

Displacement and causes of displacement in Eastern and Northern Shan State

Documents

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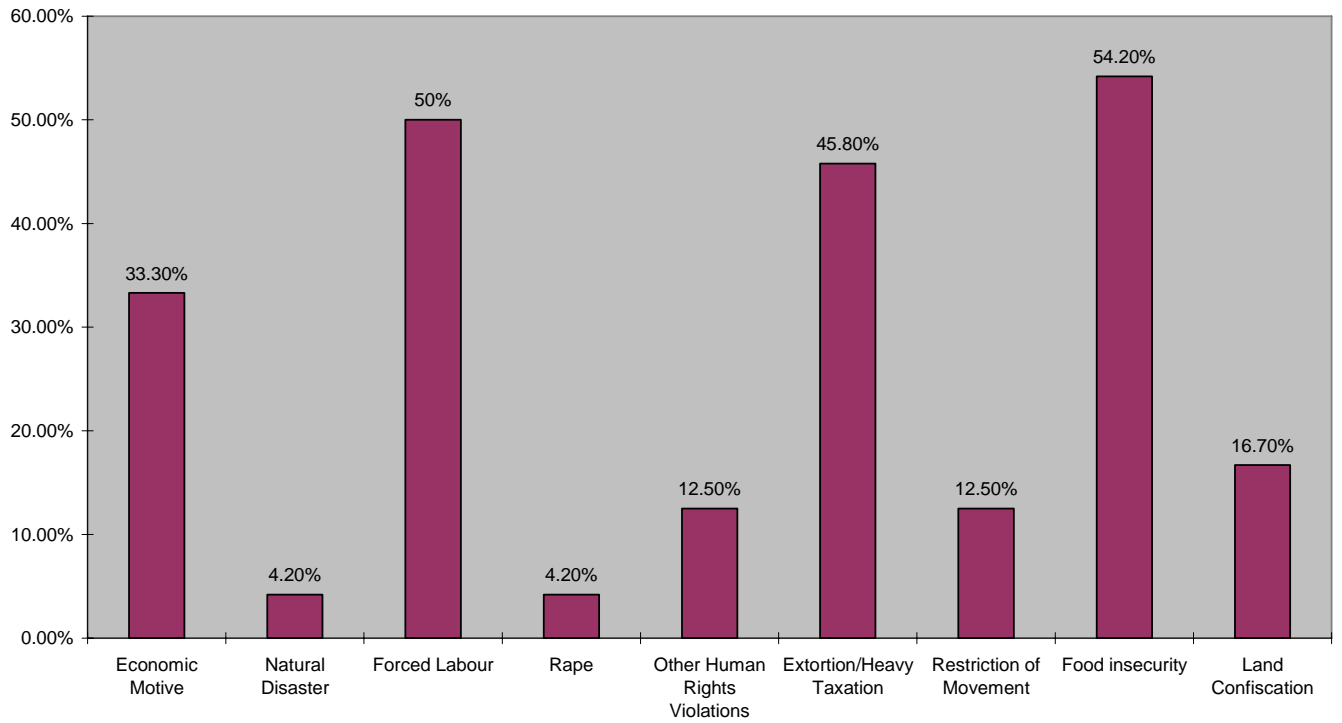
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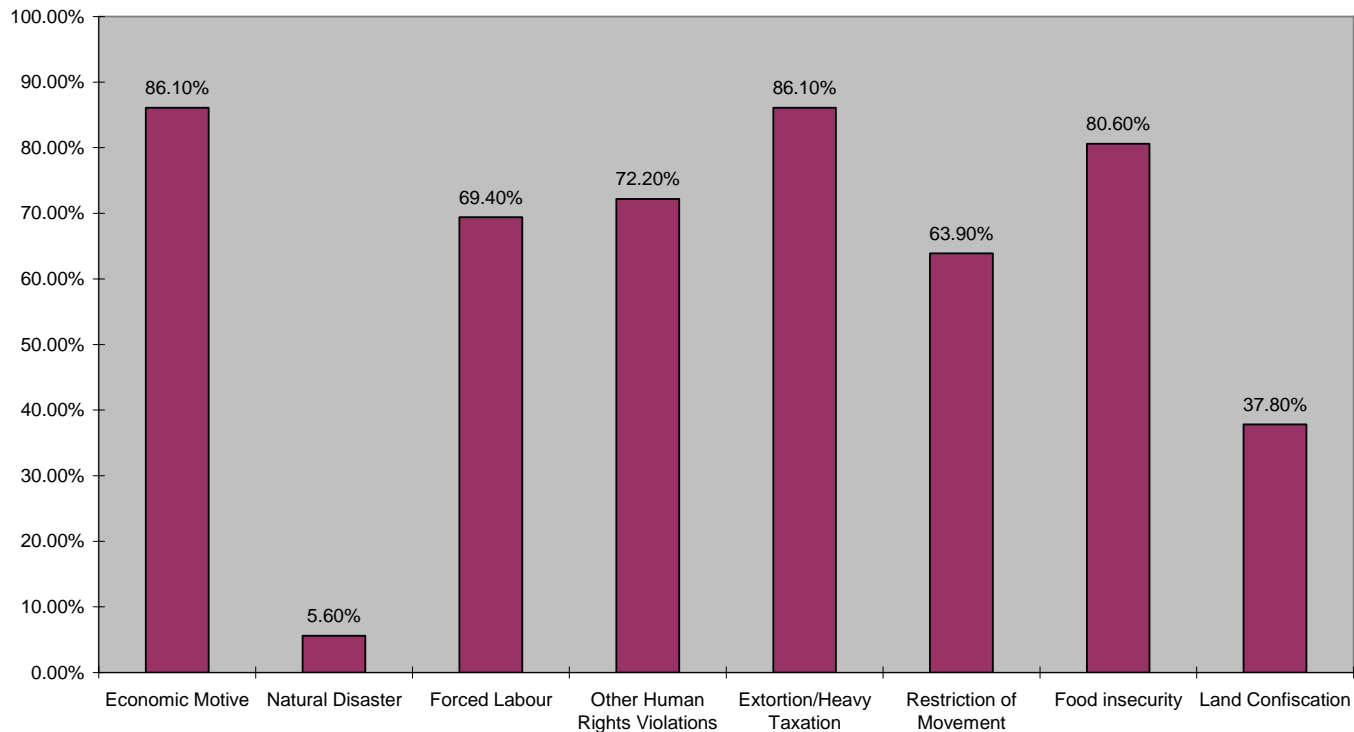
Survey Results

(60 respondents)

11) Eastern Shan State (percentage)



12) Northern Shan State (percentage)



Forced relocation/eviction (rural)

Mass forced relocation in Kaeng-Tung

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, June 2006*

In late 2005, several villages in Mung Laab village tract in Kaeng-Tung township were ordered by the SPDC authorities to make preparation to move out of the area within 5 years to make way for a foreign lignite mining company.

The order came out in November 2005 after a mining concession was granted to a Thai mining company by the SPDC authorities to dig lignite in the area of Mung Laab village tract in Kaeng-Tung township.

The location of the lignite mine was about 10 miles southeast of Kaeng-Tung town, covering roughly 20 square miles of land area in which were situated several villages. The villages that would be affected by the forced relocation were at least the following 5 villages: Wan Tawng, Wan Sa, Wan Zawn, Wan Mai Kung Ken and Paang Satza.

Even though the time frame to complete the relocation given by the SPDC authorities was long enough, from 2006 to 2011, places to which they would be relocated had not been indicated, and nothing about compensation had been mentioned, complained the affected villagers.

Monitoring Developments on Burma's Mekong

-- Extracts from *Undercurrents* Issue 2, July 2006

Impact of coal mining

The state of roads in Burma's Mekong region is a testament to what factors are steering development there: not the needs of local communities but the appetites of powerful players seeking wealth. Indeed, the rights of local populations are continuously trampled on. After a coal mine was discovered in Seng Pin in 2004, Lahu, Akha, and Samtao people native to the area (an estimated 150 houses in 5 villages surrounding the mine field) were forced by NDAA authorities to relocate. Some were moved 15-20 miles northeast of their old villages while others moved to Kengtung. An estimated 200 households of Chinese mine workers then moved in, followed by their families.

p6

Kengtung coal mine

Since 2000, Chinese and Thai interests have competed for the operation of a coal mine just nine miles outside the town of Kengtung. The SPDC has started and stopped deals between several companies. A Thai company currently operates at the mine. However, researchers in the area report that operations have recently and unexplainably stopped again at the mine. Still, the Kengtung authorities have ordered nine villages in the area to relocate, including some that have been established there for over a hundred years. The first wave of relocations began in April of this year.

Villagers have lost their houses and farms without compensation and are being torn away from nearby relatives. Some haven't been able to move yet because they cannot even arrange any transportation. For example, villagers from Pang Sang Kya had to trudge five miles down a dirt road to their new location. Others are scattered here and there and have to settle in unknown places without adequate land.

The cost of coal mining in Kengtung				
Ordered to move out by Kengtung authorities:				
	Village name	Villagers	Houses	History
1	Pang Sang Kya	Lahu	116	Established about 33 years ago. Villagers fled here from Pang sang kya tract, Mong Yang Township at the time of the CPB war

2	Pamakha	Akha	93	
3	Na Theun	Akha	130	
4	Naw Ka	A leper village	220	Established here since World War II
5	Ban Kaw	Akha	23	
6	Mae Yang	Shan	230	Established here more than 100 years ago
7	Wan Mocu	Wa and Samtao	17	
8	Wan Kang	Shan	250	Established here more than 100 years ago
9	Wan Yang	Shan	170	Established here more than 100 years ago

Villages 1 to 5 have to move out 582 houses before April 2006; 664 houses from villages 6 to 9 have to move out before 2009. An additional 20 villages might be moved out after 2010.

When the mine does begin operations again, no one knows the effects it will have on the town of Kengtung as environmental regulations are nonexistent.

Eastern Shan State provides a convenient place to do business for Chinese and Thai mining interests. The location offers deposits of rich minerals and fuel sources without the nuisance of environmental regulations or protests by local populations. Those populations, however, remain uninformed and confused about what is happening around them. Relocation without compensation, illness, and a degraded environment are just some of the consequences they must endure - with no benefits insight. p 7

Land confiscation, forced relocation and extortion by a ceasefire group, causing people to flee, in Murng-Khark and Parn-Yarng

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report*, September 2005

Since the beginning of 2005, members of United Wa State Army (UWSA), that has a ceasefire with the SPDC, have confiscated land in Murng Kaa village tract in Murng-Khark township and forcibly relocated about 600 families of Wa villagers from Parn-Yarng township in the north down to Murng Kaa area.

In Murng Kaa village tract in Murng-Khark township, there were tens of thousands of inhabitants comprising Shan, Palawng, Akha, Lahu, Akhur and Lee Saw, who were mostly farmers. During the last decade or so, Murng Kaa area has alternatively been under the administrations of SPDC and UWSA several times.

Since about late last year, Murng Kaa has again become an area under the UWSA's administration and accordingly people in the area have to comply with their orders. Since earlier this year, 2005, the UWSA started to implement their development plan in the area.

The UWSA first brought 600 families of Wa villagers from Paang Saang areas in Parn-Yarng township in the north to Murng Kaa village tract in Murng-Khark township, and then declared all the cultivated land areas in Murng Kaa village tract confiscated.

After that, a population head-count, including the indigenous and the newly arrived 600 families, of all ages in the area was done. The confiscated land was then divided and distributed equally to each person of all ages of the population, at the rate of 2 "mo" per person (1 mo = 1.6 acres). Furthermore, every person, regardless of age, was obliged to provide a yearly tribute comprising 4 yuan of Chinese money (1 yuan = 120 kyat), 25 kilograms of husked rice and 3 ancient silver coins (1 coin = 2,500 kyat) for the UWSA.

The original local villagers who had had no such experience previously were shocked by the actions of the UWSA, which they thought was a kind of communist-style land reform, and many of them fled to the surrounding areas, including Murng-Khark, Kaeng-Tung, Murng-Phyak and Ta-Khi-Laek townships.

The people who fled were mostly Shan and Palawng villagers who were known to be quite afraid of communist rule, and the UWSA had already put out a notice calling them back to their original villages, or else the lands that had been distributed to them would be reconfiscated.

Burma drives out opium farmers

-- BBC, 16 January, 2000

The Burmese government has announced plans to depopulate one of the world's biggest opium-growing areas in an attempt to eradicate heroin production in the next five years. Some 50,000 villagers in the remote Shan State, where little but opium poppies can be grown on the rugged mountains, will be relocated to new agricultural areas near Thailand.

The program is a joint effort between the Burmese government and the ethnic United Wa State Army (UWSA), which controls the Shan State. "We have designated 2005 as the year of the narcotics-free zone", said Khin Maung Myint, a liaison officer for the Wa army.

"My feeling is that only when these projects become a success, will we be able to eradicate the drug problem" he said.

Military officers and UWSA men refused to describe the operation as a "forced relocation", but acknowledged that all targeted villagers would have to leave their homes.

Drugs trafficking syndicate

The Wa are former anti-government insurgents who control large areas of northern Burma under a ceasefire agreement reached with the military in 1989.

The US State Department describes the UWSA as the world's largest drug-trafficking organisation and Southeast Asia's leading producer of heroin reaching the United States.

Both the Burmese government's anti-drug czar Colonel Kyaw Thein and Wa leaders told reporters flown into Wa territory on Saturday that they were committed to eradicating drugs from Burma within 15 years, with large areas of production to be taken out by 2005.

"We have been blamed for drugs for so long now", Kyaw Thein said. "We do not want to be blamed forever."

Correspondents say the announcement is likely to be greeted with scepticism abroad as the Burmese government is widely accused of benefiting from drug money and has few other sources of hard currency.

Burma's political pariah status has prevented it from receiving international financial aid which has helped neighbouring Thailand wipe out most of its opium fields.

Some 10,000 Wa villagers, who are traditionally some of the poorest and least educated in Burma, have already made the move south. In an effort to provide alternative ways to make a living they have been relocated to a plantation area at Wan Hone, in Eastern Shan State, where they can produce tropical fruit and rear livestock.

Some hamlets were well developed, according to western journalists visiting the site, but thousands of recent arrivals were seen living in squalor in straw huts and eating their meals on plastic mats.

The government has said it will provide rice, salt and basic medical care until the arrivals have better homes and can start earning a living from the fruit trees.

In the presence of heavily-armed Burmese and Wa army soldiers, few of the villagers were willing to comment on their forced removal from their ancestral lands, according to the French news agency AFP.

Burmese officials say the United Nations International Drug Control Programme or other agencies have not yet been informed of the project, and there has been no reaction yet from human rights groups or Burma's political opposition.

Forced resettlement of the Wa, 1999-2001

-- Executive Summary of *Unsettling Moves*, Lahu National Development Organisation, April 2002

This report estimates that since the end of 1999, over one quarter of the entire Wa population have been forcibly resettled from their homes near the China border to southern Shan State. Authorized by the Burmese military junta, the United Wa State Party (UWSP) has sent approximately 126,000 men, women and children by truck and on foot over 400 kilometres south to the Thai-Burma border.

Both the UWSP and the junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), have officially stated that the mass Wa resettlement program is aimed to eradicate opium production by enabling villagers to grow alternative crops in the more fertile lands of southern Shan State. However, evidence in this report shows that the resettled villagers are planting new opium fields, with the support of SPDC and UWSP officials.

While it is clear that this resettlement program has little to do with drug eradication, the real motives have yet to be confirmed. This report speculates that the UWSP has carried out the program to gain territory and economic advantages from border trade into Thailand and Laos. It is speculated that the SPDC are carrying out their usual divide-and-rule strategy: pitting the UWSP against the Shan resistance in southern Shan State, and using the UWSP as a proxy army against neighbouring countries; not to mention dividing the Wa themselves. Wa sources also state that financial benefits for individual SPDC leaders have facilitated the move.

Whatever the rationale for the resettlement, this report clearly documents the forced nature of the program and the abuses inflicted not only on those resettled but also on the villagers in the south who lost their lands to the new arrivals. The resettled Wa came from six townships in the northern Wa area, as well as inside China's Yunnan province. Some were given no warning whatsoever before the move, and all were forced to abandon most of their possessions. Most were herded into trucks to travel south, but many were forced to walk through mountains, taking over two months. Some died en route.

On arrival in the south, the villagers were settled mainly around existing villages in the townships of Mong Hsat, Mong Ton and Tachilek, lying opposite Thailand's Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai provinces. Upon arrival, the villagers were given rice by the UWSP but, unused to the new surroundings, many fell ill. It is estimated that over 4,000 people died, of malaria and other diseases, during the year 2000 alone.

The lives of the original inhabitants of these areas, mainly Shan, Lahu and Akha, have been gravely disrupted. Their lands and property have been seized by the newcomers, and they have had to face abuses committed by both SPDC and UWSP troops. This report estimates that the number of original inhabitants affected by the resettlement program is approximately 48,000. Of these, it is estimated that at least 4,500 have fled to other areas of Shan State, while another 4,000 have fled to Thailand. These Shan, Lahu and Akha villagers have no access to refugee camps where they can access protection and humanitarian assistance.

Forced relocation/eviction (urban)

Forced relocation and land confiscation in Kaeng-Tung

-- Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, August 2006

In May 2006, 5 families of townspeople in No. 1 quarter were forced to move away and the land area they lived on was confiscated by the SPDC police in Kaeng-Tung town, Kaeng-Tung township.

On 24 May 2006, 5 families, comprising about 20 members collectively, were forced to move away and the land on which they had been living for more than 20 years was forcibly confiscated by the SPDC police to make way for the expansion of a police station.

The land was situated on the slope of the famous Zawm Mon hill in the centre of the town and was over 1,200 square metres in area. About 5-6 years ago, the police set up a temporary checkpoint or a guardhouse on the same slope at a spot just above the said land area where the families were living.

After a while the police built a motor road from the foot of the hill up to the guardhouse and showed signs of setting up a permanent establishment at the place by grading the ground and building barracks for housing police families.

Finally, in late June this year, the families were completely forced out of the land by the police authorities to make way for the expansion of the new police establishment. Although the families tried to lodge a complaint with their community leaders, no one dared to do anything about it.

Since no place has been provided for their resettlement, the families are now temporarily staying in the Buddhist monastery compound on the Zawm Mon hill with the permission of the abbot, at the time of this report.

Other threats to human security

Land confiscation

Destruction of crops and forced labour for rice-growing competition, in Kaeng-Tung

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, January 2007.*

In August 2006, 3 acres of villagers' rice paddy full of "pregnant" rice plants were destroyed in order to organize a rice-growing competition, in which forced labour of the people was used from beginning to end, by the SPDC authorities in Kaeng-Tung township.

Acting on the order of the SPDC commander of the Special Triangle Regional Military Command, SPDC authorities in Kaeng-Tung township chose a plot of rice field in Kaad Tao village tract to organize a rice-growing competition.

The place chosen was a 3-acre rice field belonging to the villagers of Yaang Hok in Kaad Tao village tract. It was chosen because it was near the main road and easy to access and thus the most appropriate, said the authorities.

The rice field was, however, already full of paddy plants which were about to produce rice ears, or heavily "pregnant" as the farmers would say. The owners, with the help of the community leaders, tried to plead with the authorities not to choose their rice paddy, but to no avail. The authorities said they dared not defy the order of the Regional

Commander.

A meeting of all the community leaders of 24 villages in Kaad Tao village tract was held and they were told by the SPDC authorities to join the competition which was to be held on 14 August 2006. They were also told to clear the place of the rice plants and prepare it 3-4 days before the competition started.

On the day of the competition, the forced competitors had to be at the field and get ready at 7 o'clock in the morning, but the authorities, including the Regional Commander and many officials and community leaders, came a bit later and opened the competition.

There were about 800-1000 people at the competition with several groups playing traditional musical instruments while members of the SPDC took pictures with still and video cameras. The competition was completed at 7 o'clock in the evening.

In addition to having to provide forced labour for the rice-growing competition, the people in Kaad Tao village tract were also required by the SPDC authorities to compensate for the loss of the owners of rice paddy used for the competition.

Land confiscation in Sen-Wi (Hsenwi)

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, January 2007.*

In August 2006, more than 100 acres of villagers' land were confiscated by the SPDC authorities to make way for rubber plantations, south of Nawng On village in Teng Yet village tract, Sen-Wi township.

On 6 August 2006, members of the SPDC authorities in Sen-Wi township and their civilian business partners came to Teng Yet village tract and put a stake on a stretch of land saying that from then on it would be used for rubber plantations.

The land was more than 100 acres in area and situated east of Nam Pang stream and south of Nawng On village in Teng Yet village tract, comprising mostly villagers' farm lands and wood lands which had been providing them with firewood and building materials for generations.

The headman of Teng Yet village tract was called by the SPDC authorities and told to inform those who claimed to be the owners that their lands had been taken by the Burmese Military, who was the real owner of all land, and they had no right to do anything with them anymore.

Forcible use of rice paddy before harvest was complete, in Kaeng-Tung

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, December 2006*

In October 2006, 4 acres of a villager's rice paddy, which was not yet finished harvesting, was forcibly taken by the SPDC police to grow their own dry season rice, at Wan Huay village in Kaad Pha village tract, Kaeng-Tung township.

On 6 October 2006, members of the police force in Kaeng-Tung township came to Wan Huay village and chose a 4-acre plot of rice field for growing their own rice crop.

The rice paddy belonged to a farmer who had just reaped his rice plants, which were piled up in heaps in the field and had not yet been threshed.

The police informed the farmer of their intention and on the same day brought in 2 ploughing machines, let water into the field and started to till the land. As the water began to ruin the lower parts of his piles of rice plants, the farmer pleaded with the police to stop and wait until he finished threshing his crop.

The police, however, did not stop, but said the land did not belong to the farmer but the government and they, as government officials, could choose anywhere they like. They then brought in a threshing machine and threshed the rice, saying they could not wait for the farmer to do it himself, which would be by hand and take much longer.

After threshing the rice, the police charged the farmers 300 kyat of threshing fees for each sack of rice grain. The farmer had no choice, but to pay the fees and be grateful that he did not lose all his rice.

The farmer said that previously each year he used to get about 40 piles of rice plants which usually produced about 15 sacks of grain each after threshing, which was enough for him to make a decent living. This year, he said, he was in trouble, as he got much less and also had to pay high fees for the threshing.

Land confiscation in Shan State

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, August 2006*

Commentary

Confiscation of cultivated land by the Burmese military authorities in Shan State continues to be one of the main factors that is depriving the local people of their livelihood and causing them to flee to other places in desperate search of other means of livelihood.

Since more than a decade ago, as the military has been dramatically expanding its presence in Shan State, large areas of land have been confiscated for various reasons. Lands were initially seized from the local people for setting up new bases for new military units and for expanding the base areas of the existing ones.

Land areas surrounding or in the vicinities of military bases were then sooner or later confiscated for the troops to provide themselves with farm produce, wood, bamboo, firewood, etc., or merely for security reasons.

Furthermore, even larger areas of land have also been confiscated for various state-run projects such as coal and mineral mines, road construction, rubber and physic nut plantations, etc..

Apart from other gross human rights violations such as killing, rape, beating and shooting, a special section is given to incidents of land confiscation, including forced relocation and forced labour in some cases, during the first 6 months of this year in this month's issue.

There are reports on the confiscation of tens of thousands of acres of cultivated land of the local people in Kaeng-Tung and Mu-Se townships for rubber plantations, and for physic nut plantations in Larng-Khur and Kun-Hing townships, by the SPDC authorities in Shan State.

Confiscation of cultivated lands in 2006

Over the last 2 decades, especially starting from around mid 1990s, the Burmese military has been expanding its presence in Shan State, an ongoing process up to the present.

Since then, large areas of land, most of them cultivated by the local people, have been confiscated by the Burmese junta's troops in all parts of Shan State for various reasons.

Lands have been, and are still being, confiscated for setting up many new bases for new military battalions and for the expansion of the existing battalions all over Shan State, and land areas surrounding or in the vicinities of military bases have been, and are still being, subsequently confiscated for the junta's troops, or merely for security reasons.

Furthermore, vast areas of land have also been, and are still being, confiscated for plantations of rubber and physic nut, etc., which are either controlled by the state or private business firms, or joint ventures of the state and private firms.

Interestingly, private firms and companies that are given favour and granted concessions by the junta's authorities to work with or for them are usually owned by one of the notorious former or current drug barons.

Whatever the reasons for the land confiscation, the majority of those who lost their land have also lost their means of livelihood, because the majority of Shan State populations are in the agricultural sector who have to one way or another depend on the land to make a living.

The following are incidents of land confiscation in Shan State by the SPDC authorities during the early half of 2006:

Land confiscation for rubber plantations in Kaeng-Tung

In June 2006, large areas of woodland and grassland in Murng Laang village tract in Kaeng-Tung township have been confiscated by the SPDC authorities of LIB314 to make room for rubber plantations.

The SPDC authorities are said to be intending to plant 1 million rubber trees in the areas during 2006. But the project is to be privately run by an ethnic Chinese businessman, Than Htun, under some sort of agreement with the SPDC authorities.

The project has already been started at present and 250 workers are being hired to do the job on a daily basis with the wages of 1,500 kyat per worker per day.

The LIB314 had some 9 years ago already confiscated some land in the northern part of Murng Laang village tract for rubber plantations. At that time about 300,000 rubber trees were planted and now rubber is being collected from them starting this year.

This time, however, the confiscated land area was so great that it started from the previously confiscated land until it reached the southernmost point of the village tract, taking up virtually all the woodland and grassland which had traditionally served the villagers as their source of firewood and grazing grounds for their cattle.

Forced relocation and land confiscation in Kaeng-Tung

In May 2006, 5 families of townspeople in No. 1 quarter were forced to move away and the land area they lived on was confiscated by the SPDC police in Kaeng-Tung town, Kaeng-Tung township.

On 24 May 2006, 5 families, comprising about 20 members collectively, were forced to move away and the land on which they had been living for more than 20 years was forcibly confiscated by the SPDC police to make way for the expansion of a police station.

The land was situated on the slope of the famous Zawm Mon hill in the centre of the town and was over 1,200 square metres in area. About 5-6 years ago, the police set up a temporary checkpoint or a guardhouse on the same slope at a spot just above the said land area where the families were living.

After a while the police built a motor road from the foot of the hill up to the guardhouse and showed signs of setting up a permanent establishment at the place by grading the ground and building barracks for housing police families.

Finally, in late June this year, the families were completely forced out of the land by the police authorities to make way for the expansion of the new police establishment. Although the families tried to lodge a complaint with their community leaders, no one dared to do anything about it.

Since no place has been provided for their resettlement, the families are now temporarily staying in the Buddhist monastery compound on the Zawm Mon hill with the permission of the abbot, at the time of this report.

Tens of thousands of acres of cultivated land confiscated in Mu-Se

In January 2006, tens of thousands of acres of cultivated land were confiscated by the SPDC military authorities for growing rubber trees in Mu-Se township.

The confiscated land areas were mostly tea plantations, woodlands on which villagers grew trees for firewood and various other fruit orchards and gardens in the areas of the following 16 villages: (1) Terng Long, (2) Ho Po, (3) Waeng Naang, (4) Khu Waeng, (5) Maan Waeng, (6) Paang Long, (7) Kawng Sa, (8) Zaan Sa, (9) Nawng Mo, (10) Paang Kham, (11) Saai Khaao, (12) Nam Sim, (13) Maang Haang, (14) Nam Kat, (15) Maan Kaang and (16) Maan Tham.

When, on 1 January 2006, the authorities came with tractors and bulldozers and bulldozed down tea, banana and various other fruit trees and other trees in the areas of Terng Long village without informing the villagers, village elders and community leaders went to enquire about it.

What the villagers were told by the drivers of the tractors and bulldozers was that on the order of the Commander of the Northeast Regional Military Command, Lt. Gen. Myint Hlaing, 37,000 acres of land in the area were to be confiscated to make way for rubber plantations, and that they were just implementing the order.

Since then, tens of thousands of acres of land in the areas of the said 16 villages have been confiscated and all the trees and plants destroyed by a domestic private company working on the order of the SPDC military authorities.

The said private company was known as “So So Pye Pye”, based in Mu-Se, and was owned by a man named Htun Aye. Htun Aye was also locally known to be one of the local drug barons working closely under Lt. Gen. Myint Hlaing and making a lot of money for their mutual benefits.

Many tea plantations, fruit orchards and gardens, etc., of the people in those areas have been destroyed in the process. Many people who had mainly depended on those lands for their livelihood for generations have been effectively deprived of them overnight, putting them in a very sad and difficult situation.

Monitoring Developments on Burma’s Mekong

-- Extracts from *Undercurrents* Issue 2, July 2006

Impact of coal mining

The state of roads in Burma's Mekong region is a testament to what factors are steering development there: not the needs of local communities but the appetites of powerful players seeking wealth. Indeed, the rights of local populations are continuously trampled on. After a coal mine was discovered in Seng Pin in 2004, Lahu, Akha, and Samtao people native to the area (an estimated 150 houses in 5 villages surrounding the mine field) were forced by NDAA authorities to relocate. Some were moved 15-20 miles northeast of their old villages while others moved to Kengtung. An estimated 200 households of Chinese mine workers then moved in, followed by their families.

p6

Kengtung coal mine

Since 2000, Chinese and Thai interests have competed for the operation of a coal mine just nine miles outside the town of Kengtung. The SPDC has started and stopped deals between several companies. A Thai company currently operates at the mine. However, researchers in the area report that operations have recently and unexplainably stopped again at the mine. Still, the Kengtung authorities have ordered nine villages in the area to relocate, including some that have been established there for over a hundred years. The first wave of relocations began in April of this year.

Villagers have lost their houses and farms without compensation and are being torn away from nearby relatives. Some haven't been able to move yet because they cannot even arrange any transportation. For example, villagers from Pang Sang Kya had to trudge five miles down a dirt road to their new location. Others are scattered here and there and have to settle in unknown places without adequate land.

The cost of coal mining in Kengtung

Ordered to move out by Kengtung authorities:

	Village name	Villagers	Houses	History
1	Pang Sang Kya	Lahu	116	Established about 33 years ago. Villagers fled here from Pang sang kya tract, Mong Yang Township at the time of the CPB war
2	Pamakha	Akha	93	
3	Na Theun	Akha	130	
4	Naw Ka	A leper village	220	Established here since World War II
5	Ban Kaw	Akha	23	
6	Mae Yang	Shan	230	Established here more than 100 years ago
7	Wan Mocu	Wa and Samtao	17	
8	Wan Kang	Shan	250	Established here more than 100 years ago
9	Wan Yang	Shan	170	Established here more than 100 years ago

Villages 1 to 5 have to move out 582 houses before April 2006; 664 houses from villages 6 to 9 have to move out before 2009. An additional 20 villages might be moved out after 2010.

When the mine does begin operations again, no one knows the effects it will have on the town of Kengtung as environmental regulations are nonexistent.

Eastern Shan State provides a convenient place to do business for Chinese and Thai mining interests. The location offers deposits of rich minerals and fuel sources without the nuisance of environmental regulations or protests by local populations. Those populations, however, remain uninformed and confused about what is happening around them. Relocation without compensation, illness, and a degraded environment are just some of the consequences they must endure - with no benefits insight. p 7

People forced to build expensive new houses or risk confiscation in Kaeng-Tung
 -- Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, December 2005

Since July 2005, people in 2 satellite towns in Kaeng-Tung township have been forced to build new houses worth not less than 2 millions kyat each by the SPDC township authorities, and their lands would be confiscated if the houses were not completed by April 2006.

The 2 satellite towns were on the western and southeastern edges of the main Kaeng-Tung town. The areas of the satellite towns were formerly woodlands and rice fields of the people until some years ago when they were confiscated by the SPDC authorities.

The confiscated lands were then designated as new satellite towns and divided into many small plots and sold to the people for building houses. Many former owners of the land areas had to buy back some plots in order to have places to live on, or to get back as much of this land as they could.

When the order to build new houses was issued on 31 July 2005, there were about 300 houses, mostly small bamboo houses with thatch-roofing, in both towns and many plots were still left empty because the owners had not yet been able to find enough money even to build small cheap houses.

Although it was only about 40,000 kyat per plot when the lands were first divided and sold, each plot could now fetch 500,000 to 600,000 kyat. However, the owners are not allowed to sell their lands, but to build the specified houses or move away.

Whether they will build the specified houses or not, the owners of the lands are required to report to the authorities not later than the end of January 2006. Those who decide to build the houses will have to complete them by the end of April 2006.

Those who cannot or decide not to build the houses will have to give up their lands without compensations. Those lands will then be reconfiscated and distributed to the families of the SPDC soldiers and government servants.

Many owners of the lands are finding a very difficult time trying to get enough money to build the houses. Many of them have no idea of how to find that much money in only a few months time and would most likely lose their lands.

Land confiscation, forced relocation and extortion by a ceasefire group, causing people to flee, in Murng-Khark and Parn-Yarng

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, September 2005*

Since the beginning of 2005, members of United Wa State Army (UWSA), that has a ceasefire with the SPDC, have confiscated land in Murng Kaa village tract in Murng-Khark township and forcibly relocated about 600 families of Wa villagers from Parng-Yarng township in the north down to Murng Kaa area.

In Murng Kaa village tract in Murng-Khark township, there were tens of thousands of inhabitants comprising Shan, Palawng, Akha, Lahu, Akhur and Lee Saw, who were mostly farmers. During the last decade or so, Murng Kaa area has alternatively been under the administrations of SPDC and UWSA several times.

Since about late last year, Murng Kaa has again become an area under the UWSA's administration and accordingly people in the area have to comply with their orders. Since earlier this year, 2005, the UWSA started to implement their development plan in the area.

The UWSA first brought 600 families of Wa villagers from Paang Saang areas in Parng-Yarng township in the north to Murng Kaa village tract in Murng-Khark township, and then declared all the cultivated land areas in Murng Kaa village tract confiscated.

After that, a population head-count, including the indigenous and the newly arrived 600 families, of all ages in the area was done. The confiscated land was then divided and distributed equally to each person of all ages of the population, at the rate of 2 "mo" per person (1 mo = 1.6 acres).

Furthermore, every person, regardless of age, was obliged to provide a yearly tribute comprising 4 yuan of Chinese money (1 yuan = 120 kyat), 25 kilograms of husked rice and 3 ancient silver coins (1 coin = 2,500 kyat) for the UWSA.

The original local villagers who had had no such experience previously were shocked by the actions of the UWSA, which they thought was a kind of communist-style land reform, and many of them fled to the surrounding areas, including Murng-Khark, Kaeng-Tung, Murng-Phyak and Ta-Khi-Laek townships.

The people who fled were mostly Shan and Palawng villagers who were known to be quite afraid of communist rule, and the UWSA had already put out a notice calling them back to their original villages, or else the lands that had been distributed to them would be reconfiscated.

Confiscation of cultivated lands, and forced labour, in Tang-Yarn

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, September 2005*

Since April 2005, SPDC troops have confiscated several square miles of cultivated land in Murng Kaa village tract in **Tang-Yarn** township, causing great losses to the local people including the means of livelihood of many farmers, and forced local farmers to cultivate crops for them on some of the land.

In mid April 2005, the commander of the Tactical Command based in Tang-Yarn, Col. Khin Maung Myint, and the commander of IB33, Lt. Col. Thant Sin, came to Murng Kaa village tract and declared that lands in the areas of several villages had been confiscated to construct a base for IB33, without notifying the owners nor paying any compensation.

The lands were mostly cultivated lands, including rice fields, farms for other crops, woodlands, dairy farms and grazing meadows, in the areas of Nawng Ep, Phak Kum, Kung Mong, Nam Laan villages and some parts of the main village, Murng Kaa, itself. Altogether about 4 square miles in area.

When the lands were confiscated, most of them had already been prepared and were ready for sowing and planting crops. Farmers, after they learned that their lands had been confiscated, pleaded with the authorities to let them grow their crops because it was already too late to find and cultivate new lands.

Farmers were allowed to grow crops on some parts of their lands for just one last crop, and on condition that they gave the SPDC troops one basket of rice for the use of each acre of the lands. The other parts of the lands were used to cultivate rice for the SPDC troops, using forced labour of the people who also had to provide the rice seeds.

Soon after the land confiscation, the construction of the base for IB33 started, and is continuing up to the present. A road leading from Pa Zaang village to the base, about 10 miles long, was constructed, using forced labour of civilian mini-tractors to transport sand, rocks and construction materials.

Although the SPDC troops had several China-made trucks to use in construction work, they did not use them but forcibly used civilian mini-tractors in the area instead. Although the SPDC authorities said they would pay 1,000 kyat of money and 1 gallon of fuel per mini-tractor per day, they not only did not pay them but also often used the mini-tractors for up to 10 days when they conscripted them for just one day.

Furthermore, the SPDC troops have been cutting trees in the confiscated areas of the woodlands and reselling them back to the local people as firewood at the rate of 2,000 kyat per 'waa', apne-arm-span tall and wide pile of about 2-foot long pieces of firewood.

Although the construction of the military base is still far from complete, the SPDC troops have already brought in not less than 50 of their families so far to settle in houses built by forced

labour of the people and with materials, such as bamboo and thatches, requisitioned from the people.

The following is an available list of the losses of other property when the lands were confiscated:

1. 64 groves of large-size bamboo worth about 2,880,000 kyat
2. 66 groves of middle-size bam-1. 64 groves of large-size bamboo worth about 2,880,000 kyat
2. 66 groves of middle-size bamboo worth about 2,475,000 kyat
3. 1,735 groves of *mai khi laek' (firewood) worth about 4,337,500 kyat
4. 1-1/2 acres of rice worth 200,000 kyat
5. 19 acres of peanut worth 200,000 kyat
6. 5 acres of corn worth 100,000 kyat
7. 2 acres of roofing thatch worth 500,000 kyat

During the construction of the above mentioned road, civilian mini-tractors were used at least 720 times in transporting rocks and other building materials.

Implantation of settlers

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-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, September 2005*

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Farmers were allowed to grow crops on some parts of their lands for just one last crop, and on condition that they gave the SPDC troops one basket of rice for the use of each acre of the lands. The other parts of the lands were used to cultivate rice for the SPDC troops, using forced labour of the people who also had to provide the rice seeds.

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Forced labour

Forced labour in State-run plantations

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, February 2007*

In state-run plantations of all sorts, e.g., physic nut and other seasonal crops, mass forced labour of the people is still widely used. In setting up such plantations, lands already cultivated by local people have been confiscated, in some areas to the extent that local farmers were left with no land to work on.

The following are some instances of such incidents:

People forced to grow physic nut in Ta-Khi-Laek

Since July 2006, people in several village tracts in Ta-Khi-Laek township have been forced to cultivate physic nut plantations by the SPDC authorities in the township.

In Ta Lur village tract, or sub-township, each household was required to grow physic nut plants on 1 acre of land. The lands were designated by the SPDC authorities, usually farm and woodlands confiscated from the local people.

Each household had to cultivate the 1-acre plot of land designated to them. They had to clear the land, prepare the ground and build fences. They also had to buy physic nut seedlings from the SPDC troops at the rate of 5 baht (Thai money) per plant.

After planting, people have been required to continue to take responsibility for their respective plots of plantations. Up until the present, people still have to look after the physic nut plants, watering them, weeding the ground and replacing the dead and dying plants with new ones.

One more problem for the people is, the SPDC troops occasionally stealthily and deliberately cause some physic nut plants to die so that people need to buy more seedlings from them from time to time. To reduce this problem, people have to collect money among themselves, 50 baht per household per month, to hire guards to look after their plantations.

Some other village tracts such as Murng Laen, Nam Kherm and Pa leo Kaeng Laab, which have been integrated into Ta Lur sub-township, have also been forced to grow physic nut by the SPDC authorities in a similar manner.

Destruction of crops and forced labour for rice-growing competition, in Kaeng-Tung

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, January 2007*

In August 2006, 3 acres of villagers' rice paddy full of "pregnant" rice plants were destroyed in order to organize a rice-growing competition, in which forced labour of the people was used from beginning to end, by the SPDC authorities in Kaeng-Tung township.

Acting on the order of the SPDC commander of the Special Triangle Regional Military Command, SPDC authorities in Kaeng-Tung township chose a plot of rice field in Kaad Tao village tract to organize a rice-growing competition.

The place chosen was a 3-acre rice field belonging to the villagers of Yaang Hok in Kaad Tao village tract. It was chosen because it was near the main road and easy to access and thus the most appropriate, said the authorities.

The rice field was, however, already full of paddy plants which were about to produce rice ears, or heavily "pregnant" as the farmers would say. The owners, with the help of the community leaders, tried to plead with the authorities not to choose their rice paddy, but to no avail. The authorities said they dared not defy the order of the Regional Commander.

A meeting of all the community leaders of 24 villages in Kaad Tao village tract was held and they were told by the SPDC authorities to join the competition which was to be held on 14 August 2006. They were also told to clear the place of the rice plants and prepare it 3-4 days before the competition started.

On the day of the competition, the forced competitors had to be at the field and get ready at 7 o'clock in the morning, but the authorities, including the Regional Commander and many officials and community leaders, came a bit later and opened the competition.

There were about 800-1000 people at the competition with several groups playing traditional musical instruments while members of the SPDC took pictures with still and

video cameras. The competition was completed at 7 o'clock in the evening.

In addition to having to provide forced labour for the rice-growing competition, the people in Kaad Tao village tract were also required by the SPDC authorities to compensate for the loss of the owners of rice paddy used for the competition.

NGO interviews with new Lahu refugee arrivals in N. Chiang Rai border

-- December 2006

Reasons why refugees came were:

- Forced labour, 5 people made to nearby SPDC LIB 239 camp every day and night.
- Portering - about a month ago he was porter. He and 5 other people from his village were made to walk for 3 hours carrying supplies, then spend one night and then return. They weren't given any food. They beat them if they didn't keep up.

LIB 239 camp is about ½ hour away from xxx village, at yyy village; there are 20 soldiers stationed there.

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Forced labour in Northern Shan State

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, August 2005*

In 2005 up to the present, SPDC troops in several townships in northern Shan State are still using unpaid forced labour, regularly as well as occasionally, of the local people on a systematic basis, according to those who have recently visited the areas.

In several townships such as Nam-Tu, Mu-Se, Nam-Kham and La-Sio in northern Shan State, people say that SPDC troops are still using forced labour of the people on a regular basis, especially in the rural areas.

For instance, SPDC troops stationed at Murng Yaen village in Murng Yaen village tract, Nam-Tu township, are still forcing the local people to work regularly for them in the upkeep of their camp, fetching water, gathering firewood, cutting bamboo for fixing and building fences and other buildings, clearing the compound and doing sanitation work, etc.. Vehicles such as mini-tractors are also occasionally conscripted to use in transporting their troops and rations.

People in Mu-Se township, such as Tong Khaan, Kawng Khaan, Kawng Khaang, Hoi Tai and Hoi Nur villages, say they still have to provide similar forced labour to the SPDC troops in their respective areas up to the present.

People in Nawng Zaang, Nawng Turn, Saai Khaao, Nawng Ma Na Lam and Nawng Ma Na Leng villages, etc., in Nam-Kham township; and people in Nam Pawng village tract in La-Sio township; are also being faced with more or less the same situation concerning forced labour.

People forced to stand guard in Ta-Khi-Laek

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report*, March 2005

Since December 2004, people in Ta-Khi-Laek township have been forced by township SPDC authorities to stand guard day and night with the SPDC troops, police and people's militia in several village tracts in Ta-Khi-Laek township.

Villagers have had to take turns, 3 houses at a time for 24 hours, and guard strategic places and the entrances of almost every village with the SPDC troops, police and people's militia in village tracts such as Murng Phong (a) and (b), Phang Min, Murng Kok, Ta Lur and Murng Laen.

Even though the SPDC authorities said it was a combined effort to protect the village communities, the villagers see nothing for them to be protected from and regarded it as a waste of time which has been taking them from their livelihood. People in other townships such as Murng-Phyak and Murng-Yawng have also been reported to be facing the same fate as in Ta-Khi-Laek.

People forced to attend ceremonies in Kaeng-Tung and Ta-Khi-Laek

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report*, March 2005

In October 2004, people in Kaeng-Tung township were forced to attend an opening ceremony, presided over by SPDC authorities, of a shopping building in Kaeng-Tung town, set up by an association of former Burmese soldiers, from 6:00 to 12:00 a.m., during which people had to do without food.

The shopping building was once a rice storehouse during the rule of the BSPP (Burmese Socialist Program Party) military regime. It was recently renovated and turned into a shopping building by the SPDC authorities and handed over to the Association of Former Burmese Soldiers.

It was a 2-storey building and had 11 compartments which were to be rented out to traders to open up shops at the rate of 30,000 kyat per compartment, and members of the Association of Former Burmese Soldiers would be the beneficiaries of the rent.

It was to be officially opened by the Secretary 2 of the SPDC from Rangoon (Yangon) on 13 October 2004 and an order was issued by the Kaeng-Tung SPDC authorities to all the townspeople and villagers in the township requiring them to attend the opening ceremony.

One day before the day of the ceremony, some traders in the town market were ordered to move their goods to the shopping building and stock up all the 11 compartments, and the traders were required to stay at the compartment-shops as if selling their goods during the opening ceremony.

On the day of the ceremony, 50 people from each of the town quarters and villages in the township, numbering about 500-600, were required to be at the shopping building at 6:30 a.m. without fail. Many people, especially those far from town, had to get up very early and rush to the site to be on time and had no time to eat their meal.

The ceremony ended at noon and only then were people allowed to return home to have their meal. SPDC troops were deployed at all the town entrances and all the vehicles coming and going were stopped by them from 6:00 to 12:00 a.m. until the ceremony ended.

After the opening ceremony of the shopping centre in Kaeng-Tung, the SPDC Secretary 2 and his entourage were supposed to continue to Ta-Khi-Laek township the next day, 14 October 2004, to inspect the newly constructed Thai-Burmese friendship bridge on the Thai-Burma border.

On 14 October 2004, in order to greet the SPDC Secretary 2, SPDC authorities in Ta-Khi-Laek ordered the people in the township to gather at the airport at 8:30 a.m.. About 400 people waited all morning until at about 2:00 p.m. when the authorities received a message from Kaeng-Tung that the Secretary 2 was not coming, but would probably come on the next day.

Accordingly, on 15 October 2004, the same people were again ordered to gather at the airport at 8:30 a.m. to greet the SPDC Secretary 2. However, at about 1:00 p.m., Ta-Khi-Laek township authorities again received a message that the Secretary would not be coming. Only then were the people allowed to return home.

Forced labour, extortion and crop destruction in Mu-Se

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report*, February 2005

In October 2004, villagers of Zawn-Zaw village in Mu-Se township were forced by SPDC authorities to destroy 10 acres of their own rice plants in the field near the bridge spanning the Nam Paw river, to make room for planting soya bean.

The said 10 acres of rice field had been flooded during the early part of the cultivating season and all the rice plants had been destroyed. New seedlings had to be sowed and replanted by the farmers later, causing the harvest time to be delayed.

But even before the rice was ripe, on 30 October 2004, the SPDC authorities ordered the farmers to destroy the rice plants and plough the field to grow soya bean. Soya bean was to be planted on 25 acres of land as a model. Fortunately the rest of the land had not been flooded and had already been harvested.

One basket of soya bean seeds was required to be planted on each acre of the land and the farmers were forced to buy the seeds from the authorities at the rate of 1,600 kyat per 'pay' (1 basket = 16 pay).

The farmers said that because of the flood they had to plant their rice crop 2 times and it had taken a lot of time and energy, and cost them twice as much, in order to get rice to feed their families, only to be destroyed again by the SPDC authorities.

Robbery, extortion, arbitrary taxation

Escalating rice procurement in Eastern Shan State

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, April 2007*

During the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007, SPDC authorities in several townships in eastern Shan State issued orders requiring farmers to sell more rice to the authorities in 2007, at the rate of 5 baskets for each acre of land cultivated.

According to the information available, the townships included Kaeng-Tung, Murg-Khark, Murg-Yarng, Murg-Phyak, Murg-Yawng and Ta-Khi-Laek.

There has been an increase of 2 baskets for each acre since farmers were only required to sell 3 baskets per acre in 2006. Furthermore, the rice would be measured in weight not in amount like in the previous years, making it more difficult for the farmers.

The rice would be bought by the authorities at the price of 100 kyat per k.g., while the market rates were 180 to 200 kyat per k.g.. The standard weight of one basket of rice was set at 33 k.g. which only very good quality rice could weigh.

If their rice fields and farms produced poor quality rice, the farmers would have to sell more than one basket to meet the standard 33 k.g.. That also meant they would have to sell much more than 5 baskets for each acre of land they cultivated.

It has been learned that there were many farmers who could not produce enough rice in accordance with the acreage they cultivated and had to buy or borrow from others to fill up their quotas and sell them to the authorities.

According to the farmers, their life has become more and more difficult year after year with no means of relief in sight.

Rice procurement causes villagers to flee in Sen-wi

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, April 2007*

During the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007, farmers in Sen-Wi township were forced by the SPDC authorities to sell their rice quotas to the military.

According to a newly arrived woman refugee from Nam Zaang Zok village in Kawng Haw village tract, Sen-Wi township, farmers at her village had already been forced to sell their rice quotas to the IB69 in December 2006.

Farmers in Nam Zaang Zok village, including her family, were required to sell 10 baskets of un-husked rice for each acre of land they farmed. The authorities gave only 6,000 kyat for every 10 baskets while the market rate was 12,000 kyat per 10-basket.

There were about 40 farmers in Nam Zaang Zok village and altogether the quotas of 375 baskets of rice had been completely sold to the SPDC military authorities of IB69 by 8 December 2006.

The rice procurement and several other human rights abuses including the ongoing physic nut cultivation; extortion of wood and bamboo and forced labour in building fences and maintaining the military base; and forcible use of vehicles, e.g., ox-carts and mini-tractors, in transporting wood, bamboo, firewood and water, etc., to the military base were all the main reasons that had caused her family to flee her village, she said.

Forcible use of civilian vehicles in Murng-Phyak and Murng-Yawn

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, February 2007*

Since October 2006, until at least the end of the year, civilian trucks and cars running between Murng-Phyak and Murng-Yawng townships were often stopped on the way by the SPDC troops and forced to carry their things and soldiers either to Murng-Phyak or Murng-Yawng.

Almost every day, some of the cars and trucks were stopped on the way between Murng-Phyak and Murng-Yawng and forced to carry soldiers or their possessions, or both. There were usually about 10 SPDC soldiers at a time and sometimes certain amounts of their possessions.

To make room for the SPDC soldiers and their possessions, some of the original passengers and cargo had to be unloaded from the cars and trucks in the middle of the way, causing great difficulties for both the drivers and the civilian travellers.

Furthermore, if all the SPDC troops that were to board the cars were not already present, the cars were required to wait until they all turned up, and it was quite a waste of time. However, if the drivers refused to take the soldiers and/or their things, they would simply not be allowed to continue their journey.

But the irony was that, the SPDC troops always told the drivers that they were not

using people's forced labour or forcing the drivers to carry them, but they were just asking for help since they were already heading for the same place anyway.

Arrest, detention and extortion in Ta-Khi-Laek

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, January 2007*

In August 2006, a man was sentenced to 10 years in jail for not paying tax for his motorcycle, which was confiscated, by the SPDC authorities in Ta-Khi-Laek, but was released and put on probation after community leaders paid 200,000 baht (Thai money) to the authorities and guaranteed that he would behave in the future.

On 13 August 2006, Zaai Yawd (m), aged 42, of Huay Lin Lam village in Murng Phong village tract, Ta-Khi-Laek township, went to Ta-Khi-Laek town on his motorcycle to buy some commodities and ran into a group of police who had set up a checkpoint near the entrance of the town.

The police asked to see his driving licence and a tax voucher for his motorcycle. Zaai Yawd had a driving licence but did not have a tax voucher, so the police fined him 3000 baht and said they would also confiscate his motorcycle.

Although Zaai Yawd agreed to pay the fine, he argued with the police not to confiscate his motorcycle because it was not that he did not want to pay tax, but he did not even know where to pay the tax.

The police then accused him of defying authority and arrested Zaai Yawd, and later he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment by a certain court. The community leaders managed to secure his release after paying 200,000 baht to the authorities, but he was still given 10 years' probation.

It was learned that during the month of August, many motorcycles that did not have tax vouchers were confiscated and their owners fined 3000 baht each by the SPDC police in Ta-Khi-Laek township, even though there were no clearly defined places where the taxes had to be paid.

Junta Forces Rice Sales to Military in Burma at Devalued Prices Shah Paung

-- *The Irrawaddy, January 19, 2007*

Farmers in Kengtung Township, eastern Shan State and Pegu Division's Tharyawaddy Township have been forced to sell rice to a military logistics group at below-market prices, according to farmers in the two townships.

Farmers in Kengtung say that a Burmese military official from the Golden Triangle region of Northern Burma in November 2006 ordered farmers to sell their products at prices established by the military. Anyone who refused would face unspecified action by military authorities.

“The military leader did not explain what kind of action would be taken if we refused, but farmers began selling their rice because of fear,” one farmer, who refused to be identified by name, told *The Irrawaddy* on Friday.

The farmer added that the market price for rice is 200 kyat per kg, while the military demanded a price of 100 kyat per kg. In addition, military purchasers complained about the quality of the rice and asked for greater quantities at no additional charge.

Kengtung Township has 4,000 acres of farmland, according to farmer. Each acre can produce 60 to 70 baskets (approximately 20 kg per basket). Local farmers have been forced to sell the military three baskets per acre of farmland that they work.

Farmers in Tharyawaddy Township said they have been forced to grow summer paddy, despite the lack of water in the dry season and difficulties maintaining their family’s income. The military authorities have also destroyed local bean crops to make room for the planting of additional rice crops.

Burmese farmers have endured forced price reductions before. In recent years, the Myanmar Rice and Paddy Traders Association purchased rice for the Burmese military at the devalued price of 100 to 150 kyat per kg.

Government authorities are also said to have tightened restrictions on the transport of rice to Rangoon. Farmers must now have a letter of permission from local authorities to transport rice and other goods, such as bran and what is called “broken rice,” the farmer in Tharyawaddy Township said.

Farmers still forced to sell their rice below market price in Kaeng-Tung

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, December 2006*

In mid 2006, during the usual rice buying season, a team of traders was permitted by the SPDC authorities of the Triangle Regional Command to force farmers to sell rice to them at low prices on condition that they shared some profits with the authorities, in Kaeng-Tung township.

The traders forced the farmers to sell them at the rate of 100 kyat per kilogram of rice while the market price was 160 kyat. The rice was then transported to Murng Laa near the Chinese border where a kilo could fetch 3 yuan of Chinese money, and 1 yuan could be changed into 150 kyat.

That meant the traders made 350 kyat of profits on each kilogram of rice traded, of which 100 kyat was to be given to the SPDC authorities. The traders transported rice to Murng Laa several times a month and several 10-wheeler truckloads of rice each time.

However, being traders as they were, when they transported 9-10 truckloads of rice, they would inform the authorities that it was only 1-2 truckloads, and thus made 2-way profits for themselves.

The farmers were victimized by both the SPDC authorities and the traders. But the farmers dared not refuse to sell their rice because they were afraid of further abuses, as the traders used the name of the military command as a threat.

NGO interviews with new Lahu refugee arrivals, N. Chiang Rai border

-- December 2006

Forced rice purchase

Villagers must sell 5 “din” (*ten baskets*) of rice to the SPDC per acre at the cost of 17 baht per “bon” (*a big biscuit tin equal 16 kilo weight*) of rice, instead of at the market price of 40 baht per “bon”.

Interview with xxx xxx male, age 35

He is married with 2 children, including a 13 year old daughter. In October 2006, a sergeant from LIB 239 came twice to his house asking to “marry” his daughter. The father refused. After that the sergeant demanded livestock from the father. He also called the father to the 239 camp and ordered him to be a porter (together with two other men from his village) for 7 days. He had to carry supplies and ammunition to Murng Yawng. They were allowed to eat twice a day, and were supplied with rice, chillies and salt, which they had to cook themselves.

Interview with yyy yyy, male, age 28

He was the headman of the village, so SPDC would ask him to arrange forced labour for them (5 people every day). If he couldn't, they would take his livestock. People were so busy with forced that they didn't have time to work for themselves.

Interview with zzz zzz, male, age 40

Like other villagers, he was forced to plant castor oil, but most of the plants died, even though he had tried to take care of them. He thinks the seed he was given by the “ma ya ka” (*township authority*) was not good quality. On October 15, 5 soldiers from LIB 239 came to his house and asked him: “Where are your castor oil plants?” He had to take them and show them the plantation (about half an hour from the village), and they saw that most of the plants had died. The soldiers then demanded that he give them a pig, and threatened to beat him if he didn't. So he had to give them a pig.

Mass extortion of large amounts of money in Northern Shan State

-- Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, December 2006

In July and August 2006, large amounts of money were extorted from several townships in northern Shan State by the SPDC authorities to contribute to the building of the new capital, “Naypyitaw”, under construction near Pyinmana in central Burma.

The order was said to have come from the highest military authority from Naypyitaw to the commander of Northeastern Regional Military Command based in La-Sio (or Lashio), and the extortion was carried out by the township-based military battalions under his command on his order.

Around the end of July 2006, money had been extorted from Mu-Se and Nam-Kham townships in northern Shan State, and Man-Maw township in southern Kachin State. The amounts of money extorted from those townships were as follows:

1. Mu-Se township = 550 millions kyat
2. Nam-Kham township = 275 millions kyat
3. Man-Maw township (Kachin State) = 500 millions kyat

The money was said to have been collected from every household in the townships; even government civil servants were not spared. But the amounts of money which each household had to provide were not available at the time of this report.

Although it was learned that several other townships, including Kot-Khai, in northern Shan State had also been forced to contribute money in the same way, the amounts extorted were not yet known at the time this report was received in early September.

Police extort money from a motorcyclist and tell him why, in Kaeng-Tung

-- Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, October 2006

In early 2006, a man riding a motorcycle was stopped and 3,000 kyat of money was extorted from him by 2 traffic policemen in Kaeng-Tung town, **Kaeng-Tung** township.

Zaai Pan, aged 21, was going to the market on his motorbike when he was stopped by 2 traffic police at a road junction in Kaeng-Tung town. The police asked to see all the necessary documents and also checked the motorcycle but could not find any fault, and Zaai Pan was also wearing a safety helmet.

However, the police still seized his driving licence and told Zaai Pan to give them 3,000 kyat as a fine, which prompted him to ask them why, because he believed he had no fault. The police said that Zaai Pan did not stop and look to his left and right before he turned at the junction which was a breach of the traffic law.

Zaai Pan argued that he did look to his left and right, and he turned without stopping because he saw no other vehicles at the junction which was, he believed, allowed by the law. As they were arguing, another motorcycle driven by an SPDC soldier came along and turned without stopping, and the driver did not even care to look to his left or right

before turning, and sped passed them.

Zaai Pan then asked the traffic police, “Why didn’t you stop that man and fine him like me. He just did and I did, but he didn’t even care to look left and right?” The police then said to Zaai Pan, “Shut up. It’s none of your business!”

After some more arguments, Zaai Pan gave in and paid the fine for fear of the police bearing a grudge against him and giving him more troubles in the future. After receiving the money, the police returned Zaai Pan’s driving licence.

As they let him go, the police said to Zaai Pan, “Don’t be angry with us. We have to do this because we are being forced to. Each member of the police is required by the authorities to find at least 5 cases per month, either you have to fine them and get the money or arrest them, or both”.

Situation of extortion and robbery etc. in Shan State

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, October 2006*

Stealing, etc., and extortion of money and possessions of the people by the SPDC troops in Shan State are still rampant and remain among the major causes that are depriving people of their livelihoods and making them flee or move to other places in desperate search of means of survival.

The following are incidents of extortion, stealing and robbery, etc., that took place from early to around mid 2006 in several townships in Shan State:

Money extorted to make presents for foreign dignitaries, in Kaeng-Tung

In May 2006, a large amount of money was extorted from the people by the SPDC authorities in **Kaeng-Tung** township to make copies of video footage covering the drug-burning ceremony, held on 25/05/06 in Kaeng-Tung, to be given to foreign dignitaries and reporters as presents.

In order to show the international community that they are trying to eradicate narcotic drugs, the Burmese military junta conduct virtually once a year a ceremony in which drugs, which they claim to have been seized from traffickers, are burned in front of the eyes and cameras of the local and foreign reporters and dignitaries especially invited to the ceremony.

This year the ceremony was conducted in Kaeng-Tung town on May 25th and as usual some foreign reporters and dignitaries were invited. Prior to the ceremony, the SPDC authorities in Kaeng-Tung said they needed money to make video footage of the drug-burning ceremony and ordered all the village and community leaders in the township to collect money from the people.

Altogether 15 sets of copies of the video footage were made. At the rate of 1,300,000 kyat per set, it cost about 19,500,000 kyat in all to which virtually every household in the township was forced to contribute either 400 or 500 kyat.

However, only 6 sets of the video footage were said to be taken away by the guests and the rest were left piled up in the SPDC township office until at least late July when

they were still seen to be there.

Farmers forced to pay taxes for using their own farms in Kyawk-me

In early 2006, farmers in Wan Kha village tract in **Kyawk-Me** township were forced to pay taxes for growing crops on their own farmlands by the SPDC troops of LIB502 based in Kyawk-Me.

The farmers were surprised because there had never been levying of taxes on remote farms in the rural areas before 2006 and, furthermore, the lands of those who failed to pay the taxes were threatened to be confiscated.

For rice farmers, for every 2 baskets of rice seeds used in cultivating their farms, a tax of 5,000 kyat was levied, which they said was unreasonably high. However, they had no choice but to pay the tax for fear of their farms being confiscated.

According to the local people, farmers in the areas of other village tracts in Kyawk-Me township were also forced to pay the taxes by the SPDC troops in their areas.

Forced labour of vehicles and extortion in Murng-Khark

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, June 2006*

For many years, civilian vehicles have been forced to provide free labour by the SPDC authorities in Murng-Khark township, and since the end of last year motorcycles going out of the town have been required to get a pass from the authorities for 700 kyat each.

Each day from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., 2 motorcycles and 1 mini-tractor have to stay on standby at the SPDC township office to be used by the authorities when necessary. Motorcycle and mini-tractor owners have to work in rotation to fulfill this routine forced and free labour duty.

Because of the dilapidated roads between Murng-Khark and surrounding townships, for quite some time there have not been so many passenger cars and people in Murng-Khark often have to hire motorcycle taxis to take them to other townships.

Since the end of last year, motorcycle taxis carrying passengers and going out of Murng-Khark have been ordered by the authorities to get permission in the form of a pass from the SPDC township office for 700 kyat each.

Since the motorcycle taxis still have to pay the 800 kyat original gate-pass fees at one of the checkpoints manned by officers from different SPDC departments before they can leave the town, it means that they have to pay 1,500 kyat to the authorities for the permission.

Furthermore, people in the township have been banned from cutting and gathering firewood and have been told to buy it from the SPDC troops at a price of 18,000 kyat per

‘wah’ (a pile of firewood). Previously, when people could still cut and gather firewood, it was only 15,000 kyat per ‘wah’, said a local villager.

Extortion in Murng-Yawng

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, May 2006*

In late 2005, a large amount of money was extorted from farmers who had just begun rubber plantations by the township SPDC authorities in **Murng-Yawng** township.

Around mid 2005, Murng-Yawng township SPDC authorities persuaded people in the township to grow rubber trees so that they could later produce rubber and generate more income to feed their families.

Encouraged by the authorities’ persuasion, many farmers who had enough lands started their small rubber plantations at places not very close to the villages. There were about 140 rubber plantations by late 2005.

When the rubber tree saplings had properly taken root and started to grow, the SPDC authorities issued an order saying that all rubber plantation owners needed to pay taxes to the authorities. Those who failed to do so would be banned from growing rubber, and their rubber plantations would be confiscated.

The farmers complained that each of the 140 or so plantation owners was forced to pay 20,000 kyat as taxes to the authorities. It was very difficult for them because it was the time when they had to put their time, money and energy in their rubber plantations and had not yet been able to get any income from them, they said.

Situation of forcible rice procurement in Shan State

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, March 2006*

Since the end of 2005, a new round of forcible rice purchase for 2006 has already started. The Burmese military junta announced several years ago that they would stop the long-standing practice of forcible rice procurement, but farmers are still being one way or another forced to sell their rice according to fixed quotas and at more or less fixed prices.

Although the authorities do not as before set up government rice purchasing centres at different locations every year following rice harvest, they organize teams of traders to do the job for them. The farmers are still required to sell their rice at fixed quotas to the traders before they could sell it elsewhere, if they still have enough rice to do so.

Although the traders pay the farmers slightly higher prices than those which the authorities used to pay for each basket of rice, they are still much lower than the market rate and there is not much difference in deficit for the farmers because the traders use bigger measuring equipment.

The traders also sometimes have to sell the rice to the authorities at a somewhat lower than the rate they have to pay the farmers. But, being traders they know how to

balance out the deficit by using 2 different sizes of measuring equipment. They use a bigger one to buy and a smaller one, the standard one, to sell. In the end, the farmers are the ones who have to bear most of the brunt.

Furthermore, in some places, the junta's troops themselves personally go to the villages and forcibly buy rice directly from the farmers at much lower prices, although for a lesser amount than that required to be sold to the traders.

The farmers have long been badly treated in many ways by the military authorities. The following are some instances of how farmers in Shan State have been treated during 2005 and early this year, 2006.

Rice procurement in Kaeng-Tung

Since the end of last year and the beginning of this year 2006, an order was issued by the SPDC authorities requiring farmers in **Kaeng-Tung** township to sell their rice quotas to a team of traders who were buying rice to be resold to the military.

The farmers were required to sell 13 baskets of rice for each acre of the land they cultivated at the rate of 2,000 kyat per basket. Since the market rate at the time was 3,500-4,000 kyat per basket, the farmers lost 1,500-2,000 kyat per basket.

The traders, the same persons who had procured rice for the military in 2005, however, were able to make some profits by reselling the rice to the military authorities at the rate of 2,500 kyat per basket.

Farmers who did not have enough rice to fill up their quotas had to borrow or buy from other farmers and sell it to the traders. Failing to do so could result in land confiscation by the military authorities.

Furthermore, during the rice procurement period, farmers who had not yet sold their rice at the full quotas to the traders were not allowed to sell or take their rice elsewhere.

Rice procurement in Murng-Yawng

In December 2005, an order was issued by the SPDC authorities requiring farmers in **Murng-Yawng** township to sell their rice quotas to a team of traders, who had also done the rice purchasing for the military in 2005, to be resold to the military.

Farmers were required to sell to the traders 13 baskets of rice for each acre of the land they grew rice on at a rate of 1,100 kyat per basket. Rice fields of those who failed to sell their quotas in full would be confiscated and cultivated by the SPDC troops.

Since the market rate was about 2,000 kyat per basket of rice in Murng-Yawng at the time, the farmers had to lose 900 kyat for each basket sold to the said traders. The traders, however, were able to make some profits by reselling the rice to the military at the rate of 1,600 kyat per basket.

Last year in early 2005, farmers in **Murng-Yawng** township were forced to sell 10 baskets of rice for each acre of their rice growing land, 3 baskets less than this year, at the rate of 1,000 kyat per baskets while the market rate was 3,500-4,000 kyat.

Rice procurement in Murng-Khark

In 2005, farmers in **Murng-Khark** township were forced to sell their rice at fixed quotas to the SPDC troops at a rate many times lower than the market price.

Farmers were required to sell 7 baskets of rice for each acre of the land on which they had grown rice. The SPDC troops gave the farmers only 800 kyat for each basket

when the market price at the time was 3,500 kyat per basket.

Those who did not have enough rice had to buy or borrow from other farmers to fill up their quotas and sell them to the SPDC troops in order to avoid further abuses.

Arbitrary arrest and extortion in Kaeng-Tung

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, January 2006*

In September 2005, 5 villagers of Kaad Thaaï village in Kaad Thaaï village tract, Kaeng-Tung township, were arrested, detained for 2 nights and money was extorted for their release by the SPDC police force in Kaeng-Tung town.

After a fund-raising religious ceremony at a Buddhist monastery in Kaad Thaaï village, 5 members of the religious affairs committee of the village, who had organized the said ceremony, were accused of embezzling charity money and arrested by the police and detained in Kaeng-Town.

After detaining the 5 villagers for 2 nights and finding out that they were innocent, the police released them, but not before money had been extorted from the leaders and villagers of Kaad Thaaï, 30,000 kyat for each of the detainees.

A few days later, the police again arrested 5 members of the people's militia and the headman of Kaad Thaaï village, and took them to the police station in Kaeng-Tung town. These villagers were accused of providing false information that had led the police to arrest the above mentioned 5 innocent villagers, and were forced to pay a fine of 3,000 kyat each.

However, many local people believed that the police deliberately trumped up the case in order to get a share from the charity money. "The innocent villagers should have been released without money being extorted from them", they said. "The police knew that the monastery had gathered about 700,000 kyat of charity money from the donors during the ceremony".

Stealing of livestock and property in Kaeng-Tung

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, August 2005*

For some years now, SPDC troops from No. 11 Military Training Centre based in Murng Lang village tract in Kaeng-Tung township have been stealing the livestock and property of the local people whenever they get the opportunities. The following are some of the incidents that took place over the last recent months.

On 29 April 2005, a group of 7 SPDC troops from the said unit, who were roaming outside the villages, shot dead and took away 4 pigs, worth at least 100,000 kyat, belonging to the villagers of Wan Zerng village in Murng Lang village tract, Kaeng-Tung township.

Even though the villagers reported the incident to the SPDC authorities at the Training Centre as well as at the SPDC township office in Kaeng-Tung town, no one took any

action and those at the township office even teased the villagers. “You have a lot of pigs at your village, haven’t you? Why don’t you just let the soldiers have some?” they said.

On 1 May 2005, 4 SPDC troops from the same unit shot dead and took away 2 pigs, worth about 60,000 kyat, belonging to a villager of Wan Ten village in the same village tract. The incident was reported to the Training Centre, but no action has been taken so far.

On 3 May 2005, villagers of Wan Ten in the same village tract heard a gunshot from some distance outside their village. A villager who had let his small buffalo graze in the direction from where the gunshot came, became anxious and went to have a look.

Outside the village, the villager saw a group of 4-5 SPDC soldiers cutting meat from a dead buffalo and as soon as they saw him coming, the soldiers took all the meat they had cut and ran away. The villager then shouted for his fellow villagers to come and witness his buffalo being stolen by the SPDC troops.

On 9 May 2005, some valuables of one of the families of Wan Nok village in the same village tract were stolen from their house by the SPDC troops from the same unit at about 4 o’clock in the evening. The valuables stolen were: a set of gold earrings worth 30,000 kyat; 10 ancient silver coins worth 30,000 kyat and 20,000 kyat of paper money.

On the day of the incident, there was a Buddhist religious ceremony in a nearby village and all the villagers of Wan Nok had gone there during the day. However, some villagers who were returning in the evening were just in time to see 3 SPDC soldiers leaving a house. When the house’s owners returned, they saw the valuables kept in the house were gone.

Other human rights violations

Sexual assault and impunity in Ta-Khi-Laek

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, January 2007*

In October 2006, a 13-year-old Akha girl was sexually assaulted and suffered attempted rape by an SPDC soldier of LIB331 at Pung Lo village in Hawng Lerk village tract, Ta-Khi-Laek township.

Although the SPDC soldier was caught by the villagers and sent to the base of LIB331, he was immediately released by the commander in front of the villagers, without any actions taken against him on the ground that he was mentally unstable.

On 6 October 2006, early in the morning, Ae-Mi (not her real name), an Akha girl of 13, of Paang Sali village in Hawng Lerk village tract, Ta-Khi-Laek township, went to the market at Waeng Keo village in the same village tract with some vegetables to sell.

On the way, when she got to Pung Lo village, near the base of LIB331, an SPDC soldier suddenly came out of nowhere and sexually harassed her for some time and finally tried to rape her. When she realized the soldier was going to rape her, Ae-Mi screamed for help.

Fortunately, many villagers heard her scream and quickly came to her help. The villagers together managed to seize the soldier and brought him to the LIB331 military base which was not far away.

However, the commander not only did not take any action against the soldier but immediately released him right in front of the villagers, telling them not to pay attention to that soldier because he was not mentally stable.

Rape and forced labour in Kaeng-Tung

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, December 2006*

In October 2006, 2 women, aged 15 and 16, were forced to serve as unpaid porters and raped for 2 nights by the SPDC troops from LIB327, in Kaeng-Tung township.

On 4 October 2006, a patrol of about 50 SPDC troops from LIB327 and about 15 Lahu people's militiamen from Murng Sen village in Tong Ta village tract, Kaeng-Tung township, came to patrol the areas along the eastern side of the Nam Sim river, with the militiamen being forced to lead the way.

When they got near Murng Ong village in Murng Phur village tract, the SPDC troops saw 2 women in a rice farm and brought them to their commander. The commander then asked the women whether they had seen any Shan soldiers in the area.

Naang Aam, aged 15, and Naang Seng Aam, aged 16, (not their real names) had come to the farm to gather some produce, e.g., pumpkin, cucumber, etc., to make donations to the monastery because it was only 2 days before the end of the Buddhist Lent.

The women were so mindful of their work that they noticed the SPDC soldiers only when they called out to them, and they were very frightened. Trembling with fear, they told the commander that they had not seen any Shan soldier and that they needed to return home with the farm produce soon, otherwise their parents would be worried.

But the commander said he did not believe them and he suspected that they were wives of Shan soldiers, and forced them to go with the patrol, at the same time putting a heavy backpack on each of the women to carry along.

The patrol crossed over to the western side of Nam Sim river and searched the area for 2 days and 2 nights, during which the 2 women were forced to carry backpacks by day and raped by night. On both nights, Naang Aam was raped by the patrol commander

himself and Naang Seng Aam was raped by an officer with one star on each of his shoulders.

After raping the women for 2 whole nights, the SPDC troops said that they now believed what the women had told them and did not suspect them to be Shan soldiers' wives anymore, and brought them back to the farm where they had been taken away and released them.

On releasing the women, the commander told them to forget what had happened and not to tell anyone about it, but to say that during the time they were taken away by the SPDC troops they were only made to carry small backpacks and were kindly treated by the patrol commander.

However, the women did tell their parents what had happened to them simply because their sufferings were just too great for such young women to keep to themselves. But there was no one that was able to do anything about it.

NGO interviews with new Lahu refugee arrivals, N. Chiang Rai border

-- December 2006

Interview with aaa bbb, male, aged 46

He traveled to Kengtung in 2003, and on the way the police checked his ID. He had a card and showed it to the police, but they confiscated it and accused him of being a rebel. He was then imprisoned in Kengtung Jail for 8 months, then he was forced to be a porter around the Keng Kham area for 2 months. He was tied up with rope around the wrists (his wrists still have the scars), and he was beaten in the face (his nose is still damaged and has lost feeling). Two of his friends who were also portering were killed. Luckily he managed to run away when he was in Murng Nai. He took refuge in a Lahu village in the Nam Zarng area, where he tried to recover his health, and then finally in December 2005 he returned back to his village, still in poor health. However, he dared not stay openly in the village with his family, and he had to hide in the jungle near the village for a year. While he was in the jungle, in July 2006, SPDC troops came to the village and took all his livestock. His wife could do nothing.

Interview with ccc ddd, male, aged 16

On Oct 12, 2006, three days after the SPDC drove everyone out of the new church, the same group of soldiers from Ta Lerh, led by Capt Soe Win Aung, came to the village and ordered ccc ddd to get him 50 tablets of ya ba. Capt Soe Win Aung was notorious for being a ya ba addict. Ccc ddd went around the village, and then came back to the Captain and said he couldn't find any ya ba. Capt. Soe Win Aung then lost his temper and began shooting his gun in the direction of ccc ddd. He fired 6 bullets, which nearly hit ccc ddd, who ran away in terror.

Apart from this, ccc ddd sometimes had to do forced labour for the 239 camp, fetching water for the troops.

A farmer beaten to death, his motorcycle and valuables stolen, in Si-Paw

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, October 2006*

In March 2006, a villager of Kung Nyawng village in Nam Lan village tract, **Si-Paw** township, was beaten to death near his village, and his motorcycle and other valuables stolen, by the SPDC troops from LIB505 based at Nam Lan.

Lung Suay Lu, male, aged 59, was returning from tending his rice paddy outside his village on a motorcycle when he ran into a patrol of SPDC troops from LIB505 near his village. When he had not returned home in the afternoon, Lung Suay Lu's family and relatives went to look for him in the area where he was stopped by the SPDC troops.

They found Lung Suay Lu's lifeless body lying in a bush on the side of the road, apparently beaten to death, and his motorcycle was nowhere to be seen. The valuables he was wearing, including a wrist watch, a gold necklace and a gold ring, were also missing.

The villagers buried Lung Suay Lu's body near the place he was killed and conducted a funeral rite for him at the village temple. The villagers believed Lung Suay Lu was killed and robbed by the SPDC troops because they were the only group patrolling the area at the time of the incident.

Lung Suay Lu's relatives later learned that his motorcycle, which was brought in from Thailand, had been taken to May Myo and sold there by the SPDC troops, and they became quite sure that he was actually killed and robbed by them. However, no one dared to do anything about it.

3 Lisaw girls, aged 20, 12 and 15, gang-raped in Murng-Khark

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, February 2006*

In September 2005, 3 Lisaw village girls, aged 10, 12 and 15, were gang-raped by 5 SPDC soldiers from IB293 on the way between their village, Nam Lin, and Murng-Khark town, in **Murng-Khark** township.

On 22 September 2005, at around 5 o'clock in the morning, 3 Lisaw girls, Lee Chung, aged 10, Ma Ka, aged 12 and Ta Taw, aged 15, (not their real names) of Nam Lin village went together to the town market in Murng-Khark.

At a remote spot on the way between the town and their village, the 3 girls ran into a patrol of 5 SPDC troops who seized them and raped them. The girls were raped by all 5 SPDC troops and in the process Lee Chung, who was too young to endure the ordeal, lost consciousness for about 30 minutes.

After raping the girls to their satisfaction, the SPDC troops warned them not to tell anyone at their village about the incident before letting them go, adding that they would come and kill them if the girls dared talk about it.

The girls, however, did tell their parents about their plight and although it was learned that the SPDC troops were from IB293, led by 2nd Lt. Moe Kyaw Kyaw, no one dared to complain for fear of further abuses.

More restrictions in Ta-Khi-Laek

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, February 2006*

Since October 2004, more restrictions have been imposed on the people in Ta-Khi-Laek township by the township SPDC authorities, concerning movements and registration of household members.

On 6 October 2004, SPDC authorities in Ta-Khi-Laek issued an order requiring all households in the township to register their household members with the authorities every month. Each household was required to draft a chart containing personal profiles of their household members, make a copy of it, put one copy on the wall in front of the house and send one to the township authorities, every month.

When there was a difference in the number of household members, e.g., if someone left or joined the household, a new chart completed with the personal profiles of the newcomers had to be drafted to replace the old one and a copy sent to the authorities. If, on inspection by the authorities, the actual household members were not in accordance with the chart, the head of the household would face at least 3 months in jail.

On 10 October 2004, another order was issued by the authorities preventing the people in the township from hosting (or receiving) 3 kinds of guests that came from far away or from different townships. Those 3 kinds of guests were:

1. Government servants
2. Persons without Identity Cards (Guarantee Papers were not valid).
3. Women under 25 years of age

Those who defied this order would also face at least 3 months in jail.
The above 2 orders have been in effect since 25.10.2004.

Food insecurity

Burma junta impoverishes farmers-WFP

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 14 September 2004

Thousands of former opium-growing farmers in Shan State who cannot sell their cash crops due to curbs imposed by the military junta, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), a U.N. official said on 14 September.

"What is the point of these people being assisted to grow cash crops if they do not have market access?" Sheila Sisulu, deputy executive director of the World Food Programme (WFP) told reporters in Bangkok after a four-day visit to Burma.

She also added that children under the age of five have been suffering from malnutrition due to mismanagement of the economy by the junta.

The WFP has been operating in Burma since 1994 when it began feeding some 230,000 refugees in North Rakhine (Arakan) State who returned from neighbouring Bangladesh.

It began providing food relief in Northern Shan State in October 2003, and also assists some 400 families stricken by HIV/AIDS in central Burma.

Compulsory (and frequently ruinous) cropping and marketing policies

Escalating rice procurement in Eastern Shan State

Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, April 2007

During the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007, SPDC authorities in several townships in eastern Shan State issued orders requiring farmers to sell more rice to the authorities in 2007, at the rate of 5 baskets for each acre of land cultivated.

According to the information available, the townships included Kaeng-Tung, Murng-Khark, Murng-Yarng, Murng-Phyak, Murng-Yawng and Ta-Khi-Laek.

There has been an increase of 2 baskets for each acre since farmers were only required to sell 3 baskets per acre in 2006. Furthermore, the rice would be measured in weight not in amount like in the previous years, making it more difficult for the farmers.

The rice would be bought by the authorities at the price of 100 kyat per k.g., while the market rates were 180 to 200 kyat per k.g.. The standard weight of one basket of rice was set at 33 k.g. which only very good quality rice could weigh.

If their rice fields and farms produced poor quality rice, the farmers would have to sell more than one basket to meet the standard 33 k.g.. That also meant they would have to sell much more than 5 baskets for each acre of land they cultivated.

It has been learned that there were many farmers who could not produce enough rice in accordance with the acreage they cultivated and had to buy or borrow from others to fill up their quotas and sell them to the authorities.

According to the farmers, their life has become more and more difficult year after year with no means of relief in sight.

Rice procurement causes villagers to flee in Sen-wi

Shan Human Rights Foundation Monthly Report, April 2007

During the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007, farmers in Sen-Wi township were forced by the SPDC authorities to sell their rice quotas to the military.

According to a newly arrived woman refugee from Nam Zaang Zok village in Kawng Haw village tract, Sen-Wi township, farmers at her village had already been forced to sell their rice quotas to the IB69 in December 2006.

Farmers in Nam Zaang Zok village, including her family, were required to sell 10 baskets of un-husked rice for each acre of land they farmed. The authorities gave only 6,000 kyat for every 10 baskets while the market rate was 12,000 kyat per 10-basket.

There were about 40 farmers in Nam Zaang Zok village and altogether the quotas of 375 baskets of rice had been completely sold to the SPDC military authorities of IB69 by 8 December 2006.

The rice procurement and several other human rights abuses including the ongoing physic nut cultivation; extortion of wood and bamboo and forced labour in building fences and maintaining the military base; and forcible use of vehicles, e.g., ox-carts and mini-tractors, in transporting wood, bamboo, firewood and water, etc., to the military base were all the main reasons that had caused her family to flee her village, she said.

People forced to grow physic nut in Ta-Khi-Laek

-- Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, February 2007

Since July 2006, people in several village tracts in **Ta-Khi-Laek** township have been forced to cultivate physic nut plantations by the SPDC authorities in the township.

In Ta Lur village tract, or sub-township, each household was required to grow physic nut plants on 1 acre of land. The lands were designated by the SPDC authorities, usually farm and woodlands confiscated from the local people.

Each household had to cultivate the 1-acre plot of land designated to them. They had to clear the land, prepare the ground and build fences. They also had to buy physic nut seedlings from the SPDC troops at the rate of 5 baht (Thai money) per plant.

After planting, people have been required to continue to take responsibility for their respective plots of plantations. Up until the present, people still have to look after the physic nut plants, watering them, weeding the ground and replacing the dead and dying plants with new ones.

One more problem for the people is, the SPDC troops occasionally stealthily and

deliberately cause some physic nut plants to die so that people need to buy more seedlings from them from time to time. To reduce this problem, people have to collect money among themselves, 50 baht per household per month, to hire guards to look after their plantations.

Some other village tracts such as Murng Laen, Nam Kherm and Pa leo Kaeng Laab, which have been integrated into Ta Lur sub-township, have also been forced to grow physic nut by the SPDC authorities in a similar manner.

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NGO interviews with new Lahu refugee arrivals, N. Chiang Rai border

-- December 2006

Forced castor oil plantation

Each house has to plant 5 acres in 3 years. This year they had to plant, 2 acres. They are not told where to plant, and can plant in any available place. They were ordered to do this since the start of the rainy season.

Some people are able to find the seeds in the forest to plant. Otherwise you have to buy from the authorities at price of 350 kyats per kg. The township authorities, police and intelligence come and check if you have planted the nuts. If you the plants are not growing well, they will demand chickens or pigs or other bribes from you, and threaten you with jail.

Some people's plants did not grow well because they had to plant during the rainy season and it was difficult to clear the ground well in the rain for the plants.

Even in Ta Lerh town, all the schoolchildren, including young kids, have been ordered to buy and plant 5 plants each (costing 5 baht per plant).

Interview with zzz zzz, male, age 40

Like other villagers, he was forced to plant castor oil, but most of the plants died, even though he had tried to take care of them. He thinks the seed he was given by the "ma ya ka" (*township authority*) was not good quality. On October 15, 5 soldiers from LIB 239 came to his house and asked him: "Where are your castor oil plants?" He had to take them and show them the plantation (about half an hour from the village), and they saw that most of the plants had died. The soldiers then demanded that he give them a pig, and threatened to beat him if he didn't. So he had to give them a pig.

Farmers and forced labour news

-- *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 14 June 2006

Farmers and their children, young and old, in Lashio Township in northern Shan State, have been forced to work in the castor oil/physic nut plantation project owned by the army of Burma's military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

Local shan villagers told DVB that they have been unable to concentrate on their own works as they often have to go to the plantation and plant castor oil saplings for the army.

"It (the plantation) is very far. It takes two and half hours to three. That far," a villager told DVB. "The work starts at 11am. We have to plant the trees. Then clear the grass/weeds in the surrounding areas. We have to work until 5.30pm. They not only do not pay us money, they do not even give us water. We have to bring our own lunch. If you don't go, they admonish you and the like. It is impossible not to go. There are 45 houses in (our) village. One person per household (has to go). There are many people, more than 1000 people."

The Burmese generals ordered the plantation of castor oil plants nationwide in order to extract bio fuel from the seeds, in an attempt to solve energy shortage in the country while selling all gas fields to foreign countries.

At the same time, the authorities at Yezagy Township within Magwe Division in central Burma have been forcing local farmers to grow wetland rice causing them unnecessary difficulties including heavy losses. The region is said to be arid and has no irrigation system and the farmers have traditionally been growing assorted beans, peas and wheat that don't need much water.

Forced plantation of physic nut and extortion in Kaeng-Tung

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, September 2006*

Since May 2006, dry-rice farmers in Kaeng-Tung township have been forced to buy saplings of physic nut and grow them around their farms by the township SPDC authorities in Kaeng-Tung township.

On 1 May 2006, village and village tract leaders in Kaeng-Tung township were summoned to a meeting by the township SPDC authorities and told that every dry-rice farm in the township was required to grow at least 450 physic nut plants around it, no matter how far and remote the farm was.

Farmers were required to buy 450 physic nut saplings from the Burmese military at a rate of 120 kyat per plant. The money, which was meant for supporting the families of the Burmese troops, was to be handed to the authorities in accordance with the numbers of farms in each village tract.

The saplings would then be trucked to the main village of the village tract that had paid the money. Physic nut plants that were not bought from the military would not be counted. Even if there were physic nut plants brought from elsewhere planted at the farms, the farmers would still be obliged to buy 450 saplings from the authorities.

Farms around which were not planted physic nut bought from the authorities would be confiscated, if they were found by the authorities on inspection after a certain period of time, the community leaders were told.

Farmers forced to buy and grow a certain kind of rice seeds in Ho-Pong

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, March 2006*

In 2005, farmers in Nawng Wawn village tract in **Ho-Pong** township were forced to buy a certain kind of rice grain known as 'Shwe Pyi Aye', meaning roughly 'Peaceful Country', to be used as seeds and grow them on their lands.

The SPDC troops brought 80 baskets of the said rice grain to Nawng Wawn on a military truck and ordered the farmers in the area to buy them and grow them on their lands, saying that the rice was of good quality which would yield more and was very nice to eat.

Every farmer was required to buy and grow the rice which they were told to call 'Shwe Pyi Aye' and to strictly follow the instructions by the SPDC troops on how to grow them, including the dates for sowing and planting.

The farmers said the rice grain was of the same kind they had been forced to grow in the previous years, but this time it was given a new name and the farmers had to follow strict instructions. They thought that the SPDC troops were just practising one of the cults they believed was able to ward off the evils.

The farmers, however, in addition to having to perform a cult for the SPDC troops, also had to pay 3,000 kyat for each basket of the said rice grain while the market rate for

the best quality rice in Nawng Wawn at the time was only 1,500 kyat.

The situation of forced rice cultivation in Kaeng-Tung

-- *Shan Human Rights Foundation, Monthly Report, March 2006*

Since late 2005, farmers in **Kaeng-Tung** township have been forced by the township SPDC authorities to cultivate dry-season rice for the military.

An order to start preparing the rice fields for the military came in mid October 2005, even before the harvest of the farmers' wet-season rice was completed. The SPDC troops themselves would come and work the rice fields that had not been prepared in time, said the order.

This had prompted the farmers to quicken up their harvesting although some of the rice was not yet properly ripe to prepare the fields for the military, because they wanted to avoid having to let the SPDC troops themselves work their fields.

Normally one might think letting the SPDC troops grow their own rice would save the farmers from forced labour. But, according to some farmers whose lands had been worked by the SPDC troops before, it was quite otherwise.

The SPDC troops often were not punctual at virtually every stage of the cultivation, always a little too late or too early, and the harvest was delayed until the time the farmers needed to prepare their fields for their wet-season rice.

In many cases, the fields were simply neglected until the farmers had to harvest them and transport the produce to the military bases, or, as happened to a rice field at Wan Ha village in Wat Saa village tract, compensate with money, 20,000 kyat in this case, to get permission to reuse the land where the rice had been neglected beyond harvestable condition.

In any case, due to the delay the farmers did not have enough time to properly prepare the soil in advance to make it more fertile, resulting in poor harvests which also meant more difficulties to fill up the quotas for the military rice procurement.

Discrimination

Religious persecution

-- NGO interviews with new Lahu refugee arrivals, N. Chiang Rai border, December 2006

On October 9, 2006, the villagers of vvv www had finished building their new church. The SPDC soldiers had known they were building the church, but had not stopped them. However on opening day, 50 soldiers from Ta Lerh (LIB 316), as well as some police and intelligence officers, came in and said: "Who allowed you to do this?" and then drove everyone out of the church, and then either ate the food prepared, or threw it away.

Since then, they have come to check every Sunday to make sure no one is holding any services in the church. They say: There is a policy in Keng Larb that no one can build any churches, and if they find anyone with a Bible they will kill them. (They also declared about 1½ years ago that people were not allowed to hold church services.)

As a result the villagers have to just hold services in people's houses.
