese. They ordered us to lay down our cane and asked, 'Can anyone speak Burmese?' We answered that none of us could speak Burmese. They asked us, 'Where are you coming from?' They asked me, 'Where do you live and why are you coming here?' I told them that I had come to the forest to cut some cane. They told me, 'If you come here you have to make a pass. If you don't get a pass you can't come here. If you don't get a pass there are some Nga Pway ['Ringworm'; derogatory term for the KNU/KNLA], so we will mistake you for them and shoot you.' If the soldiers come I don't know. Since then I have never gone there again. We had thought we would cut the cane to sell to buy salt and fishpaste to eat. They force us to work and they don't feed us so we have to cut cane in order to buy salt and fishpaste." - "Aung Baw" (M, 50) villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #148, 10/00)

Restrictions are also placed on batteries and medicine. The SPDC soldiers accuse the villagers of providing medicine to the KNU and so have forbidden the villagers to carry medicine. In some areas this has extended to the selling of medicine even for personal use. This order has severely limited the villagers' access to medicine. Many are forced to rely on traditional herbal medicines as a substitute. Sometimes medicine can be bought on the black

market but it is risky. Batteries are also forbidden because the SPDC believes the villagers will provide these to the KNU who will use them in their walkie-talkies and the detonators of their landmines. The penalty for carrying either of these can be death. Villagers are also given specific orders that if for any reason they are outside the village at night they must use a firebrand for light, not a flashlight. The SPDC soldiers tell them that anyone seen holding a flashlight will be assumed to be a Karen soldier and will be shot on sight.

"Last year they killed one villager from H---. S--- killed him. I never heard about it for medicine but that time was because of batteries [the villager was carrying batteries]. ... People can buy them [medicines] but they buy them secretly with an understanding between themselves. We don't dare to do it openly. If you say it is for yourself they allow it, but they don't allow it to be sold. If people are sick we can send them to the hospital. They are doing this in the wrong way." - "Saw Nyi Nyi" (M, 37), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

"Batteries and medicine are forbidden. When the [Sa Thon Lon] guerrilla retaliation group came they ordered that it was a death sentence if villagers used these things. We have not been able to use batteries up to now. They are worried about our siblings [the KNU] who stay above [in the mountains] - that they will use them for their landmines [KNLA landmines often have battery powered detonators]. We don't know what the Burmese plan is. If we use torchlights we need batteries. But they forbid us to use batteries so we can't use batteries. They don't give us the right." - "Saw Ber Kaw" (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)



Villagers in Dweh Loh township, Papun District, work on a fence around their village which LID 33 ordered them to make in April 2001. [KHRG]

Forced Labour

“They called the villagers to do ‘loh ah pay’. They forced them to cut down the forest, dig out the roots and stumps of trees, and then burn or carry away the branches. They usually called 18, 19, or 20 villagers from each village, big or small. They called them once or twice a month, for 3 or 4 days each time. ... When harvest time came, the people were called from Section 4 of T--- village, in K--- village tract, for ‘loh ah pay’ [forced labour harvesting the Army’s crop]. ... Aung Gyi gave very strong orders. He said, ‘Don’t pity them, look after them, think of them as your siblings or love the villagers. You are a soldier and you have to force them like a soldier.’ Because of this, I ordered and forced the villagers to work.” - “Saw Tha Ku” (M, 21), Private from Infantry Battalion #xx, Papun District (Interview #225, 3/00)

“Now we have to go and do ‘loh ah pay’. We have many kinds of ‘loh ah pay’. ‘Loh ah pay’ as porters, ‘loh ah pay’ to cut the brush along the road, ‘loh ah pay’ to build their camp and ‘loh ah pay’ to carry their food and rations. There are many kinds of ‘loh ah pay’. You cannot count the amount of ‘loh ah pay’.” - “Saw Ra Doh”, (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #199, 6/00)

Forced labour is constantly demanded from the villages under SPDC control despite the regime’s claims to be putting a stop to the practice [see ***‘Restrictions on Forced Labour’*** below]. The rugged hills of the region have very little infrastructure and there are no large-scale road or railway projects using thousands of people for forced labour at a time, but forced labour is nonetheless an everpresent burden in every village under the SPDC’s control. A village head in an SPDC-controlled village must send villagers for labour at the local Army camp building barracks, digging trenches, fetching water and doing other work around the camp. The villagers go for this work on a rotating schedule. Many villages have two or more camps nearby and the village head may have to send people to work at more than one of the camps. He must also send villagers to stand as unarmed sentries at Army camps and along any nearby roads. The few roads which exist in the area are dirt and need a great deal of maintenance, which the villagers are forced to perform. They must also regularly clear scrub along both sides of the road in order to protect the Army from ambush. If the local Army unit has a farm or a money-making project like a brick kiln or logging, the village head must send people to work on those too. In addition to this, the village head is ordered to provide porters whenever the Army needs them, so he must find villagers who are not already working at the camp or doing sentry duty to go. Much of the portering is also done on a rotating basis. An Army column may pass through the village and demand yet more villagers to go with it as operations porters. While these forms of labour are not as visible or headline-grabbing as the building of a railway, the work goes on every day, it is just as difficult, and collectively involves the labour of thousands of villagers.

“They are forcing them, the same as in our village. It is no different. They wrote the same letters to us and the other villages. They ordered them to do

‘loh ah pay’ too. If they write one letter to M---, they also write one to T--- and another to K---. They demand things from all the villages at the same time.” - “Saw Tee Maung” (M, xx), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #133, 5/00)

“The villagers are called to go and work on the road for ‘loh ah pay’, ‘ta won kyay’ [‘obligation’] and many kinds of work. We also have to go for ‘wontan’ [servants, which often means porters]. If we can’t supply replacement villagers, they don’t allow the workers to return to the village.” - “Saw Kloh” (M, 56), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #188, 5/00)

“It starts from Noh Paw Tee, then to Poh Ma Heh, Tee Theh Lay, Tee Law Thay Hta, Noh Ghay, Wah Tho Klah, Hsa Law Dteh, Baw Tho Hta, Tee Tha Blu Hta, Taw Meh Hta, Bpo Leh, Bpo Khay, Bler Per, then down here to K’Pee Kee, Pway Taw Ru, Tee Hsaw Meh, Noh Lah, Pah Loh, Taw Thu Klah. They all have to go. They can’t take a rest.” - “Pi San Nweh” (F, 53), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #193, 6/00); talking about the villages in her area which have to go for forced labour

“I don’t know all the villages near Ka Ma Maung, but all the villages on both sides of the road have to go. The villages of Wah Tho Koh and Maw Law Kloh always have to go. Even the villages near Ka Ma Maung have to stand sentry along the road. I know that the villages of Baw Kyo Leh, Taw Thu Klah, Pah Loh, Poh Mine Hay, Tee Theh Lay, Tee Law Thay Hta, K’Pee Kee, Pway Taw Ru, Tee Tha Blu Hta, Wah Tho Klah, Hsa Law Dteh, Taw Meh Hta, Bpoh Leh, Bpoh Khay and Bler Per always have to go. Of the villages above us I know that Th’Wa Ko Law and Th’Wa Hu Law have to

go. On the road from the east I know that Taw Thu Klah, Pa Loh and Meh Ku Hta have to do it. If they don't they will be moved." - "Mya Aung" (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00); giving a list of villages near the Papun - Ka Ma Maung road which have to go for forced labour.

"This is 'loh ah pay' and every village has to go for it. The Army unit that camps in the fields [outside his village] often demand 'loh ah pay', and the Baw Bi Doh [Sa Thon Lon] also often order us to go on the west side of the car road. The DKBA also order us to work for them, so we don't have any time left to do our own work." - "Saw Plaw Doh" (M, 25), refugee from G--- village, Mone township (Interview #7, 2/00)

"The next unit was #38 [IB]. The name of #38's commander is Maung Maung Aye. They ordered us to carry loads twice. Each time they demanded 20 people, 40 people in all. They also demanded 20 people for 'loh ah pay'. That is 60 people in all. Two people also had to go for 'set tha' each day. I don't remember the dates for the other things, but the 'set tha' is regular." - "Pu Ler Ku" (M, 60), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #221, 4/01); 'set tha' is rotating forced labour as messengers and errand-runners

Both women and men go for forced labour. Men usually do most of the labour, but sometimes the men have already gone for some other form of forced labour, or the men are too afraid to confront the soldiers because they are more likely to be physically abused or accused of being 'rebels' than the women. Women going for a shift of forced labour must decide whether to leave their small children behind or carry them along; even women who show up for work breastfeeding infants are not exempted. Women are at risk of sexual abuse while labouring for the soldiers, especially while portering. Children as young as 10 or 11 and people as old as 60 are also sometimes forced to work. The children often have to go if their parents are not able to go due to illness or because they have to work in the fields. Some SPDC officers complain when children are sent, more because they cannot do a full workload than out of any sympathy for the children - and even though they complain, they still keep the children until replacements are sent or the shift ends. Allowances are not always made for widows or the elderly, but village heads try to arrange for them to be exempted. The number of villagers in a village is also not always taken into account when the local Army commander demands workers, resulting in some smaller villages having a high percentage of their villagers away working at any one time. One villager in Dweh Loh township told KHRG how in his village of 16 houses, 16 people had to go as sentries on the road every day. The result was that there were not even enough people to rotate the

sentries, much less go for any other work which they might be ordered to do.

"They have to go to do 'loh ah pay' a lot. When the Burmese don't see any men, they order the women to do it. They also force the old people and children, they are all workers. Some people are 40, 50, and 60 years old and they must go. I saw a man named P—. His children are all grown up and he has grandchildren. He went to porter and his back was bruised. He is Shan. As for the Karen villagers, the Burmese don't call the people who are old and sick, but the people who can go and are healthy, they all must go. Children as young as 12 or 13 years must go. The people who go as porters must take along their own rice. The people who go to porter at the front line do not have enough to eat. They have to ration their food to survive. The Burmese don't give a salary." - "Pu Taw Lay" (M, 56), internally displaced villager from M— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #80, 3/00)

"They ordered the village head and the village head ordered the villagers to do it. Even the 10 year old children all went to work because some of their parents weren't free, so they asked their 10 year old children to go and work. The old people go sometimes and sometimes not. The women also go. They force everyone to do 'loh ah pay'." - "Htaw Say" (M, 43), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #210, 2/01)

"We had to do sentry duty during the last dry season. They didn't say how many days each person had to be a sentry. We only have a few houses and the [sentry] huts that they have for us along the road are the same number as the houses in the village. In all there are 16 houses in K— and N— villages. There are 8 huts and one hut is for two people so that is 16 people. We don't even have enough people to rotate the sentries. We have to stand sentry full time until the [Army] trucks are finished coming up [this is almost the entire dry season]." - "Saw Ra Doh", (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #199, 6/00)

"When we went to do 'loh ah pay' to cut and sweep the road, they forced us to guard it when they were carrying their rations. Our village is small but they demanded 6 people. We didn't have time to rest. There are only 10 or 20 families in my village. They demanded 6 people for 2 days by rotation, so we didn't have any time to rest. ... For example, if right now one of their columns came to call us, after they left another unit would come to call for someone the next morning. The other one [her husband] hasn't come back yet, so that's why his wife is alone in the house. So his wife has to go." - "Naw Ghay Paw" (F, 40), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #185, 4/00)

“The children don’t need to go but the adults do. The oldest people may be 50 or 60 years old. The youngest person is about 20 years old. The women also have to go. The men and women go together. In some houses if there are no men, then the women have to go. One person from each house has to go. If 30 people from K— village have to go, then 30 people have to go. They don’t like it if less than 30 people go.” - “Po Lah” (M, 25), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #12, 4/01)

The conditions of work vary depending on the type of work and on the unit demanding it. For rotation work at Army camps and portering, the villagers are kept for the length of the shift or the journey, or however long the unit wants them. Workers on rotation are usually not released until their replacements are sent, and officers often send written orders to villages complaining that the current shift of workers have been there much too long already and should be replaced immediately. For road work, each village is assigned a section of road and given a deadline to complete the work, usually either repairing the road or clearing the scrub on the roadsides. In this situation the soldiers do not usually oversee the work, but they check it after the deadline and if it has not been completed to their satisfaction the village is ordered to do it again and/or punished in some way. Food, tools and building materials are never provided and the villagers must bring their own. Salaries are also never paid to the workers. Villagers who get sick or become injured while working are never given compensation or medicine. They must find their own medicine, even though the transporting and selling of medicine is forbidden in most areas of Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts. Sometimes the villagers must sleep at the work sites. Portering may involve the villagers being away from the village for weeks or even months. Often when one project is finished, the SPDC finds something else for the villagers to do. This leaves very little time for the villagers to do their own work.

“Sometimes they demanded leaves, thatch and bamboo, and we had to go and build things and fence their garden. All of the people in the village had to do that, no one could avoid it. People had

to go in turns. We all took turns, but we only had 3 days before our turn would come up again. People had to hurry to finish their own work [for their own living]. If the wife went to work for them, the husband had to do the work for the family, and if the husband went to work for the Ko Per Baw [DKBA] or the Burmese, the wife had to hurry to get their family’s work done. People always did things like this to earn their living. We spent less time working for ourselves than working for them. Overall, we could only work for ourselves one third of the time. Sometimes our turn came up to guard at the sentry huts [along the road], and it was usually the men who went for that.” - “Naw Say Muh” (F, 54), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #203, 7/00)

“When they finished fencing the villages the SPDC found more work to do. They forced the villagers to cut the brush along the road and to clear the road. They forced the people to make small bridges. The villagers can’t take a rest.” - “Saw Maung Sein” (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

“Last month they demanded 52 people for ‘loh ah pay’. The villagers dare not go because sometimes they take the villagers to go with them for a long time, so we had to hire people. The villagers are afraid of the soldiers and dare not go. They say only three days, but it wasn’t only three days, it was all month.” - “Saw Ber Kaw” (M, 40), village tract head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

“Every village, all the villagers have to go. The whole village tract. The old people and the young people have to go. The older people are 50 or 55 years old. The youngest people were about 16 years old. They don’t let the people younger than 16 years old work. They said they can’t work and they are useless if they work.” - “Saw Per Per” (M, 45), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #24, 4/01)

Restrictions on Forced Labour

“Q: They said they don’t order people to go for ‘loh ah pay’ or portering anymore. Is that true?”

A: Maybe they will comb their hair in front of the people and the other leaders like that, but here we have suffered it and there are many villagers who have had to carry loads in the mountains and many people have died along the way.” - “Saw Ber Kaw” (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) was formed in 1917 to improve and protect labour standards, and since the creation of the United Nations it has operated as an agency of the UN system. Unlike most UN agencies, its membership includes trade union organisations and employers’ organisations as well as governments. In 1955 the Burmese U Nu government signed ILO Convention 29 which bans the use of forced labour. Despite signing the convention, the use of forced labour in the country only became more widespread and systematic, and Burmese regimes have come under pressure by the ILO since 1964 to put a stop to forced labour in the country. Nothing has ever been done to stop it. The pressure gradually increased until by the mid-1990’s the ILO was singling the Burmese regime out for severe criticism. In 1997 the ILO appointed a Commission of Inquiry which held hearings, interviewed over 300 witnesses in Burma’s neighbouring countries (the Commission was refused entry to Burma itself) and studied over 10,000 pages of documentary evidence. In 1998 the Commission reported that forced labour is widespread and systematic throughout Burma and is operated by both the civilian and military authorities. The SPDC was given until May 1st 1999 to take steps to put an end to forced labour and to punish those exacting it. The SPDC claimed to have issued Order 1/99 on May 14th 1999 banning some types of forced labour throughout the country, but evidence indicated otherwise and the SPDC was told to put a stop to it or face the consequences. With no progress being made, in June 2000 the ILO voted to take measures in accordance with Article 33 of its Constitution, which had never been applied to any country in the ILO’s 84-year history. Following a six month grace period in which it was determined that nothing had changed, in November the ILO enacted Article 33 stopping all technical cooperation with the Burmese regime and asking its member nations, unions and employers’ organisations to review their relations with the SPDC to ensure that nothing they were doing would contribute to the continuation of forced labour. As they had done in 1999, the SPDC waited until the last moment and then claimed to be doing something about it in order to undermine the ILO action. This time the SPDC claimed that the Home Ministry had issued ‘Supplementary Order to Order 1/99’ on

October 27th 2000, and that this order imposes a broader ban on forced labour and prescribes punishment for anyone demanding it. This order was followed on November 1st by another similar, but in some ways stronger, order issued by Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Secretary-1 of the SPDC. The SPDC claims that all township, village tract and village heads in the country have been told about the order, and that if anyone demands forced labour from them they can complain to the appropriate authorities and that person will be arrested.

“I heard about it. I heard that they couldn’t force the villagers, but they still forced them secretly. They still force them secretly and the leaders who stay there [in the Army camps] know about it. ... It [the order] didn’t leave the town. They let the towns know, but they are still forcing people in our place. ... Our village head said, ‘The letters they [the SPDC] are distributing are coming. Don’t worry. Don’t worry that the Burmese will force us.’ But they are still forcing us to work secretly and the leaders in the town do not know about it.” - “Nyi Nyi” (M, 27), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #237, 8/01)

As this report goes to print, an ILO High Level Team has just completed a trip of several weeks travelling throughout Burma to assess whether the SPDC has circulated the orders banning forced labour as claimed, and whether there have been any serious attempts to enforce these orders. According to information gathered by KHRG there has been some circulation of the orders, but most of it only occurred in August and September 2001 just before the visit of the High Level Team. Despite any circulation of the orders, villagers report that there has been no decrease in forced labour, and the SPDC has admitted that not a single person has yet been prosecuted for demanding forced labour. Interviews compiled by KHRG for this report from Nyaunglebin and Papun districts between November 2000 and October 2001 indicate that not only is forced labour still being demanded from the villagers, but that the villagers have no one to complain to about it. Some villagers have said that they were told there would be no more forced labour, but that it still continued. When asked whether forced labour had decreased in his area, one village head from Mone Township said that the SPDC may be ‘combing its hair’ in front of the world, but in his tract they are still portering for the SPDC Army.

“They do not go to complain to the higher leaders. They dare not go and complain. They stay in xxxx village and they dare not go anywhere. They dare not go because if the Burmese know that they are going to complain it will not be good for us. If they hear and know about it, they are going to kill us. Only this. The villagers are afraid and the village heads are also afraid. No one goes to

complain. They dare not go to complain.” - “Nyi Nyi” (M, 27), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #237, 8/01)

“No, they don’t dare to go and complain about it. It is not near Rangoon. Meh Way is just a Karen village where Karen people live. The Burmese came and drove the people together at Meh Way. So even the village heads are just as afraid of the Burmese as the villagers. ... They can’t say anything. Even if they did speak, they wouldn’t win. They complain but the officers don’t listen to them. They are the frontline units and most of the people are afraid of the frontline units. ... If they went and complained and said, ‘You said you are not going to call for porters anymore,’ then they [the soldiers] would say, ‘Now we are not calling for porters, we are just asking you for loh ah pay.’ The meaning [of loh ah pay] is to help, so the things the villagers help with is carrying loads the same as before..” - “Saw Nay Lay” (M, 51), Centre for Internally Displaced Karen Persons township leader, Dweh Loh township (Interview #238, 8/01)

“The Burmese who force us to work said that it is the Operations Commander who orders the work so we have to work. After that the soldiers went to report the names [of the people who went to work]. We couldn’t stay without working. If we don’t work we would have to move and if we move to another place the soldiers will take action and put us in jail [for not being registered to live there].” - “Mya Sein” (M, 21), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #209, 12/00)

“Q: Did they say there were to be no porters or ‘set tha’ [messenger labour]?”

A: In the past they said there was to be no more, but they are demanding it again.” - “Zaw Min” (M, 26), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #220, 4/01)

The SPDC is also trying to play with words to both trick the villagers and to make its use of forced labour sound better internationally. Under successive Burmese military regimes the state-controlled media has tried to present the labour of villagers as being voluntary and done out of love for the country. There is a Pali term used traditionally for voluntary labour contributed by villagers to gain Buddhist merit, ‘loh ah pay’; it normally applies to villagers getting together to maintain the temple or clear the path to the next village. However, SPDC authorities use the term *loh ah pay* when demanding labour at Army camps and other forms of short-term forced labour, so this is what it has come to mean to the villagers. Heavier or more long-term labour such as portering or road-building are never called *loh ah pay* by the villagers, but soldiers have now begun telling villagers that portering is now to be called ‘loh ah pay’ as well. This difference may

sound subtle to an outsider, but it greatly angers many villagers in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts, who have complained to KHRG that they have shown up for a short shift of ‘loh ah pay’ only to find themselves taken as porters. Portering is dangerous and can last weeks or months so villagers usually try to pay to avoid it, whereas they are less afraid of *loh ah pay*. By summoning the villagers for *loh ah pay* the villagers are less likely to try to get out of it and the SPDC can try to claim that the work is contributed voluntarily. The villagers resent being tricked in this way and have said that this ‘loh ah pay’ is synonymous with ‘portering’. One villager from Lu Thaw township told KHRG that a meeting was held in late 2000 at which Karen State Peace and Development Council Chairman (and commander of the Southeast Command) Major General Thiha Thura Sit Maung said that there were to be no more porters, that porters would only have to carry light rations for the soldiers, and that the practice was henceforth to be called ‘loh ah pay’ and not ‘portering’. According to a KHRG researcher from Papun District the terminology was changed in November 2000 - at the same time that the ILO enacted Article 33 and the SPDC claims to have banned forced labour.

“Some of the Karen village heads spoke about it. They said that the units which have come to the frontline have been ordered by Khin Nyunt to not use forced labour anymore. ... They [the village heads] haven’t received any orders. They just heard about it from people gossiping. ... Some of the village heads asked them [the soldiers], ‘Why if the people [SPDC] don’t call for porters anymore, are you still calling for it?’ They [the soldiers] said that instead of porters, they should call it loh ah pay.” - “Saw Nay Lay” (M, 51), Centre for Internally Displaced Karen Persons township leader, Dweh Loh township (Interview #238, 8/01)

“I heard the villagers come back and speak about it. Sit Maung, the State Chairman [Major General Thiha Thura Sit Maung, the Southeast Command commander and the Karen State PDC Chairman until his death in February 2001], said there are to be no more porters. Only for carrying and delivering the small rations for them. They don’t call it portering. We have to carry for free. That is ‘loh ah pay’. They don’t call porters now but if they do, we must pay.” - “Maung Than” (M, 40), village headman from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #205, 8/00)

“They always force us to do ‘loh ah pay’. They force the villagers to go and carry things for them as porters. Before they called it portering, but now they said they don’t call it portering, they call it ‘loh ah pay’. ‘Loh ah pay’ is portering because you have to carry things the same way. Sometimes they have to carry things for three or four days. They call it ‘loh ah pay’ but it isn’t.

'I will still use forced labour ...'

They have a meeting every four months and all the battalion commanders go. There are ten battalion commanders, the Division Commander and the three operations commanders. During the four-monthly meeting, the Division Commander talks about everything. In January 2001, at the time when every battalion commander went for the four-monthly meeting, the Division Commander said, 'We aren't allowed to use forced labour any more, and I have already sent the radio message about it.'

Our battalion commander was not at the meeting. I stay near the battalion commander. I heard the battalion commander and the operations commander talking to each other. They were talking as friends. 'Younger brother [the operations commander is senior in rank and is addressing the battalion commander], the Division Commander said we can't call for wontan or porters anymore. He only threatened us. They just talk to each other. Why doesn't he try it himself. He stays in the town. We are the people who really have to work. So if we have to carry [the loads themselves], can he come and carry also?' They were talking to each other. I was sitting down beside them in case they needed boiled water [for tea]. If they did, I had to bring the boiled water. If they needed rice, I had to bring them rice. If they needed curry, I had to bring them curry. I had to work for them like that. I lived in the office so I know everything they said. He [the operations commander] said, 'About this, I will still use forced labour in my area.' For carrying loads, for example, I can only carry one load. We can't carry two loads, so there is one load left. Where can you get the people to carry it? So we just take villagers. Okay, there is no other way. [The Battalion Commander said:] 'Come on. If anything happens, let it happen. If they arrest me, then they can arrest me.' It doesn't mean that they [the commanders] aren't afraid [of being arrested]. Even if they are afraid there is no other way, so they just solve the problem themselves.

Q: *How many people did the Operations Commander tell?*

A: *The Headquarters Company Commander, the Battalion Commander and the three operations people [the Operations Commander's staff]. They didn't speak about it anymore. They didn't let them [the rank and file soldiers] know. They didn't let any of the lower people know.*

Q: *Were they still using forced labour when you left [he deserted in March 2001]?*

A: *Yes, until I left. We forced the villagers to cut the grass and dig bunkers at our T--- camp. We called them and forced them to do that. They had to dig the bunkers and they are still digging them now.*

Q: *Did they take any action against the people who are still using forced labour?*

A: *There was no action.*

["Tin Lwin" (M, 20), Lance Corporal who deserted in Nyaunglebin District in March 2001 (Int. #236, 8/01)]

They renamed it. They said that if they call it portering it is rude. They changed the name in November [2000]. ...

Q: *After they changed the name to 'loh ah pay' what did they force the villagers to do?*

A: *The soldiers forced them to carry food, rice and beans.*

Q: *So they don't have porters anymore?*

A: *They do but they call it 'loh ah pay'.*" - "Saw Maung Sein" (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

"Q: They demand porters but call it 'loh ah pay', is it different from portering?

A: *It is the same. If they demand porters and say it is portering, the villagers dare not go. That is why they trick us. They think, 'If we arrest porters for a long time, and call them porters, the civilians*

know about it and are afraid to come. They dare not come.' So they call it 'loh ah pay'. They called it 'four day loh ah pay'. But we had to go more than four days and it became long term portering. They trick us in this way." - "Saw Tha Htwe" (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #206, 9/00)

"They said that when we carry loads they won't allow us to call it 'wontan' ['servant'] or portering, we must call it 'loh ah pay'. They said it doesn't look good if we call it 'wontan' or porter." - "Htaw Say" (M, 43), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #210, 2/01)

Another cosmetic change which has been occurring is who gives the orders for forced labour. In the past it was usually the Army which dictated its demands

for porters and Army camp labour directly to the villages, while the Township civilian authorities dictated many of the demands for forced labour on infrastructure projects. In many areas this has also been subtly changing, with many Army units channeling their demands for porters and Army camp labour through the local civilian authorities at the Township and village tract levels. For example, an Army Battalion notifies the Township or Village Tract Peace and Development Council (PDC) that it wants 50 people for forced labour, and the PDC must divide that number of people between the villages under it, issuing the orders to each village in turn. Alternatively, the PDC pays to hire people to fill at least part of the demand, and then bills the villages under it for their share of the hiring cost. This process makes the villages see the demands for forced labour as coming from the civilian authorities rather than the Army. In some areas the authorities avoid issuing written orders demanding forced labour directly, choosing instead to call village heads to meetings and dictate the demands orally so that there will be no documentary evidence - though in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts a great deal of forced labour is still demanded using written orders. There have also been cases in the two districts of the DKBA issuing orders demanding forced labour on behalf of the SPDC's Army units.

The SPDC is also bringing in a great deal of convict porters to supplement the use of villagers as porters, particularly because most villagers will do anything to avoid frontline portering. Based on cases studied by KHRG, it appears that the regime is even arresting innocent people in the towns and cities and convicting them on vague charges with no evidence simply to turn 'civilian labour' into 'convict labour' (see below under **'Porters'**).

Regarding the alleged distribution and implementation of the SPDC's orders banning forced labour, most village heads from SPDC-controlled villages in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts who have been interviewed by KHRG say they have either never seen the orders, or have seen them but without any evidence of their being implemented.

"I don't know whether it comes from Rangoon or Moulmein. I know that the people said the leader came and distributed the order so the Burmese can't force the villagers to work. But they still force the villagers to work secretly and say to the village head that they do not force people to be porters or to do loh ah pay. They use their brains like that. ... As for me, I thought the Burmese could no longer force us, we were very happy because we had had to carry very terribly. We thought that if they couldn't force us we were very happy. But they are still forcing us secretly. So what can we do? We must go." - "Nyi Nyi" (M, 27), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #237, 8/01); he was blinded in one eye by a landmine while portering for the SPDC in June 2001

Porters

"They captured porters there. They called it Army 'wontan' ['servants'], but it was portering. They called one villager from each house to carry rations. Some villagers didn't come because they didn't have enough food, they had to work and weren't free to go. They arrested the villagers who were hiding [from forced labour; in this context 'arrested' means captured them and forced them to go]. When they didn't arrest them, they fined them. Some villagers couldn't go, so they forced them to pay 1,000 Kyat per day. They called both men and women." - "Saw Tha Ku" (M, 21), Private from Infantry Battalion #xx, Papun District (Interview #225, 3/00)

The SPDC's Army requires thousands of porters to keep its expanding web of camps supplied and to carry supplies for the operational columns. The porters are usually demanded by written order and given by the village head on a rotational basis. Sometimes the villagers are required to stay at the camp for a certain number of days and remain on standby in case the local Army unit needs to go anywhere. At any given time, most Army camps have a few people from each village in their area carrying for their patrols or on standby at the camp. Other times the porters are requested for a specific purpose, such as the monthly or bimonthly rations deliveries to camps. At certain times the Army will send up large shipments of rations and other supplies for all the camps in an area. The supplies are usually brought up by truck or boat to bigger Army camps at places like Ka Dtaing Dtee, Toh Thay Pu and Meh Way in Papun District and to Ko Sghaw and Ma La Daw in Nyaunglebin District. From these bigger camps along the roads, the supplies are then carried up into the hills by villagers taken from the villages and relocation sites. Villages suddenly receive written orders to send one person from every household for one or two days of carrying. During the rainy season the roads, most of which are dirt, become impassable and villagers are forced in addition to porter supplies where trucks would go in dry season. These are large-scale resupply operations and as many as a hundred or more villagers are demanded at a time. Many of the bigger camps are also relocation sites which have a large pool of labour which can be used. The resupply can last for many days and usually requires that all the villagers, including women and children as young as eight, go in order to finish the work as soon as possible.

"When we went to carry the rice sacks in the dry season when the [rations] boats came, we slept there. We carried the rice sacks to the storehouse in their camp. It is about three furlongs from the river to the camp. Every village had to carry for that. They demanded 18 people but we sent only five or six. If it took a long time - two or three days - we had to rotate new people in. It was this

dry season and it took nearly one month.” - “Saw Tee Maung” (M, xx), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #133, 5/00)

“The other villages also have to go as porters. They demand one porter from T--- village, three porters from B---village, three porters from D--- and T--- village, three porters from M---, one porter from ---... I know only of these. They went together with us. Since the Burmese arrived, everyone has to carry. I know this and I’ve also seen it with my own eyes. T---, T---, B---, P---, they all have to carry. We see it ourselves. Sometimes, after we’ve fled we arrive among them [people from other villages] and they tell us, ‘Right, we have to do this. We can’t stay and we have to go and carry in fear.’ Even when we carried them [the soldiers] sometimes accused us of being KNU spies. That is why if we couldn’t carry, we fled if no one came to relieve us.” - “Kyaw Po” (M, 45), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #192, 6/00)

“They forced them again on the 2nd of September [2000]. Seventy people had to carry loads to Doh Ko Wah. It took two days. On September 3rd [2000], [Infantry Battalion] #63 was going to rotate out [of the area] and they demanded porters. They demanded the villagers from Koh Thee Hta, Khaw Tee Ko, Tee Na Day, Meh T’Ru Kee, Wa Wee Lay, Wa Kha Hta, Meh Wa Hta, Meh Kyo, Meh Pu Kee, Meh Pu Hta and Poh Loh Hta. It was over 100 people. They forced the soldiers to carry their things to Na Gyi.” - “Saw Maung Soe” (M, 42), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #147, 9/00)

“They don’t pay the people who must carry the rice. We have to carry the rice from Mu Paw Hta. It has been ten days already and they still have rice [to carry]. They divided it up into loads for each person to carry. We had only a few people so we tried to carry it quickly so it would be finished. If we carried it only one or two trips a day it would never be finished. Every older person [adults and older teenagers] who could carry all had to go and carry it. The youngest ones, like Naw P— [a young girl], she

could carry one or two bowls [1.6-3.2 kg / 3.4-6.8 lb] so she also had to go and carry it. It was bad for the children but they had to try twice a day until they arrived at the storehouse. We still have to carry tomorrow and the day after. A lot of people aren’t free to carry it because they are already tired from carrying it so many times. The villagers have to work their fields and look after their buffaloes. They can only carry it one or two times because if we work too much for them we don’t have time to work for ourselves anymore. But we try to finish their work.” - “Aung Baw” (M, 50) villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #148, 10/00)

“They demand them from the village head. They don’t write a letter, they demand with their mouths. If we can’t give them as many people as they need, they come and summon them themselves [the soldiers come and capture the needed number of villagers]. Sometimes they demand five people or six people and sometimes they demand ten people. We have only 15 houses in the village, so when they demand 10 porters, it is difficult to find that many. When we couldn’t find enough people they captured them themselves.” - “Naw Say Paw” (F, 46), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #195, 6/00)

“There are many different types of ‘loh ah pay’ t h e r e . Sometimes the soldiers go to stay at Doh Koh Wah, but now they are not there. The last time was in October 2000. They stayed there for a month and a half. From our village they demanded 50 ‘loh ah pay’ [people]. One time they demanded up to 80 ‘loh ah pay’

<p align="center">Stamp:</p> <p align="center">Peace and Development Council xxxx Village Tract</p>		<p>Date: 4-4-2001</p>
<p>[To:] Head xxxx village</p>		
<p>To transport the sacks of rice from the rations godown at xxxx Army camp hill send five loh ah pay people to the Army camp on 5-4-2001 to arrive at 7 o'clock in the morning, you are informed.</p>		
<p>Note: Do not fail.</p>		
<p align="right">[Sd.] 5-4-2001 Stamp: (for) Chairperson Village Peace and Development Council xxxx Village Tract, Papun Township</p>		

A translation of an order sent to a village in Papun District.

from xxxx village. The women and children also went. They had to carry food up from Wa Mu camp to Doh Koh Wah. Some of the women had children who hadn’t stopped nursing yet. The soldiers say it is your duty and you have to do it. It is a big problem and a great pity for them. They had to carry rice, milk, sugar and beans. Some males went but the women went also. For some women, their husbands and children had to go to

work, so the wives had to worry as one person had to go from each house. They have to go by rotation. Sometimes 70 or 80 and sometimes 50. They can't stay in the village without going. If the villagers don't go they are fined and food is demanded from them for the soldiers to eat. Problems are also made for them. They threaten many things so the villagers are afraid and have to go." - "Saw Maung Sein" (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

"Sometimes they forced us to go Papun and then come back. We went to carry rations for them and to buy things. Their trucks brought food for them, but they forced us to go and buy cheroots for them. For small things they just demanded one or two people to carry for them, but to carry to Kyauk Nyat a lot of people had to go, about 20 or 30. If that many didn't go, they came into the village and captured both men and women. They brought rice in their trucks and after it arrived at Kaw Pu [a.k.a. Kaw Boke], we had to carry it to Kyauk Nyat." - "Saw Doh" (M, 30), refugee from K--- village, Bu Tho township (Interview #218, 4/00)

Portering usually lasts for a day or two but can last for as long as ten, during which the villagers must bring their own food. The village heads send the villagers to go as porters by rotation but in some areas, and especially in the smaller villages, it is so frequent that it is not long before a person's turn comes around again. Often a village head can't get anyone to go for the next rotation, so the Army holds on to the people it already has for weeks. KHRG often obtains orders written by officers complaining to the effect that 'the present servants have been here much too long already, send their replacements immediately'. When the soldiers need to move a lot of things at once, such as resupplying the camps with rations, entire villages have to go. Men usually go for portering, but demands placed on the small villages are so heavy that women, children and the elderly also go. Women are less likely to be physically beaten or accused of being 'rebels' while portering, but if the shift of portering lasts more than a day they face the serious risk of rape. They are also forced to decide whether to take their children with them, making the journey much more difficult, or leave them at home where they may go hungry. One headwoman from Dweh Loh township told an Army unit demanding women porters that she would only give them men. She got away with it, but usually the Army takes whomever they can get. Children as young as 7 years old are also sometimes taken as porters. Some units do not take children because they are too small to carry the heavy loads. An SPDC soldier who deserted in Papun District told KHRG of seeing a young girl forced to carry a basket full of rice. He tried to help the girl by carrying her load, but his Sergeant punished him for it by forcing him to carry an even heavier load of ammunition.

"They send the food between December and January. They send the food to Kaw Boke and then to Ka Hee Kyo. The villagers must carry the food from Ka Hee Kyo to Kyauk Nyat. The soldiers send trucks to Ka Hee Kyo and the villagers must carry it from there. For example, Nu Thu Hta village has to carry 30 sacks of rice [1,500 kg / 3,300 lb]. To finish it quickly, the villagers will need more people to carry the rice. If there are four or five people in a house, the villagers call them all together and go like that. Male and female, they all go. Children who are seven or eight years old and can carry half a basket [of rice; 12.5 kg / 27.5 lb], they all go. They went together so the rice carrying would finish quickly for their families and the village. When they finished carrying the 30 sacks of rice their duty was finished. Another village, Toh Wee Der, was the same. Another one or two villages also must work the same to carry things so they will finish quickly." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

"There was a small girl. She was the same age as my cousin. They were forcibly ordering her to carry things. I pitied that girl, but I also had to carry a backpack. I said to her, 'Sister, give it to me. I will carry it for you.' Then one of the Saya [NCO's] told me, 'Hey kaung [this pronoun is usually only used when talking to animals] what are you doing?' I said, 'No, don't do an injustice. This girl has to climb the mountain. You have put a lot of rice in her basket, that is why I am helping her and carrying for her.' He took me and said to me, 'If you want to carry, come.' He ordered me to carry 2,000 bullets for the MA [MA is a series of assault rifles and machine guns made in Burma to Chinese designs; 7.62mm bullets]. I couldn't carry it. When I couldn't carry it, an officer came and asked, 'What is happening?' I said, 'Bo Gyi [Captain] think about it, they forced a small girl to carry a rice sack so I helped and carried it for her. For that, he [the Sergeant] ordered me to carry these 2,000 bullets. I can't carry it.' The officer said, 'The order was from the Army. It was only one order. You must do the order.' I carried it a little bit further and threw it away. It fell down the side of the mountain into the valley. The officer ordered me to go and pick it up. Then he ordered another porter to carry it." - "Thein Htay" (M, 26), Private from Light Infantry Battalion #xxx, Papun District (Interview #227, 11/00)

"The units that were here before didn't do that but Division #xx [Light Infantry Division #xx], which just came, asked me to give them women porters. I haven't given them any. I told them that women from xxxx never go to porter. They said that the women from xxxx came so why can't

ours. I told them that I wouldn't give them women. I will give men only." - "Naw Eh Kri Mu" (F, 34), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #196, 6/00)

Village heads are also sometimes ordered to provide bullock carts to Army camps on a rotating basis. The bullock carts and their drivers must remain at the camp on standby for immediate use whenever required by the Army. There is very little motor transport in the area and bullock carts are used to carry heavy equipment, building materials or heavy weapons. The bullock carts are also used to carry bamboo and lumber for the soldiers as a part of their logging operations. Bullock carts can also be commandeered at any time from the villagers without compensation. The bullocks are not fed by the soldiers and are worked so hard that the owners are not able to properly care for them. Boats and their drivers are also commandeered by the soldiers to carry rations and supplies up the rivers. This is especially so on the Bilin River, where the road is impassable throughout the May-October rainy season.

"As for the bullock carts, they never get to rest. They have to go with the soldiers three days a week. Sometimes they have to go and carry the rations to L---. Sometimes the bullock carts have to stay at the camp and the villagers come and change the carts every three days because they need their carts and bullocks to work. The soldiers don't take care of the bullocks or feed them. They have to tie them with bamboo. The villagers have to come to bring straw and bran because the grass there is dried and dead. They [the soldiers] don't take care of the bullocks along the bank of the river." - "Naw Eh Kri Mu" (F, 34), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #196, 6/00)

"They brought it halfway by boat and carry it the rest of the way on the road. They don't pay for the boat. It was a villager's boat but the soldiers put gasoline in it. The drivers are Burmese traders. They [the soldiers] use about six boats a day. There are two boats which can't go up because they no longer work. The drivers can't drive those boats anymore." - "Aung Baw" (M, 50) villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #148, 10/00)

A much more arduous and feared form of portering is going as 'operations porters' with the Army's mobile columns. Operations portering involves carrying supplies for the soldiers as they conduct an operation in an area. An operation may be a simple patrol lasting a few days to a sweep of an area involving hundreds of soldiers and lasting months. Villagers are especially afraid of being taken for this form of portering, and even villagers who normally stay in the village and face the soldiers flee if they know the

soldiers are coming for operations porters. If the demand is made in advance by written order they try to find itinerant labourers from the plains who are willing to be hired to go in their place, even if they have to sell their livestock to pay the price. If this proves impossible, money cannot usually be paid to get out of it. The villagers are taken for weeks and sometimes months at a time. The food provided by the soldiers is never enough and the porters are rarely allowed to rest. When the soldiers stop at camps along the way, the porters are ordered to fetch water, gather firewood and perform other menial tasks for the soldiers. Villagers are beaten or kicked more often while doing this type of portering due to their inability to carry the heavy loads for such a long time without adequate rest or food. Villagers who cannot keep up due to exhaustion or illness are often beaten and left behind on the trail, where they sometimes die.

"Some villagers say, 'We can't carry our loads. When we climb the mountains, they tell us to walk very quickly. They drive us to go. We don't have enough rice to eat. They don't feed us enough.' The SPDC said, 'You are industrious when the Kaw Thoo Lei [KNLA] ask you to do work but if we ask you anything, you are lazy. You eat a lot. You can't carry your loads.' Then when the people complain to them, they kick them and step on them." - "Pi San Nweh" (F, 53), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #193, 6/00)

"If the SPDC hurts them we don't usually see it, but the villagers come back to us and tell us. Some people weren't able to carry but they had to continue anyway. Some had so much pain in their bodies or their backs or shoulders. I have to ask them to go, but when they come back and tell me that they can't bear it, I don't dare to ask them to go. But I have to ask." - "Saw Than Htoo" (M, 51), village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #190, 5/00)

"There were 2 soldiers behind every porter. All of us had to carry the same things, like bullets, shells, cookpots, and their clothing and blankets. Everyone was exhausted because of the heavy loads. But you have to carry it or they beat and kick you. Pa K— [one of the porters] was sick and wanted to switch the load to his other shoulder but he couldn't, so he asked a soldier to help him for a moment and they punched him in the back." - "Maung Htun Shwe" (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #124, 9/99)

"At first I thought I wouldn't try to escape, but the soldiers treated us very badly. On the way they beat, punched and shouted at us. Sometimes they fed us when they ate, but sometimes they didn't."

They forced us to work, and even when we gathered firewood for them they weren't satisfied. They told us that we're too stupid to understand, and that we're old. Sometimes they punched us with their fists." - "U Nyunt Shwe" (M, 51), escaped porter from K— village, Pegu Division (Interview #231, 9/99)

The treatment of porters depends very much on the commander of the unit the porters are attached to. More humane commanders may look after the porters by giving them food and not physically abusing the porters, but most simply don't care what happens to the porters as long as loads are delivered at the right place at the right time. Food is sometimes given to the porters but usually the villagers must bring their own. Porters are commonly told they will only be gone for one or two days, but it lasts for much longer and the two or three day supply of rice they brought with them soon runs

out. One villager who portered for the Army told KHRG that when the soldiers ran out of their own rice they took it from the porters. Other Army units demand rice from the villages and then give it to the porters. When the porters are fed it is usually not much and of poor quality. Porters sometimes have to resort to begging for food from the villages they pass through along the way. The water given is also dirty and porters are not usually allowed to stop at streams along the way. Porters are only given rests when the soldiers want to rest. Stopping along the way to take a rest usually results in a porter being shouted at and beaten. At night the porters are allowed to sleep, although they are usually kept in one place and guarded to make sure they do not try to escape.

"They force us to carry their loads. We have to go and carry their loads but they don't give us any rice to eat. When the SPDC have no more rice, what do they do? They take it from the porters. The porters get no rice to eat and have to suffer

and go hungry. They have to go and get food from villagers' houses." - "Naw Eh Kri Mu" (F, 34), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #196, 6/00)

"They also demand rice. The chairperson collects it. We have to give one bowl [1.56 kg / 3.4 lb], two bowls [3.12 kg / 6.8 lb], 4 milk tins [781 grams / 1.7 lb] or 5 milk tins [975 grams / 2.2 lb] of rice. The SPDC demands it. It is the porters' rice [the rice the soldiers will give to the porters]. They

don't pay us money [to porter]. They give five bowls of rice to each porter. Each of the houses has to give rice. They only demand rice, nothing else." - "Saw Lah Thaw" (M, 42), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #158, 2/01)

"They didn't feed us good food. It looked like the food people feed puppies, piglets, calves and small buffaloes. They fed us twice each day but it

was not enough. They gave us their food, but it wasn't the same food as the soldiers. We didn't need to bring it from our house each time. In the past we had to bring our own. The water wasn't clean. It was very dirty and we could catch diseases." - "Saw Ra Doh", (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #199, 6/00)

"They could take a rest when it was time to eat. You can't take a rest when you want. If you take a rest when you want, the soldiers scold and shout. The older people are kicked, beaten and punched, but the children are scolded and shouted at." - "Saw Maung Sein" (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

"They didn't give us water, and you can't ask to drink the water in their canteens. We couldn't carry our own water because we had to carry all of their things, and the loads were so big that we had no space to carry anything for ourselves. I

<p><u>Stamp:</u></p> <p>#xxx Light Infantry Battalion Battalion Office</p>		<p>#xxx Light Infantry Battalion xxxx [town] Letter No: 2001 / x / Yay x Date: Year 2001, May 2nd</p>
<p>To:</p> <p>Chairpersons xxxx Village Tract - xxxx Village, xxxx Village</p>		
<p>Subject: : <u>Informing [you] to arrange (2) bullock cart porters</u></p>		
<p>For the use of #xxx Light Infantry Battalion for administrative matters, [we] need two bullock carts for every day 1 day, so start arranging and sending (2) bullock cart porters from the Elder's village tract to the Battalion on (4-5-2001) to arrive at (0500) hours, you are informed.</p>		
<p style="text-align: right;">[Sd.] (for) Battalion Commander</p>		

A translation of an order sent to a village in Nyaunglebin District. The order was typed with blanks left which have been filled in by hand shown in italics. The term used for porters is 'kyaw'; literally, the phrase is 'bullock cart porters', really meaning bullock carts, teams and drivers for forced labour.

only had the clothes I was wearing, and it was wet all day and night and insects bit me all the time. ... The loads were very heavy and we lost our strength, so some got sick. When I came back I could not walk." - "Maung Htun Shwe" (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #124, 9/99)

"They fed us a little rice. The whole day they fed us only one time. It was not enough and I got only a little to eat. I couldn't carry the load but I couldn't stop. When we have to go in an emergency like this [when the soldiers just show up in the village and demand porters rather than requesting them in a written order] we don't bring food. When we have to go and sleep on the way for two or three nights, we bring and carry our own food. For one day we don't bring it." - "Aung Myint Win" (M, 40), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #200, 6/00)

The loads which the porters are forced to carry vary, but can include rations for the soldiers, cookpots, medicine, and ammunition, such as bullets and mortar rounds. The weight of the loads is usually between 16 and 35 kilograms (35-80 pounds). The soldiers often add rice, fruit, vegetables, chickens, clothing, utensils, or whatever else they loot from villages along the way to the loads. When soldiers get tired of carrying their own personal backpacks they often add them to a porter's already heavy load, or change into sandals and make a porter carry their boots. This makes it easier for the soldiers to keep going without a rest, and the porters can only rest when the soldiers want to. The baskets that the porters' loads are carried in are made of bamboo or cane and usually have shoulder straps made of shaved bamboo or rough burlap. Many villagers arrive back with painful bruises, abrasions and festering open wounds from where the straps have rubbed their shoulders raw or the bottom of their baskets have rubbed against their lower backs.

"Sometimes I've had to carry ammunition and other times rice and food and also medicine. Sometimes it is the soldiers' belongings, but occasionally they also take belongings from the villagers and put it together with their own. The weight varies. Sometimes they force you to carry a load and you aren't able to carry it or even hold it up. When I carried, it was over 20 viss [32 kg / 70 lb]. They demand workers from the village head. Sometimes they come themselves and demand them from the village head, and other times they write a letter to the village head. We had to go for up to 10 days." - "Saw Shwe" (M, 36) villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #191, 5/00)

"The children who are 13 years old are forced to carry one big tin of rice [12.5 kg / 27.6 lb] and they cried. Some older people who went also

helped and shared the load with them. If they hadn't done that the children couldn't have carried it." - "Saw Maung Sein" (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

"They forced me to carry #7 shells [rocket-propelled grenades for the RPG 7 launcher]. Each person had to carry eight rounds, rice pots, food and everything else they had put in. We couldn't carry it but we had to. It was 20 or 30 viss [32-48 kg/ 72-108 lb; more likely the lower figure] which we had to carry." - "Htaw Say" (M, 43), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #210, 2/01)

"They were sick when they came back, but it was not caused by beatings. It was because of carrying heavy loads and being tired. When they went, they couldn't sleep well. And they couldn't get enough food or quality food. They had to carry about 20 viss [32 kg / 70 lb] or more. The baskets are not small and they are full. When the soldiers saw pumpkins, they added them to the loads. They also climbed to get the villagers' coconuts and put them inside the baskets. When they saw the villagers' rice, they took it and put it into the baskets and had it carried. The porters also carried bullets. They each even had to carry one of the soldiers' bags. The porters had to carry the soldiers' big backpacks and the soldiers walked with only their guns." - "Naw Eh Kri Mu" (F, 34), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #196, 6/00)

Although the loads are heavy, villagers are usually berated, kicked or beaten if they cannot carry them and keep up. Illness, exhaustion brought on from carrying the heavy loads without adequate food or rest, or the wounds created by the baskets themselves are not taken into account by the soldiers. The treatment of operations porters is often much worse than short-term porters, with beatings becoming more frequent as the journey gets longer and the porters get weaker. Army units are under orders to arrive at a certain place by a certain time, and low-ranking NCOs and Privates know that they will be beaten, given extra work or otherwise abused if they don't arrive on time. The officers shout at, berate and beat the soldiers under them for being too slow, and the soldiers pass on the same treatment to the porters for fear of being punished themselves. They are often encouraged in this by the Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO's) who want to please the officers by arriving on time. Conversely, any show of sympathy for the porters is seen as a sign of weakness or suspect loyalty.

"For example, you are the battalion commander and I am a soldier. You climb the mountain and carry nothing. For me, I have to carry my things and I have to control the wontan ['servants', i.e.

porters] also. The porters are carrying their loads and walking; mot, mot, mot, mot. I am also carrying my load and climbing; mot, mot, mot, mot. Then the battalion commander, who is carrying nothing, arrives before us. When we arrive later, he scolds us, swears at us and hits us. In the end, we don't want him to scold us, swear at us or hit us anymore, so we hit and pound the porters. This is why people do it. The main thing is that they [the officers] order us to do it so we have to do it." - "Tin Lwin" (M, 20), Lance Corporal who deserted in Nyaunglebin District in March 2001 (Interview #236, 8/01)

"Two villagers couldn't carry. The first one is H--. He is 48 years old. The second one is P—, 35 years old. They couldn't carry nor could they climb the mountain, they had difficulty breathing and were sweating. When they put down their

threw some people to the ground and pushed their heads with the butts of their guns. Sometimes people had trouble climbing mountains so the soldiers beat them, kicked them and injured their legs and then just left them there. Three or four porters were left along the way because they couldn't carry. I don't know what became of them. ... When I was tired and needed to rest they would say, 'Aren't you a man? Can't you carry? If not, we will beat your rear-end with our guns and sticks.' So I was afraid of getting beaten, and I continued to climb. Sometimes we climbed on all fours and my shoulders were so weak. If we saw water along the way, they would say, 'Don't drink, just go.'" - "Maung Zaw Oo" (M, 27), escaped porter from P— village, Pegu Division (Interview #230, 3/99)

Many villagers arrive back to their villages completely exhausted from their ordeal. Their shoulders and backs are cut and bruised from carrying the heavy baskets, and the lack of sleep and food leaves them weak and prone to illness. Porters who get sick are not usually given medicine by the soldiers but have to just continue on. The alternative is to be left behind to fend for themselves in the forest. One porter told KHRG that when the soldiers did give medicine to the porters with him, it was noted down, probably with the intention of demanding reimbursement from their village later. Some have been left behind to die when they become too sick or exhausted to carry their loads any longer. Some villagers



A trader from Pegu Division who was taken as a porter for SPDC soldiers in Papun District. The photo shows his emaciated condition and the wounds on his shoulders from carrying a heavy basket. [KHRG]

loads, the SPDC shot at their backs and bottoms. When they fell down, they [SPDC soldiers] forced them to stand up, grabbed their heads and slapped their faces. The porters had to suffer like this. When the SPDC returned to the village, they fined the villagers. They gathered the village elders and fined the village 20 viss [32 kg / 72 lb] of pork." - "Pati Htay Htoo" (M, 35), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #189, 5/00)

"We had some porters who couldn't continue to carry their loads because they were in extreme pain or exhausted. They [the Burmese soldiers]

have come back so exhausted and/or ill that they are unable to work for days afterward. One villager who was ill was beaten and left on the side of the trail. He made it back to his village but before he had fully recovered his turn came up to porter again. He told KHRG that he hadn't yet decided whether to go as ordered or to flee the village.

"Sometimes I saw them kick and step on porters if they couldn't climb with the baskets. They pulled them and grabbed at their heads - people from our village. One man died when he went to porter and contracted a disease. He came back

and died at home - Thay Nyoh Pa was 50 years old. But the villagers still have to porter. We are not free." - "Saw Shwe" (M, 36) villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #191, 5/00)

"They released us when they arrived at their place. No one fled. We could come back but we had to be afraid of their friends [soldiers from other units] on the way back. I can't say what would have happened if we had met them [they may have been taken as porters again or accused of being KNLA because they were walking in the jungle far from their village]. When we arrived back at the village one of my friends couldn't walk. It was because he'd had to porter. His friends who portered with him in the same group helped him. If they hadn't helped him he couldn't have done it. Now he is home and looking for the bark of trees and bamboo [to make traditional herbal medicines]. Everyone came back but they were very tired." - "Aung Myint Win" (M, 40), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #200, 6/00)

"I saw some people get sick. I don't know if the soldiers looked after them or not. There were some people who couldn't walk anymore and they fell down in pain. The soldiers didn't give them medicine. They order the porters to work the whole day and don't give them any food to eat." - "Aung Baw" (M, 50) villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #148, 10/00)

"[T]hey didn't release us. Even if they gave us medicine, they wrote it down. Po H— from B— came back sick. He hasn't recovered yet. He can't get any medicine." - "Saw Shwe" (M, 36) villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #191, 5/00)

"When the SPDC arrived in M— they called him and forced him to carry a load. He had to climb the mountains so he began coughing again and had no energy. He fell down and became unconscious. The SPDC kicked him and slapped him and then he fell down again beside the road. The SPDC threw stones at him. He didn't know how many times they threw stones at him because he was unconscious. When he became unconscious, the SPDC walked on and didn't give him any medicine. He slept there for a while and when he woke up he went back home. When he came home he went and found medicine in a shop and also drank spirit water [water which has been blessed by a monk and believed by the villagers to have healing properties]. He felt better after he bought the medicine, but he isn't fully healed yet. Tonight, on xxxx 2001, the people told him to go to M— to carry loads for the SPDC. He doesn't know if he will be able to go yet or not." - field report from KHRG field researcher (Field Report #22, 5/01)

Porters are usually forced to walk at intervals between a few soldiers while on the paths. One reason for this is to make sure the porters do not try to flee. Porters are often shot at if they try to run away. One villager heard a Sergeant tell one of his soldiers to be sure to chamber a bullet so he would be able to shoot a porter whom he suspected was about to flee. Another reason for placing the porters between soldiers is that the soldiers hope the KNLA will not ambush them if they see that they may hit the porters. Porters are sometimes forced to walk in front of the soldiers to act as human minesweepers. Porters have died and lost legs from landmines intended for the SPDC soldiers. Some areas are so heavily landmined or booby-trapped that there is nowhere to run during ambushes as the side of the trails could be mined or booby-trapped. The porters are caught in the middle and some have been cut down in the crossfire of ambushes. Wounded porters have been left behind by the soldiers, but sometimes they are given treatment by the medics and some have even been sent to hospitals where at least part of their costs were covered.

"They guarded us. They guarded us so we couldn't run away. Mostly they were soldiers [privates] but their sergeants or officers directed them." - "Saw Peh Yah" (M, 30), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #211, 3/01)

"I have one friend who wanted to flee. ... They [SPDC] knew that this person might possibly flee so the Burmese SPDC told him, 'If you go to take a shit, you have to do it in front of me.' A Sergeant who has three chevrons said, 'Chamber a bullet. If he flees, shoot him dead.' ... We got sesame oil cake to eat because when they [SPDC] got beans as rations they sold them. That is why when they don't have enough to eat, they demand food from the village heads. So if they demand sesame oil that is what we eat, and if they get pork, then we eat pork. ... They don't give us payment. I don't know. They give it by air [in words only]. If they gave 100 Kyat to us, we would porter for more than three days. We would carry and show them the way. How much do they have to carry? But they don't give us anything, so we agreed with each other and the village head that we would carry and change workers every three days. If they gave us 100 Kyat per month, we would carry for them. We would even wash their new clothes." - "Kyaw Po" (M, 45), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #192, 6/00)

"The soldiers went group by group. There were two companies of soldiers. There were about 20 soldiers in each company so there were almost 50 soldiers in the two companies. Each group controlled their own porters. They kept one soldier between three or four porters." - "Aung Myint Win" (M, 40), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #200, 6/00)

“We met some people who had set off a landmine. They [the Burmese] forced porters to go ahead of them in case there were landmines. Even when they ordered us to go into the forest to get bamboo we had to do it [despite knowing that most of the mines are just off the pathways in the forest].” - “Maung Htun Shwe” (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #124, 9/99)

“When my villagers went to porter a battle occurred between T--- and L--- and one of my villagers was injured. The people called him H—. He is 36 years old. He wasn’t injured from a landmine. He was injured in the fighting by a piece of shrapnel from a big shell. We also don’t know whether it was from the SPDC or the KNU. His right eye is blind. He was still alive and went to get treatment at the Mingaladon Military Hospital [in Rangoon].” - “Mya Aung” (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00)

“[S]ome people died because they forced them to go and they stepped on landmines. After they died their wives and children couldn’t work and had nothing to eat. ... U N---. He was 35 years old. He was the Burmese village head [SPDC-appointed village chairman] for K---, and he said that he dared not go. He asked his villagers to go and they told him, ‘We dare not go.’ But the Burmese told him that the village head has to go if his villagers dare not do it, so he went and then stepped on a landmine and died.” - “Saw Doh” (M, 30), refugee from K--- village, Bu Tho township (Interview #218, 4/00)

Villagers occasionally flee from short-term portering, but the units that take them are locally based and usually demand immediate replacement porters from the same village, or that the person who fled be sent back for another full shift as punishment. They also come back to the villages and demand fines because the villagers ran away. The villager is usually fined for the amount in ‘porter fees’ which would be the normal bribe to avoid the number of days of portering which he missed; for example, if a porter doing a 5-day shift flees after 2 days and the normal bribe to avoid forced labour is 500 Kyat per day, then he will have to pay 1,500 Kyat to the soldiers when they come. Demands for chicken or pork are also sometimes tacked on to the monetary fine. Sometimes the entire fine is paid in chicken or pork. Fines must be paid on the spot when the soldiers come. If the fine isn’t paid, the person who fled may have his house burned down by the soldiers or be taken away for more forced labour. Soldiers have also threatened to shoot villagers who flee if they see them again. Villagers fleeing from long-term portering are shot at if they try to flee, and some who have been recaptured have even been executed by the soldiers as a deterrent to prevent the other porters from fleeing.

“For example, if they had to go for five days but before the five days they fled back. If there were two days remaining to work, the soldiers counted it as how much per day. If one day was 500 Kyat, then two days is 1,000 Kyat. You must send the money to them [the soldiers]. If they ask for 1,000 Kyat and 2 viss [3.2 kg / 7.2 lb] of pork, you must send the 2 viss of pork also.” - “Saw Maung Sein” (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

“When the people fled they were fined. For a person who fled for three days, they would demand three viss [4.8 kg / 10.5 lb] of chicken. One viss of chicken is worth 700 Kyat. One viss per day. If they didn’t receive a replacement porter, they would come to the village to fine us or to burn down his house [the house of the person who fled]. ... They also fine us if they demand porters and one person flees. If the person flees after one day of work, they will fine us for 10 days. We can’t send replacement porters - we have to send money for 10 days. I can’t do everything for the village and if they come I will not suffer it - I will flee. I can’t suffer it so I will try to avoid them.” - “Saw Than Htoo” (M, 51), village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #190, 5/00)

“One of my friends named Ko T— is staying with his in-laws. He went to porter for the Burmese. They said that it was ‘loh ah pay’ but he had to carry a log measuring about four handspans [91 cm or 36 inches] around and 12 cubits [5.5 m or 18 ft] long. They forced him to carry it for one or two days. He couldn’t do it anymore so he fled. After he fled, the SPDC said, ‘If we see M—, enough [he will be killed].’ We don’t know what they are going to do with him. He doesn’t dare encounter them. He came back to call his wife secretly and ran to stay in the jungle.” - “Saw Maw Ray Heh” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from M— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #151, 11/00)

There are not enough people in the area to supply the Army’s needs for porters, so it is also using other means to fill its requirements. Itinerant workers from central Burma are hired by the Township Peace and Development Councils to go as operations porters with the Army’s mobile columns. The money to hire these porters is demanded as a ‘tax’ from the villagers in the township. Villagers have told KHRG that if they do not pay they will have to go themselves. KHRG has also interviewed civilians from central Burma who have been forced to porter for SPDC units in Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts after being approached and offered work by labour agents, then sold to the Army and taken to the hills without pay. Another way the Army gets enough porters is to surround teashops or cinemas, douse the lights and put all the men on trucks to be sent to the Army’s

frontline units. Porters who have been taken by the Army in this way have come from as far away as Rangoon and the Irrawaddy Delta.

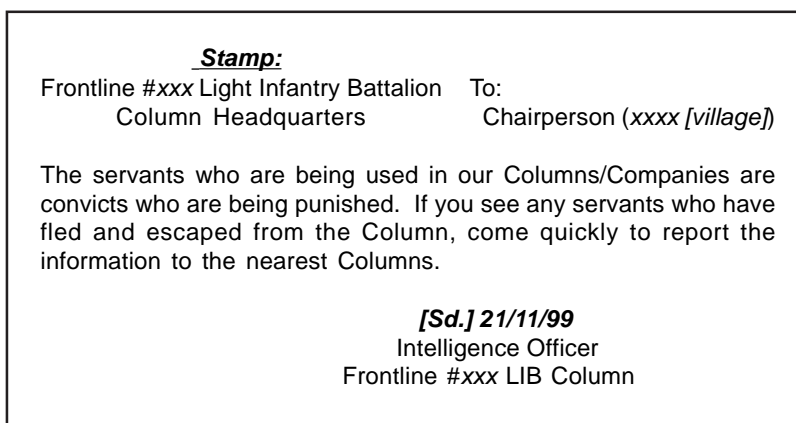
"I took the train from Rangoon to Toungoo, and when I got off the train, I met a porter broker [someone who provides forced porters to the authorities for a price]. His name was Kyaw Tint and he was about 35 years old. He'd lost one of his legs and said he had resigned from the military. He asked me, 'Young brother, where are you going?' I said, 'I am looking for a job.' He asked me, 'What skills do you have?' I said, 'I can do anything'. He asked me, 'Will you come to work in a brokers' sales center? You will get 300 Kyat per day, plus food. What do you think?' I said, 'If I can make 300 Kyat per day plus food, I will follow you.' ... He took me to Nyaunglebin. When I got to Nyaunglebin, Zayat Kyi, he didn't send me to a brokers' sales center. He sent me to the Zayat Kyi police station. When I arrived in the police station there were many people, the same as me. The porter broker sold us for 4,500 Kyat each. The police gave money to the porter broker, and then he gave money to us - 1,000 Kyat each. He said it was 'part payment in advance.' I spent one night in the police station. When the total reached 15 people, they sent us in a group by truck. ... While we were staying there, we had to porter, dig trenches, cut bamboo and forage for food. They told us, 'You won't need to stay here much longer. We'll rotate out after 15 days.' But we stayed there longer than 15 days. After 20 days, I heard the soldiers talking to each other and saying that they were going to be there for 3 months. None of the porters could suffer that. ... Many porters had fled, some along the path and some after we'd arrived at the camp. If they recaptured them, they punished them. The soldiers threatened us, they said, 'If you run to escape, you will find that we have laid landmines and punji-sticks [sharpened bamboo spikes concealed in shallow holes to mangle and infect the foot and lower leg of anyone who steps on them] around the camp. Even if you make it to the path, you will be killed by the Nga Pway [derogatory slang for KNLA].'" - "Ko San Aung" (M, 19), escaped porter from H— town, Rangoon Division (Interview #232, 9/99)

"I went to visit my Aunt in Pyu [central Pegu Division, west of the Sittaung River]. When I got off the train, the soldiers asked for my nationality card [National Identity Card, which he didn't have] and then arrested me. They arrested 3 others together with me. ... The soldiers arrested us and asked us if we would join the Army. We said we wouldn't join. Then they sent us to the porter broker's house. ... Yes, they took me. They even take people who are 10 years old to be soldiers." - "Ko Zaw Thein" (M, 15), escaped porter from P— village, Pegu Division (Interview #233, 9/99)

The SPDC has used prison convicts as porters for military operations for many years. The use of convict labour by the SPDC has increased rapidly in the past 2 to 3 years because the Army is steadily expanding and needs more and more porters with each passing month to keep it supplied. The villagers can no longer

meet the demand in many areas, particularly hill areas of Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts where most people have fled their villages. Another reason for the growing use of convict porters is that the SPDC is under heavy international pressure to end forced labour, and convict labour is

looked upon more favourably than civilian forced labour, in both human rights circles and the ILO Forced Labour convention. This has led to a disturbing new trend in which the SPDC seems to be arresting people solely to convict them and send them off to the Army as porters. Many people have been arrested on vague or trivial charges such as 'hiding in the dark' (a form of conspiracy charge which can be applied to anyone out at night, or even in broad daylight), possession of illegal lottery tickets or failure to pay their crop quotas, while others have been convicted on theft or drug charges despite the lack of any evidence whatsoever. The SPDC courts issue quick convictions and send the new convicts to prison, where they spend only a few days before being whisked off to the Army's convict porter camps and sent into the hills. More recently KHRG has encountered escaped 'convict porters' from several areas who did not even know they were convicts; they say they were grabbed by soldiers, forced to change clothes and sent to the hills. Some did not even realise the clothes they had been forced to change into were convict uniforms (white or blue shirt and sarong of very coarse cotton). This appears



A translation of an order sent to a village in Papun District.

to indicate that in order to cover its use of forced labour the SPDC is sending innocent civilians to the frontline as 'convicts' hoping that the international community will look the other way.

The treatment of convict porters is especially brutal. The loads which the convicts are forced to carry are often twice the weight of what a villager would have to carry. Many convicts have said that they needed assistance even standing up with the loads on their backs and that they were unable to stand upright. Convicts are beaten for not being able to carry the heavy loads, sometimes to death. They are often fed little more than rice and a thin broth made from beans. Medicine is almost never given to the convicts. Work doesn't stop for them when they reach an Army camp. They are expected to dig trenches, fetch water, fence the camp and do other work until they are taken out with the mobile columns once again. Despite being told in advance that they will be released or have their sentences reduced after portering for the Army for a few months, the convicts quickly realise that they will be worked to death unless they escape, even if this means being kept well beyond the end of their sentences. *[For more information see 'Convict Porters: The Brutal Abuse of Prisoners on Burma's Frontlines' (KHRG 2000-06, 20-12-2000)].*

"[W]e saw some prisoners [convicts from the prisons] who couldn't carry and were beaten. We saw them get beaten. The people who beat them were a Lance Corporal with one chevron and a Sergeant with three chevrons. They beat them as if they were cattle or buffaloes. They shouted and one of them said, 'Let them die.' That is why when we saw it we just passed by without looking at them. I asked some prisoners [why they were forced to porter] and they said they stole bread and sold it and also stole kerosene and sold it. That is why they were imprisoned and were forced to go up the mountain and porter." - "Kyaw Po" (M, 45), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #192, 6/00)

Labour on the Roads

"We have to cut and clear [the brush] around the car road, stand sentry, clear the landmines and fence the road. We also have to cut down teak trees. They don't give us any Kyat for that work, we have to cut the trees for free. Many villages have to send people to go and work for them for free. Tee Hsaw Meh, Tee Theh Lay, Poh Mine Hay, Tee Tha Blu Hta, Kyaw Law Day, Wah Tho Klah, Baw Tho Hta. Every village has to go. If they don't go, the villagers won't be able to stay in their village. If we don't go and work, they will come and oppress and beat us. We cannot suffer that so we just have to follow them and do what they say." - "Pa Thu" (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #194, 6/00)

The SPDC has built, or is currently building, as many as four military access roads across the area during the last four years; a road from Ma La Daw in Mone township to Bu Sah Kee in Toungoo District, a road from Shwegyin to Ko Sghaw, a road from Papun to Kyauk Nyat on the Salween River and a road from Pwa Ghaw to Ler Mu Plaw. There are also rumours of plans to build one or more new roads (Ko Sghaw to Meh Way, Kyauk Kyi to Pa Saung in Karenni State and Ler Mu Plaw to Bu Sah Kee) and upgrade some of the existing roads (the Bilin to Papun road). Many of the newer roads have been built without civilian forced labour. This is partly because the SPDC wants the roads built quickly to gain control of the region, but also because all the villagers have fled along the routes of the new roads. The exceptions are the roads from Ma La Daw in northern Nyaunglebin District up to Bu Sah Kee village in southeastern Toungoo District, and the road from Papun up to Kyauk Nyat in Papun District. Both of these have been partially built by villager labour. People as old as 60 and children as young as 14 are reportedly working on the Bu Sah Kee road. If the road from Bilin to Papun is upgraded then it will likely involve the use of villager forced labour from the relocation sites along the route.

"[T]hey are building a car road from Kyauk Kyi Kaw to Saw Thay Der. They started forcing us to do it on the 10th of April [1999]. They have forced Burman and Mon villagers from other villages, and Karen villagers who stay around S--- and L---. They are forcing old people and women. They don't consider the elderly as being too old. They use people who are 50 or 60 years old as their slaves, and the children who are 14 or 15 all have to work as well. They said that they are building the road for development and strength. They say that the aim of building the road is for civilian use, but it is not useful for civilians. It will only benefit their own people." - "Pu Taw Lah" (M, 68), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #27, 7/99)

“They are building a car road up from Shwegyin and Ko Sghaw. They started to build it in Shwegyin, and it comes up from there. They started it months ago, when the rain had finished. Right now the road already reaches Ko Sghaw, and they will continue it to Meh Way. The Burmese said themselves that they would, so it might be true. They said they would do it quickly because their trucks must be able to use it within 2 months. So far they’ve used bulldozers but they’ve also forced civilians to work on it. They were only using two bulldozers. They can now use the road in the dry season, but they have no hope of using it in the rainy season.” - “Pu Taw Lay” (M, 56), internally displaced villager from M— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #80, 3/00)

None of the roads in the area are all-weather roads and must be repaired after every rainy season, usually by civilian labour. To repair the road from Papun to Ka Ma Maung, the villagers have been ordered to dig pits to get stones which they must then use to fill the potholes. Each village along the road has been given a stretch of the road which it must repair. The villagers have also been ordered to dig drainage ditches along the side of the road and to fence its entire 100-kilometre length on both sides. The Na Than Gwin-Mone car road must also be repaired after every rainy season. In 2000 parts of it were destroyed when the Sittaung River flooded. Villagers had to dig dirt and carry it by bullock cart to rebuild the areas which were washed away. During work on the road when it was first built in 1999, a villager estimated that at least 10,000 villagers had been assembled to work on sections of the road to get it finished within a week. The villagers were told by soldiers who walked around with sticks that they didn’t care about anything as long as the road was finished on time. The roads which the villagers spend so much time and energy working on are almost exclusively used by the Army and the DKBA.

A villager from Dweh Loh township told KHRG that at one point when he was working on the Ka Ma Maung-Papun road the soldiers guarding them ordered the villagers to move back a fair distance from the road. The soldiers then took the villagers’ machetes and mattocks and began working on the road while other soldiers took photographs. After taking the photos, the soldiers stopped working and took up their places again while the villagers went back to work. Villagers from other regions have reported similar incidents. The SPDC has been trying to claim lately that the Burmese Army is actively helping the villagers and that together they are developing the country. This puts some doubt into the veracity of those claims and any photographic evidence which the SPDC produces to support it.

“All of the villages along the road have to go and work. The villages which have to go include: Tee Law Thay Hta, Tee Theh Lay, Hsa Law Dteh, Wah

Tho Klah, Tee Tha Blu Hta, Taw Meh Hta, Bpo Khay, Bpo Leh, Bler Per, Th’Waw Ko Law, Ta Ku Law, Noh Pa Doh, Ma Htaw, Ku Seik, Khaw Klah, and Tha Ma Kyu Law. The other villages also have to work. These are on the main road - it’s so hot near the road. Ma Htaw, Ku Seik, Nga Ain Su, Way Mone, Way Sah, Dta Ko Der, then to Papun. In the lower areas, K’Pee Kee, K’Dter Dtee, Noh Paw Tee, Pway Taw Ru, and Noh Lah. From the east, they demand people from Meh Pu Hta, Meh Nyo Hta, Oo Thaw Hta, and Toh Mu. They also have to work and can’t take a rest. They have to porter, sentry and everything.” - “Saw Shwe” (M, 36) villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #191, 5/00)

“They order people to put the little stones in the road [gravel for filling in holes in the road]. When the rains come all the stones are gone [they wash away]. Then they order us to dig again. They order the porters who bring things to dig [for the gravel]. The soldiers will force them until they die.” - “Aung Baw” (M, 50) villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #148, 10/00)

“They force us to dig rocks. Four and a half holes by each family. The holes are ten feet wide around and one foot deep. No one can not give rocks to them. They are waiting and watching at the end of the month [to see who has fulfilled their quota]. For one hole it takes two men working for three days. We have to show the soldiers when they come to see. The problems we have are that it is difficult to get rocks and we have to break the rocks. We just burn and work like that. Everybody is working like that. ... They said they will try to finish the car road during the hot season [March-May 2001] so they ordered the villagers in L— to give them rocks this month [December 2000]. I don’t know about the other villages. The villagers said that they can make a car road but just a few people can use it. The road belongs to the Army camp. It doesn’t belong to us.” - “Mya Sein” (M, 21), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #209, 12/00)

“Q: Have they ordered the villagers to work on the car road?

A: They have ordered that a lot lately. The villagers can’t rest. They force the villagers to pick stones [to fill holes], cut the brush along the road and to dig ditches beside the car road. ... When they force us to work in the daytime, the soldiers go along the road. If they see people taking a rest, they say, ‘Hey, Maung Kyaw [uncle], work quickly. What are you doing?’ It is like this every time. We start working in the morning and take a rest at 12 p.m. for one hour and come back home to eat. [Infantry Battalion] #38 does this.” - “Htaw Say” (M, 43), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #210, 2/01)

"It is a car road. The people start [cutting] in one place and where they stop another village starts again [each village has a set stretch of the road which they must clear]. People who stay in one place have to clear that place and the villagers who stay in another place have to clear that place. ... The enemy will repair the road and they demand that the people carry stones. They [the villagers] lay the stones on the road. One house has to carry stones from three holes. We got the information that the soldiers demanded three holes from each village. The hole must be 10 feet around and 3 feet deep and the villagers must dig three. The soldiers said they would give a prize but the villagers haven't seen a prize. They didn't give a prize. Lately the soldiers have started to demand this from every village. It was last January [2001] that they began demanding this. ... Almost all the villages must go. Starting from Papun they are the villages along the road; Papun Meh T'Ru, Ta Gone Tine, Way Maw, Way San and Ku Seik until the road ends.

On the mountain side of the road the villagers also have to work. They are Noh Law Hsu, Tee Ber Ka Hta, Day Law Pu, Klaw Day, T'Rih Per Koh, and Baw Hta. They ordered the villagers to carry stones. The villagers must carry the stone and fill the holes to repair the road. Lately we haven't received any news, but we think they must still be building it. The soldiers said that the

villagers should build it. At the moment I think that they can't build it because the situation is that the people can't get enough stone." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

"We stay close to the [Na Than Gwin-Mone] car road now. Before we stayed very far from the car road, but then they ordered us to move to the west side of the car road. We had to rebuild that road last year in 1999, and we had to finish the whole road within a week. We had to work in the hot season, and both humans and animals were sick

and suffering. People had to work with bullock carts to dig up and carry the dirt. We divided into groups to work on different parts because they forced us to finish it in a week. We were afraid, so we worked both day and night to finish it and we were very exhausted because it is a very big car road. ... The village headman told us that if all of us didn't work on it together we would be late [for the one-week deadline], and this time we couldn't be late. So every family that had people who could work had to all go and work together. The Burmese wanted only the mother of each family to stay home to cook and look after the small children. If a family had 3 or 4 people, then 2 or 3 people went. Every villager who could work had to go, and a lot of people got sick because it was very cold at night and very hot during the day. They divided the road into sections for each village to finish within the same week. They didn't pay us, and we had to take our own food, cookpots and baskets. We had to sleep there among the

bushes. They guarded us sometimes, but they knew that our Karen people [KNLA] couldn't come to help us, so they did whatever they liked and only guarded us when they felt like it. There must have been ten thousand villagers there, and only 2 or 3 of them to guard us. We didn't dare go near them. In the daytime they went around with a stick and were very fierce to us. They said they didn't

care about anything as long as the road was finished on time." - "Saw Daniel" (M, 43), refugee from G--- village, Mone township (Interview #8, 2/00)

"Then just one or two days ago they started forcing us to cut and clear along the road and to fix any parts of the road that aren't good. Wherever there were potholes, we had to dig earth and fill the hole with stones and dirt. They didn't give us anything, it is just free labour. After we'd finished the work, they came in trucks and said they would take photos of the workers. Then the soldiers who were there standing sentry came and told the

Stamp: Frontline #xxx Infantry Battalion Column #x Headquarters		Frontline #xxx Infantry Battalion xxxx Town Letter No: xxx / 2000 / Oo x Date: Year 2000, November 2 nd
To:	Chairperson <u>xxxx</u> village	
Subject:	<u>To quickly repair the car road</u>	
Regarding the above matter, the Elders from each Village Tract have to take responsibility to eliminate potholes along part of the vehicle road. [You] Must carry stones from the (left/right) sides of the road and fill them, and there must be no water [puddles] left on the road. [You] Must carry this out and finish tomorrow evening, you are informed.		
<p style="text-align: right;">[Sd.] (for) Battalion Commander Frontline #xxx Infantry Battalion</p>		

A translation of a typed and carbon copied order sent to villages in Nyaunglebin District with the name of the village written in by hand.

villagers to go a fair distance away, and they took our machetes and mattocks and cut the scrub while the others took photos. It was as if it were them working on the road. They forced us to go well out of the way, so it would look like it wasn't villagers who were doing the work. ... Then after taking the photos they stopped doing it, and the villagers had to come back and take their places and continue working." - "Saw K'Paw Sghee" (M, 40+), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #166, 6/99)

Villages are also forced to build fences along both sides of roads used by the Army, and receive regular orders to cut and clear all scrub within 20 to 100 metres of both sides of the roads. This is to make it difficult for resistance forces to cross the road or landmine it, and also to provide a clear field of fire in case the SPDC convoys are ambushed. Each village along the roads is given a section of the road which they must clear and fence. The villages along the Papun-Ka Ma Maung car road are required to send people to cut the bush away from the sides of the road to a distance of 20 to 30 metres (50 to 100 feet) on both sides. The villages along the lesser-used Bilin-Papun road are also required to cut the brush along that road. Villagers must bring their own tools and food and are sometimes forced to sleep one or two nights at the work site if their village is far from the road. If the work is not to the satisfaction of the soldiers, the villagers are accused of helping the KNU and are forced to cut it again. In some areas one or more of the SPDC, KNLA and DKBA have planted landmines on or around the roads, and some villagers have been wounded or killed by these while doing forced labour.

"I have to arrange people in eight groups, each group responsible for one furlong [200 metres / 220 yards] of road. The SPDC soldiers guard them as they work. Each furlong must be swept, the area around the road must be cut and weeded and the stones must be picked up. They don't give us payment for this work and we have to carry our own rice. If we don't take our own rations we have to suffer from hunger and thirst. If we come back to get more rice, they [SPDC] take action as if we were keeping contact with Kaw Thoo Lei. That is why we can't do it. One village head has to go to them every day and take care of them and send food. The road goes from Ka Ma Maung to Papun. The SPDC use it to send rations, so they force the villagers to provide security." - "Pati Htay Htoo" (M, 35), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #189, 5/00)

"Villagers also had to cut and clear [foliage] to make a car road. The car road comes from Bilin and each village has to cut one 'der' [mile] of road." - "Saw Tee Maung" (M, xx), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #133, 5/00); talking about work along the Bilin-Papun car road.

"They have to sleep there for one night and the next morning they have to go and cut it again. We used to cut the brush away from the road for 50 feet, but now we have to cut 100 feet. We have to cut it well. If we don't cut it well, we have to cut it twice. That is why I told the villagers, 'Go. We can't do anything. Cut it well or later you will have to go again. You have work in your fields to do now, so if you have to go two times, you won't

We Have to Go Because We are Afraid of Them

"They force us to go and cut the scrub along the road and then build a fence of bamboo and install it along the main road. They wanted both sides fenced - the east and the west sides. They think that the Kaw Thoo Lei [slang for the KNLA] can't come and make trouble like planting landmines if there is a fence. That is why they force us to fence it for them. Only the men were going, but sometimes they were not enough so the women had to go too. Some women went who had small children. They sometimes even asked their daughters to go and work. Then after our shift, we change. We have to go because we are afraid of them. They have weapons. We have to go whether we are free to go or not. That is why they call it 'loh ah pay' - we always have to go for free. We have to go even if we aren't able to do our own work because of it. We have to work more on their jobs than ours. ... They don't give us the tools. We have to bring our own things. If we need a knife or a mattock, we have to provide them ourselves. They don't give food to us either. We have to bring our own food. We carried sesame oil cakes and rice for three days. We had to sleep there for three days. There were no good places to sleep. We slept at the side of the main road, on the ground. ... They come to patrol and check up on us sometimes at night. They force us to fence the road and if there are any problems they will ask the villagers to pay for it. Moreover, they will accuse us of being spies of the KNU. That is why we don't have an easy life. That is why we survive as we can, in fear." - "Kyaw Po" (M, 45), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #192, 6/00)

be able to do your own work.’ ... They give nothing to the villagers. We have to take our own knives and axes and even food. They don’t give us anything.” - “Mya Aung” (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00)

“We had to be afraid because when we worked and cleared the car road, sometimes we dared not do it too quickly. We had to work slowly. There are landmines and we are frightened. Some people didn’t know about this and they stepped on landmines and lost hands or legs. So some people dare not go and they pay money. If it is really ‘loh ah pay’, they demand 500 Kyat per day.” - “Saw Tha Htwe” (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #206, 9/00)

The most dangerous work on the road involves sweeping it for landmines before Army convoys come up with the rations for the soldiers. Villagers are ordered to literally sweep the roads to uncover any mines which may have been laid on them. The villagers are also at risk of stepping on one of these mines. Another method the SPDC uses is to demand bullock carts and force the villagers to load them up with cut wood or a log and then drive them up and down the road multiple times. The idea is that if there is a landmine, the weight of the bullock cart will set it off, possibly killing both the bullocks and the driver. One villager told KHRG that he had heard of villagers being required to pull the cart themselves. This is supposed to accomplish two purposes: clearing the road of mines, and ‘punishing’ the villagers for allowing the KNLA to operate in their area. The villagers are ordered

to do this whenever an Army supply convoy is due to come up the road.

“The SPDC demanded a bullock cart when they were sending rations by truck. They asked for one bullock cart each from P---, T--- and K--- villages. These carts had to go to Taung Thon Lon [the SPDC Army camp], get loaded up with cut wood and then were driven along the car road. If a landmine exploded, it would damage the bullock cart rather than one of their trucks.” - “Pati Htay Htoo” (M, 35), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #189, 5/00)

“In the morning we had to put a log on a bullock cart and drive the bullock cart up and down the car road 10 times. I heard that they forced the humans to pull the bullock cart, but not here. After that we had to sweep the road [to better see if any mines had been placed in the road]. If one tree leaf fell down, we had to pick it up. We had to sweep every morning and every evening.” - “Mya Aung” (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00)

“When they were going to come up [with a supply convoy], they demanded that we go to sweep and guard the road. Both men and women had to go for that. ... We had to go and sleep there for 3 days, and after that other people replaced us. They ordered us to sweep the road before the trucks came.” - “Saw Doh” (M, 30), refugee from K--- village, Bu Tho township (Interview #218, 4/00)

To:	<u>Stamp:</u>	
xxxx village	#xx Infantry Battalion	Date: 17-2-2001
Chairperson	#x Company	
Subject:	<u>The Strategic Operations Command Commander demands people to cut the bushes on the left/right sides of the road.</u>	
Chairperson, lead 50 people, each with their machetes, and come to report information to the 29 Miles / 6 Furlongs place [on the road] at 12 o'clock and 30 minutes in the afternoon [12:30 p.m.]. You are informed.		
[Sd.] aaaa Strategic Operations Command Group		

A translation of an order sent to a village in Papun District.

Sentry Duty Along the Roads

“The villagers have to always stand sentry. They can’t come back. They had to stand sentry when the trucks came up, for a month. There are 16 houses in my village including the widows and orphans. From these 16 houses the Burmese forced me to put sentries in eight huts along the road. Two people have to be sentries in each hut and 8 times 2 is 16 people. I didn’t have any villagers to rotate with, all the people had to go. If they wanted to come back and visit, they had to rotate with people from their own house.” - “Naw Say Paw” (F, 46), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #195, 6/00)

The roads are very important to the SPDC, both as arteries for the supply of its military units and as barriers to both the movement of villagers and the KNLA. To protect the roads and also to detect villagers or the KNLA trying to cross them, the SPDC has forced villages near the roads to build huts along the roads and to post villagers as sentries in those huts day and night. On the Ka Ma Maung-Papun car road for example, huts have been built every few hundred metres along its length. The villagers who stand sentry have to bring their own rice, knives and anything else they might need. Each of the huts has a hollow piece of bamboo which the sentries must knock at certain times to sound the ‘all clear’ or to sound an alarm. Soldiers occasionally patrol the road and if they catch any

of the sentries asleep or do not hear the knocking of the bamboo at the specified time, the villagers are fined in money or chicken. However, the main punishments occur if anything happens along the road. Villages are fined as much as 500,000 Kyat if gunfire occurs near the road or if a vehicle is damaged or destroyed by a landmine or ambush on the road. Officers often threaten to burn and relocate villages or kill villagers if anything happens along their stretch of the road. Even reporting everything they see does

not save the villagers, because if anything happens they are still automatically charged with facilitating it. One village headwoman interviewed by KHRG said that she had been told that if the KNLA came, her villagers should attack them with their machetes. Responding to this ludicrous idea, she told the soldiers that if she or her villagers saw the KNLA they would run, because the KNLA has guns.

“They demand us to work as sentries all the time but we don’t always go. We pretend that we never heard the order. Once while the villagers were watching the road, the people [KNLA] fired one shot at the Burmese soldiers. They [SPDC] said it was because the villagers were working on the road and providing intelligence [to the KNLA]. On the night that this occurred, the SPDC soldiers interrogated and hurt one person with a knife. It was P— from B—. He is over 40 years old and married. He was very afraid and won’t dare to go again. They beat him on his back. Some people who are working as sentries get sick with fever and headaches but they continue until their number of days is done. After that they come

back and switch with others. But all the villagers have been sick.” - “Saw Than Htoo” (M, 51), village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #190, 5/00)

“ T h e y threatened us about our sentry work saying, “If the Kaw Thoo Lei people [KNU/KNLA] come and plant a landmine when you come to stand sentry along the road, you must tell me. Don’t sleep when you stand sentry at night. If

you sleep and the people come to plant landmines, and a landmine explodes, I will kill you.” We have to sweep the road. Sometimes we wake up at 4 a.m. and have to sweep the road.” - “Pi San Nweh” (F, 53), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #193, 6/00)

They also fine the villages 500,000 Kyat if there is gunfire on the road or if a landmine explodes and a car is damaged. All the villages which are close

Stamp:		5-1-2001
Frontline #x Infantry Battalion		
Column #x		
To:		
		Chairperson
		xxxx (yyyy Village)
Subject:	Calling for 3 sentry huts and 6 adult people from yyyy village	
<p>Regarding the above subject matter, build 3 sentry huts on the left and right sides of the vehicle road. Then 2 people for each sentry hut, 6 people <i>[altogether]</i>, must bring along rice and cookpots and stand sentry. The 6 people for the 3 sentry huts are to bring along clothing, blankets, and mosquito nets and come to arrive tomorrow on the 6th at (0900) hours, you are informed.</p>		
<p style="text-align: right;">[Sd.] (for) Column Commander Frontline IB #x</p>		

A translation of an order sent to a village in Papun District.

to the road are fined like this - we can't stay without paying them. A long time ago we had to pay when the KNU destroyed one of their [SPDC] cars. They blame any problems on the villagers who are posted in the sentry huts. The villagers guard the road in the night time - one hut per furlong [200 m / 220 yd]. Each sentry hut has one piece of hollow bamboo. If the sound from the bamboo is heard from Taung Thon Lon [the SPDC army camp], it is sounded by all the sentries along the road. The sentries cannot sleep. Two or three SPDC soldiers travel along the road and if they catch any villagers sleeping, they fine them money or chicken - one viss of chicken, worth 800 Kyat, per person." - "Pati Htay Htoo" (M, 35), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #189, 5/00)

"They [the soldiers] said the Nga Pway ['Ringworms'; derogatory slang used by the SPDC to refer to the KNU and KNLA] would come to spy and shoot at them and to plant landmines, so they force us to do sentry duty. They don't give us any guns, there is nothing with us. We have to bring our own rice and machetes. They said that if the Nga Pway come that we should cut them with our machetes. Do we dare to cut them? I told the soldiers that if I saw the people [the KNLA] come, I would run and follow the other villagers. I wouldn't cut them with a machete. I dare not cut them. They [the KNLA] have guns. We have machetes. We dare not cut them." - "Naw Say Paw" (F, 46), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #195, 6/00)

Set Tha and Labour at Army Camps

"What did they ask us to do?! They forced us to cut, dig, clean, guard, and fence the car road. And if they had loads to carry they forced us to carry them, and ordered us to do everything for them. We had to work on the car road. We had to cut bamboo and trees for them, and they ordered us to get leaves for their roofs. They demanded small trees for making their fences also. We could give them some, but we didn't have leaves so we had to buy them for them. And if we couldn't buy leaves they demanded money from us instead. For 100 [shingles of] leaves they demanded 1,000 Kyat. They made the roofs of their bunkers, offices, and maybe some [of the money] was sent to their families who live in town. Because I saw a lot of leaves kept in their office and underneath when a village head asked me to go [to their camp] with him, and we thought 'What are they going to do with those?'" - "Naw K'Paw" (F, 45), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #184, 4/00)

Village heads receive demands from the Army camps for the villagers to perform various types of forced labour at the Army camps. The villagers are ordered to repair the roofs of barracks, build new barracks, dig wells and cut the brush around the camp. All of the wood and bamboo used for the construction of Army barracks, bunkers and fences is cut for the soldiers by the villagers. The defensive works of the camps are also sometimes built by the villagers. Villagers have told KHRG about digging trenches and bunkers as well as fencing the camps and filling pits they have dug with punji stakes they were ordered to cut. One villager told KHRG how a person was injured while doing this work when he stepped on a landmine which the soldiers said they had already cleared. No compensation was given and the village head ended



Villagers from Klaw Maw village, Kyauk Kyi township take a break from building a sentry hut, which is half-constructed on the right.
[KHRG]

up having to take up a collection around the village to pay for the man's medicine. Villagers are also ordered to do more menial tasks such as collecting firewood, fetching water and doing the soldiers' laundry.

"We have to do things near our village at a place called Y— camp. We have to do 'loh ah pay', build their camp and fence their camp. Sometimes we have to dig trenches for them. After that they demand thatch and bamboo. Sometimes they call

work 'loh ah pay' and they tell us to go and dig trenches near the airport in Papun. They do agriculture there, sugar cane plantations. We have to go and bring our own food with us. They limit the shifts to one week for each one of us. But when we don't have time to go then we have to hire someone to go for us. This costs 500 Kyat per day." - "Saw Tha Htwe" (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #206, 9/00)

"They never gave payment for this work. They force us to do 'loh ah pay' when they need it. They are always looking for new work for us, things to repair. Do they need the roof of the hut repaired, or the well? If they do, they write a letter and order us to work. If they need thatch they demand thatch. If they need wood, we have to go and cut wood or bamboo. When they order it, we have to go and do it." - "Saw Tee Maung" (M, xx), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #133, 5/00)

"In the year 2000, the people went to work as messengers and cut around the Y— camp and one person was injured. He was hurt by a landmine. They [SPDC] said that they had already cleared that area and there would be no problems. Then the villagers were afraid of the soldiers and went to cut [the brush around the camp]. One villager went and stepped on a landmine. Even now, the conditions of his family are not going smoothly. His name is Pa T—. He has a wife and children. When the landmine exploded, he was

injured around his leg but it was not too bad. It became swollen. The area between his sole and his ankle swelled up and he couldn't work. ... When that villager got injured, the village heads

looked at him and pitied him because he was going to work as a messenger and it was for the benefit of the people. When he got injured the people in the village sent him to the hospital. When he went there, the SPDC said they didn't have enough medicine. So he had to buy it. He also had to buy

food and everything else. He was injured and couldn't do anything. It was a problem for him. The village head took pity on him. He [the injured villager] was working for the people so the village head collected money from the villagers and went to pay for the medical fees and other things that he needed. There was nothing from the enemy [SPDC]." - "Saw Tha Htwe" (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #206, 9/00)

Men, women, the elderly and children all go for this work. The work is usually easier than portering so many times the women and children do this work instead of the portering. It also allows the men time to work in their fields. The labour is performed in rotating shifts varying from one to ten days. Villagers are sometimes required to sleep at the camps during this period, and are not allowed to return home until their replacements arrive for the next shift. The number of villagers who go at any one time depends on the number requested and on the size of the village. The villagers must bring their own tools. Food is not provided so the villagers must bring their own. There is never any payment for the work.

"We don't have time to work because they are forcing us to go and do 'loh ah pay' and 'set tha'. The SPDC enters our village very often and demands ten or more people [each time]. We have only 40 or 50 villagers. Two or three of their units are demanding people from us and we can't do it [each unit demands about ten people so 20 to 30 or more people must go out of the 40 or 50

Date: 22-2-2001	
[To:]	xxxx Village VPDC U aaaa
Subject:	The matter of sending loh ah pay
Regarding the above subject, in accordance with the directive of the Frontline #xxx Sa Ka Ka Mu [Military Operations Commander], to repair xxxx [Army] Camp, the Elder's village is to deliver and hand over one loh ah pay person to xxxx Army Camp today at 2 o'clock. Do not fail. If [you] fail, it will be the Elder's responsibility.	
With food for 5 days.	
[Sd.] Stamp: Village Head xxxx Village (x) xxxx Village Tract Kyauk Kyi Township	

A translation of an order sent to a village in Nyaunglabin District.

households]. Sometimes 10 people have to go for 'loh ah pay' and sometimes more than 10 people. For 'set tha' one person has to go each day, every day. If we don't go they will make a problem for us." - "Saw Pah Baw" (M, 32), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #201, 6/00)

"They always demand 'loh ah pay' and porters.

For 'loh ah pay' the villagers have to go at least three times a month. Every village. Many people have to go from the big villages and fewer people go from the smaller villages. For Kwih T'Ma they sometimes demand up to 50 people, male and female, for 'loh ah pay'. From other villages 25 to 30 people have to go. They demand it at least three times a month." - "Saw Maung Sein" (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

"Once each day. Every day. The

whole village. Other [villages] had to go also, but N--- had to work for 'loh ah pay' the most. It was mostly women and children. A few men were involved, but the men were busy [working on the family fields]. The eldest people were about 50 or 60 years old. Children were involved too, around 12 years old." - "Naw Hser Mo" (F, 35), refugee from N--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #183, 4/00)

"They didn't give us money, they just set a deadline like "you have to finish it within two days". If we could finish within the deadline, we could go back and work on our fields. But if we couldn't finish, they called us again to finish it. Sometimes they demand 50 or 60 people but we only have 35 houses, so how can we find 50 or 60 people?" - "Saw Doh" (M, 30), refugee from K--- village, Bu Tho township (Interview #218, 4/00)

Set tha or 'messengers' are used as runners to take the orders written by SPDC officers and NCO's to the various villages in the area. They also perform menial jobs around the camps when there are no letters to send. Most villages have to send two or three people each day for set tha, or on a rotating schedule every two or three days. Another form of work is called 'htain chaw' or 'sitting porters'. Villagers also go to do this on a rotating schedule. They must remain at the

camps on standby to go with the soldiers immediately whenever they are needed. While they are on standby they are also tasked with finding firewood, fetching water and cooking for the soldiers. Sometimes they do not have to go portering, but just perform labour around the Army camps.

"They tell us to do many kinds. Each day, they demand two 'set tha' ['messengers'] from the large villages and one 'set tha' from the small ones. The 'set tha' have to go for three or five days. They

demand them from Tee Law Thay Hta, Noh Ghaw, Baw Tho Hta, Pway Taw Ru, K'Pee Kee, Wah Thoh Klah, Hsaw Law Day, Tee Tha Blu Hta, Bpoh Leh, Bpoh Khay and Bler Per." - "Saw Hla Dah" (M, 40), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #207, 9/00)

"The people who the soldiers don't order to go to the frontline [they stay behind at the camp] are forced to fetch water and cook rice. They also can't take a rest." - "Htaw Say" (M, 43), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #210, 2/01)

"They demand Htain Chaw ['sitting porters'; villagers to stay at the camp for use whenever required] and send them for duty at K--- camp. It is about a 7 or 8 mile walk, but I am just

Stamp:		30-3-2001	
Peace and Development Council	To:		
Papun Township	(aaaa)		
xxxx Village			
<p>Informing [you] that now [I] have already met with Major bbbb about the matter of servants. [You] Must give, so I am dividing the duty among the villages. [I] Will allocate duty quotas to Elder Sister's xxxx village, yyyy [village], zzzz [village] and wwww [village], totalling 4 villages for one month of 30 days.</p>			
(1) xxxx	6 days	From 2-4-2001	to 8-4-2001 year
(2) yyyy	9 days	From 8-4-2001	to 17-4-2001 year
(3) zzzz	9 days	From 17-4-2001	to 26-4-2001 year
(4) wwww	6 days	From 26-4-2001	to 2-5-2001 year
<p>For these days, you can hire people if you want / if the people want to go, go. When your dates are finished, contact yyyy [village] and arrange to rotate.</p>			
<p style="text-align: right;">[Sd.] cccc U cccc Chairperson yyyy Village Tract Stamp: Chairperson Village Peace and Development Council yyyy Village/ Pa Pun Township</p>			

A translation of an order setting out the schedule of rotating forced labour workers in a village tract in Papun District. The villagers are given the option of hiring other people to go in their place.

estimating, because there are the mountains. ... They demand one porter each time. Each porter has to take the duty for 15 days. The people who don't go have to pay 1,500 Kyat for 15 days. ... They have to cut bamboo and wood, and to porter. When the soldiers go for sentry duty [on patrol], they have to porter. And when the soldiers aren't out on sentry duty, they have to cook rice, and cut bamboo and wood." - "Saw Mu Wah" (M, 40), refugee from K--- village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #9, 4/00)

Labour on Army Business Projects

"The other way they force us to work is by demanding logs from us, so our villagers have to go and cut down trees for them. Then people who have bullock carts have to carry the logs to their [the SPDC's] sawmill. After they saw the wood into planks, they take it away on trucks, so we don't know if they sell it or what they do with it. They don't give us any money for it, we just have to work for them for free. They sent a letter saying they would use it to build a school, but they didn't build a school with the wood we gave them. I think they sold it." - "Saw K'Paw Sghee" (M, 40+), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #166, 6/99)

SPDC Army officers often set up profit-making projects for their own benefit, and use local villagers and their own soldiers as free labour on these projects. Projects in the frontline areas always use nearby villagers as the main source of labour. Some soldiers are kept at the camps to guard and oversee the villagers who work on the projects. Many units have farms where they grow rice and vegetables with which to supplement the diet of the soldiers and their families. The land used for the farms is seized from the villagers and often includes the best land in the village. The villagers are forced to plough, plant, tend the crops and harvest them, and sometimes even to provide the seed. Some of the produce is used to

feed the soldiers, but much of it is actually sold for a profit by the officers. At Ka Dtaing Dtee south of Papun the villagers had to plant, water and harvest beans for the soldiers. When some of the beans died before harvesting, the villagers had to compensate the soldiers by giving some of their own beans. Some of the agriculture projects are not very well thought out; a villager from Dweh Loh township described to KHRG how in his village they were forced to dig a well that wouldn't fill with water, but they had to keep digging until it did. They were then forced to plant vegetables deep in the jungle where the soil was poor. When the plants failed to grow, the villagers had to pay for them. In Way Maw village in Bu Tho township, the SPDC confiscated three of the villagers' fields at ploughing time. The villagers were forced to sign their names to a transfer deed handing over their land, and then pay the soldiers 25 Kyat for the processing cost. The fields may be used to supplement the soldiers' diet but more likely the produce will be sold by the officers for a profit. Burmese law previously introduced by dictator Ne Win specifies that all land belongs to the State, and the Army officers often make vague reference to this when arbitrarily seizing villagers' land for their own benefit. The Army also has betelnut, coconut, tea and rubber plantations. The villagers have to provide the saplings and plant the crops for

the soldiers. These are all cash crops, so the produce will likely be sold by the officers for their own personal profit. Although the private soldiers oversee much of the work, they never receive any of the profits from it.

<p>To: Chairperson xxxx village Frontline #356 Light Infantry Battalion Column x Headquarters</p> <p>Come to send without fail 5 coconut seedlings from xxxx village, 5 coconut seedlings from yyyy village, total 10 plants, today to arrive to the zzzz Camp Commander, Saya Gyi [used for Sergeant] bbbb.</p> <p>[Sd.] (for) Column Commander</p>	<p>Stamp: 23-5-2000</p>
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A translation of an order demanding coconut tree seedlings for an Army plantation in Papun District.

"Last dry season they did some farming. The

villagers had to go and dig a well. It wouldn't fill with water but we had to dig it until it filled. They forced us to plant things deep in the jungle where the soil is not good for agriculture. We had to do that and use our time. We also had to give them bean seeds and other seeds. When the plants didn't grow, we had to make up for it. We had to give them money. It was not only my village. N—and many other villages also had to do this. We had to give them one box of seed and right now a box of round bean seeds is 1,000 or 2,000 Kyat." - "Saw Ra Doh", (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #199, 6/00)

"In the rainy season the people had to plough their fields, but the SPDC told them that they were also going to do it. The SPDC confiscated all the fields

from the villagers who stayed near that area. They didn't ask for the fields from the owners. [The SPDC said] All the places belong to them. They owners dared not and could not say anything. The Burmese said, 'I will take this field. Do you agree?' We can't say that we do not agree so the villagers agreed. When the villagers agreed they had to sign their names and pay 25 Kyat. They took three flat fields that way. It was at Way Maw. They did this in other places to but we do not have the exact information. The fields belonged to different people in the same village. ... The Burmese demand seed from the villagers. The villagers have to give the seed and sow it; [for example] 50 betelnut trees and 50 rubber trees. They grow betelnut trees, coconut trees and tea bushes. The enemy demands those trees. The villagers go and send the trees and have to plant them." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

SPDC officers have also been logging the forests in Papun District, using the Ka Ma Maung-Papun road to send the cut wood and timber down to Pa'an to sell it. The villagers are forced to fell the trees and then pull the logs to the sawmills using their elephants or bullock carts. Privately owned sawmills in the area are then forced to process the wood for free or at the expense of local villagers. The soldiers sometimes promise to pay for it but the money usually never arrives. The villagers in the Ka Dtaing Dtee-Noh Paw Tee area have said that they have had to go and cut down teak and ironwood trees for the SPDC. SPDC deserters have told KHRG that they have never seen the villagers paid for this work. The orders given to the villages usually specify that the wood is for their camp, but when the trucks come up from Ka Ma Maung in the dry season with the rations, the wood is carried back down on them. Bamboo is also cut and sold in the same way.

"I saw them transport wood - teak and ironwood. They get it from T--- forest. It is about three furlongs from K--- and five furlongs from T--- and B---. They do the logging during the whole dry and rainy seasons. The villagers have to go and cut, clear and weed the road for them. Sometimes they force us to go and saw the logs or pull the logs for them." - "Pati Htay Htoo" (M, 35), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #189, 5/00)

"We have to cut 30 or 40 trees each time and the width of the trees must be over 3 hta [handspans; 69 cm / 2 feet 3 inches]. Sometimes they use them for their camp buildings. Sometimes they force us and say it is for their camp, but in the dry season, when they have a truck, they carried the trees down to the plains [to sell]. Bamboo is the same. Even now, they force us to go and cut bamboo. When we went they said it was for their

camp, but the next morning when we went to see them, the truck had already gone down and we couldn't see any logs or bamboo." - "Naw Lah K'Paw Mu" (F, 48), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #198, 6/00)

"I have seen that they are working with the Ko Per Baw [the DKBA]. They are carrying logs and taking rations to the soldiers. They are carrying teak. They used to take ironwood, but now there isn't much ironwood near the road [it has all been cut down]. There is a lot of teak so they cut the teak. There was only a little bit of ironwood, so it took them only one or two days and then it was gone. ... Sometimes they cut it down themselves and sometimes they force the villagers to do it. My villagers haven't gone to cut the trees, but I heard they give payment. I heard from some people from Pway Taw Ru who said that they would get payment, but we haven't seen any Kyat yet. It is like they are forcing us for free. I also had to go carry their logs one time. We had to go and carry them by bullock cart. My villagers went to carry it. The soldiers said they would give payment, but when my villagers finished carrying it they received nothing. ... They will sell them in Pa'an. In the past they brought a machine [a type of tractor] and used it to carry logs. Now I don't see the sawmills anymore. I have heard people say sometimes that they are still doing the logging, but I don't go very often. The people who went [to the logging area] said they still carry the logs sometimes." - "Mya Aung" (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00)

"While I was portering for them they ordered us to cut down teak trees, then they sold them in town. We had to pull the trees like elephants. The SPDC Army forced us to work like slaves and animals, and if we complained to them they abused, scolded, and threatened to shoot or torture us." - "Saw Maw Lah" (M, 30), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #173, 9/99)

Labour for the DKBA

“When P--- [a DKBA officer] came to stay here, they forced the villagers. They ordered them to help. The people had to go and carry for them. After they carried they had to come back. They never gave payment.” - “Mya Aung” (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00)

The DKBA presence is somewhat limited in the area, but they also demand labour from the villagers near their camps. Villagers have reported making charcoal, cutting trees and bamboo and building a pagoda for the DKBA. In Kyauk Kyi township of Nyaunglebin District, the villagers are forced to use their bullock carts to transport bricks and sand for the DKBA to Klaw Maw where they are constructing a pagoda with civilian labour. The DKBA claims that the villagers do projects like this willingly because it is for their B u d d h i s t

religion, however Christians are also forced to work on the project, and B u d d h i s t s interviewed by KHRG did not feel they were doing it willingly. *Loh ah pay* work for the DKBA near Klaw Maw pagoda in Kyauk Kyi township is unpaid and the villagers must bring their own rice. Five or six villagers are u s u a l l y requested to work twice a month for three days at a time. Villagers who don't work are

threatened and scolded by the DKBA. Villagers have also been used by the DKBA in this area to porter shells and other supplies to the frontline. The DKBA demands ‘porter fees’ from villages wanting to avoid portering. A villager from Kyauk Kyi township told KHRG that he never saw them use the money to hire anyone, implying that it goes into their pockets.

“The DKBA are forcing us to make charcoal. The villagers who stay close to them also must use their bullock carts to help them [to haul wood for charcoal]. They are making the charcoal for themselves, but they are forcing the villagers to

do it. The villagers go to cut the firewood and bring it back to put in a big firepit. There are about 10 firepits. The villagers have to do it for 4 or 5 days at a time. Sometimes 4 or 5 villagers go, and sometimes 7 or 8 villagers go to do it for them. They don't limit the time the villagers have to go. Sometimes 4 or 5 villagers go for 2 or 3 days, then sometimes 5 days at a time, sometimes they continue forcing them to do it, there is no limit to the time. They force men and women to go. Sometimes they scold us, but when I stayed there, they didn't beat us and cause pain. ... They have a camp there; it is their main camp. It is about 3 miles from K---. They force the villagers to do ‘loh ah pay’ there whenever they need them. Sometimes they call 2 times a month. Each time they call 5 or 6 villagers to go for 3 days at a time. They have to go and sleep there, and they also have to take their own food. They forced us to carry bricks and sand, and sometimes to make firewood. We carried bricks to make a pagoda at

Klaw Maw. They have f i n i s h e d making the body of the pagoda, but they are still working on the base. ... They force us to do work at their camp and they call it Htain Chaw [‘sitting porters’]. It means to go and cook rice for them. In addition, when they are going to the frontline, they force us to carry shells. The villagers have to go by rotation. Each villager has to

go for one day and night. If villagers don't go, they have to pay 300 Kyat for one day and night to the DKBA. I don't know what they do with this money, maybe they spend it. I have never seen them use it to hire another person.” - “Saw Mu Wah” (M, 40), refugee from K--- village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #9, 4/00)

The DKBA has a much larger presence in Papun District and the variety and amount of labour demanded is correspondingly greater. Villagers are ordered to act as porters, perform labour around the DKBA camps, build houses for DKBA soldiers and their

<u>Stamp:</u> Peace and Development Council xxxx Village Tract To: Village Head xxxx village Date: 3-2-2001	
Subject: <u>The matter of calling for loh ah pay</u>	
Regarding the above subject, for the use of the DKBA from xxxx send without fail (without fail) five male loh ah pay servants to the DKBA office on 4-2-2001 to arrive at 6 o'clock in the morning, you are informed.	
Note: If you fail it is the responsibility of the village head.	
<u>[Sd.]</u> <u>Stamp:</u> (for) Chairperson Village Peace and Development Council xxxx Village Tract, Papun Township	

A translation of an order was sent to a village in Papun District for the DKBA by a village tract head.

families and cut wood and bamboo. The DKBA is also involved in forcing the villagers to work on the stretches of the roads under their control in the same way as the SPDC. Treatment of workers by the DKBA varies, with some commanders treating the villagers well while others have been reported by the villagers as being worse than the SPDC. One villager told KHRG that the DKBA bought the villagers snacks, milk and sugar after forcing them to carry supplies to Kaw Boke. Villagers are also used on the DKBA's profit making projects. Villagers in eastern Dweh Loh township are forced to cut down and process trees for the DKBA, which are then taken down the road and sold in Khaw Taw (Myaing Gyi Ngu) or Pa'an. A villager told KHRG that the wood was sold to pay off debts which the DKBA members had incurred with each other through gambling and drinking. Another villager said that the DKBA was forcing people to work for them on the orders of the Burmese. This is true in some instances, such as road clearance, but much of the work probably originates with the DKBA. One villager from the Baw Kyo Leh area noted that he had had to work more for the DKBA than the SPDC.

"The Burmese force them [DKBA] to force us. They contact each other. The Ko Per Baw force us to work and we don't even have free time to rest. We have to carry firewood, do 'loh ah pay', build their houses, and cut bamboo. We don't have time to find food. ... Pah Loh, Baw Kyo Leh, Taw Thu Klah, Noh Paw Tee, Taw Kloh Kee - the villagers from Meh Baw Kee and Poh Gha also came to work together there. They force all the villages near their camp. They dictate the number of villagers who must come from each village. We have to go regularly. It never stops for us. We even have to work for their wives and children. There are many children in the [DKBA] camp at Baw Kyo Leh, and we have to work for them. The Burmese force us one step, then they [DKBA] force us one step further." - "Naw Wah Wah" (F, 41), refugee from B--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #182, 4/00)

"The Ko Per Baw fired guns in the village because they were demanding bullock carts, and demanding people to haul trees for them. They traded in logs, but they also have a lot of debts. They have debts from playing cards and drinking too much. They build up these debts to each other, and then they oppress the village to pay for it. If they heard us saying this on the tape, they would slit our throats!" - "Naw May Wah" (F, 40+), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #204, 7/00)

"The Ko Per Baw [DKBA] forced us to clear an area for the car road. Just one or two weeks ago, the villagers had to go and do that. We had to cut and clear a strip about the width of one felled tree from the road, 30 plah [15 metres / 45 feet]. It

took one day or sometimes two, but we could come home and sleep at night and then go again in the morning. The road runs from K'Dter Dtee and goes to Papun. They [DKBA] are going to use it to transport rations for themselves. They transport them by bullock cart or truck during the entire dry season. The Ko Per Baw also use the road for logging transport. They get logs from the teak forest at K'Pee Kee. Teak and ironwood. They sell it in Ka Ma Maung [town]. They force us to clear the road and cut teak wood during the whole dry season. We had to wait by the road for them [to act as sentries]. Twelve men from K'Pee Kee had to go in rotation for three days at a time. One time when we went to work with them, there were over ten men from our village and 20 altogether, including P--- and K--- villagers." - "Saw Eh Ywa" (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #187, 5/00)

Forced Labour Fees

"For 'set tha' [forced labour as messengers and for ad hoc camp labour] we have to give 4,000 Kyat every month [to avoid the labour]. It's become a problem for the villagers. They can do day labour to get 100 Kyat per day just to buy 8 milk-tins [1.563 kg / 3.4 lb] of rice for themselves, but that's not enough because they can't stay in the village without paying the Burmese. They have to give. ... The villagers want to provide a good life for their children, but they can't unless they have paid off the Burmese first. If we don't pay them we can't stay here, they will drive us out. If we have only one Kyat we have to give it to the Burmese, then if we have two Kyat we have to give it all to them too. So we can't earn anything to eat from our work, and we have to go hungry." - "Saw Myo" (M, 44), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #168, 7/99)

Most of the villagers cannot afford to take the time off from their fields to perform all the forced labour that is demanded of them. There is also a very real fear of being abused by the soldiers, falling ill from exhaustion, or being wounded or killed by landmines or firefights. For most forms of forced labour a fee can be paid to get out of having to go. The 'fee' to avoid short-term portering, *set tha*, or Army camp labour usually amounts to 300 to 500 Kyat per person per day. The officers pretend that this money is to be used to hire replacements, but in reality it is just pocketed while other people who cannot pay are forced to do the labour. Combining all the types of forced labour demanded simultaneously by several Army camps, most village families have to pay anywhere from 1,000 to over 5,000 Kyat per month in 'porter fees' and other forced labour fees. Once the soldiers get used to receiving money instead of workers they

expect it, and start demanding people as well as money - resulting in the villagers paying weekly or monthly 'fees' to avoid a particular form of forced labour, while still having to send people to do that labour. Meanwhile, the soldiers get their labour, and also make a lot of money for 'not' getting it.

"They have to pay money. Some people can't go when it is their turn. The Burmese need emergency porters and write an order that you must come and if you don't come how much it will cost each day. They write it themselves. They wrote in their order that if someone doesn't come for a day, they have to pay 500 Kyat. The village head has to bring the money to them. He also has to report how many people didn't come and what their problems were. The soldiers don't hire anyone with that money. They spend it all. When the work isn't finished yet, they continue demanding villagers." - "Saw Maung Sein" (M, 40), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #4, 2/01)

"They dare not go. They have seen the SPDC demand 'loh ah pay' in the past and later they used them as porters. The portering has become longer. The civilians are afraid, so later they hired people with money. There was one event in the past. In 1998 the soldiers demanded porters. The people dared to go because the soldiers called it 'loh ah pay'. Some people thought it was 'loh ah pay' so they asked their children and wives to go ['loh ah pay' usually consists of making fences or doing work around the Army camps rather than the more arduous and dangerous portering]. When the villagers arrived there the SPDC changed it to long-term portering and they had to go. When they got to M--- village a battle occurred and one village woman was shot and died. That is why the civilians are afraid and dare not go. They pay money. Really, if they speak with us truly like we have to go for 'loh ah pay' for three days or a month, then the people would go. If they gave us a reason people would go. But they don't tell us the truth. 'Loh ah pay' has become portering for 10 days or a month. Sometimes people have died. That is why the villagers try to find money." - "Saw Tha Htwe" (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #206, 9/00)

"If the villagers can't go the soldiers order them to pay money. They demand 500 Kyat for one porter for one day. If it is for three days, the people have to pay 1,500 Kyat. They demand it from everybody. We have to pay. If we don't pay, they come themselves and capture us [to go as porters]. I don't know what they do with the money. They just eat it [a slang term meaning to pocket the money themselves]. Maybe they eat it with their soldiers [share it around to the other soldiers; this does happen but usually only among the officers]

or they take it to their families, I don't know. They just take it to their families. When they come to the village they torture the villagers and the villagers have to pay them money. If the villagers don't have money they have to sell their things. The villagers suffer because of them." - "Pa Taw Thu" (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #152, 12/00)

"Q: What do they do to people if they can't go? A: The soldiers fine them. They order the people to pay money. If they demand 500 Kyat, the villagers have to pay and they demand 1,000 Kyat the villagers also have to pay it. They [the soldiers] just use it themselves. They don't report it [to their superiors]. They just work for money." - "Saw Eh Muh" (M, 40), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #154, 12/00)

"We didn't hear that they force the children to work, but if they are capturing porters, they take everyone and then the parents have to pay money for their children to be released. That is what we heard people say. I heard that some people have to pay 4,000 or 5,000, even 10,000 Kyat. The people who cannot pay are forced to porter for long distances. Some who are very young have parents who go to pay for them, but some who are older have no one to pay for them so they have to go." - "Saw Lay Pa" (M, 39), refugee from T--- village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #66, 1/00)

"Later we heard that when these troops go back home they have a lot of money with them, so I wondered what money is that? It must be the money that we gave them when they demanded money for 'loh ah pay', because where else would they get it? They just keep it." - "Naw Lay Mo" (F, xx), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #117, 7/99)

Instead of giving money to the Army, many villagers try to hire people to go for forced labour in their place, or give it to the village head and he tries to find people to hire. In villages in or near the plains this is often possible because there are impoverished itinerant labourers passing through who are willing to hire themselves out for this type of work. Some have made almost a profession of it, and are quite adept at dealing with the soldiers and paying them off to avoid physical abuse and lighten their loads during the labour. In the remoter hill villages it is much harder to find anyone, but the poorest villagers may be willing. Smaller villages often send the required money to the village tract or township seat, where it can be used to hire people to fill their quota. In many cases the Army sends its demands for people to the township or village tract, which then divides the number of people required between the villages under it, usually based on village size. Many village tracts and townships have developed a system of hiring people to fill the demands

they receive from the Army, then billing the villages in money for their allotted quota of people. Before long, the villages cannot keep up the payments and fall behind, and when the Army puts pressure on the village tract leaders they have little option but to point out the 'delinquent' villages, which are then stormed by the troops to gather forced labourers or forced to relocate.

"The villagers have to find people and hire them themselves. In the past through 1999 we could pay the soldiers money. This year we can't pay them money. We pay the other villagers. Some villagers have had to go many times because other villagers are sick and so to help each other they find and pay each other to go. It is 500 Kyat for one day. Usually they go for three days, so 1,500 Kyat. If we can't find villagers from this village we find them in the other villages." - "Mya Aung" (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00)

"If they cannot go anymore then they have to change with another villager. They have to pay the person who replaces them. If they have to pay 500 Kyat then they pay and if they have to pay 600 Kyat then they pay. They pay the money to the people who replace them. For example: the enemy stays in Meh Ku Hta and I stay in Meh Ku Kee. If I cannot go I have to find a person in Meh Ku Kee to replace me. The village head has to arrange it and he will ask me for 500 Kyat for that person. I have to give for how many days [the person will go for]. If one day is 500 Kyat then three days is 1,500 Kyat. If it is less than 500 Kyat per day then no one is willing to go." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

"If we don't go ourselves, we have to pay money. We are free if we pay the money. We have to give 1,000 Kyat each time. They said this is for three days, but sometimes it is for longer than three days and we have to pay more. If they are gone for longer than three days and the villagers haven't come back, then their friends have to go and pay more money. The money is for the people who go to porter. When they recently demanded them [porters] at night, we gave it through the Ya Ya Ka [Village Peace and Development Council]. The Ya Ya Ka holds the money. Then they said they hired them [the porters]." - "Naw Lah K'Paw Mu" (F, 48), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #198, 6/00)

"The people who stay in the plains of Bu Tho township face big problems and the people who stay near the road are in even more trouble. The soldiers order people to carry things up and down [the road]. In January the enemy ordered the people to carry the rations when the trucks arrived.

If the people don't go they have to give 500 Kyat. The enemy thinks 500 Kyat is expensive so they tell the villagers that if they don't like to carry rations up and down, they can clean the roadside [cut the brush along the sides of the road instead of paying the porter fees]. The distance is 50 feet on both sides." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

The villages in the plains along the Sittaung River are under firmer SPDC control than the villages in Papun District so they are subject to another fee, the township porter fees. The Township Peace and Development Council (PDC) authorities send orders to the village tract leaders demanding an amount of money which the Village Tract Peace and Development Council must raise to hire porters. The village tract head then asks for the money from each of the villages in his village tract based on the number of households in the village. One village head told KHRG that in his tract of five villages, each village must pay 750,000 Kyat per year for these porters. The villagers don't have to go for this type of portering, unless they can't pay. The Township PDC uses the money to hire porters from other parts of Burma to go instead. The township officials are usually very corrupt so the fees are inflated and much of the money ends up in their pockets. Township porters are used for longer-term military operations by the Army. Paying these fees does not release the villagers from short-term portering or working at Army camps. Within the last year KHRG has conducted numerous interviews with convict porters and civilians from throughout Burma who have been forced to porter without pay in Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts, but none who were hired for this work. This and other evidence suggests that the Township porter fees are ending up in the pockets of Township authorities and military officers rather than being used to hire any porters.

"The SPDC demands it regularly. People have to pay each month. They demand 'loh ah pay', porters and food so people have to give it to them every month. It is not the same each month. Sometimes they demand a lot and we have to pay 1,000 Kyat [per person] and sometimes we have to pay 500 or 600 Kyat. It is for the township porters. If two or three groups go together we have to pay 1,000 or over 1,000 Kyat. ... We pay for porters once a year to the township [Township Peace and Development Council]. We give them 750,000 Kyat for one year. ... If they demand four people we have to send four people and if they ask for five people we have to send them five people. We have to give every month. The porters for the township are the big porters [long-term operations porters]. We have to send them to Ler Doh [Kyauk Kyi]. There are many groups so maybe they will then be sent on to the mobile columns, I don't know. They ask and we send. I

don't know where they send the people." - "Saw Nyi Nyi" (M, 37), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

"We have to hire people for 3,000 Kyat for one person. That is for five days. The others are 15,000 Kyat for Pyi Thu Sit 'wontan' [People's Army (SPDC militia) 'servants'] each month, 15,000 for the K--- [an Army camp] 'loh ah pay' and 15,000 for the township operations servants. We have to pay those regularly every month." - "Saw Ber Kaw" (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

The stronger control which the SPDC has over the plains also means that the villagers must pay more in fees for forced labour and to more groups than just the Army. Villagers here must also pay for servants for the *Pyi Thu Sit* or 'People's Militia' (units of villagers conscripted

and trained by the Army with the villagers forced to pay the costs). The village head from the area quoted above told KHRG that combining fees to avoid portering and 'loh ah pay', militia forced labour fees and township porter fees, each village in his area must come up with 60,000 Kyat every month. This is in addition to other demands and extortion money, and it is important to remember that these are primarily subsistence farming villages with very little cash floating around. Some villages in both the plains and the hills must pay fees to nearby DKBA units as well.

"We have to give them from 10,000 to 52,000 Kyat every month. It is for porters, for the militia and for 'loh ah pay'. They ordered us to carry as porters to M--- or to S---. 'Loh ah pay' and portering are not the same in S---. When they came the last time we had to give 400 Kyat for each person. They added it all up and demanded 45,000 Kyat for one month [from his village]." - "Saw Per Per" (M, 45), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #24, 4/01)

"There are taxes for supporting the Pyi Thu Sit [the People's Militia] servants, support for the township operations porters and K--- 'loh ah pay'

['loh ah pay' at K--- Army camp]. ... Sometimes if we cannot give it we subtract something from the fees. We decrease their fees like that." - "Saw Ber Kaw" (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

Finding the money to pay the fees is becoming increasingly difficult for the villagers. Most of the villagers in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts are subsistence farmers with very little money. There is very little paying work available, although some villagers are able to make small amounts of money doing day

labour in other people's fields. Some people work as petty traders carrying goods on their backs to sell to other villages or to the displaced villagers in the hills, though anyone carrying goods into the hills runs the risk of being arrested and accused of supplying the resistance.

S o m e

villagers are able to grow cash crops like betelnut, coconuts and various fruits, which they sell to pay the fees. The soldiers often steal the fruit and betelnut, making it difficult for the villagers to grow enough to make much of a profit. Other villagers hunt game in the forests like deer or trap animals like eel and turtles to sell. In some areas villagers are even panning for gold to be able to pay the fees. Villagers are often forced to sell whatever jewellery, possessions and livestock they have to pay the fees. The need to find money forces the villagers to take yet more time away from their fields.

"The villagers who can't go or dare not go must pay porter fees. If a person doesn't go he must hire another person for 2,500 or 3,000 Kyat. People also have to do sentry duty by rotation. After everyone has gone once, they start the rotation again. If a person doesn't go for his turn, he has to hire someone else. If they can't pay to hire anyone, they have to find a way. If they have gold or silver, they must sell it. If they don't have anything they must ask someone to go, and then pan for gold. When the person comes back, the fee must be paid. ... They can pan for gold at the

Stamp:	Date: 29-4-2001
Village Peace and Development Council xxxx Tract - Kyauk Kyi Township	
To	
U aaaa Village Head	
Informing [you]- Come today to pay the money for the quota Township servants' fee to the tract Chairperson at xxxx, you are informed. [We] Must go to the Township [office] on the morning of the 30 th . Come to pay today.	
[Sd.] bbbb Stamp: Chairperson Village Tract Peace and Development Council xxxx Village Tract - Kyauk Kyi Township	

A translation of an order sent to a village head in Nyaunglebin District demanding that he pay his village's portion of the monthly township porter fees.

Weh Loh River. There is no other way to make money. They tried to find another way by making fruit plantations and growing coconuts, but the Burmese climbed up and took all the fruit and coconuts, so they couldn't sell any. ... They are also given a chance to work hill fields at B—. They can only do it on a day by day basis; they can only go and sleep there for a night or at most 3 nights. They have to take food for 3 days and when that is gone, they have to come back. The Burmese don't allow them to take more [food with them] than that. The Burmese give passes to allow them to go. During the paddy growing time the villagers have serious problems, because the pigs and buffaloes eat all the rice.” - “Pu Taw Lay” (M, 56), internally displaced villager from M— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #80, 3/00)

“Not everyone can give but they try. Turtles and eels are expensive and the villagers can sell them and the money they get they give for the taxes. Sometimes we have to give the tax twice because we have to pay for the 10th month [October] in the 9th month [September], and we have to pay for the 11th month [November] in the 10th month [they must pay taxes one month in advance so sometimes the authorities conveniently ‘forget’ and make them pay twice]. We cannot pay it regularly. If the villagers cannot give they have to borrow from each other. They have to pay it back time after time. If we pay it back we pay it 10,000 Kyat by 10,000 Kyat.” - “Saw Ber Kaw” (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

“If we had rice, we sold it and gave the money to them. If people shot a wild cock in the forest, they came back to sell it and gave them the money. If people could sell a fowl, they sold it and gave them the money, and then had nothing to eat.” - “Naw Hser Mo” (F, 35), refugee from N--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #183, 4/00)

Effects of Forced Labour on the Villagers

“We stay under the control of the military and the villagers have to face not having enough food, because of the military oppression. Since we were children, we saw our parents and grandparents always go to be sentries, porters and do ‘loh ah pay’. When we have time to go and work the fields, we dare not spend the night in the fields. We have to go from our house each day, so the fields have become closer year by year. ... The people are becoming exhausted. In addition, the SPDC are forcing us to come and work for them more and more. To work as a sentry or a porter is not right. It has been like this since we were children, under the Ma Sa La [Burmese acronym for the Burma Socialist Programme Party, Ne Win’s regime], Na Wa Ta [SLORC], and Na Ah Pa [SPDC] times. ‘Loh ah pay’ and portering are becoming our jobs by tradition. It is becoming worse. The villagers are poor and have to work day to day to feed themselves.” - “Saw Mu Wah” (M, 40), refugee from K--- village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #9, 4/00)

The effect of continuous forced labour on the villagers is disastrous. Villagers are becoming poorer, they are unable to properly work their own fields and they are facing starvation. Villages which were once prosperous in the fertile plains along the Sittaung River are now becoming poorer and poorer with some of the villagers even having to resort to eating rice porridge. In the Bilin and Yunzalin River valleys of Papun District, where the villages are smaller, poorer and the land less fertile, villagers are choosing to live on the run in the mountains where they can at least try to grow some food. Villagers in both areas are increasingly choosing to flee to Thailand because they can no longer endure the constant work and the lack of food that results from it. In the SPDC-controlled villages of both the plains and the river valleys, the villagers are faced with two possibilities: go to do the work, or pay money to avoid it. Whether they spend most of their time doing forced labour or trying to make enough money to avoid it, they end up without enough time to work their own fields and support their families.

“[T]he basic problem comes from the SPDC because they force people to work for them. They [the villagers] have to work for them for one or two days but then have no time to do their own work and can’t plant big enough fields. They force every village the same.” - “Saw Tee Maung” (M, xx), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #133, 5/00)

“We don’t have enough free time to do our own work. For every day we can work for ourselves, there are three or four days for them. Each month

we only have a few days to work for ourselves because we work so much on their things." - "Saw Eh Ywa" (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #187, 5/00)

"Not all of the villagers have enough to eat. Some stay and work at home and they are not doing well. Most of them are not doing well. They have to go and porter for the Burmese and work for 'loh ah pay'. They have to go and work on the road for them, but one person has only one set of hands. When the people are called to many places, they can't do it all. They don't have enough food to feed themselves. Right now, they aren't free to work. I look at them with pity but I have to ask them to do things. I am concerned for them, but I can't do anything. I feel bad for them but I can't do anything. ... When some porters fled back home, they [SPDC] came to me and demanded to eat 15 viss [24.5 kg / 54 lb] of pork. All because three porters fled. They fled because they had to go for so long. They knew their wives and children didn't have food to eat back at home. When they went to porter they only had one bowl of rice left in the house. It made them worry while they were portering so they fled after having been gone for so many days. They were fined but they had nothing to pay with, so they were in debt to us. The whole village had to help them. This was near the end of May. I don't know the date exactly because I am not educated and couldn't write it down. They still can't repay their debt." - "Naw Eh Kri Mu" (F, 34), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #196, 6/00)

Most villagers try to find some middle way, going for some forced labour and paying to avoid some of it, while always trying to keep at least one family

member working in the fields. This system requires every family member to work, forcing children out of school and elderly family members to go for forced labour. For small families or single parents, striking this balance is impossible. Village heads often plead with the Army to exempt the households of widows and orphans from certain forms of forced labour, with varying degrees of success. Even families with enough people find that they can only work fields much smaller than what they would normally plant. Smaller fields mean less food after the harvest. This often forces the villagers to try to find more odd jobs to have enough money to buy food, which lessens even further the time they have to work the fields. There is not much money or work and eventually the villagers run out of money. Another result of the constant work is exhaustion, which makes the villagers more susceptible to disease and less able to work their fields even when they have the time. Villagers from Dweh Loh spoke to KHRG of being weak already and of becoming weaker and thinner. With no money left and not enough time to do all the forced labour demanded of them and still survive, people have little choice but to flee to the hills. In the end the forced labour works against the SPDC because it drives villagers to flee their villages, and a declining population has less food and labour to hand over to the Army. Many of the recent arrivals to the refugee camps in Thailand cite the constant forced labour as their main reason for fleeing their villages.

"They are forcing us to carry loads for them, do 'loh ah pay' and send information. When they force us it becomes a problem for us. In the end, our lives become thirsty. We have to work for them, so we have little time to do our own work. When we have no free time, we become thinner and thinner. That is why we have less and less."



People in southwestern Dweh Loh township, Papun District, leave their fenced in village on March 27th 2001 for another stint of forced labour. They have been ordered to carry rations up from the roadhead to outlying Army camps for LID #33. [KHRG]

None of the families have enough food because they are forcing us to do so much. ... About 10 families have run. Aye! Because of the weakness, because the SPDC are forcing us so much and they cannot suffer it. But many are fleeing to places up above here [higher in the hills]. Aye! They are always fleeing. Just a few are still living here. The villagers have a plan. If they cannot continue to suffer they will go up [into the hills], but right now they can't go and are still suffering very slowly." - "Saw Kloh" (M, 56), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #188, 5/00)



Villagers in southern Papun District haul logs to an SPDC Army camp on April 23rd 2001. The villagers were ordered to cut the logs and to provide carts, teams and drivers to haul the logs. [KHRG]

"We couldn't find any money. We could only sell our livestock or our paddy, and after doing that we only had 10 or 20 baskets of paddy left to eat [for the whole year]. Even if you harvested 50 or 60 baskets of paddy, you had to sell most of it to repay your debts, so you only had 10 or 20 baskets left and you would finish it all before the next rainy season arrived - so we'd accumulate more debts, even when we were still working to produce food." - "Naw Say Muh" (F, 54), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #203, 7/00)

"We also do not have enough to feed us because the Burmese demand it [food] from us. If we didn't pay, they were cruel to us. They threatened us with guns and bamboo sticks so we had to pay. It was not good for us if we didn't. Because of all the 'loh ah pay' and 'set tha', the villagers don't have time to work their own fields. Some of the fields are covered in grass. Others had time to plant only half of their paddy. That is why we suffer from these weaknesses - we have to do so much work for the SPDC." - "Pati Htay Htoo" (M, 35), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #189, 5/00)

"Every problem and trouble is important, but the most important is food. If we have food it will be a little better for our lives. Now we are not free to work because we have to work for them [the soldiers] also. We are not free to plan and work for ourselves. We have to work one day for them and one day for ourselves." - "Saw Nuh Po" (M, 23), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #143, 9/00)

"This year we didn't get enough rice or paddy because we couldn't work. It was because of the SPDC. They are forcing us to be busy so we couldn't work to make our flat field each year. We have to work for them. ... We can't work anymore. We just carry and sell things and buy rice from them [traders from the plains]. Last year the rice was very expensive, one sack [50 kg / 110 lb] was 7,000 [Kyat]. They don't allow this so we carry it secretly." - "Saw Peh Yah" (M, 30), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #211, 3/01)

Killings, Arrests and Torture

“For two or three days after they captured us they burned us with fire, poked us with knives and scraped us with knives. They burned me with fire when they first captured me. They hit me on my body wherever they wanted. When they kicked me they aimed at my groin and stomped on me. The other people were also hit and kicked in the buttocks. They burned my head and my hair smelled from the fire. They poked me [with a knife] in the chest. They poked me with the tip of the knife and I had a small wound. Before they released us two groups of them hit us 50 times each.” - “Po Lah” (M, 25), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #12, 4/01)

Villagers living in SPDC controlled villages and relocation sites, while living in areas under SPDC ‘government’ control and theoretically under the rule of law, find that they are subject to arbitrary arrest, torture and extrajudicial killing. Much of the violence is directed against the village heads, as they are the people who most often deal with the SPDC soldiers. Village heads are easier targets than the villagers, because many of them feel a responsibility to their villagers that prevents them from fleeing the village. Torturing the village head sets an ‘example’ for the villagers and makes them feel guilty for not supporting him or her enough in meeting SPDC demands. Another reason for directing it more against the village heads is that it may keep the villagers from running, because they are less likely to run if they are not the ones being directly abused. Villagers, however, are still arrested, tortured and executed. This is especially so if they are caught outside the village without a pass.

“They shot dead Pa Myint Kyo two years ago. He was about 26 or 27 years old. He was married and his wife still stays here. He had no children. His wife was pregnant when he died and she had a miscarriage. I think it was the same unit as the Burmese battalion that has just returned to the area now, IB #63. They also shot and killed one child about 15 years old. His name was Pa Bee Dah. He had only three siblings and no mother or father. They stayed with their grandfather. He ran when he saw the Burmese and they shot him dead when he was running.” - “Saw Tee Maung” (M, xx), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #133, 5/00)

“The soldiers shot two men and they were wounded. They shot them this year. They were villagers and the soldiers shot them when they were coming back from work. They had gone to fence their sugar cane field and were coming back in the evening to eat. The soldiers saw these two men coming while they were also returning. The soldiers called out to them and shot at them at the same time. If they had just called out and not shot, the men would have stopped. They called and shot at the same time so the men were afraid and fled. They fled and both of them were injured.

S— is 43 years old and married and Saw B— is 25 years old and also married. They are still staying in the village. ... It was IB #xx. Their commander is M---. ... We sent them to K--- hospital. They are not healed yet, but they have come back because they don’t have any more money. They couldn’t pay the medical fees if they stayed there. The SPDC didn’t help with any medicine. They gave 10,000 Kyat for both of them. They are being treated with traditional medicine [herbal medicines], but they can’t walk.” - “Naw Lah K’Paw Mu” (F, 48), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #198, 6/00)

Villagers living under some form of SPDC control are not usually shot on sight as the IDP villagers are, but are more often arrested and executed, usually after being tortured first. The soldiers in Papun District do occasionally shoot villagers on sight if the villagers run from them from ‘Peace’ villages. Executions usually take place after the villager has been accused of helping the KNU or KNLA, usually with only circumstantial evidence or no evidence at all. In early 2001 a villager from Mone township was arrested by SPDC soldiers and accused of going to hide his gun. Despite his denial and the pleas of his mother that he was only putting away his rice after coming back from the fields, he was taken away and tortured. His mother was punched for her efforts on his behalf, and later he was taken out into a bean field and executed. The soldiers buried him while he was still alive and villagers nearby watched helplessly as he struggled against the mud on top of him. Villagers have also been killed because their relatives have joined the resistance. In western Nyaunglebin District this is usually handled by the ‘Short Pants’ Sa Thon Lon execution squads, but in most areas it is regular SPDC battalions which carry out the killing. Most of the executions are done by gunshot or stabbing, but sometimes the person is beaten to death or dies under various forms of torture.

“The next day I asked my nephew to go and listen [for news]. After he arrived there he wrote me a note and said those people had already killed my son. People said they pulled him somewhere and killed him. But he hadn’t died. Some Burmese women who went to grow beans said that he didn’t

die easily. They killed him and buried him, but because he wasn't dead yet he tried to struggle in the ground with a lot of mud on him. After people came back and told us that we went. We went there after that and we asked the Burmese [the SPDC] and they said they didn't know. ... I just suffer and have to live this hard life. He was the one who could work for food. After he died it is difficult to work and get food to eat. We don't have any possessions so we just work a little by little and eat like that. When he was alive he did everything. When he was alive we had to pay for the sentries and porters, but we could go and borrow money from here and there. Now everything has run out. Now my grandchild has come back to stay with me. He also goes to work to get food." - "Naw Paw Eh" (F, 50), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #16, 4/01)

"Here in xxxx village tract in N— village they arrested Saw Mu Rih. He had been working in T— and was coming back down. They captured him on the xxxx road and beat him. After that they just killed him. They didn't say why they captured him. They don't give us any answers. They just beat him until he was dead. They killed him at K—. He hadn't done anything. He was working a flat field. He couldn't speak Burmese very well. They interrogated him but because he couldn't answer them they killed him." - "Saw Nyi Nyi" (M, 37), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

"I saw them kill Kyaw Naw Ku when I went to porter for #308 [LIB]. Their Battalion Commander is Aung Kyaw Than. I had gone to porter for one of their companies. They didn't beat us, but they did beat him. He was a villager they met in a field. They kicked him, stepped on him and tied him up and forced him into the water. They had accused him of going and buying alcohol from the Kaw Thoo Lei [slang for the KNU/KNLA]. It was last year." - "Aung Myint Win" (M, 40), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #200, 6/00)

"It was LIB #534 that did it. I don't know the name of their commander but the soldiers say they are from this battalion. The commander gave the order to kill the villagers. They killed U K---. He had done nothing. He had a wife named Naw D— and six children aged 4 to 16 years old. They also killed Htoo Saw. The people called him Aye Myint Mo. He was a villager. He was 37 years old. He was married with three children. They are 7 to 15 years old. The third one killed was Pa Yaw Kya. He was 45 years old. He had a wife and a 4 year old child. The other one was Kaw Lah Po. He was 25 and single. He made a living by collecting the sap from toddy palm trees and selling it. ... Some of their children [children is used here loosely meaning both younger relatives as well

as children] work with the resistance [KNU]. They killed Htoo Saw because they said that his nephew works for the resistance, and Pa Yaw Kya because his wife's son works for the resistance. Kaw Lah Po wasn't related to the resistance but he was arrested with the others so they also killed him. ... They arrested them and took them back with them that same night. They didn't do anything else in the village. They went back to kill them near Khaw Hta village. They arrested them on the 8th of January [2000] and on the 9th the soldiers killed them. The village head went to vouch for them but he didn't get there in time. Even if he had been there in time, he wouldn't have been able to vouch for them. They said it was because their children are soldiers so they killed them." - "Maung Gyi" (M, 33), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #134, 8/00)

"There were four people shooting at me and they hit me once. It hit me in the back side of my arm and it was broken. I was broken like that and I couldn't work or do anything. I had to stay in the jungle for five days. Flies laid eggs and there were larvae in the wound. It had a bad smell and the people came and took me back. After they took me back I told them to treat me but they didn't treat me, they just left me like that. I suffered like that and later I slowly came up here." - "Saw Ghu" (M, 33), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #112, 4/01); he was shot while fleeing after being told he was to be executed.

SPDC soldiers have fired into villages without warning. This is sometimes done when the villagers have not paid all their fees or given what was demanded of them. Villages are also fired on when it is thought they are helping the KNU in some way. A notable incident occurred in Dweh Loh township in 1999 when the soldiers opened fire at close range on what they thought was the wedding of a KNLA officer. When they left, five villagers were dead and two more were wounded. The wedding, however, was the marriage of two villagers. The KNLA officer's wedding had taken place in another village a month previously.

"My husband told me that he was going to prepare his hill fields after our children's wedding was over, because it would be difficult to finish before the wedding. But the wedding hadn't finished yet when the Burmese came late that night. We heard noises outside, and my oldest daughter told me that she was going to sleep because she thought the noise was only buffaloes. But when she went outside, she called back to me that it wasn't buffaloes but men carrying guns. We had no idea what to do. As soon as she called back to us they started shooting at us from both behind and in front. They shot so many bullets, and we couldn't do anything. ... Five villagers were dead, and my niece's husband was wounded by a gunshot in his neck. My 9-year-old nephew was also

wounded. But the other five were killed, each with two or more shots, because they were shooting from close range. Even if you'd never shot a gun before you could shoot people dead from that close. They hate our people that much, even though we have never done anything to their people." - "Naw Kler Paw" (F, 48), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #160, 6/99)

The *Sa Thon Lon*, which used to be responsible for many of the killings in Nyaunglebin District, has not been as active in the past year. Villagers have told KHRG that though the *Sa Thon Lon* have been killing fewer people recently, they still do torture and execute people occasionally. The decrease in numbers has probably occurred because most everyone on their 'hit list' has already either been killed or fled the area. The DKBA in Papun District and Nyaunglebin District has not been accused of many killings in the past few years, although they also still kill villagers on occasion, usually for allegedly supporting the KNU or in retaliation for the death of a DKBA soldier.

"They killed four people; Saw Lay Heh, Saw K'Bweh, Maung Nyut Po and Saw Po Keh. I don't remember the date but it was during the month when people throw water, Taw Tha Lin [Buddhist lunar month roughly corresponding to October 1998]. I haven't had time to think about what they were accused of. The soldiers [Sa Thon Lon] just captured them and killed them immediately. So we didn't have time to think about it. They shot three of them dead, but one of them they couldn't shoot because the gun jammed, so people said they just stabbed him and killed him with a knife. They killed them beside T---. They were all T--- villagers." - "Saw Bo Lweh" (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #10, 4/01)

"They arrested and killed Pa Twee Maung, also called Saw Cha Lay, at Kyun Gyi. He had lived in Sweh Dtee and then he moved to stay at Thay Pyu. He was coming back to work and they arrested him at Kyun Gyi on December 27th 1999. They broke a bottle and cut him with the pieces of the bottle until he died. They did this the whole night, then killed him. They cut him with the bottle and then stabbed him to kill him. I saw it. I saw him after he was killed. They killed him near the bank of the lake and left the body. I don't remember the number of the unit, because we were afraid and avoided them. They suspected that he was a person from the KNU, so they killed him." - "Saw Mu Wah" (M, 40), refugee from Kaw Tha Say village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #9, 4/00)

"My father went to find his cattle and he was somewhere near some Karen soldiers, but he didn't know that. The Guerrilla unit [Sa Thon Lon] was coming down. They met the Karen soldiers and fought, then afterwards they saw my father,

captured him and killed him. He was 67 years old. They killed him brutally - they stabbed him in the side and then they pushed him down on his face and twisted his head to break his neck, like this. They killed him last year in March [1999]. He had never joined the resistance. He was a communion server in church. He died on the other side of the river near our house, beyond some fields. They killed him there in the heat of the day. After he was dead I went to see his body. They had tied his arms behind his back tightly, and there was a very big hole from a stab wound in his left side and two dagger wounds on his neck. He was wearing short pants and a sarong tied around his waist, and when we saw him his body was all covered in mud. After that we didn't dare stay there, because they would try to find his relatives and kill them all." - "Saw Plaw Doh" (M, 25), refugee from G--- village, Mone township (Interview #7, 2/00)

Villagers and village heads can be arrested under almost any pretext. Village heads are commonly arrested and taken to Army camps for not meeting the demands of the soldiers or for not providing the soldiers with information on the movements of the resistance groups. While at the camps they are often tortured. Usually it is done to teach the village head 'a lesson' so that he or she will comply the next time. It is for this reason that the village head position is often rotated among the villagers or given to a woman. Rotating the position keeps the abuse from constantly being directed at one person. Female village heads are less likely to be abused than the men.

"We were the village heads. We were the village heads for them to hit, so they hit us. They said it was my fault because I hadn't searched to find out any information. We were the leaders so we should have tried to get information. I didn't look for it so I got hit. ... It was May 19th [2000]. The soldiers hit me because they saw some people coming down, KNU. They hit me with an ironwood branch. It was almost dry but still a little green. They hit me with the first stick in front of the K— village head. After it broke they ordered some people to cut a second stick to hit me with. That one was green. It was bigger around than a wrist and about as long as an arm. It was about 2 ½ or 3 cubits long [114.3-137.16 cms. / 3'9"-4.5']. They hit me on the car road at the sentry hut at H—. It was because I was the village head and they questioned me. They ordered me to lie on my stomach. They then hit me on my backbone, my buttocks and also on my calves." - "Saw Pa Aye" (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #18, 4/01)

"It was because they couldn't demand enough porters from me. They demanded five porters but I couldn't find them, so they dried me in the sun. They put me out in the sun from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

They almost beat me but they didn't." - "Saw Ra Doh", (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #199, 6/00)

"It was because the people [KNLA] came to shoot them. They [the KNLA] shelled them so the soldiers then came to call us and immediately put us in cells. They ordered me but I wasn't at home. I was in the jungle. When I came back I went to meet them. When I went they immediately put me in the cell. They didn't do anything else." - "Pa Tray" (M, 51), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #222, 4/01)

"They demanded money and said they would release us. If we didn't give them money they wouldn't release us. At first they were going to kill us, but the village head vouched for us so they weren't going to kill us anymore. They released us and demanded money. My family had to pay it for me." - "Po Lah" (M, 25), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #12, 4/01)

Villagers are also arrested for being out of their villages without passes or for suspected contact with the resistance. Beatings are common after arrest. Villagers are punched, kicked and hit with a variety of objects; rifle butts, lengths of bamboo, firewood or the sticks used as whips by bullock cart drivers. After being arrested and taken to the Army camp, villagers are kept in jail cells, goat or pig pens, or cages in pits in the ground, depending on the facilities at the camp where they are held. A common punishment is to lock the villagers in mediaeval-style leg stocks for prolonged periods of time. They are sometimes left in the stocks outside in the sun and rain for days or even weeks. After being in the stocks villagers usually have cuts and bruises on their ankles, and if it has been more than a week they have great difficulty walking and may suffer permanent aftereffects.

"They took a very big garden, fenced it and guarded us. We couldn't go out so we had to urinate and shit there, so all of us smelled of urine and shit. There were a lot of people in there. It was everyone who could not fulfill their [paddy] quotas. We didn't have to work for them. We just stayed there. We'd had to bring our own paddy, because they didn't feed us. We had to cook it in the garden." - "Saw Plaw Doh" (M, 25), refugee from Gko Nee village, Mone township (Interview #7, 2/00)

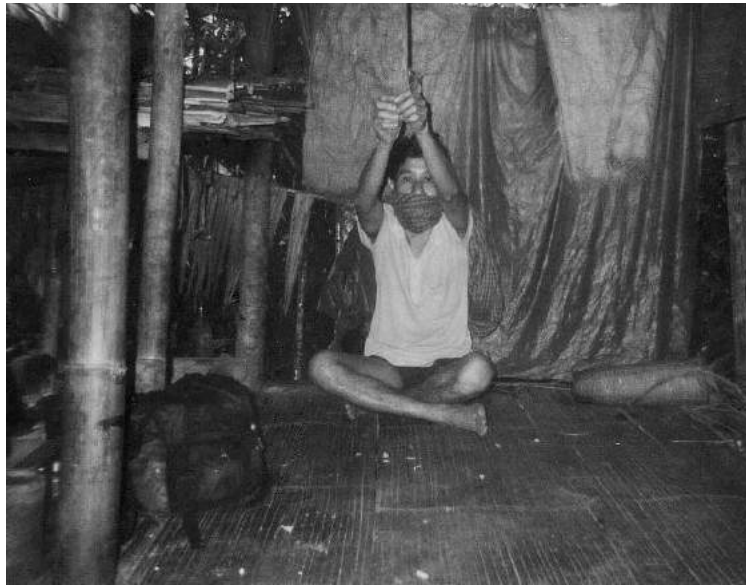
"When they put me in a cell, at first I did not understand what their reason was for capturing us. [H]e said, 'I am arresting you now because of the faults you have committed. You have reported me to outside people [KNU] and told them that I abused you, tortured people and raped women once or twice, so I am arresting you.' ... They put

six of us in a six-hole leg stock, each with one leg in, and the seventh was tied up by his arms and legs so he couldn't go to the toilet or do anything. ... We couldn't lie down or sit up and had to stay like that through the pain and discomfort. This lasted for eight days. ... During those 8 days, when he [the officer] wasn't around we dealt with the private soldiers, who were friendly with us and sometimes untied us. When we went to the toilet they followed us, and when we came back they would say, 'The commander isn't around, so take a rest and relax for a while.' ... Der! We heard him [the commander] say, 'My name has been declared as having raped and abused a woman.' The woman was Naw H—. She is single and over 20 years old. I have heard about him raping others but he has never told us, so I can't guess. ... [H]e [the Burmese commander] told us to pay 60,000 Kyat anyway. He claimed the money was also to show him respect after he was dishonoured by reports of his rape and abuse of women. He said we had to honour him [with the money] because the reports tarnished his authority and reputation and that of the entire Burmese army." - "Saw Tha Doh Wah" (M, 51), village elder from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #121, 9/99)

"[T]hey hit P— with a piece of bamboo until it broke. It was a big piece of bamboo, as big around as a wrist. It was already old but still fresh. He was hit until the bamboo broke in two. They hit P— two times with a carbine. When we arrived above N— village they punched him on the temple one time and kicked him in the back with their jungle boots twice. They hit Saw W— the same as me, but less. They punched him and hit him with the butt of their guns. They hit one of the chairmen beside his eye and poked him in the back of the neck with a gun barrel three times. When we reached T— they kicked him and stomped on him once. His hands were bound behind him so when they kicked him he fell down on his face and they stomped on him. I saw him, but I dared not look." - "Pa Noh Day" (M, 42), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #15, 4/01)

"[W]e saw them hit him at A—. The Burmese also punched me because I tried to tell them that he didn't do evil things. They punched me and I fell down because there was too much pain in my chest. When I went to follow him later, my chest still hurt. The Burmese hit my breast and my breast was in too much pain. They hit me just one time because I went to them. Maybe they would say that I didn't respect them." - "Naw Paw Eh" (F, 50), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #16, 4/01); her son had been arrested under suspicion of being KNLA and hiding his gun, though he was just a village farmer. He was later executed.

"They arrested me when I was coming home and it was already night. When I came back I didn't know they were staying near my house. They called me and ordered me to lay face down and they tied my wrists behind my back and stomped on me. They tied me with a bicycle chain. He took me to near my Auntie's house because a bullock cart was there and when he saw the stick for the bullock [a long stick used like a whip] he immediately beat me. He kicked my face too.



A villager from southern Papun District showing how he was tied and gagged by the SPDC officer who beat him. After seven days of forced portering he was ordered to produce a gun. When he could not he was tied up, gagged and beaten. He was kept tied up for 3 hours until the Battalion Commander arrived and ordered him released. [KHRG]

When he saw I had used a fire he hit me with a gun [villagers are forbidden to use torchlights so they sometimes use fire torches]. They kicked me and I fell down. They tied me and ordered me to walk but I couldn't walk." - "Saw Thay Myo" (M, 30), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #21, 4/01)

Sometimes the abuse stops with the beatings, but it can continue with other forms of torture. Soldiers sometimes place plastic bags over the heads of villagers to partially suffocate them, but more commonly they use nylon bags or pieces of nylon for this purpose. This is more convenient than plastic because it can be left covering the victim's face during interrogation. The victim can suck a small amount of air through the nylon until the soldiers pour water over it, making it temporarily air-tight and suffocating the person until the water runs off and air can pass through the nylon again. One villager from Dweh Loh township who suffered this told KHRG he was held down and punched in the sides while they poured water over the cloth covering his mouth. He repeatedly passed out, but was revived and the torture repeated. Another

form of torture is to scrape a person with a knife and then rub salt into the wounds or to poke the person with a knife until they bleed. A few villagers have told of being burned with fire, one of whom spoke of having petrol poured over his chest which was then lit. One village head told KHRG the SPDC officer told his soldiers as though instructing them, "I must show you what we do to the village head." He then wrapped the man's head in nylon and told them, "Later if you can't question and get results from the village head, you must do like this. I will show you."

Questions are asked in between bouts of torture. Giving honest answers is not good enough, particularly if one doesn't know anything; the victim must give the answer the interrogator wants to hear. This is especially the case when they are questioned about having guns or walkie-talkies. Villagers often end up lying and 'admitting' that they have a gun or walkie-talkie so the torture will stop, only to be executed for 'confessing'. In cases like this, however, the soldiers usually know the person is completely innocent and release him after torture. Release often comes after the intervention of the village head and the paying of a substantial bribe. Villagers have had to pay as much as 200,000 Kyat to secure the release of an arrested villager. In many cases it is clear that soldiers have arrested and tortured villagers knowing they are totally innocent, simply to extract a large ransom.

"I had to send information [to the SPDC camp] and along the way we met them [SPDC soldiers]. We tried to give them [the soldiers] money but they didn't like it. Pu L— and I talked together and thought there was no need to worry about the way from here to W— [village]. He [the SPDC officer] asked me about the information [about the activities of the KNU or KNLA around his village] and I told him a little bit. He didn't continue asking me anything. He stood and looked at one of his soldiers and said, 'You don't know and you don't understand. I must show you what we do to the village head.' He then wrapped my whole face, head and neck [in a nylon bag]. He told his soldiers how to do things like this because they don't really know what to do or understand. He said, 'Later if you can't question and get results from the village head, you must do like this. I will show you.' Then he ordered me to lie down and he wrapped me. He wrapped my head and didn't ask anything else. I could breathe a little bit, but if he had wrapped my face for a long time, I couldn't have felt anything. The nylon bag was

very thick. When they took it off, I had to try to breathe because I was tired. He asked me, ‘Do you feel tired?’ I would have died if it lasted a long time. When he wrapped my head, it was torture. He didn’t have any unusual questions for me. There was no need to wrap me when I didn’t answer. I think they might go and do this [kind of torture] to others.” - “Maung Than” (M, 40), village headman from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #205, 8/00)

“They took me and put me in a goat pen. They didn’t give me food or water the whole day. They also didn’t release me to go home. I had to stay in the goat pen for a while. After a while they got rice to eat, but I didn’t get any. After they ate they took me to the river. They took me half way and then they covered my face. After covering my face we went down to the river. When we got there they ordered me to sit down. They then took a one gallon drum and tied me to it and forced me to lie down. They poured water into my mouth and held my nose closed, so I had to drink the water. ... It was very bad. After they poured the water in my mouth, they woke me up [he had lost consciousness]. I felt half-dead and half-alive. Three of them then stepped on my stomach and the water came out. That is when I regained consciousness and woke up. When I had regained consciousness they questioned me. I told them I hadn’t seen their [the KNU’s] place. Then they said, ‘You are a relative of the Nga Pway [‘Ringworm’; derogatory SPDC slang for the KNU/KNLA]. You must find two guns for us. If you can’t find them we will kill you.’ I couldn’t tell them anything so they did it to me again, time after time. They forced me to lie down again and poured water in my mouth and nose two, three, four or ten times. I don’t remember because I lost

consciousness. When I regained consciousness they poured petrol on my chest and lit it. I squirmed around, but I couldn’t do anything. When I regained consciousness, I smelled bad.” - “Saw Plaw Poh” (M, 30), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #181, 2/00)

“When I slept they were talking slowly. I thought they were going to kill me. I guessed it. I was thinking and afraid. He [the commander or intelligence officer] told one of the sentries, ‘Watch this man, he will flee and escape. He will take your gun.’ I didn’t dare do that. I told the sentry I would go to shit. He told me to go. I was afraid they would do something to me when I arrived at K—. I was worried because there were many of my friends but they took only me [he was the only one the soldiers took of the five people arrested]. I wasn’t sure what they would do to me because I don’t believe the Burmese. Then I ran and ran. The sentry lit two torchlights and I ran quickly because I thought they were following me. I ran and fell down in the mud when I arrived at the car road. It is the old car road from below T—, the cars haven’t come on it for many years. I fell three or four times. When I stood up I was confused about the way. I couldn’t find the path.” - “Saw Lah Thaw” (M, 42), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #158, 2/01)

“I came down to carry and sell goods. There was a wedding celebration so I visited it and sold some goods. The soldiers came to me in the village and called me. The commander called me and told me to send them [to show the soldiers the way]. I sent them along the road but they didn’t like it. He asked me to send them another way through the bushes. He didn’t like it when I went through the dark bushes and he didn’t like it when

A villager demonstrates one of the positions the SPDC soldiers tied him in while they beat him; note the cloth placed over his head so he could not see the blows coming. [KHRG]



I went through the fields. He scolded me but I kept going. When we arrived at the village I told him, 'Thu Ko [officer], I can't do it. I sent you on the way to N—. Please release me.' He didn't release me and said, 'Nga lo ma ['I fuck your mother'], you can't help us.' Then he punched me one time. He then took a long piece of bamboo and hit me one time on my head. That bamboo was over one armspan long with a hole at the top and the other end was broken. He hit me with his right hand. His Thra [Karen term used for Non-Commissioned Officers] called me and when I went to him he punched me. The first one who beat me was the commander. I don't know his name, the people call him 'Pa Pay Kaw' ['The Neck Mover'] because he is always moving his neck when he goes among the people. His NCO beat me two times and the commander beat and punched me one time in the front. It was with the right hand, the same one he used to hit me with the bamboo. The NCO with two chevrons

[corporal] also beat me with his right hand. They didn't kick me. ... They arrested me on the 5th [February 2001] in the afternoon at about 1 p.m. ... An NCO who was carrying a #7 [launcher for RPG 7 rocket-propelled grenades] punched my nose and it bled. Then I told them, 'If I die or live, I am without hope.' I told them, 'I will run. I am a villager. If you torture me seriously, I can't endure it. I will run. If I don't run I will die, so it is hopeless. If I die or live, I am without hope.' I took my bag and ran away in front of them. When I ran they were behind me and shouted at me but I didn't care. They shot at my back with their guns. They shot at me many times and I was hit in my buttock. I didn't fall down. I kept running and bleeding from my nose and buttock. They shot at me until they finished own or two magazines. When they thought I had escaped they fired two small mortar shells." - "Htaw Say" (M, 43), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #210, 2/01)

Falsely Accused

"At first when they captured me they asked me, 'Where do you live?' I told them that I lived in M— and that I had gone to walk to the Bu Loh Kloh [the Bilin River]. They looked at me and didn't believe me so they ordered me to follow them and said they would release me when we arrived at W—. When we arrived at W— the Battalion Commander's group [his staff] met three people from M— and they immediately accused me of being the joint-secretary [of a resistance group]. I told them I wasn't. Soon after that they [the soldiers] bound me and went to interrogate me in another person's house. They tied me, wrapped my head [in a nylon cloth or bag] and forced me to drink water. Two of them stood on me, two of them punched my sides and one of them squeezed my neck while another one poured water into my nose. After that torture they asked me how many friends I have [meaning KNU friends]. I answered them that I have no friends, I am just a villager. I was doing nothing. They still didn't believe me and tortured me. Some of them punched me, some of them squeezed my neck and one of them poured water into my nose. After that they asked me, 'Where are your gun and your walkie-talkie.' They said I must have them. They ordered me to go and find them. I told them I had nothing. I couldn't find a gun because I am a villager. Then they unwrapped my head and ordered me to tell them [information]. I told them I couldn't tell them anything. 'You wrapped my head and I couldn't breathe.' Then they ordered me to tell them again, but I didn't tell them anything, so they wrapped my head again and two of them stood on me and two of them punched my sides. They poured water on my head and my head was wet. One of them poured water in my nose. Then I asked them, 'If I told you I had those things and then I couldn't find them for you what would you do to me?' They said that there was no way I couldn't find them. "You must have them."

Then I lied to them and said, 'Yes, I have them.' I couldn't endure this anymore. Then they took me and I went near U K—'s field and they searched for the gun there. They couldn't find anything. Then they told me, 'You said there is a gun here but now we have come and we don't see anything, so you have lied to us.' Then I said to them, 'I just told you I don't have a gun, but you didn't believe me. Now you are going to torture me again.' Then they wrapped my head in nylon again, made me drink water and punched me. U K— saw me when they were torturing me. I told them, 'If you don't believe me go and ask U K—.' Then they went to call U K— and ask him. U K— told them there was nothing there. I didn't know how to speak to them so I lied to them.

Then they took me down and asked me about H—. They said, 'You live in M—, you must know H—.' I told them I didn't know H—. I just knew that H— was one of the volunteer village heads [a KNU village head]. They said that H— was over 40 years old. 'I mean H—, the one who works together with you. The people who work together with you are H—, S—, N—, and P—. All these people work

"I saw them take and tie up four other men. They said they had captured the Nga Pway ['Ringworms', SPDC slang for KNU/KNLA]. They were all villagers from B---. ... Because a battle had occurred. The KNU and SPDC had met and shot at each other, then the soldiers said that they could arrest the Nga Pway. They said it was the villagers' fault [that the battle had occurred]. They tortured many people including these four men. They are H—, P—, P— and M—. The soldiers said the people [the KNLA] had gone very close to their camp and shot at them. It was near their work place [probably a battalion farm or other money-generation project]. They said that the villagers welcomed the KNU and fed the KNU like their relatives. ... They kicked, punched and slapped their faces. They tied them like that for one day. ... They released them when they met the village headman." - "Saw Pah Baw" (M, 32), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #201, 6/00)

"[H]e pulled me up into the tree [they had a rope slung over a branch and pulled him off the ground] so I was hanging by my neck, and I struggled and struggled until they let up on the rope. They kept doing it like they were going to kill me, because he wanted the answers. They hoisted me up like that two or three times. They touched me with the barrels of their guns and beat me with their gun butts a lot, and they flipped my body upside down and rightside up again and again. They kept poking the front of my body with a knife until it almost bled. Blood was coming out of my nose and mouth, and one of them took an empty milk tin and caught my blood in it, until the milk tin was full. Then they took a plastic sheet and tied it tightly around my neck, and they pulled the edges up around my head so it was like a container. Then they poured boiled water and cold water into it time and time again, until the water came up over my mouth and nose and I couldn't breathe,

together with you.' I told them that I didn't work together with anybody. They said, 'Don't lie to me. You are the Secretary of the organisation.' Then I told them I was not the Secretary of any organisation. So they said, 'You live in M—, you must know H—. Do you know his hill field? You must know it.' So they pushed my head down into the water and forced me to drink water. They said, 'We don't like you to answer that you don't know. H—'s hut is there beside the river. He goes up to the river to carry water from the river.' Then they said, 'If H— is there when we go what are we going to do to you?' I said, 'If you see H— when you go there then kill me.' Then they went to H—'s house and didn't see H—. They didn't believe me so I told them that H— had already fled since the time that #63 [IB] came, because he was just a villager. Then they accused me again, 'You reported me to the BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation, shortwave Burmese language news] and the BBC announced it on the radio. Didn't you hear about that?' They said that the BBC announcement had talked about #63 coming and harming people. The said, 'You are the one who reported us.' I told them it wasn't true but they still tortured me. ...

They went to see H— but they didn't see H— so they wrapped his wife's head in nylon and asked her, 'Where does your husband keep his gun?' Because she was a woman and pregnant she couldn't bear it and said that her husband kept his guns over here and over there. But the SPDC couldn't find them. They asked her, 'Where is your husband?' She answered that he had already fled. They didn't believe her and ordered her to search for her husband. Then they wrapped her head and poured water in her nose until she could no longer bear it. She went to show them at P—'s hut. Then they asked me, 'Whose hut is it?' I answered them that this was the hut and hill field of people from K—. After that they came directly back to the person's house in W—. They also took K—'s wife when they went. Her name is M—. They punched me when I spoke up for her. I told them they were abusing her even though she hadn't done anything. She has a little baby and doesn't go anywhere, so she doesn't know anything. They said, 'It is not your business.' And they punched me one time.

When they took me with them they wrapped my head and I couldn't breathe very well. After we arrived there they didn't ask me any questions and didn't do anything to me. ... There were villagers around my village who were tortured before me and there were some people who were tortured at the same time as me. The soldiers spoke like they are going to torture people like this in every village. They spoke like that."

["Pa Taw Thu" (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #152, 12/00)]

and then I struggled and struggled, and I ruined one or two plastic sheets. I was still tied up at that time, and I struggled a lot. I tried to pull it between my knees, and I bit it with my teeth, and I tried to kick up to it with my foot, and it broke and the water spilled out. Then they stopped for a while, and he said, 'We did that because you weren't being honest with us. Now we've stopped, so tell us the truth. If you don't tell us we'll do it again, and this time we'll keep doing it until we kill you.'"
 - "Saw Eh K'Lu" (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #163, 6/99)

"I am a farmer. On the morning of May 10th 1999, my wife packed some rice for me and I took the rice packet to my field to plough the field and take care of our cow. When I was already far from the village, the Burmese saw me and called me over. I was afraid, so I went as they asked. When I got to them, they didn't ask me anything, but immediately punched me on my chin. Then he still didn't say anything, and I looked at his face. He punched me once in my ribs, it hurt a lot and I fell down. Then he looked down on me and said, 'Don't you know that people aren't allowed to look me in the face?' ... Then they searched my basket and saw my rice pack and chili paste. They accused me that I was taking it to the KNLA. I told them that I was going to my flat paddy-field and that I was taking it for myself, but they said I was lying to them and that they already knew from before that I was in contact with the KNLA. They punched and beat me. I can't count the number of times they beat, punched and kicked me. When I regained consciousness I heard the commander say, 'This man is not useful, kill him.' I was still laying on the ground, and I heard a sound like thunder in my head and I lost consciousness again. At the time, I didn't know where my heart was going. The Burmese soldiers thought that I was dead and left me there. At 5 p.m., I regained consciousness again. I heard my wife crying, and many people were sitting near me. Later when I got better, I saw 4 knife wounds on my body, head, neck, ribs and back."
 - "Saw Htay Mu" (M, 25), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #6, 6/99); describing an encounter with a Sa Thon Lon execution squad

"They accused me of having a gun and walkie-talkie and questioned me about my gun and walkie-talkie. I told them I am just a villager, I didn't have a gun or walkie-talkie. So they pushed me down into the water and scraped me with a knife and hit me hard. Even though I didn't have a gun I had to tell them I did have a gun. I couldn't endure it anymore so I had to say I had a gun. They then pushed me down into the water again four times and then released me. They kept me for four days. ... My body was full of wounds. I didn't dare to look at it anymore. Even they [the

soldiers] didn't dare to look at it anymore. When they sent me to the Ko Per Baw [DKBA] I didn't have any clothes. There were wounds on my back and on my chest. When I arrived there [to the DKBA's place] one of the officers [DKBA officers] gave me a shirt to wear and told me, 'If you arrive back home, send my shirt back.' When I took off the shirt before I went home he saw a lot of wounds on my body and maybe he thought it didn't look good, so he gave me one shirt and said, 'Wear it when you go back.' There were also wounds on my ankles because they put me in the stocks."
 - "Saw Nyi Nyi" (M, 37), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

Some of the abuse has become almost routine, and villagers are punched or hit for almost anything. Many Karens in the area can't speak Burmese or have only a very basic knowledge of it, but people are routinely slapped or kicked for not understanding the soldiers when they request something. Threats of abuse or death are also used. Villagers are commonly threatened with having their whole village burned and all the inhabitants killed if fighting occurs or a landmine explodes near their village. The near and distant relatives of known KNU or KNLA people are regularly harassed by both the SPDC and DKBA, particularly after there have been any engagements with the KNLA. Soldiers have also been known to fire their weapons when they come to demand porters or when they are drunk, simply to intimidate the villagers. Villagers are also poked with guns and threatened whenever the soldiers come to steal chickens and pigs, or when the soldiers want information.

"The soldiers said that if the people [KNLA] shot at them close to the villages, they would shoot [at the villagers]. Right now the people haven't shot at them yet. They said if the people shoot at them close to a village then they will not keep any of the villages nearby [they will burn and relocate them]. They are going to shoot everyone. I heard them say that but they haven't done it yet. It is a worry for the future."
 - "Saw Kaw Kwee" (M, 23), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #212, 3/01)

"They also come to the village and order me to collect 5 or 10 porters for them, and they only give me 5 minutes to do it. If it takes me longer than 5 minutes, they start firing their guns in the village. They've done this to me twice since I have been village head. The first time they fired off a pistol, and the second time it was a carbine [M1 rifle]. The first time was because they couldn't get anyone for 'loh ah pay', and the second time was because the people they demanded didn't come quickly enough. The first time, people were holding the Ka Daw Pway festival [a Buddhist festival] so they didn't come right away, so he fired off his pistol until the leaves of the trees were

falling. He fired more than 10 times. It was the time when the Buddhist people were worshipping and offering their Ka Daw Pway, and all the women became afraid and almost threw away their Ka Daw Pway and ran. The Burmese didn't care about that, they just said, 'We want to eat your rice, not see your face.' That was Company Commander Bo N—." - "Mugha Thein Gyi" (F, 40+), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #165, 6/99)

"Sometimes when they force people to get this or that, the people don't understand their language. The soldiers then slap or kick them one or two times. ... When they entered in the past, they immediately poked people with their guns and called all the families down [out of their houses]. Some of them captured the poultry and ate it all. They called and gathered the villagers and asked a lot of questions. They questioned many people to get many answers. Some villagers were afraid and answered incorrectly. Sometimes, after they questioned other villagers, they came to question you again. ... They always question us a lot. When we can't answer they always say that we are contacting the Nga Pway. Sometimes we can't think and answer them when they speak like that. They said that if we lie to them they are going to kill us. We don't lie. We tell them the truth, but they don't believe us." - "Zaw Min" (M, 26), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #220, 4/01)

"[T]he unit which has come up now has said that if they know that any of their enemies have come to our village or near our village, they will treat it as the villagers' fault because the villagers didn't tell them. If the KNU comes to our village we have to let them know at once. We can't be late." - "Naw Lah K'Paw Mu" (F, 48), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #198, 6/00)

Rape carries a terrible stigma in Burmese culture and the SPDC has always reacted strongly when accused of rape in international fora. Whether for this reason or others, rape by SPDC soldiers appears to have become less prevalent since the mid-1990's. One woman interviewed for this report said that when she was portering, the officer in charge of the unit told her to make sure the older women slept among the younger ones to take care of them because "some of his soldiers were very terrible". The *Sa Thon Lon* units, however, do have a reputation for rape of young women and forced marriages, though KHRG has received fewer reports of these since 1999. Sexual abuse is also sometimes reported by children, as in the case reported to KHRG of a boy in Papun District who was molested by a soldier while doing forced labour.

"Recently there was a Baw Bi Doh [Sa Thon Lon] soldier who harassed a woman whom he liked, but people couldn't convince her to flee the village. He asked the village head to propose for him, and he said that if she didn't agree then all the villagers and the village head might be killed, and the whole village might be burned down. The woman didn't like him, so he was trying to force her to marry him. People told the woman to go and stay among the DKBA in order to avoid him. The DKBA welcomed her to stay with them, but they also liked her, so she couldn't do anything. She had to marry a DKBA soldier. If the Burmese [Baw Bi Doh] soldier knew about it, he would not have let it happen. ... He was a Baw Bi Doh commander, his name is Bo Teh Kah. He is about 30 years old. He said he is single, but we didn't know if he already had a wife in his own village." - "Saw Plaw Doh" (M, 25), refugee from Gko Nee village, Mone township (Interview #7, 2/00)

"They raped women, and we heard that there was a young woman who did not love him [a Sa Thon Lon officer], but he ordered the villagers to give her to him and said that if they didn't give her then they would all be killed. That happened at the time when Bo S--- was there, and during that time Bo S--- also got a very young Karen woman for himself, even though he is not well built or handsome and he has short legs. At that time I think he was about 30 years old." - "Saw Daniel" (M, 43), refugee from G--- village, Mone township (Interview #8, 2/00)

"On June 3rd 1999, Special Authority Guerrilla [Sa Thon Lon] commander Bo S--- raped Naw M—, age 18, daughter of Saw Y— and Naw H—, from P— village. On June 5th, he raped Naw M—, daughter of Saw H— and Naw M—, from M— village. On June 12th 1999, he raped Naw K—, age 14, daughter of Saw H— and Naw M—, from T— village. He then threatened that if news of this rape spread, he would kill all of the villagers." - field report from KHRG field researcher (Field Report #9, 8/99)

"They didn't allow them to rest. A soldier ordered one child to masturbate his penis. ... Whether he dared to touch it or not, the soldier had power over him so he had to masturbate it. He couldn't make him ejaculate, but still he had to keep doing it until noontime. ... He was a boy, 14 years old." - "Saw Thay Po" (M, 31), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #186, 4/00)

Extortion, Looting and Destruction of Property

“They eat the chickens and pigs, steal the goats and eat a lot. They don’t give payment, they steal. Some demanded things to eat. When they can’t demand, they point at the women with their guns. They are from #44 [LID #44]. The villagers dare not say anything. They will do something if the villagers speak. Even when the villagers say nothing they point at the women with their guns.” - “Htaw Say” (M, 43), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #210, 2/01)

For many of the SPDC’s officers, service in the rural areas, especially if there is no fighting, is a way of getting rich quickly. A one-year assignment in a fertile area can easily turn a profit of 5 or 10 million Kyat for a Company or Battalion Commander. This is done in several ways: using villagers and soldiers as forced labour on personal money-making projects like brick-baking, logging or fishponds; ‘deducting’ at least half the salaries of their soldiers and selling rations on the market; demanding forced labour and then collecting ‘fees’ to avoid it; arresting and ransoming village heads and villagers; and finally, through direct extortion, theft and looting. Whenever battles occur, landmines explode or trucks are destroyed, the soldiers blame the villagers and large sums of money are demanded as ‘compensation’. These demands are in the hundreds of thousands of Kyat and are usually imposed on several villages at once, accompanied by threats to relocate the villages. The villagers are also blamed when the SPDC loses a gun due to fighting or desertion and have been forced to pay as much as 100,000 to 300,000 Kyat for it. Officers frequently demand that the villagers provide them with guns so they can prove to their superiors that they have fought the KNLA and killed a ‘rebel’ and thus secure a promotion or other such reward. Most villages cannot obtain a gun and try to pay money instead; one officer who demanded a gun in Papun District ended up taking 30,000 Kyat instead when the villagers couldn’t find him a gun. A villager from Nyaunglebin District told KHRG that the soldiers demanded 150,000 Kyat for the cost of bullets they had used in a recent engagement with the KNLA. If the money wasn’t paid, the soldiers threatened to block all the paths in and out of the village and relocate it. The villagers paid, but were later forced to pay another 300,000 Kyat to avoid having their village relocated. The demands are not always for money. Villages are also forced to provide chicken, pork or other things as ‘fines’, usually after their people have fled forced labour or the SPDC has heard of KNU activity in the area of the village.

“Yes, they shot their guns at them. The SPDC retaliated very strongly against the villagers and the village head. We have to have unity in the village. If they demand money, we give them money. If they demand food, we have to give them food. We make it easy by cooperating like that.

Each time they demand 10,000 or more Kyat. If the Karen soldiers shoot at the SPDC soldiers and capture a gun, they [SPDC] demand that we give them the gun’s price. For a gun, they would demand 100,000 Kyat or even 300,000 Kyat. We had to pay the gun fee one time. Karen soldiers shot them on the main road and they [SPDC] fined us over 100,000 Kyat. At that time, our Kaw Thoo Lei people fought them along the main road and captured a carbine [M1 rifle]. They [SPDC] demanded 300,000 Kyat from K— and P—. We didn’t pay it and they told us, ‘If you don’t give us the money, you can’t stay. You will have to relocate your village.’” - “Pati Htay Htoo” (M, 35), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #189, 5/00)

“They threatened us. They said that if one landmine exploded and damaged a truck, we must give compensation for the cost of the truck. If their soldiers demand a lot of money from us, then we must suffer. There is only this way. If anything happens when we are on road sentry duty, they would burn our village. They would fine us. They said that if we couldn’t compensate them then they would put us in prison.” - “Naw Say Paw” (F, 46), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #195, 6/00)

“They said that they had given an order that if the KNU soldiers came and shot and destroyed a truck, we must pay for it. Also our village would be burned and the village head killed. The village would also be relocated. The bridges can’t be destroyed. If the bridges are destroyed they will fine us. The trucks can’t be destroyed. If the trucks are destroyed they will fine us. The main road can’t have any holes. If the main road has a hole we must fill it up with dirt.” - “Saw Ra Doh”, (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #199, 6/00)

“There are some people who can pay and some who can’t pay. Sometimes it is too difficult to pay. Like if the people [the KNLA] come back and shoot and the soldiers have to shoot back, they have to use their bullets so they fine the villagers for the cost of the bullets. We already had to pay once 150,000 Kyat. It was from the

whole village. ... If we can't pay they will block the paths and we won't be able to go up and down and they will order us to move our village. The people are afraid of them. During the rainy season, in the fifth or sixth month [May or June 2000] we had to pay one time again. That time it was 150,000 Kyat. The soldiers went together with the Ko Per Baw [DKBA] and the Guerrillas [Sa Thon Lon] and went to shoot [at the KNLA]. We had to pay for the price of the bullets and other things. In order to come back and stay in our village we also had to pay money [to be allowed to move back from the relocation site]. They demanded 300,000 for that. We haven't paid for all of it yet. There is still about 1,000 left to pay." - "Saw Nyi Nyi" (M, 37), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

"They accused us when their truck was burned. We don't know who burned the truck. We didn't see the logic, but they said because we stay in the village, if the [KNLA] people come then they must come past us so we should know. They hit both sides of my face, tied me up and put me in the stocks." - "Saw Ber Kaw" (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

"They said, 'If a battle occurs on the road while you are guarding, we won't leave your village in peace. If they attack us while you villagers are guarding the road, you villagers will have to pay us.' If a battle occurs before they've finished carrying their rations, we must pay for it if their truck is destroyed. They said, 'If it happens on the road, you must pay. If you can't pay, you can't stay in your village.'" - "Naw Ghay Paw" (F, 40), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #185, 4/00)

"The villagers went to carry loads for the KNU recently and the SPDC knew about it. They said that we hadn't let them know that we were carrying for the KNU. They fined us two viss [32 kg / 7.2 lb] of pork from each villager who went. For the two people from my village we had to pay four viss [6.4 kg / 14.4 lb]. One of their sergeants demanded to eat one viss [1.6 kg / 3.6 lb] from me, so we had to give five viss [8 kg / 18 lb] in all. One viss is 500 Kyat, so in all it was 2,500 Kyat. For chicken it is 1,000 Kyat per viss." - "Mya Aung" (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00)

Another way in which money is extorted is to arrest villagers, accuse them of helping the KNU and then threaten to kill them unless the village pays a large sum of money. Among those interviewed by KHRG for this report, one villager who was arrested in late 2000 in Papun District had to buy his life with 85,000 Kyat. Another villager in Papun District paid 200,000 Kyat to have his father released because they said

they wouldn't release him otherwise, but after taking the money they killed his father anyway. An incident occurred in 2001 in Nyaunglebin District when KNLA soldiers tried to stop a pair of bullock carts being used by the SPDC. One bullock cart was burned and another captured along with teams of bullocks. The SPDC summoned all the village heads, arrested them and accused them of assisting the KNLA. The village heads were then put in the stocks and the soldiers threatened to kill them unless the villagers compensated the soldiers with a bullock cart and two pairs of bullocks. The villagers were forced to pay.

"There are about 100 people there, just one battalion. They said that they have to come and operate here for eight months. It has now been nearly eight months. They got a lot of money and a lot of guns when they came and operated. From me alone they got 85,000 Kyat. I had to buy my life with 85,000 Kyat. If I hadn't paid it they wouldn't have let me go. ... I am just a villager, but they accused me of being Nga Pway [KNLA] and were going to kill me if I didn't pay them. They came and tortured me and accused me of being Nga Pway and demanded that the villagers redeem me. They just come and work to get money." - "Pa Taw Thu" (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #152, 12/00)

"They captured me on November 7th [2000]. They captured me on the path when I was going to the hill field beside M— village. After they captured me they accused me of being Nga Pway and asked for a gun and a walkie-talkie. I told them I had nothing. They told me it wasn't true. Then they tortured me. They wrapped my head [with a nylon cloth or bag], made me drink water and slapped my face and tied my hands behind me for one day and one night. My hands are painful because they tied me for a day and a night. After that they put me in the stocks. If they don't get a gun they must get something so they demanded money. When they demanded money people came and gave the soldiers 30,000 Kyat. After the soldiers got the money they released me. It was 30,000 Kyat and one gold watch." - "Maung Aye Kyi" (M, 25), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #153, 12/00)

"On September 6th 1999 Commander M— of Infantry Battalion #xx and Commander S— of Infantry Battalion #xx combined their troops and arrived at B— village at 2 p.m. and arrested my father, M—, in his house. At that time my father was sleeping and they woke him, then tied him immediately. They tied his hands behind his back and tied his neck, then punched him and beat him with a gun. After that they pulled him to the road. The next morning the village head went to see DKBA commander K— of Brigade #xxx. He demanded 200,000 Kyat for the release of my father.

He said that if the village head didn't pay the money he wouldn't release him. ... [T]hey sold their cattle and buffaloes and paid money to the village head to hand to K—. After the village head paid him 200,000 Kyat, he didn't say anything, nor did he release M—. ... The SPDC Army can get money very easily. They arrest a villager and then demand money, and if people don't pay them they threaten many different things. So the villagers worry about it, and they have to do what they ask, but they never release anyone. They just kill them all. The SPDC group that came and arrested my father got 200,000 [Kyat] and killed him anyway."
 - "Saw Min Htoo" (M, 27), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #172, 9/99)

"Sometimes they order the villagers to go on our own [carrying Army supplies] and none of them come with us. So if Karen soldiers are waiting for us and take all our things, then later they [SPDC] order us to pay them money. They said that we had to pay for their rations that the KNU soldiers had taken. We've had to pay twice already, and it was a lot of money the time that people portered from Papun. I think it was over 20,000 or 30,000 Kyat, but I don't recall exactly. There are just 30 or 35 houses in the village, and every house has to pay. Whenever people [meaning opposition forces] take their things, they order us to pay them back. Once when they ordered us to carry rice for them, when they arrived at another camp they checked it and their weight of rice was not the same as before. Some of their rice had been damaged when insects attacked it, and they ordered us to come back and replace it with our own rice. It wasn't just my village, but different villagers who went to carry for them had to replace it with their own rice. They accused us of eating it."
 - "Saw Doh" (M, 30), refugee from K--- village, Bu Tho township (Interview #218, 4/00)

"[I]t was our siblings [the KNLA] who came back and they took two bullock carts. The KNLA told them to stop, but they didn't stop and continued to drive the bullock carts. The soldiers shot at them so they left the bullock carts and ran away. The soldiers [SPDC] aren't happy about this. ... [B]ecause they left the bullock carts and ran away when the soldiers tried to stop them, the soldiers [KNLA] burned one bullock cart and took the four bullocks and the other cart. ... The people who burned the mill in the lower place and who burned the truck was them [the KNLA] but we don't like to tell about them. They said the people [the KNU] burned the truck in the L— area and that the people burned the bullock cart also in the L— area. ... We had to find and replace the bullock cart which was lost and give two bullocks. ... In all it was one bullock cart and four bullocks. ... The next day they said, 'It is because you accepted the people

like that so we are taking our revenge by making you replace this."
 - "Saw Ber Kaw" (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

Whenever an Army unit leaves after visiting a village, some of the villagers will probably be missing chickens, pigs and other belongings. Some officers seem to have better control over their soldiers than others, but in general looting is a regular occurrence. Many officers make the situation worse by stealing and selling the rations meant for their troops, leaving them little option but to steal to eat. Deserters from the SPDC Army have on many occasions told KHRG that they knew it was wrong to steal the villagers' livestock and even that it made them ashamed, but that they had no choice because they were starving. The situation has also worsened since the SPDC leadership found it could no longer feed its expanding Army, so in 1998 it cut back on rations to most units and ordered them to grow their own food or take it from the villages. The chickens and pigs are sometimes stolen at night, but are also stolen at gunpoint while the officers look on. Sometimes this is done even after the villagers have already arranged a meal for the soldiers. Villagers interviewed by KHRG have said there is nothing they can say about it to the soldiers even if they dared to. Villagers who have tried to speak to the officers have only been given empty promises of punishment or reimbursement, or been told that the villager should talk to the soldiers.

"When we went and entered villages, they shot the villagers' poultry. Sometimes the people [KNLA] shot at them near a village and then when the SPDC got to the village, they glared at the villagers and shot the women's chickens. The women shouted at them but it did no good. If the women shouted, they pointed their guns at them or pulled them and beat them. They were beaten with a pole. ... When they entered the village, sometimes when they couldn't get the villagers' chickens and pigs, they shot at the villagers' hands and feet to frighten them. I saw them burn one village and threaten all the villagers. It was D— village. They also burned down three paddy barns."
 - "Saw Shwe" (M, 36) villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #191, 5/00), describing what he saw when portering with SPDC columns

"They shoot and eat poultry and steal the villagers' pigs. We've seen this with our own eyes. They don't give any payment. The people who steal like that never pay for anything. If the commander is no good, the soldiers are not good either. ... I think that it is because of the commander that the soldiers steal. The commanders don't scold them or say anything to them. Sometimes the village head says, 'Commander, your soldiers are stealing things', but he doesn't care. Some of the

Commander's friends [soldiers] were shooting chickens right in front of him and he said nothing to them. I guess they are all the same." - "Kyaw Po" (M, 45), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #192, 6/00)

"They shoot the chickens and eat them. I can't count how many. The cost must be in the tens of thousands of Kyat. One viss [1.6 kg / 3.6 lb] of chicken is 1,000 Kyat and one viss of pork is 500 Kyat." - "Saw Ra Doh", (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #199, 6/00)

"They eat the rice and everything. Also the animals such as piglets and chickens. We arrange some for their arrival, but the soldiers come and eat even more behind the backs of their commanders. Sometimes we civilians see it but we don't dare tell. We don't know what they will do to us if we tell them." - "Saw Tha Htwe" (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #206, 9/00)

"They do it every time. Yesterday they caught many of the people's chickens. They caught over 10 chickens. I don't know who owned them, they ate chickens belonging to all the people in the village. They ate them really. ... They took the people's belongings. They went in the people's houses and took them. The owners complained to them so the soldiers beat on the sides of the houses and pointed with their guns. The people dared not say anything. They threw the villagers' chickens around and the owners couldn't say anything. ... They took them freely and pointed at people with guns. You must stay quietly and don't complain to them. You don't say anything about the price. We dare not ask them. If you ask them they won't give it to you. They will show us their guns if we ask them." - "Saw Kaw Kwee" (M, 23), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #212, 3/01)

"Sometimes they called us to go in an emergency and to enter and clear a village. They asked us to kill the chickens and pigs. As a group we did this, but I never did it alone. I killed one pig in Paw Hta village. There all the soldiers stole chickens. They also beat to death one cat. The old sergeant beat the cat." - "Saw Tha Ku" (M, 21), Private from Infantry Battalion #xx, Papun District (Interview #225, 3/00)

"They come at least once or twice a day to find food in the village. One camp is in T---, and the other is in K--- [K---]. There are two camps and our village is between them. They come to our village to find chicken, pigs and things. They don't buy them, they just shoot them and eat them. They demand some from the village head, but if

he doesn't give them, they just steal them. When the village head is forced to give them, we have to pay for them." - "Naw K'Paw" (F, 45), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #184, 4/00)

Apart from livestock, soldiers also go up into villagers' houses and take pots, plates, spoons, blankets and clothing. The villagers' only form of 'savings' in a monetary sense usually exists in small items of gold jewellery they have bought and passed down through the family, and the soldiers are quick to steal these, sometimes even pulling earrings out of women's ears. While taking his things, the soldiers told one village head that they were taking them because they were the belongings of the 'Ringworms' (KNU/KNLA). Nothing is ever paid in compensation for the valuables looted by the soldiers. Some of what is taken is used by the soldiers who are poor themselves or sent to their families, and the rest is sold for their own personal profit. Villagers are often amazed at the lack of shame of soldiers who steal their spoons and try to sell them in the next village, or steal women's clothing to send to their wives.

"They took pots, plates and many things from the villagers. They didn't pay anything. They took these things and said that they belonged to the Nga Pway [derogatory slang for the KNU/KNLA]. They spoke like that. When the villagers fled, the soldiers said they were all Nga Pway, but they were villagers. They said we were Nga Pway and had lied to them. They said, 'This house is a Nga Pway house. They come down here.' They took all the pots, plates, sarongs, clothes and blankets. They left nothing. They also took all the rice." - "Zaw Min" (M, 26), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #220, 4/01)

Villagers who are growing fruit trees or betelnut trees have seen their fruit and betelnut stolen by the soldiers. Villagers say that the soldiers sometimes don't even bother to climb the trees but just cut the branches down to get the fruit, destroying the tree in the process. Rice storage barns are also sometimes looted. A villager from Nyaunglebin spoke of seeing 300 baskets of paddy (rice still in the husk) looted from her village then loaded onto a truck and taken away. The paddy was probably taken away to be sold elsewhere.

"During March 1999 they went to loot paddy from another village and they asked us to go and carry that paddy for them. Sa Ka #xx, Battalion #xxx, asked us to do this. It was in the S--- area. There were 3 paddy barns, one belonged to N---, whom the Burmese shot dead recently. There were 300 baskets of paddy. They asked us to carry it and keep it under the monastery. We thought that they would donate it to the monks, but they didn't

donate it. Later their trucks arrived and they carried it to Ler Doh [a.k.a. Kyauk Kyi]." - "Saw Shwe Pa" (M, 37), villager from xxxx village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #73, 3/00)

"They also eat people's coconuts and dogfruit. They don't ask for those kinds of things from the owners, they just eat them when they see them, as they like. They often cut the branches off the dogfruit trees just to get the fruit." - "Pu Kyaw" (M, 55), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #116, 7/99)

"They have come to take people's rice to eat. I know of one time. They took rice from four or five houses in the village. They also took my rice, 5½ baskets [138.5 kg / 302.5 lb]. They didn't ask, they just came in and took it. They took it by force. We were in the house but we dared not say anything." - "Saw Pa Aye" (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #18, 4/01)

Villagers have had their fields and plantations destroyed by the soldiers and are never compensated for it. A villager in Papun District watched as the soldiers destroyed his banana plantation so they could build a storehouse for their rice. The soldiers denied doing it when he spoke to them about it. Another villager told KHRG that the coconut trees planted by the villagers along the car road had been cut down by the soldiers to widen the car road. Again no compensation was given. The villagers count on these crops to be able to sell them to have enough money to buy rice and to pay all the fees demanded of them.

"On September 22nd 2000, Infantry Battalion #xxx under K--- came and cut them down because they wanted to build a godown [a small warehouse] to store rice for their soldiers. They cut it all down. They carried the leaves and roofed the godown with them so it would be dry. They built a new

godown and ordered the people to cut off the leaves [of his banana trees] for them. They didn't pay. They also cut some from the plantation themselves. ... The plantation was about three acres. I could sell one or two thousand bananas because they had a good price. I can't do anything now because they cut them all down. They also ate all of my betelnut and also our chillies. They pulled up the [chillie] bushes that I had planted last year and ate all of the chillies. I haven't eaten any. ... They took all of the things from my hut. They left only the roof. I repaired my garden and they broke it again. After we finished cutting [the bamboo] and tying it together, they untied it and took it all to build their hut. We tied it again and they destroyed it and took it again. We couldn't do it again. When I went to them and spoke to them, they said, 'Let's see, we live in your garden and we destroy nothing.' They took all the planks off of my house. Nothing was left, just the bare ground [when interviewed he was going back secretly to his village to tend his crops, and the SPDC soldiers had dismantled his old house]. They told me they destroyed nothing. That time when I went to carry cane, they told me, 'We have looked after your hut responsibly. Look at it.' They had destroyed it all. There was no fruit left. I just started growing them again. There was nothing left. They never pay for anything. If it is possible we have to pay them." - "Aung Baw" (M, 50) villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #148, 10/00)

"The villagers have planted their coconut trees near the side of the road. If they [the SPDC] enlarge the road for cars [it is presently a dry season dirt road and the SPDC may be starting to improve it] they will have to cut down all the coconut trees there. They have already cut down over 50 coconut trees. The SPDC didn't give any compensation for this. ... They started to build it

in June [2000] and it isn't finished yet." - "Saw Tha Wah" (M, 42), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #146, 9/00)



Villagers in Dweh Loh township who were forced to move to a relocation site, but later fled back to the area of their village because of the harsh conditions in the site. [KHRG]

Demands for Food and Money

"The SPDC, if possible, I don't want to see their faces at all. They eat. They demand things to eat. When they can't demand, they point at us with guns. When they can't demand they steal. When they can't steal they are angry. The villagers are afraid and have to feed them." - "Htaw Say" (M, 43), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #210, 2/01)

"They demand that we help them. Sometimes they demand to eat chicken, fruit, coconuts, sticky-rice, and pork, and we have to give it all to them. They demand thatch, money, and rice, and we have to give it all. We can't do it, but we must. If the villagers don't give it to them, they have their weapons and they come to threaten us, so we must give." - "Naw Wah Wah" (F, 41), refugee from B--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #182, 4/00)

Demands for food and money are almost constant. Village heads receive demands for chickens, pigs, rice, bamboo, thatch and even things like mosquito nets. Money is demanded as spending money for the soldiers, to facilitate 'development' projects, for festivals which may or may not happen, to pay the costs of entertaining visiting Army officers, or under any number of real or imaginary guises. A village head in Nyaunglebin District explained to KHRG that if the demands are not met the letters come again, the second time in red ink. He also mentioned that in addition to the formal demand orders there are also more informal handwritten orders. The handwritten letters usually consist of requests for pork for the officers' dinner or other items which cannot be demanded officially. In some areas these demands come from the SPDC soldiers, the *Sa Thon Lon* soldiers and the DKBA all at the same time, making it very difficult to comply with all of them.

"There are three groups that demand to eat [to be paid money]; the Ko Per Baw demands to eat, the Guerrillas demand to eat and the columns also demand to eat. We don't need to pay every month. We have to pay when they ask." - "Saw Nyi Nyi" (M, 37), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

"They send orders to the villages. They order curries and we have to send them. Here at E—camp we have to give them five curries each month, every month. They demand it from all the villages in the tract. If we cannot give it to them their letters arrive in red ink, not blue. Even if there are not regular orders there are still other orders [some orders are typed and official while others are hand written on notebook paper]. Like the last time when they had to buy mosquito nets, we had to pay for them. We have to give them everything they need." - "Saw Ber Kaw" (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

Soldiers demand chicken, pork, rice, fruit, vegetables, cheroots, alcohol, chillies, fishpaste, salt and even

cooking oil and seasoning crystals. Sometimes the village head receives a written order to send pork or chicken to the local Army camp. Other times it is for a cooked curry. In some areas there is actually something of a system where the villages take turns sending curries to the Army camp. If the villagers no longer have chickens or pigs the village head must find it and give it to the soldiers, even if it means going to another village and buying it. A village headwoman from Papun District told KHRG how she had to search for a chicken in the night, with her husband following her and carrying their crying baby, because the soldiers had demanded it. Some of the things demanded are later sold by the soldiers for their own profit. A villager in Papun District saw the soldiers come and demand three big tins of rice [37.5 kg / 81 lb] which they then took and sold by the bowl [1.7 kg / 3.4 lb] elsewhere. Salaries were increased for the soldiers in April 2000 but at least one villager who knew about the salary increase said that it resulted in no change in their stealing and demands. A villager in Papun District reported to KHRG that the soldiers came and demanded rice from her village because they ran out of rice after selling off all of their rationed rice.

"The villagers had to give it to them for free. They demanded to eat our rice for free too. And salt and fishpaste. They demanded everything - even cooking oil and chili paste. There was nothing that they didn't demand." - "Saw Tee Maung" (M, xx), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #133, 5/00)

"In October or November 1999, the guerrillas [Sa Thon Lon] forced the villagers to kill a pig. It was about 20 viss [32kg/70lb]. They ate some and told the villagers to sell the rest. They only wanted to eat a little, but they forced the villagers to kill a whole pig. The villagers wanted to give chickens and ducks to them, but they wouldn't allow it. They demanded a pig, so the villagers had to give a pig. They are like this." - "Saw Mu Wah" (M, 40), refugee from K--- village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #9, 4/00)

“Sometimes they came around and demanded rice because they had sold all of their rations, and then if they were out of rice before their next ration shipment they collected it from the villagers. ... We didn’t know or see whomever they sold them to. ... Maybe if the villagers knew the answer, the villagers with money could have bought some of it. Then maybe it would have been a bit easier when they ordered us to feed them, because it was very expensive to buy rice from outside and sometimes they sell theirs for a little bit less.” -

“Naw Say Muh” (F, 54), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #203, 7/00)

“They came and demanded some and I gave them three chickens. One was 50 tha [816 grams / 1.8 lb]. The other one was 30 tha [490 grams / 1.2 lb] and the third was over one viss [1.6 kg / 3.6

lb], because it was a cock. One viss of chicken is worth 1,000 Kyat. They haven’t stolen any pigs. When Division #44 came they immediately ordered me to give them one pig. They took 10 viss [16 kg / 36 lb] of pork and paid only 250 Kyat per viss. In the village, the villagers sell one viss for 500 Kyat. It makes trouble because the rest of the villagers have to pay some money to the owner of the lost pork [to compensate him/her]. If we don’t pay them, they don’t have food and they can’t breed animals for selling. They breed one or two pigs and had to give those, so we had to give it [monetary compensation] back to them.” -
“Naw Eh Kri Mu” (F, 34), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #196, 6/00)

“They came and demanded three big tins of rice [37.5 kg / 81 lb]. They called the porters and forced them to carry it and then they sold it. They sold it by the bowl [1.7 kg / 3.4 lbs]. One bowl is 100 Kyat. They gave us one Kyat for each big tin.” -
“Aung Myint Win” (M, 40), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #200, 6/00); one Kyat is nothing, a purely token payment

“We can’t say why they have to take and eat things from the village. They have recently said, ‘This year our salaries have been increased. A soldier

who got 600 Kyat before, will now receive 3,000 Kyat [per month] and a soldier who got 1,000 Kyat will now get 10,000 Kyat.’ They said their salary had been increased but there has been no change, they are still demanding things from us to eat.” -
“Mya Aung” (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00)

“Even if we don’t have food to eat, when they come we must feed them. They are the soldiers

of the government and the villagers are poor, but they still demand things from the villagers. We can’t do anything. The villagers can’t ask for food from them, we must buy it when we have money. If you don’t have money they never give you anything for free. They sell it very expensively.

They sell it at the same price as other people sell it. They never lower the price by any Kyat.” - ***“Saw Kaw Kwee”*** (M, 23), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #212, 3/01)

“He comes and demands chickens, and we have to find them for him. One time the chickens in our village were dying of a disease so we didn’t have any, but even then we had to try our best to find one until it was already night time. I am a village head but I have children, and my baby was crying. My husband had to follow me carrying my baby, and my baby was crying a lot but I couldn’t do anything about it, and I couldn’t find a chicken but I had to keep looking until I found one.” - ***“Mugha Thein Gyi”*** (F, 40+), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #165, 6/99)

“The village head says they always ask for things to eat. When the soldiers come they cook curry and ask people to catch birds and chickens and the villagers have to cook them until the oil flows [an expression meaning to put a lot of oil in the curry]. If the oil doesn’t flow then they are going to throw it away. We have to be afraid of them.” -
“Saw Pa Aye” (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #18, 4/01)

Stamp:	
Frontline #x Light Infantry Battalion Column x	26-11-2000 To: Daw aaaa (Chairperson)
<p>By the time you receive this letter, Mother’s village will have obtained 30-weight [30 viss] of pork and 3 sacks of rice for the Column. Bring to yyyy camp 30 viss of pork, whether this is one or two pigs, to arrive today. Bring the pigs alive. If it is already dark, carry a firebrand, you are informed. If [you] fail, it will be Mother Head’s responsibility, you are informed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Unsigned] (for) Column Commander LIB x, Military Operations Command</p>	

A translation of an order sent to a village in Papun District. [See Order #15 in Appendix G]

The villagers are also ordered to provide the soldiers with wood, thatch and bamboo. The soldiers use some of it to build their houses and sell the rest. The logs must be cut and delivered to Army camps using elephants or bullock carts; sometimes the villagers are additionally forced to have the logs sawn into planks first at sawmills. The villagers have to go into the forest and cut the bamboo themselves, then deliver it to the camp. To make thatch they must gather dry leaves and cut small bamboo in the forest, split the bamboo into sticks and shave the rest of it into ties, then make a bamboo frame and tie the leaves onto it, ending with a thatch 'shingle' about a metre long. Army camps routinely demand 500 or 1,000 of these shingles at a time and allow the villagers only a day or two to deliver them. These shingles are easy for the soldiers to sell in the town markets for 20 Kyat or more apiece, but the villagers are never paid for them. In one village in Papun District this year, SPDC soldiers ordered each household to buy 30 shingles of thatch which had been made in another village. The village head said that although no one wanted it they had to sell it for the soldiers.

"[L]ast month the Ko Per Baw demanded thatch and the people had to give it. They demanded 100 shingles of thatch from each village. They also demanded it from M—. They went up to N— and T— and arrived at M—. They demanded but the people didn't give it to them. They also demanded it from here but we didn't give it to them. What are we going to do? The villagers are not free. They also have to build their own houses. If we give it to them, we will also have to go and carry it to them. It makes work difficult. So they demand it, but we don't give it. They haven't said anything yet, nor have they made any

problems yet. We went to tell them [that the villagers don't have time to make the thatch] and they said there was no need [to make it]." - "Zaw Min" (M, 26), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #220, 4/01)

"Now they have asked us to sell 30 shingles of thatch to each person [the soldiers either made the shingles or more likely had another village make them and then ordered the villagers to buy them]. It was this month. We couldn't sell the thatch they sent." - "Pa Tray" (M, 51), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #222, 4/01)

"They ordered us to cut bamboo for them. Our village had to cut 1,000 pieces of bamboo for them. The village head said each house had to give 100 bamboo so we had to cut it for them. It wasn't possible to not cut it for them. There are not many houses, only 10 houses. The village head had to go and send the bamboo to them. We drifted them down by raft on the Wah Law Kloh. After the villagers cut it for them, they demanded that people cut trees for them of 10 armspans. After we cut them they ordered us to find an elephant so we found an elephant and we had to pay the wages for the elephant. We couldn't pay so we had to pull the logs together and after one or two days we still hadn't reached their camp." - "Saw Ghu" (M, 33), internally displaced villager from T— villager, Shwegyin township (Interview #112, 4/01)

The village heads also receive demands for money for various reasons. The local battalions often demand money for building projects which is in excess of what will be needed. The leftover money then goes into

In April 2001, villagers in southwestern Papun District carry bamboo poles to the riverbank to be tied into rafts and floated down to an Army camp. [KHRG]



the pockets of the officers. Sometimes the full budget for the project has been given by the State, but the officers and local authorities still use the project as an excuse to demand money from the local villages. Even when villagers are ordered to provide all the materials and labour for such projects they are still forced to donate money for the 'costs'. Money is demanded to build schools, monastic halls and government buildings, some of which are never built. A village head in Nyaunglebin District reported having to pay 37,733 Kyat for the building of a government office. Other times the soldiers ask for 'donations' to various things such as 'Battalion funds', 'development funds' and so on. Officers demand money for religious festivals, then offer it to the temple in the name of the Army. Village heads often try to ignore or argue against at least some of the demands because their villagers simply cannot pay them. Sometimes the Army relents, but if the officers insist and start making threats the villagers have no option but to comply or flee the village.

"Htun Aung called a meeting and when we went they collected money for making a hall [at the monastery]. They demanded 15,000 Kyat when we went the first time. We came back to stay and then they demanded 18,000 Kyat from us again. I don't remember the date. It was during Thadin Kyut [Burmese lunar month; September 28th - October 26th 2000]. The next time was also in Thadin Kyut. In all it was 36,000 [33,000] Kyat from M— village alone. They built the hall in M—." - "Pu Ler Ku" (M, 60), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #221, 4/01)

"Sometimes they ask for donations. Sometimes we lose the donation paper, so we don't send it heh, heh, heh, heh [laughing]. If we have to pay a little we send money to them for the least costly one [on the list]." - "Saw Nyi Nyi" (M, 37), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

"The SPDC sometimes orders me to go to meetings. I go but nothing improves. Before, they [the soldiers] said they didn't need people to be 'set tha' [forced labour 'messengers'], but now they are calling for 'set tha' and demanding money for the visiting soldiers [units which are temporarily assigned to the area for operations]. We have to pay for them for six months. It has only been one month and they are demanding it again, a letter reached me just now." - "Zaw Min" (M, 26), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #220, 4/01)

"They also demand wood and bamboo. They demanded coconuts and mosquito nets also. One mosquito net is 1,500 Kyat and they demanded four mosquito nets. Sometimes they demand pocket money of 10,000 Kyat and sometimes we have to donate 30,000 Kyat. For the building of the government office we had to give 37,733 Kyat. It is in Mone [Army] camp." - "Saw Ber Kaw" (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

"When they demand money we pay them. There is no way to earn money. The only way is if we have things I can sell them to you and if you have things you can sell them to me. We don't have a way for [commercial] trade. The SPDC soldiers stay nearby and have closed all the ways for trade. If you work on something they demand taxes. For example, if you are cutting bamboo or trees, they demand 3,000 or 4,000 [Kyat] for each ton. They demand it as they need it [not at a government set official tax rate]. When they demand what they need you must pay them. They don't like it if you don't pay them." - "Saw Kaw Kwee" (M, 23), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #212, 3/01)

Karen villagers from southern Papun District head for an SPDC Army camp carrying the 300 thatch shingles they had been ordered to make by the Army in mid-April 2001.
[KHRG]



Crop Quotas

“Now, under the control of the SPDC, all of the farmers, porters, and wage labourers want to destroy things, because they can’t survive on what they can earn. Their character is being destroyed. They lie to each other, and have no sympathy for each other anymore.” - “U Nyunt Shwe” (M, 51), escaped porter from K— village, Pegu Division (Interview #231, 9/99)

Villages under firm SPDC control become subject to the regime’s system of taxes and crop quotas. This is especially so in the plains along the Sittaung River where the control is strongest. The villagers have to deal with two parallel sets of taxes and crop quotas: the ‘official’ quotas decreed by the SPDC and implemented by the township and other civilian authorities, and the informal and sometimes random quotas demanded by Army units. Throughout Burma the ‘official’ quotas have been increasing year by year despite crop failures. The informal quotas demanded by the Army have also been increasing, because of Army expansion and the SPDC’s 1998 order cutting back on rations and calling for Army units to get more of their food from the villagers.

“When we left the paddy wasn’t ripe yet, but they had already ordered them to give paddy to the government. You can’t stay there without giving it. Even if you don’t have food to eat, you must first fulfill your obligations [pay your quota]. The Army troops gave orders like, ‘You have to give, if you can’t give you have to sell your house and all of your belongings, then buy paddy to fulfill it.’ In previous years, the people who weren’t able to pay it were put in a cell. You had to go and work for them until they had fulfilled their plan [reached their paddy collection target] and released you. Other villagers in that area had to face the same problems and they cannot escape.” - “Saw Daniel” (M, 43), refugee from G--- village, Mone township (Interview #8, 2/00)

“We heard their soldiers speaking about it, but we didn’t go and see. The soldiers said, ‘We have to feed ourselves in the future from the Village Tract. The support [for rations] won’t come again. We have to stand up and try for ourselves, so in accordance with the gathering of donations, we ask you to buy paddy for us. One Village Tract has to buy 100 baskets of paddy.’ ... They say that it is for the soldiers’ families who are staying behind [in the rear area camps]. But we don’t know how they are really going to use it [often some of the rice is given to the soldiers while the rest is sold by the officers for a personal profit].” - “Saw Tha Htwe” (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #206, 9/00)

In Papun District, where SPDC control is relatively weak, most taxes and quotas are demanded by the military because the control of the Papun Township Peace and Development Council does not extend very far beyond Papun town. When the military collects rice quotas, some units pay a fraction of market value while others pay nothing at all. A village headwoman from the area told KHRG that in 2000 the military were demanding five baskets of paddy [*rice in the husk*] from each acre of flat irrigated field and one basket from each acre of hill field. One basket of paddy weighs approximately 20 kilograms (44 lb), and when milled produces about ½ basket of rice, which weighs 16.5 kilograms (36 lb). She estimated that they could harvest 40 or 50 baskets of good paddy from an acre of flat field. In a different township of the same district the quota was 5 baskets of paddy from each acre of hill field. This particular demand ran into a problem when the villagers couldn’t specify how many acres they had and then the SPDC also couldn’t figure it out (acreage is difficult to measure on steep and undulating hillsides, and villagers normally measure their field by the number of baskets of seed planted). The result in this particular case was that the crop quota was suddenly rescinded.

“This year they demanded it but I haven’t seen anyone pay it yet. They demanded five baskets of paddy for each acre. For a hill field, they demand one basket for each hill field. From each field, we can harvest 40 or 50 baskets of good paddy.” - “Pi San Nweh” (F, 53), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #193, 6/00)

“Right now they are doing things step by step. We don’t know how many kinds of things they will be doing in the future. Now they are doing things in the Nyein Chan Yay [SPDC-controlled] area. We had to pay five baskets of paddy from each acre of hill field. Then the village head went to tell them, ‘We hill villagers don’t understand about field acres. There is no one to measure it for us. We don’t have enough knowledge so we can’t do it by acreage [villagers normally measure hill fields in terms of baskets of seed planted]. Go and see what they are doing in the big field. Some are doing two, three or four pieces [fields]. So we can’t give it to you by acre.’ The SPDC also couldn’t figure it out so they stopped this policy.”

Later they ordered us to give paddy to them when we go to the Village Tract. 100 baskets are 10,000 Kyat, so one basket of paddy is 100 Kyat." - "Saw Tha Htwe" (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #206, 9/00)

In the Sittaung River plains the SPDC has much firmer control, and rice quotas are demanded by both the Township Peace and Development Councils (under the official SPDC scheme) and by the military. In Kyauk Kyi township villagers have told KHRG that the quota in 2000 was 12 baskets of paddy per acre of flatland irrigated field and that the SPDC pays 270 Kyat per basket. The ordinary price at the market however was 600 Kyat. During that same time the quota at Gko Nee village in Mone township was 15 baskets per acre of paddy. According to villagers from west of the Sittaung River, similar quotas of 12-15 baskets per acre apply there. The price given by the SPDC in 1999 in that area was 300 Kyat per basket, although the market price was 600 Kyat. Not only have the prices paid by the SPDC for quota rice fallen, but corruption is rampant among the paddy collection officials and they often steal more than half of the money which is supposed to go to the farmers. Villagers who are unable to give the required quota are forced to buy paddy to make up the difference. Natural disasters, such as the floods that hit the plains in 1999, are not taken into account. A villager who tried to explain to the authorities that all of his paddy had died due to the flooding was told that even if his family didn't have food to eat they had to fulfill the quota. Failure to pay usually means being put in a lockup cell until enough paddy can be purchased to cover the debt. Quotas are demanded for other crops too. The mung bean quota has to be sold to the SPDC at 2,000 Kyat per basket before the rest of the crop can be sold on the open market for 4,000 Kyat per basket. The quota is one basket of beans per acre. People who don't sell to the SPDC first are arrested and have all of their beans confiscated. A KHRG researcher who visited the area said some people are hiding their beans in their haystacks and going out to sell them at night. One villager told KHRG that in addition to the Township PDC and the Army, Military Intelligence also demands 300 baskets of beans a year.

"They have to pay 12 baskets of paddy per acre planted. They have to send it to Shwegyin, to M---. The Burmese give 270 Kyat for one basket of paddy. The ordinary [market] price is 600 Kyat for one basket of paddy." - "Saw Mu Wah" (M, 40), refugee from K--- village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #9, 4/00)

"They just wrote order letters, and the village head had to give those letters to the villagers who are working fields according to their registration list. Everyone has to pay them, if you don't pay they'll arrest you and lock you up in a cell. For each

acre of land it is 15 baskets of paddy each year, so if you work 10 acres you have to give them 150 baskets. For example, my father-in-law has to give 150 baskets for his fields. But all of our paddy was flooded out, so we didn't have anything to give and we didn't even have enough to eat each day. There was flooding for a whole month, and all of our paddy drowned under the water. We explained to them, but they refused to understand us and just told us to pay. ...Last year I had two bulls, but I was staying in the lockup cell [for nonpayment of quota] and my wife was at home alone, and I was worried for her so I sold one of my bulls to buy my release. Then we didn't have any more belongings and we had nothing to eat, and we couldn't figure out any way to survive so we fled here. ... They put me in the cell until I had paid my full quota. I stayed about 10 days, but it wasn't just me. All the villagers who couldn't pay had to stay until we paid our quota. They came to call us from the village. There were 20 or 30 soldiers. They didn't tie our hands, but they took all of us back with them." - "Saw Plaw Doh" (M, 25), refugee from G--- village, Mone township (Interview #7, 2/00)

"When the villagers are working the Burmese demand things to eat. They demand mung beans. They have decreed that the people have to sell the beans to them. If the people don't sell to them they don't allow the people to sell to anyone else. Mung beans are very expensive there. When the people buy them on the black market, one basket is 4,000 Kyat but the SPDC pays only 2,000 Kyat. If people don't sell to them they are arrested. ... They arrest them and confiscate their beans. I saw some villagers who were hiding them in their haystacks and going to sell them at night." - "Saw Ler Wah" (M, 26), KHRG field researcher from Nyaunglebin District (Interview #5, 6/01)

"[W]e have to give depending on their quota, 12 or 15 baskets of rice for each acre. They buy it from us at their quota price - 30,000 Kyat for 100 baskets of paddy. The market price is nearly 60,000 Kyat [for the same quantity]. On top of that, they also take the stones out of the paddy and then give us nothing [the paddy collection officials say the farmer's paddy has stones and things in it, decrease the payment and pocket the difference]." - "U Nyunt Shwe" (M, 51), escaped porter from K--- village, Pegu Division (Interview #231, 9/99)

"From these fields they just ask us to fulfill our duty [pay a 'tax', these are usually arbitrary and not official government taxes]. For our duty we have to give 13 baskets [of paddy] from each acre. If the harvest is good we can get 80 baskets per acre. Intelligence demands 300 baskets of beans each year. If people sell the beans outside [on the

black market] they can get 4,000 Kyat per basket, but they only pay 3,000 Kyat. They said they would pay that price but they haven't paid yet. People have already given them the beans. They demand this from all the villages. They ask for it from the village tract and all the villages in the village tract must give." - "Saw Bo Lweh" (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #10, 4/01)

"We can't cut wood for building a house as we like. We have to go through them and feed them first. If we don't feed them they arrest us. They don't even allow the carpenters to work freely.

We are growing paddy but we can only sell it if they allow us to sell it. If they don't allow us to sell it we can't sell it. They specify the price for the paddy the villagers sell to them. The villagers can't sell to anyone else until they have sold to the SPDC. The beans are the same. They ask, 'How many acres of beans did you grow?' If you planted one acre, you have to give one basket. The government has set it at

three baskets. After the villagers have sold them their obligation amount, the villagers can sell to other people. We can sell it outside [to others before paying their quota] but if they see us they arrest us." - "Saw Nyi Nyi" (M, 37), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

"This year the government is paying us 350 Kyat [per basket of paddy]. This year if we sell it outside we get only 200 Kyat so this year the Burmese lose." - "Saw Per Per" (M, 45), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #24, 4/01)

There is also a system in firmly SPDC-controlled areas of 'paddy loans' whereby a farmer can borrow money to plant his field but then must pay it all back in paddy at harvest time. At first this may sound like a benevolent form of assistance, but in reality it just

locks the farmers into a cycle of debt. Many farmers are forced to use this system because they have had to pay so much in rice quotas, extortion and forced labour that they do not have enough seed for planting or money to hire buffaloes for ploughing. By taking the loan they commit themselves to paying it back in paddy at harvest time, plus their quota, which will leave them even less than the previous year. This forces them into a debt which will probably spiral higher each year. If at any time the crop fails or is small, they risk losing their land to the SPDC and being locked up.

"We have to pay, they demand one basket [of paddy] from each acre. If we do five acres we have to give five baskets. That obligation they call Ma Taung Ngway [' m o n e y advance'] and each person has to go and give them paddy. If they take 50 Kyat they have to go and give back 50 Kyat and if they take 100 Kyat they have to give back 100 Kyat. They borrow it at Mone. It is like they borrow the rice and give

the rice back. They go and sell it back." - "Saw Pa Aye" (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #18, 4/01)

"The SPDC asks the people to go and sell it as a duty. Some people are able to go and sell and some people can't go and sell it. They give the people money first, they call it Ma Taung Ngway [the SPDC lets the villagers borrow money to use to prepare and plant their fields which can be paid back after the harvest]. The people go and pay it back. Some people are not able to go and pay. The people who take the money have to go and pay it all back. If the people borrow 100 Kyat they have to give back 100 Kyat. If people take 50 Kyat they have to pay back 50 Kyat." - "Saw Nyi Nyi" (M, 37), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

Stamp:	
Peace and Development Council Papun Township yyyy Village	
Paying the advance money for agriculture costs	
Regarding the above matter, for 2 acres of fields and 70 baskets of paddy, advance money of 7,000 Kyat, seven thousand kyat, has been transferred to xxxx village as noted below.	
Stamp: Chairperson Peace and Development Council yyyy village, Papun township	
[Sd.]	
(the one transferring [the money])	(the recipient of the transfer)
Name: U aaaa	Name: U bbbb
NIC No.: xxxx/xxxxxx	NIC No.: [blank]
Address: yyyy village	Address: yyyy village
Date: 6-7-2000	Date: 6-7-2000

A translation of an order sent to a village in Papun District. This order means that the local PDC authorities have given the village 7,000 Kyat in advance for a paddy quota of 70 baskets from 2 acres which they will have to pay at harvest. This would only be for one or two farmers, not the whole village. NIC is National Identity Card, which everyone is supposed to have but many non-Burman farmers do not.

Food Shortages

“When we stayed and worked there and produced paddy, it became theirs [the SPDC’s]. They came to rule over us with guns and weapons, so we had nothing to eat and faced starvation. We were the losers. We were always busy and exhausted, but we got nothing. So we had nothing more to lose, and we fled down here and thought that this would be the best for us. It is very good for us to stay here, because we don’t need to waste our energy growing paddy just for it to be eaten by the SPDC. If they can’t take our paddy we are very happy, so we enjoy staying here.” - “Pu Tha Ker” (M, 56), refugee from L--- village, Lu Thaw township, talking about his new life in a refugee camp in Thailand (Interview #50, 4/00)

Food shortages are not limited to the villagers hiding in the mountains. Many villagers living in what should be stable villages under government control with no fighting, where they should be able to get enough food from farming, are instead experiencing food shortages. Many villagers, especially those who had been in the relocation sites, described to KHRG widespread malnutrition and hunger. Even the villagers from the fertile Sittaung River plains, where there is extensive irrigated rice cultivation, speak of having to survive on rice porridge. The shortage of food is caused by a combination of factors. Chief among them is forced labour, which keeps people away from their fields when they need to be there. Along with this, the forced labour fees and other extortion money demanded by the Army forces farmers to seek paying work as the only way of obtaining cash, which also takes them away from their fields. When work can’t be found or people quickly need money to avoid forced labour, they have to sell their livestock, which takes away another source of food. The Army’s regular demands for rice and other food also take a serious toll on the villagers’ food supplies.

“When they came to my village, they demanded rice. When they demanded it, we couldn’t live without giving it. They demanded it from every house. They came many times, and sometimes demanded one big tin of rice from each house. Many people didn’t even have rice to eat. They had to borrow from their friends. After the Burmese left, they worked to pay it back. If they couldn’t pay it back, they had to work for their friends because there was a lot of work to do. Some villagers are working in the morning just to eat in the evening [just getting enough to survive each day]. Each of us only worked with one hand [they could only devote part of their time to their fields due to forced labour], that’s why we prepared a whole field but could only grow half a field. Mothers worked alongside their small children and got only half a field.” - “Naw Ghay Paw” (F, 40), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #185, 4/00)

“It is because the SPDC is operating and we can’t work our hill fields or flat fields. They are also

forcing us to work. We don’t have time to rest. We only have time to go and work for them until it is finished. We can’t do our own work and also the paddy harvest was no good. We planted the paddy late and the paddy became diseased. They [the SPDC] also stopped the water and there was no water [to irrigate the flat fields]. We don’t have enough food because of this.” - “Zaw Min” (M, 26), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #220, 4/01)

“The villages which are not close to the big town always have to suffer being forced and used as slaves for the SPDC soldiers. They don’t have enough time to work for themselves. They can’t work for the SPDC soldiers anymore. The villagers have had to suffer for so many months and years that they can’t tell about it all when we ask them. The soldiers are always forcing them so they don’t have enough food to eat. When I went, I saw that the villagers from all the villages were eating boiled rice soup [a last resort to stretch the rice supply]. They don’t have time to cut the grass [the weeds in their fields] or work their fields because the SPDC are forcing them a lot. The SPDC soldiers are demanding 15 baskets of paddy [375 kg / 825 lb] for one acre of flat field and 15 or 20 baskets of paddy [375 – 500 kg / 825 – 1,100 lb] for one acre of hill field. They have to give it to the SPDC soldiers. It is not easy for them to stay if they don’t give it. The SPDC columns which patrol around the villages burn the paddy barns and field huts if they see them. The soldiers say they belong to the KNU and burn them.” - field report from KHRG field researcher (Field Report #16, 7/00)

Restrictions on the movement of villagers (see the ‘Restrictions’ section on page 93) make it very difficult for villagers to grow a full crop, and sometimes prevent them from harvesting any crop at all. For subsistence farmers, the complete failure of a crop means starvation. Villagers forced to move to relocation sites are under even tighter restrictions, and face the added difficulty of being even further from their fields. In some relocation sites even this permission is denied. The land around the sites is often not available as it is usually being farmed by the village where the

relocation site is located. Paying work in those fields may be available, if the relocated villagers are allowed enough time away from forced labour, but the local farmers themselves usually do not have enough money to pay for much help. In many cases they have also lost fields because the Army has confiscated them for an Army camp or a relocation site.

“We have no land to cultivate and no money to pay, so we have to endure their forced labour and have no time to work for ourselves. We had to stop working on our own fields. If this situation continues, the villagers may starve. Now we have to eat boiled rice soup and roots because we have no time to work our fields, and then insects come and destroy our paddy.” - “Saw Maw Lah” (M, 30), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #173, 9/99)

In at least 3 village tracts of Dweh Loh township it appears that the entire 2001 rice harvest is to be wiped out in the name of undermining the local KNLA. As described above in the **‘Restrictions’** section, villagers throughout Ka Dtaing Dtee, Tee Tha Blu Hta and Ku Thu Hta village tracts, and maybe others as well, were issued orders prohibiting them from leaving their villages between September and November 2001. They are not even allowed to go to their fields, and as this period includes the latter part of the growing season and the rice harvest, the entire crop will be lost and starvation is likely to begin within a few months. The order covers at least 5,000 people from 30 or more SPDC-controlled villages, and may be even more widespread than that.

“We can’t go to the hill fields so all the paddy will be destroyed. We are going to starve. When everything is destroyed there is no way for us to live. We will have to go to buy rice in K---. It is difficult to find money. We have to find vegetables and go to sell them. Then we can get money and we can go to buy rice. There is no other way for us.” - “Saw Mu Htoo” (M, 26), villager from B— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #239, 10/01)

“When I came here people could no longer go to their hill fields or flat fields. It is nearly harvest time, but we can’t harvest our paddy anymore. I don’t know what I will do. I can’t eat anymore. All the paddy will be destroyed.” - “Saw Eh Kaw” (M, 34), village head from H— village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #240, 10/01)

The crop quotas also contribute to starvation because they force villagers into an inescapable cycle of debt. Villagers must pay these quotas or face imprisonment, and pleas of crop failures or flooding fall on deaf ears. Given the precarious nature of subsistence farming in the face of forced labour and other SPDC demands, once a farmer has to borrow to pay his quota one

year, he will probably never be able to recover from the debt, which will only grow year by year. The looting of the villages and constant demands by the Army camps for food and rice further deplete whatever food supplies the villagers may have. The only way to get food once the supply runs out is to buy it, but the forced labour fees, extortion money and demands leave the villagers with very little money. Eventually many find they have sold all of their livestock, they are deeply in debt on their rice quota, they have no more money to avoid forced labour and they have no seed to plant. Despite all their efforts, they have little choice but to flee their village or face arrest or starvation.

“This year nobody has enough rice or paddy. They have to go and carry some from town. One big tin of rice costs 2,000 Kyat. Sometimes it’s easy to go but sometimes it’s not easy. Sometimes the Burmese give permission, and sometimes they don’t. If the Burmese do not give permission for people to go and get rice, people starve.” - “Maung Htun Shwe” (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #124, 9/99)

“This year they don’t have enough food. They do nothing. They sell their precious things to buy rice. For example: if they have a cow or buffalo they sell it and buy rice. It will be a big problem for them to stay in the future. They have asked for advice from the village leaders to escape, but they cannot escape. They cannot escape because the enemies stay around them. That is why it will be a big problem for them to stay living there in the future. They sell the cattle and buffaloes they have to buy rice and food. They borrow rice from people who have more rice. We think it will be a big problem for their lives in the coming year.” - “Saw Po Hla” (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

“We have to buy sacks of rice to eat. There are now villagers who have to borrow food to eat from other people. There are villagers who don’t have any Kyat to buy food to eat. It is very terrible. ... This year nobody has enough paddy. We can’t even buy sacks of rice to eat. Nobody has money and we don’t have any way to get money.” - “Zaw Min” (M, 26), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #220, 4/01)

“This year three families [from her village] have gone to stay there [at refugee camps in Thailand]. They had to work only for the Burmese and they didn’t have time to do their own work. They are poor. When they had to work and carry loads for the Burmese, they didn’t have food to eat and it would be better if they went there [to the refugee camps]. They couldn’t suffer being forced anymore so they left.” - “Naw Lah K’Paw Mu” (F, 48), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #198, 6/00)

Health, Education and Development

“They said they were going to use it for civilians, to send food. In our view there is nothing in this for the civilians. We have to buy everything. For example, if something is worth one Kyat, we have to pay two Kyat. We don’t have enough to eat but we have to buy from them. The road is for sending food. Every year we have to go and clear it. They say that they use it to send food to the Burmese and the villagers. But we know it is not for us.” - “Kyaw Po” (M, 45), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #192, 6/00)

Very little development work goes on in Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts. Projects that are begun, like the roads, are almost all for the benefit of the military. There are almost no clinics or hospitals in the area besides those in the major towns like Shwegyin and Papun. The few clinics which have been built in some larger villages have used forced labour and materials extorted from the villagers, then end up lying empty with no doctors or medics. A few schools have been built but support for them by the SPDC is limited, and at the same time the SPDC has been forcing the villagers to close their own small schools because they are not state-approved. In the case of one village in Dweh Loh township, the building of a school as a development project was used as the pretense for relocating villages. In another village the building of a school was used to extort money out of the surrounding villages, with the excess money undoubtedly going into the pockets of the local officers. The villagers had to pay for the workers and the building materials but much more money was demanded than necessary. Most villagers and village heads say that they have never been called to a meeting concerning the development and improvement of their villages.

“They use the car road to carry rations. When they went to the villages further up, they even used it to carry a lot of the villagers’ paddy back down [paddy which has been stolen or taken as a tax from the villagers and will likely be sold by the officers for a profit]. They transport logs, paddy and cane back down. They don’t buy any of that, they just take it. For two tons of logs, they gave me only 15,000 Kyat. I had to buy the fuel for the machine [the saw at the sawmill] and everything and it was not enough. The sawmill owner also didn’t get any payment. They took out ironwood, teak and Kya Ghaw [a kind of tree]. They do this every year. Last year we had to transport it to K’Dter Dtee for them.” - “Naw Eh Kri Mu” (F, 34), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #196, 6/00)

“Don’t think that they are going to give some benefit to us. They are going to make the villagers poor. They don’t open ways for villagers to work, if possible they close them. They are only going

to oppress us. They are eating, taking, stealing things and hurting us. They didn’t build a school.” - “Saw Kaw Kwee” (M, 23), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #212, 3/01)

“They are very cruel. They say to us, ‘Right now there are Kaw Thoo Lei near here. If there were none, we could make a school and a clinic and help the villagers improve the economy and work peacefully.’ They say that, but what they do is very different from their words.” - “Pi San Nweh” (F, 53), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #193, 6/00)

“On August 8th 2000 in the Wa Mu area Colonel Kyaw Zin Oo of Na Ba Ha #x [Tactical Operations Command #x], Sa Ka Ka #xx [Military Operations Command #xx], called together the village heads and chairmen from K---, P---, W---, N---, M---villages and made plans to build a school at W---. The school will have two floors. They planned how much wood each village would have to contribute. The villagers haven’t given it though because they can’t get the wood, so the soldiers are demanding money from each house and each village. There are 30 houses in Ma Lay Ler village and each house has to pay 600 Kyat. So that one village has to pay 18,000 Kyat. In K--- village, there are 134 households. Each house has to pay 1,500 Kyat. Therefore it will cost them 210,000 Kyat [actually 201,000 Kyat]. In N--- village, there are 20 houses and each one has to pay 1,000 Kyat. So they pay 20,000 Kyat. As for P---, their 40 houses have to pay 700 Kyat each. It will cost them 28,000 Kyat. ... They demanded the money and then forced the civilians to cut down the trees for them. The villagers also have to saw the logs [into planks for building]. It’s mostly ironwood but there is some Kyaw and Th’Waw [two types of wood]. They have already cut down over 100 trees [the villagers are paying for the wood as well as cutting it down and providing it].” - “Saw Tha Wah” (M, 42), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #146, 9/00)

“They told us about schools and clinics. They told us to stay. If they build a hospital at K---, they will say it is a good thing, but the civilians will

have to do everything [to pay for and build it]. They don't pay the workers. The villagers have to collect the money and pay the carpenters. They [the SPDC] just use their name. Everything that they have done for the school here they have used their name [but not their money or labour]." - "Naw Lah K'Paw Mu" (F, 48), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #198, 6/00)

"Their health situation is also very bad. There is no clinic. The SPDC doesn't allow them to buy or sell medicine. When the SPDC see people carrying and selling medicine, they capture and kill them [after accusing them of supplying the medicine to the KNU/KNLA]. The villagers in that area have to die from lack of medicine. The diseases there are diarrhoea, malaria, headache and fever." - field report from KHRG field researcher (Field Report #16, 7/00)

"There is no school in our village. It's because of the SPDC. They think that if we build schools, we will become educated. If we are educated, they know that that they cannot oppress us. They can't step on us. That is why they do not allow us to build a school." - "Kyaw Po" (M, 45), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #192, 6/00)

The health situation does not necessarily improve once villages come under the control of the SPDC. There are hospitals in the bigger towns like Papun and Mone but they are expensive and the patients must buy all their own medicine. Very few clinics exist in Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts and the ones that do rarely have much medicine and only a few medics and no doctor. The medics in some of the Army camps may treat villagers at times, but for a fee. Occasionally KNLA medics come to the villages and treat the villagers but this is rare. Some villagers have also gone into the hills to look for treatment of illnesses or wounds from KNLA medics after being unable to get treatment from the SPDC.

"The KNU come and look after the villagers who are seriously ill and have to go far away to the hospital. The KNU asked us to get one nurse to help the village. The SPDC came and said that the nurse made contact with Nga Pway and the KNU so they arrested the nurse. She doesn't dare to come and stay in the village. She went back to her village in Bassein [in the Irrawaddy Delta]. So we don't have a nurse in T— village. The sick people can't get medicine. But some people come to sell Ever Light [a Burmese patent medicine]. We eat tree leaves, bamboo and ginger leaves [these are used to make traditional herbal medicines]." - "Naw Eh Kri Mu" (F, 34), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #196, 6/00)

"The villagers have to stand with their own energy. When you go to the hospital, they write the name of the medicine for you on paper. Then you have to take it to the medicine shop. You show that paper and they give you the medicine. ... We civilians can't deal with this. We are just civilians and we have to listen to whatever the doctors say, whether they have medicine or not. If they don't inject us, they ask us to go and buy it. The female doctors [nurses] take care of the patients if there is medicine. However we have to buy all the medicine from there [the medicine shop]. There was one person who went to the hospital in June or July [2000]. He was very seriously ill. He bought 40 big medicines [intravenous drip bags such as D5W or NSS] and paracetamol. He had to stay there for over two weeks. He was sick twice. He spent 120,000 Kyat there. We don't understand why there was no medicine in the hospital. They asked him to buy it from outside." - "Saw Tha Htwe" (M, 36), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #206, 9/00)

"Q: Has the SPDC given you any medicine since you were injured?

A: Don't think that they will give you medicine. They don't even look back when they finish shooting [to see if the person is dead or just wounded]." - "Htaw Say" (M, 43), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #210, 2/01)

"Aye! Don't say that they are going to give medicine. If possible, when we go to them, we have to buy needles, drip tubes and plasters." - "Saw Kaw Kwee" (M, 23), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #212, 3/01)

"There is no clinic. We just go here and there to get treatment. Sometimes we go to the Burmese and sometimes we go to the Karen [KNU], to the people who know a little bit about medicine." - "Saw Pa Aye" (M, xx), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #18, 4/01)

"There is no clinic. In our village we have a primary midwife. We don't have the opportunity to get enough medicine. We have only a few things we can use." - "Saw Ber Kaw" (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

Medicine can sometimes be bought from the soldiers, who sell the medicines supplied to their units for a profit. In the shops in bigger villages, especially near the Sittaung River and around Papun town, medicine is easier to obtain. Much of the medicines available are Burmese patent medicines of the kind which make claims to cure everything from toothache and dyspepsia to paralysis, but which have questionable

effectiveness. Better quality injected medicine or tablets from Thailand or China are very expensive and scarce. In some areas the SPDC doesn't allow medicine to be sold because they think the villagers will give it to the KNLA. The villagers then have to buy it secretly. The transportation of medicine is forbidden, and villagers caught carrying it for whatever reason are arrested and can be executed - even if the amount being carried is so little that it is clearly for personal use. The problem is further complicated by the villagers' lack of knowledge of modern medicines, so even when they do manage to buy something it is often the wrong one. They generally have a misplaced belief that only injections are really good medicine and will buy a random 'injection' or IV drip set rather than a more appropriate course of tablets. Most villagers now have no such choice, however, and are forced to rely on traditional medicines made from leaves, roots and tree bark.

"When the villagers see people who are carrying and selling medicine they buy a little bit. There is no market where you can buy things, only people who carry and sell things. They are the villagers from K—. They dare to come on the path because they don't have to pass any Army camps." - "Saw Eh Doh" (M, 25), KHRG field researcher from Papun District (Interview #3, 2/01)

"They don't have medicine. If the villagers are sick they find a plant. To buy medicine is very expensive in Burma, so they can't buy medicine. They don't even have enough money to buy rice. They always have to work for their enemies and have no time for themselves so they don't have enough money or rice. They have to sell their precious things to buy rice. We saw one person who had to sell his wife's earrings and rings to buy food but it was not enough to buy rice." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

"[S]ome people got sick. They got fevers and diarrhoea because of the bad water. They bought medicine to treat themselves. If we couldn't heal them that way, we treated them with leaves and our traditional medicines." - "Naw Hser Mo" (F, 35), refugee from N--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #183, 4/00)

"The SPDC is at that place and there is medicine there so we can buy it and get injections. If we can't buy it or we dare not buy it, the DKBA can buy it for us. They [the SPDC] don't allow us to buy it. It is because if the civilians buy medicine they are afraid we will go and give it to the KNU. We can't say we will treat ourselves." - "Saw Nyi Nyi" (M, 37), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #13, 4/01)

Access to education is severely limited in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts. There are a few SPDC schools in the plains of Nyaunglebin District and in the bigger villages under SPDC control in Papun District. Most of them are primary schools which only reach 4th Standard (Grade 4). There is an SPDC high school in Papun. All of the SPDC schools teach a Burman-centric curriculum based on the SPDC's versions of history and geography, with the teaching of Karen or other languages strictly forbidden. Karen children attending SPDC schools grow up illiterate in their own language unless taught by their parents. Most of the schools in the area receive at best only partial help from the SPDC. Some schools have been built by the SPDC as 'development' projects, usually with money, labour and materials all extorted from the local villagers, but teachers and teaching materials have never been provided. Teachers sent out to the area by the SPDC are usually Burmans from the city who try to escape back to the cities at the first opportunity. Some of them only stay a few months, then return to the provincial town and bribe their superiors to continue paying their salary without them having to return to the village school; they tell the parents of their students that they are going for a meeting, and never return. For those who do remain, the SPDC pays only part of their salaries. The villagers must pay the rest, provide them with food, and buy all required materials for the school. They must also hire their own additional teachers because the SPDC never sends enough for the number of students.

"Yes, three standards [grades]. It was an SPDC government school before, a primary school, but they didn't give us a teacher. They have called one 'loke tha' [a villager to be the teacher] for our village now. They give payment to the 'loke tha' but it is not full [he doesn't get his full salary; it is probably pocketed along the way]. The villagers have to give payment to one teacher. Now we have two teachers here." - "Naw Lah K'Paw Mu" (F, 48), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #198, 6/00)

"There is no school. We send the students to M—. The students travel to M— and stay there. They don't learn the Karen language. They only learn the Burmese language. I think that next year I will build a school. We must find a teacher. They [the SPDC] will allow it." - "Pa Tray" (M, 51), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #222, 4/01)

"The government [SPDC] made that school. We have to pay for the children to go to school. We have to buy the books. We have to pay everything. There are three or four teachers and the government pays for two teachers. The villagers discussed it and hired the other two teachers. The

government doesn't pay them enough." - "Po Lah" (M, 25), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #12, 4/01)

"They set up one government school in the K— area in the western part of H—. The school has 8 standards [grades]. We have six teachers but the six people couldn't work so we had to find more teachers to help them." - "Saw Ber Kaw" (M, 40), village tract head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

Villagers talk of having had schools before but after years of displacement and instability the schools are gone. Many of these schools were KNU schools which were closed once the SPDC took over the area. In order to provide some education to their children, villagers build their own schools, hire their own teachers and buy their own teaching materials. Occasionally they receive help in this from the KNU, but more often it is done completely on their own. Since the beginning of 2000 the SPDC Army has ordered some of these schools to close because they are not 'state-approved', but others have been left alone. In smaller villages, one or two volunteers spend part of their time teaching the children to read and write, even if the teachers themselves only have a 2nd or 3rd Standard education. Despite these attempts to provide education for the children, many children are still unable to go to school because their families need them to work in the fields or fill quotas for forced labour. In the face of all of the demands placed on them by the SPDC, many families would starve without the help of the children. This is especially true in the relocation sites, where the SPDC never provides any access to schooling anyway.

"In the past when we had fewer problems, we had a school. But right now with all these things occurring, it is not easy to keep one. ... In the past, we had a school in every village. We even had schools in small villages like Bpo Leh, Bler Per, Bpo Khay, and Taw Meh Hta. They [SPDC] haven't set up a school for us because they think that maybe the villagers will become educated. They think that if we have a school, the children will be more educated and will fight back. The children can't study now. They have to stay with dead ears." - "Saw Than Htoo" (M, 51), village head from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #190, 5/00)

"The KNU want to come and build a school for us. We also want it. They will help us with education. If we build the school the SPDC may come and ask us, 'Did you build the school yourselves or did the KNU come and help you?' If we tell them that the KNU helped, it looks like we asked for help and that we are their spies. We don't have anything like this in our hearts. We

don't want anything. We want our civilians to build it themselves. If we can build it and they [KNU] help us, we will be happy. If we have a school and they [SPDC] come to ask us about it and we answer that we built this school ourselves, we worry that they will say, 'If you built this school yourselves, right now, how many houses are in the village?' If we have only a few houses, they will assume the KNU helped us. 'If you built it yourselves, how much were the expenses for the school and the teacher?' That is why, with only a few people in the village, they will think that the KNU came and encouraged us. So we can't build a school. This is the reason. Many children want to study but they can't." - "Kyaw Po" (M, 45), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #192, 6/00)

"We have a school. It has four standards [four grades]. The students can study now and the SPDC hasn't made any problems yet, but they don't support the school, the villagers do it themselves. They [the villagers] get the books from inside Burma." - "Aung Myint Win" (M, 40), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #200, 6/00)

"There are about 80 houses including the widows and widowers. There is also a school and we teach students at the monastery. We have a teacher. The SPDC don't pay for him, the villagers take care of it. We found the teacher ourselves. There are four standards [grades] in the school and the students are able to study. The SPDC doesn't make trouble for them, but they never help. We always buy the books ourselves. We went to buy them in Ka Ma Maung and they haven't said anything. They don't say anything about the students' supplies." - "Mya Aung" (M, 32), village headman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #202, 6/00)

"There is a school in the monastery. They teach in the monastery. The villagers made the school and looked for a teacher. ... [T]he villagers try to look for a teacher in the village for their children's education. I saw only one teacher and 27 students. There are two standards [grades]. They teach in a hall and not in the monastery buildings." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

"I send only one to school. The others are not doing any education. They are working for food. I can't send them to school because the Burmese are forcing us to work, and in addition to that we need to get enough food for our bellies. We couldn't send them to school." - "Naw Wah Wah" (F, 41), refugee from B--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #182, 4/00)

"It is time for my children to go to school, but there we couldn't send them to school because we had to carry all the time and we had to ask our children to take care of each other. I sent my eldest son to the monastery [for education], but then I told him, 'Son, I can't send you to the monastery anymore. Cut the weeds. Your mother and father have to carry [as forced labour porters], so nobody has time to cut the weeds [in the ricefield].'" - "Naw Ghay Paw" (F, 40), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #185, 4/00)

"The villagers and the KNU pay. Everybody agreed. The SPDC doesn't pay. It is a KNU school. They have to go and get the books from Papun. Support for the teacher depends on the students. If there is one student [in a family], he gives three baskets of paddy and if there are two students, then five baskets of paddy. There are over 20 students. The students' parents also give 100 Kyat per house." - "Zaw Min" (M, 26), village head from xxxx village, Bu Tho township (Interview #220, 4/01)



Internally displaced villagers in Papun District bring their sick for treatment to a KNLA medic. [KHRG]

Abandoned school-house in Khaw Hta village, Papun District. All the villagers fled into hiding in the forest because SPDC troops began destroying villages and hunting villagers in the area. Now that they are in the forest, the children no longer have a chance for education. [KHRG]



V. Flight to Thailand

"They are active everywhere. They go everywhere around T---. In 1999, they came very often and in 2000 they have already come three times. When they came they shot at the villagers and the villagers had to flee. When they [SPDC] leave the area, the villagers come and stay in their villages again. If the soldiers come again the villagers will flee away again. The villagers have to live like this. ... If they come again we can't stay here anymore. If we can't stay here, there is no way to go to another place. We will have to flee and stay in the refugee camp." - "Saw Nu Nu" (M, 37), internally displaced villager from L— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #51, 4/00)

Villagers view flight to the refugee camps in Thailand as a last resort. It is only when they can no longer do the forced labour or their food has run out and there is no hope of getting a decent harvest in the coming year that the villagers attempt the journey to Thailand. The villages are their homes and they have been attached to the same land for generations, so they will try to remain on their land or near it for as long as possible, even when conditions are absolutely desperate. To subsistence farmers who have always lived off the land, abandoning the land and going to a distant and strange place like Thailand sounds almost suicidal. What will we eat? Where will we get bamboo for a house? We will starve and die out in the open! For those who find it difficult to imagine these fears, try to imagine what an urban stockbroker would think on suddenly finding out he has to flee the city and live in a cave on a remote mountaintop illegally in a foreign land, and the thoughts will be similar. For most of the Karen farmers of Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts, even living on the run in the forest is preferable to going to the refugee camps as long as there is enough food to survive.

"I want to say that we didn't want to leave our mountains to come and stay here, but because of problems with the SPDC Army staying among the mountains we had to come here. If the SPDC Army moved their Army back into their barracks and back to the towns, none of the mountain people would come to stay here. If that happened, a lot of people who stay here now would go back to stay there, too." - "Pu Tha Ker" (M, 56), refugee from L--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #50, 4/00)

"The meaning of 'have to go to a refugee camp' is like this; if you ask people to go to a refugee camp, they don't want to go. When we look at the movements of the enemy, they shoot at us and lay landmines, so we dare not travel. But some people think that even if we stay here like this, one time a person will die, and another time a person will lose a leg. It is not easy for people to stay here either, so we heard that they will go." - "Saw Plaw Doh" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from M— village, Kyauk Kyi township (Interview #75, 3/00)

"In the future, I don't know if I can live here or not. I'm not sure. If we can't stay here anymore we'll have to go among our brothers and sisters in the high place [Thailand]. I will never go and surrender to them [the SPDC]. If we go and surrender to them they will torment us worse than now. This year we will live here and do our hill field. We will live like this until the end of this year. If in the next year we cannot stay here anymore, we'll have to go stay with our brothers and sisters in the high place." - "Meh Bya" (M, 37), internally displaced villager from L— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #54, 4/00)

"Will we be able to last the year if we don't go to Thailand? If they can't show us a way and tell us to go whichever way we want, we won't go to the Burmese, so if we must go to Thailand then we will." - "Pu Taw Lay" (M, 56), internally displaced villager from M— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #80, 3/00)

The journey is very hazardous and usually takes weeks of travelling over mountain paths, past SPDC Army camps, dodging SPDC patrols sent out to hunt them down and praying not to step on any of the thousands of landmines planted in the area. One villager who made the journey said that SPDC soldiers were waiting in ambush along the known escape routes and that these soldiers shoot on sight. The new roads being built by the SPDC also create a formidable barrier which most people do not dare to cross for fear of landmines and SPDC patrols. The worst of these is the new road from Kyauk Kyi to Saw Hta, which has cut off any possibility of flight for most would-be refugees from northern Lu Thaw township, Mone township, and Toungoo District further north. Another deterrent is cost; many villagers simply don't have the money or the food to attempt it. For most the route passes through areas of Papun District where all of the villages have been destroyed or abandoned and where people are shot on sight, and the displaced villagers hiding in these areas cannot help travellers with food. Travelling through the jungles and over the mountains is not easy and there are no maps. Most people don't dare attempt the trip unless they can

follow someone who knows the way. The shortage of food also means that many villagers have to stay where they are to get food to eat and never really have enough to take with them if they want to escape. Despite all of this many villagers do attempt the journey, even from villages as far from the border as the Sittaung River plains.

“They think that they will try to endure this. They also have problems in coming here. The enemy stays on the path, along the way and along the border. It is not easy for them to come between the places [the camps] because there is a lot of jungle. It is not easy for some people to come because they have children and babies. They way is also far for them.” - “Saw Po Hla” (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

“The Burmese were waiting at S--- to stop people fleeing from around Papun. When we arrived at Saw Bweh Der, the Burmese had just killed 4 villagers who were crossing the old road there. We arrived just a day or two after they’d killed them. When we got there, the villagers told us. I don’t know the name of those villagers, they had come from a faraway village. They wanted to come here, but the Burmese were waiting secretly on the path. They don’t want us to come here, so a small unit of their troops is always waiting secretly. People said it was a whole family that they killed.” - “Naw Wah Wah” (F, 41), refugee for B--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #182, 4/00)

“I started coming here on February 20th 2001 because I had to face many troubles, so I had to come up. On the way I didn’t have any money and I had to sell my machete and use the money to come here. We came on the path. We went to T—. It took three or four days to arrive at T—. When I arrived there I was faced with trouble because I couldn’t find any food. At the Khoh Loh Kloh [the Salween River] I could go no further. I didn’t have any more money. To go we had to have at least 400, 500 or 1,000 [Baht] and I had only 40, 50, 100 and 200. I had only 100 or 200 [Baht] and my children wanted to eat also. They saw ‘moh leh saun’ [a drink made of sugar or jaggery and coconut mixed with a small lump of jelly] on the way and I wanted to buy it for them but I couldn’t. When we arrived at K— I bought a short pen and one or two snacks and the money was gone. Then I couldn’t hire a boat. I borrowed some money from a man who took pity on me and gave me the money. Now I have a debt to pay back to him. I suffered that and slowly I arrived at this place after 6 p.m.” - “Saw Tha Pwih” (M, 38), refugee from T--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #56, 2/01)



A villager and his two children make the long trek from Nyaunglebin District to the Thai border about 100 kilometres to the east. [KHRG]

“They came from the time when the paddy was ripe until the villagers carried it to the paddy barn and pounded it [from approximately November 1999 to January 2000]. They burned the paddy barns and took the rice. They stabbed holes into some of the pots and took the others. The villagers had to flee without even taking our clothes. We don’t have anything to wear. We are going to the refugee camp. All of the villagers from N--- are suffering like this. The soldiers burned the village, then they planted landmines. We don’t dare go back to the village. We have to hide. They destroyed most of the food but there were many people so we could carry some away.” - “Mya Win” (M, 49), refugee from N--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #131, 5/00)

Many villagers are also afraid to make the trip because news has filtered back to them that Thai forces are cruel to refugees and force them back across the border, and that even the refugee camps have been attacked by SPDC troops. Unfortunately, this news is true. Current Thai government policy is that no

new refugee camps are to be established, and that no new arrivals can be allowed in the existing camps because they are already overcrowded. The combination of these means that no new refugees are allowed. The reality on the ground is somewhat different, because new refugees are still arriving in Thailand almost every day. For the villagers who finally manage to reach the border, though, their troubles are far from over. They must race toward a refugee camp, which may be as far as 50 kilometres away through Thai territory, and try to sneak in before being detected by one of the many arms of the Thai forces deployed along the border. If at any point along the way they encounter Thai Army, militia, Border Patrol Police, regular police, forestry department officials, or district authorities, they will almost certainly be forced back across the border at gunpoint with no one ever knowing about it. If they manage to sneak into a refugee camp before this happens they can hide among the refugees and later try to 'register' if they like. At present the Thai 'admissions boards', made up of military, police and government officials with no training in refugee issues, still reject *en masse* most new refugees who attempt to register, but even after rejecting them it is more difficult to force them back across the border from the camps because of international pressure. Some have been forced back from the camps after being rejected, but most who manage to find their way into the camps also manage to remain there. However, the problems of entry into Thailand have forced the KNU to set up camps for internally displaced people just across the border from Thailand, and many of those trying to flee to Thailand get no further than this. From these camps, groups of a few families at a time attempt the trip to refugee camps. These IDP camps on the Burma side of the border receive very little aid, are surrounded by landmines and are very much under threat of SPDC attack. In the event of attack there is almost nowhere for the villagers to flee, because their backs are up against a hostile Thai border.

"We have come here because we can't stay in our villages and houses. Our children also can't stay in the school. That is why we come here. We thought we would go to the [refugee] camp. But there the Thais don't accept us. That is why we are looking for our leaders' plan." - "Saw Maw Ray Heh" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from M--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #151, 11/00)

For those who manage to sneak into the camps they must either hide among the refugees, or if they attempt to 'register' then they are forced into barracks-like 'holding centres'. The barracks in which they are kept leak in the rainy season, are overcrowded and lack proper walls and privacy. Food, medical and other aid, all of which are provided to the camp by overseas agencies, are deliberately restricted by Thai authorities so that only a bare subsistence diet can be provided for the exact number of people registered

in the camp. This has caused serious problems due to the growing number of unregistered refugees 'hiding' or staying in the camp, for whom the overseas agencies are not allowed to provide food. Although most of those who reach the camps have thus far been able to avoid being forcibly repatriated, Thai policy and crackdowns are becoming harsher with each passing month and these refugees are living under great risk. It is only international pressure on the Thai government which provides them with any measure of protection.

"The people who arrived here were able to come without a problem, but when they arrived at the border because they are from Burma the Thai authorities had to check them and allow them to enter Thailand. They were allowed to stay. Most of them stay in Meh Ka Kee refugee camp." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

"We are not building a house yet because people told us that the Thais [Thai authorities] don't allow us to cut bamboo and trees. We dare not go because we are new, so we are staying here in this barracks [the holding centre for new arrivals], and when the rain comes we all get wet. We have lived like this in the barracks for nearly a month now." - "Naw Ghay Paw" (F, 40), refugee from P--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #185, 4/00)

"Since we've arrived here we don't have anything to fear, but we can't shed our fears because we have lived so long in terror. When we first arrived here, even when we heard dogs bark we were afraid. Even now, just yesterday people asked us about our home place, but we still fear the thought of going back there. When we stayed there, if they [SPDC troops] ordered us to go with them we knew that they were going to beat us until our skin was cut open or until we died. Since we've come here, sometimes we have to go and talk with our [refugee] leaders here and it should not be terrifying, but still we go with fear because we already have such fear in us." - "Saw Daniel" (M, 43), refugee from G--- village, Mone township (Interview #8, 2/00)

"We brought only the set of clothing on our bodies. We were carrying each other when we climbed the mountains. We couldn't carry anything else. I carried some things halfway, but then I couldn't carry them anymore and left them along the path. ... I have come to stay. I wouldn't be happy to go back and stay there. That's why I came up here. I've decided that I will not go back. Even if there is peace, I will not go back because all of my relatives have died. I think that I would be alone. People are dying there, one by one. We would die if we went back to the place where we lived." - "Naw Wah Wah" (F, 41), refugee for B--- village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #182, 4/00)



Karen villagers from Maw Kee village, Shwegyin township, Nyaunglebin District, flee through Papun District in March 2001 to reach a refugee camp in Thailand. The man crossing the bridge stepped on a landmine in October 2000 while displaced in the forest.

When these photos were taken in March 2001 they had been on the run for about 6 months nonstop, and had decided they had no choice but to make for a refugee camp in Thailand. [KHRG]

VI. Future of the Area

“I hate them, but they have guns and I don’t. If they rule we can never get peace. We want peace and love. We would like to work undisturbed. There are no civilians who love the SPDC. They all hate them. Everybody hates them.” - “Po Lah” (M, 25), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #12, 4/01)

The SPDC’s attempt to gain complete control of the region is not going to finish any time soon. It will take the SPDC years to establish enough camps to be able to bring all the villages in the region under their control. As long as a part of the region is free of their control, the villagers will still flee and the KNU/KNLA will still operate there. The SPDC and its predecessors have for decades tried to undermine resistance groups by depopulating the areas where they operate, and it has never yet been particularly successful. While the villagers starve or are killed, the resistance groups always find ways to bring in supplies from other regions. In some ways the destruction and relocation of villages strengthens the resistance, because it draws more recruits to their cause and also gives them more freedom to attack the SPDC without fear of retaliation against local villages. Even so, the KNU is strongly opposed to the SPDC’s campaign against villagers in Papun and Nyaunglebin districts because it is their own families and their own people who are suffering. It is unclear what the KNU will or can do to limit the damage except what it is already doing, such as small-scale harassment to restrict the movements of SPDC columns, the sharing of intelligence with the internally displaced, and helping to protect some of the villagers’ hiding places and villages. Though the loss of much of its territory since 1995 has led to the KNLA becoming a tighter, smaller, more motivated force, it has also lost a great deal of relevance. It can no longer drive the SPDC out of areas for any length of time, nor can it effectively protect the villagers. The KNU has been trying to initiate a dialogue with the SPDC for the past 3 years, but the regime continuously refuses to discuss anything but complete and unconditional surrender. The international community has consistently ignored this, preferring to focus its attention on the secret talks in Rangoon between the SPDC and the National League for Democracy (NLD), talks which have not produced a single statement or positive result for the ordinary people of Burma in an entire year. The talks exclude and apparently completely ignore the non-Burman peoples who make up at least half the population of Burma. They are definitely ignoring the people of Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts, whose villages and crops have continued being systematically destroyed since the talks began. The SPDC’s August/September 2001 order forbidding thousands of villagers

in Dweh Loh township from harvesting their rice (see ‘Restrictions’ on page 93), which will wipe out the rice harvest and condemn the villagers to starvation, gives a clear idea of how much these Rangoon talks are considering the fate of Burma’s people. The abuses by the Army only continue.

“I think that if our leaders can solve this problem and one day if the situation in our land is good I will go back. If the situation is not good we will stay here like this. I don’t go in front anymore [in the frontline areas, which is most of Papun District].” - “Saw Tha Pwih” (M, 38), refugee from T--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #56, 2/01)

“I have had a lot of problems while growing up. Since the Four Cuts when I was a child [the regime’s programme to cut off support for the resistance by destroying the villagers’ means of survival, which began in the 1970’s], our parents had to carry us and flee. They carried us and went to other people’s villages and houses and the life was hard. They had a very hard time feeding their children. Since I was a child until now I have had to face a lot of trouble. In the past the SPDC came and stole all of the paddy in the paddy barns. The rest of the paddy they threw into the water and they shat on it. It was a serious hurt to us. I suffered a lot of trouble and tried to bear it. I can’t bear it anymore but I can do nothing. I have to face it step by step. Until now we have to flee and stay in other people’s houses in the jungle. We don’t have enough food. Sometimes we have food and sometimes we don’t have food to eat. It seemed to get better, but not for long because they started doing it again. For the last one or two years we have had to face a lack of food again. I have to face many difficult things in my life.” - “Hla Maung” (M, 40), internally displaced villager from P— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #88, 12/00)

“When I was facing these problems, I kept thinking that the SPDC is our enemy. When I think about it, it is very painful in my heart. However, we can do nothing with this pain, because they are the people holding weapons, and we are the people who are weak. We were earning a living for our children by working our fields. We have no weapons and we can’t do anything. That’s why

we have to suffer and face this.” - “Saw Lay Ghay” (M, 34), internally displaced village head from P— village, Dweh Loh township, (Interview #127, 12/99)

Without a ceasefire the conflict will go on, and the SPDC will continue targeting the civilians as the support base of the KNU. Despite the fact that years of displacement and struggle have left the villagers with virtually nothing with which to support the KNU, the villagers can expect to continue to see their homes and fields destroyed and their friends and relatives shot until the SPDC declares the KNU eradicated and the population sufficiently subjugated. Even then, as can be seen in the firmly SPDC-controlled villages, the nightmare of constant forced labour on ‘development’ projects would only become worse.

“I want to say something if it will help us to be happy staying here and working for our living. We need those things, but we don’t know how many years we’ll have to continue facing problems like these. We can’t even be sure we’ll still be alive by the time all these troubles are past. For now we have enough food to eat, but we cannot speak about the future, even the next one or two months.” - “Saw Dee Ghay” (M, 63), internally displaced villager from S— village, Mone township (Interview #70, 2/00)



One of the hundreds of widows in Papun District who must now raise her children on her own while still having to run whenever SPDC troops enter her area. [KHRG]

“I am older, but if I was younger I would think about many things. Now I have a family and children. I am very angry with them [SPDC] when I think about it, but I have to be patient. When my son gets older and if they give me the opportunity I will beat them in return. They think I don’t have hands but we have hands the same as them.” - “Saw Thay Myo” (M, 30), villager from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #21, 4/01)

“They are going to keep the civilians hungry. They said that their enemy [the KNU] are staying here because the civilians are living here. If the enemy can’t meet the civilians then they can’t get food to eat. The civilians are living here and the enemy can also stay here so they [the soldiers] are going to oppress the civilians. The SPDC knows that if they don’t oppress the civilians like this, the civilians will always give encouragement to their

enemy.” - “Naw Lah K’Paw Mu” (F, 48), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #198, 6/00)

“They are always abusing us in many ways and we can’t suffer it. They are the soldiers of the government and must govern the country and the villagers. If they are doing this a lot, the villagers also can’t suffer it. ... I don’t want to say anything else, only this: you ask me like this and we answer like this, I don’t tell lies. I speak truthfully. I can say only this. I have suffered many things. We have to suffer side by side from their torture.” - “Saw Kaw Kwee” (M, 23), villager from xxxx village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #212, 3/01)

“They arrived there, saw him, and shot him. They shoot, and if they see people’s things they take them. Nephew, they are really just bandits. They are not people who are fighting to run this country. If they were really fighting to run this country, they wouldn’t steal things like that. They’d have to do things another way. If you’re fighting to run a country but you steal things, you’ll only make more enemies. If you shoot people whenever you see them like this, how can you organise the people? You’ll never succeed.” - “Pu Law Tee” (M, 70), internally displaced villager from S— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #78, 3/00)

The villagers in the area have never been adequately politically educated by either side. Few of the villagers in this area have strong views on the political future of Karen State or Burma, they simply want to be left in peace by all sides to farm and to live as they please.

They are sympathetic to the KNU and KNLA because it is their people, often their relatives, it is people who speak their language and do not abuse them. They hate the SPDC not because it is Burman, but because it has never shown them any face except abuse. Ever since the brutal abuses committed against villagers in the area by General Aung San's notorious Burma Independence Army during World War Two, the villagers have almost never encountered Burmans who did anything but abuse them. It will take generations to alleviate the mistrust that over 50 years of brutal abuse have engendered. Even Aung San Suu Kyi is not seen as a beacon of hope by these people, but as the daughter of a man who oversaw the destruction of their villages and the murder of hundreds of innocent villagers 50 years ago. Foreigners who believe that a Burman-dominated democratic government with a Burman-dominated Army can quickly bring about peace and trust in such a region are naïve and sadly misguided.

"I don't know. When we look at it, we are Karen, our hearts are Karen. As for them [the Burmese], they are not our nationality. They do things to us and it doesn't make us happy as Karen." - "Naw Say Paw" (F, 46), village headwoman from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #195, 6/00)

"I don't think the civilians will get any benefit. They [the soldiers] accuse us of being their enemy so we also accuse them of being our enemy." - "Hla Maung" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from P— village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #88, 12/00)

"I don't know what I am going to do in the future. Since I was young, the Burmese have kicked us when we cried. They've gagged us. It has never got better. Whenever they come to us they write a letter saying, 'If you need peace, lay down your arms and come back to us.' They say that they will take care of our food and security, but we are not interested. We have been fleeing since we were young and in the wombs of our mothers. In our father's time, they fled until they died. Now in our time, we are going to flee until we die." - "Saw Thay Doh" (M, 28), internally displaced villager from P— village, Shwegyin township (Interview #81, 3/00)

"All of the battalion commanders are SPDC. The SPDC tries to collect all the people and have them stay among them. If people go and live among them they have to start pulling logs and sending them abroad. Their government rules with a one party system. They look just like a tortoise. They would like to go and collect everything. They don't like the native inhabitants of the country. They collect them and force them to porter and work until they die. If they ruled by law it would be better for the native inhabitants." - "Myo Nyunt" (M, 20), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #141, 9/00)

"That group [the SPDC] is very cruel. They don't want the Karen people to rule the country, they would like to rule the country alone. Even though they rule, if they ruled properly it would be better. Even though they rule, they don't want to govern or keep the Karen people. They want to finish us all. If they said, 'Okay, you can stay and do your hill fields and if we come, invite us, try to send us here and there.' If they did like that there would be peace in the country. Because of what they do we dare not accept them. If we accept them, we are dead. Even though we don't accept them, we go and we are still dead. It is very difficult." - "Saw Pleh Wah" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

Charges of genocide have been levelled by some groups against the SPDC. KHRG does not believe that the SPDC plans to systematically wipe out the entire Karen people, but this does not mean that genocide is not occurring. Article 2 of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines five actions, any one of which is sufficient to constitute the international crime of genocide: the killing of members of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. The first three of these conditions clearly exist in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts. It cannot be ignored that the abuses of the SPDC Army are deliberately directed at the Karen civilian population, not at the Karen Army or political organisations. Karen civilians are shot on sight, arrested, tortured, summarily executed, fined, restricted in their movement, deliberately impoverished, denied access to food, medicines and education, and deliberately prevented from growing food to survive, all because they are Karen. In areas where Burmans also live, such as the Sittaung plains, most of the abuse is directed at Karen villagers. Though KHRG and others may believe otherwise, it is a common belief among Karen villagers that the final plan of the SPDC is to completely wipe them out.

"I don't think it is right how the Burmese oppress the Karen people. It's too much, because they even regard our belongings and everything else as their enemies. I don't think that it is right to do that. If they say that they are going to kill and oppress their real enemies, that should be enough. But now if they see villagers who are adults or children, blind or deaf, sick or missing arms or legs, they shoot them all. None of that is right. They have kicked and trampled some of our

villagers to death, some were shot dead, some they stabbed to death and some they beat to death with a stick. We couldn't tolerate it anymore. I don't think they want to rule over Karen people, I think they just want to wipe us out until we're gone, and then divide up our country. They plan to wipe out the Karen nationality." - "Saw Lah Htoo" (M, 40), refugee from Ko Say village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #35, 1/00)



This displaced villager from Nyaunglebin District set up his temporary shelter to rest and hide in the forest in May 2001. Shortly thereafter he had to flee the SPDC soldiers again, and eventually decided to try to flee to Thailand.

[KHRG]

"We don't see that they are good. The soldiers who stay in W--- are destroying the villagers' land and plantations. In the past the villagers who stayed in the mountains could stay there, but now they [the SPDC] doesn't allow them to come up. They allow only their own [Burman] civilians to come up. They call them up and look for gold. They bring machines and pan for gold. The villagers have to come and hire themselves out to cut grass and clear things." - "Saw Dee Ghay" (M, 45), internally displaced villager from T--- village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #90, 1/01)

Forced labour is a chief component of the SPDC's plans and as such will continue. The Army believes its soldiers cannot operate and its camps cannot be supplied without unpaid servants and the thousands of porters forced to carry supplies for them. In addition, the loyalty of the officers to the regime largely stems from their impunity to use villagers for their own purposes, and the regime will want to retain that loyalty. The increasing militarisation of the area will mean that the villagers will have to work as labourers on the roads and at the camps, as servants for the officers and as workers on the soldiers' money-making projects. All of these things continue to occur despite ILO censure of Burma and international pressure against the regime. Most of this pressure is starting to dissipate simply because the SPDC is talking to Aung San Suu Kyi, despite the continuation of forced labour and other abuses. At the time of writing the ILO has just completed an investigative trip to Burma to discover whether anything has been done to stop forced labour. Whatever the ILO finds in Burma, information from Papun and Nyaunglebin districts indicates that the SPDC has no plans to discontinue the practice, only to disguise it. The villagers in the area will be forced to work for the SPDC for a long time to come.

"The things I have suffered are due to their [the SPDC] oppressing us. We want to stay but we can't stay anymore. We can't work to eat. We have to flee all the time. Our children can't learn. So we have to go. ... If the situation is good we have to go back." - "Saw Kyi Po" (M, 37), internally displaced villager from L— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #107, 3/01)

"This group [the SPDC] is not easy. This group only destroys. They torture and kill civilians. They go and burn the civilians' villages, paddy and hill and flat fields. They burn everything they see. They take some of the paddy, but they stomp on the paddy that they can't take from the rice barns. For example when they came to our place, they destroyed some of the paddy and some they threw on the ground so we couldn't eat it anymore. Some of the paddy they didn't throw, they burned. We couldn't do anything. How can we eat? We dare not be close to them. We just go back and look at our village for a while. We have to flee. We also have to be afraid of their landmines. We have to be afraid of them about everything and we dare not go anywhere." - "Saw Pleh Wah" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

"We don't want to stay under the SPDC soldiers at all. We don't wish to do their work. We are the civilians so we want to stay peacefully. If we have peace we will be happy and the village will develop and improve. We can go and visit other villages. Now we have a problem because the SPDC soldiers are here and we can't go to visit. We also have to work for the Burmese, the SPDC, and we have many problems. The other thing I would like to

say is about our nationality, the KNU, we are not able to work for them. We would like to work for them, but we can't. We have to work only for the SPDC and we are unhappy. ... I will tell you how the SPDC is. They have weapons and they have a country so they want to force us as slaves and buffaloes. We can't carry but we have to carry. We can't do it but we have to do it." - "Saw Ra Doh", (M, 35), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #199, 6/00)

Villager after villager in the more than 300 interviews conducted for this report has told KHRG that what they want is peace and the freedom to grow their own food. Villagers living as IDP's in the forests and mountains want to return to their villages so they can grow enough food to live through the year. The villagers in the SPDC-controlled villages would also like simply to be left enough time to be able to plant enough food to live on. Many villagers have indicated that they wouldn't mind having to pay the crop quotas and having to go for occasional forced labour if they were also given the time and the freedom to work their fields and if the demands were kept well within what they can manage. They simply want to be left in peace to work their fields.

"I would like to tell you because you asked me. The problems are as I told you before. The main problem is food. The villagers have to face this. The second problem is about health. Some people should not die but they die, and people who should not be getting sick are getting sick. We have only hope. In addition there is an education problem - our children remain uneducated. They should be learning now but they aren't. They stay in the jungle. We pity them when we look at them but we can do nothing. We believe that something will change for us. We don't want these problems any more in our future. We hope that our leaders can solve these problems. We hope that in the future we will get something. That is all." - "Saw Po Hla" (M, 43), KNU township official, Bu Tho Township (Interview #219, 2/01)

"They didn't force us to do anything because we didn't dare to see them [they never let themselves be caught for forced labour]. We could face it if we heard that they'd come to fight with our soldiers [KNLA], but if they saw us villagers, whether in the day or the night, they shot at us all. Not only did they shoot to kill, but they also spoiled people's fields, paddy and rice and destroyed all the people's belongings. They killed all the animals like cattle and buffaloes when they saw them. That is why we don't dare to see them face to face. Because we don't dare to face them and because they do this to us, step by step we have

run to live in the jungle and they have to find us step by step like that. When we could suffer it no longer, we ran away to this place." - "Saw Tha Pwih" (M, 38), villager from T--- village, Lu Thaw township (Interview #56, 2/01)

"For our problem now, people must help us. If there is no help we are in trouble. Our civilians have trouble. When we go to buy rice it is because people [the KNU] give us money so we can go and buy it. We have no income. There is no work to do to get money. Even if there is paddy, if we don't have money, we can't buy it to eat. So people must help. If there is no help it will not be easy. The leaders must help. They should contact the other countries and help us. If they don't help us it will not be easy for us. Like I told you, we stay like this and the only thing we need is food. If our leaders and the other countries help us then we can stand. If they don't help us, it will be too hard for us to stand." - "Saw Pleh Wah" (M, 40), internally displaced villager from T— village, Hsaw Tee township (Interview #99, 3/01)

"[I]f the needs of the villagers can be met and if there are rights for the villagers then everything will go well and they will not be poor like this. Some of the villagers said that if there are rights for them and their needs are being met, then even if they still have to give taxes it will not be a problem for them. If they can go freely to their hill fields and into the jungle and work there is not much of a problem, but because they can't travel they can't work easily and they cannot easily pay the taxes. ... I don't have anything else to tell, but in the future I would like to have peace and development in our country. We should have peace and then work well to get enough food. There are many ways of oppression and we would like to be safe from these. It would be enough for us if we were safe from the many kinds of oppression." - "Saw Ber Kaw" (M, 40), village head from xxxx village, Mone township (Interview #17, 4/01)

"I can't tell you about anything else. I can tell about the time when I was angry. When I was angry I couldn't laugh or cry. I came back and saw that my rice was already burned. I had no rice to eat. I didn't want to laugh. I couldn't cry. I was angry but I couldn't do anything. I wanted to cry but I couldn't cry. I wanted to laugh but I couldn't laugh." - "Naw Mu Lay" (F, 36), villager from xxxx village, Dweh Loh township (Interview #142, 9/00)

Appendix A:

List of Destroyed and Abandoned Villages

This is a partial list of villages confirmed as burned, destroyed or abandoned due to the operations of SPDC soldiers between 1998 and June 2001. There are 226 villages on this list but it is important to emphasise that this list is not complete and that more villages are being burned as the SPDC expands its control. Some of these villages were given orders to relocate and therefore also appear in Appendix B, but most were simply destroyed or abandoned without receiving any specific orders to relocate. The destruction of these villages has been described in the interviews and field reports conducted for this report. Many of them have been corroborated by several interviews and field reports. Under '**Source**', **FR** indicates Field Reports from KHRG field researchers, **KHRG** indicates information given in the form of verbal reports or lists by KHRG field researchers and **Ix** indicates interviews with villagers, '**x**' being the interview number used in the report. Under '**Village Name**', * after the village name indicates a village which has not been destroyed but has been abandoned due to SPDC military presence. Full texts of the interviews and field reports are available upon approved request as an Annex to this report.

Papun District

Lu Thaw Township

#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>	#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>
1	Ler Mu Plaw	KHRG, I51, I60, I50, I45	32	Saw Mu Plaw	I51
2	Yay Gho Loh Der	KHRG	33	Tee Baw Kee	I40, I33, I34, I51
3	Ta Er Nah Kee	KHRG	34	Dta Baw Ko Der*	I36
4	Hser Tih	KHRG, I51	35	Blaw Ko	KHRG
5	Tee Khay Kee a.k.a. Loh Koh	KHRG, I51	36	K'Bu Kee	KHRG
6	K'Neh Mu Der a.k.a. Paw Kho Kee	KHRG, I51, I58, I59	37	Li Pway Kee	KHRG
7	Bler Ghaw	KHRG, I51, I60	38	Hsi Mu Heh Der a.k.a. Klaw Thay	KHRG
8	Hee Koh Loh Der	KHRG	39	Bee Ko Der	KHRG
9	Dta Baw Meh Plaw	KHRG	40	Ko Say*	I35
10	P'Nah Ay Per Ko	KHRG, I58	41	Theh Kee	KHRG, I53
11	K'Baw Kee	KHRG, I51	42	Shway Mu Der	KHRG
12	Saw Ay Kee	KHRG	43	Paw Khay Ko	KHRG
13	Hser Hta	I31, I44	44	Keh Meh Der	KHRG
14	Kho Kyaw Der	I46	45	Toh Pwih Der	KHRG
15	Naw Yo Hta	I60, I29	46	Theh Hsa Kee	I53
		KHRG	47	Tee Lee Kha Kee	KHRG, I56
16	Kho Kaw Der	KHRG	48	Ko Kee	KHRG
17	Bler Lu*	I52, I46	49	Kaw Kyay Der	KHRG
18	Ma Mee*	I52	50	Pla Koh	KHRG, I35
19	Lay Wah*	I52	51	Paw Mu Der	KHRG
20	Thu Kler	I46, KHRG	52	Kyo Moh Lay Der	KHRG
21	Keh Koh Mu Der	I52, I39, I46, KHRG	53	Saw Ker Der*	KHRG, I68
22	Kha Tha Lo Der	KHRG	54	Tay Thu Der	KHRG
23	Thaw Khee Der	KHRG	55	Thay Koh Mu Der	FR12
24	Taw Paw Der	KHRG	56	Khaw Hta*	KHRG, I3, I96, I105
25	Saw Khu Der*	I60	57	Per Kee Der*	KHRG, I88, I3, I96, I105, I99
26	Tee Ler Kee	I32	58	Yoh Po Loh*	I89, I3, I92
27	Kay Pu	I50	59	Wah Ka Der	I126, I128
28	Plo Kee*	I39	60	Paw Thu	01-26-17
29	Sgho Per Ko	KHRG	61	Lay Poh Kaw Tih	I96, I105
30	Si Day	KHRG	62	T'Lay Ghaw Der*	I89, I105
31	Baw Lay Der	KHRG	63	Tee Mu Der*	I91
			64	Kay Mu Der*	I69

#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>	#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>
65	Lah Eh Der	I37, I57	82	Thaw Pi Der*	I39
66	Hsaw Moh Hu Der*	I57	83	Deh Bo Hta*	I39
67	Baw Peh*	I57	84	Dta Law Ploh*	I39
68	May Per Hta*	I57	85	Paw Wah Hta	I68
69	Htee T'Kay Hta*	I57	86	Kyay Baw Ka	I68
70	Dta Bo Hta*	I57	87	Taw Thu Kee	I44
71	Nga Mu Per	I53	88	Na Ku Plaw	I46
72	Ler Taw	I53	89	P'Nah Po Plaw	I46
73	Tee Pweh Ko*	I29	90	Meh Hta Ko	I46
74	Sho Po Hta	I40	91	Saw Toh Kee	I48
75	Saw Pa Kaw Der*	I40	92	Pa Hta	I51
76	Nay Pweh Kee*	I40	93	Khaw Kho Hta*	I51
77	K'Per Kee*	I40	94	Yu Loh Der	I51
78	Lah Kaw*	I40	95	Khaw Thu	I3
79	Deh Bo Plaw*	I38	96	Theh Pa Tee*	I52
80	Kler Ka Plaw*	I39	97	Wah Daw Klah a.k.a. Mu T'Ru Pu	I40
81	Klu Thay Der*	I39			

Bu Tho Township

#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>
98	Bwah Der	KHRG
99	Meh Paw Mu Hta	KHRG
100	Ma Mu Der	KHRG

Dweh Loh Township

#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>	#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>
101	Nya Peh	KHRG	127	Per Ko	KHRG
102	Noh Nay Pu	KHRG	128	Plaw Kee	KHRG, I138, I142, I151, I139, I4
103	Meh Kleh	KHRG	129	Meh Thu Kee*	KHRG, I4, I129, I149
104	Nya Hsa Day	KHRG, I146, I4	130	Meh Paw Kee	I141, I145, I149
105	T'Kaw Hta	KHRG, I130	131	Thay Day Plaw Kee*	I149
106	P'Nweh Hta	KHRG	132	Nya Hsa Kee	I131, I132
107	Meh Toh Kee	KHRG, I141, I150, I151, I4	133	Ner Kee	KHRG, I114, I125, I131, I3
108	K'Neh Khaw Hta	KHRG	134	Wah Tay*	I131, I132
109	Maw Hta	KHRG, I151	135	Ler Toh Po	I132
110	Doh Koh Wah	KHRG, I4	136	Ker Kaw Law	KHRG, I131, I3, I132
111	Thay Ko	KHRG	137	Maw Pu	I114, I130, I126, I128, I77
112	Hsaw Pwih Hta	KHRG, I4	138	Lay Hta	I114, I130, I126, I77
113	Hsaw Pwih Kee	KHRG	139	Da Baw Kee	I130, I128, I126
114	Lay Kee	KHRG, I4	140	Meh Gha Law	KHRG, I130, I126, I132, I3, I77
115	K'Waw Kee	KHRG	141	Paw Wah Der	I130, I127, I132
116	Baw Naw Kee	KHRG	142	Noh Paw Per	I114
117	Poh Loh Kee	KHRG	143	Dta Hu Law	I191
118	Poh Loh Hta	KHRG	144	Ka Pu Soh	I130
119	Pway Day	KHRG, I144, I141	145	Maw Thay Hta	I130
120	Ler Wa Ko	KHRG	146	Baw Oo Toh*	I143
121	Kloh Kee	KHRG, I4	147	Th'Waw Kha	I140
122	Toh Meh Kee	KHRG	148	Th'Waw Ku	I140
123	Wa Tho Law	KHRG			
124	Noh Baw Law	KHRG			
125	Meh Paw Hta	KHRG			
126	Wa Law Kloh	KHRG			

Nyaunglebin District

Mone Township

#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>	#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>
149	Thay Nweh Kee	I42, I43, FR5, I49	159	Taw Ray Der	FR6
150	Saw Ka Der*	I70, I5	160	Saw Nyeh Der	FR6
151	Nwa Kee*	FR11	161	Tee Ner Hta	FR6
152	Haw Kho Dreh*	FR11	162	Nwa Lay Ko	FR6
153	Saw Kee*	FR11	163	Play Kee	FR6
154	Tee Ghaw*	FR11	164	Yaw Kee	FR6
155	Saw Tay Der	I28, I30, FR6	165	Play Pa	FR6
156	Pah Kaw Kee*	I48	166	Si Daw Ko	FR6
157	Wah Kee	FR6	167	K'Nay Kee	FR6
158	Kwih Day Ko	FR6	168	K'Pah Hta	FR12

Kyauk Kyi Township

#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>	#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>
169	P'Yah Hser Der	FR12	183	Maw Lay Kee	I75
170	Tee Mu Hta	I66, I94	184	Kee Tee	I75
171	Per Po Kee*	I5	185	Nyah Tay*	I75
172	Maw Kee	I80, I83	186	Kee Kheh Der*	I75
173	K'Du Mu Der*	I94	187	Thaw Mi Der*	I75
174	Kheh Der	I73, I75, FR12	188	Poh Kyo*	I75
175	T'Kaw Der	I75, FR12	189	Hoh Lu	I75
176	Oo Keh Kee	FR12	190	Paw Poh Der*	I75
177	Mu Kee	I75, FR12	191	Peh Po Kee	I9
178	Doh Daw Kee	FR12	192	Saw Baw Der	I30
179	Dta Baw Kee*	I77	193	Lay Pway Kee	KHRG, I2
180	Tee Nya B'Day Kee	I74, FR12	194	Kler Kee*	I94
181	Poh Hta	I75	195	Kwih Lah*	KHRG, I2
182	Po Khaw Der	I75, FR12			

Shwegyin Township

#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>	#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Source</u>
196	Hsaw Gho Kee	KHRG	211	Saw Ru Ko*	KHRG, I1, I99
197	Du Pa Leh	KHRG	212	Mee T'Nay Der	I99
198	Tee Klay Kee	KHRG	213	Dta Keh Pu*	KHRG, I1
199	Tee Blah Hta	I90, I79, I111	214	Mi Tha Mi Der*	I98
200	Thaw Gheh Ko	I76, I99	215	Thay Ko Pu	I103
201	Saw Ther Kee*	I76, I102	216	Dta Say Der	I71
202	Tee Thareh Kee	I71, I76, I130	217	Htoo Lu*	I72
203	Yah Aw*	I76	218	Maw Pu	I77
204	Ghaw Kee*	I71, I76	219	Saw Aw Hta	I78
205	Dta Kaw Lay Ko*	I76	220	Meh Kyi Kee a.k.a. Kyaw Mu Chaw Day	I80
206	Tee Nya Mo Kee*	I109 (fled but not destroyed)	221	Prah Kee*	I81
207	Tee Ler Ghaw Kee*	I99	222	Wah May Kee*	I81
208	Loh Kee*	KHRG, I1, I98, I99	223	Dta Kwih Kyo*	I82
209	Kaw Mu Der	KHRG, I1, I97, I98, I100, I101, I99, I105	224	Meh Thee Hta*	I86
210	Thay Ko Hser Der*	KHRG, I1, I97, I101, I96, I105	225	Meh K'Dtee*	I85
			226	Kyay Kee*	I101

Appendix B: **Relocated Villages**

This is a partial list of villages which were given specific orders to move to relocation sites according to villagers in the area. Many of these villages also appear in the list of burned and destroyed villages because they were subsequently burned after the villagers moved. This list is not complete. Under 'Source', **FR** indicates Field Reports from KHRG field reporters, **KHRG** indicates information given in the form of verbal reports or lists by KHRG field researchers and **1x** indicates interviews with villagers, 'x' being the interview number used in the report. Full texts of the interviews and field reports are available upon approved request as an Annex to this report.

Papun District

#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Township</u>	<u>Relocation Site</u>	<u>Source</u>
1	Wah P'Nah Lo Ko	Wa Mu	Wa Mu	KHRG
2	Wa Wee Lay	Meh Kyo	Ku Thu Hta	I116
3	Nya Hsa Day	Meh Kyo	Wa Mu	I146
4	K'Neh Khaw Hta	Ma Lay Ler		I157
5	Thay Kyo	Ma Lay Ler	Wa Mu	I146
6	Lay Kee	Ma Lay Ler	Wa Mu	I146
7	Kyaw T'Koh Kee	Ma Lay Ler	Wa Mu	I146
8	Khaw Tee Ko	Ku Thu Hta		I133
9	Dweh T'Kaw Kee	Ku Thu Hta		I133
10	Meh T'Ru Kee	Ku Thu Hta		I133
11	Tee Na Day	Ku Thu Hta		I133
12	Kloh Kee	Meh Way	Meh Way	KHRG, I4
13	Wa Tho Law	Meh Way	Meh Way	KHRG, I4
14	Noh Bo Law	Meh Way	Meh Way	KHRG, I4
15	Wa Law Kloh	Meh Way	Meh Way	KHRG, I4
16	Plaw Kee	Meh Way	Meh Way	I137
17	Meh Thu Kee	Meh Way	Meh Way	KHRG, I4
18	Du Baw	Meh Way		I143
19	Ka Hser Ghee Tee	Meh Way	Meh Way	KHRG, I4
20	Toh Kyaw Kee	Meh Way	Meh Way	KHRG, I4
21	Da Baw Kee	Meh Thu		I114
22	Meh Gha Law	Meh Thu		I113, I114
23	Khaw Tee Ko	Meh Nyu Hta	Klaw Hta	I220 *
24	Meh Nyu Hta Khaw Kla	Meh Nyu Hta	Meh Nyu Hta	I221

* This village had been told it would be relocated, but moved to a place of its own choosing.

Nyaunglebin District

#	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Township</u>	<u>Relocation Site</u>	<u>Source</u>
25	Kheh Pu Der	Mone		FR6
26	Theh Baw Der	Mone		FR6
27	Kyaw Pya	Mone		FR6
28	Ploh Pa	Mone		FR6
29	Gko Nee	Mone		I26
30	Noh Taw Hta	Mone	Yan Myo Aung	I5, I10
31	P'Reh See	Mone	Yan Myo Aung	I5, I10
32	Ta Maw Ma	Mone	Yan Myo Aung	I5, I10
33	Twa Ni Gone	Mone	Yan Myo Aung	I10
34	Mah Pee Doh	Ler Doh	P'Deh Kaw	KHRG
35	Mah Pee Po	Ler Doh	P'Deh Kaw	KHRG

<u>#</u>	<u>Village Name</u>	<u>Township</u>	<u>Relocation Site</u>	<u>Source</u>
36	Leh Gkaw Wah	Ler Doh	Lay Bin Way	I9
37	Shwe Dtee	Ler Doh		I9
38	Taun Dta Daw	Ler Doh		I9
39	P'Zu An	Ler Doh		I9
40	Ma Oo Bin	Ler Doh		I9
41	Nga Peh Inn	Ler Doh		I9
42	Shan Su	Ler Doh	Kaw Tha Say	I9

Appendix C:

Villagers Killed by SPDC and DKBA

Soldiers and Landmines

This is a partial list of villagers directly killed by the regular SPDC soldiers, the Sa Thon Lon and the DKBA in Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts. These killings have been described in the interviews and field reports collected for this report. Many of them have been corroborated by several interviews and field reports. There are 313 people on this list who have been killed since 1998, but it is important to emphasise that this list is far from complete and that the real death toll is much higher, perhaps double or triple this amount. This list does not include the hundreds of people who have died of starvation, disease or accidents caused by having to flee their villages or the actions of the SPDC within the villages. The time it takes to travel to these areas and obtain the information means that there are few accounts of killings in the last few months; this does not reflect a decrease in the rate of killing but simply the difficulty in obtaining reliable information. Under 'Twp.' (Township), **M** = Mone, **K** = Kyauk Kyi, **S** = Shwegyin, Nyaunglebin District; **L** = Lu Thaw, **D** = Dweh Loh, **B** = Bu Tho, Papun District; and **R** = Rangoon Division. Under 'Source', **FR** indicates Field Reports from KHRG field reporters and '**ix**' indicates interviews with villagers, '**x**' being the interview number used in the report. Full texts of the interviews and field reports are available upon approved request as an Annex to this report.

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
1	4/5/01	Saw Pa Dway	M	38	Paw Dee Der	B	Mentally handicapped villager shot five or six times by IB 19	FR21
2	20/3/01	Saw Po Lay Tay	M	27	Li Pway Kee	L	Killed by SPDC landmine	FR23
3	3/01	Maw Kyay	M	?	Do Pa Leh	S	Shot dead	I102
4	4/2/01	U Ba Htay	M	44	Ler Wah	S	Shot dead by LIB 440 while carrying rice	I108
5	4/2/01	Chit Ko	M	30	Ler Wah	S	U Ba Htay's son-in-law; shot dead by LIB 440 while carrying rice	I108
6	4/2/01	Kyeh Nee	M	34	Ler Wah	S	Shot dead by LIB 440 while carrying rice with Chit Ko and U Ba Htay	I108
7	2001	Saw H---	M	22	xxxx	M	Arrested, tied up, tortured, executed and buried alive	I16
8	2001	Saw La Heh	M	?	Kaw Mu Der	S	Killed by SPDC landmine	I101
9	2001	Mu Kler Htoo	M	?	Thay Koh Hser Der	S	Shot dead while acting as a lookout	I101, I99
10	2001	Ba Htay	M	?	?	S	Shot dead	I98
11	2001	Unknown	M	?	?	S	Ba Htay's son; shot dead	I98
12	12/00	Saw Hla Hay	M	32	Thay Koh Hser Der	S	Killed by landmine	I97, I98, I100
13	12/00	Unknown	F	30+	Yah Aw	S	Killed by landmine	I95
14	12/00	Saw Leh Yu	M	20	Tee Blah	S	Died after legs blown off by landmine left by SPDC soldiers in a village	I90
15	12/00	Kaw Ka	M	60	Tee Blah	S	Killed by landmine when he went back to look for food around his village	I90

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
16	11/00	Pa Kyaw	M	16	Maw Hta	D	Shot dead while searching for food	I151
17	10/00	Pa Thu Gheh	M	?	Thay Ko Pu	S	Shot dead	I103
18	10/00	Saw Eh Mu Mo	F	?	Thay Ko Pu	S	Shot dead	I103
19	15/8/00	Pa Kyaw Law	M	25	Poh Mine Hay	D	Shot dead on path by LIB 2	I207
20	6/8/00	Saw Kaw Pweh Mu	M	25	Yah Ploh Der	L	Killed	FR23
21	7-8/00	Maung Nay Tu	M	30	Du Baw	D	Shot on sight	I143
22	7-8/00	Saw Pa Htoo	M	25	Du Baw	D	Maung Nay Tu's brother; he was shot in the leg and later bled to death in the forest	I143
23	27/6/00	Saw T'Pway	M	58	K'Bu Kee	L	Killed	FR23
24	6/6/00	Saw Sa Wa Htoo	M	15	Li Pway Kee	L	Killed	FR23
25	18/4/00	Saw Dee Mu	M	18	Hser Hta	L	Shot dead under his hut and burned together with his hut	I51
26	18/4/00	Naw Y'Weh Tee	F	42	Hser Hta	L	Saw Dee Mu's mother; shot and died near her hut	I51
27	28/3/00	Eh Wah, a.k.a. Kyi Htoo Pa	M	50	Meh Yeh Kee	S	Shot on sight in his field hut by IB 10 or IB 88	I85, I86, I87
28	14/3/00	Hser Mu Lah Paw Pu	M	70	Dta Kheh Thee Hta	M	Shot dead by LIB 351 while building houses	I49
29	14/3/00	Htoo Saw Pa	M	71	Dta Kheh Thee Hta	M		I49
30	14/3/00	Naw Eh Mu	F	?	Thaw Gheh Ko	S	Shot on sight in the head by LIB 4	I76
31	23/2/00	Pa Maung Tu	M	40	Meh Thu Kee	D	Arrested with his three children; he was shot dead and the children taken by the soldiers to Meh Way	I149
32	14/2/00	Saw Klu Kla	M	46	Theh Kee	M	Died from gunshot wound to ankle and shrapnel wounds in his chest after SPDC soldiers opened fire on him when he was fishing; his daughter and two sons escaped	I41, I49
33	9/3/00	Pa Peh	M	?	Tee Thareh Kee	S	Shot dead by LIB 4	I76
34	3/00	Unknown	M	?	Noh Paw Tee	D	Shot dead	I185
35	3/00	Unknown	?	?	Kaw Tha Say	K	Killed by DKBA	I9
36	3/00	Unknown	?	?	Kaw Tha Say	K	Killed with previous villager by DKBA	I9
37	15/2/00	Saw Bo Kloh	M	45	Ghaw Kee	S	Shot dead by IB 14	I71
38	15/2/00	Poh Ku	M	56	Tee Thareh Kee	S	Shot dead while cooking in his kitchen	I77
39	2/00	Saw Nay Say*	M	46-47	Hsaw Th'Rih Kee	S	Killed by landmine	I77
40	2/00	Naw Dah	F	20	Maw Kee	S	Wounded in the thigh by shrapnel, she was later shot dead when the soldiers found her	I83, I84
41	2/00	Pa Bway Htoo Pa, a.k.a. Ko Maung	M	80	Maw Kee	S	Shot in the thigh, he was later shot dead when the soldiers found him hiding	I83, I84

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
42	24/1/00	Saw Pa Kaw Ka	M	45	Du Pa Leh	S	Killed by landmine laid by LIB 4, LID 66	I71, I78
43	23/1/00	Maung Yay Han	M	?	Po Lah	K	Killed by landmine	I75
44	20/1/00	"Saw K'Baw's" son	M	6 mo.	Ta Say Der	S	Shot dead by LIB 5 when they raided their IDP site	I71, I72
45	19/1/00	Eh Mu Thay	M	28	Htoo Lu	S	Shot dead by LIB 5	I72
46	18/1/00	Saw Eh Roh	M	?	Thay Nweh Kee	M	Shot dead by LIB 351 while carrying rice; everything including his clothes were taken and his face cut up	I47, I41, I42, I70
47	18/1/00	Naw K'Paw Htoo	F	?	Thay Nweh Kee	M	Shot dead when SPDC soldiers opened fire on an IDP camp	I47, I41, I42, I43, I70
48	18/1/00	Saw Pweh Kaw	M	30	Po Kler/Ber Baw Kee	L	Killed by landmine while coming to see his wife and children	I46, FR23
49	15/1/00	Po Raw	M	?	Tee Ler Kee	L	Shot in stomach; later died of his wound	I39
50	13/1/00	Hser Ghay Htoo	?	?	Po Khaw Der	K	Killed by landmine	I75
51	9/1/00	U Kyaw Hlaing	M	?	Pah Weh Hta	D	Arrested, accused of having relatives in the resistance and later executed by LIB 534	I134
52	9/1/00	Htoo Saw	M	37	Pah Weh Hta	D		I134
53	9/1/00	Pa Yaw Kya	M	45	Pah Weh Hta	D		I134
54	9/1/00	Kaw Lah Po	M	25	Pah Weh Hta	D	Arrested with the previous three men and executed by LIB 534; he had no relatives in the resistance and was executed because he was arrested with the other three men	I134
55	4/1/00	Maung Dta	M	?	Tee Nya B'Day Kee	K	Shot dead; afterwards they slit open his stomach and removed his heart, liver and intestines, they also cut off his penis and testicles	I74, I75
56	1/00	Po Day	M	?	Thay Po Plaw	L	Shot dead	I68
57	1/00	Po Kah	M	?	Thay Nweh Kee	M	Shot dead while walking with his sons	I43, I70
58	1/00	Saw Pah Ku	M	35	Du Pah Leh	S	Killed by landmine laid by LID 66	I71, I79
59	1/00	Kyo Du	M	38	Noh Ghaw	K	Arrested, stabbed and executed by Sa Thon Lon after a fight with the KNLA	I9
60	2000	Maw Say	M	25	Tee Blah	S	Shot dead	I111
61	2000	Unknown	M	?	Hsaw Oh Der	M	Killed by Sa Thon Lon for possessing batteries	I14
62	2000	Pa Peh	M	46	Saw Theh Kee	S	Killed by landmine	I102
63	2000	Pa Kaw Ka	M	47	Saw Theh Kee	S	Killed by landmine	I102
64	2000	Pa Th'Weh Po	M	30+	Saw Theh Kee	S	Killed by landmine	I102
65	2000	Pa Deh Kha	M	?	Saw Khu Der	L	Killed by landmine	I60
66	2000	Pa Ghaw Khay	M	35	Ler Wah	K	Ambushed on a path and shot dead	I94

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
67	2000	U Traw	M	50	Ler Wah	K	Shot dead on a path	I94
68	2000	Mya Li Hay Pa	M	?	Saw Ka Der	M	Shot dead	I56
69	2000	Po Ka Hu	M	?	Saw Ka Der	M	Wounded and later shot dead	I56
70	2000	Saw Po Pway	M	25	Mee Maw Kee	L	Killed	FR23
71	2000	Saw Maw Tay Oo	M	35	Mee Maw Kee	L	Killed	FR23
72	2000	Maung Dee Tu	M	35	Wah Du Baw	D	Shot dead with his brother by LID 66	I149
73	2000	Kyaw Pa Toh	M	34	Wah Du Baw	D	Maung Dee Tu's brother; shot dead by LID 66	I149
74	2000	Saw Lay Wah	M	?	Meh Paw Kee	D	Arrested and executed	I145
75	2000	Kyaw Hsa	M	?	Meh Paw Kee	D	Arrested and executed	I145
76	2000	Lah Thin	M	?	Meh Paw Kee	D	Arrested and executed	I145
77	2000	Maung Kyaw	M	?	Meh Paw Kee	D	Arrested on a path and later executed	I145
78	2000	Naw Pway	F	27	Meh Paw Kee	D		I145
79	2000	Unknown	?	?	Meh Paw Kee	D		I145
80	2000	Unknown	?	?	Meh Paw Kee	D		I145
81	2000	Unknown	M	10	Wah Tay	D	Shot dead when SPDC soldiers surrounded his house and opened fire	I132
82	2000	Nay Htoo Pa	M	30+	K'Baw Kee	L	Killed by landmine	I51
83	2000	Kaw Kee	M	?	Der Kay Kee	S	Killed by landmine laid by LID 66	I79
84	2000	Aung Tin	M	?	Meh Kyi Kee	S	Shot dead when SPDC soldiers opened fire on an IDP site	I80
85	29/12/99	Pa Htoo	M	19	Dta Kwih Kyo	S	Shot in head and chest while walking on a path	I82
86	28/12/99	Saw Tin Oo	M	?	IDP, Ler Mu Plaw village tract	L	Ambushed and shot dead on path	I45
87	27/12/99	Pa Twee Maung, a.k.a. Saw Cha Lay	M	?	Thay Pyu	K	Sliced with a broken bottle and then stabbed to death; arrested going to work and suspected of being KNU	I9
88	24/12/99	Naw Kri Sa Paw, a.k.a. Naw Lu Lu	F	19	Po Khaw Der	K	Shot dead by LIB 383	I73, I75
89	23/12/99	Saw Law Shwe	M	49	Dta Blaw Ko Der	L	Killed by landmine	I36, FR23
90	23/12/99	Saw Noh Dee	M	?	Dta Blaw Ko Der	L	Killed by landmine	I36
91	23/12/99	Naw Thaw Myint	F	?	Dta Blaw Ko Der	L	Killed by landmine	I36
92	21/12/99	Sha Yu Muh	M	35	K'Bu Kee	L	Shot dead in his hut	I40, FR23
93	14/12/99	Pa Maung Dah	M	28	Maw Pu	D	Shot in leg and disappeared	I127, I128
94	9/12/99	Saw Yee Po	M	40	Dta Baw Ko Der	L	Killed	FR23
95	5/12/99	Saw Dta Lah Kaw	M	35	Tee Baw Day	L	Killed by landmine	I40, I36, FR23
96	1/12/99	Saw Dta Baw Reh	M	20	Sgho Per Ko	L	Killed	FR23
97	12/99	Maw Htoo Wah	M	?	Saw Ka Der	M	Mortally wounded from bullet wounds in the arm and stomach; his wife, daughter and grandchild were wounded	I5, I62
98	12/99	Hsa Baw	M	?	Saw Ka Der	M	Shot in the buttocks and through the heart and liver	I62

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
99	12/99	Po Thay Leh	M	60	Meh Kaw Law	D	Shot dead in his house	I132
100	12/99	Po Mee Yoh	M	?	Wah Tay	D	Shot on sight while drying his paddy	I131, I132
101	12/99	Saw Ghay Say Pa	M	?	Hser Hta	L	Shot dead	I68
102	12/99	Kya Yuh	M	?	Dta Blaw Ko Der	L	Shot dead	I36
103	12/99	Yu Po	M	?	Wah Tho Day	L	Killed by landmine planted in village after he villagers fled	I40
104	12/99	Saw Kyaw Yeh	M	30	Baw Wah Der	D	Killed by a landmine while going to feed his pig	I130
105	11-12/99	Ta Pa	M	?	Noh Ta Lay	L	Shot dead while harvesting paddy	I34
106	11-12/99	Ta Pa Mo	F	?	Noh Ta Lay	L	Ta Pa's mother; shot dead while harvesting paddy	I34
107	11-12/99	Hser Eh Paw Mo	F	?	Noh Ta Lay	L	Shot dead while harvesting paddy	I34
108	27/11/99	Saw Pweh Lay Kaw	M	30	Tee Mu Kee	L	Killed	FR23
109	19/11/99	Maung Dta Htoo, a.k.a. Mu Doh Paw Pa	M	38	Shway Mu Der	L	Shot dead while threshing his paddy	I48, FR23
110	19/11/99	Khaw Na Hsay	M	20	Baw Gho Der	L	Maung Dta Htoo's nephew; shot dead in his field while eating	I48, FR23
111	19/11/99	Saw Thay Wah	M	?	Po Hta	K	Shot dead	I75
112	10/11/99	Unknown	M	?	Wah Ka Der area	L	Shot dead while in his field	I129
113	10/11/99	Unknown	M	?	Wah Ka Der area	L	Shot dead on a path	I129
114	6/11/99	Kyaw Neh Po, a.k.a. Kyaw Pa	M	70	Dta Baw Ko Der	L	Shot dead by Sa Thon Lon while carrying his paddy	I40, I38, I36, I33, I68, FR23
115	6/11/99	Naw Law Eh	F	48	Dta Baw Ko Der	L	Wife of Kyaw Neh Po; shot dead by Sa Thon Lon while carrying paddy	I40, I38, I36, I33, I68, FR23
116	6/11/99	Naw La May	F	68	Dta Baw Ko Der	L	Shot dead while carrying paddy	I40, I38, I36, I33, I68, FR23
117	11/99	Unknown	?	?	?	L	Killed by landmine	I36
118	11/99	Unknown	?	?	?	L	Killed by landmine	I36
119	11/99	Tee Kaw	M	27	?	L	Killed by landmine	I40
120	11/99	Maw Lay	M	?	Kay Mu Der	L	Shot dead while	I69
121	11/99	Unknown	?	?	?	L	harvesting paddy	I69
122	11/99	Unknown	?	?	?	L	together	I69
123	11/99	Unknown	?	?	?	L		I69
124	19/10/99	Saw Bee Wah Htoo	M	43	Baw Gho Der	L	Shot dead while working in his field; his niece and two nephews were killed with him	I53, I48, I54, I55, FR23
125	19/10/99	Naw Meh Hsa Htoo	F	13	Baw Gho Der	L	Saw Deh Wah Htoo's niece; shot dead while working in field	I53, I48, I54, I55, FR23
126	19/10/99	Saw La Kaw Mu	M	10	Baw Gho Der	L	Naw Meh Sa Htoo's brother; shot dead while working in field	I53, I48, I54, I55, FR23

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
127	19/10/99	Saw Tha Nay Mu, a.k.a. Saw April Htoo or Pa Thu Koh	M	20	Baw Gho Der	L	Naw Meh Sa Htoo and Saw La Kaw Mu's uncle; shot dead while working in his field	I53, I48, I54, I55, FR23
128	10/99	Kyaw Win	M	50+	Paw Wah	D	Village head executed by IB 264 and then beheaded	I131
129	10/99	Unknown	M	?	Saw Baw Der	M	Arrested, tied up and shot; the SPDC unit had been ordered to kill all the men in the village by their operations commander	I30
130	10/99	Unknown	M	?	Saw Baw Der	M		I30
131	10/99	Unknown	M	?	Saw Baw Der	M		I30
132	10/99	Unknown	M	?	Saw Baw Der	M		I30
133	10/99	Unknown	M	?	Saw Baw Der	M		I30
134	10/99	Unknown	M	?	Saw Baw Der	M		I30
135	10/99	Unknown	M	?	Saw Baw Der	M		I30
136	6/9/99	M---	M	?	Bler Per	D	Arrested and beaten by IB's 98 & 93, later executed despite 200,000 Kyat paid as ransom	I172
137	23/8/99	Thra Yah Kyaw	M	?	Wah Law Kloh	D	Arrested and later executed by IB 264	I123, I124
138	23/8/99	Naw Lay Gher	F	?	Wah Law Kloh	D		I123, I124
139	23/8/99	Pa Kay	M	?	Wah Law Kloh	D		I123, I124
140	23/8/99	Pa Ler Pway	M	7	Ya Ku Kee	D	Shot dead in father's arms when SPDC soldiers opened fire on his village	I120, I122
141	23/8/99	Hla Myint	M	?	Tee Shee Baw	D	Arrested and taken away; later they were executed by having their throats slit	I120, I122, I123
142	23/8/99	Ner Doh	M	?	Rangoon	R		I120, I122, I123
143	23/8/99	Pa Pay, a.k.a. Pa Khin	M	?	?	D		I120, I122, I123
144	17/7/99	Saw Kway Htoo	M	36	Lah Eh Der	L	Killed	FR23
145	5/6/99	Saw Say Pya	M	25	Sway Tay	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10, FR13
146	5/6/99	Saw Aung Shwe	M	55	Sway Tay	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10, FR13
147	6/99	Maung Yin Shwe	M	?	?	M	Shot dead on a path by LIB 351	I41, I70
148	25/5/99	Unknown	M	70	K'Pah Hta	M	Killed by IB's 48 and 26; they then beheaded him and left the knife sticking in his neck	FR12
149	24/5/99	Naw Tha Wih	F	32	Mah Pee Doh	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10, FR13
150	24/5/99	Pa Raw	M	46	Bpo Khay	D	Shot dead when IB 27 opened fire on a wedding party believed to be for a KNLA officer; his wedding was in a different village a month earlier	I161, I160, FR8
151	24/5/99	Pa Bleh	M	60	Bpo Leh	D		I161, I160, FR8
152	24/5/99	Po Meh	M	?	Bpo Leh	D		I161, I160, FR8
153	24/5/99	Po Kyaw Ku	M	?	Bpo Leh	D		I161, I160, FR8
154	24/5/99	Po Naw Seit	M	48	Pah Loh	D		I161, I160, FR8
155	14/5/99	Saw Ler Htoo	M	45	Shwe Tik	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
156	14/5/99	Saw Hsa Mu Htoo	M	26	Law Plah Toh	D	Shot dead by Ka Hsaw Wah Battalion of the DKBA	FR1
157	14/5/99	Saw Paw Naw Pi	M	20	?	D	Shot dead by Ka Hsaw Wah Battalion of the DKBA	FR1
158	12/5/99	Saw M---	M	40	xxxx	M	Arrested, beaten, stabbed and then shot and executed	I18, I13
159	9/5/99	U Kyaw Shwe	M	30-40	Shan Su	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
160	2/5/99	Saw Tha Lah Kyaw	M	45	Noh Ghaw La Kaw	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10, FR13
161	2/5/99	Saw Da Tha	M	25	Noh Ghaw La Kaw	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10, FR13
162	2/5/99	Saw Kaw Beh	M	61	Noh Ghaw La Kaw	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10, FR13
163	2/5/99	Unknown	M	?	Tee Theh Lay	D	Tortured, stabbed and shot	I164
164	27/4/99	Baw Lwee		28	Wih Pyin	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13
165	27/4/99	Saw Wah Per	M	65	Pa T'Lah	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10, FR13
166	26/4/99	Saw Saw Nee	M	45	Neh Yu	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10, FR13
167	25/4/99	Saw Wah Per	M	50	Weh La Taw	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13
168	25/4/99	Saw Ler Htoo	M	53	Sway Tay	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
169	25/4/99	Saw Aung Nee	M	40	Neh Yu	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
170	21/4/99	Saw Kaw Lah Wah	M	34	Pa T'Lah	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
171	21/4/99	Saw Kho Der Hta	M	32	Pa T'Lah	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
172	21/4/99	Saw Maung Ree	M	40	Pa T'Lah	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
173	17/4/99	Saw Myint Oo	M	27	Shwe Dah	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
174	16/4/99	Maung Kyi Hla	M	?	Ma La Daw	M	Killed by landmine planted by SPDC soldiers	I27
175	14/4/99	Unknown	?	?	Theh Baw Der	M	Shot dead by IB 48, Column 2	I25
176	14/4/99	Unknown	?	?	Theh Baw Der	M	Shot dead by IB 48, Column 2	I25
177	14/4/99	Unknown	?	?	Theh Baw Der	M	Shot dead by IB 48, Column 2	I25
178	14/4/99	Unknown	?	?	Theh Baw Der	M	Shot dead by IB 48, Column 2	I25
179	14/4/99	Unknown	?	?	Theh Baw Der	M	Shot dead by IB 48, Column 2	I25
180	14/4/99	Unknown	?	?	Theh Baw Der	M	Shot dead by IB 48, Column 2	I25
181	14/4/99	Unknown	?	?	Theh Baw Der	M	Shot dead by IB 48, Column 2	I25
182	4/4/99	Naw Mu	F	35	Pa Aw Taw	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13
183	4/4/99	Naw Pya Yaun	F	40	Pa Aw Taw	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13
184	4/4/99	Saw Shu Kan	M	45	Noh Po	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13
185	4/4/99	Saw Ka Lah	M	20	Mo Koh	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
186	4/4/99	Saw Maung Say	M	35	Pa Aw Taw	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
187	4/4/99	Maung Soe	M	40	Pa Aw Taw	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
188	30/3/99	Ko Maung Oo	M	35	Mah Pee Doh	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
189	29/3/99	Kyaw Day	M	37	Tan Ka La	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13
190	29/3/99	Maung Shi Nya	M	35	Tan Ka La	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
191	28/3/99	M---, a.k.a. 'Dter Kweh Po'	M	20	T---	S	Shot 4 times by SPDC soldiers coming to raid his village	I80
192	25/3/99	Ko Chit Thaw	M	40	Tan Ka La	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
193	25/3/99	U Kyaw Day	M	60	Tan Ka La	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
194	23/3/99	Saw Pan Gyi	M	29	Daw Kee	K	Killed by LIB 364 for transporting and selling goods from outside the country	FR13
195	23/3/99	Saw Pa Baw	M	30	Taw Ko	K		FR13
196	22/3/99	Saw Pa Ku Na	M	42	Pa Na Ner	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13
197	22/3/99	Khin Maung Soe	M	22	Thu K'Bin	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13
198	22/3/99	Saw Maung Tin	M	55	Thu K'Bin	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13
199	20/3/99	Saw Po Kyaw	M	45	Kaw Tha Say	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
200	16/3/99	Saw Du	M	18	Nya Lo Der	L	Killed	FR23
201	16/3/99	Saw Maw Rih Dee	M	32	Nah Yoh Hta	L	Killed	FR23
202	16/3/99	Saw Nay Hla Mu	M	16	Hintha Weh	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
203	7/3/99	Saw Shwe Mya Htoo	M	65	Nya Ploh Der	M	Shot dead in his field by LIB 369; they beheaded him, stuck a cheroot in his mouth and put his head on a post	FR5
204	7/3/99	Naw Po Po	F	25	Nya Ploh Der	M	Daughter of Saw Shwe Mya Htoo; shot dead in her field by LIB 369	FR5
205	7/3/99	Naw Nyu Paw	F	?	Nya Ploh Der	M	Shot in her field with her father and sister; she died three days later	I25
206	3/99	Unknown	M	?	Rangoon	R	Shot dead while escaping from portering	I230
207	3/99	Lah Oo	M	67	Gko Nee	M	Stabbed and neck broken by Sa Thon Lon	I7
208	3/99	Wah Baw	M	?	Kheh Der	K	Arrested and executed by LIB 361, SKK 10	I73
209	3/99	Oo Peh	M	?	Kheh Der	K	Arrested with Wah Baw and executed by LIB 361, SKK 10	I73
210	26/2/99	Saw Lu Muh	M	?	Haw Ko Dreh	K	Killed by LIB 361	FR11
211	25/2/99	Saw Noh Htoo	M	?	Nwa Kee	K	Killed by LIB 366	FR11
212	24/2/99	Kaw Say Gay	M	?	?	L	Shot dead while picking oranges with a KNLA soldier (he was carrying a gun)	I29
213	21/2/99	Kyu Lah Htoo	F	?	Thay Nweh Kee	M	Shot on sight while working in their field	I41
214	21/2/99	Tha Blu Paw	F	?	Thay Nweh Kee	M		I41
215	21/2/99	Tha Blu Say	F	?	Thay Nweh Kee	M		I41
216	15/2/99	Saw Da Po	M	37	Blu Doh Lu	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13
217	8/2/99	Saw Lu Gu	M	50	Hteik Htoo	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
218	2/2/99	Saw Dta Htun Aung	M	14	Lay Pin Weh	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10, FR13
219	1/2/99	Unknown	F	48	Saw Mu Theh	K	Killed by DKBA	FR13
220	1/2/99	Hta Pu	M	43	Nan Yu	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13
221	2-5/99	Ka Koh Per	M	50+	?	M	Killed by IB 48	I28
222	2-5/99	Nah Aye	M	55	?	M	Killed by IB 48	I28
223	2-5/99	Unknown	M	?	?	M	Killed by IB 48	I28
224	2-5/99	Unknown	M	?	?	M	Killed by IB 48	I28
225	2-5/99	Unknown	M	?	?	M	Killed by IB 48	I28

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
226	2-5/99	Unknown	M	?	?	M	Killed by IB 48	I28
227	2-5/99	Unknown	M	?	Htoo Lu	M	Killed by IB 48	I28
228	21/1/99	Saw Dta Htoo Htoo	M	9	Hintha Weh	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon; they were killed for carrying packs of rice to eat while watching over their cows	FR10, FR13
229	21/1/99	Saw Dta Hay Htoo	M	13	Hintha Weh	K		FR10, FR13
230	21/1/99	Saw Thay Gyi, a.k.a. Saw Kyaw Tha	M	12	Hintha Weh	K		FR10, FR13
231	16/1/99	Saw Tha Htoo, a.k.a. Saw Maung Htoo	M	60	Neh Yu	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10, FR13
232	16/1/99	Saw Po Po	M	45	Nyaw Hta	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10, FR13
233	15/1/99	Saw Pa Klu	M	40	Blaw Ko	L	Killed	FR23
234	11/1/99	Saw Kler Hee Htoo	M	35	Tee Baw Kee	L	Killed	FR23
235	11/1/99	Naw Yee Dah	F	55	Tee Baw Kee	L	Killed	FR23
236	9/1/99	U Gyi Myaing	M	45	Shan Su	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
237	4/1/99	Ka Sgay Ghay	M	35	Li Pway Kee	L	Killed	FR23
238	4/1/99	Saw Heh Nay	M	36	K' Bu Kee	L	Killed	FR23
239	4/1/99	Naw Mu Mu	F	20	Htee Pu Lu	K	Arrested by LIB 264, raped and then shot in vagina	FR13
240	4/1/99	Saw Na Twin	M	25	Htee Pu Lu	K	Brother of Naw Mu Mu; he went to find his sister and was killed by a landmine laid beside her body	FR13
241	1999	Saw Rih Eh Wa	M	20	Dta Baw Ko Der	L	Killed	FR23
242	1999	Naw Nyo Paw	F	25	Hsay Mu Heh Der	L	Killed	FR23
243	1999	Naw Po Po	F	27	Hsay Mu Heh Der	L	Killed	FR23
244	1999	Saw Wa Kay	M	30	Hsay Mu Heh Der	L	Killed	FR23
245	1999	Saw Shwe Mya Htoo	M	57	Hsay Mu Heh Der	L	Killed	FR23
246	1999	Maung Yay Hay	M	30	Maw Soe Ko	K	Killed by landmine	I2
247	1999	Htaw Kee	M	35	Po Khaw Der	K	Killed by landmine	I2
248	1999	Unknown	F	12-13	Po Khaw Der	K	Killed by landmine	I2
249	1999	Nelson	M		Noh Paw Per	D	Arrested and executed for having a home-made percussion lock hunting musket	I132
250	1999	Tee Chit Baw	M		Noh Paw Per	D		I132
251	1999	Po Ku Paw	M	55	Way Tay	D	Arrested, tortured and executed by IB 264	I132
252	1999	Saw Pa Thu	M	18	?	L	Shot dead	I54
253	1999	Saw Thu	M	17	?	L	Shot dead	I54
254	1999	Saw Khaw Say Heh	M	23	?	L	Shot dead	I54
255	1999	Saw Khaw Daw Heh	M	25	?	L	Shot dead	I54
256	1999	Kyaw Naw Ku	M	?	?	D	Accused of buying alcohol from the KNU and beaten to death by LIB 308	I200
257	1999	Maung Dah	M	35-36	Theh Hsa Kee	L	Shot dead while threshing paddy (he was carrying a gun)	I29

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
258	1999	Unknown	M	20	Theh Hsa Kee	L	Maung Dah's nephew; shot dead while threshing paddy	I29
259	1999	Rah Ko Mu	M		Saw Mu Plaw	L	Shot dead	I29
260	1999	K'Pru				L	Shot dead	I29
261	1999	U Ngan	M	35	Kaw Pu	B	Village head killed by landmine while portering	I218
262	1999	Pa Maung Lay	M	20	Kay Hta	B	Arrested and badly beaten, later executed	I218
263	1999	Pa Kyaw Shwe	M	30	?	B		I218
264	1999	Lu Kwee	M	?	Kaw Pu	B		I218
265	1999	Maung Sa Han	M	?	Kaw Pu	B		I218
266	1999	Unknown	?	?	Kwa Thay	M	Executed by Sa Thon Lon	I26
267	1999	Unknown	?	?	Kwa Thay	M	Executed by Sa Thon Lon	I26
268	1999	Htun Myint	M	?	Tha Seik	K	Killed by IB 350; he was a retired soldier from IB 57	I9
269	24/12/98	Saw Oo Kweh	M	20	Sgho Per Ko	L	Killed by SPDC landmine	FR23
270	16/12/98	Nay Hla Moo	M	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Shot dead	I75
271	8/12/98	Maung Lu Lu	M	?	Hteik Htoo	K	Killed by DKBA	FR13
272	1/12/98	Saw Kaw La Thu	M	25	Noh Nga Tha	K	Arrested by DKBA and executed	FR13
273	1/12/98	Saw Kyaw Thaw	M	30	Thu K'Bin	K		FR13
274	1/12/98	Maung Twin Soe	M	20	Thu K'Bin	K		FR13
275	16/11/98	U Gyi Mrey	M	45	Shan Su	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR13
276	11/98	Dta Ghaw Lee	M	?	Plaw Ghaw Kee	L	Shot dead while carrying rice	I32, I39
277	22/10/98	Saw Lay Heh	M	45	Twa Ni Gone	M	Arrested and executed by the Sa Thon Lon	I10
278	22/10/98	Saw K'Bweh	M	36	Twa Ni Gone	M	Arrested and executed by the Sa Thon Lon	I10
279	22/10/98	Maung Nyunt Po	M	30	Twa Ni Gone	M	Arrested and executed by the Sa Thon Lon	I10
280	22/10/98	Saw Po Keh	M	23	Twa Ni Gone	M	Arrested and then stabbed to death by the Sa Thon Lon because their gun jammed	I10
281	17/10/98	Saw Pa Mee	M	31	Nan Yu	K	Arrested and executed by IB 59	FR13
282	20/9/98	Saw Maung Lay	M	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Shot dead	I75
283	25/8/98	Saw Ba Aye	M	35	Leh Gkaw Wah	K	Killed by Sa Thon Lon	FR10
284	30/6/98	Saw Maw Deh	M	32	Si Day	L	Killed	FR23
285	19/4/98	Saw Baw Lah	M	50	Dta Keh Der	L	Killed	FR23
286	19/4/98	Naw Paw Mu Dweh	F	18	Dta Keh Der	L	Killed by SPDC landmine	FR23
287	10/4/98	Saw Pa Kih	M	39	Si Day	L	Killed	FR23
288	10/4/98	Naw Tee	F	40	Leh Kee	L	Killed	FR23
289	10/4/98	Naw Si Si	F	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Shot dead	I75
290	30/3/98	Saw Daw Muh Hsa	M	23	Kay Pu	L	Killed	FR23
291	26/3/98	Maung Ree Heh	M	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Shot dead	I75

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp	Remarks	Source
292	25/3/98	Thein Shwe	M	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Shot dead	I75
293	24/3/98	Kyay Lah Paw	F	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Shot dead	I75
294	24/3/98	Mu Ka Ree	F	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Shot dead	I75
295	21/3/98	Saw Mi Poh	M	child	Kheh Der village tract	K	Shot dead	I75
296	1998	Saw Maw Lu	M	21	Sgho Per Ko	L	Killed by SPDC landmine	FR23
297	1998	Saw Ghaw Lee	M	41	Thaw Khee Der	L	Killed	FR23
298	1998	Saw Koh Ah	M	36	Hsay Mu Heh Der	L	Killed	FR23
299	1998	Saw Mya Pweh Say	M	17	K' Bu Kee	L	Killed	FR23
300	1998	Saw Hsaw Pa Wa	M	28	K' Bu Kee	L	Killed	FR23
301	1998	Saw Dih	M	30	K' Bu Kee	L	Killed	FR23
302	1998	Pa Thweh Heh	M	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Shot dead	I75
303	1998	Saw Boh Kee	M	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Killed	I75
304	1998	Saw Wah Toh	M	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Killed	I75
305	1998	Naw Yway Ray	F	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Killed	I75
306	1998	Pa Ma Mu	M	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Killed	I75
307	1998	Pa Pway Dee	M	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Killed	I75
308	1998	Poh Paw Pweh	?	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Killed	I75
309	1998	Naw Paw Ku	F	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Killed	I75
310	1998	Kya Aye Mu	?	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Killed	I75
311	1998	Naw Kleh	F	?	Kheh Der village tract	K	Killed	I75
312	1998	Maung Ba Aye	M	?	Leh Gka Wah	K	Killed	I9
313	1998	Naw Ah Htoo	F	?	Dta Blaw Ko Der	L	Beaten to death while portering	I36

*He was a KNLA radio intercept operator who was in his village and carrying rice for his family.

Appendix D:

Villagers Wounded by SPDC and DKBA

Soldiers and Landmines

This is a partial list of villagers wounded or injured by the regular SPDC soldiers, the Sa Thon Lon and the DKBA in Nyaunglebin and Papun Districts. These incidents have been described in the interviews and field reports collected for this report. Many of them have been corroborated by several interviews and field reports. There are 190 people on this list who have been injured since 1998, but it is important to emphasise that this list is far from complete and that the real number is much higher, perhaps double or triple this amount. This list does not include the hundreds of people who have suffered illnesses or been injured in accidents caused by having to flee their villages or the actions of the SPDC within the villages. The time it takes to travel to the areas and obtain the information means that there are few accounts of injuries in the last few months; this does not reflect a decrease in the rate but simply the difficulty in obtaining reliable information. Under ‘**Twp.**’ (Township), **M** = Mone, **K** = Kyauk Kyi, **S** = Shwegyin, Nyaunglebin District; **L** = Lu Thaw, **D** = Dweh Loh, **B** = Bu Tho, Papun District; and **R** = Rangoon Division. Under ‘**Source**’, **FR** indicates Field Reports from KHRG field reporters and ‘**Ix**’ indicates interviews with villagers, ‘**x**’ being the interview number used in the report. Full texts of the interviews and field reports are available upon approved request as an Annex to this report.

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
1	4/01	“Saw Tay Htoo”	M	50+	xxxx	M	Beaten	I17, I21
2	4/01	“Saw Thay Myo”	M	30	xxxx	M	Tied up and beaten	I17, I21
3	28/3/01	B--- a.k.a. Saw H---	M	?	K---	S	Stepped on a landmine while going to get paddy	I106
4	19/3/01	Saw K---	M	27	K’Bu Kee	L	Wounded	FR24
5	5/3/01	Naw P---	M	40	?	L	Arrested on a path, punched and beaten by LIB 340	I211, I212, I213
6	5/3/01	Pa M---	M	28	?	L		I211, I212, I213
7	5/3/01	Saw M---	M	23	?	L		I211, I212, I213
8	5/3/01	P---	M	23	xxxx	L		I211, I212, I213
9	5/3/01	Pu P---	M	?	?	L		I211, I212, I213
10	5/3/01	Pu Y---	M	?	?	L		I211, I212, I213
11	5/3/01	K---	M	30	xxxx	L	Mentally handicapped; interrogated, beaten and slapped by LIB 340	I212
12	5/2/01	“Htaw Say”	M	43	xxxx	D	Taken as a guide, hit w/ a bamboo stick; shot in the buttocks while escaping	I210
13	10/1/01	“Saw Lah Thaw”	M	42	xxxx	D	Arrested, slapped and strangled	I158
14	10/1/01	K---	F	?	xxxx	D		I158
15	10/1/01	K---	M	?	xxxx	D	Arrested, slapped and strangled	I158
16	10/1/01	Unknown		?	xxxx	D		I158
17	10/1/01	Unknown		?	xxxx	D		I158

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
18	5/1/01	"Pa Noh Day"	M	42	xxxx	M	Accused of helping KNU; beaten and kicked	I15
19	5/1/01	Saw K---	M	?	xxxx	M		I15
20	5/1/01	Pa L---	M	?	xxxx	M		I15
21	5/1/01	Pa K---	M	?	xxxx	M		I15
22	5/1/01	"Saw Ber Kaw"	M	40	xxxx	M		I15, I17
23	2001	"Saw Ghu"	M	33	xxxx	S	Arrested and tied up and beaten by IB 96 he was shot in the arm while escaping	I112
24	2001	O---	F	?	xxxx	B	Kicked, stomped on, hit with a stick about 30 times and slapped	I220
25	2001	Pa S---	M	?	xxxx	B		I220
26	2001	P---	M	?	xxxx	B		I220
27	2001	M---	M	?	xxxx	B		I220
28	2001	K---	M	?	xxxx	B		I220
29	2001	"Zaw Min"	M	26	xxxx	B		I220
30	2001	M---	M	?	xxxx	B		I220
31	2001	Unknown	F		xxxx	B	Slapped and kicked	I220
32	2001	P---	M	?	xxxx	B	Tied up, kicked, stomped on and slapped	I220
33	2001	P---	M	?	xxxx	B	Hit, slapped and kicked for not following orders because he doesn't understand Burmese	I220
34	2001	K---	M	?	xxxx	B	Kicked and stoned because he was too weak to continue portering for LIB #104, left in the forest	I221, FR22
35	2001	"Po Taw Ku"	M	25	xxxx	B	Tied up and hit on the back repeatedly with a big length of bamboo	I223
36	2001	W---	M	?	T---	S	Shot in the sole of his foot while acting as a lookout	I101, I99
37	2001	T---	M	?	K---	S	Shot	I100
38	2001	Unknown	M	?	K---	S	Wounded by landmine	I100
39	23/12/00	Saw M---	M	70	Li Pway Kee	L	Wounded	FR24
40	1/12/00	H---	M	20	L---	K	Shot in buttocks when SPDC soldiers encircled his village and opened fire	I2
41	1/12/00	Unknown	F	6-7	L---	K	Wounded in the top of her foot in same attack	I2
42	18/11/00	Saw G---	M		P---	L	Shot when SPDC soldiers attacked his village	I88
43	14/11/00	"Saw Nya Thu"	M	35	xxxx	L	Shot on sight while in his field; he was wounded in the back, wrist and arm	I92, I93
44	11/00	"Saw Thet Wah"	M	30	xxxx	S	Shot in the leg	I97, I98

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp	Remarks	Source
45	11/00	“Saw Thi Oo”	M	60	xxxx	D	Village head arrested to encourage his village to relocate; he was suffocated, beaten, stabbed, and kicked	I157
46	11/00	H---	M	?	M---	D	Arrested and tortured	I152, I153
47	11/00	T---	M	40	M---	D	Arrested, tortured and stabbed	I152, I153, I154
48	11/00	P---	M		M---	D	Arrested and tortured	I152, I153
49	11/00	“Maung Aye Gyi”	M	25	xxxx	D	Arrested on path and accused of being KNU; tortured	I152, I153
50	11/00	K---	F	?	xxxx	D	Accused of husband working for KNU, arrested and tortured	I152
51	11/00	“Pa Taw Thu”	M	36	xxxx	D	Arrested, accused of being KNU and tortured	I152, I153
52	20/10/00	“Pati Htoo Kuh”	M	61	xxxx	D	Arrested in his hut, beaten and suffocated	I156
53	27/8/00	“Saw Maw Ku”	M	48	xxxx	D	Village head; badly beaten for not sending word of KNU movements	I147, I155, I4
54	27/8/00	U P---	M	?	K---	D	Village chairman; arrested and disappeared for not sending word of KNU movements	I147, I155
55	6/00	“Po Lah”	M	25	xxxx	M	Arrested, beaten with bamboo sticks and gun butts, burned with fire, poked with knives, held under water, stoned, scrapped with knives and salt rubbed into wounds by LIB 368	I12, I13
56	6/00	Saw H---	M	35	xxxx	M		I12, I13
57	6/00	K---	M	50	xxxx	M		I12, I13
58	6/00	“Saw Nyi Nyi”	M	37	xxxx	M		I12, I13
59	6/00	Unknown	M	?	B---	D	Beaten repeatedly in the head with a gun butt	I201
60	6/00	H---	M	?	B---	D	Accused of being KNLA and beaten by IB 2	I201
61	6/00	P---	M	?	B---	D		I201
62	6/00	P---	M	?	B---	D		I201
63	6/00	M---	M	?	B---	D		I201
64	6/00	“Saw Pah Baw”	M	32	xxxx	D	Beaten by IB 2 for not seeing the KNLA	I201
65	19/5/00	“Saw Pa Aye”	M	?	xxxx	M	Village head; he was forced to lie down and then beaten with an ironwood branch 40 times by Sa Thon Lon	I18
66	5/00	N---	F	17	N---	D	Arrested by LID 66 with her sister, interrogated, slapped, burned and possibly raped	I132

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
67	5/00	Unknown	F	19	N---	D	Sister of N---; arrested by LID 66, interrogated, slapped and burned, she escaped after one day	I132
68	18/4/00	Naw D---	F	15	H---	L	Shot when SPDC soldiers opened fire on her village; two others died	I51
69	17/4/00	"Thein Shwe"	M	35	xxxx	L	Wounded in the back by shrapnel while in his hill field	I55, FR24
70	17/4/00	Naw L---	F	32	xxxx	L	Wife of "Thein Shwe"; wounded in the shoulder by a rifle bullet while in her hill field	I55, FR24
71	28/3/00	"Saw Tha Dah"	M	70	xxxx	D	Shot in the shoulder when soldiers opened fire on an IDP camp; he was captured and taken to a relocation site	I137, I138
72	14/3/00	H---	F	32	K---	L	Wounded by rifle-grenade shrapnel while building houses; 2 others died	I55
73	14/3/00	N---	M	32	K---	L		I55
74	14/3/00	M---	F	30	K---	L		I55
75	14/3/00	H---	F	67	K---	L		I55
76	14/3/00	Saw H---	M	12	K---	L		I55
77	14/3/00	P---	F	4	K---	L		I55
78	3/00	C---	M	7	D---	L	Injured in the thigh by rifle grenade shrapnel when SPDC soldiers opened fire on his house	I54
79	3/00	Unknown	M	?	Noh Paw Tee	D	Shot on sight; wounded in the arm, his friend was killed	I185
80	23/2/00	Saw H---	M	6	Li Pway Kee	L	Wounded	FR24
81	23/2/00	Naw M---	F	38	Li Pway Kee	L	Wounded	FR24
82	21/2/00	Saw H---	M	12	K'Bu Kee	L	Wounded	FR24
83	2/00	Unknown	M	?	P---	D	Wounded in an ambush while portering and left behind	I185
84	2/00	Unknown	M	?	P---	D		I185
85	2/00	T---	M	50+	P---	D	Severely beaten for supposedly taking food to the KNU	I185
86	2/00	Ma M---	F	25	P---	D		I185
87	2/00	"Naw Paw Ghay"	F	35	xxxx	S	Wounded in the hand by fragments when SPDC soldiers opened fire on their IDP camp; 2 others were killed, 3 wounded	I83, I84
88	2/00	Auntie K---	F	?	M---	S	Wounded in the head by shrapnel	I83, I84

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
89	2/00	Auntie K---'s daughter	F	<3	M---	S	Wounded in the back by shrapnel	I83, I84
90	2/00	M---'s mother	F	50-55	M---	S	Shot in the arm	I83, I84
91	28/1/00	Pa B---	M	?	H---	L	Leg blown off by landmine	I31
92	18/1/00	Naw K---	F	?	K---	M	Shot in cheek and shoulder	I70, I47, I41, I42
93	5/1/00	"Win Naing"	M	31	xxxx	D	Arrested and tortured for 4 months; severely beaten, shot in the shoulder, shot again during fighting while portering	I140
94	3/1/00	K---	M	?	H---	K	Leg blown off by landmine	I75
95	1/00	Saw H---	M	?	K---	M	Shot in foot and calf	I70
96	1/00	Unknown	F	45	M---	S	Arrested in her hill field and beaten; she was released later	I85
97	2000	P---	M	?	T---	S	Stepped on a landmine while going to get rice	I104
98	2000	Unknown	M	7-10	Saw Ka Der	M	Shot in the leg	I56
99	2000	Unknown	M	?	Saw Ka Der	M	Brother of the previous boy; shot in the arm	I56
100	2000	U T---	M	?	xxxx	D	Arrested and beaten while collecting wood	I4
101	2000	"Aung Aung"	M	40	xxxx	D	Arrested and beaten by LID 66	I150
102	2000	M---	M	?	H---	D	Arrested, beaten, burned and suffocated during interrogation	I140
103	2000	Pa T---	M	?	K---	L	Leg injured when he stepped on a landmine	I206
104	2000	T---, a.k.a. K---	M	60+	W---	D	Arrested on the way to his tobacco field; severely beaten, suffocated and burned; released after 2 days	I131
105	2000	H---	M	36	B---	D	Blinded in one eye by shrapnel during fighting while portering	I200
106	2000	Unknown	M	?	?	D	Blinded by mortar fragments from an SPDC mortar while portering for the SPDC	I200
107	2000	S---	M	43	N---	D	Shot on sight by IB 38	I198
108	2000	Saw B---	M	25	N---		while coming back from their sugar cane field	I198
109	2000	P---	F	40		L	Shot in the leg	I53
110	2000	M---	F	30	P---	L	Shot	I53
111	23/12/99	Saw H---	M	30	K'Bu Kee	L	Wounded	FR24
112	23/12/99	Saw N---	M	20	Blaw Ko	L	Wounded	FR24
113	23/12/99	Saw N---	M	20	Blaw Ko	L	Wounded	FR24

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
114	21/12/99	“Saw Plaw Poh”	M	30	xxxx	L	Arrested by IB 19 while looking for his buffalo, tied to a barrel and water poured over his head to suffocate him, then they poured petrol over his chest and lit it	I181
115	21/12/99	K---	M	29	T---	L	Shot in the leg; 2 others were wounded and 1 person was killed	I40, FR24
116	21/12/99	M---	M	30	T---	L	Shot in the arm; he was with Gyi Lee	I40, FR24
117	21/12/99	P---, a.k.a. Pa T---	M	45	T---	L	Shot in the arm which was broken; he was with Gyi Lee and Mya Pay Mu	I40, FR24
118	2/12/99	Saw K---	M	35	Li Pway Kee	L	Wounded	FR24
119	12/99	“Naw Mu Lu”	F	50-60	xxxx	M	Shot in the arm while fleeing from SPDC soldiers; her husband and one other villager were killed	I5, I62
120	12/99	L---	F	30	S---	M	Pregnant, she was shot in the arm; her mother was wounded and her father killed	I5, I62
121	12/99	Unknown	M	?	S---	M	“Naw Mu Lu’s” grandchild, he was shot	I5, I62
122	26/11/99	P---		?	D---	L	Shot	I36
123	26/11/99	Pu L---	M	31	D---	L	Shot	I36, FR24
124	26/11/99	Naw ---	F	27	D---	L	Shot	I36, FR24
125	20/11/99	“Naw Ghay Muh”	F	42	xxxx	L	Shot on sight in the leg	I48
126	6/11/99	“Naw Paw Si”	F	11	xxxx	L	Shot in the arm while carrying paddy; her mother and father and another villager were killed and another villager wounded	I38, I36, I68, FR24
127	6/11/99	N---	M	13	xxxx	L	“Naw Paw Si’s” nephew; shot in the nose, chin and buttocks while carrying paddy; his uncle, aunt and another villager were killed	I38, I36, I68, FR24
128	4/11/99	Naw H---	F	45	Li Pway Kee	L	Wounded	FR24
129	11/99	N---	M	?	D---	L	Shot on sight in the mouth by Sa Thon Lon; three other died	I40
130	11/99	K---’s husband	M	27	K---	K	Shot by DKBA and lost his thumb for coming late to do <i>loh ah pay</i>	I9
131	29/9/99	“Saw Taw Ni”	M	50	xxxx	D	Accused of drinking with the KNLA, he was beaten, hung by the neck, and burned	I162

#	Date	Name	Sex	Age	Home Village	Twp.	Remarks	Source
132	16/9/99	Naw B---	F	30	T---	L	Shot in the jaw by LIB 361 when they opened fire on her village; she was 8 months pregnant	I53
133	9/99	U M---, a.k.a. P---	M	56	B---	D	Arrested at his house and beaten, he has now disappeared	I171
134	23/8/99	“Pa Htoo Saw”	M	27	xxxx	D	Wounded in the hand by bullet which passed through and killed his son who he was carrying in his arms	I122
135	8/99	T---	F	?	T---	L	Half of her thigh blown off by a rifle bullet while cutting weeds in her field	I48
136	8/99	Naw P---	F	?	T---	L	Shot through the arm while cutting weeds in her field; she was with Tay Kya Paw Mo	I48
137	8/99	H---	M	?	xxxx	K	Beaten while portering	I9
138	15/7/99	Nay P---	F	30	Ko Say	L	Wounded	FR24
139	15/7/99	Naw B---	F	45	K’Bu Kee	L	Wounded	FR24
140	5/7/99	Unknown	F	?	K---	K	Accused of helping the KNU and beaten by the DKBA	FR7
141	5/7/99	Unknown	F	?	K---	K		FR7
142	5/7/99	Unknown	F	?	K---	K		FR7
143	5/7/99	Unknown	F	?	K---	K		FR7
144	5/7/99	Unknown	F	?	K---	K		FR7
145	5/7/99	Unknown	M	?	K---	K		FR7
146	4/7/99	K---	M	40	K---	K	Arrested and badly beaten by DKBA	FR7
147	4/7/99	Saw D---	M	22	K---	K		FR7
148	4/7/99	Pa G---	M	46	K---	K		FR7
149	4/7/99	Saw S---	M	30	B---	K		FR7
150	2/7/99	M---	F	20	xxxx	K	Arrested and raped by soldiers of LIB 351	FR7
151	2/7/99	Ma M---	F	20	xxxx	K		FR7
152	2/7/99	Ma K---	F	18	xxxx	K		FR7
153	7/99	“Sai Heng”	M	?	xxxx	D	Punched and accused of being KNLA, then taken as a porter and kicked	I118
154	20/6/99	Saw N---	M	?	xxxx	M	Kicked, beaten, suffocated, sliced with knives after which salt and chillies rubbed into wounds, and a hot firebrand repeatedly placed on his stomach; asked if his brother worked with the KNU	FR4
155	12/6/99	N---	F	14	xxxx	K	Raped by Sa Thon Lon commander Shan Bpu	FR7

#	Date	Name	S e x	Age	Home Village	T w p .	Remarks	Source
156	7/6/99	“Saw Eh K’Lu”	M	?	xxxx	D	Punched, beaten with gun butts, hung repeatedly by the neck and kicked to get information about the KNLA	I163
157	6/6/99	Naw M---	F	?	xxxx	M	Beaten for resisting rape by an officer and a medic of IB 48; she was pregnant and miscarried her child as a result of the beating	FR7
158	6/6/99	Naw M---	F	?	xxxx	M	Raped in her house by an officer and medic from IB 48; she was beaten and her arm broken	FR7
159	6/6/99	Naw T---	F	?	xxxx	M	Raped in her house by officer and medic from IB 48; she was beaten for trying to resist	FR7
160	6/6/99	Naw M---	F	?	xxxx	M	Raped in her house by officer and medic from IB 48; she was beaten for trying to resist	FR7
161	6/6/99	Saw T---	M	?	xxxx	M	Accused of contacting the KNU and hit 3 times	FR7
162	6/6/99	Saw K---	M	?	xxxx	M	While sleeping in his house, SPDC soldiers stood on and dislocated his neck	FR7
163	6/6/99	Saw P---	M	?	xxxx	M	Kicked in the face; one tooth broken and 5 others cracked	FR7
164	6/6/99	Saw T---	M	?	xxxx	M	Beaten on the head, cutting open the skin on one side	FR7
165	5/6/99	N---	F	?	xxxx	K	Raped by Sa Thon Lon commander Shan Bpu	FR7
166	5/6/99	K---	M	?	T---	D	Village head beaten for not informing the SPDC of KNU movements	I163
167	5/6/99	T---	M	?	T---	D	Village head beaten for not informing the SPDC of KNU movements	I163
168	3/6/99	N---	F	18	xxxx	K	Raped by Sa Thon Lon commander Shan Bpu	FR9
169	24/5/99	Unknown	M	?	B---	D	Shot in the neck when SPDC soldiers attacked a wedding party believed to be for a KNLA officer; 5 others were killed and a boy injured	I161, I160
170	24/5/99	Pa T---	M	9	B---	D	Shot in the buttocks during the same attack	I161, I160

#	Date	Name	S e x	Age	Home Village	T w p .	Remarks	Source
171	12/5/99	Saw M---	M	51	xxxx	M	Arrested and accused of being a KNU leader, beaten and tortured	FR3
172	10/5/99	"Saw Htay Mu"	M	25	xxxx	M	Beaten and stabbed by Sa Thon Lon; accused of supporting KNLA	I6
173	3/99	Unknown	M	?	Gko Nee	M	Beaten and trampled on by Sa Thon Lon	I7
174	26/2/99	Saw T---	M	57	Li Pway Kee	L	Wounded	FR24
175	14/2/99	Saw T---	M	?	P---	L	Shot on sight in the thigh while looking for his buffalo	I48
176	12/2/99	"Saw Klaw Doh"	M	?	xxxx	D	Arrested and beaten for not telling the Army about KNLA patrols	I119
178	12/2/99	Pa K---	M	?	xxxx	D		I119
179	12/2/99	M---	M	?	xxxx	D		I119
180	1999	K---	M	?	B---	L	Beaten for not knowing where the KNLA was	I29
181	1999	Naw K---	F	?	L---	L	Shot in the thigh	I29
182	1999	B---	M	?	L---	L	Shot in the ankle; he was with Naw Kaw Yeh	I29
183	1999	K---	F	?	P---	L	Shot	I48
184	1999	"Saw Shwe Pa"	M	37	xxxx	K	Severely beaten and interrogated by LIB 364	I73
185	1999	Unknown		?	Doh Daw Kee	K	Leg blown off by a landmine	I2
186	19/8/98	Saw P---	M	20	Sgho Per Ko	L	Wounded	FR24
187	19/4/98	Saw B---	M	28	Dta Keh Der	L	Wounded	FR24
188	1998	Saw P---	M	27	Saw Mu Plaw	L	Wounded	FR24
189	1998	Saw P---	M	48	Li Pway Kee	L	Wounded	FR24
190	1998	K---	M	26	T---	L	Shot in the knee	I64

Appendix E:

SPDC Military Units Stationed in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts

Units Permanently Stationed in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts:

Southern Regional Command		Southeastern Regional Command	
1. IB 30	8. IB 264	1. IB 19	
2. IB 35	9. LIB 349	2. LIB 340	
3. IB 48	10. LIB 350	3. LIB 341	
4. IB 57	11. LIB 351	4. LIB 434	
5. IB 59	12. LIB 439		
6. IB 60	13. LIB 440		
7. IB 73			

Units Assigned to Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts During 2001:

Southwestern Regional Command

1. IB 18	7. IB 92
2. IB 27	8. IB 93
3. IB 36	9. IB 98
4. IB 38	10. LIB 308
5. IB 51	11. LIB 534
6. IB 63	

Sa Ka Ka 1 (Kyaukme – Northeastern Command)

1. IB 243	6. LIB 502
2. LIB 17	7. LIB 503
3. LIB 114	8. LIB 504
4. LIB 115	9. LIB 505
5. LIB 501	10. LIB 506

Sa Ka Ka 10 (Kalay – Northwestern Command)

1. LIB 361	6. LIB 366
2. LIB 362	7. LIB 367
3. LIB 363	8. LIB 368
4. LIB 364	9. LIB 369
5. LIB 365	10. LIB 370

LID 44 – (Thaton, Mon State)

1. IB 2	5. LIB 2
2. IB 8	6. LIB 104
3. IB 81	8. LIB 207
4. LIB 1	

LID 66 (Prome, Pegu Division)

1. IB 1	6. LIB 4
2. IB 11	7. LIB 5
3. IB 14	8. LIB 6
4. IB 75	9. LIB 10
5. IB 80	10. LIB 108

LID 77 (Pegu, Pegu Division)

Unclear which units have been stationed in the area

*LID's and Sa Ka Ka's have 10 battalions assigned to them but not all the battalions are always assigned to an area; the units here are only those confirmed by villagers and KNU intelligence sources.

Appendix F:

Index of Interviews and Field Reports

This index summarises the interviews and field reports quoted within this report, using the numbers which also appear in the quote captions. The full text of these interviews and field reports is published as an Annex to this report which is available from KHRG on approved request. All names of those interviewed have been changed. Village names are only shown for people who have already arrived in Thailand as refugees. In the summaries below, **FL** = Forced Labour, **FR** = Forced Relocation, **IDP**=Internally Displaced People, **DKBA**=Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, and **SSS** = Sa Thon Lon. Under '**Nat.**' (Nationality), **K**=Karen, **S**=Shan, **I**=Indian, **B**=Burman and **P**=Padaung. Under '**Twp.**' (Township), **M** = Mone, **K** = Kyauk Kyi, **S** = Shwegyin, Nyaunglebin District; **L** = Lu Thaw, **D** = Dweh Loh, **B** = Bu Tho, Papun District; **Pa**=Pa'an District; **T**=Thaton District; **P**=Pegu Division; **I**=Irrawaddy Delta; **R**=Rangoon and **Sh**=Shan State.

Field Reports and Interviews with KHRG Field Researchers

#	Date	Name	S e x	Age	N a t.	Village	T w p.	Summary
FR1	6/99	Field Report 1						Killings by DKBA
FR2	7/99	Field Report 2						Killings and extortion by SSS
FR3	7/99	Field Report 3						Detention, torture and extortion
FR4	7/99	Field Report 4						Detention, torture and extortion
FR5	7/99	Field Report 5						Killing of villagers and looting of property
FR6	7/99	Field Report 6						FR
FR7	7/99	Field Report 7						Rape and beating of villagers
FR8	7/99	Field Report 8						Killing of villagers
FR9	8/99	Field Report 9						Rape of villagers by SSS and SPDC soldiers, arrest, torture, looting, demands for food
FR10	8/99	Field Report 10						List of villagers executed by SSS
FR11	8/99	Field Report 11						Killings, destruction of property
FR12	8/99	Field Report 12						Village destruction, killing and looting
FR13	9/99	Field Report 13						SPDC, DKBA and SSS killings
FR14	10/99	Field Report 14						FL, extortion
FR15	10/99	Field Report 15						FL
FR16	7/00	Field Report 16						FL, food shortages, crop quotas, restrictions, SPDC Army
FR17	9/00	Field Report 17						Incident reports from KNU human rights and intelligence information
FR18	9/00	Field Report 18						Killing of villager, looting
FR19	9/00	Field Report 19						Incident reports
FR20	1/01	Field Report 20						Food shortages, village destruction
FR21	4/01	Field Report 21						Killing of villager
FR22	4/01	Field Report 22						FL, beating of porter
FR23	6/01	Field Report 23						List of villagers killed in Lu Thaw township since 1997 (included in 'List of Villagers Killed by SPDC and DKBA Soldiers and Landmines')

#	Date	Name	S e x	Age	N a t.	Village	T w p.	Summary
FR24	6/01	Field Report 24						List of villagers injured in Lu Thaw township since 1997 (included in 'List of Villagers Killed by SPDC and DKBA Soldiers and Landmines')
1	2/01	"Saw Ghay Hser"	M	xx	K		S	General situation in Nyaunglebin District, food destruction, village destruction, 'peace pass', IDP situation, landmines
2	2/01	"Saw Tha K'Baw"	M	xx	K		K	General situation in Nyaunglebin District, DKBA, IDO situation, SSS, landmines
3	2/01	"Saw Eh Doh" "Saw Muh" "Saw Dah Dah"	M	xx	K		L	IDP situation, food,
4	2/01	"Saw Maung Sein"	M	xx	K		D	Relocation sites, FL, extortion, demands, torture, food
5	6/01	"Saw Ler Wah"	M	xx	K		S	General situation in Nyaunglebin District, IDP situation, food, landmines, killings, FR, FL, fees, extortion, DKBA, crop quotas

Villages in the Plains of Nyaunglebin District

6	6/99	"Saw Htay Mu"	M	25	K	xxxx	M	SSS, torture
7	2/00	"Saw Plaw Doh"	M	25	K	G---	M	Crop quotas, SSS, extortion, FR, FL, torture, DKBA, killing
8	2/00	"Saw Daniel"	M	43	K	G---	M	SSS, demands, rape, torture, crop quotas, FL, FR, DKBA
9	4/00	"Saw Mu Wah"	M	40	K	K---	K	FL, crop quotas, food, demands, SSS, killing, DKBA, FR, extortion
10	4/01	"Saw Bo Lweh"	M	?	K	xxxx	M	FR, village destruction, torture, killing, crop quota, SSS
11	4/01	"Naw Mu Ha"	F	?	K	xxxx	M	Killing, looting, FL, demands
12	4/01	"Po Lah"	M	25	K	xxxx	M	Torture, extortion, FR, crop quotas, FL, fees
13	4/01	"Saw Nyi Nyi"	M	37	K	xxxx	M	Torture, looting, FR, demands, DKBA, extortion, crop quotas, fees, killing
14	4/01	"Saw Ka Neh"	M	58	K	xxxx	M	SSS, demands, DKBA, fees, FL, killing
15	4/01	"Pa Noh Day"	M	42	K	xxxx	M	Demands, DKBA, torture
16	4/01	"Naw Paw Eh"	M	50	K	xxxx	M	Killing, torture
17	4/01	"Saw Ber Kaw"	M	40	K / B	xxxx	M	Torture, demands, fees, FL, extortion, FR
18	4/01	"Saw Pa Aye"	M	?	K	xxxx	M	Crop quotas, demands, fees, torture
19	4/01	"Saw Bo Kee"	M	32	K	xxxx	M	Torture
20	4/01	"Meh Nay Say"	M	45	K	xxxx	M	Torture, extortion
21	4/01	"Saw Thay Myo"	M	30	K	xxxx	M	Torture
22	4/01	"Saw Tay Htoo"	M	50	K	xxxx	M	Torture, extortion
23	4/01	"Saw Kee Aye"	M	39	K	xxxx	M	Torture, extortion
24	4/01	"Saw Per Per"	M	45	K	xxxx	M	Demands, fees, FL, FR, quotas

Villages in Northern Lu Thaw and Eastern Mone Townships

#	Date	Name	S e x	Age	N a t.	Village	T w p.	Summary
25	5/99	“Saw Thay”	M	49	K	xxxx	M	Killing, looting, village destruction
26	7/99	“Saw Law Po”	M	35	K	K----	M	FR, killing, SSS, FL
27	7/99	“Pu Taw Lah”	M	68	K	xxxx	M	FL, fees, killing, FR
28	11/99	“Saw Meh Wah”	M	35	K	S---	M	Food, killing, FL, IDP situation
29	12/99	“Naw Lah Mu”	F	27	K	L----	L	Killing, crop destruction, IDP situation, looting
30	1/00	“Saw Wah Pa”	M	33	K	S---	M	IDP situation, food, killing, village destruction, FL, demands
31	1/00	“Saw Pwih”	M	31	K	H----	L	IDP situation, village destruction, food, landmines
32	1/00	“Saw Lu Doh”	M	30	K	T----	L	Looting, killing, village destruction
33	1/00	“Saw Tha Say”	M	35	K	T----	L	Village destruction, crop destruction, killing
34	1/00	“Po Lah”	M	50+	K	T---	L	Looting, killing,
35	1/00	“Saw Lah Htoo”	M	40	K	K---	L	Killing, looting, IDP situation, food
36	1/00	“Saw Lay Thu”	M	36	K	D----	L	Crop destruction, village destruction, landmines, killing, looting
37	1/00	“Saw Maw Shwe”	M	37	K	L----	L	Village destruction, looting, killing
38	1/00	“Naw Paw Si”	F	11	K	D----	L	Killing, looting, crop destruction
39	1/00	“Saw Toh Wah”	M	32	K	K----	L	Village destruction, looting, killing
40	1/00	“Pa Say”	M	41	K	W----	L	Village destruction, looting, killing, IDP situation, food, crop destruction, landmines
41	2/00	“Pa Maw Htoo”	M	27	K	P----	M	Village destruction, looting, killing
42	2/00	“Saw Kleh Wah”	M	45	K	T----	M	Looting, village destruction, killing, food, IDP situation
43	2/00	“Naw Lah Muh”	F	40	K	T----	M	Looting, village destruction, food, killing
44	2/00	“Saw K’Paw Htoo”	M	23	K	H----	L	Looting, killing, village destruction
45	2/00	“Saw Kweh Pa”	M	34	K	L----	L	Village destruction, looting, killing
46	2/00	“Po Tha Dah”	M	31	K	B----	L	Killing, village destruction, looting, landmines
47	2/00	“Naw Si Si Po”	F	49	K	S---	L	Killing, looting, landmines
48	2/00	“Naw Ghay Muh”	F	42	K	P----	L	Crop destruction, looting, killing
49	4/00	“Pa Mer Ler”	M	25	K	T----	M	Killing, food
50	4/00	“Pu Tha Ker”	M	66	K	L---	L	Village destruction, looting, IDP situation, food
51	4/00	“Saw Nu Nu”	M	37	K	L----	L	Village destruction, IDP situation
52	4/00	“Pa Lah”	M	35	K	M---	L	Landmines, looting, food
53	4/00	“Pa Luh Htoo”	M	45	K	T---	L	Looting, killing
54	4/00	“Meh Bya”	M	37	K	L----	L	Killing, IDP situation
55	4/00	“Thein Shwe”	M	35	K	S----	L	Killing, food

#	Date	Name	S e x	Age	N a t.	Village	T w p.	Summary
56	2/01	“Saw Tha Pwih”	M	38	K	T---	L	Killing, landmines, village destruction
57	3/01	“Bo Tha Ku”	M	45	K	xxxx	L	Saw Hta car road, village destruction, food
58	3/01	“Saw Ko Suh”	M	54	K	K----	L	Food, IDP situation, village destruction, landmines
59	3/01	“Naw Paw Paw Htoo	F	30	K	K----	L	Food, looting, village destruction, crop destruction, landmines, killing
60	3/01	“Saw Ta Pla Pla”	M	?	K	S----	L	Food, crop destruction, looting, killing, village destruction
61	3/01	“Po Naw”	M	?	K	S----	L	IDP situation, food
62	3/01	“Naw Mu Lu”	F	50-60	K	S----	M	Killing, looting, food

IDP Villages in Southern Lu Thaw Township and Eastern Kyauk Kyi and Shwegyin Townships

63	6/99	“Naw Prih Wah”	F	25	K	T---	L	Village destruction, food, FL, crop destruction
64	6/99	“Saw Dee Wah”	M	28	K	T---	L	Looting, FL, fees, FR, IDP situation, killing
65	11/99	“Pa Nga”	M	39	K	T---	L	Looting, IDP situation
66	1/00	“Saw Lay Pa”	M	39	K	T---	L	Crop destruction, food, looting, landmines, FL, IDP situation
67	1/00	“Saw Thay Muh”	M	45	K	P---	L	Crop destruction, village destruction
68	1/00	“Saw Dta Kler”	M	35	K	S----	L	Crop destruction, village destruction, killing
69	1/00	“Saw Po Lay”	M	50+	K	K----	L	Crop destruction, killing
70	2/00	“Saw Dee Ghay”	M	63	K	S----	M	Looting, killing, food
71	2/00	“Saw Maw Htoo”	M	31	K	D----	S	Crop destruction, looting, killing, IDP situation, landmines, food
72	2/00	“Saw K’Baw”	M	31	K	H----	S	Killing, looting, food
73	3/00	“Saw Shwe Pa”	M	37	K	K----	K	Killing, torture, looting, FL
74	3/00	“Pa Ghaw”	M	29	K	T----	K	Looting, village destruction, killing, torture, food
75	3/00	“Saw Plaw Doh”	M	40	K	M----	K	Crop destruction, looting, killing, village destruction, landmines
76	3/00	“Saw Lay Doh”	M	40	K	T----	S	Village destruction, crop destruction, looting, landmines, killing
77	3/00	“Saw Kler Htoo”	M	51	K	T----	S	Village destruction, killing, looting, crop destruction, food
78	3/00	“Pu Law Tee”	M	70	K	S----	S	Village destruction, crop destruction, looting, killing
79	3/00	“Saw Ler Thu”	M	45	K	T----	S	Crop destruction, looting
80	3/00	“Pu Taw Lay”	M	56	K	M---	S	Killing, looting, village destruction, crop destruction, food, FL, fees, IDP situation
81	3/00	“Saw Thay Doh”	M	28	K	P----	S	Looting, IDP situation
82	3/00	“Pa Kwee”	M	62	K	D----	S	Killing, looting, IDP situation

#	Date	Name	S e x	Age	N a t.	Village	T w p.	Summary
83	3/00	“Naw Paw Ghay”	F	35	K	M----	S	Killing, looting
84	3/00	“Pa Ler”	M	30	K	K----	S	Looting, killing
85	4/00	“Pa Hla”	M	?	K	M----	S	Crop destruction, killing, food
86	4/00	“Paw Paw Mo”	F	45	K	M----	S	Killing, IDP situation
87	4/00	“Saw Muh Dah”	M	30	K	T----	S	Crop destruction, looting, village destruction, killing, IDP situation
88	12/00	“Hla Maung”	M	40	K	P----	L	Village destruction, looting, IDP situation
89	12/00	“Saw Htoo Lay”	M	53	K	T----	L	IDP situation, looting
90	1/01	“Saw Dee Ghay”	M	45	K	T----	S	Crop destruction, looting, killing, IDP situation
91	2/01	“Saw Tee Ko”	M	50	K	H----	L	Food, IDP situation
92	2/01	“Saw Nya Thu”	M	35	K	Y----	L	Looting, shooting, IDP situation
93	2/01	“Naw Way”	F	60	K	Y----	L	Shooting, looting
94	3/01	“Naw Mi Mu Wah”	F	35	K	K----	K	IDP situation, killing, looting
95	3/01	“Naw Paw Ghay”	F	11	S	T----	S	Landmines, IDP situation
96	3/01	“Saw Heh Kay Htoo”	M	70	L	L----	L	IDP situation
97	3/01	“Saw Thet Wah”	M	30	K	T----	S	Looting, IDP situation
98	3/01	“Saw Ghaw”	M	32	K	T----	S	IDP situation, landmines, food, killing
99	3/01	“Saw Pleh Wah”	M	40	K	T----	S	IDP situation, village destruction, looting, food
100	3/01	“Naw K’Ser Tee”	F	48	K	K----	S	Looting, IDP situation, food, landmines
101	3/01	“Saw Yo Tha”	M	56	K	K----	S	IDP situation, looting, killing
102	3/01	“U Gah Lu”	M	46	K	S----	S	IDP situation, killing, landmines, food, crop destruction
103	3/01	“Saw Thay Tha”	M	46	K	T----	L	IDP situation, killing, village destruction
104	3/01	“Saw Thee Way”	M	22	K	T----	L	IDP situation
105	3/01	“Saw Toh Wa”	M	65	K	P----	L	IDP, situation, village destruction
106	3/01	“Saw Tee Muh”	M	30	K	T----	S	IDP situation
107	3/01	“Saw Kyi Po”	M	37	K	L----	S	IDP situation
108	3/01	“Naw Muh Eh”	F	57	K	L----	S	Killing, IDP situation
109	3/01	“Sein Maung”	M	52	K	T----	S	IDP situation
110	4/01	“Maung Aye”	M	?	K	S----	S	Arrest
111	4/01	“Saw Wih Kyay”	M	40	K	T----	S	Crop destruction, killing, IDP situation
112	4/01	“Saw Ghu”	M	33	K	T----	S	Torture, FL, fees, killing

IDP Villages and Relocation Sites in Western Dweh Loh Township

113	3/99	“Hla Po”	M	45	K	M----	D	FR, DKBA, FL, IDP situation
114	3/99	“U Than Dah Sara”	M	41	K	M----	D	FR, DKBA, FL, IDP situation
115	6/99	“Pu Htoo Po”	M	60	K	xxxx	D	FR, FL, fees, looting
116	7/99	“Pu Kyaw”	M	55	K	xxxx	D	Looting, FL, fees
117	7/99	“Naw Lay Mo”	F	?	K	xxxx	D	Demands, FL, fees
118	7/99	“Sai Heng”	M	?	S	xxxx	D	FL
119	7/99	“Saw Klaw Doh”	M	?	K	xxxx	D	FL, demands, looting
120	9/99	“Pi Hla Paw”	F	58	K	xxxx	D	Fees, looting, village destruction, killing
121	9/99	“Saw Tha Doh Wah”	M	51	K	xxxx	D	Torture, extortion, FL

#	Date	Name	S e x	Age	N a t.	Village	T w p.	Summary
122	9/99	“Pa Htoo Saw”	M	27	K	N----	D	Killing, village destruction, looting
123	9/99	“Saw Wah Pa”	M	40	K	xxxx	D	FL, fees, killing, looting
124	9/99	“Maung Htun Shwe”	M	35	K	xxxx	D	FL, looting, demands, extortion, killing
125	11/99	“Pu Ghay”	M	60	K	N----	D	Crop destruction, IDP situation
126	12/99	“Saw Day Htoo”	M	50	K	xxxx	D	IDP situation, killing
127	12/99	“Saw Lay Ghay”	M	34	K	xxxx	D	Village destruction, looting, crop destruction, killing, IDP situation
128	12/99	“Saw Po Thu”	M	30	K	M----	D	Killing, village destruction, crop destruction, IDP situation
129	1/00	“Pu Ko Wah”	M	67	K	M----	D	Crop destruction, killing, IDP situation
130	4/00	“Saw Bway Htoo”	M	42	K	P---	D	Crop destruction, landmines, village destruction, IDP situation
131	5/00	“Mya Win”	M	49	K	N----	D	Crop destruction, village destruction, killing
132	5/00	“Pa Kah Lay”	M	39	K	W----	D	Looting, village destruction, killing
133	5/00	“Saw Tee Maung”	M	?	K	xxxx	D	FL, village destruction, FR, fees, killing, looting
134	8/00	“Maung Gyi”	M	33	K	xxxx	D	FL, fees, demands, killing
135	9/00	“Saw Nyunt Htin”	M	20	K	P----	D	IDP situation
136	9/00	“Naw Thay Paw”	F	36	K	P----	D	IDP situation, village destruction
137	9/00	“Saw Tha Dah”	M	70	K	xxxx	D	FR, torture, FL
138	9/00	“Saw Mi Taw”	M	41	K	P----	D	Crop destruction, FR
139	9/00	“Toe Hlaing	M	40	K	P----	D	FR, village destruction, looting
140	9/00	“Win Naing”	M	31	K	xxxx	D	Torture, village destruction, FL
141	9/00	“Myo Nyunt”	M	20	K	xxxx	D	Crop destruction, village destruction, food, IDP situation
142	9/00	“Naw Mu Lay”	F	36	K	P----	D	IDP situation, crop destruction
143	9/00	“Saw Nuh Po”	M	23	K	xxxx	D	Killing, looting, FR
144	9/00	“Saw Myint Oo”	M	37	K	P----	D	Village destruction, looting
145	9/00	“Saw Mu Kaw”	M	23	K	xxxx	D	Village destruction, looting, killing, IDP situation, FL, FR
146	9/00	“Saw Tha Wah”	M	42	K	xxxx	D	Demands, fees, FL, FR
147	9/00	“Saw Maung Soe”	M	42	K	xxxx	D	FL, extortion
148	10/00	“Aung Baw”	M	50	K	xxxx	D	Crop destruction, FL, FR
149	11/00	“Saw Ner Kaw”	M	45	K	M----	D	Killing, IDP situation
150	11/00	“Aung Aung”	M	40	K	M----	D	Crop destruction, village destruction, IDP situation, torture, extortion
151	11/00	“Saw Lah Kuh”	M	40	K	M----	D	Killing, village destruction, FL, crop destruction, IDP situation
152	12/00	“Pa Taw Thu”	M	36	K	xxxx	D	Torture, FL, fees
153	12/00	“Maung Aye Gyi”	M	25	K	xxxx	D	Torture, extortion, FL
154	12/00	“Saw Eh Muh”	M	40	K	xxxx	D	Torture, demands, FL, fees
155	12/00	“Saw Maw Ku”	M	48	K	xxxx	D	Torture, FL
156	12/00	“Pati Htoo Kuh”	M	61	K	xxxx	D	Torture, FL, fees
157	12/00	“Saw Thi Oo”	M	60	K	xxxx	D	Torture, FR, FL
158	2/01	“Saw Lah Thaw”	M	42	K	xxxx	D	Torture, FL

**Eastern Dweh Loh Township and the Nyein Chan Yay Villages
of Southern Lu Thaw Township**

#	Date	Name	S e x	Age	N a t.	Village	T w p	Summary
159	6/99	“Pa Nwee”	M	46	K	xxxx	D	Torture, FL, extortion
160	6/99	“Naw Kler Paw”	F	48	K	xxxx	D	Killing
161	6/99	“Naw Shi”	F	27	K	xxxx	D	Killing
162	6/99	“Saw Taw Ni”	M	50	K	xxxx	D	Killing, torture
163	6/99	“Saw Eh K’Lu”	M	?	K	xxxx	D	Torture, FL
164	6/99	“Naw Si Si Paw”	M	?	K	xxxx	D	Torture, killing
165	6/99	“Mugha Thein Gyi”	F	40+	K	xxxx	D	Demands, fees, FL, extortion
166	6/99	“Saw K’Paw Sghee”	M	40+	K	xxxx	D	Demands, FL, fees
167	7/99	“Pi Ghay”	F	58	K	xxxx	D	Demands
168	7/99	“Saw Myo”	M	44	K	xxxx	D	Demands, fees, FL
169	9/99	“Saw Moe Shwe”	M	56	K	xxxx	D	FL
170	9/99	“Pa Khaw”	M	30	K	xxxx	D	FL
171	9/99	“Saw Myo”	M	27	K	xxxx	D	Killing, extortion, looting
172	9/99	“Saw Min Htoo”	M	27	K	xxxx	D	Torture, killing, extortion, looting
173	9/99	“Saw Maw Lah”	M	30	K	xxxx	D	FL, fees
174	9/99	“Saw Hsah Tee”	M	56	K	xxxx	D	FL
175	9/99	“Saw Muh”	M	32	K	xxxx	D	FL, fees
176	9/99	“Saw Lah Pa”	M	32	K	xxxx	D	FL, fees
177	9/99	“Saw Lah Ku”	M	48	K	xxxx	D	FL
178	9/99	“Saw Eh Peh Su”	M	48	K	xxxx	D	FL, fees
179	11/99	“Saw Thay Ler”	M	?	K	xxxx	L	FL, demands
180	2/00	“Saw Htoo Klih”	M	32	K	xxxx	L	FL, demands
181	2/00	“Saw Plaw Poh”	M	30	K	xxxx	L	Torture
182	4/00	“Naw Wah Wah”	F	41	K	xxxx	D	FL, fees, demands, crop quotas
183	4/00	“Naw Hser Mo”	F	35	K	xxxx	D	Demands, FL, fees, DKBA, extortion
184	4/00	“Naw K’Paw”	F	45	K	xxxx	D	FL, demands, looting, extortion, crop destruction
185	4/00	“Naw Ghay Paw”	F	40	K	P---	D	FL, FR, torture, crop quotas, demands, fees, landmines, DKBA
186	4/00	“Saw Thay Po”	M	31	K	P---	D	FL, fees, demands, FR
187	5/00	“Saw Eh Ywa”	M	35	K	xxxx	D	FL
188	5/00	“Saw Kloh”	M	56	K	xxxx	D	FL
189	5/00	“Pati Htay Htoo”	M	35	K	xxxx	D	Extortion, FL
190	5/00	“Saw Than Htoo”	M	51	K	xxxx	D	FL, fees, demands
191	5/00	“Saw Shwe”	M	36	K	xxxx	D	FL, destruction of crops, fees
192	6/00	“Kyaw Po”	M	45	K	xxxx	D	FL, fees, looting
193	6/00	“Pi San Mweh”	F	53	K	xxxx	D	FL, crop quotas
194	6/00	“Po Ghay”	M	?	K	xxxx	D	FL, fees
195	6/00	“Naw Say Paw”	F	46	K	xxxx	D	FL, demands
196	6/00	“Naw Eh Kri Mu”	F	34	K	xxxx	D	FL, demands, fees
197	6/00	“Naw Blu Paw”	F	27	K	xxxx	D	Torture, FL, looting
198	6/00	“Naw Lah K’Paw Mu”	F	48	K	xxxx	D	FL, fees, demands, torture, extortion
199	6/00	“Saw Ra Doh”	M	35	K	xxxx	D	FL, demands
200	6/00	“Aung Myint Win”	M	40	K	xxxx	D	FL, torture, demands
201	6/00	“Saw Pah Baw”	M	32	K	xxxx	D	Torture, FL, demands, looting
202	6/00	“Mya Aung”	M	32	K	xxxx	D	Demands, FL, fees

#	Date	Name	S e x	Age	N a t.	Village	T w p.	Summary
203	7/00	“Naw Say Muh”	F	54	K	xxxx	D	DKBA, demands, FL, fees
204	7/00	“Naw May Wah”	F	40+	K	xxxx	D	Demands, FL, DKBA
205	8/00	“Maung Than”	M	40	K	xxxx	L	Torture, FL, demands, fees
206	9/00	“Saw Tha Htwe”	M	36	K	xxxx	L	FL, fees, demands, landmines, crop quotas
207	9/00	“Saw Hla Dah”	M	40	K	xxxx	L	Killing, demands, FL, fees, looting
208	10/00	“Naw Si Yu Paw”	F	37	K	xxxx	Pa	DKBA
209	12/00	“Mya Sein”	M	21	I	xxxx	D	FL
210	2/01	“Htaw Say”	M	43	K	xxxx	D	Torture, shooting, looting, demands, FL, fees
211	3/01	“Saw Peh Yah”	M	30	K	xxxx	L	FL, looting, torture, demands, fees
212	3/01	“Saw Kaw Kwee”	M	23	K	xxxx	L	Torture, FL, fees, looting
213	3/01	“Htun Htun”	M	42	K	xxxx	L	Demands, FL, looting, torture
214	3/01	“Naw Lah Say”	F	20	K	xxxx	L	Village situation
215	3/01	“Saw Pa Heh”	M	35	K	xxxx	L	Village situation
216	3/01	“Naw Bu Heh”	F	35	K	xxxx	L	Village situation
217	3/01	“Saw Kyi Po”	M	48	K	xxxx	L	Village situation

Villages in Bu Tho Township

218	4/00	“Saw Doh”	M	30	K	K---	B	FL, looting, fees, torture, killing, DKBA
219	2/01	“Saw Po Hla”	M	43	K	xxxx	B	FL, demands, IDP situation, fees
220	4/01	“Zaw Min”	M	26	K	xxxx	B	FL, demands, FR, torture, fees, looting
221	4/01	“Pu Ler Ku”	M	60	K	xxxx	B	FR, FL, fees, demands, torture, killing
222	4/01	“Pa Tray”	M	51	K	xxxx	B	Looting, FL
223	4/01	“Po Taw Ku”	M	25	K	xxxx	B	Torture
224	5/01	“Saw Lu Lu”	M	54	K	xxxx	B	FR, demands

SPDC & DKBA Deserters

225	3/00	“Saw Tha Ku”	M	21	K	xxxx	I	Conditions as a SPDC soldier, FL, looting,
226	11/00	“Soe Tint”	M	18	B	xxxx	R	Conditions as a SPDC soldier, village destruction, killing, FL
227	11/00	“Thein Htay”	M	26	B	xxxx	K	Conditions as a SPDC soldier, FL
228	12/99	“Saw Po Kyu”	M	?	K	xxxx	I	Conditions as a DKBA soldier, DKBA, demands
229	4/00	“Saw K’Thay”	M	25	K	xxxx	T	Conditions as a DKBA soldier, FL, fees

Civilian Porters from Central Burma and Convict Porters

230	3/99	“Maung Zaw Oo”	M	27	B	xxxx	P	FL
231	9/99	“U Nyunt Shwe”	M	51	B	xxxx	P	FL, crop quotas
232	9/99	“Ko San Aung”	M	19	B	xxxx	R	FL
233	9/99	“Ko Zaw Thein”	M	15	B	xxxx	P	FL

#	Date	Name	S e x	Age	N a t.	Village	T w p.	Summary
234	9/99	“Ko Myint Maung”	M	19	B	xxxx	R	FL
235	8/00	“Aung Zaw”	M	28	P	xxxx	Sh	Convict porter

Supplemental Interviews

236	8/01	“Tin Lwin”	M	20	B	xxxx	P	Restrictions on forced labour, portering
237	8/01	“Saw Nyi Nyi”	M	27	K	xxxx	D	Restrictions on forced labour
238	8/01	“Saw Nay Lay”	M	51	K	xxxx	D	Restrictions on forced labour
239	10/01	“Saw Mu Htoo”	M	26	K	xxxx	D	Restrictions
240	10/01	“Saw Eh Kaw”	M	34	K	xxxx	D	Restrictions