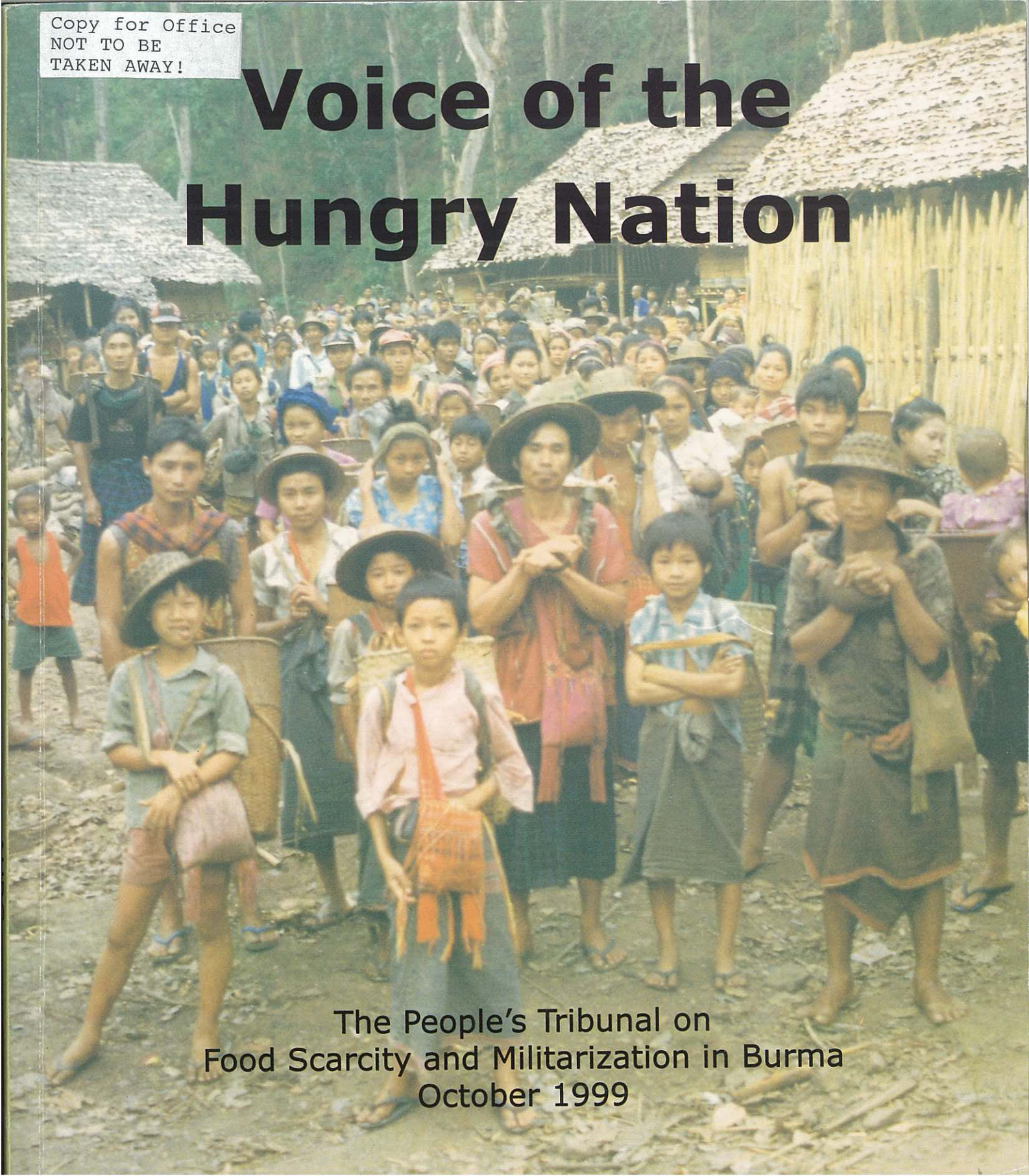
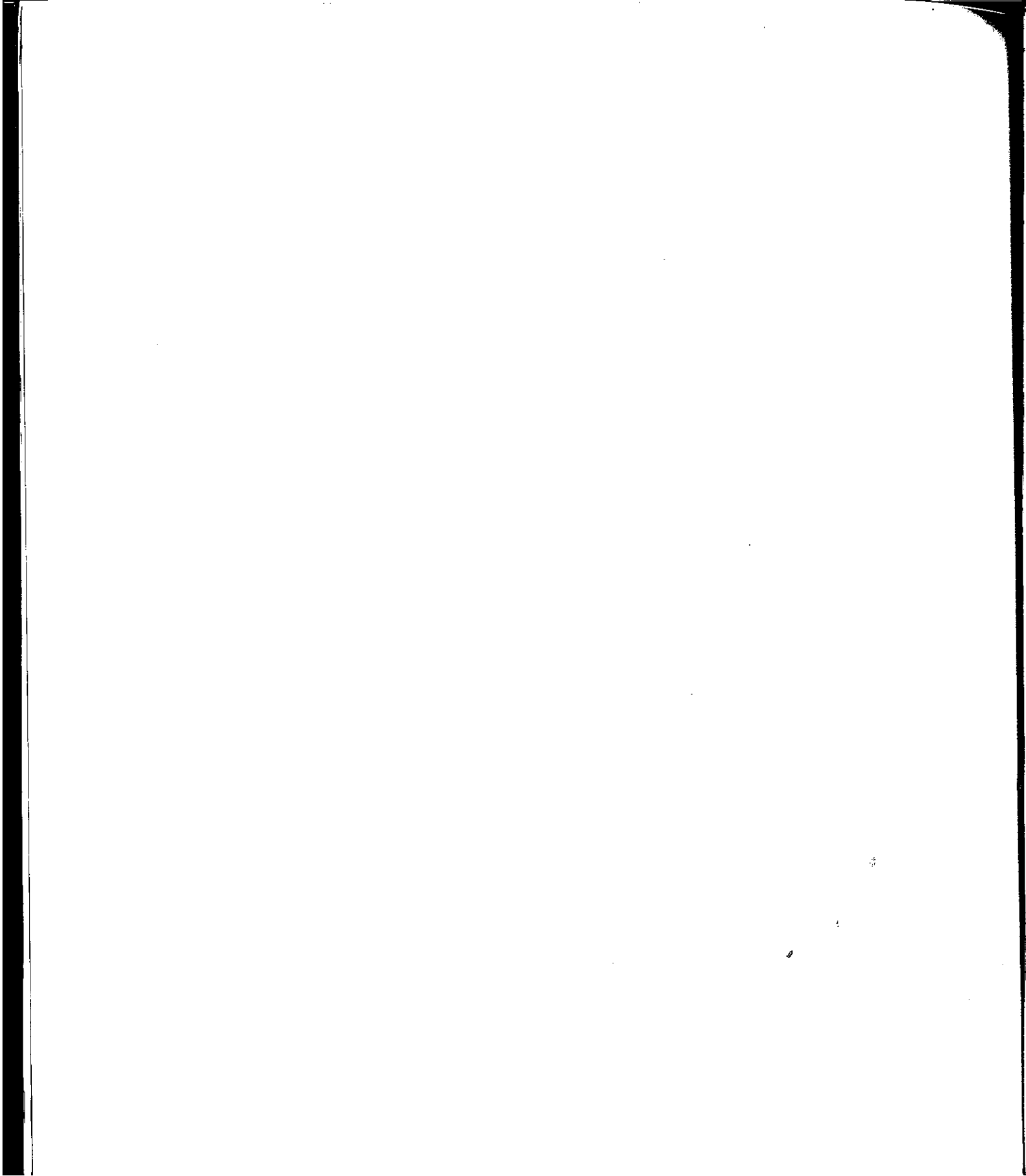


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Voice of the Hungry Nation



The People's Tribunal on
Food Scarcity and Militarization in Burma
October 1999



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and Militarization in Burma
October 1999

Asian Human Rights Commission 1999

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Front cover: Burmese refugees assemble after arriving at a refugee camp in Thailand

Back cover: Trays used for winnowing rice which were slashed by the army

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xi
MAPS	xii
GLOSSARY.....	xix
SCOPE OF INQUIRY.....	1
The Right to Food	1
Rice	4
Militarization	10
Rise of the <i>Tatmadaw</i>	11
SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE	16
Untold Sorrows: Food and War	16
Food Under Fire	17
To Live, to Work, To Eat	29
No War, No Peace	37
Trouble in the Rice Bowl	37
Hunger in the City	49
Government Response	54
FINDINGS	55
On the Right to Food	55
The Right to Work	55
Paddy Procurement	57
Forced Labor	58
Counter-insurgency	59
On Militarization	63
Routine State Functions	63
Militarization of Agriculture	65
Military in the Media	67
Popular Opinion	69

THE NEXUS	71
RECOMMENDATIONS	74
APPENDICES	
Appendix 1: Letter to the Government of Myanmar	77
Appendix 2: Catalogue of Evidence	79
Appendix 3: Depositions to the Tribunal	80
Appendix 4: Testimonies Presented to the Tribunal	87
Appendix 5: Articles from <i>New Light of Myanmar</i>	114
Appendix 6: Sample Military Orders	126
Appendix 7: Bibliography	142

INTRODUCTION

This document presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the People's Tribunal on Food Scarcity and Militarization in Burma. The Tribunal's work will appeal to all readers interested in human rights and social justice, as well as anyone with a particular interest in Burma. The Asian Human Rights Commission presents this report in order to stimulate discourse on human rights and democratization in Burma and around the world. Following are a few words about the Tribunal, its background and intentions.

What is the People's Tribunal?

The People's Tribunal is a public exercise in discovering and assessing evidence of human rights abuse. It belongs to the people, as opposed to the state, because victims of injustice reveal their plight regardless of the government's willingness to acknowledge a complaint. Others who are not victims use their knowledge of human rights to organize this process, helping victims find recourse, raise their voice, and work towards justice.

While the People's Tribunal belongs to common folk, it also belongs to the modern human rights movement.¹ This legacy of post-Nuremberg tribunals and public hearings embodies two twentieth century realizations: international law and crimes against humanity. International law has yet to reach a mandate powerful enough to deal with government criminality, especially in domestic conflict. Yet some horrors of war denigrate all human beings, not just the immediate victims. The sobering, powerful reality of injustice on a superhuman scale has prompted global efforts to apply international law concepts in new and creative ways. Despite their origins, People's Tribunals are best described as quasi-legal. They are "tribunals of conscience" which don't pretend to legal authority, but seek to highlight the need for public accountability. Jurors include public figures from various backgrounds who share the exceptional ability to grasp, articulate and interpret the meaning of human rights. Recent tribunals have investigated corporate responsibility for the industrial disaster at Bhopal in 1984, the United States' invasion of Panama, the Persian Gulf War, and World Bank/IMF structural adjustment policies.

To convene a Tribunal is to propose how human rights should be perceived, discussed, and ultimately achieved. This proposal responds to a basic contradiction: people own their rights, but government is supposed to look after them. This condominium-like division between popular entitlement and state responsibility inevitably means that when the state itself transgresses, people must either wait for government to correct itself or forge their own tools to reveal truth and condemn

injustice. Where the state completely fails to respect human rights, as in Burma, the waiting is insufferable and people must act.

Thus, the Tribunal articulates society's claim to human rights and highlights the state's failure to pursue justice. It calls for a more vigorous commitment to protecting human dignity. However, its salient contribution is not decrying abuse, but investigating and explaining which human rights are denied, how and why. Therefore the Tribunal must be orderly and credible. Credibility derives from its adherence to those legal principles which are ethically binding in a democratic society: independence of judiciary, due process, neutrality, and transparency. Like any proper court, its duties are to consider charges and evidence, to hear all parties and to deliver a verdict. The Tribunal is neutral regarding conventional politics, preferring no leaders or factions; though admittedly its findings have political implications.

The Inquiry

International eyes have scrutinized human rights in Burma for over a decade.² Throughout these years NGOs, foreign governments and the UN have copiously documented acts of abuse, everything from killing innocent civilians in the countryside to harassing opposition leaders in the capital city. This nationwide violence and repression is a matter of public record. Now, the question facing people in and out of Burma is how to redress the country's climate of chronic abuse. The Tribunal's modest contribution is to highlight two social trends which, although alluded to frequently, have generally received less concentration than they deserve. Each seriously affects the health and freedom of millions throughout the country. Both are staple issues in the search for human rights and democracy. Furthermore, food scarcity and militarization pervade at the local, regional and national levels, powerfully influencing politics, economy and culture.

Food is the most basic economic right. Without food there is no life; and from this truism comes a human rights tenet: *without sufficient food, people can not attain the health, happiness and dignity which are their birthright.* Food is universal, transcending class, race and creed. Similarly, freedom from hunger is a universal wish native to human experience. The Tribunal notes that this right is not achieved by apportioning "a morsel of food for every hungry mouth," but by guaranteeing food security, a cornerstone of human life which ensures health and vitality for all. By choosing to investigate the right to food, the Tribunal affirms this universality. and argues that basic economic rights should supersede politics, underscoring food as a right permitting no compromise and no derogation.

Emphasizing food also clarifies the difference between campaigning for human rights and campaigning for political change, two related but separate agenda. One easily loses this distinction because Burma's odious government seems to embody

everything a state should not be at the close of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, by putting all blame on the current government we conflate fact with fiction. While government culpability in violating human rights is fact, the inference that mere change in government will undo systemic human rights abuse is fiction. Burma's military government has incorporated denial of food into the policies, structure and routine operations of state. Ethnic conflict is entrenched in cultural life. Corruption and exploitation are social realities.

Studying hunger's political structure, the Tribunal confirms a trend towards militarization throughout Burmese society. Militarization does not simply implicate the Burma army (its part in creating food scarcity is obvious), but more importantly, suggests that authoritarianism, oppression and violence have become ingrained in routine government business. Propaganda superimposes military values—unquestioning conformity, harsh discipline, and centralized power—onto Burmese culture until the two fuse together. Militarization orients public policy toward military purposes in opposition to the general population's best interests. In managing the rural economy, the government consistently prefers military needs above farmers' food security. Examples of this preference abound in practices, policies and programs of national administration: arbitrary taxation, paddy procurement, agricultural development, forced labor.

Participants

The Tribunal was made possible by dozens of people, some named by this report and many others remaining anonymous. In preparing its submission to the Tribunal, AHRC worked closely with the human rights organization Burma Issues, which began in 1997 to develop a network of grassroots information collectors. These researchers investigated hunger throughout the country. At times this work involved great personal risk, as when studying war zones or the closely watched Irrawaddy Delta. The researchers' courage and commitment are impressive.

Two directives guided their work: approach the right to food as a people's issue, and build solidarity with informants.

The first principle guided practice and theory alike. Hunger lives in every vernacular, requiring no technical definitions or foreign vocabulary. Farmers talk about their crops and parents discuss their children's health without much prompting. Such mundane topics threw a valuable cloak of discretion over potentially risky work. Theoretical benefits complement this practical advantage. A colloquial approach confirms that the lofty speech of human rights indeed reflects a common will to live a secure and dignified life. Many informants had probably never heard the formal term "human rights," but each knew the justice in having enough food, benefiting from one's labor, enjoying good health, and being treated fairly.

Experience with human rights documentation in remote, war-torn areas teaches the importance of solidarity. A researcher who approaches a traumatized community, digs for facts, snaps photos then never returns again contributes little to that community's ongoing struggle for dignity. This struggle may be expressed by the community's cohesion, its sense of humor or simply its tenacity—all strategies for sharing the emotional burden of violence. Whatever the form, it is the community's internal human rights movement. Even a visiting researcher with his own agenda should recognize this movement and participate in it. For the Tribunal research, solidarity meant field workers explaining the Tribunal and what it hopes to achieve. When possible, field workers distributed popular human rights education materials. In some cases, illiterate informants were taught to read.

Because much had already been written on Burma, original research for the Tribunal sought quality rather than mass. Existing literature became important secondary source material. Eventually, work concentrated on a set of case studies and testimonies presenting the experiences of ordinary people across the country. Along with several short numerous secondary sources, these were then assembled into a single volume and submitted to the Tribunal panel, a trio of respected figures in Asia's human rights movement selected by AHRC. Each member contributed expertise in a distinct area of human rights:

- Justice H. Suresh of the Bombay High Court (retired), provided his knowledge of law to assure that the Tribunal conformed to fair and transparent legal standards. Justice Suresh has been a leader of India's People's Tribunal movement, especially in the field of environmental protection.
- Professor Mark Tamthai, Director of the Center for Philosophy and Public Policy, Faculty of Arts, at Thailand's Chulalongkorn University. Professor Tamthai's participation was critical to defining the scope of inquiry and the challenge of applying human rights to the realities of government and society.
- Dr. Lao Mong Hay, Executive Director of the Khmer Institute for Democracy. Dr. Lao Mong Hay contributed experience with militarism and democracy in Cambodia, grassroots human rights education, refugee repatriation and land use, and with building civil society in post-conflict situations. His precise attention to the Tribunal's Recommendations was an enormous asset.

In April 1999 the Tribunal convened in Thailand, where witnesses gave direct testimony and answered the panel's questions. Some were expert witnesses who deal with hunger and human rights in Burma professionally. Also appearing were many of the researchers themselves, who elaborated on the cases they documented so diligently. The most valuable testimony of all, however, came from those witnesses

who related their personal experience with hunger, violence, life and death in Burma today. These were a cross-section of grassroots Burma: small farmers, hired hands, schoolteachers, and displaced peasants. Most depositions are partly reproduced in this report.

Findings

After thoroughly reviewing all evidence, the Tribunal completed its findings and recommendations as presented in the following pages.

The findings show food scarcity and militarization as daily obstacles with dire effects. One witness recorded how he watched three of his neighbor's children die of malnutrition within a month. A teacher whose village was decimated by the government's anti-insurgency program relates how he "would forego food so my children could eat. I went around begging for rice. Some people took pity and gave me a cup or two." Together, the case studies show hunger as a silent, insidious epidemic and militarization as its relentless, ubiquitous cause.

The Tribunal also addresses the scale of food denial, noting that its entire effect on the nation is greater than the sum of the many lives it touches. Hunger on such a large scale exposes a deep vein of injustice running through society. To document a burned rice field is to allege a crime; but to show that soldiers confiscated the remaining food, that landmines pock the countryside, that going to market means traversing a war zone, that sons have enlisted and daughters gone abroad, that simple diseases kill the young while the old can flee no more, that tomorrow rifles will evict the village, that throughout the country hungry farmers grow rice they cannot afford to eat, and that no jury will hear the truth—is to depict no simple crime, but a crime



Professor Mark Tamthai (center), Justice H. Suresh (right) and Dr. Lao Mong Hay (not pictured) receive testimony from expert witnesses.

against humanity.

These findings are enlightening, but not encouraging. In them we read no hint of hunger's demise or militarization's imminent defeat; in fact, the Tribunal suggests the opposite trends. One sees how the struggle for political power afflicts society's most vulnerable, often most blameless, members. Such strong words are discouraging, but they should not remove a sense of hope. The very nature of human rights is hope for a better life in defiance of extreme oppression. Nowhere is this defiant faith more apparent than in the perseverance of Burma's rural poor. Each season the farmer returns to till a parched field marks immense patience and fortitude; each smoldering grain of rice recovered from the ashes of war testifies to the peasant's resilience; each humble meal shared among displaced people hiding in the jungle pronounces their own declaration of human rights.

While the Tribunal condemns government transgressions, its true aim is to focus the international community's attention on this popular desire to live in peace and security. The world has immense resources and goodwill to share with Burma's rural poor; the first step is to understand the complex challenges facing Burma's people, and the bright future they deserve.

Chris Cusano
Burma Issues
October 1999

Notes to the Introduction

¹ The background presented in this paragraph was drawn from Arthur W. Blaser, "How To Advance Human Rights Without Really Trying: An Analysis Of Nongovernmental Tribunals," in *Human Rights Quarterly*, Vol. 14, 1992.

² The debate persists over whether to replace the former name *Burma* with the current transliterated form, *Myanmar*. Political and linguistic arguments have been advanced for either term, but this report does not address the matter. Although Burma is used here, when the Tribunal refers to government departments, officials and other formal titles, Myanmar has been retained. In either case the meaning is the same and readers should not worry over the usage; it will not obscure the issues of food scarcity and militarization. More importantly, in this report state and division names have been retained in the traditional spelling but township names have been spelled in the new system to facilitate cross-referencing with government sources and state media. Nevertheless, some inconsistencies may exist in the text.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS





Without the dedication and hard work of the following people, this Tribunal would not have been possible.

Basil Fernando, BJ Kawhtoo, Canady, Dee Gay Htoo, Eh Na, E. Miller, Grace Choy, Hla Hla Po, Hsar K'baw, Htoelwiwar, J. Schnookal, Khun Somchai, Khwar Hseet, Ko Thiha, Kwe Klo, Kwe Say Kapoetatti, Lay Thaw, Max Ediger, N. Cheesman, Nyi Nyi, Payhleek, Sanjee Liyanage, Sirimoe, Thra Lawrence Po, Thra Paw Moo, U Aung Htoo, Vic Coakley, and many others.





MAPS

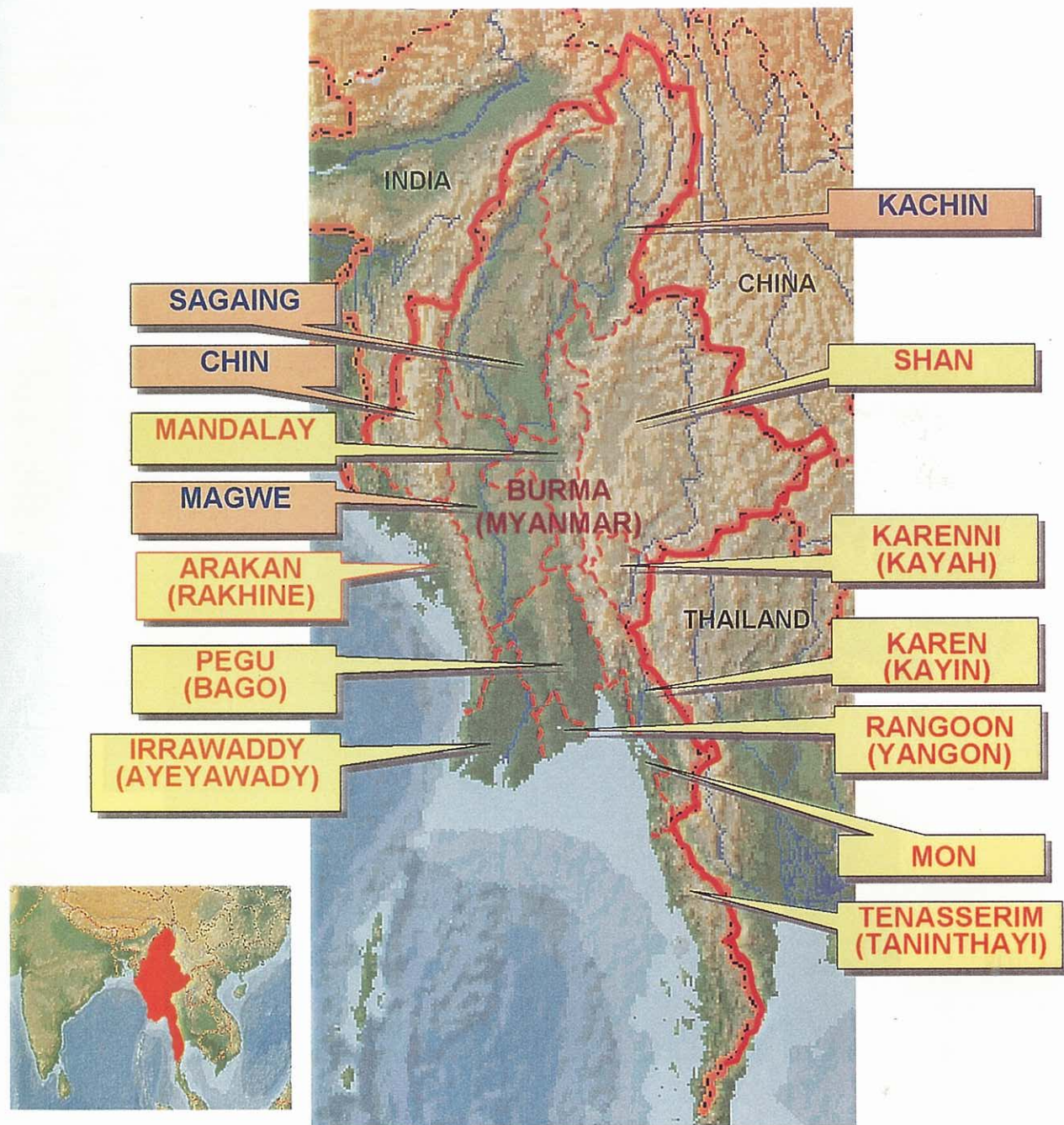
Key

Map 1: Burma

	States and divisions researched
	Other states and divisions
	National boundary
	State or division boundary

Maps 2 - 6: States, Divisions and Townships

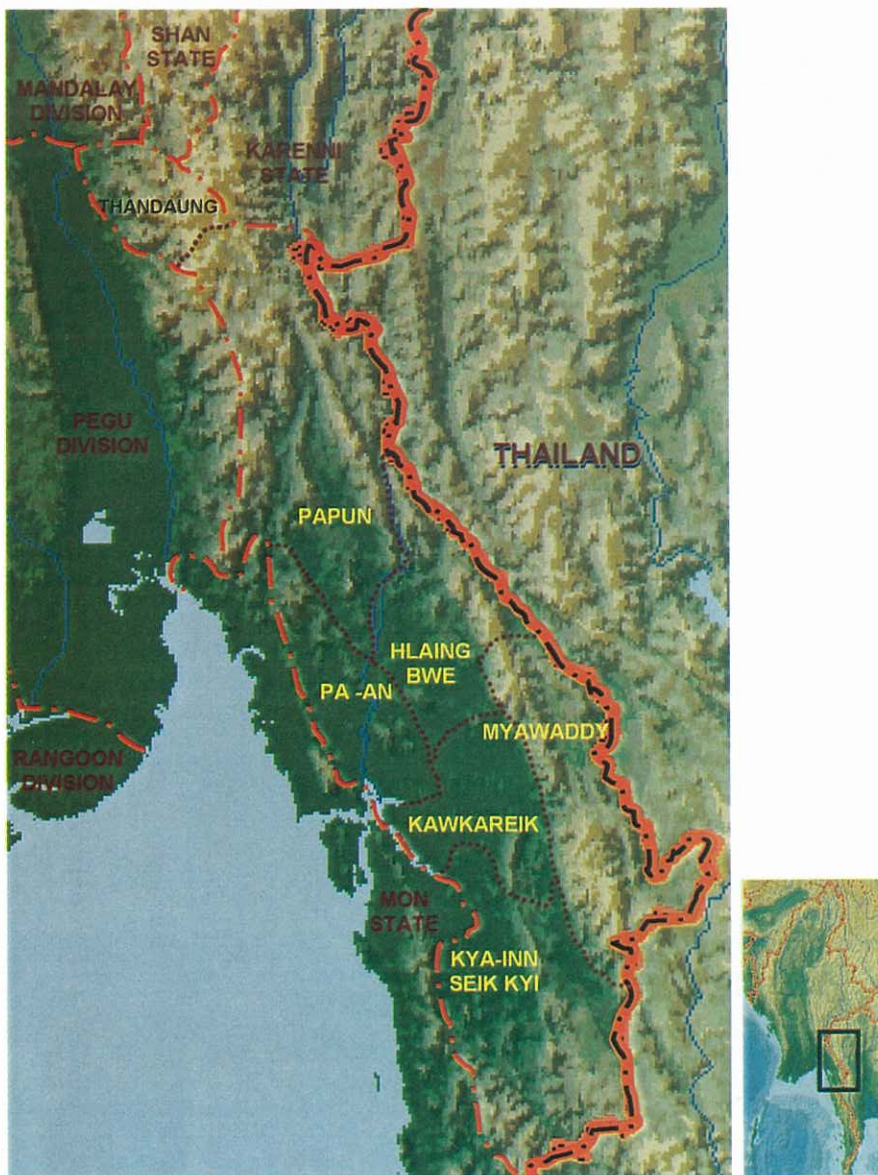
	Townships researched
PANTANAW	Other townships
RANGOON DIVISION	Other states or divisions
	Township boundary
	State or division boundary
	National boundary



Map 1 Burma: States and Divisions



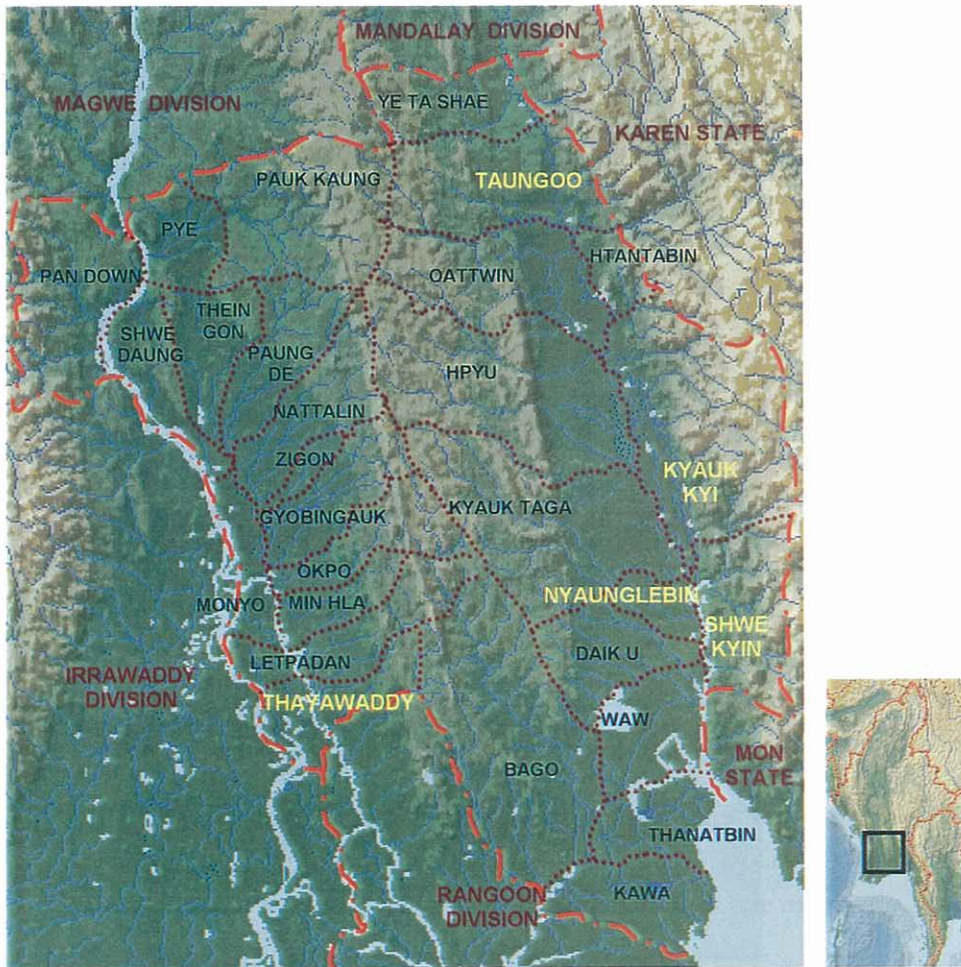
Map 2: Irrawaddy (Ayeyawady) Division



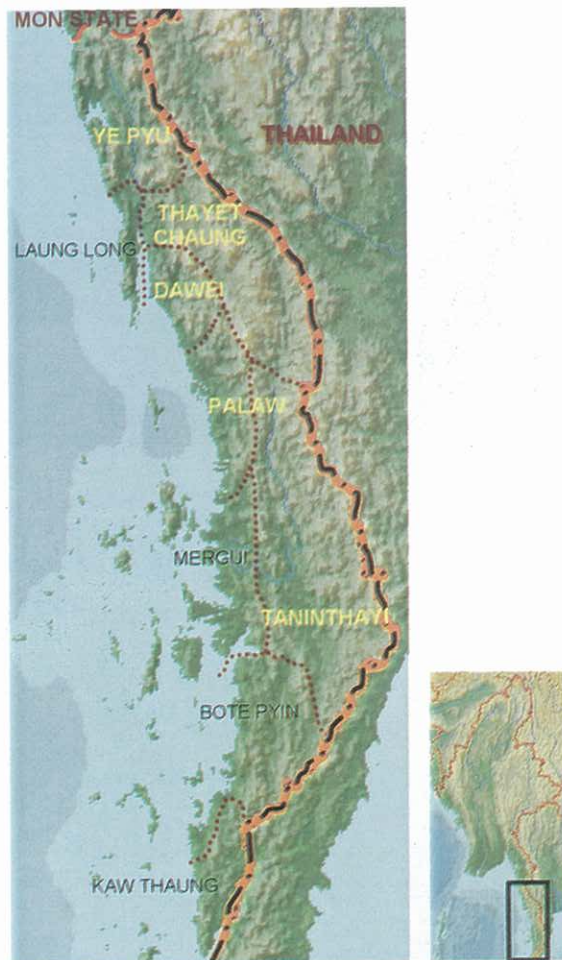
Map 3 : Karen (Kayin) State



Map 4: Mon State



Map 5: Pegu (Bago) Division



Map 6: Tenasserim (Taninthayi) Division

GLOSSARY

<i>Ajinomoto</i>	Monosodium glutamate
<i>baht</i>	Thailand's currency (35-40/US\$)
<i>basket</i>	The standard unit of measure for rice. One basket is 16 pyi (9 imperial gallons/40.91 liters). The standard weight for a basket of rice is 46 pounds (21 kgs).
<i>BSPP</i>	Burma Socialist Programme Party
<i>cup</i>	Equivalent to one condensed milk can: 10 fl. oz.
<i>DKBA</i>	Democratic Kayin Buddhist Army
<i>FY</i>	Fiscal Year
<i>GOB</i>	Government of Burma
<i>IB</i>	Infantry Battalion
<i>IDP</i>	Internally Displaced Person
<i>kyat</i>	Burma's unit of currency (320-350/US\$)
<i>KNU</i>	Karen National Union
<i>LIB</i>	Light Infantry Battalion
<i>Lt-Col</i>	Lieutenant Colonel
<i>Lt-Gen</i>	Lieutenant General
<i>Maj-Gen</i>	Major General
<i>MAPT</i>	Myanmar Agricultural Produce Trading
<i>paddy</i>	Unmilled rice with the husk still on
<i>People's Militia</i>	Government administered village militia
<i>pyi</i>	0.56 imperial gallons/0.26 liters
<i>rice</i>	Milled paddy, ready to cook
<i>SLORC</i>	State Law and Order Restoration Council
<i>SPDC</i>	State Peace and Development Council
<i>Tatmadaw</i>	Burma's armed forces
<i>vlss</i>	3.6 pounds/1.63 kilograms

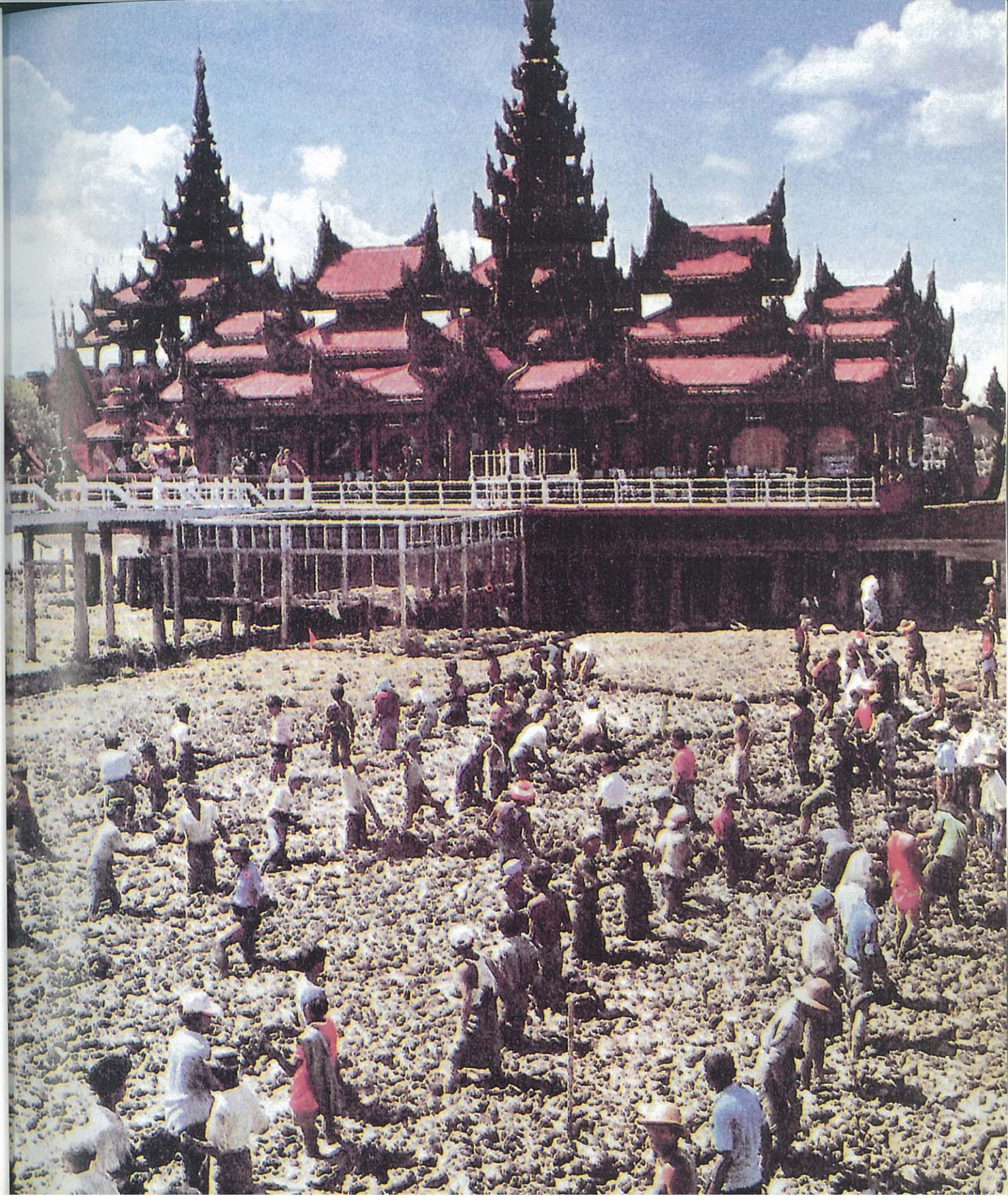
Alternate place names

Traditional

Arakan
Bassein
Irrawaddy
Karen
Karenni
Moulmein
Pegu
Rangoon
Tavoy
Tenasserim

Current

Rakhine
Patheingyi
Ayeyawady
Kayah
Kayah
Mawlamyine
Bago
Yangon
Dawei
Tanintharyi





SCOPE OF INQUIRY

Concerned by frequent and serious reports of hunger in Burma, the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) invited us to sit as members of the People's Tribunal on Food Scarcity and Militarization in Burma, and requested us to hold an inquiry. We are aware that there is military dictatorship in Burma, that there have been human rights violations throughout the country, and that such violations continue even today. However, in this inquiry we are not concerned with all such abuse. We are mainly concerned with whether the right to food has been denied to people in Burma, and if so whether this denial owes to a militarization of Burmese society.

This section presents the terms and concepts basic to our inquiry. It also summarizes the history of food production and military rule provided us by AHRC.

The Right to Food

The right to food is recognized by both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, passed by the UN in 1966 (ICESCR). Article 25(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood, in circumstances beyond his control.

The Declaration further states that member nations should "by progressive measures, national and international... secure their universal and effective recognition and observance." The primacy of right to food is also established by Article 11 of the ICESCR, which provides:

- 1) The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of

this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international cooperation based on free consent;

2) The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international cooperation, the measures, including specific programs, which are needed;

(a) To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;

(b) Taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.

**Failure to safeguard
the right to food is as
bad as failure to
protect life.**

Under the international legal system, States have a duty to respect, promote and fulfil all basic human rights. If protecting life is what human rights are all about, it must be said that life cannot be sustained without food. Food is not just a commodity, but the guaranteed right of every person. Failure to safeguard the right to food is as bad as failure to protect life; if multitudes are denied food, mass starvation and death are bound to ensue.

The State's obligation to protect the right to food goes beyond providing a morsel of food for every hungry mouth. Instead, it means States must perform certain positive obligations. Their obligations include:

- To respect people's right and freedom to control their resource base, namely land;
- To eliminate any form of involuntary servitude that restricts the freedom to choose an adequate resource base from which to obtain sustenance;
- To protect this freedom and resource base from encroachers;
- To assist people who are unable to take care of their needs;

- To eliminate discriminations hampering free access to food; and in no event to indulge in any act of commission or omission which will endanger people's capacity to produce food and have access to it.

Within the international legal framework, non-performance of the duties mentioned above, or any of them, or deliberate refusal to comply with them, would constitute denial of the right to food. At the same time, the Government of the Union of Myanmar has not acceded to most international legal instruments, including the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. This raises the question of applicability. The Tribunal's view is that a distinction can be made between the legal instruments of human rights as the letter of law, and the universal truths about human life and society which these laws help to articulate. This is especially pertinent to such a basic right as food, the universality of which can not be reasonably challenged. Failing to ratify an international treaty may preclude other governments' right to censure in certain forums, but it does not exempt Myanmar from the obligation to respect and establish basic human rights. Moreover, the government has voluntarily committed itself in non-binding declarations, plans and obligations to protect the right to food. The universality of human rights and the government's awareness of its responsibilities therefore render the Government of Myanmar accountable for allegations of abuse.

AHRC has measured the denial of the right to food in Burma



Food scarcity refers to inadequate access to the necessary amount of food as measured in real terms.

terms of “food scarcity.” This phrase denotes the absence of sufficient food to maintain a healthy and active life.¹ Food scarcity refers to inadequate access to the necessary amount of food as measured in real terms: whether people actually have food to eat. Food may be produced and sold abundantly, but if it is too expensive or not available locally then people will have no food on their tables. It is the opposite of food security. Clinical malnutrition and death from starvation may be extreme effects, but are not required to demonstrate food scarcity. More visible are the social symptoms: poverty, children dropping out of school to work, crime, corruption and other communal or environmental damage created by the desperate search for a reliable food source.

Rice

Any investigation into hunger must take into account agricultural production and distribution. AHRC has provided the Tribunal with a background to Burma’s agricultural economy, summarized briefly below.



“Bad harvests in 1966-68 resulted in short supply of food.”

Rice is the staple crop and staple food, and is the commodity which determines food security or scarcity. Burma’s agricultural economy has weathered four eras of rice production and distribution: feudal, colonial export, nationalized, and post-socialist. Importantly, none of these historical shifts tells the full story. Because the country is politically and geographically diverse, significant sectors of the agricultural economy remained unaffected by these historical changes. This is particularly true in the distinction between lowland rice production, by which farmers cultivate rice paddies flooded by monsoon rains, and highland swidden agriculture, in which non-

¹ For more discussion of food scarcity and related terms, see FAO’s *The State of Food and Agriculture*, and *Bread for the World’s Eight Annual Report*, cited in the Bibliography (Appendix 7).

irrigated fields are cultivated on hillsides. To generalize: lowland cultivation provides a surplus crop to be sold and traded; growing highland rice generally produces a subsistence crop for local consumption. The four eras of Burma's agricultural economy generally refer to changes in the production and distribution of lowland paddy.

Feudal agriculture provided a community's food and whatever tribute was due to the monarch or his local vassal. Generally, the subsistence economy depended on three factors: enough cultivable land, communal labor and a local natural resource base to provide the necessities of life. The "rice tax" due the royal court, its army and small civil service was more or less of a burden depending on proximity to the capital (or feudal lord), total output and the specific demands placed on a farming community.

With colonialism came the rice export economy. Under British administration, vast areas of lower Burma were cleared for export rice production, and by the 1920s Burma became the foremost supplier of rice to the world. In 1939 Burma was still the leader, putting 3 million tons of rice on the international market that year. Much of it was grown in the Irrawaddy Delta and exported from Rangoon.

Under the socialist regime, which took over in 1962, rice production was nationalized. The government attempted to redistribute productive lands under nationally administered, locally managed collective farming. The general ineffectiveness of this program combined with the fertility of Burma's soil meant that the changes posed little threat to food security, despite population growth from 17 million just after World War II to 24 million in 1962. However, poor harvests in the late 1960s tested nationalized rice production's flexibility in a crisis:

Bad harvests in 1966-68 resulted in short supply of food. Starvation was experienced for the first time in the known history of Burma. Even during the four years (1942-45) of war, food had not been scarce. For the first time in the lives of the people of Burma, the word famine expressed itself in real life. Parents sold their children for some rice... Around 1960 1 kilogram of rice cost .5 kyat. In 1966-69 it cost 28 kyat, 56 times more.²

In good times and in bad, the government was a major rice consumer. It purchased a percentage of all rice produced at a fixed rate, regardless of

"Around 1960 one kilogram of rice cost 0.5 kyat. In 1966-69 it cost 28 kyat, 56 times more."

² Shwe Lu Maung, *Burma: Nationalism and Ideology*, Dhaka: University Press Ltd., 1989. pp. 56-7.

most fluctuations in the rice market. As in pre-colonial times, the government procured rice to provision the army and sell at a discount to civil servants. Throughout the shortages of the 1960s, the government maintained its purchase rate of 3 kyat per kilogram, or almost one-tenth of the going market rate.



"The government pays little for rice destined to bring high profits in overseas markets."

Trouble in the rice market triggered the end of the socialist-styled agricultural economy. By 1987 another food crisis loomed, and the government abandoned its strictest controls on the rice market. In August 1997 rice had risen to 15 kyat per kilogram, the highest price since the 1960s. Fearing possible famine, in September the government lifted the ban on harvest-time rice trading, in place since 1962. The market price of rice was cut in half.

The post-socialist era has retained central planning and control of food production. Farmers are still required to sell a percentage of their rice to the government at discount prices. This paddy procurement system is implemented by Myanma Agricultural Produce Trading (MAPT), a state agency which, along with other arms of the bureaucracy, inherited the duty from its socialist predecessor, State Corporation No 1. MAPT's national structure reaches down to the village, where it designates paddy land and collects a fixed quota based on land area. This quota rose steadily from 1988 until 1995, when it was fixed at 12 baskets per acre in high rice-producing areas such as Irrawaddy Division (reports of quotas set at 15 or even 18 baskets are not unknown). Around this time the government paid one-third to one-fifth the going market price for rice purchased under the quota system.

An inherent flaw in this system is the government's quota calculation based on arable land area rather than amount of rice actually planted or harvested. Farmers who work poor land or for other reasons produce an imperfect crop are not exempt from the quota. They fulfil their obligation by supplying paddy bought on the market. In these cases, the difference between the relatively high market price and the low government purchase rate results in a net loss for farmers.

Households which fail to fill the quota face a variety of consequences. While arrests and beatings have been reported, more common is the confiscation of paddy land, for redistribution to other farmers more likely to produce. Farmers have also been sent to labor camps to work off their debt. In Irrawaddy Division, local military authorities are said to have ordered no milling of harvested rice for consumption or trade until entire villages filled their quotas. Lastly, farmers have been threatened, scolded and publicly abused by government rice procurers dissatisfied with their quota.

Quota rice is not only used to provision the army and the civil service, but sold on the international market. Since 1988 there has been a renewed emphasis on agricultural production for export. The main strategies are to increase the land area under cultivation, increase productive capacity through a variety of irrigation and agricultural development projects, and license commercial ventures to grow rice for export.

In 1994 the government announced a major new drive to increase rice exports fourfold, but in the first years of its plan was forced to buy rice at market value to make up for the shortfall of MAPT-procured quota rice. The World Bank estimates that in 1994-95 rice farmers lost about one quarter of their gross income because of MAPT procurement. This mass purchase of an additional 3% of the nation's rice over and above the quota raised its domestic market value. Following this experience, the government became slightly more cautious in purchasing rice for export. In 1997 government purchase rates rose to almost one half the market price for top-quality rice. A temporary relaxation of the strictest aspects of the quota rule and a reduction in land confiscation also saw the total amount of rice procured fall by 21% in 1996-97.

The government may have accepted that its export plans will only be realized when the total amount of paddy produced in Burma increases to satisfy the both the domestic market and the MAPT



Corruption and quota pressures mean sometimes farmers must sell even more paddy than calculated.

quota, and leaves a surplus bound for foreign shores. In a speech to mark World Food Day 1997, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation, Lt-Gen Myint Aung, explained:

Being endowed with equitable weather conditions and abundance of land and water resources, Myanmar has made great accomplishments in the production of food through the joint effort of the Government and the people... A tremendous amount of capital has been invested for the implementation of increased food production programs. We have been engaged [in] the development of virgin lands, expansion of cropping areas and increasing the cropping intensity... Food policy adopted for the country is aim[ed] at supplying [a] sufficient amount of food for the entire nation and at the same time to guarantee better health and social well being of the populace.³

The government has launched agricultural development schemes throughout the country, but especially in the Irrawaddy Delta. The centerpiece is the summer paddy program, in which the traditional single rice crop per year, sown in the rainy season and reaped in the cool season of October-December, is followed by another crop raised and reaped in the hot season. The summer paddy scheme has several elements: development of irrigation systems such as dams and canals, introduction of high yielding hot-season rice strains, and use of new fertilizers, pesticides and machinery to cope with the technical complications of the new crop.



"They took video where the crop looked good, where it was green and ripe."

³ "More Food Being Grown to Eradicate Hunger and Malnutrition," *New Light of Myanmar*, 17 October 1997.

These tactics have created two new burdens for farmers. The first is the labor needed to build roads, small dams and irrigation ditches. State-directed, uncompensated labor is common practice in Burma. Farmers who work on these development projects have less time to tend their crops or other subsistence activities. Secondly, the chemical ingredients of the summer rice program are not distributed free to poor farmers, but are sold to them. Farmers who don't buy the necessary materials can not participate in the program; their unproductive land, officially designated for double-cropping, is reassigned to a more able household.

The socialist-era reassignment of arable land to productive farmers has taken a new twist in the late 1990s: corporate rice farming. In January 1999 the government announced that 200,000 acres of paddy land in the Irrawaddy, Rangoon and Magwe Divisions had been transferred to nine unnamed entrepreneurs licensed by the government to reclaim "wetlands and vacant, fallow and virgin lands." It further added that "More wetlands and vacant, fallow and virgin lands are being reclaimed to extend cultivation to ensure rice sufficiency for the people" in a campaign to increase wet-season paddy land by two million acres, and summer paddy by an additional four million.⁴



Development schemes never challenge the assumption that Burma needs to recruit, feed and equip a huge army.

Recent US Department of Agriculture statistics affirm statements by the Burma government that in 1998-99 rice export once again drove national farming policy. There was a substantial export increase in 1998; by November, 86,233 metric tons of paddy had been exported, compared to only 15,328 for the whole of 1997.⁵ These reports coincide with rising

⁴ "Nineteen entrepreneur groups to reclaim 203,000 acres in Ayeyawady Division," *New Light of Myanmar*, 19 January 1999.

⁵ US Department of Agriculture, "Burma's monthly rice trade and price update for September, 1998," *GAIN Report* (#BM8013, 8 October 1998).

“Militarism is distinguished as being of a more material, physical quality...while militarization is predominantly an ideological orientation...”

national production targets, to be achieved in part by contracting big parcels of land to entrepreneurs.

Despite efforts to increase rice production, independent reports indicate that in the early 1990s, over 30% of Burma's children were suffering from malnutrition. Furthermore, anecdotal reports from throughout the country confirm that many people simply don't have enough to eat. AHRC has provided some of these reports to the Tribunal; most are publicly available. Perhaps one million Burmese refugees and migrant workers reside in neighboring Thailand, many reporting food scarcity as their primary reason for flight.

Militarization

The Asian Human Rights Commission has submitted that food scarcity and hunger exist because of militarization. In defining this term, AHRC has distinguished between *militarism* and *militarization*, the critical difference being the social and ideological force the latter exerts on the normative life of society:

Militarization should be understood as the process whereby military values, ideology, and patterns of behavior achieve a dominating influence on the political, social, economic, and external affairs of the State; and as a consequence, the structural, ideological, and behavioral patterns of both the society and the government are “militarized.”⁶

Thus, the distinction between militarization and militarism:

militarization... denote[s] the spread of military values (discipline and conformity, centralization of authority, the predominance of hierarchical structures, etc.) into the mainstream of national economic and socio-political life. Militarism is distinguished as being of a more material, physical quality...while militarization is predominantly an ideological orientation, often leading to military leadership of civilian organizations and institutions.⁷

⁶ Churches Commission on International Affairs, *Militarism and Human Rights*, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982, p. 5.

⁷ Jim Zwick, "Militarism and Repression in the Philippines," *Working Paper Series*, Montreal: McGill University Developing Area Studies, 1982, p. 4.

So we have been presented with a distinction between militarism as a visible characteristic of state and militarization as a more abstract interpretation of how those characteristics affect the nation. From these definitions the Tribunal understands that a degree of militarism is already known to exist. Burma's military government, armed conflict and suppression of political dissent are all facts which we recognize at the outset. However, a large and active army, the State's use of violence and even military rule are traits of militarism which can exist without extreme pervasion of military culture and polarization of people from the state. AHRC has sought to establish before us that what has taken place in Burma is not mere militarism, but militarization in the full sense. This is the issue we will consider.

AHRC has sought to establish that what has taken place in Burma is not mere militarism, but militarization in the full sense

Rise of the Tatmadaw

The AHRC has outlined Burma's modern political history to help define the scope of the Tribunal. This history can be summarized as follows.

The modern nation of Burma was forged when a variety of feudal states were consolidated by British colonial rule. Before colonial times, there were no fixed boundaries around a single encompassing nation or kingdom. Instead, peoples living in and around the Irrawaddy River basin existed under the rising and falling influence of Burman, Mon, Shan, Arakan, Siamese and other kingdoms. Furthermore, huge highlands were home to various peoples without large-scale polities, especially Kachin, Chin, and Karen peoples, as well as numerous related and unrelated groups. Throughout the 19th century, however, England fought a series of wars with the Burman empire in a campaign to make Burma the easternmost province of British India. By 1890, the last Burman king went into exile, and colonial administration was established. The eastern border with Siam was more or less demarcated, Assam and Manipur were retained as parts of India, and the northern and northeastern frontiers with China roughly set. Burma was created not as a sovereign nation, but as a colonial province of British India.

British Burma was thus a mosaic of peoples and places brought for the first time under a single state. The peoples of Burma received the new regime with varying reactions, some resisting colonialism outright and others welcoming it as a turn in their political favor. British interest lay in profitable export of teak and rice, and in controlling the eastern extreme of British India. European expansion ended with World War II and the invasion of Burma by Japan. A group of Burman nationalists known as

the Thirty Comrades seized the war as an opportunity to oust Britain. They established the Burma Independence Army (BIA), led by General Aung San, which assisted Japan on the understanding that once the British had been routed, Burma would achieve independence. However, doubts about the sincerity or viability of the Japanese pledge led the BIA to switch sides, and by the end of the war Burma remained a British colony.

World War II also crystallized modern ethnic nationalism. Burmans saw the war as the beginning of a drive for independence, a campaign which was ultimately successful. Chins, Kachins and Karens provided pivotal support to the Allies throughout the war, raising their status within the colonial administration and exposing them to techniques of modern warfare. Furthermore, the BIA's initial cooperation with Japan entailed retribution against those who aided the British, including the ethnic minorities. Thus the war created, renewed or intensified ethnic tensions between Burmans, whose monarch had been banished and who had been subjugated under colonial rule, and the minorities, whose subjugation under the Burman kings had been somewhat relieved by the British.



The Tatmadaw developed a political identity as defender of Burma's unity...

When Britain granted independence to Burma in 1948, questions over autonomy for ethnic-minority inhabited areas remained unresolved. General Aung San, who headed a controversial provisional government, was assassinated along with his entire cabinet just before the British withdrew. Within months the country was covered with nationalist and communist movements. The Burma army, or *Tatmadaw*, was thus born into the role of suppressing the disunity of a nation which had never been unified to begin with.

Throughout the 1950s the Burma army's power grew steadily, while political inroads to resolving Burma's many conflicts were few and led nowhere. In 1958 a military-led caretaker government assumed control, led by General Ne Win, one of the Thirty Comrades. In 1962 Ne Win

consolidated his power through a complete military coup. For three decades of Ne Win's rule, the Tatmadaw developed a political identity as defender of Burma's unity against internal enemies. The Burma army cast itself as savior of the nation's integrity.

Politically, the period between 1962 and 1988 was Ne Win's experiment with socialism. Single party rule fell to the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), which nationalized agriculture and industry and turned Burma into a "closed" country. BSPP legalized itself in 1974 through a new constitution. In 1988, with Burma facing economic ruin, Ne Win retired from his leading role in national politics. In August many people took to the streets calling for greater reform, invoking a harsh military response. Thousands of demonstrators, including students and workers, were killed or fled to the frontier areas. A junta of hard line military officers staged a coup, reasserting the army's prominence. In September 1988, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) replaced the BSPP and its pretensions to both socialism and quasi-civilian rule. Despite holding a promised election in 1990, the military refused to cede power to an elected parliament, persecuted its rivals, especially the National League for Democracy (NLD), and maintained tight control on all political dissent. The 1990s saw the Tatmadaw expand, modernize, and begin to open the nation's economy to foreign capital.

Insurgency continued throughout the BSPP and SLORC eras. The Karen rebellion, which broke out near Rangoon in 1949, gradually drifted eastward to the Thai frontier. The Kachin Independence Organization maintained control over the highlands in northern Burma. Meanwhile, the adjacent Shan State was home to ethnic nationalist movements, drug warlords and the once-powerful Communist Party of Burma. In 1974 the Tatmadaw expanded the "Four Cuts," an anti-insurgency program designed to cut civilian support for guerrillas. The brutality of this campaign fuelled further resistance and cemented the belief that the Tatmadaw was intent



In 1974 the Tatmadaw expanded the "Four Cuts."

on genocide, making total autonomy of minority peoples the only secure political destiny. SLORC's determination to quash Burma's insurgency saw a series of political and military successes throughout the 1990s. It concluded cease-fire agreements with several opposition groups and won significant military victories, especially along the Thai border.



Throughout the 1990s the Tatmadaw grew both in size and expenditure.

government spending, equivalent to 2.3% of recorded GDP. By comparison, from 1993 to 1996 defense constituted about 40% of government spending. The government reported that in 1995-96 for every kyat spent on development in frontier areas more than 26 kyats went to the Tatmadaw. Beyond this substantial piece of the national budget, the Tatmadaw receives goods and services of uncalculated value:

The Ministry of Defense receives but does not pay for about one-fifth of Burma's centrally generated electricity. The Defense Ministry also purchases large amounts of fuel far below market prices. In FY 95/96, the Defense ministry purchased at least 12 million gallons of fuel, at about 20 kyats per gallon for diesel and 25 kyats per gallon for gasoline, for which the market prices were about ten times higher. In addition, a substantial share of the

Throughout the 1990s the Tatmadaw grew both in size and expenditure. In 1989-90 the army stood at 175,000 men but doubled to 350,000 in 1995-96. In the same period, the civil service increased by only six percent. Indeed, a 1997 estimate put one in every 32 eligible people in the military. The government's target is 475,000 troops—larger than the US army and one of the biggest standing armies in the world. The American Embassy estimated defense spending to be at least half of total government expenditure, at 8-10 % of recorded GDP.⁸ In 1988-89, the year SLORC formed, Burma spent 1.8 billion kyats on defense, constituting 22.9% of recorded

⁸ American Embassy Rangoon, *Foreign Economic Trends Report: Burma, 1997*, September 1997, p. 15.

GOB's declining real expenditures on health is said by health industry experts to be used to provide medical services to military personnel, and is not included in the defense budget. The Defense Ministry also receives large amounts of rice at a steep discount from the market price...⁹

Today, despite decades of armed resistance, the military remains in firm control of Burma's political and economic scene. The Tatmadaw has maintained its leading role in Burma's government, impervious to growing international concern for human rights and political freedom. The population, at about 45 million, has virtually no legal options for political opposition, although a number of illegal anti-government groups operate throughout the country. Burma's Tatmadaw continues to pursue its vision of a unified, "peaceful, modern and developed" nation led by strong and vigilant military heroes.



"They burned our houses and food supplies and it's plain to see that we could never stay on there."

The Tribunal will consider food scarcity and the militarization of Burmese society against this background of a prominent and growing army. Certain political facts are undisputed: Burma has a military government; this government is autocratic; armed conflict exists within the country; and civilians report that atrocities are committed against them in the course of this conflict. Our inquiry is to determine whether the right to food has been denied to the people of Burma, and if so whether the military dictatorship and the administration it controls are responsible. To make this determination, we must evaluate AHRC's charge that the right to food has been denied, then judge whether there is a nexus between this scarcity and military encroachment.

⁹ The American Embassy's statistics are not official, but are a compilation of embassy, Myanmar government and World Bank/IMF figures. The embassy's report outlines the flaws inherent in all statistical data on Burma, including a general incompleteness of all data, exchange rate distortion, omission of defense-related imports and overstatement of international debt service payments.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

In February 1999, AHRC submitted to us a compilation of evidence detailing the charge that militarization has caused food scarcity. Along with a series of written depositions, it contained history, statistics and excerpts from numerous reports about Burma's government and economy. Also provided were several explanatory maps and a collection of photographs detailing aspects of the evidence. After reviewing the compilation, the People's Tribunal convened in Thailand to hear testimony firsthand. On April 2-4 twenty-six witnesses made depositions. We interviewed nine of these people in Bangkok, and the remaining seventeen in Tak Province. Most of the depositions were recorded on audio cassette and later transcribed. Witnesses who gave testimony in languages other than English worked through interpreters, and their depositions were later translated into English for documentary purposes. It is not practical to insert all the evidence in this report. Instead, we include a clear and representative sample.¹⁰

Untold Sorrows: Food and War

The evidence demonstrates that food scarcity is a national trend which varies according to regional political and economic conditions. Most notable are differences between areas with armed conflict and areas without it. Terminology differentiating these areas is problematic. The government does not use the term "civil war," preferring instead to consider the conflict an insurgency by "illegal armed groups." On the other side, opposition groups see the armed conflict as revolution or even war for independence. It is outside the Tribunal's scope of inquiry to investigate and decide on the conflict's political classification; we are concerned with the relationship between armed conflict and hunger. In keeping with the general trend of the testimony brought before it, the Tribunal uses the terms "civil war zones" and "non-civil war zones," without bias or obligation to any political significance they might connote.

Nevertheless, terminology problems remain. Civil war zones are often further divided into "black" and "brown" zones, the former meaning areas considered by the government to be outside its effective control, and the latter denoting areas over which its control is incomplete. It is widely

¹⁰ A catalogue of material submitted to the Tribunal, witness deposition, testimonies, and a bibliography are attached as Appendices 2,3, 4 and 7 respectively.

reported that this further division, along with the term “white zone” for areas without an insurgent challenge, is a fundamental military tactic employed by the government. Both types of zone experience consistent human rights abuse. Furthermore, the term “free-fire zone” declares an area to be under a form of military control which allows soldiers to shoot anyone on sight without the need to determine identity. Again, the government doesn’t use these terms in its public documents or mass media. Regardless of whether these divisions originate from the government, the Tribunal finds them logical and useful descriptors for real conditions, and elects to use them here.

Food Under Fire

Remote regions of Burma are exposed to primitive but militarily effective scorched-earth tactics. According to Tatmadaw strategy these are “free-fire” areas, in which all people are suspected of insurgency and are treated as the enemy. People are subjected to indiscriminate executions and a panoply of other human rights abuses, mass destruction of crops and villages and massive population displacement. The Burmese army has devised what is known as the “Four Cuts” strategy to deny rebels (1) food (2) money (3) communication and (4) recruits. In practice, the strategy does not differentiate between combatants and civilians. To begin with, selected areas 40 to 50 miles square are cordoned off for concentrated military operations. The army then orders villages to move to strategic locations under its control. Soldiers may warn that anyone who refuses to move will be treated as an insurgent and can be shot on sight. After the first visit, troops return periodically to confiscate food, destroy crops and paddy and shoot anyone suspected of supporting insurgents.

The evidence collected by Saw Kwe Say in respect to Papun and Kyauk Kyi Townships describes how people are dealt with in insurgent zones. While the army has its bases in the lowlands, people are forced to live in the jungle “hiding their rice and struggling to survive without medicine, schools or much contact with the outside world.” People say that they are always on the run for they do not know when the soldiers will come. They face immense hardship:

People are forced into the jungle, hiding their rice and struggling to survive without medicine, schools or much contact with the outside world.



**Map 5:
Pegu Division**

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

“This year we ran from the army four times. The third time, they pulled all the paddy stalks from the ground and burned down the field hut”

When the army columns come into the mountains, they destroy any houses they find, shoot whoever they see, and take or burn all food and possessions. If they come to a village, they don't see any people because everyone has run into the forest already. If they find rice stored in the jungle, they take or burn it, or sometimes lay land mines around it. We always look for a safe place deep in the jungle to hide our food...These hiding places may be safe from soldiers, but not from wildlife.¹¹

Because of these harsh military pressures in an already difficult natural environment, the villagers constantly struggle to feed themselves:

One woman in my mother's village was growing rice to feed her four children. The soldiers came so she abandoned her small field for a while. As a result the crop wasn't very good. Before harvest, a pack of wild boar came and destroyed about one fourth of her crop. After harvest, we left the cut rice stalks to dry in the fields, and the boars came back for another quarter. Finally, when we were preparing fields for the next crop they came back again. When she saw what had happened she just sat down, stared at what was left of her rice and began to cry.



“The rice they couldn't carry away, they set on fire”

¹¹ Saw Kwe Say, *Report on the Conditions in Free Fire Zones of Mudraw and Mone Townships*, 1996.

Saw Kwe Say appeared before us and submitted further information he collected relating to a village called T'kwiso, where villagers said:

This year we ran from the army four times, and three times in September they really reached our location. The first time they took all our possessions. The second time they destroyed all our crops. The third time, they pulled all the paddy stalks from the ground and burned down the field hut.

He stated that this year families would face extreme hardship from the soldiers coming and destroying the grain and foodstuffs, and also from having to flee.

Displaced people have little forewarning and little time to prepare food for their stay in the jungle. Even their food can become a liability, as reported during a 1997 military operation in Kyauk Kyi Township:

The villagers of Nwar Lay Khoh knew that troops were approaching, so they began to evacuate their houses. They fled into the scrub, dangerously close. They had to kill roosters and geese, because their cries travel far and might reveal the hideout. For security, dogs too were beaten to death—there is a lot in the jungle to bark at.¹²

According to another researcher, Dee Gay Htoo, as the army passes through villages it indiscriminately destroys food. He states that:

The biggest problem is getting food. Troops have destroyed virtually everything of last year's crop and now people are trying to plant, but there hasn't been any rain, so the crops are poor. The suffering is extreme. Most people are living only off bamboo shoots and other roots.

Dee Gay Htoo filed another report in October 1998 which details military attacks on other villages in Papun. For example, in Tei Bo Plaw Village:

Battalion 706 burned down two sections of Tei Bo Plaw. Khler Hat Htah was destroyed on 31 October 1997, and Maw Pho Khi on 12 November. Twenty-two houses were burned. The army stayed in Tei Bo



Map 3:
Karen State

¹² AHRC, *First Submission to the People's Tribunal on Food Scarcity and Militarization in Burma*, 1 February 1999, p. 73.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Plaw for about one week. The villagers fled into the forest but couldn't take much food. Altogether, 71 barns were burned, and the people lost 3,692 baskets of grain.¹³

In another village, Doh Daw Khi, Dee Gay Htoo continues,

When the villagers fled, they couldn't take very much food with them. They fed what they had to the children, and the adults fasted. They went and secretly grabbed food now and then. One woman gave birth during this time, but the child died, due to the conditions in the forest. These villagers have had to hide out there for five months, the entire rainy season. Most are animists whose religion stipulates that any place destroyed by fire cannot be rebuilt for three years.



"The people live in fear that the army will search and find them."

In this way, we have details of several villages destroyed by the army in Papun region. There is also a report by Karen Human Rights

¹³ "Confidential Report to Burma Issues on taxation and extortion of villages in Kyauk Kyi Township, Pegu Division," 17 October 1998.

Group (KHRG) which lists 105 villages forced to relocate, 180 burned down and 10 more partially destroyed.¹⁴

From Kyauk Kyi Township we heard similar allegations of army abuse. Saw Kwe Klo reported that the army

..looted and destroyed property in every village they entered. They arrived in Nwar Lay Khoh on March 14, and burned down 32 houses. They ate all the ducks, chickens and pigs they saw. The people work swidden farms. The land must be prepared in February, but because of the army people didn't come back until May. This has meant a very poor crop...¹⁵



“The biggest problem is getting food. Troops have destroyed virtually everything of last year’s crop... The suffering is extreme.”

“I saw one family close to utter starvation, the two small children crying from hunger.”

¹⁴ Karen Human Rights Group, *Wholesale Destruction: The SLORC/SPDC Campaign to Obliterate All Hill Villages in Papun and Eastern Nyaunglebin Districts*, Chiang Mai: Nopburee Press, April 1998.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

There are many instances of similarly tragic experiences narrated by villagers. Hunger can force unarmed civilians into deadly encounters with the army. On 3 April 1997, soldiers entered Thay Khoh Mu Der, whose inhabitants evacuated immediately

without preparing any food for themselves. They had nothing to eat in the forest. The army burned 36 houses and 14 barns containing 200-400 baskets each. Some villagers decided to come back for hidden rice. Five men fearfully returned, but the soldiers saw them and started to shoot. Phar Khin Sein, aged 50, was killed and the others escaped.¹⁶

Saw Htoo K'baw, a teacher from Papun Township gave his statement to Saw Khwar Hsit, a Tribunal researcher.¹⁷ They both appeared before us on April 4. Like most of the people from his village, Saw Htoo K'baw came to Thailand two years ago. In his first statement he recalled, "Starting from January 1992, the Burma army soldiers began to battle KNU there and destroyed villages. They patrolled and skirmished, and so 1992 was the first year that there were food problems." However, he stayed on even when others had left. He gave a year by year account, starting with his own efforts to earn a living during the school break:

In January I planned to trade in biscuits, Ajinomoto and clothing to get extra money. The soldiers were patrolling because of this trade, and would stop people on the road or shoot from far away. As five of us were returning, some soldiers off to one side of the path saw us and shot. We dropped our goods and ran for our lives. I lost all my valuables and was discouraged from trading any more.

Thus, his search for food was confined to the village and its immediate environs, which added to hunger. Starting from September 1994 his family fled the army frequently and

¹⁵ AHRC, p. 73.

¹⁶ See "The mountains of war," Testimony 1, Appendix 4.

¹⁷ See "War and hunger in the 1990s," Testimony 2, Appendix 4.

had to eat rice porridge for two months. After October we reopened the school, but on weekends I found work sawing timber in order to buy rice. I didn't even want to plant rice anymore at that point. Sometimes all we had to eat were boiled bamboo shoots and roots.

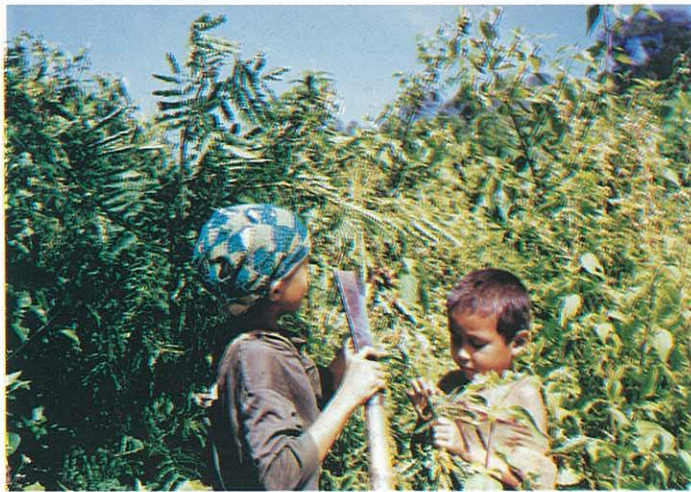
Eventually, Saw Htoo K'baw took up farming again, but his efforts to grow rice were continually frustrated by military action:

It was almost harvest time when we fled to where there was no food. We had not brought much with us, so we ate porridge. For two or three months we hid like that, and my fields were destroyed.

By 1996, conditions had become miserable for the whole village. As an immigrant to the area, Saw Htoo K'baw wasn't adept at hunting or foraging for wild roots and vegetables, which is how the indigenous people coped with hunger. He turned to his neighbors for charity:

I would forego food so my children could eat. I went around begging for rice. Some people took pity and gave me a cup or two. Most who had migrated to the area like me were suffering considerably.

His family continued to survive without food security, but conditions were dire. In 1996 they took to the jungle three separate times, during which



"In the jungle we had to eat roots and leaves."

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

he saw others suffering an even worse fate:

Each time we had no food. In the forest relationships varied. Some shared food with others then left to look for roots together; others did not. I saw one family close to utter starvation, the two small children crying from hunger. The mother pitifully fed them roots which hadn't been boiled long enough—she probably didn't know what else to do. After that they suffered nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Eventually they could withstand no more. Losing their home was the last straw:

Around April, it rained very heavily and our house collapsed into the river, totally destroyed. We were left with nothing, no food and no place to stay, so we fled and hid. My children were sick. A KNU official gave me some rice. I thought about the situation and knew we couldn't stay there anymore, and so we came to this refugee camp.



"We cannot go back, we dare not go back and face the soldiers."

When we met Saw Htoo K'Baw in April he testified that between 1994 and 1996 up to thirty children, mostly under 5 years old, died from malnutrition. We asked whether he would go back, and he answered:

Everyone wants to go back, but is afraid. Even if we went and there were no soldiers, we would still have a food problem in the first year or so. Also there are a lot of landmines, planted by both sides. If there weren't mines, it would be more feasible.

We have videotaped statements from several people in Papun, all narrating the same story of destruction and flight.

Another informant told a similar tale of military abuse in Myawaddy Township, who reporting that when soldiers came they

ate our pigs and chickens. Anything that they didn't eat, they killed, and the rice they couldn't carry away, they set on fire. Day to day, we could still eat, but over a longer time we would surely have starved. Because we couldn't travel around, we couldn't work. We always had to follow their orders. My children suffered from diarrhea and malaria. So before my family reached the point of starvation we fled to this refugee camp. If I had stayed in my



"In the forest relationships varied. Some shared their food with others then left to look for roots together."

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

village I would surely have died. There were still 20 baskets of threshed rice in my barn. I had to leave all that.¹⁸

The above evidence comes from Karen State, but conditions are similar in central and southern Shan State. AHRC's compilation shows that since March 1996, the Tatmadaw has forcibly relocated over 1400 villages through 7000 square miles. Over 300,000 people have been ordered to move at gunpoint into strategic relocation sites. The relocations intensified in 1997 and 1998, with people in new areas forced move, and existing sites forced to relocate yet again. Vast areas of 11 rural townships have become depopulated "free-fire" zones. One witness described to us relocation in Shan State:

Three to five days after the order, soldiers come back. If villagers haven't left, either they say 'go now,' or burn the village, or shoot—there are many different scenarios. Out of 300,000 people, 100-120,000 have come to Thailand. About 100,000 are in relocation sites, and about 50,000 are on the outskirts of towns where they can find work or have relatives. About 50,000 are hiding. They are trying to survive in the jungles.¹⁹

The Tribunal also heard of a family's struggle with relocation, hunger and violence in Shan State. Her family

was relocated to Kun Hing in 1996. They went to the relocation site and tried to stay, but couldn't. They went back into hiding after a year, on a heavily wooded island in the river. Her father would catch fish at night then secretly go to Kun Hing to sell in the market. Just last month he went back to his old village to look for cattle he left there. He was shot and killed. The family lost their breadwinner, so they moved to Kun Hing and the mother sent her to Thailand to earn money.

¹⁸ See "A village teacher," Testimony 4, Appendix 4.

¹⁹ See the First Witness' deposition, Appendix 3.



"People are forced into the jungle, hiding their rice and struggling to survive."

Villagers in the relocation sites work as porters, build roads, dig ditches and erect fences at nearby military camps without food or pay. Most of the relocated people are farmers; so all these changes have seriously affected regional food production.

Similar is the situation in Karenni State. The Tribunal heard that large numbers of Karenni farmers currently live displaced. Some have moved to the relocation camps; the majority remain hidden in the jungle; and some have fled to refugee camps in Thailand. Many see no viable option in Burma and migrate to Thailand to live as refugees or illegal migrant workers.

The relocations about two years ago in Karenni State involved 70-80,000 people, entire regions were moved. People had four choices: 1) go to the relocation site, under Burma army control; 2) stay with relatives in town; 3) hide in the forest; 4) cross the border into Thailand, the last resort. The vast majority of people don't want to come. Many went to the relocation site at Shadaw. Now, two years later, people are arriving in Thailand because they simply could not survive. They tried. There are people who said their father starved to death, people who said, "This does not happen in Burma, people

do not starve.” They tried to make ends meet, they cannot any longer, and they come to the border.²⁰

The AHRC has summarized how the civil war creates food scarcity. It identified six factors:

1. Direct attacks on civilians and food

Military offensives destroy villages, farms, grain and livestock. Food is consistently targeted for destruction. Civilians displaced by combat who return to their fields risk being shot on sight. Some communities are attacked more than once within a year.

2. Looting of food and possessions

Soldiers take food and livestock without permission and loot other household possessions.

3. Displacing people

Civilians flee to the jungle, become internally displaced persons (IDPs), and face food shortages. Army columns destroy any hidden food they find. People hide in the jungle as long as they can. When they can no longer survive this way, they try to flee from the area completely.

4. Restrictions on trade and travel

The army cuts trade and transportation routes to “black” zones, creating shortages of food, medicine and other essentials. Civilians are also denied income through trade.

5. Ecological damage and crop shortfalls

Frequent military incursions diminish soil fertility by preventing farmers from preparing their fields properly. Military action also interferes with planting, tending and harvesting crops. Therefore, farmers produce a shortfall of paddy and other food.

6. Poor health

Civilians, particularly children, suffer from malaria, diarrhea, anemia and malnutrition. The evidence links child mortality to food scarcity. Non-government clinics in “black” areas are military

²⁰ See the First Witness' deposition.

targets, and trade in medicines is prohibited, thus denying treatment to the ill.

To Live, to Work, To Eat

In areas not entirely controlled by the government, we find systematic population displacement and forced labor, arbitrary taxation, extortion and other infringements on basic economic rights.

The Tribunal heard testimony about the typical problem of two or more armies vying for administrative control. According to a woman from Mon State, military demands piled up with each new regime:

The village was taxed by KNU for a long time, though there were some benefits, such as schools and clinics. When the Burma army came it also made demands, but if fields were not destroyed then we could pay. But with the advent of DKBA in 1996 food problems have grown.²¹

Similarly, we read evidence of how civilians are caught between insurgents and the government. In 1996, the Tatmadaw announced the following fines and punishments people in southern Burma's Thayet Chaung Township:

- Any village where insurgents fire a gun must relocate within seven days.
- If insurgents attack Tatmadaw territory, all villages through which they passed must move.
- If any Burma army soldiers die in combat, the nearest village must pay compensation of 50,000 kyat for each dead soldier.
- If insurgents take Tatmadaw equipment or food, the nearest village must pay to replace it.
- If Tatmadaw loses guns, the nearest village must pay 15,000 kyat for each.



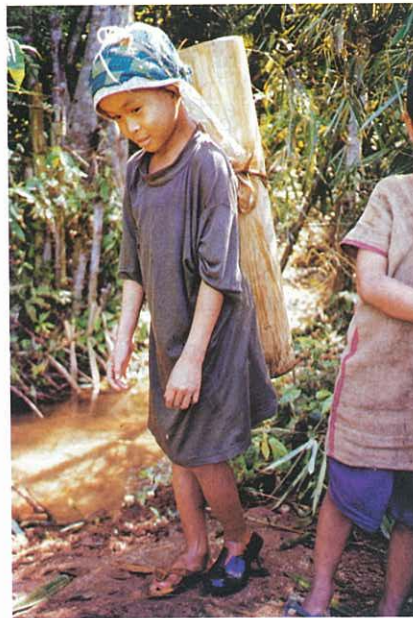
**Map 6:
Tenasserim
Division**

²¹ See "Forced Relocation," Testimony 23, Appendix 4.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

- Any village where a battle takes place or where insurgent supporters are exposed will be burned to the ground.²²

Most of Tenasserim Division is a contested area. AHRC has submitted that severe military action since 1997 has displaced much of the rural population. These effects have been documented in various reports such as “Tennasserim Situation Report” (1998) by the KNU Mergui-Tavoy Information Department and “The Situation of the People Living in the Gas Pipeline Project Region” prepared by Mon Information Service (1997). All detail how villagers were conscripted for forced labor on development projects under appalling conditions. Moreover, they had to feed themselves while doing it. Much of this farming population has either been forcibly relocated or if not, subjected to severe restriction of movement. Many are prohibited from staying overnight in their fields, necessary during the labor-intensive planting and harvesting seasons.



“It was almost harvest time when we fled to where there was no food.”

²² Adapted from *Terror in the South: Militarisation, Economics and Human Rights in Southern Burma*, All Burma Students Democratic Front, November 1997.

We received statements on the fear created by this constant military presence. Naw Ble, a subsistence farmer in Dawei township, reports that she returned home after the army promised not to harm villagers:

We saw all our possessions scattered, and no cock crowed, no dog barked, no cat cried and no cattle wandered about the place. Everything was quiet. The next day, troops started to dig trenches by our houses. They did not harm us, but would climb our trees and take fruit. They ordered us not to leave the village without permission. To go out cost 15 kyat per day, and we had to be back before dark.²³

We found that counter-insurgency measures include the confiscation of food from civilians. The same witness related how her village's food was taken away:

After wandering in the jungle we felt there were no more places to go. Some people suggested going back would be better than being caught in the jungle. So one day when there were no soldiers in the village, we re-entered...

They ordered us to bring our paddy from where we hid it, or they would find and destroy it. Some brought the rice and it was confiscated. The soldiers ate it. At the same time, soldiers went house-to-house selling ration rice for 50 kyat a pyi. We pay to work our own plantations, we serve them without wages, our paddy is looted then we buy back rice to survive. Our fruit and crops are taken, our animals and plants are taken, we are unable to escape. They told us troops in the hills have orders to kill anything they see. We are haunted by this.

"We saw all our possessions scattered, and no cock barked, no dog barked, no cat cried and no cattle wandered about the place"

²³ See "Wandering in the jungle," Testimony 13, Appendix 4.



"They ordered us to bring our paddy from where we hid it, or they would find it and destroy it."

This treatment by the military naturally created resentment among the people. Another villager complained:

I feel bitter about the troops staying in our village, looting our rice and eating it, then selling us their rations. We have very little money to buy rice. Think about it! How long can you survive without any time to earn money?²⁴

Adjacent to combat zones, "brown" areas are a constant source of conscripted labor. The army forces people to work continually, a practice well documented by international organizations. The International Labour Organization's exhaustive report commented on the economic ramifications:²⁵

²⁴ See "No living things," Testimony 14, Appendix 4.

²⁵ International Labour Organisation, "Forced Labour in Myanmar (Burma). Report of the Commission of Inquiry appointed under article 26 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization to examine the observance by Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). Geneva, 1998."

Forced labour caused the poorer sections of society who carried out the majority of the labour to become increasingly impoverished. Day labourers needed paid work every day in order to obtain sufficient income and that became impossible when they were forced to provide uncompensated labour. Families who survived on subsistence farming also required every member of the family to contribute to this labour-intensive work, particularly at certain times of the year. Demands for forced labour seriously affected such families. Families who were no longer able to support themselves often moved to an area where they thought the demands for forced labour would be less; if this was not possible, they would often leave Myanmar as refugees. Information provided to the Commission indicated that forced labour was a major reason behind people leaving Myanmar and becoming refugees.



"We slept soaked."

Furthermore porters on duty go hungry, as recounted by this 18 year old from Kawthaung Township who was forced to carry loads for an army column in 1997:

All the porters became weak from lack of food. I saw about ten fallen by the way, some were ready to die, rolling around and murmuring. Some had swollen faces and heads. Seeing this I was afraid, since I was weak and could not walk well. I wanted to run but did not know the way, so I carried on even though weak and thin.²⁶

Another porter serving at the same time echoed this ordeal:

They fed us two cups of rice a day, along with salt and sometimes banana palm shoots. The soldiers had enough rice, curry and canned food. More than

²⁶ AHRC, p. 132.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

100 porters slept in a shelter we built ourselves. The roof was made from old iron sheets. When it rained the roof did not cover us, so we slept soaked. There were so many sick porters among us. The military didn't care for the sick.²⁷



Many villagers are hiding in "free-fire" zones.

We also saw a report on Palaw Township, where the people are caught between the Burma army and KNU. The Tatmadaw suspects villagers of helping KNU and targets them for all sorts of torture, extortion, and confiscation of food. Thus, many villagers are hiding in "free-fire" zones. These people live in fear that the Burma army will search for them and find them, especially in the dry season. In fact, in the 1998 dry season troops destroyed many jungle plots, and barns, livestock and property were confiscated. The main concern of these internally displaced people is food. The AHRC has also collected several statements from the affected persons.²⁸

We read case studies from Bilin Township and Pegu Division. These are areas where people have been forcibly relocated. According to one relocated villager, arbitrary taxation, forced labor and restricted movement result in food scarcity:

Most villagers travel two or three hours to work their farms. Traveling back and forth they can't really tend their crops, which get damaged by disease, insects and weather. Soldiers moving from one place to the next also trample the fields. Swidden fields must lie fallow before being used again, but because of relocations more people are forced into a small area, so soil quality is deteriorating. Before the harvest is in most people eat rice porridge, perhaps once per day, with a few bamboo shoots, with parents going hungry so children can eat.²⁹

²⁷ See "Shouldering the burden," Testimony 15, Appendix 4.

²⁸ AHRC, p. 139.

²⁹ See "Forced relocation," Testimony 23, Appendix 4.

We also saw evidence of how soldiers ordered farmers throughout eight villages to pay "gardening taxes" on their own trees. The fees were calculated as follows: 18 kyat for each betel palm, 10 for a coconut palm, 15 for cashew, and 5 each for mango, jackfruit, pomelo and lime trees. The army threatened the villagers that failure to pay meant land confiscation.³⁰

AHRC identifies nine conditions which cause food scarcity in such areas:

1. Direct attacks on civilians and food

The army attacks civilians and food less frequently here than in black zones, but burning of food, houses and fields continues. Populations deemed uncooperative experience the worst forms of military excess.

2. Expropriation of food, possessions and land

The army constantly demands rice and livestock, either without paying or paying little. Soldiers resell military rations while living off food stolen from villagers. Bullock carts are confiscated for work on infrastructure projects. Agricultural land is taken for roads, plantations, barracks or military-run development projects.

3. Relocation

Forced relocation of villages is common. Movement at relocation camps is tightly restricted, while former village sites are declared "free-fire" zones. Trading may be prohibited. Farmers are denied access to their fields. Those who flee relocation to hide in the jungle expose themselves to free-fire conditions.



"They threaten that if anyone shoots at them in the village, then it will become ash."

³⁰ Win Hlaing, "Tenasserim Division: Thayet Chaung /Ye Pyu Townships Rural Conditions," 25 October 1998.

4. Forced labor

The army conscripts unpaid labor on infrastructure development projects. Villagers perform menial duties for the military and portering increases. People have not enough time to work for themselves, and self-sufficiency in the rural economy dissipates.

5. Taxation and fees

Furthermore, the army levies arbitrary taxes and fees, including fines for defaulting on labor conscription. These payments cover expenses, surcharges and fines imposed by local authorities.

6. Crop procurement

In some areas, the military enforces a version of the national paddy procurement system (discussed below), straining rice supplies.

7. Rice rationing

The army confiscates and stockpiles rice, then rations it back to farmers. Restrictions on movement, distance between army camps and relocation centers or villages, and corruption prevent these rations from reaching civilians.

8. Abandoned farmlands

Economic and military pressures force many farmers to leave their land. The quality of vacated land deteriorates rapidly, so that it may not be successfully replanted immediately.

9. Inadequate health care

Stringent control on travel, possession of medicine, and a general lack of services means that health care is very poor. Existing clinics may have no trained staff or medical supplies.

No War, No Peace

We also heard evidence from beyond the areas of conflict. In Burma's non-civil war zones, failed agriculture policies and persistent demands for cash, goods and labor undermine food security. Witnesses testified to rising prices, falling wages, unbearable taxation and the inability to feed one's family. We divide the evidence into rural and urban areas.

Trouble in the Rice Bowl

We heard myriad evidence attesting to hardship in rural Burma created by government agricultural policy, especially regarding production and distribution of lowland paddy. Much of this data comes from lower Burma: Mon State, Pegu Division and Irrawaddy Division.

A 24 year old landless worker from Mon State's Thaton District described how taxation, government policy and forced labor created hunger in his village

This is a general description of my village since 1988, but things have been worse since 1996 than any time before. The village has only about 18 real landowners, and the rest are hired workers. The biggest farm is 50 acres. I worked on a 13 acre holding, which yielded 60-70 baskets of rice per acre, as long as we used fertilizer.

High taxes and hunger forced some farmers to sell their land. They have to pay the annual quota,



"Most villagers travel two or three hours to work their farms."



Map 4:
Mon State

which the government buys at 150 kyat per basket. The administration had us build a big dam, and to support this work farm owners paid one more basket per acre annually to the township council. The dam construction began in 1992 and took two years. The water is for the dry season crop. The dam needs maintenance, and if you don't go you are fined 100 kyat per day.

Government plans to increase rice production included chemical fertilizers and farm machinery as well. Because of corruption, however, farmers did not benefit from these enhancements:

The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation sells two kinds of fertilizer which farmers can buy on credit at 3,200 kyat per acre. But our township council prefers selling to merchants, leaving farmers with only 4 bags for 10 acres. But when the debts are due, farm owners have to pay the full value, as if they had actually received 2 bags per acre. We heard that the government sent irrigation pumps, but after the township council received them all the pumps disappeared.



"Villagers build roads without pay."

Apart from farming, the people must work on a variety of projects run by the military. Some, such as roads, are public works projects, while others seem to be soldiers' private concerns.

Villagers build roads without pay. If you don't go, the soldiers make you a porter to the frontline. IB 33 Commander Aung Ye Min established a rubber plantation on 500 acres near the village. The army made people plant trees then fence in the plantation. Cattle used to graze there, and now if they stray back the soldiers shoot and eat them.

So, even without insurgency, rural people face local military rule and hunger. The witness described food scarcity in his village:

Taxes and oppression are starving the village. There's no time to work, only to pay taxes and do forced labor; many villagers have little food. Some must eat porridge, some only water skimmed off boiled rice, and others only sweet potatoes. To feed the children some adults go without food for one or two days at a time. Even so, children increasingly suffer diarrhea, sore stomachs, and death.



"Taxes and oppression are starving the village."

“They said, ‘If you can’t stay then get out—we’re just following instructions. You farmers are dishonest. When you need something we give it, then you protest. We can’t follow your whims any more.’”

Living under these conditions, the informant’s own family did not eat adequately. Food security eluded them, despite their collective efforts. In the end, he left home to find work abroad:

I have 5 children. My oldest daughter, who is eleven, always went to do forced labor while we parents looked for food. You see children 8 or 9 years old working. Sometimes we only had enough rice for porridge. I worked all day, then went home only to hear my children cry from hunger. My tears fell, too. I could not suffer the poverty of my village. I came to Thailand to work and send money home, so that they can eat.³¹

We read the statement of a 58 year old widowed farmer from Rangoon Division. This very fertile area had always enjoyed a rice surplus. She related the hardship caused by government policies to increase rice production through irrigation and double cropping. The drive to grow more paddy began with forced labor:

The government made us dam the Ngamoeyeik River then called on us to grow summer paddy. The construction site was 5 miles away, and we walked back and forth every day in the hot season, when it was really stinking hot. Each family in the region had to send people to dig. I heard that one pregnant woman died carrying loads of soil on her head. I had to hoe the ground. The work was enormously tiring. After we went home in the evening, they videotaped the day’s progress. The dam opened in 1995.³²

The dam now complete, farmers had to adapt to the hastily-planned new crop:

Summer paddy started in 1996. They didn’t give seeds, we had to buy them. I’ll tell you something, they made us buy seeds taken from other farmers. But different strains of rice were all mixed together, one from here, one from there. When we planted we didn’t notice the difference, but they grew at different rates. There were three different kinds of

³¹ See “The reality of agricultural development,” Testimony 24, Appendix 4.

³² The *New Light of Myanmar*, 27 March 1995, reported on the dam’s inauguration. It was later covered in “Minister for A&I inspects Ngamoeyeik Dam, paddy fields in Bago Division,” *New Light of Myanmar*, 6 September 1998.

rice, so what can you do about that? You can't do anything! You would have to harvest one field three different times, which is too much work. Farmers were furious—some destroyed the whole lot and planted beans or sesame, then bought paddy in the market for their quota.

Despite these initial setbacks, the government enforced the summer crop program. Farmers were forced to comply:

Well, by this time most monsoon paddy had been harvested, and people had planted their beans. But with the dam finished everybody had to grow summer rice. They told us we couldn't grow nuts, we had to grow paddy. Officials from Rangoon, not soldiers, came and ripped up the beans and even unharvested rice. That was just about the last straw. The government said, "We are making you grow summer paddy for you yourselves to eat." They said monsoon paddy is for government and summer paddy would be for farmers.

But flaws in the program continued to frustrate farmers and government alike, particularly irrigation problems:

When we needed water they didn't open the dam; when we didn't want water they gave it! At first they didn't release water as some people hadn't finished



"The summer crop is a total loss for farmers, but if you don't do it, the government will take away your land."

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

harvesting all of their crop. Summer paddy needs water, so the government opened the dam and way too much water poured out. People who hadn't finished harvesting their first crop rushed out to gather it all up. In bean fields, water flooded the landscape. Villagers asked, "What are you doing? We can't even live here any more." Then the government answered "If you can't stay then get out—we're just following instructions." Later they cut the water and the summer rice started drying up in the fields. People ended up pumping in water themselves, which was expensive. The administration said, "You farmers are dishonest. When you need something we give it, then you protest. We can't follow your whims any more." The authorities said farmers are inconsistent and don't do things right.

Eventually, farmers confronted the state:

Farmers were now losing their crops. So villagers went to break open the dam themselves. The authorities became angry and said, "You went to break open this dam, so you must relocate!" The village leaders outlined their case step by step, then the authorities understood a little. We didn't have



"The government said, 'We are making you grow summer paddy for yourselves to eat'."

to relocate, but we had to help repair the dam. We nearly died in the stinking hot weather. Anyway, it was all flooded and the paddy was dead, dead, dead. They took video where the crop looked good, where it was green and ripe. They don't shoot the stuff that didn't grow—you can't say anything about that. The wet paddy smelled foul. The procuring agents refused to take it. Nobody is producing enough grain. No farmer has enough to eat. This is what I know from my own experiences and what I myself have witnessed.

Amid this fiasco, farmers still struggled to meet the rice quota. The widow's family faced insurmountable problems:

My son-in-law and I owed 80 baskets to the government. His 6 acres produce about 200 baskets in a good year. But this year he got less. The government calculates quota by stripping stalks until the grain fills a tin can. Where there's dense growth two or three stalks will fill a can. They said that one acre would produce 80 to 90 baskets. That's what they said... 80 to 90 per acre, compared with 200 for the whole farm in a good year.

Our land was flooded, so we hired a pump. He had only about 60 baskets left, which we took to the



"No farmer has enough to eat."

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

administration—the entire lot, and not a single basket was left. But they said, “This grain is no good, we don't want it,” and they made him bring it all back.

Farmers now mix in dirt and other stuff to increase the weight, so even 10 to 20% contain junk. Others bribe—a couple of bottles of alcohol and maybe they get 10 baskets off the quota.

Now I've come to Thailand to do some trading, sell medicines and stuff, instead of working there. There's nothing to be gained from it.

While Rangoon Division's “rice bowl” is under extreme pressure to increase output, farmers everywhere face the quota and forced labor on top of debt and natural disaster. A Dawei Township farmer with four children said:

I have 3 acres. Last year there was a big flood and my entire farm was destroyed. I replanted, but only got 130 baskets, instead of the normal 200 to 250. We have to pay 12 baskets per acre as quota, so that was 36 baskets. Because of the flood I planted twice, so costs doubled. To pay and still meet the quota meant I couldn't even feed my family. I was conscripted as a front line porter for five months,



“Now days many people have quit farming because the government forces them to raise cash-crops for export.”

during which my family had nothing to live on. The only way was to borrow money. That is why we, the people, never get sufficient food, never develop. Several in my village have not been able to repay debts, and have watched the government confiscate their land and transfer it to other farmers.³³

We learned that the government forces people to raise crops for export even when they have nothing to eat. We read about this practice, environmental problems and poverty in the Shan State:

Central Shan State around Hsi Paw and Hsen Wi has big paddy plantations. But now days many people have quit farming because the government forces them to raise cash-crops for export. Paddy also is becoming less beneficial for farmers. Agriculture Department officials push new strains of rice unsuited to the soil and cool weather. They also push soybeans and peanuts as cash crops. But peanuts drain fertility, and the soil must be left to regenerate or it will be useless. The government pays less for produce here than in central Burma. For all of these reasons, people are quitting the land.

It seems that government input to agriculture had always created problems. We read how the BSPP failed to invigorate the land:

During the BSPP period, especially in the early 1980s, farmers traded paddy for chemical fertilizers under the quota system. At first, crops were good, but over time the soil deteriorated and the produce lost its flavor. More fertilizer was required to get the same yield. Now much of this land no longer produces; the chemicals caused permanent damage. Nowadays, the only chemical fertilizer comes from China, and only big landowners can afford it. Large areas once cultivated in Hsen Wi are now barren, commodity prices are rising and people are hungry. Disused land is taken by the army.

We also have a report about hunger in Arakan State, where the Muslim minority, known as Rohingyas, are generally denied Burmese citizenship and have been repeatedly swept into refugee camps in Bangladesh. International human rights organizations noted:

"I was conscripted as a front line porter for five months, during which time my family had nothing to live on."

³³ AHRC, p.181.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Since most of the Rohingyas are unskilled day laborers, one day of work without pay can mean one day without food for the whole family. The availability of work depends very much on the agricultural cycle, and during summer there tends to be very little work. In the past, Rohingyas traveled to find work in towns, but since 1991 their freedom of movement has been severely restricted... They thus have very few sources of income to begin with, and since the dry season also happens to be the best time for construction work, when forced labor demands are most intense, the burden on the Rohingyas is particularly acute.³⁴

All the above evidence demonstrates food scarcity's prevalence. However, we saw that hunger is not only widespread, but also serious. It has caused malnutrition and death in children, and increased poverty for the whole family. An informant from a fertile region of the Irrawaddy Division, recorded hunger's impact in his neighborhood.



"The soil must be left to regenerate or it will be useless."

³⁴ Human Rights Watch/Asia; Refugees International, *Bangladesh/Burma – Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh; The Search for a Lasting Solution*, August 1997, pp. 11-12. Further information on food scarcity can be found

In 1993 three children died a couple of doors down from my house. All boys, they were around 10, 8 and 6. The children had always been weak and malnourished, especially in the last couple of years. Their bellies were distended and their ribs stuck out—like starving African children we saw in magazines. Their knees were swollen and their calves were sticks. Their skin was white, their lips pale. They often had diarrhea. Their father worked cutting grass and bamboo to build houses. They all died about a week apart—I remember because I went to cut timber for a week, came back and heard one had died. I went back to the forest, came home the next week and another was gone. Just one week later the third child died. We knew the family well. I remember the family's condition and how this all came to pass.

Before they died, the children were hungry for many years. Their family was caught up in a political and economic crisis going on far outside their village.

Their father used to grow bananas, cucumbers, and watermelons on a small plot about two miles outside the village. After the 1988 uprising, the government consolidated the village, so the family had to move. Wild elephants ate all their plants, and so he turned to cutting bamboo. He earned about eighty kyat per day, which might have been enough, but he only got cash when bamboo traders came, so the family sometimes went hungry. Also, at 45 he was getting arthritis and couldn't work every day. His family of seven ate no more than mine of five, and my children were younger. They begged for help frequently. Of course, we pitied them and helped as we could. Apart from rice, my wife gave them salt and fish paste.

When the children got diarrhea nobody suspected anything serious. They took some Burmese medicine, but that didn't stop it. Intravenous drips might have helped, but those cost 150 kyat or so, and nobody could afford them. So they passed away. The parents knew their children were dying,



**Map 2:
Irrawaddy
Division**

“The children had always been weak and malnourished, especially in the last couple of years. Their bellies were distended and their ribs stuck out—like starving African children we saw in magazines.”

in "Rohingya said to be fleeing famine," *The Nation*, 11 May 1997 and Rohingya Solidarity Organisation, "Starvation Looms in Arakan," *Newsletter*, April 1997.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

but there was no health care or medicine. Their father could only weep, heartbroken.

Reflecting on these tragic deaths, the informant commented on the government's role in food scarcity:

I knew this was a wrong and terrible thing. In my opinion, these children died from starvation. If they had adequate food they wouldn't have died. And they weren't the only ones, but I don't know the others' details. In nearby villages there was a minor epidemic. No matter how deep in poverty, people are never excused from demands for labor and money. This family had no alternative but to struggle for survival every day, and so the children died.³⁵

These narratives represent the evidence presented to us. They are but a sampling of the voluminous documentation we received. The next section presents the last source of evidence we considered, Burma's cities and towns.



"We have to tell lies in order to use our own property."

³⁵ See "Food scarcity in the delta," Testimony 26, Appendix 4.

Hunger in the City

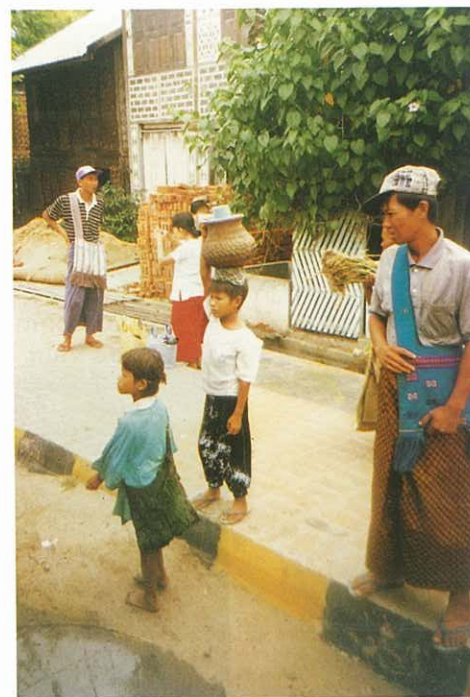
Food scarcity also affects Burma's cities. The Tribunal heard of high food costs, endemic corruption, forced labor, and dislocated rural villagers drifting into cities in search of work or simply to beg for food.

The cost of food rose steadily through the 1990s. By 1998, most poor families in the capital city could manage only one meal per day,³⁶ though food security was by no means elusive only to the urban poor. In January 1997 a former office worker from Rangoon reported,

The biggest problem is feeding our families. Nearly everyone in Rangoon is struggling just to eat. Since we need money for other things as well, usually we eat less or eat very simply. This is a general economic condition, not the problem of only poor people. My house, for example, could be called middle-class, but we face the same problems with food as everyone else.³⁷

Poor urbanites earn their food one day at a time:

Sundry workers include petty vendors, tri-shaw drivers, hired laborers, and the like. They earn between 50 to 180 kyat per day, barely sufficient to cover the cost of rice. They purchase only 2-3 pyi at a time. Agricultural laborers working for the government get only 20 kyat per day, but have the privilege of purchasing 12 pyi of polished rice for only 20 kyat. Sometimes they get afternoon meals free. Most are women and teenage children. Only the combined income of all members in a household enables people to survive.³⁸



More visible are the social symptoms of food scarcity: poverty and children dropping out of school to work.

³⁶ American Embassy Rangoon, p. 33.

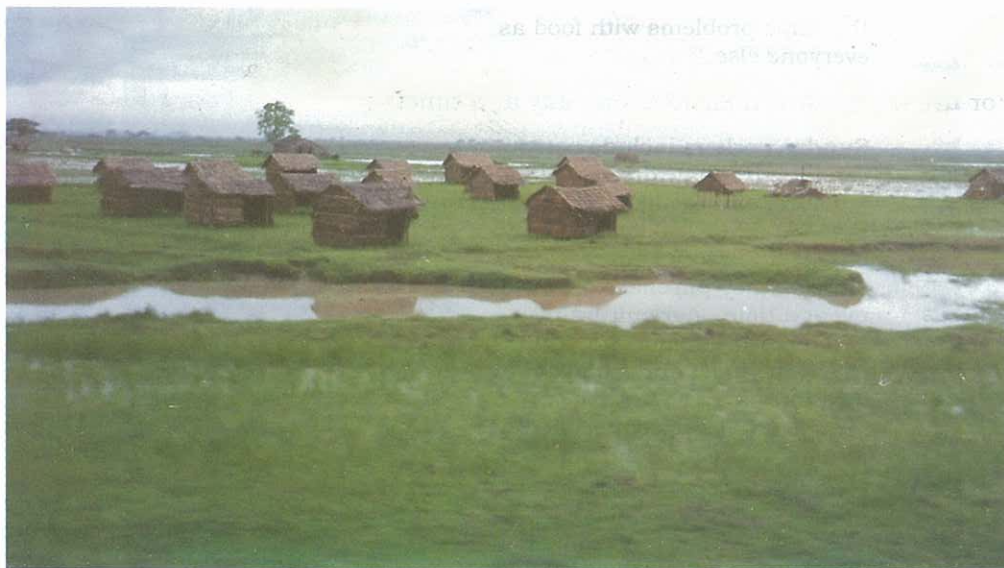
³⁷ "The Inside Perspective," *Burma Issues*, January 1997.

³⁸ AHRC, p. 186.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

Civil servants fare no better. While they may receive some benefits, their income is sapped by a range of petty fees: thirty kyat for monthly charge for volunteer fire watch, fifteen for porter fees, two hundred for rice, twenty for assorted benefits, ten for special consumer discount rights, fifty to support festivals, and two hundred for electricity. Half of one's salary may be lost to such fees.³⁹ Compounding this loss are stagnant wages from the government. Even a substantial pay raise in the early 1990s was lost to inflation:

That the government has basically kept wages fixed only exacerbates these conditions. A 1993 wage-hike averaging around 30% for all civil servants has not helped to prevent the slide in real wages. The official CPI was running at 30% annually between 1989 and 1993, and has risen since then. On the basis of private estimates, prices of basic necessities in the unofficial/black markets in Rangoon and other major cities across Burma have been rising at an average annual rate of over 100% since 1989.⁴⁰



"I saw people fleeing or being relocated to the outskirts of town."

³⁹ National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, *Human Rights Yearbook 1996*, July 1997, p. 221.

Government workers struggle to eat in ways which affect everyone else. The Tribunal heard that, perhaps inevitably,

bribery and corruption are on the rise. Civil servants are more interested in getting outside incomes, looking for perks and extra cash from their jobs, and any chance to leave for better jobs outside the civil service. Private companies pay better, especially foreign companies. An ordinary civil servant earns between 900 and 1200 kyat per month. Despite the discount rice they can not keep up with inflation.⁴¹

“An ordinary civil servant earns between 900 and 1200 kyat per month. Despite the discount rice they can not keep up with inflation.”

A witness from Shan state told us personally how poverty and corruption among government teachers affects the nation's education system:

In 1988 we moved to Taunggyi, but the education system wasn't good there, the teachers weren't very enthusiastic. Because they needed extra income, in the classroom they didn't teach the full curriculum. To pass the exams, students had to pay the teachers for extra tutoring.

As in rural areas, these various expenses and fees compound the authoritarian demands by the government. Though the cities may at first glance appear free from military pressure, security is not guaranteed. The witness continued:

In Taunggyi the government widened the roads. People had their land confiscated and their houses demolished. My family lived in a small town and was never forced to relocate this way, but every day I saw people fleeing or being relocated to the outskirts of town. Nearby villages had to relocate to suburbs, one or two miles out. When I was young I didn't know why they all came, but later I learned that no villages were left in the surrounding countryside; all had been relocated. When I left, there was only one army camp, on a hilltop. I went back to visit in 1994 and saw that outside the two were many new military camps, set up on land that used to belong to the people.

⁴⁰ Mya Maung, "The State of the Burmese Economy under Military Management," in *Human Rights Yearbook 1995*, National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, May 1996, p. 33.

⁴¹ *Confidential Report to Burma Issues*, July 1997.

AHRC has listed seven factors causing hunger outside the war zones:

1. Paddy quota

The government taxes farmers through a compulsory rice purchase system based on unrealistic crop yields. The quota is calculated according to acreage, not production, and prescribes unrealistically high contributions. Bad weather, flooding or crop failures due to flawed government projects do not exempt farmers. Many must buy rice then resell it for quota, at considerable loss. Reform has failed.

2. Agricultural development

Programs to increase yield have failed to realize food security. Not only do farmers lose money, but they must borrow money for fertilizers and farm equipment. If they do not to comply with government regulations, they risk land confiscation. Summer rice programs in Irrawaddy Division and Mon State illustrate the effects of these policies. Where crop yields do increase, the government reaps the benefit: surplus paddy is sold for export, rather than distributed to hungry farmers.



"When I was young I didn't know why they all came, but later I learned that no villages were left in the surrounding countryside; they had all been relocated."

3. Land confiscation

The law empowers the government to take away people's land swiftly and efficiently.⁴² Apart from land confiscation, small farmers abandon their land when rice farming is no longer economically viable. They become hired laborers whose daily wage can not guarantee food security.

4. Forced labor

As in civil war zones, the government conscripts uncompensated labor on public works. Such work includes servicing irrigation projects related to the summer paddy program. This labor impedes food security by reducing farmers' time and capital for agriculture.

5. Economic policy

The government has created rice shortages by removing paddy from the domestic market and selling it overseas. Furthermore, this rice has been purchased substantially below market rates. Rice prices have inflated and the kyat has fallen, which affects all food prices. The government has reduced wages and benefits to the army and civil service, contributing to endemic corruption by state officials.

6. Arbitrary fees

Quite apart from the rice quota system, administrative and military officials levy a range of fees, fines and arbitrary taxes. These payments are not part of an official national tax structure, but are instead an institutionalized form of corruption which uses the formal structure of the state to support a shadow economy.

7. Inadequate community health service

Malnutrition and illness are compounded by a general lack of health services and high costs for medicine and health care. Children have suffered hunger, disease and death.

To recap: AHRC has presented a large amount of evidence attesting to food scarcity across a range of economic and political circumstances. This evidence comes from firsthand sources such as depositions and statements, as well as secondary sources analyzing politics and economy.

⁴² Mon Information Service (Bangkok), *Abuses Against Peasant Farmers in Burma*, July 1998.

Many, though not all, witnesses appeared before us and answered our questions. Overall, we find this evidence to be informative, consistent, and credible, and therefore will draw from it our findings and conclusions.



Each smouldering grain of rice recovered from the ashes of war testifies to the farmer's resilience.

Government Response

After scrutinizing the evidence, we arrived at certain tentative conclusions. Following the principles of natural justice, we invited the Government of Myanmar to respond before giving our final verdict. By our letter dated 23 June 1999 addressed to H. E. Senior General Than Shwe, Prime Minister of The Government of the Union of Myanmar, we announced certain preliminary conclusions, all indicating that there has in fact been denial of food, largely through the actions of government.⁴³ We requested the government to reply by the end of July, after which time the Tribunal would finalize its verdict. The letter was delivered, but we received no response whatsoever. Given this failure to reply, we are free to proceed with our findings. If sometime in the future the Government changes heart and submits evidence, it can be included in any future proceedings or reports.

⁴³ The letter is attached here as Appendix 1.

FINDINGS

In light of the evidence before us, as summarized in the previous section, we may render our findings. The People's Tribunal finds that indeed food scarcity is widespread and serious in Burma today. Provisionally, we find Burma to be militarized, and that a causal nexus links militarization to food scarcity. This section of the report details why we arrive at these conclusions.

On the Right to Food

The right to food, as defined by the International Bill of Rights, has been denied to a large but unknown number of people. As explained in the scope of the Tribunal, the right to food invests certain positive obligations in all sovereign states. Burma has never ratified the relevant international legal instruments, but this failure to publicly accede diminishes neither the validity nor the universality of the concepts they represent. In fact, the Government has committed itself to them in its own public statements.

The Right to Work

The evidence consistently and convincingly illustrated that the state prevents people from working to achieve food security. Farmers are prevented from using their land, water and other natural resources to provide sufficient food. They are not free to choose when, how and what to cultivate. They are not free to devote their own labor to food security. Communities in armed conflict zones are prevented from using their labor, land and natural resources to achieve food security. Farmers in non-conflict zones are compelled to appease the state first, and feed themselves second. Regardless of their own economic well-being, farmers and others are required to provide goods and services to state institutions, especially the army.

State rhetoric conflicts diametrically with reality, but what Burma's government says about food security demonstrates an awareness of its obligations. For example, in March 1998 the government reported to the



"They fed what they had to the children, and the adults fasted."

“The Government of Myanmar remains totally pledged to the achievement of food security for all.”

World Food Summit, an intergovernmental conference, that “The Government of Myanmar remains totally pledged to the achievement of food security for all.”⁴⁴ The report outlines a series of commitments conforming to the Summit’s Plan of Action:

Commitment One: We will ensure an enabling political, social, and economic environment designed to create the best conditions for the eradication of poverty and for durable peace... which is most conducive to achieving sustainable food security for all...

Commitment Two: We will implement policies aimed at eradicating poverty and inequality and improving physical and economic access by all, at all times, to sufficient, nutritionally adequate and safe food and its effective utilization...

To pursue poverty eradication, among both urban and rural poor and sustainable food security... the Government have laid down agriculture sector policies as follows:

- Free choice of crop production
- Provision of right to cultivate to those who develop new agriculture land or who are cultivating the land
- Provision of land ownership to the perennial crops growers, as long as they are producing commercially...

The Tribunal finds that despite these commitments to ensuring farmers’ rights and food security, the government consistently undermines its own stated goals and obligations. The evidence shows that in civil war zones farmers are simply denied the right to cultivate. Farmers in eastern, central and lower Burma who would prefer to plant beans and pulses, relatively quota-free crops, are nevertheless compelled to grow paddy. The government prescribes land for rice production and confiscates land from farmers who do not grow paddy. We find that these policies negate farmers’ self sufficiency, deny their right to work and deprive them of food.

⁴⁴ Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, *The National Report to CFS on the Implementation of the World Food Summit Plan of Action Until End 1997 (Union of Myanmar)*, The Government of the Union of Myanmar, March 1998, p. 9.

Paddy Procurement

The law empowers Burma's government to purchase for redistribution or resale a percentage of all paddy. A compulsory nationwide program conducted by a government agency, buying substantially below market price, it is effectively a crop tax. The rationale for the low price paid, about half of market value, is to feed the armed forces and provide discounted rice to civil servants. Furthermore, MAPT exports paddy earning foreign currency.

Despite its theoretical merits, the paddy quota fails to promote food security. In practice, the government denies rice to the very people who grow it, people who don't have enough to eat. Hungry farmers grow rice, but the State takes it away without otherwise providing for their food security. This is severe injustice.

The paddy quota is inherently unfair, unrealistically and inflexibly assessing how much rice farmers can spare. Furthermore, through this coercive system the government pays little for rice destined to bring high profits in overseas markets, with no commensurate payment to farmers whatsoever. Corruption and quota pressures mean sometimes farmers must sell even more paddy than calculated. Agents subtract moisture content, and thus demand greater volume. Farmers have little choice but to accept these adjustments. In addition to the MAPT quota, local authorities compel farmers to sell more rice at MAPT prices. This black-market quota may amount to several percent of paddy production. In remote areas, the army conducts virtually all paddy procurement, arbitrarily and with force.

It appears that this system is a major cause of inflation in Burma's economy. Expensive rice means higher costs for all food, and rural and urban people alike can not feed themselves adequately. Given the uniform evidence detailing how paddy procurement siphons rice from rural households, and the economic hardship this system creates for farmers, the Tribunal judges it a significant factor in food scarcity



In practice, the government denies rice to the very people who grow it.

Forced Labor

Forced labor has been Burma's most widely documented and roundly condemned human rights violation.⁴⁵ To maintain our scope of inquiry, we will confine this discussion to forced labor's relationship with food scarcity. In a word, the State's demand for compulsory, uncompensated labor denies the right to food.



"My oldest daughter, who is eleven, always went to do forced labor while we parents looked for food."

Under threat of violence, civilians must work on roads, railways, dams, military installations and a variety of other infrastructure projects. Typically, local authorities (civil servants in non-civil war zones, the army elsewhere) send an order to village leaders specifying the time, place and nature of the work, as well as the number of people required. It could be for one day or one month. Often the order is to recruit one worker from each household. People unwilling or unable to work may find a substitute or pay a cash fine.

Witnesses testified to the economic hardship incurred by this inflexible, time-consuming and sometimes dangerous work. Conditions of forced labor vary throughout the country. Once again, the difference depends on war zones. Portering for the army, minesweeping and serving military installations increase worker risks. Several porters attested to being underfed, neglected and abused. Wherever forced labor takes place, it affects agriculture, household income and food in three ways. First, it reduces the amount of time and energy people spend in productive work to feed themselves. Second, it extracts cash from households. Last, the actual work forces people to face hunger.

⁴⁵ The most comprehensive treatment of forced labor in Burma is found in the International Labour Organisation's "Forced Labour in Myanmar (Burma)."

Forced labor is a common practice with severe repercussions on household economy and food scarcity. The evidence before the Tribunal from a variety of sources indicates that it is a major drain on Burma's rural economy and a significant cause of food scarcity.

Counter-insurgency

Nowhere does the state deny food more blatantly than in combat zones. The Tribunal finds the counter-insurgency program to have absolutely decimated food security in and around combat zones. The strategy is simple but effective: stop food, funds, recruits and intelligence from reaching insurgents by severing ties between guerrillas and civilians. Since the guerrillas generally operate in small mobile units, the Four Cuts fall on rural villages in six ways.

The Army Destroys Food and Crops

Military operations in the civil war zones target the rural food supply. Apparently, the army's justification is that this food, or some portion of it, is in fact being supplied to insurgent forces, and therefore must be withheld. The army does attempt to distinguish between food intended for civilian consumption and food allegedly destined for the rebels. Instead, the army targets crops which provide the local food supply, in fear that if harvested, this rice would feed guerrillas. Tilling the soil, planting, tending fields, harvesting—all phases of agriculture are subject to attack.

The Army Displaces Civilians

Arbitrary and severe violence has destroyed countless rural villages, scattering people throughout the jungles. Where the army conducts intermittent raids but has no permanent bases, civilians may choose to remain in or near their villages, hiding when soldiers approach. Familiar with the local terrain, hunting conditions and edible plants, native inhabitants attempt to survive despite the loss of their homes and farms. The Four Cuts have thus created a phenomenon of internally displaced people (IDPs), living with perpetual food scarcity.

Arbitrary and severe violence has destroyed countless rural villages, scattering people throughout the jungles.

The Tribunal finds that the severest cases of food scarcity, including reports of starvation, occur among IDPs made homeless by the military strategy. Furthermore, this sector of Burmese society has the fewest alternatives when facing a food crisis. The army's presence makes travel hazardous, even when people cross the border into Thailand as refugees.



"They told us troops in the hills have orders to kill anything they see. We are haunted by this."

The Army Relocates Villages

Relocating human settlements is a major element of the strategy, uprooting hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—of people over the years and in many cases devastating the rural economy. This is coerced, involuntary relocation, enforced by the army. Typically, a village either receives written order or a visit by military officers, who command it to move.

The Tribunal found that some areas, such as the eastern Pegu Yoma mountains, have known strategic relocation for nearly three decades. Major forced relocation in Pegu

Division began in the 1970s, when hill villages were moved close to army posts, and numerous restrictions were placed on travel out of the relocation sites. In 1979, one hundred refugees from Thaton district crossed over the Thai/Burmese border and became the first group of Burmese refugees to enter Thailand.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Saw Nyi Nyi, "Burma Issues internal report," 1997, p. 5.

But forced relocation is not confined to any one region; it happens wherever the army faces the threat of insurgency. One of the most comprehensive and damaging forced relocations ever is currently underway in the Shan State, where over 300,000 people have been moved for strategic purposes.⁴⁷ At the relocation sites villagers are called on to work for the Burma army, such as building stockades, doing chores at army posts, guarding roads, building railroads serving as porters, and a variety of other tasks the local military designates. However, many people ordered to relocate do not move to the new sites. They may migrate to cities and become hired workers.

We find that relocation has profound effects on food security. Moving people cuts them off from their land and natural resource base, subsistence farmers' lifeline. The military neither compensates people for these losses nor designates new land. In



"This year we ran from the army four times."

⁴⁷ See Shan Human Rights Foundation, *Dispossessed: Forced Relocation and Extrajudicial Killings in Shan State*, April 1998.

the words of a Tatmadaw officer explaining relocation to villagers, "This is military rule... you stay where we tell you to stay."⁴⁸

Furthermore, food is tightly restricted in relocation centers, depending on the army's perception of insurgent threat and whether rations actually exist. Relocation creates serious long-term food scarcity, rather than seasonal hunger arising from military incursions or heavy taxes at harvest time. A relocated family has lost its land, and with it the children's future security in the rural economy. Economically, they must begin again, often starting from zero.



"This is military rule... you stay where we tell you to stay."

The Army Expropriates Cash and Materials

Relocated or not, people must provide cash, goods and services to local military authorities. Refugees sometimes cite these unrelenting and excessive demands as reasons why they left. Although witnesses call it taxation, there is no connection to any national revenue or excise department. Quite to the contrary, it is an *ad hoc* practice serving military needs, and individual soldiers' arbitrary and sometimes capricious demands. Construction materials, food, livestock, liquor and virtually any other items are expropriated or taxed in this way. The army has also made civilians responsible for

security by threatening heavy fines for any local rebel activity. The military promises economic ruin for any village tolerating guerrilla action.

⁴⁸ Second Strategic Command officer, Colonel Aung Naing Tun, to a meeting of headmen at Thandaung, Papun Township, Karen State, in 1995. "Confidential Report to Burma Issues: Summary of 1995 offensive in Papun Township," 1997.

On Militarization

The Tribunal recognized *prima facie* that Burma has a military government and that the army is prominent in national affairs. These facts of *militarism* were never in doubt, but nonetheless have been amply demonstrated in our foregoing discussions on the right to food. Our inquiry does, however, assess *militarization* as defined in the scope: military ideology, values and social structures pervading and dominating the economic, social and political life of the country. Militarism describes an army pursuing its conventional role with much vigor; militarization describes the pursuit and capture of all society.

We can not study this problem's complexity solely by surveying food scarcity. One would have to define Burma's military institutions, their history, activities, structure and philosophy, then examine in detail their social, cultural and psychological effects. One would need to examine how military ideology is propagated through folklore, education and mass media. Ideally, one would interview military officers, rank-and-file soldiers within the Tatmadaw and its opposition.

Such a definitive inquiry exceeds our scope; it is complex and important enough to warrant a Tribunal of its own. Here, we will confine our assessment to the inquiry at hand: denial of food. We therefore pose and answer the following question: *Do the Tribunal's findings on denial of food indicate militarization of Burma?* We find that they do.

Routine State Functions

We found two major causes of food scarcity to be paddy procurement and public works projects. Although military involvement should not be necessary for these routine functions of government, both fall under explicit and implicit military control.

In theory, paddy procurement is a contract between farmers and the state. Tax collection is a normal and reasonable state duty. To this end, MAPT and associated agencies have staff and offices throughout the country, performing their duty in cooperation with town and village authorities. Furthermore, the national police force, to the extent that it is separate from the army, deals with violations of tax law. Therefore, there is no apparent institutional need for the army.

Nevertheless, the paddy quota has been militarized through coercive military force. Evidence showed that soldiers took rice from farmers late for the quota, and that military officials physically and verbally assaulted

Do the Tribunal's findings on denial of food indicate militarization of Burma? We find that they do.

farmers for not producing enough paddy for quota. For example, in 1997 the Mudon Township Council set a January quota deadline. When farmers were late, soldiers “simply went to houses and barns and took the grain by force.”⁴⁹ In areas without MAPT officers or where the army must provide for itself, the quota is replaced by arbitrary taxation, levied with impunity and military violence. Unlike rice collected by the government then redistributed to the army, this tax is consumed locally by the “tax man” himself. Clearly, the military usurps taxation as a routine and legitimate function of government.

Forced labor also reveals militarization. Like tax, public works such as building and maintaining roads, dams and canals are routine state functions. When critics attack forced labor, Burma’s government objects to a foreign misread of unique and necessary national traditions. However, regardless of whether forced labor is customary or necessary, people resent the danger and economic burden it creates, particularly food scarcity. The evidence shows people not opposed to the public works projects *per se*, or even to donating their labor, but to the military’s management approach.



Militarism describes an army pursuing its conventional role with much vigor; militarization describes the pursuit and capture of all society.

⁴⁹ Mon Information Service, "Human Rights Report 1/97: The Forced Purchasing of Paddy in Mon State," May

Rural traditions like collective farming exemplify that labor could be arranged in other ways. Once again, routine administration does not require military excess. Yet it is overwhelmed by military authoritarianism, and suffers because of it.

Militarization of Agriculture

Burma is an agrarian society. Farming is not just an occupation, but a way of life. Conceivably, high taxes and unpaid labor might constrict agrarian living without threatening the foundation of subsistence agriculture: fertile land and productive work. Yet there has been a militarization of agriculture through continuous preference for military priorities over farmers' needs.

The Tribunal finds that buying paddy, building dams, increasing production and selling rice on the world market all put military interests above food security. On one hand, these imply development and open-market reform. On the other hand, the hand of reality, they have been a human rights disaster. These policies would not be so uniformly terrible if planned and carried out democratically. The essential problem is that militarization simultaneously depends on farmers and negates their way of life.

The government correctly identifies agriculture as Burma's economic foundation, and formally specifies development as a national objective.⁵⁰ Officially, the government's Four Economic Objectives are



"People are only thinking of how to get a little food to fill their stomachs."

1997, Report 1.

⁵⁰ The Four Political Objectives are 1) Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order; 2) National reconsolidation; 3) Emergence of a new and enduring State Constitution; 4) Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution. The Four Social Objectives are 1) Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation; 2) Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character; 3) Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit; 4) Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation.

- Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
- Proper evolution of the market-oriented economy
- Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad
- The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples



Promoting rice cultivation makes sense as economic policy, ensuring a homegrown staple diet.

Furthermore, promoting rice cultivation makes sense as economic policy, ensuring a homegrown staple diet. The problem is that various development schemes and policies never challenge the assumption that Burma needs to recruit, feed and equip a huge army. This army's simple existence strains the rural economy: recruiting farmers to be soldiers; feeding them with other farmers' rice; and buying materiel with rice export. Agriculture has become the basis for military buildup. Controlling and exploiting agricultural production have therefore become military goals. The military pursues these goals in a spirit of conquest and militarism.

This is militarization, not mere militarism, for two reasons. First, it is a thorough, systematic and nationwide orientation towards military control of agriculture, replete with violence, intimidation and military fanfare. Second, and perhaps more telling, is that military structure and ideology take over government, abrogating farmers' self-sufficient way of life. This was clear with the Ngamoeyeik dam, where the government's hierarchy meddled with farmers' expert knowledge of land and water, resulting in flood, drought and farmers simply giving up. When the people complained, "What are you doing? We can't even live here anymore!" officials replied that they didn't know, they were just following orders. It was nearly impossible for

farmers to participate in decisions about agriculture. Militarization's values—buildup of the armed forces, hierarchy, and blind obedience—seem incompatible with agrarian living.

Military in the Media

Food scarcity also suggests militarization through government's control of state media. Again, it is necessary to distinguish simple *militarism*, which might use mass communication to honor or celebrate the armed forces, from *militarization*, in which propaganda goes a step further, promoting military attitudes and priorities. Militarism depicts the army's forceful presence; militarization prepares the whole society to think and feel like soldiers going into battle. Mainstream opinion is made to reflect goals normally confined to the army.

Every day the state reiterates these goals, which are printed in newspapers, announced on television and repeated at public events. Apart from the Four Political, Four Economic and Four Social Objectives of the



Militarization prepares the whole society to think and feel like soldiers going into battle.

State is the People's Desire, a propaganda campaign begun in 1996. The sum of these slogans is supposed to represent the common will. The People's Desire comprises four commitments to safeguarding the nation:⁵¹

- Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views.
- Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation.
- Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State.
- Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy.

The government claimed these statements to be the product of mass meetings featuring speeches, patriotic oaths and unanimous ratification of the People's Desire. As army propaganda, there is nothing remarkable here. All militaries are assigned to protect the State. The People's Desire is remarkable because it is not supposed to be military propaganda, but a summary of civilian wishes. It embodies several ideas:



"We are the lucky ones, to be able to leave."

⁵¹ As broadcast daily on TV Myanmar.

that civilians and the Tatmadaw are indivisible, that what's good for the army is good for the people, and that true victory will come when the populace truly adopts militant nationalism. Conspicuously absent from these aims are political negotiation, poverty eradication and similar "hearts and minds" tactics. Food security, land rights, health care and education, desires that some of Burma's people expressed to the Tribunal, apparently have no place.

State media further confuses the roles of soldier and farmer by continuously reporting on military officials' input to agriculture. Inspecting fields, checking irrigation ditches, making speeches to farmers, reviewing machinery and "leaving necessary instructions" wherever officials go—all are public acts which reinforce the message of army leadership in rural life.

If standard propaganda featuring military speeches and parades reveal militarism, then formulations like the People's Desire, which superimpose military thinking on the whole population, reveal militarization.

Popular Opinion

We found the last indicator of militarization to be witness statements. Witnesses repeatedly expressed that Burma is dominated by military, and that rights and freedoms they wish for are therefore impossible. People believe Burma is hopelessly militarized, and that military influence forces them into misery. This viewpoint was especially convincing in testimony from refugees, who weren't merely opining on politics, but explaining why they left their homes, gave up their land and now live in extreme poverty. The military's predominance is real and pervasive enough to affect people's most important economic and social decisions.

Such statements make three points. First is the perception that military rule is a nationwide reality with serious implications for everybody. The second is that military rule is absolute, leaving no viable alternative other than flight. Not a single witness expressed faith in the justice system or even mentioned Burma's courts. Lastly, traditional values of rural society have collapsed: the state has turned people against each other. It has replaced trust and cooperation with desperate competition for survival. All of these elements can be seen in Saw Roman's direct testimony to the Tribunal:

Many people have experienced far greater suffering than us. We are the lucky ones, to be able to leave. I consider Burma my home and my land, but because of gross injustice and abuse, we are forced to run away. We grew rice until this year. I even planted a new crop, but we had to leave it all. If we harvested early to pay for the journey people would have suspected. So we lost everything.⁵²

Saw Roman's family might have survived another season; perhaps next year's quota will decrease; the neighbors may not be informers after all. Speculation is immaterial, because Saw Roman's view of life in Burma has been militarized. He is resigned to the supremacy of the armed forces. Justified or not this resignation is shared by many, and demonstrates militarization's advances on national psyche.



"Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy."

⁵² See Saw Roman's deposition in Appendix 3.

THE NEXUS

This Tribunal convened to investigate two straightforward questions about human rights in Burma: Is there food scarcity, and if so, is militarization the cause?

In the course of inquiry we reviewed evidence from a variety of first and second hand sources representing all walks of life. The geographic distribution of evidence covered ten states and divisions, from the northeastern-most Shan State to the western border with Bangladesh. This swath of territory includes a range of topographic conditions: fertile river valleys, arid plains and plateaus, tropical forests, remote mountains and coasts. Hunger appeared consistently throughout these diverse regions. The prevalence of food scarcity was also clear in the demographic distribution of evidence. The Tribunal admitted evidence from members of at least eight different ethnic groups. Among the rural population, we heard from subsistence farmers, landless peasants, hired workers, and land-owners. Townspeople and suburbanites, including educated civil servants and teachers, also testified to hunger and its proximate causes. Muslims, Christians and Buddhists alike struggle daily just to eat. The Tribunal is confident that food scarcity is indeed a nationwide phenomenon.

The causes are also national, linking hunger wherever it occurs to a common source. By all accounts, the source is social rather than natural, rooted in the structure and actions of the state rather than vagaries of land and climate. Our findings show that among state institutions, the people of Burma overwhelmingly accuse the military of denying their right to food. The displaced hilltop farmer hiding in the jungle, the impoverished lowland rice farmer surrendering his crop, and the harried civil servant trying to feed and clothe his family all identify the army as the source of their privation.

The abuse of power, rampant though it may be, would not in itself be sufficient to qualify for militarization. The excessive use of force could be explained as isolated incidents, minor flaws or corruption in a well-meaning and essentially noble institution. Poor judgment, weak discipline and loss of self-control are dangers inherent to army field operations everywhere. However, the army attacks on all fronts: strategic, political, economic and ideological. Influence over all political, economic, legal, social and cultural affairs of the nation is prescribed by the needs and priorities of the state, enforced by the military's potential for violence against citizens, and reinforced by the people's lack of legal recourse. This

trend has contributed to state repression of fundamental rights and freedoms, insurgency, communal violence, and particularly to the evolution of a powerful and successful military government. Paddy procurement, agriculture development and rice export are all nationwide policies designed at the highest levels to fulfil military needs first without regard to civilian well-being. The military's role in managing the national economy demonstrates that militarization is centralized, not isolated; systematic, not random; intentional, not accidental.

Normal governance and administration have been subsumed by military authoritarianism. All functions of state which came under our purview—tax-collecting, infrastructure development, economic policy—conform to military priorities and bear the signs of military implementation. Civilians are polarized from the state through continual and excessive demands for food, land and labor. Moreover, the army's obsession with internal security has become so central that it tolerates no form of political dissent. Just as the army treats the people as an Enemy, so too have the people become inimical towards the state.

Nowhere is this polarization more evident than in Burma's continuing armed conflict, in which the state repeatedly destroys and expropriates food, farmland and crops, displaces entire populations and systematically denies people the right to work. Civilians are presumed to be unpatriotic, hostile and seditious and thus in the army's eyes lose all their rights. In non-combat zones, where one might not expect to see similar excesses, again the state levies enormous demands on malnourished farmers, upbraiding them as selfish, lazy and dishonest when they can't comply.

Moreover, the Tribunal has found evidence that the militarization of Burmese society extends beyond the government and its relationship to the people. Insurgent or revolutionary armed groups follow the same pattern of absolute military authority, although with a notable reduction in violence against civilians. Nevertheless, arbitrary taxation and compulsory labor are standard wherever an army takes over. This suggests a transcendent pattern of militarization in which whoever holds a gun rules supreme and may dictate to the people under his control.

While other factors such as natural disaster or mere incompetence may contribute to or exacerbate scarcity, none is as pervasive or consistent, none can explain why food is not available to those who produce it, and none can override the state's role in denying the right to food. The nexus stands established.

The People's Tribunal is aware that Burma is in the throes of a long and difficult democracy struggle, and wishes to emphasize once again the importance of the right to food. Civil rights, political participation, freedom of expression and civilian rule are all important in democratization. So too are the most basic economic and social rights which allow people the physical strength and security to realize and enjoy their political freedoms. Without food, land rights, and a secure natural resource base, the comings and goings of assorted governments and political parties are to the rural poor mere scenes played out on a distant stage.

True democratization means breaking down barriers between political actors and their captive audience. A democracy struggle brings little change if those who lecture, exploit and despise the rural poor simply change from military to civilian costume. Democratization must be a complete change of character. Ultimately, Burma's democratization will depend on widening the stage to accommodate all society, burying the old habit of monologue and building a new culture of dialogue based on mutual interest and respect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on its findings, the Tribunal makes the following recommendations:

1. On the Urgency of Food Scarcity:

All parties must recognize the urgency of Burma's food scarcity before it reaches a crisis. Steps should be taken immediately, in accordance with the recommendations below.

2. To the Government of the Union of Myanmar:

Under international law, all States share a fundamental obligation to safeguard the well-being of their people; this obligation includes ensuring the availability of food. The Government of the Union of Myanmar must address widespread food scarcity throughout the country by giving highest priority to food security as a basic human right, and by:

- a) guaranteeing the rights of farmers to possess and use arable farmland and agricultural products to achieve food security;
- b) guaranteeing that the State will not interfere where people who have been internally displaced attempt to return to their original lands and resume agriculture conducive to food security;
- c) guaranteeing that refugees displaced by conflict can return to their original lands and resume agriculture conducive to food security.

3. To other parties engaged in Burma's armed conflict:

All parties whose participation in armed conflict affects civilians' access to food must recognize that food security is a fundamental right which can never be denied, regardless of political and military circumstances. Where their military action affects the food supply, all armed parties must make protecting and promoting food security among civilians a higher priority than provisioning combatants.

4. To all civilian individuals, organizations and political parties planning for political change:

All such parties working towards political change within Burma, as well as those working for change from outside the country, must first recognize the contribution and the importance of farmers to

Burma's past, present and future. Burma is an agrarian society with an economy dependent on subsistence agriculture. All economic policy must address the well-being of farmers—particularly small and subsistence farmers—and protect and promote their fundamental role in feeding the nation by reinforcing their basic rights to land, labor and economic self-determination.

Consequently, all parties working towards political change must emphasize food security as a national issue affecting all people regardless of race, religion, location or political belief. Any program for conflict resolution, political change, democratization or the transition to civilian rule must include economic policies which respect small farmers as the backbone of Burma's agricultural economy and promote their interests.

5. To the international community:

a) To State Governments:

The international community must, to fulfil the obligations specified by Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, promote food security, and therefore must:

- i)** accept the importance of food security as a fundamental human rights issue in Burma;
- ii)** study the nature and all causes of the food scarcity situation, with due recognition of the military's role in creating food scarcity;
- iii)** exert influence on the Government of Myanmar to recognize that denial of food is a human rights violation of the most serious and fundamental type, and to guarantee and safeguard food security for all people.

b) To the United Nations:

As global promoter of human rights, and as the forum for State governments, the United Nations must in its relationship to Burma strive to realize the principle declared in Article 1 (2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:

All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based on the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

c) To International NGOs:

International non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seeking to support peace, conflict resolution, democratization, human rights or development in Burma should recognize the fundamental role economic, social and cultural rights play in promoting popular participation and political and social empowerment. Awareness and attainment of the right to food, land, housing, health care and education are critical to building a free and open society.

6. On the Criminal Implications of Creating Food Scarcity:

Through the systematic militarization of Burmese society, the Government of Myanmar is largely responsible for food scarcity. The government may be considered guilty of a crime against humanity, punishable under international law. If the government and other concerned parties fail to reverse this consistent denial of the right to food, it falls within the scope and obligation of international law to investigate and prosecute those responsible.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

LETTER TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MYANMAR

PEOPLE'S TRIBUNAL ON FOOD SCARCITY AND MILITARIZATION IN UNION OF MYANMAR

Unit 4, 7 Floor, Mongkok Commercial Centre, 16 Argyle Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong. • Fax: +(852) 2698-6367

May 23, 1999

H. E. Senior General Than Shwe
Prime Minister
The Government of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the Prime Minister
Yangon
Myanmar.

Your Excellency,

Due to the current conditions in Myanmar, the Asian Human Rights Commission – AHRC invited us to sit as members of the People's Tribunal on Food Scarcity and Militarization in Union of Myanmar and requested us to hold an inquiry. Accordingly we accepted this invitation. The scope of our inquiry was to hear the people affected by food scarcity and to hear their experiences with hunger and military rule and to determine whether there is a nexus between the two and whether the right to food has been denied to the people of Myanmar. We have had submitted to us evidence by the AHRC and have received testimonies by a large number of witnesses. On the basis of this we have reached the following preliminary conclusions:

1. There exists hunger and food scarcity in both the civil war and non-civil war areas of Myanmar, in particular the Karen, Karenni and Shan states, and the Delta region;

Appendix 1: Letter to the Government of Myanmar

2. The situation of hunger is spreading both geographically (to more regions of Myanmar) and demographically (affecting people from more varied walks of life);
3. The causes of this situation are as follows:
 - 3.1. the destruction of staple crops which provide the local food supply;
 - 3.2. uncompensated conscription of people to work on State projects which do not leave enough time for them to work their fields;
 - 3.3. uncompensated conscription of people to do portering to areas far from their home villages, resulting in not being able to have time to grow food.
 - 3.4. forced relocation of people to areas where rice is difficult to grow, or to unfamiliar terrain making it difficult to find enough food;
 - 3.5. a quota system of the amount of rice to be supplied to the government substantially below market price, which must be supplied whether or not the harvest was adequate. This often leaves the people in debt and without any rice of their own to eat;

Prima facie we are inclined to consider that the above acts of commissions and omissions are as a result of military activity against civilian population and the overall militarization of rural society.

Observation: We are of the opinion that denial of food to a large number of people leading to starvation and disruption of normal life should be considered as a crime against humanity.

We are inclined to consider that such starvation and denial of food to a vast number of the population has taken place under your regime. However, before we arrive at our final conclusions we would like to have your and your government's say in this matter by the end of June, 1999, which we assure you will be duly considered and weighed in the light of all facts and circumstances that are placed before us.

Thanking you and awaiting your response,

Justice H. Suresh
Tribunal Member

Professor Mark Tamthai
Tribunal Member

Dr. Lao Mong Hay
Tribunal Member

APPENDIX 2: CATALOGUE OF EVIDENCE

Summary of material reviewed by the Tribunal

- 26** Depositions to the Tribunal
- 3** Additional submissions to the Tribunal
- 11** Case studies
- 57** Individual testimonies
- 34** Field reports (excerpts)
- 261** Photographs
- 18** Maps
- 12** Additional reports (from non-government organizations, international organizations, Government of Myanmar)
- 35** Media reports (excerpts)
- 2 hrs.** Video footage

APPENDIX 3: DEPOSITIONS TO THE TRIBUNAL

The following are excerpts from oral testimonies made before the Tribunal in April 1999.

First Witness

The First Witness represents an NGO providing food and relief assistance to Burmese refugees in Thailand. The personal details of the Witness cannot be given. This Witness said that there are 12 camps in Thailand housing 115,000 people, and 4 more are across the border. Since the fall of Karen National Union (KNU) headquarters in 1995, the Burma army controls the border and there are more restrictions on movement of refugees. The Witness observed: "The refugees are increasingly aid-dependent. Aid agencies now provide virtually all food, including rice, salt, fish paste, yellow beans and oil, as well as building materials, mosquito nets and blankets."

The First Witness explained the impact of the Government's forced relocation programs. "Relocations are usually done to facilitate 'development' work, such as roads and bridges at the new site. People are ordered to meet paddy quotas but are no longer able to do so as their villages have been relocated. This year, soldiers are no longer provided with rice and have been ordered to find their own rations. They go to villages, take the rice they need to feed themselves for a short time and destroy what remains. They don't order people to bring it to distribution points. Orders can be in verbal or written form, and relocation instructions allow villagers as little as three days. Orders are made regardless of whatever work the people may be doing at the time. For example, at harvest times people are ordered to work at construction sites. Families send their children while parents continue the harvest." The Witness stated that the military relocates populations to secure areas and also to create a labor force in those areas. The Witness was asked whether paddy land is available for at relocation sites. "No. For example, the relocations about two years ago in Karenni State involved 70-80,000 people, and entire regions full of villages were moved. People had four choices: 1) go to the relocation site, under Burma army control; 2) go to find relatives in a local town and stay with them; 3) become displaced in the forest; 4) cross the border into Thailand, as a last resort. The vast majority of people don't want to come. Many Karenni went to the relocation site at Shadaw, and now two years later we see people arriving in Thailand from the relocation site because they simply could not survive there. They tried. There are people who said their father starved to death. And somebody said, 'This does not happen in Burma, people do not starve.' But this is what it's come to in some areas. They've been displaced for over two years. They've tried and tried to make ends meet and now finally they've decided they cannot any longer and they've come to the border. And we're talking about weeks walking. These are long journeys, and when you've got maybe five children and you've got to find food on the way it's extremely difficult. The good thing in them coming across the border now is that we can get firsthand information." Generally, a relocation area is an area under military control. "Usually they are impoverished lands that no one else wants. The people are given no assistance in any form. The big issue is that whereas before people were dislocated due to fighting between the Burma army and the ethnic insurgencies, and the villagers were caught in the middle so they had to flee; now it's not because of any offensives that we are seeing them having to move. It's directly because of military activities against civilian villages. The Burma army specifically order civilians to clear out of areas they have lived in throughout their lives. More are planned. The army marks off an area and send the orders to clear it."

The Witness explained that there are large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs), "yet the concern is that nobody recognizes the existence of IDPs. The SPDC says that there are no IDPs, therefore no organizations working inside Burma cannot address the issue. They are prevented from traveling around." The Witness said: "It's not that internal displacement has just begun happening. I think it's been going on for years, but they had their own mechanisms to deal with it. And the reality is people survive on very little. Another aid group divides people into three categories: (1) those with enough rice for two or three meals per day, but not enough to see them through to the next harvest; (2) those with enough rice for one

meal per day and one of boiled rice/roots; (3) those with no rice, who live off boiled roots. So people survive on the barest minimum. They've had to run all their lives. Some people have moved 14 times in the last 20 years." The Witness was asked: "(Q: In your opinion, if most of the people coming across the border weren't being chased, if there were no free-fire zones, do most of them feel they could survive where they have come from?) Yes. That's all they want. These people who came across are not looking for aid. I don't think the rural populations could care less about who's in power in Rangoon. For them it's not about democracy. For them it's to be left alone in peace. (Q: So you would support the basic thesis of this Tribunal, which is that access to food for large sections of Burmese people has become a serious problem?) Yes, and it's becoming an increasing problem. It's a serious problem now and from what we are seeing, it's an ever-growing problem. We see no sign of it improving in any way."

Acharn Pornpimon Trichot

She is at the Researcher, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University. She says that the trouble started after 1990 when the state began interfering with the people too much. She says: "The Government has two arms for control. One is the army, the soldiers themselves, the other is the bureaucracy. To have these two organizations work, you have to support them. The military needs food and privileges. The civil service is needed to run things like the paddy quota and taxation systems, and they also need their rice and salaries." She was questioned: "(Q: It has been mentioned that they have reached a point where the army also has had to cut back on privileges. So it can't even feed itself?) I would say that. And it has resulted in soldiers taking rice and anything they can get their hands on from the people. They used to have an excuse to take this action against the minority ethnic groups, but against their own people it is a very bad sign. Out of poverty they are doing that. It's surprising, because even for a hardcore military to do things like this that affect people can be very dangerous."

Hseng Nong Lintner

She is a photo-journalist/translator. She was originally from Shan State. She is now a Swedish citizen. She meets people at the Burma border and she can collect information which she can pass on to NGOs. She says: "Shans always grew enough rice for three uses: (1) for themselves; (2) for religious offerings; (3) for guests. The land in Shan State is so fertile that if you just throw the seed it will grow, if nothing is disturbed and there are no interruptions. The government claims that its operations are counter-insurgency, but they have always had the upper hand. It is just a policy of annihilation, without ever questioning why there is insurgency all over the country. Relocated people have to leave an area where they are already growing crops and go to another area where they have no land. They go and then can't make a living and, not being close to any border, go into the forest and try to survive. But they still need cash to buy clothing and salt. To survive they need more than just rice. On the hillside the only crop they can grow is opium, so that's also why production increased." After 1988, the army was expanded: "They began facing the issue of how to feed this big army, now stronger than before. So they now demand that soldiers take care of their own food supply, and from there the problems have increased. They confiscate land and instruct people to work for the army, growing food or building barracks. Even if households have only old people or children, they must go."

She further says: "Yet what the military is doing doesn't make sense. On the one hand they talk about more production, on the other they are putting more pressure on people. In the town of Murg Phan, Shan State, for example, a river used to go around the town, but now they have filled it with earth, and for what reason? The river was not very big, but it was enough for the town. And now people can't grow rice because of that. It used to be that if people didn't have enough rice in their fields they would find some cash and buy rice to fill the quota, if they couldn't avoid it. But now there is not enough rice to buy on the black market. There's not even that. Shan State used to have a self-reliant barter system. People growing rice could trade with people growing tea and beans, and so on. But now that has been interrupted by demands from the central administration. A lot of rice grown in Shan State goes out, so there is less for those not growing for themselves. Rice imports to Shan State from central Burma are prohibited, so that must have some effect."

Fourth Witness

She works on emergency relief to refugees along the Thailand-Burma border. Her personal details cannot be published. She says: "[A] huge forced relocation program in Shan State started in 1996. In early 1996, around 20,000 [refugees] came in [to Thailand] and the total number of arrivals had increased to about 80,000 by early 1998. Since November-December 1998 until now the number has again gone up. We monitor conditions at border villages through headmen, who keep very detailed monthly records on where the people have come from, how many etc. Without exception, all the people are coming from forced relocation. They come for a variety of reasons connected to relocation." She says that in the last few months a large number has come to Thailand. In one crossing point "we monitor thoroughly, we have records of about 1500 crossings per month. There are several other points." She says how people are forced to leave: "Three or five days after a relocation order is given, the soldiers come back. If the villagers haven't left, either they'll say 'go now,' or burn the village, or shoot—there are so many different scenarios. This has happened to 1460 villages in the central Shan State area. Then if they're caught back at the village they're told they'll be shot on sight. Most of the villagers haven't got permission to go back. A rough estimate from various sources is that out of 300,000 people who were relocated, 100-120,000 have come to Thailand. About 100,000 are in the relocation sites, and then about 50,000 have gone to other areas in Shan State, maybe on the periphery of towns where they can find work, have relatives and so on. About 50,000 are hiding. They don't want to go to the relocation sites and are trying to survive in the jungles." She explains how people still desire to go back, but they are not allowed: "After the relocations started, there were some people who came to Thailand straight away, who weren't going to try to survive at the relocation sites. Some people went to the relocation sites and tried to survive but couldn't, and when their supplies ran out, they came to Thailand. Some people have gone to the relocation sites, haven't managed to survive there and have gone back into hiding in the area, to cultivate fields in the hills. They can't hide in large groups, and tend to stay only a couple at a time. And often this is very different from what they are used to, because the Shans live in valleys. But they can't stay in the valleys, because they'd be targets, so they have to stay in the hills and cultivate hill fields, living in the jungles which they're not used to. It's a very different lifestyle that they're forced to live."

She narrated the tragic story of a 17-year-old girl whom she met the previous day: "Her family was relocated to Kun Hing in 1996, from a village just south of there. Her family first went to the relocation site and tried to stay but couldn't. They tried various means. So she, her father, her mother, and three younger brothers and sisters went back into hiding after a year. There's a river with lots of islands on it, so they hid on an island. She said there were two families on the one island, which was heavily wooded. They stayed there for two years and her father made money by fishing, as they planted a little rice but it wasn't enough. He would go out on a boat and at night he would go secretly to Kun Hing and sell the fish in the market. Just last month he went back to his old village, to try to get some cattle he left there, to sell them. He was shot and killed. The family lost their breadwinner, so they moved to Kun Hing and the mother sent her to Thailand to earn money."

Padoh Kwe Htoo Win

He is Chairman of KNU's Mergui-Tavoy District [Tenasserim Division]. He says that in the February 1997 offensive "Out of the 217 Karen villages in the region, 80% were destroyed, deserted or forcibly relocated by the Burma army. Forcibly relocated people have had no chance to grow rice." He says "IDPs groups vary in size. The smallest has 2 or 3 families, the largest 30-40. According to our data, the total number of IDPs in the Tenasserim region is around 20,000. They survive in the forest any way they can. We stay with them, we travel with them and try to assist. Some do not have enough food, especially in the rainy season, but they try to survive. If they do not have rice, they boil bamboo shoots and roots. We can't take food to them, but if we get some assistance like cash from NGOs or friends we distribute it. They can buy food, because they have some contact with people at relocation sites. The biggest concentration of IDPs in our area would be in Palaw and Eastern Mergui Townships. People in Palaw Township who were situated along the Tenasserim River fled into the mountains rather than go to the sites. Medicine is a problem. We try to help, but there is never enough. Malaria is especially prevalent."

Saw Ehna

He is Deputy Editor of *Kwe Ka Lu*, a Karen language newspaper. Last year, his editor had asked him to go and study the IDP situation in the Tenasserim Division. That is how he has first hand information. He could move only with great difficulty. When he met IDPs, he asked them: "What do you think about your future?" but mostly they just answered that they flee the Burma army and die in the jungle of poverty and starvation, that's better for them than living under the Burma army. The biggest thing for them is to flee the army. When they are hiding, also they are afraid, so they don't think about whether or not they will starve or die in the jungle. They just want to get away from the Burma army. Sometimes I asked, 'How long will you live in the jungle, how long will you hide?' but they didn't answer. They have no plans other than to get away from the army. Staying as IDPs, they eat fish, wild potatoes, bamboo shoots. If they can get a rice crop, they can survive. The problem is that when they plant rice, the Burma army come and destroy it, so sometimes they have little food left, and they have to ration it out and mix the rice with leaves and bamboo shoots to make it last. The villagers are classified as supporters of KNU, and the Burma army has a strategy especially to destroy food, crops and fields, and to arrest or shoot people on sight. This is a free-fire zone, so they can shoot without questions, or sometimes arrest and later torture and kill." According to him, the future for people there is not good.

Khu Turein

He is from Karenni State. There is little flat land there. Most agricultural land is under hillside cultivation. Most people live in forests, farming on hill slopes. In 1982, the Government began forced purchases of rice, partly to pressure the people not to support the revolution. "Since 1992, the military government has required summer paddy in Karenni areas, and this has created many hardships. In the beginning growing one crop per year was sufficient, but the summer crop meant depleted the soil so even the monsoon crop wasn't good anymore. Another thing was when they introduced seeds to use for the summer crop they brought them from another area, and these were unfamiliar to the local people. Land owners had to irrigate for summer rice at their own expense, which was very costly. The reservoirs didn't have enough water. At first, the administration sold fertilizer, but later they stopped and the crop yield fell."

In 1996, forced relocation began. He says: "Firstly, they sent written orders to villages with fixed dates by which to arrive at the relocation camps. If people didn't follow the order, when the military arrived, they burned the village. In 1996 there was one example of some elderly people left behind in a village with some rice to eat by villagers who had left. The families hoped to return to the elderly people later. They wrote in front of the houses that 'we have left some old people behind here, please do not harm them because they are too old to travel to the relocation camp.' But when the troops came and inspected the village and saw the people left behind, they reacted angrily, as if the people didn't obey them, and burned down the houses with the people in them." He also says: "From 1997 to the present, most families in relocation sites couldn't eat rice, and had to eat maize- if they were able to grow it. Most go to beg in nearby towns, and some people can offer them rice, a tin or two, or sometimes just one or two spoons full. There are also some villages that have not been relocated, but the people in these places must pay a lot of fees, serve as porters and so on. The army demands logs, porters, money, and even cattle manure to make fertilizer for the town garden, which the people would otherwise have used on their own land. People are not paid for these things. If they do not provide as ordered, they will probably be punished by having to do labor at a military outpost, such as digging trenches and doing domestic work for the soldiers."

Ninth Witness

This witness is from Shan State. For security reasons she cannot be identified. She says: "Before 1998, the situation in Shan State was easier, as most families had sufficient income and food. At this time there are a lot more difficulties. The deteriorating conditions relate to the broader militarization of Burma. The government purchases rice forcibly and at very low prices, such as one-fifth the market value. If you can not or do not sell to the government then they take action against you." Here also there is forced relocation: "Forced relocation has come to Shan State. In the south, townships like Pin Lone, Murg Nai, Larng Kher and so on have had to move in their entirety. The Burma army has carried out relocation the same as in

Appendix 3: Depositions to the Tribunal

Karenni State, issuing deadlines and threats that they will come back and harm the villagers. According to government development plans, whenever they want to extend a road from place to place they confiscate land and destroy houses and crops without compensation."

Thra Paw Moo

He is a teacher from one of the refugee camps. He was a government employee under the socialist regime. He says: "As a Grade 2 civil servant, I got some rations and 750 kyat/month. The food benefits were not free. We could buy rice at the discounted government rate. At that time, one pyi of rice at the market rate was about 13 kyat, so my salary of 750 kyat made me quite well off. But now the price of rice has gone up to at least 80 kyat per pyi, yet the pay hasn't risen. Of course, workers are unable to make ends meet, so they are forced into corruption to survive." He came to Thailand in 1991 and since then he has not gone back.

Naw Miroline

She came to Thailand in February this year, "to find work, as the cost of living is now so high there, and there are no ways to earn an income." She worked in Irrawaddy Division as a farm laborer. Whatever she earned planting rice in the rainy season was not enough to survive the year. This is the fate of all farm laborers. She referred to the paddy quota system: "In our area there is a paddy quota set by the military, at the rate of 12 baskets per acre. The government pays about half the market rate. The quota is paid by the land owner, not workers like me. If they don't pay the quota, they can be arrested." Some people borrow paddy from others. Some families don't have enough for their own consumption, particularly when the food crop is affected by floods etc.

Kyan Du

He arrived in Thailand this year. He worked on a rubber plantation in Pa-an Township. He says: "Before it was converted, this land was peanut fields and swidden cultivation. The military said that these fields weren't real farms, took the land and converted it to a rubber plantation. They declared it a development project. It was the villagers' land, and they paid taxes on it. It was difficult, but people would find a way." Now, that is no longer the case, as the farmers have lost their lands and earn a marginal income from subsistence labor.

Saw Lay Thaw

He was in the 1988 uprising. He had to flee in 1989. At first he worked in the revolutionary areas. Later he stayed in a refugee camp. He also collects information from people who have fled Burma. Based on his experience, he says: "It is clear that there is now real scarcity of food. For example, at the time I left, a cup of tea was one and a half kyat. Now it is 20 to 30 kyat. But who can afford tea when one pyi of rice is at least 70 to 80 kyat? From the information I have collected, this is my assessment of the situation. It has become worse and worse until the point that some people now even have to sell the water poured off from boiled rice [for others to drink]."

Saw Tin Win

He is from Karen State. He travels back and forth through the border regions as a member of the KNU Forestry Department. He says: "In my area, there is a demarcated forest that I have to monitor, although it's not under firm control of the KNU. This is a 'black' zone. There are still about 20 villages in the area. In 1998, there wasn't enough rain and this meant that people couldn't grow crops. In this area orders have been given for people to relocate, but instead they fled into KNU areas and they have been able to get some supplies of food and rice sent by aid agencies." He has some hope that people may be able to go back and cultivate.

Thra Lawrence Po

He has stayed in Thailand since 1982. He is originally from the Irrawaddy Division. He says: "Before 1962, there was plenty of rice, both for exports and for people in the country. And a Burmese administrator said to me at the time of the take-over, 'We are not afraid for our economic situation. Our country has the best rice exports in Asia. We are afraid only that the Thais will give arms to invaders'. Yet now Thailand has greater exports, although they did not supply invaders. And because of nationalization and ineptitude, staff were not able to perform their tasks. They are clever in other ways, but not good at administration."

Saw Htoo K'baw

He stayed in Kyauk Kyi Township until 1997. His statement is recorded in the Submission made by AHRC. In 1997 he had to leave Burma. He says: "My village was destroyed. Also, I had worked as a swidden farmer when I was there, and up to 1997 it was still possible to grow something. The Burma army didn't come to tell us to move. They just came in, patrolled up and down, shot at random and killed people sometimes. They didn't give any orders or details. If they saw people they just killed them. So in this area we hid our rice stocks in the forest, but if the army saw them then they burned everything."

Saw Roman

He is from the same place as the previous witness. He talks of the Four Cuts operation that began in 1973-74 and says: "We were driven from our villages in great numbers, cattle taken, people murdered. That operation was called 'Operation Aung Soe.' At the time, I was a schoolboy, and I remember that my relatives - uncles, parents, young people and old - had to serve on forced labor projects. We were terrified by their cruelty and fled. People were arrested and tied to trees. Some who escaped died fleeing, others made their way out with nothing, some even without clothes. Some who were recaptured were tortured and executed. It was a disaster for our people. Starting from that time, our troubles have increased steadily, including those regarding food."

He talks of the quota system which does not take into account the actual production. He says: "They get the quota but still they go around the place demanding other things and bullying the people. In December 1998, my family couldn't meet the quota and had to buy rice at the rate of 50,000 kyat for 100 baskets, which we resold to the government for 30,000 kyat. So they make at least a 20,000 kyat profit. Anyway, I worked yellow beans to get some money back. These things happen all around Kyauk Kyi Township, not only in my area. There are a lot of swidden farms there too, so people have to go to the hillsides to harvest, but nowadays they don't allow people to go. It's very dangerous to collect a harvest." He also says: "Many people in my area have experienced far greater suffering than we. We are some of the lucky ones, to be able to leave. I consider Burma my home and my land, but because of the gross injustice and abuse there, we are forced to run away from our country. We had grown a rice crop up until this year. I had even planted a new crop, but we just had to leave it all. If we reaped some and sold it to get some money for the journey then people would have been suspicious. So we lost everything."

Nyunt Thein

He is from Karen State. He was working as a betel nut farmer. The Burma army entered his village in 1997. In 1998, he had to flee. He says: "After the Burma army came in, we tried to stay for a year, but we had to do forced labor for them and serve as porters. We had to pay various fees and taxes if we didn't work, or serve as porters. Every month it came out to thousands of kyat. When you are a porter, you have to feed yourself or give 1000 kyat per day for a substitute. I couldn't bear it any more, but anyway we stayed on, in spite of everything they forced us to do. Then they shot dead four villagers, so finally I didn't dare to stay. I couldn't bring any of my crop with me, and the soldiers got my buffalo. I don't dare to go and live there any more, so whoever wanted to eat those nuts did so; whether Burma army troops, villagers, or whoever. I had to leave my land and everything behind. So did many others." He went back to his house once after coming here, about a month before he was deposed before us. He says that every thing of his had been taken or eaten.

Saw Hsar K'baw

He came to Thailand in 1984. Now he works in a refugee camp as a teacher. He says: "Last year I went to work at a timber mill in the area of Karen State, only a few hours from the border. In that area, I saw many people living displaced without shelter, in huts by the streams and in the hills. Most of them had come from Myawaddy and Kya-Inn Seik Kyi Townships. But they couldn't cross into Thailand, because the DKBA didn't want them to leave. The DKBA said they would feed the people, but I saw that most of them didn't have enough food. They all faced the same problems, losing their land, paying too many fees, serving as porters and not having work. People have no way to support their families. So they thought that it would be better to go to the refugee camps. They came but cannot pass the DKBA. Also the Thai military doesn't want people coming in. It's very hard for them. Now I've heard that many of those people have tried to find new places in the hills and jungles. The biggest problem is that there is no medicine. They can find food, but when they get sick there are no medicines, and some die. Sometimes sick people are allowed to travel to refugee camp clinics, but usually by that time they are already in a critical condition and die soon after."

Khun Kham Koh

He was originally from Shan State. He was a member of the Pa'o National Organisation. In 1991, they made a cease fire deal with the Burma army. He did not approve of this. He is now a member of Independent Historical Research Association - Pa'o. He says: "During the U Nu period, according to the statements of elders that I have documented, food and agriculture conditions were good. After Ne Win's take over in 1962, things began to get worse. Some people suffered from starvation at that time. When the military government came up with the Burmese Way to Socialism, only army officers could take senior administrative positions. But these officers didn't have technical expertise needed for managing agriculture, and were ignorant of the different conditions of the places they were assigned. In Pa'o areas, people were ordered to work crops which were untenable and without any support for the farmers. The administrators came at harvest time and scolded people for crop shortfalls, without ever having helped or knowing what they were talking about. Some people who hadn't produced anything at all lied out of fear, saying 'we got this much or that much.'"

Although last year there was little rain, the Government demanded its quota. So "the villagers had to buy rice. They couldn't do anything else. One half basket of paddy cost 700 kyat in the market. The government set the purchase rate at 200 kyat. They lost 500 kyat per half basket. If they didn't comply, they would have their land confiscated by the military. When land is confiscated, the army puts up signs saying 'Military area: no trespassing'. That's why people know they have to pay the quota. To survive people eat a boiled mixture of rice, potato and wild wheat. The situation is the same for many villages." He also explained how this has resulted in increased narcotics production: "Farmers unable to cultivate rice to eat and sell will ultimately grow drugs. The drug plantations are small and easily hidden. So annual production of narcotics is increasing and there is competition between drugs and food. For example, in Shan State increased production of narcotic drugs has resulted in reduced production of citrus fruit plantations. One has directly offset the other. Yet people are simply growing these drugs to get money to buy food. They can't see any other way. So this is a big problem."

APPENDIX 4: TESTIMONIES PRESENTED TO THE TRIBUNAL

The following are excerpts from selected testimonies presented to the Tribunal prior to April 1999.

1. The mountains of war

P'deh War, a 19 year old male student from Papun Township, Karen State.

On 28 March 1997, the Burma army started a strong offensive in our township. The KNU soldiers are very short on ammunition, having no more than about 20 bullets per weapon, so they heard that the Burma army order was- "If the KNU shoots once, shoot ten times; if they shoot ten times, shoot 100 times; if they shoot 100 times, shoot at them all day."

None of the villages has more than about 40 houses- all are small mountain communities. Every house has a barn. The Burma army soldiers began along the Bilin River valley, at a village called Ta Me Der. They entered burned all the houses, rice, and the villagers' possessions. Virtually everything was destroyed, except a few caches of rice successfully hidden in the jungle.

On April 3, IB 51 soldiers entered Thay Khoh Mu Der village and all the villagers evacuated without preparing any food for themselves. This became a big problem when they fled into the deep forest and couldn't get any food. They had nothing to eat. The Burma army troops slept in the village, and after eating pigs and chickens, they burned down 36 houses and 14 barns containing 200-400 baskets of paddy each. They saw a place where villagers had hidden about 80 baskets. The villagers had no food, so some decided to come back for the hidden rice. So five men fearfully returned, and just before they arrived they saw the soldiers, so they deliberated, "Do we dare to go back and take the grain?" And one said, "Never mind, we will go back. If we die, we'll die together and if we survive, we'll survive together." They had walked barely a few more steps when the soldiers opened fire. One of them, named Phar Khin Sein, aged 50, was killed. The other four escaped. After that the soldiers burned the 80 baskets of rice.

In total, 67 houses and 55 barns were burned down within a few days, as well as 10 hidden rice stores, each with about 40 baskets of grain. Later, the villagers faced serious food and shelter problems- they were forced into the jungle. Having destroyed all these places and this food the soldiers returned to Ker Gaw Lo, which they had not destroyed, and took porters. Rather than flee, the village elders tried to negotiate with the soldiers. The army demanded 4000 kyat from each person not going to serve as a porter.

The soldiers destroyed and burned all the people's property. On April 8, IB 135 entered Hkeh Pa Htah village and burned all 38 houses and 23 paddy barns containing 100- 200 baskets grain each, and ate two buffaloes. All the villagers, about 2000 in number, fled before their arrival and hid in Hkoh Khi forest. Many villagers from surrounding areas had already fled to Hkeh Pa Htah. They brought with them enough food for one month, so in the forest they felt very tired and worried about their future. If the army withdrew the people would return and try to sow a crop. If not, there was no way to survive in the jungle, so then they would probably be forced to go to Thailand.

This unit of soldiers came bit by bit until making their rendezvous with the other unit [IB 51] at Thay Khoh Mu Der. The two groups began to consolidate all people around the army camps. Those villagers staying outside their control, even children or the elderly, would be treated as insurgents.

They proceeded to burn down Doh Daw Khi, Mu Khi, Too Gaw So, Hti Thaw Pe Khi, and Hkeh Der villages. The first was Doh Daw Khi, where 20 houses were burned down. They also burned down 17 barns there. The total number of houses in these villages, in addition to Doh Daw Khi, would be about 80. Immediately after that, the soldiers entered Maw

Appendix 4: Testimonies Presented to the Tribunal

Law village where all of the villagers, 10 families, fled as quickly as possible to rendezvous at the big caves in the forest. They had taken very little food and had to eat porridge for three weeks until some KNU soldiers escorted them to Yeh Mu Plaw area. They travelled by night in small groups. The soldiers shot at 30 buffalo at Maw Hsar Plaw. Those not killed were blinded and could not graze. The army left a note, "These animals were support for KNU, so they are our enemies, therefore we had the right to kill them."

Furthermore, they burned 18 houses in Ti Thoo Der and left a message on a tree which said "Kill the Karen race!" The villagers fled to the forest for more than three weeks. There were more than 200 people. On April 28, it rained very hard, so a lot of the people got fevers, especially the children, and there was no medicine. The people were drinking water from the streams. As for food, most had managed to bring some rice and salt. Apart from that, they had to forage for vegetables in the jungle. Most people ate one or two cups of rice per day. I asked some villagers, "If the route opens up, will you cross into Thailand?" They answered, "We absolutely won't. We will live or die in these mountains. If we die we'll die together. If we eat, then we'll eat together."

According to a report by Saw Dee Gay Htoo in October 1998, the Yeh Mu Plaw region continues to experience serious incursions as part of the 1998-99 offensive. He also managed to make contact at the end of December 1998, and reported that at that time the Burma army troops were stepping up the regional offensive, spear-headed by the destruction of all and any crops and food stocks already made scarce by poor weather conditions.

2. War and hunger in the 1990s

Saw Htoo K'baw, a 36 year old teacher and father of five from Papun Township, Karen State.

I arrived in Papun Township in 1981. I went to help the people there, and as a high school graduate I was given a teaching position in the [KNU] high school. Until 1992, conditions weren't too tough. At first, the school committee provided me with food and some money, which was adequate. But in January 1992, the Burma army began to battle KNU. They patrolled and skirmished, and 1992 was the first year that we had food problems.

Before all that our area was pretty stable. Less secure places faced regular fighting, causing people to flee into safer areas like ours. There was increasing population pressure over time. When I left earlier this year [1997] the village had reached more than 200 houses, compared to the typical village size of only 30 houses. Originally, apart from growing rice, people had no problems earning a living by fishing; breeding livestock; growing and foraging for vegetables; cutting timber and trading. KNU taxes were reasonable- one basket of paddy per acre and a little bit more for sugarcane. However, over time it became harder to live by agriculture. Soil fertility suffered. Land should lie fallow for at least a three or four years, but nowadays it's two years at most. That's because of growing populations people should move further away from government control. The land is totally exhausted.

After 1992, I also grew my own rice. I planted 3-4 baskets of seed the first year. Because the soldiers were patrolling and the soil was poor I didn't harvest enough to feed my family, only 5 baskets. After school closed in January, I planned to trade in biscuits, Ajinomoto and clothing. The soldiers began patrolling because of people trading in this way, and they would stop people on the road or shoot at them if far away. I only attempted to trade goods this one time, in 1992. As I was returning with my goods in a group of 5 people, some Burma army soldiers who were off to one side of the path saw us and shot at us. We all dropped our possessions and ran for our lives. So, I lost all my valuables and was discouraged from further trading activities.

By 1994 more villagers had come, the village was getting crowded and dirty, and people were getting sick. Most children under 5 were ill. One illness was "yellow eyes." Apart from the yellowness in the eyes and face, the children's livers were swollen. About 20% of children under five died. Only with urgent medical treatment could they possibly hope to survive. Their skin and eyes yellowed and their livers enlarged. At first people didn't think too much of it and used traditional medicines. When that didn't work, the people tried to get help from outside, but it was too late.

Pu Ta Thoo, a neighbor of mine, lost a two-month-old baby. He went to get a KNU medic, but the child had already been sick for 3 or 4 days. Anyway, the medic had nothing for this illness, only paracetamol and quinine. Pu Ta Thoo had no money for medicine; intravenous drips from Thailand are very expensive, and medicines from inside Burma are unreliable. So the child died. The mother was also ill, weak with fever and headache, although. My family faced the illness too, and what's more we had to flee from the Burma army and stay at the bottom of a river valley. We didn't have spare clothing or mosquito nets, so the children suffered chills.

Work became harder. The soil was losing its fertility. The soldiers patrolled at the time of the harvest, and so crops were destroyed and went bad. Starting from September 1994 my family had to eat rice porridge. Sometimes I had to go without food to feed my family. Sometimes all we had to eat were boiled bamboo shoots and roots.

In 1995, because of constant Burma army movement, we had to be ready all the time. In the hot season I worked odd jobs. The school committee couldn't take care of teachers anymore. We couldn't buy any clothes, and had only one set each. Some newer arrivals risked their lives by returning to their old villages. My children were coughing terribly, but I had no money for medicine. I searched far and wide for money, but couldn't earn enough. I just made certain that I boiled all drinking water for my children.

In September I planted two baskets of rice seed. It was almost harvest time when we fled to where there was no food. As we had not brought much food, we ate rice porridge. For two or three months we hid, and our fields were trampled by livestock and destroyed by the soldiers. I would forego food so my children could eat. I would go around and beg for rice. Some people would take pity and give one or two cups- mostly these were hill people who were coping better than the rest of us. It's true that by this time people suffered differently. Most who had migrated more recently and were living off agriculture or fishing were suffering considerably. Traders and the traditional hill people were managing better. We only cooked one small pot of rice per meal. We had one pot, but no plates, bowls or cutlery, so we ate from bamboo. In 1996 things became so tough that we couldn't even get salt anymore, which used to come in from Papun. But by this time all roads had been cut. No one dared travel secretly, afraid to be shot along the way.

Villages on the other side of the river suffered more, because they received little warning when the soldiers came. They suffered constant harassment, and they never had enough food. In spite of all this they didn't want to move. From June to August of 1996 they ate porridge and bamboo shoots, and from September to November they ate roots. My family ate like this until the December harvest. That year I planted three baskets and reaped 15.

In early November 1996, my uncle was killed. His name was Phar Maung Kyaw. He was about 47 years old, and had 4 children. The troops were approaching as he prepared to flee, but he didn't know how close they were. His wife left first and he followed, but he took the wrong path and ran into the soldiers. His wife heard the gun fire but did not know what had happened. After a couple of days went by she understood that it was her husband who had been shot. All the villagers were terrified, and for over a week none of them went back. However KNU soldiers saw the corpse, which had been shot in the head and chest.

In 1996 we fled three times. Each time we had no food, no grain with us, and so we all foraged for roots. The first time was when we were preparing the fields, during March; once during May-June; once during the harvest in October-November, on each occasion for 1 to 3 weeks. If the soldiers used a familiar approach we usually had enough warning to prepare, but sometimes they came down from the mountains by surprise, so we had to flee with nothing. Even if people prepared they would only be able to carry enough food for 4 or 5 days, one week at most. In the forest relationships varied. Some shared their food with others, knowing that it would run out quickly, and then left to look for roots together, others did not. The last time, I saw one family especially close to utter starvation, the two small children crying from hunger. The mother pitifully fed them roots which had been boiled enough. She probably knew that they would make them sick but didn't know what else to do. After that they experienced nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. They had absolutely no possessions whatsoever, other than one pot, a machete and a small blanket. For shelter people made small bamboo frames which they covered with leaves or plastic. During the rainy season we also had to make a floor to sleep on.

Appendix 4: Testimonies Presented to the Tribunal

By this time the army units usually killed anybody they saw in the village. Around April, it rained very heavily for about a week. Our house collapsed into the river and was totally destroyed, we were left with nothing, no food and no place to stay, so we fled and hid. The children were sick, and a KNU administrator gave me some grain. I thought about the situation, and thought that as we had lost our house and possessions we wouldn't stay there anymore, and so we came to this refugee camp step by step.

By 1997 it was easy to flee, we had nothing left anyway. We had lost, sold or exchanged all our meager possessions over time in order to get food. We never had much, but before 1992-93 we had 4 or 5 items of clothing each, enough blankets, mosquito nets, plates and spoons to go around. By 1997, my wife, our three oldest children and I had exactly one set of clothes each, and our youngest two children we simply wrapped in rags, and carried them on our backs when we fled. A machete, a pot and a bamboo bowl, some rice, two blankets and one mosquito net were the sum total of our possessions. Under such conditions money is not spent on clothes and such, you only think about getting food. Whether I taught in the school, worked the fields, or slept at home, I only had one shirt to wear. If our children suffered diarrhea and spoiled their pants, then we washed them and dried them in front of the fire, in time for school.

If we look at all of this, then we can say that because of the Burma Army offensive and destruction starting from 1992, transport was restricted and prices were on the rise. Travel is difficult and it isn't possible to get medicines, food is scarce. There is increasing sickness and it is more difficult to earn a living. That the Burma army soldiers are deliberately creating starvation astonishes people. When it is almost time for people to burn the fields, the army terrorizes people so that they are too afraid to stay in their fields. They move all over the place and approach from different routes. Finally, the rains have come, causing the troops to withdraw. Then the villagers have to start work to get food during the rains. When the crop is almost ready, the troops come back again and go directly to the fields and trample the plants when they are due for harvest. The villagers again flee to the forest, leaving their cattle behind, and this also becomes a problem, as the animals roam around eating the crops. All this leaves villagers totally distraught and with no idea how to feed themselves in the future. All villagers suffer in the same way, this is not just a once-off event, and so are utterly discouraged as to how to work for a livelihood.

3. Displaced

Kyay Mi, a male farmer from Papun Township, Karen State.

We came to Thailand because of too many problems from the Burma army soldiers. We had to pay porter fees and then we thought that we'd be left alone, but they still gang-pressed us into porter service. They burned our houses and food supplies and it is plain to see that we could never stay on there. We were afraid for the safety of our lives. The army deploys its troops close together and sends out patrols to harm the people and destroy villages. Most villagers have been forced to move and stay hidden from the troops. At the moment they are surviving on last year's harvest. But next year if they can't find food then they will flee into Thailand. But the trip is hazardous and you have to bring enough food to last along the way. Some of us didn't have enough rice and had to borrow from others. So you can see that these are the problems facing us: scarcity of food, rainy weather and the soldiers. Along the way one baby in our group died, and two elderly people suffered acute health problems. There was no medicine.

At present the soldiers are building barracks, so they required villagers to carry loads, hack wood and do all sorts of things for them. Workers have to provide their own food. Some managed to flee from the most difficult areas. If people move and find that they can not plant then they move again, otherwise they'd starve the next year. We heard news that the strategic commander said operations were done in that area. But others heard that they would begin another operation. If that happens, the people will be in great danger. The commander told people that if they want to run away, they should either run very far or stay close to the army. If they find people in the jungle they shoot on sight. Only when there is peace in our country will the people survive and prosper. If it is not so, the people will still have to bear heavy burdens. People like us will come here, and the rest will die.

Source: Burma Issues video tape #17A/154, September 1997

4. A village teacher

Naw Eh Paw Htoo, a 33 year old woman from Myawaddy Township, Karen State.

In March 1997, there was increasing suffering and poverty in my village. I was there together with my four children and husband, my house and my land, which yielded 600 baskets of paddy grain. Before the fighting we ate okay. From 1984 to 1988, I was teaching at Taung Oke. In 1985-86, the army reached and destroyed our village, but they left and people came back. In 1989, they again reached the village, destroyed my stuff and burned down my house and shop. But they went away and I still dared to stay. When I married in 1989, my husband and I moved to another village where we planted rice and raised livestock. We could work peacefully and the KNU taxation wasn't much. It was easy and we had enough to eat.

From 1990 through 1996, we were reasonably well off. There were no problems, and only in this year, 1997, did we face real problems. What we met with was very different from before, when the Burma army came, destroyed some things and went away. This time, they came to stay beside the village, and we always had to go to help them, and they came into the village and destroyed things like our household possessions, and entered our houses to get food, so we had to feed them. Anything they didn't eat they discarded, especially food like paddy grain, threshed grain, root plants and small livestock. The soldiers who came to control our area were Battalion 425, commanded by Kyaw Zaw Aung. They destroyed household possessions and destroyed our rice grain. They also took and ate our pigs and chickens. Anything that they didn't eat, they killed, and likewise rice grain that they couldn't carry away, they set on fire. So we really faced problems for our food. On a day to day basis we could still eat, but over a longer time we would surely have starved. Because we couldn't travel around, we couldn't work. We always had to follow their orders and only do things for them. They will surely force the villagers into starvation. Even if I only look at my household, we had to frequently face problems; I can't even count how many times. My children suffered from sicknesses such as diarrhea and malaria, as a result of sometimes having to flee and so often not having clean food.

The soldiers stayed in the village, therefore we had to see them every day and almost every day they impoverished the villagers. They demanded the villagers threshed rice, and said that their own rations weren't tasty, but the villagers' rice was tasty. They eat the poultry for free. They demanded people's pigs and said that whether big or small they would give 3,000 kyat per pig. Before I fled I had to sell one of my pigs this way. It would have been worth 1,500 to 2,000 Thai baht but I had to sell it for 3,000 kyat. I also had 4-5 buffalo, and after I came here I heard that the Burma army shot and ate one of them.

Now I have come here, and none of my four children are well. Before fleeing, we lived in fear and we made the children sleep in the fields, without any mosquito nets. My oldest child has malaria, and the middle two are also getting fevers everyday, so they have to take medicines. The youngest has diarrhea and anemia, and also has to take medicines.

I know that if I had stayed in the village [rather than come to the refugee camp] for a longer time, I would have faced more suffering and poverty, sickness and death, because the village no longer had access to a clinic and the Burma army soldiers did not take care of people, only always terrified them. I came to the refugee camp because I was unable to stay in my village as a result of the soldiers confiscation and destruction of my food, rice and possessions on a daily basis. If I had stayed in my village for an extended period of time I would surely have starved. So before my family reached the point of starvation we fled to this refugee camp. If I had stayed in my village I would surely have died. A lot of the villagers who are still there will also come. I could not bring anything with me. My house and land are still there. There was still 20 baskets of threshed rice in my rice store. I had to leave all of that.

I can't think about staying in my village now. I won't ever go back until the situation in the country has changed.

Appendix 4: Testimonies Presented to the Tribunal

5. Another offensive

Naw Tha Kyeh, a 45 year old woman from Myawaddy Township, Karen State, speaking in July 1997.

We were working as farmers and had been able to trade our crops easily. The Burma army troops first came into the village in 1986 and later again in 1993. Each time they came, they took paddy and rice stocks and destroyed our property. They subjected villagers to extra-judicial arrest, torture and murder, causing most people in our area to flee into Thailand each time. We suffered serious losses to our farms, gardens and livestock. Only after they left, were we able to return and reconstruct.

In February of 1997, they launched a new offensive. This time our people were unable to flee. The army said all livestock and grain supported the KNU and proceeded to burn, loot and destroy it all. The cattle and buffalo were either taken away to be eaten or shot. Any villagers who pleaded with them to do otherwise were ignored. The worst thing was that when it was time to begin tilling our lands, the soldiers denied us permission. They forced us instead to build their barracks, construct roads for their supply lines, be their guides and simply stay at the sites of their camps without any work at all. We were not able to go and sell any of the remaining fruit and vegetables from our farms. They blocked all trading activities.

Not only did they confiscate our paddy, but they also did not allow us to prepare our farms for the coming season, which poses a serious threat of starvation. Consequently, some of us were determined to risk death by crossing the border areas. Some have made it to the refugee camps, others have been caught by the Burma army troops and murdered or tortured brutally.

6. A hillside farmer

Phar Too Ngar, a 40 year old from Kya-Inn Seik Kyi Township, Karen State, speaking in 1997-98.

I stayed in my village for 30 years and worked as a paddy farmer. I also grew vegetables, betel nut palms and rubber trees. In 1992-93, the village flooded, so we stopped working those fields. That year we frequently ate rotten rice, because the rice store was wet. After that I started to work swidden fields, from 1994 to 1997. My swidden fields yielded about 108 baskets per year, and I re-sowed 10 baskets.

Until January 1997, our village only had to pay low KNU taxes and work conditions were good. Starting then, we faced increasing poverty. When the Burma army soldiers first entered, they made people construct their army camp and begin a road to Kyaik Done. The villagers had to work for three days, rest for one day, on rotation. Work was begun in January. Villagers who didn't go had to give 1200 kyat for three days, direct to the soldiers. For construction of the road, some villagers had to give up agricultural land, but did not receive any compensation. At least 30 households had to leave land and houses to make way for the road. I too lost some of my rubber plantation and vegetable gardens.

There is no longer any time for villagers to get food for themselves. Only the army's work can be done. The soldiers made people construct two big rice stores- to contain 400-500 baskets of grain each- and then made villagers contribute one cup of rice per person per day. They were still doing this when I left.

As there is no longer enough food in the village, people are developing bad characteristics. Some are stealing rice to eat. A lot of villagers don't have enough to eat, so they want to come to Thailand, but they can't come easily. Army units are stationed all around the village. If they see people who are leaving secretly, they threaten to shoot them.

Since the Burma army entered the village there have also been more deaths. Some elderly people terrified by the soldiers have died from heart problems. Soldiers pick fights with villagers everyday. They drink and accuse villagers of cooperating with KNU.

Villagers can do only the army's work, constructing roads and other forms of labor. If soldiers see villagers going to do their own work then they ask, "Where did you get permission from? Who gave you permission?" They confiscate carts and bulls. They threaten that if anybody shoots at them in the village then it will become ash. They are building shops on

villagers' land and then make them buy the shops for 5000 kyat each, and every month charge 500 kyat as tax per shop. Some people who lost their houses due to the road construction have been instructed to purchase them

When I first left, my objective was to take my wife to be cured of tuberculosis in a refugee camp clinic. A week after I came, I heard that my house, my vegetable gardens and all my land was destroyed, so I no longer want to go back. They must have thought that I came to contact KNU. The total value of all my possessions would have been 100,000 Thai baht.

By the time I left, 40 households in the village were already facing serious hunger. Everybody is suffering poverty. If they stay in the village for a long time then they will die of starvation.

Saw Canady, an information collector in the region who also witnessed these events, forwarded the following details..

In February 1997, Burma army troops of LIBs 203, 205 of Division 22 and LIB 505 of Division 77 launched military operations in Kyeik, Kwin Kale, Dan Kalaw and Thay Phat Htaw village areas. 25-30 villagers from each village in the area have since had to serve on forced labor projects such as road constructions, rice barn constructions and serve as guides.

The workers include men, women and children, all of whom have to supply their own food and medicines while doing the work. They have had to construct two big rice barns on high ground near Kyeik village to store the supplies from surrounding villages, and ration it back out to the villagers.

Houses that stood in the fields outside of villages were shifted and rebuilt inside. Also all livestock had to be moved in. The troops robbed the villagers property and when the owners asked for things to be returned, they intimidated them into silence.

The Muslim populations at Kyaik Done and Pah Kalaw Ni villages were evicted and denied their possessions. They told the Muslims, "This is not your place, go back to your country." I witnessed 90 bullock carts and cattle, buffaloes and goats belonging to Muslims being confiscated by the Burma army troops. The Muslims had to leave their properties with tears in their eyes.

They have made house registers and villagers are issued with documents. Those without documents are classified as rebels. Bullock carts and motor cars are being commandeered to transport food and ammunitions. They are levying taxes on cars and elephants.

The army has given guarantees that it will treat people well. But in practice, their troops commit daylight robbery, gang-press labor, and extortion. Because of all this the villagers are full of woe and misery. The army does not allow anybody carrying belongings while traveling to prevent people from fleeing.

7. An elder's thoughts

Phu Kar Hsu, a 55 year old father of seven children from Kya-Inn Seik Kyi Township, Karen State.

The Burma army arrived at our village about 2 months back, in March 1997. Some of us fled to the border area and some stayed behind in hiding, to watch how things went.

My family and I came to a refugee camp when the army started its campaign. Later, I went back to my farm, to have a look at the situation. The troops there were from Division 44. They were forcing people to work as porters and guides, interrogating people and beating them. They confiscated property and livestock which they sold and ate. They gave villages orders to relocate, to separate them from the KNU.

Appendix 4: Testimonies Presented to the Tribunal

They also seized people from the surrounding villages and forced them to carry army rations. Those who could not cope were beaten and abused. They treated porters whom they had brought with them from far away very badly, and eventually killed them.

Within a week of arrival, the soldiers ordered two bullock carts and three people from each surrounding village go to the Division 44 camp at Kwi Kler daily. Each village also had to provide 20 to 25 laborers to work on road constructions daily. Every person had to work the entire day, providing their own food and medicines. All buildings and trees in the path of the road construction had to be pulled down. The soldiers also extorted money and belongings from villagers.

When I went to the market in Kwi Kler village, I met a soldier who searched my bag and I had to give him 200 kyat. The troops there tried to sell buffalo, cattle and other looted goods, but the villagers knew where these things were coming from and refused to buy them. I heard a villager speak to one of these soldiers: "Look here, we've been tilling the land and raising livestock here for so many years, and we have just a few animals. As for you, you've been here for such a short time, you don't till the land or rear animals, and yet you seem to own more than we do. How come?" The soldier replied, "Uncle, as we know each other so well, I do not think I need to answer your question."

8. Demoralized communities

Lein May Aye, a 24 year old mother of two from Kya-Inn Seik Kyi Township, Karen State.

About five months ago, in February 1997, the Burma army troops of Division 44 came into our village. It has about 30 houses. Most of the people are traditional farmers. These troops are stationed at Kyaik Done and whenever they come, they shoot and kill our livestock at random, and also confiscate our belongings. They make people serve as porters and guides, and go to work in their army camp every day. All the males in the village were forced to work as porters when they first arrived, and later we had to provide five workers each day.

Initially this work was being done during the hot season when we had little work of our own to do, so although the burden was heavy, we could bear it. But later, when we had to attend to our farm work, clearing the hill plantations and so on, it was a more difficult situation. They also confiscated the paddy that the villagers keep for home consumption, so villagers are left starving. Many of the villagers in the area are no longer able to spend any time working for their own livelihoods as they have to give all of their energy to support the Burma army troops labor requirements. The types of work commonly required include building barracks at their camps, carrying arms and ammunition, serving as guides, doing sentry work and sending messages.

Eight households left our village and we met up with four from Win Lone village, so in total over 60 people ended up coming. We took six days to prepare for the journey to Thailand. We brought a week's food supply: just salt, chilies and rice. No medicines for people who became ill. But on the 18th, we encountered a group of Burma army troops who fired at us, and we scattered. I ran and found my way to an old woman farming a hill plantation, and stayed there for a while. Later she guided me to Thailand. Of the people who started the journey in my group from our village, only fifteen made it here. I'm not sure about all the others. I heard that some were caught by the soldiers and taken back to Kyaw Htah and Azin. Some others are still hiding in the jungle and some gave up and went back to their villages.

Many of the villagers are demoralized. Since the army onslaught, most villagers have left our place. I think very few will still be there now. Villagers can no longer get any earnings, and if they fail to meet soldiers' demands then they are beaten and abused. They will not be able to get enough rice for the coming year. In front-line areas, officers sell their supplies and feed off the rice and food belonging to the villagers. I think no one would like to stay in their villages any more. If they have any chance to come here they'll do so, although if they become aware of the danger they'll meet on the way then they'll surely be discouraged.

9. Flight

Saw Heh Nay, a 48 year old father of four children, from Kya-Inn Seik Kyi Township, Karen State.

In July 1997, Battalion 230 demanded that people in our village serve as porters. The loads were unbearably heavy. If we could not carry them then they beat and kicked us. We had to carry one and a half baskets of rice each. We had to carry them for 4-7 days. If we could not carry them then they started beating us. I myself never got beaten, but I saw other people beaten.

They ordered seven villages relocate to Waw Loo. If anyone refused to go, or if they saw people in any other places, they said that they would recognize them as their enemy and kill them all. They did not send the orders by letter. They came into the village, called a village meeting and spoke directly to the people. When they move the villagers to the new site they will make fences and restrict villagers activities.

For these reasons I came to Thailand. If we stayed there, our lives would be ruined. We came in a group of 50 villagers. It was a very hard journey, because we had to find ways safe from the Burma army. It took three weeks to arrive. Currently, we don't have any problems. But if the Thai authorities do not allow us to stay here, we can't do anything. We cannot go back, we dare not go back and face the soldiers.

Source: Burma Issues video tape #17A/152

10. The army is not easy to work with

Saw Sein Thauung, Ta La Ku Religious and Cultural Preservation General Secretary, from Hlaing Bwe Township, Karen State.

I am responsible for the preservation of the Ta La Ku [a traditional animist sect] religious and cultural norms. Being under control of the military government is very hard. The Burma army called us to go back from Thailand and work together with them for a better life. It was very difficult to work together with the army. We had to do everything they told us to do. The only burden we could not bear was portering. The loads were enough for horses and elephants to carry. If we could not carry them then they kicked us and beat us severely.

We called a community meeting with other Ta La Ku people. We agreed that we would come to Lay Taw Kho [a Ta La Ku village in Thailand]. If we stayed in our village then we would get more and more trouble. A lot of people came. The Burma army asked us to go back. They said that they won't treat us badly the way they've done before. They said that they won't ask us to work, but we don't trust them. We told them that if they want us to go back, then let their authorities come to our place and make a magical oath in front of our religious leader that they won't oppress us any more. They sent a message in reply that "there is no way the Tatmadaw will obey orders from villagers."

We left all our property and rice stocks in our village. We don't have food and we have no rice fields here in Lay Taw Kho, so I asked people, "What are we going to do about this situation?" We want to go to a place where we can get rice, but when we think about our religion, we cannot go because the way we eat and the way we live is different from other people. If we go there, we will lose our religion. So we will have to stay here and die with our religion.

Source: Burma Issues video tape #17A/152

11. Building roads, going hungry

Kyaw Me, a 40 year old man from Hlaing Bwe Township, Karen State.

Our village has about 150 households. About 50 households have their own paddy fields. The others work swidden crops and seek daily wages. Sundry workers earn about 75 kyat per day, or are often paid one pyi of rice. There are monthly taxes on every household, such as 100 kyat porter fees and 50 kyat messenger fees. The administration collects a paddy quota and pays only 250 kyat per basket.

Appendix 4: Testimonies Presented to the Tribunal

From 1996 to the present, about 60 households have not had enough to eat. These are mostly sundry workers. They have to beg for grain from others. They have to give too many taxes now, and the expenses of farming are also going up. Especially now, the only thing that matters is to work for the military, constructing roads and camps. On 1 April 1997, a Division 99 officer ordered us to construct a road from our village to Hlaing Bwe. Each household must go three days at a time, and take their own food. The work is from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. The officer also demanded 200 kyat from every house for the purchase of sand and gravel. People who don't go to work on the road must give 500 kyat to the military per household for three days. For these reasons, in the future there will be serious food shortages.

12. The cost of living

Nyein Chan, a fisherman with six children from Hlaing Bwe Township, Karen State, speaking in 1997.

In 1996-97, we have had to work on road constructions. The length of road that each village must construct varies with the village size. We have to take our own food and materials. Soldiers come and eat our food, so we feed both ourselves and them. In order to feed them we have to collect money from people. They said they would provide half the food during construction, but each village received only one sack of rice. That's about one cup of rice per person.

Due to high taxes, youths have to work in Thailand. In some houses only old women and girls are left, but they have to go and work on the roads anyway. In some houses, there is only one old mother and one child left. If the mother cannot go, the child must go.

For the sake of economic progress, the military government says that people will have to buy water pumps and grow rice during the dry season. But this won't happen. If farmers are to grow during the dry season they'll have to buy fertilizer, which costs at least 1800 kyat per sack. Petroleum is 130 kyat per gallon. If costs are so high, farmers won't be able to do this work. But if they don't do as instructed then they can no longer work as farmers.

Most villagers in my area earn their livelihoods fishing. We have to give tax to the village council. We pay taxes, but then the soldiers demand fish every day. We get a reasonable amount of fish and an income from this work, but that income is no longer equivalent to the cost of living. Food is expensive, we have to give taxes, and in our village there is a People's Militia unit whom we have to feed and pay wages. These are not just the conditions in Karen State. When I went to Mawlamyine [Mon State] I saw soldiers arresting people to serve as porters. For 15,000 kyat you could go free. In Burma, if you have money then you can do a lot.

13. We wandered from place to place

Naw Ble, a 40 year old mother of nine and swidden farmer from Taninthayi Township, Tenasserim Division.

Our village has 30-40 families. In February 1997 the Burma army troops entered a nearby village, so we all ran away in fear. We wandered from place to place, and learned that troops were passing through our village regularly. We also learned that the animals had all been eaten. Some of the coconut and betel nut palms had been chopped down by soldiers.

After wandering in the jungle for more than one and a half months, we felt there were no more places to go. Some people suggested going back would be better than being caught in the jungle. So one day when there were no soldiers in the village, we re-entered.

We saw all our possessions scattered, and no cock crowed, no dog barked, no cat cried and no cattle wandered about the place. Everything was quiet. The next day, troops started to dig trenches by our houses. They did not harm us, but would climb our trees and take fruit. They ordered us not to leave the village without permission. To go out cost 15 kyat per day, and we had to be back before dark.

They ordered us to bring our paddy from where we hid it, or they would find and destroy it. Some brought the rice and it was confiscated. The soldiers ate it. At the same time, soldiers went house-to-house selling ration rice for 50 kyat a pyi.

We pay to work our own plantations, we serve them without wages, our paddy is looted then we buy back rice to survive. Our fruit and crops are taken, our animals and plants are taken, we are unable to escape. They told us troops in the hills have orders to kill anything they see. We are haunted by this.

Source: KNU Mergui-Tavoy Information Office, Situation Report on Internally Displaced People inside Mergui/Tavoy District Areas, 22 August 1997

14. No living things

Saw Ke Hko, a 30 year old male farmer from Taninthayi Township, Tenasserim Division.

My village has 50 houses. In February 1997, LIB 433 entered the village and we all fled. Later some of the villagers went to Kaw Maw Pro to try to buy salt and other goods, and two were detained by soldiers. The soldiers tried to persuade the two to organize other villagers to return to our village. They promised to build a school, clinic and other development projects.

The two returned and told us what the soldiers said. We dared not believe them, we were frightened. However, the pastor went to see the situation. He came back and told us the army would not harm us if we returned, but if we continued to hide outside the village, they would not guarantee our safety. So we returned and saw everything broken and scattered. The houses contained no living things and the trees were bare of any fruit. The skin and bones of our animals were spread everywhere and the place was swarming with flies. We started to repair our houses. LIB 433 returned the next day, they built trenches by the houses. No one was allowed to go outside the village. Those wanting to go to their plantations had to pay 15 kyat per person per day. No one was allowed to stay outside overnight. Everyone had to be back before dark.

Every two days, two people had to go to the commander in the village, provide a boat each and serve as guides on the river. I was ordered to be a permanent guide. I had no time to help my family. We also had to make a front-line hospital, a rice store and an office for them.

We sneaked out at night along with nine other families. We had only been back in the village for three weeks. We could carry only a little rice with us, but after two days we met some KNU soldiers who offered us some more.

I feel bitter about the troops staying in our village, looting our rice and eating it, then selling us their rations. We have very little money to buy rice. Think about it! How long can we survive without any time to earn money?

Source: KNU Mergui-Tavoy Information Office, Situation Report on Internally Displaced People inside Mergui/Tavoy District Areas, 22 August 1997

15. Shouldering the load

Aung Win Thein, a 35 year old fisherman with four children from Thayet Chaung Township, Tenasserim Division.

In my village, Burma army troops demand porter fees one, two or three times a month. It is not the same each month. As time goes by, villagers cannot afford to pay, so they have to go instead. They demand 2-3 villagers per time, because my village is small. If they do not get porters through the village authorities, they come and capture villagers themselves.

I do not remember the date I started serving as a porter. I think I had been serving for one month and three days when I fled from porter duty in July 1998. After LIBs 373 and 380 demanded porters from our village, we had to draw lots, and I ended up on the list. Last year I already had to serve as a porter once. On that trip, when we arrived at Aing Win village I sneaked away.

This time, I was sent to Thayet Chaung police station and had to spend one night there. In the morning, we were sent to IB 25 in Dawei. We had to wait there for 3 days. There were 70-80 porters there, from several villages. We had to buy food. The military did not feed us. From there, we were sent to Myitta village, east of Dawei, and spent one night there.

Appendix 4: Testimonies Presented to the Tribunal

In the morning we had to follow LIBs 373 and 380 in separate columns. We had to carry one basket of rice each. I was in the first column of 45 porters. We traveled down the Tenasserim River. After five days, we arrived in Htee Hta, where the army had set up a big camp. On the way, we had very little time to rest, just once every 2-3 hours of walking. Those who could not bear their burdens were beaten and kicked. I was kicked or hit not less than 50 times. My burden was really heavy, so that whenever we had to walk up slopes it became difficult to step forward. At those moments, I was hit by the soldiers. On the way, I saw three porters' corpses. One of them died simply while drinking water, because he was too weak and tired. Another four porters were left in the jungle, as they could not walk any further. At night, we had to make fences with bamboo cut from the forest and sleep inside the fence. The soldiers slept around us.

I also saw some soldiers who were really tired. I saw one soldier who loaded his gun to commit suicide, but others grabbed his rifle, and then he was tied up and beaten. I also saw some stronger soldiers hit and kicked the weaker soldiers when they were unable to walk. I heard them whisper to each other that some soldiers were fleeing along the way.

After we arrived in Htee Hta village, we were not released. They ordered us to dismantle the roofing on deserted houses and build new shelters. They fed us two cups of rice a day, with salt, and sometimes banana palm shoots. The soldiers had enough rice, curry and canned food. We porters slept in a shelter we built ourselves. The roof was made of old iron sheets. When it rained, the roof did not cover us, so we slept soaked. There were so many sick porters among us. The military didn't care for the sick.

From Htee Hta, we had to carry things downstream again. We arrived in Maw Hta, and spent one night there. In the morning, we headed into the jungle. After two days, I became too weak to carry my load so I requested they reduce the weight I was carrying, but in vain. I decided to flee whenever the opportunity allowed. One night when the troops were on the top of a hill, me and two other porters, Sein Min Oo and Ko Aung Soe, sneaked out. Though we didn't know where to go, we only thought it necessary to escape. We walked down a stream and arrived at the Tenasserim River, where we saw two women. We requested they ferry us to the other side of the river with their boat. After we arrived on the other side, we walked downstream and later saw two other villagers, who fed us. After we finished our meal, these two villagers sent us to a KNU officer. By the time I arrived there, I could not breathe or cough hard, because of chest pains. The KNU soldiers gave me some medicine. We ate well and regained our health, strength and weight. Now I want to go back to my home, as I've left my children and wife without any money.

Source: KNU Mergui-Tavoy Information Office, Update Situation Report, 27 August 1998

16. No rest for the farmers

U Nyunt, a middle aged man from Thayet Chaung Township, Tenasserim Division, speaking in June 1998.

I've come to the border to sell my cattle. I've come every year for the last five years. The reason is that I've had no money to grow paddy, so every year I've come to sell some cattle to get money. This time, I sold three cows for 10,000 Thai baht. If you change that to kyat it's about 80,000. I have six acres of fields at my village. That land doesn't yield too much paddy. If you use fertilizer then one acre can yield 60-70 baskets. If you don't use it then it's only 30-40. Last year, for six acres I got a total of 350 baskets. I used 14 bags of fertilizer. One bag of fertilizer was 3000 kyat, so for six acres it cost 42,000 kyat. I hired a plowing machine for 3000 kyat per acre. You also have to give money to hire people to transplant seedlings and harvest, so for my six acres I had 80-100,000 kyat total expenses. The amount that I got by selling my three cows now will be completely used for this year's harvest expenses.

We give 6-8 baskets per acre paddy quota, as our yield is low. For my six acres I give 48 baskets. Last year, we got 190 kyat per basket from the government. At first, we had heard that they would pay real market value, but later we only got 190 kyat. At that time, the market price was 350-400 kyat per basket. Farmers with more than three acres are given loans from the government at the rate of 1000 kyat per acre. That commits us to giving them the paddy quota. We have to take the quota paddy to a storage facility about 10 miles from our village. For people with carts and bullocks, it's no problem, but for people without, they have to rent them from others. For the trip of 10 miles, the rent is two baskets of paddy.

Traditionally, in the monsoon we worked paddy, and in the summer worked vegetable gardens. From 1992 to the present, the agricultural corporation officials introduced a program to increase paddy yields. You have to crop exactly according to their method. For 6 years we have done like this. Our village has low quality soil, so unlike some other places we don't get too much paddy. The villagers lose all of their money because after working the monsoon crop we have to do the summer crop. The summer crop is a total loss for farmers, but if you don't do it, the government will take away your land. So, we lose our money, but anyway, we grow it. To grow the summer crop, each year the stream must be dammed and an irrigation system built. The construction of this must be done by the villagers as "people's contributions." We do this work for a month at the start of every summer, so the farmers get no rest.

Our village has more than 400 houses. There's an army post. Ten soldiers from IB 404 stay there. Every house must give 500 kyat per month as porter fees to the village council. Also, four porters are called and rotated monthly. Villagers who don't want to go must hire other people to go, and for one month that's 60,000 kyat. Every day, two other people have to stay as "standby" porters for the soldiers in the village. To hire another person for this duty is 300 kyat per day. If you kill a pig or cow to sell, you must give 10% as "flesh tax" to the soldiers. Sometimes they kill people's chickens or ducks in front of the villagers, but nobody dares to say anything back to them.

17. Everything left behind

Kyan Pyu, a 52 year old father of six of Palaw Township, Tenasserim Division, speaking in the jungle in May 1998.

Forced labor has been demanded by the soldiers since they established a base close to our village in 1989. I was forced to labor several times. The common laboring duties are building outposts, sharpening spikes, sentry duties, digging trenches and carrying building materials. Those refusing orders were given a penalty of 3-4 days digging trenches at the army base.

The Burma army troops ordered our village relocate to Palawgon twice. Initially in 1996, while the villagers were harvesting, and the second time, also in the harvesting period of 1998. I heard that people at the Palawgon relocation site could not work for themselves. Besides paying for basic foods, they also had to buy fuel and even drinking water. Fearing military persecution, my family and I did not move to the relocation site. We and some others fled to the jungle about two hours by foot from our village. Nine families left with us. Many of the villagers fled, scattering across upper streams.

We live in fear of the Burma army. They searched for our hiding places four times this year. If they find us, they will shoot or capture us. They caught one of my daughters. I heard that she was imprisoned and is alive. The fourth time, the soldiers killed six villagers in our area. This year we have changed our hiding place all four times. Each time one of us is caught, we have to change our hideout for fear that the one arrested will become a guide for the soldiers. Each time the soldiers find people, they use them as guides to find other hiding places.

I have left nearly all of my property. I left my plantation, my house, all of my livestock. My betel plantation yielded 100,000 kyat of produce each year. But I had to leave it all. I learned that my house has been burned down by the military. The house was worth about 150,000 kyat. I could carry nothing. I left everything behind. Before, I could make ends meet, but now I am without income.

Here in the hideout, my greatest fear is of the soldiers. I am always worrying they might come. Other problems we face are sickness and the difficulty of finding medicine. The second greatest problem is food. Salt and fish paste are rare commodities. We need money to buy food, but now we do not have incomes as we did in our villages. Also, we can only buy these goods at villages controlled by the army. We dare not travel to buy goods at these villages. They are quite far and we fear the soldiers will capture us. Rice is a problem only if the soldiers find and destroy it.

18. Anti-insurgency and food scarcity

Saw Eh Doh War, a 27 year old farmer from Kyauktaga Township, Pegu Division, speaking in June 1997.

My village is in a front-line area. Innocent villagers have often been killed in battles. In 1994, the Burma army forcibly relocated a lot of villages to Taw Katah military camp on the Shwe Kabin-Kyauk Kyi road. Their strategy is to deny the KNU shelter and food supplies. The actual result is that the people have had to face food scarcity. To go back to their farmlands, people have to get permission from the army authorities. Usually approval is granted for between one and seven people from a village to return for up to seven days. It is generally a couple of hours traveling time from the relocation sites back to the old village areas. But tilling of land relies on weather conditions, and so this also makes problems. Often the time period given by the authorities for the farmers to do their work is simply not long enough or the conditions are not suitable at the time for the villagers to do their farm work, so there has been a sharp decrease in the production of paddy.

The villagers are also conscripted as porters. Three to five young male villagers have to be on stand-by in each camp at all times. The purpose is also to have the able-bodied young men under their watch, so their contacts with the KNU will be severed. The parents of those men have to send them meals daily. Villages which have not yet been relocated have to pay various taxes, such as porter and sentry fees, and special taxes twice per month of 100-200 kyat per time. All the people's earnings are going to the military government. This is also a part of their strategy- the villagers must use all their grain stocks simply in order to survive.

Paddy stocks from Sa Pyin Gyi, Hta Htu, Paw Thayay, Teik Pauk, Oh Myay Do, Patala, Kywe Gyo Inn, Noh Po and Kya Inn villages are being stock-piled at Hta Htu and Kywe Talin military camps. The soldiers ration the paddy back to the villagers. Villagers have to go and present passes to withdraw their food quotas. During the rainy season, floods made it difficult for people to go and draw rations, so people were going hungry. The soldiers also sell the paddy to traders instead of redistributing it to the villagers.

19. The social costs of government policy

A 25 year old farmer from Kyauktaga Township, Pegu Division, speaking in June 1997.

Half of the people in our village are farmers. It is the traditional occupation. Under the current government, some are turning their backs on farming and looking for other ways to earn their livings.

Taxes and quotas on farm produce have been rapidly increased under this government. As a family of eleven people, we need 400 baskets of paddy for our annual consumption. Our farm of 10 acres yields about 60 baskets of paddy per acre. But after the quota and taxes and other costs, we don't have enough. So we have had to plant summer crops, such as peanuts and beans, to make up for the loss. Besides that, when the sale of paddy was 50 kyat for one basket on the open market, the government gave only 15. When it was 100 kyat per basket, they gave only 40. There have been such rapid rates of inflation on basic goods like rice and beans, but not wages. Consequently, a range of social problems have arisen out of increasing poverty, such as theft of rice and other possessions. The government ignores these problems stemming from its policies.

The majority of villagers are trying to till lands handed down through their families over generations, and they are clinging to them by selling cattle and parts of the land to meet costs. They are desperate to prevent their lands from being confiscated by the government. Farmers have no skills they can apply to trades other than their own.

The government lacks the know-how, machinery and support to build the agricultural base. Large areas of land have been destroyed by flooding, but in spite of lost agricultural output, the government doesn't lessen the quotas they demand be sold to them.

20. Taxation, relocation, starvation

Saw War a 28 year old man from Kyauk Kyi Township, Pegu Division, speaking in May 1997.

I know some people in my area are now forced to eat rice porridge, and some have sought help from friends. I know this because I work together with one of the elders of my village who was feeding people coming to seek his help. These things go on all the time, but especially when military operations occur during the hot season. Most of the people who are starving are daily-wage earners, who get around 80 kyat per day, and tenant farmers. I know that starvation is occurring as a result of all varieties of taxation, forced labor, forced relocation and military operations.

In our area we produce one annual crop. With fertilizer we can get a good crop of about 80 baskets per acre. Land tenants then have to repay around 25 baskets per acre to the land owner, and hire a pair of cattle at 50 baskets per bull, to plow the fields. The government quota is 15 baskets per acre. That leaves a farmer working five or six acres with less than half of the crop to sell.

People are called to serve five-day and seven-day rotations as porters, and the soldiers also arbitrarily detain people to work for them. These are not the same as "voluntary" labor which is mostly on roads and other constructions. Long term labor is the worst. It's not for one day, one week or one month- you just disappear and that's that. You don't get told anything about what's planned for you. To get exempted you have to pay from 100 kyat for a day to 5000 kyat for long-term duties. One house usually is called upon for labor three or four times per year. To exempt a village from relocation costs 30,000 kyat. Some villages have been ordered to move twice in one year.

21. A farmer's lot

A 53 year old father of five in Thayawaddy Township, Pegu Division, speaking in June 1997.

The price of paddy is currently on the rise. One hundred baskets wholesale for 32,500 kyat. The government quota is 12 baskets per acre. They give 160 kyat per basket. But when the paddy is weighed by government agents we have to add five to ten baskets for every one hundred baskets delivered- we always take along surplus. We give one hundred, but they always find ways to cut it back. They always do things like that to us. They claim there is trash among the paddy. They make deductions called "donations." They draw up registers and promise to provide one bag of discounted fertilizer per acre of farmland, but give nothing.

Our farms can yield up to 70 baskets of paddy per acre. My 17 acres can yield nearly 1000 baskets. But after we've given our quota and deducted planting and harvesting expenses we are left with an amount barely sufficient to cover our basic food expenses. In the past we didn't use much fertilizer, so our production level was less- only up to 50 baskets per acre. At that time, though, the cost of living was lower, so we could get by. But by 1985-86, under the previous socialist regime, the situation was deteriorating. We couldn't sell any of our paddy on the open market at that time- it all went to the government. The farmers could hardly keep enough of their crop for household consumption. In the present conditions we are free to sell part of our crop on the open market, but the expenses involved in planting, harvesting, labor and so on are escalating right out of proportion. Food and commodities prices are also on the rise. So you can see that the farmer's lot is still unenviable. It has only become worse and worse.

22. A landless worker

Chit Tin, a 25 year old father from Bilin Township, Mon State, speaking in July 1997.

My parents are wage earners, as our family has no land of our own. Starting from when I was 16 until 24; I too worked on a farm. Now I have left. Working as a farm laborer I received 10 baskets of polished grain for a season's work- farmers hired me to help them plant and maintain crops. I had to feed seven people. Our daily consumption was 1 pyi of rice, small quantities of fish paste; chilies; Ajinomoto and vegetables foraged for in the forest. If my younger brothers did not attend school, they could also catch some fish. My parents are aged, so it is difficult for them to work, apart from foraging for

Appendix 4: Testimonies Presented to the Tribunal

vegetables. My two younger brothers we were trying to keep in school, but now they have to support our parents. Sometimes we had absolutely no more rice left and then we had to go and seek some from other villagers, such as farmers whom I worked for. At these times, my father would also work. We would borrow enough rice to keep us going for one or two months. But sometimes after working to get rice, I had to give it back to people whom I had borrowed it from and so then we no longer had enough left to eat ourselves, and had to borrow it again. Generally, we had to beg for rice like this at least once a year, usually not long before the new harvest was in.

Our family didn't want to come to this refugee camp. But because land holders have become totally discouraged they don't want to do the work anymore. In our area land is not yet organized by title- people simply clear land for use. What prevented me from doing that was the need for capital items, such as tools and cattle to plow the land, and a stock of seeds to sow. None of these do we poor people have available to us, nor is there any way for us to get such items without too much expense. It is easier to work on someone else's land.

In 1990, the Burma army arrived in our region. Other villagers fled, but I was not aware of the arrival, as I was off working. They captured me and forced me to work as a porter for more than 2 months, carting ammunitions up the one hill three or four times per day. They fed me only once per day. It wasn't long after I was released that they began relocating villages on three-day notices.

They started relocations again in 1996, to an army camp. They try to control the population by keeping them close by. In recent times there have been three relocations, around March-April of each year. To leave the relocation site, such as to go work in the fields, you have to get a pass from the village chairman, and return the same day- the hours of the pass are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Outside these times, the soldiers threaten to shoot anybody they see on sight. Most farmers' properties are at least two hours walk from the relocation site, and so they have a maximum of 6 hours work time available per day. There is no longer any benefit in doing work. So the land holders are no longer working their fields and this also created a big problem for me. Although I might have been able to find some other work, it is very difficult to earn a living now, and we live in constant fear of the military. We had no choice left but to come to this refugee camp.

Between February and May, the roads are open to vehicles, and so the military sends enough supplies to last for the rainy season, when conditions aren't good for transporting large quantities of food. First, the soldiers resell the supplies they get. This happens in two ways. Individual soldiers sell their personal supplies to supplement their incomes. In particular, they sell beans and condensed milk. But sometimes they also sell their rice, particularly if it is poor quality. The other thing that happens is that the battalion commanding officer sells bulk provisions for personal profit, especially the stocks of rice. Most rice is sold by the commander, not the soldiers themselves. Generally, the village head acts as a broker. Most buyers are traders from other places. The traders bring in basic commodities for sale, like salt, fish paste, chillies and Ajinomoto, and if they are making a profit then they purchase the soldiers' provisions. The effect of all this, however, is that by the time the rains have set in and the roads are no longer open, the soldiers don't have sufficient provisions left for themselves, and they demand rice from villagers. They demand rice weekly for the duration of the rainy season and quantities vary from one can to one pyi per house, depending upon the needs of the soldiers and the size of the household. Come the next dry season, and it starts all over again. Although quite a number of units have been rotated through this garrison, it seems customary for each to behave in this manner.

23. Forced relocation

A 26 year old female teacher from Bilin Township, Mon State.

My village is in the plains, and there are also hills around the area. Villagers are paddy and swidden farmers. Typically, villages in this area had 20 to 30 houses each. My village stayed in the same place for a long time, but starting from December 1995, after the crops had been harvested, the Burma army soldiers gave villagers two day notices to relocate to Kwee Lay village. People were too afraid not to go. These relocations were part of the Four Cuts operation. Due to this relocation program, food has become increasingly scarce. Prior to relocations, Kwee Lay had about 50 houses. At present it has more than 300.

After people relocated, they thought that they would stay for a short time, and then go and stay back in their original places, so they didn't bring all of their possessions, but instead hid them around the place. One villager explained to me how he had hidden possessions in the river bank. Some soldiers went to catch fish and saw the villagers' possessions, so they took them. This villager lost a lot of household items.

Most of the villagers are animists or Buddhists, and they have a lot of religious observances regarding agriculture. For example, if fields are damaged prior to the appropriate date when they must be prepared, then the people will no longer use them. In 1995, four villages were ordered to relocate to Kwee Lay, being K'wah Htah, Lah Kyoe Khoh, Su Khi, and Ta Meh Khi. Many people failed to relocate as they were instructed, so the Burma army came and burned their lands. For the rest of that year, they ceased their work and refused to grow rice. Although they had rice left over, they had to give it to the Burma army, KNU and DKBA.

The village was taxed by KNU for a long time, though there were some benefits such as schools and clinics. When the Burma army came, it also made demands, but if fields were not destroyed, then we could pay. But with the advent of the DKBA in 1996, food problems have grown. Starvation has started as a result of the relocations. The area is being watched intently by the Burma army and DKBA, so if people want to go out of the village to their fields then they have to get a pass and cannot stay out for a long time. Passes are issued daily for 5 kyat each, allowing travel from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. People cannot carry rice out of the village or they are accused of taking it to the KNU. One person told me that if he walked very quickly, then he could reach his farm, strip three betel palms of their fruit, and bring it back to Kwee Lay for sale. Most relocated villagers have to travel two to three hours to work their farms. As they have to travel back and forth like this all the time, they are also unable to look after their crops very well. The crops become damaged by diseases, insects and weather, so there is no longer any benefit in doing the work. The crops are also damaged by the movements of soldiers from one place to the next. Another thing is that few of the farmers are paddy farmers, most are swidden farmers. Swidden crops need the land to lie fallow before being used again, but due to relocations more and more people are being forced into a small area, so the land is becoming crowded and the quality of the soil is deteriorating rapidly. Also, when the rice crop is almost due, they still have to give taxes or food to the Burma army and DKBA soldiers in ever increasing quantities, and so they experience hunger. At that time of year most people are not eating regular meals of rice, but are eating rice porridge, perhaps only once per day, with a few bamboo shoots. Parents often go hungry to feed their children.

In March 1997, children in Kwee Lay were dying virtually daily, due to basic illnesses and inadequate care. At least twenty children died in one month. A lot of new people were coming into Kwee Lay, but had to go back to work their original properties daily, so they had insufficient time left to take care of their children. They have had to work harder than ever before, and even all the youth are also working. The youngest are left behind, by themselves, in unsanitary conditions. Many get measles and dysentery. Their diseases are treatable, but there are no medicines, and many end up dying.

Due to soldiers' activities or difficulties in getting to their farms, people are no longer working their lands. So there is no longer enough food left to eat. Villagers are facing starvation and disease. They can't contemplate their futures. Some who have no money and no more rice go to those with rice and do domestic work at their houses to get food to eat, meal by meal. The house owners are very embarrassed and sympathetic, but the people who come to do the work are no longer thinking of anything except how to get a small amount of food to fill their stomachs, which will satisfy their immediate needs.

As I see it, the village is in serious decline. The villagers are totally discouraged, and some want to leave their lands for good and find other work, but as they have never left their area or done any other kind of work, they can't think of where they would go or what they would do. The food that they grow, they don't get to eat. They have to give taxes and meet demands from three sides. Even if they have only rice porridge to eat, they still aren't too discouraged, but now some can't even eat rice porridge any more- sometimes they just eat roots and leaves. Some villagers told me, "If we could go to Thailand easily then we would all desire to go, but we don't want to give up our homelands here to other people."

24. The reality of agricultural development

Myint Soe, a 34 year old laborer from Thaton Township, Mon State.

This is a general description of my village since 1988, but things have been worse since 1996 than any time before. The village has only about 18 real landowners, and the rest are hired workers. The biggest farm is 50 acres. I worked on a 13 acre holding, which yielded 60-70 baskets of rice per acre, as long as we used fertilizer.

High taxes and hunger forced some farmers to sell their land. They have to pay the annual quota, which the government buys at 150 kyat per basket. The administration had us build a big dam, and to support this work farm owners paid one more basket per acre annually to the township council. The dam construction began in 1992 and took two years. The water is for the dry season crop. The dam needs maintenance, and if you don't go you are fined 100 kyat per day.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation sells two kinds of fertilizer which farmers can buy on credit at 3,200 kyat per acre. But our township council prefers selling to merchants, leaving farmers with only 4 bags for 10 acres. But when the debts are due, farm owners have to pay the full value, as if they had actually received 2 bags per acre. We heard that the government sent irrigation pumps, but after the township council received them all the pumps disappeared.

Villagers build roads without pay. If you don't go, the soldiers make you a porter to the frontline. IB 33 Commander Aung Ye Min established a rubber plantation on 500 acres near the village. The army made people plant trees then fence in the plantation. Cattle used to graze there, and now if they stray back the soldiers shoot and eat them.

Taxes and oppression are starving the village. There's no time to work, only to pay taxes and do forced labor; many villagers have little food. Some must eat porridge, some only water skimmed off boiled rice, and others only sweet potatoes. To feed the children some adults go without food for one or two days at a time. Even so, children increasingly suffer diarrhea, sore stomachs, and death.

I have 5 children. My oldest daughter, who is eleven, always went to do forced labor while we parents looked for food. You see children 8 or 9 years old working. Sometimes we only had enough rice for porridge. I worked all day, then went home only to hear my children cry from hunger. My tears fell, too. I could not suffer the poverty of my village. I came to Thailand to work and send money home, so that they can eat.

25. Separation for survival

Ma Khin, a 30 year old mother from Thaton Township, Mon State, speaking in May 1997.

Previously my family had seven and a half acres of our own land, however, we had to give a quota of 14 baskets paddy grain per acre annually. Our land yielded only about 300 baskets per year. We were forced to sell the land to a wealthy person for only 30,000 kyat. We used this money across six years, while doing labor on other farms, but now it's all gone. Now, one acre of land in my village can fetch more than 20,000 kyat.

Of my five children, three have had to leave home and work elsewhere. The oldest is 17. My husband got work as a subsistence wage laborer, digging earth to the west of Mayankun. He could earn 50-150 kyat per day, depending on the amount dug, but it was still not enough to support our family. Also, the army is constructing a cement road between Mayankun and Kyeh Kaung villages, and are demanding laborers or a fee of 100 kyat per person per day.

As a result of these problems in getting enough food for our family, we have had to separate. The children have gone to do domestic work in other houses. We parents came to work in Thailand. We figured that we could get better wages than in Burma, but after we came we were split up by agents and I was sent to a rich person who clearly planned to sell me. I and my friend fled secretly, and will now return to Burma.

26. Food scarcity in the delta

Kyaw Aye, a 40 year old fisherman from Ngaputaw Township, Irrawaddy Division.

I once stayed in my wife's village and worked as a logger, but with increasing restrictions and demands by various authorities, it was becoming more and more difficult to earn a living this way. In 1994 I told my wife, "I can't stay here and do this work any more- if we don't leave, we'll starve." I left the village and went to stay in town with family members. It was better to go to an urban area. Life is easier for the people there than in rural areas. I was lucky to have family in town. If a rural person tries to move into town without having any connections, it is very difficult to get started.

Since I stayed in town, I became a fisherman. During peak season I can make about 1,000 kyat per week. During the other times of year I also repair bicycles. The income from this activity is pretty inconsistent- sometimes quite good, sometimes nothing. People simply can't support a family on one form of income- you have to try your best to find as many different ways to get money as possible.

In 1993 three children died a couple of doors down from my house. All boys, they were around 10, 8 and 6. The children had always been weak and malnourished, especially in the last couple of years. Their bellies were distended and their ribs stuck out—like starving African children we saw in magazines. Their knees were swollen and their calves were sticks. Their skin was white, their lips pale. They often had diarrhea. Their father worked cutting grass and bamboo to build houses. They all died about a week apart—I remember because I went to cut timber for a week, came back and heard one had died. I went back to the forest, came home the next week and another was gone. Just one week later the third child died. We knew the family well. I remember the family's condition and how this all came to pass.

Their father used to grow bananas, cucumbers, and watermelons on a small plot about two miles outside the village. After the 1988 uprising, the government consolidated the village, so the family had to move. Wild elephants ate all their plants, and so he turned to cutting bamboo. He earned about eighty kyat per day, which might have been enough, but he only got cash when bamboo traders came, so the family sometimes went hungry. Also, at 45 he was getting arthritis and couldn't work every day. His family of seven ate no more than mine of five, and my children were younger. They begged for help frequently. Of course, we pitied them and helped as we could. Apart from rice, my wife gave them salt and fish paste.

When the children got diarrhea nobody suspected anything serious. They took some Burmese medicine, but that didn't stop it. Intravenous drips might have helped, but those cost 150 kyat or so, and nobody could afford them. So they passed away. The parents knew their children were dying, but there was no health care or medicine. Their father could only weep, heartbroken.

I knew this was a wrong and terrible thing. In my opinion, these children died from starvation. If they had adequate food they wouldn't have died. And they weren't the only ones, but I don't know the others' details. In nearby villages there was a minor epidemic. No matter how deep in poverty, people are never excused from demands for labor and money. This family had no alternative but to struggle for survival every day, and so the children died.

The annual inflation rate on basic food items in the last few years has been about 25%. Before 1988, we didn't see price increases like that. If my family runs short of food then I simply have to work extra-hard, and other members of my family will try to find some way of getting a little extra income, such as buying big bunches of vegetables, splitting them up and reselling them in one kyat bundles. Everybody does like this.

Every year people are called up to do labor on roads. This was another thing that seriously affected my ability to earn an income in my wife's village. Previously, I had to go twice, for an entire month. Orders came down from the township council through the village head. In my house there was but my wife and daughters and myself, so who else would go? The government was making these roads to connect with an artery from Pathein to Ngaputaw, but until now no vehicles are allowed on these roads as they are unpaved and would be destroyed in the wet season. If you chose not to go to labor then you could find somebody willing and negotiate a price for them to take your place, usually around 1000 kyat. I didn't have any savings to do like this. In fact, when I went to the road works I had only about 60-70 kyat with me.

Appendix 4: Testimonies Presented to the Tribunal

A lot of people at the construction site got headaches and fevers. As far as I see it, it should have been the responsibility of officials making us do the work to provide medicines for those who got ill, but they didn't give a thing. We also had to take all of our own tools- we got no support from the government for any of the work. We constructed huts in the fields that the road was constructed across. The farmers who lost land naturally got no compensation. One road also cut through a cemetery, but never mind about that! Women from a local village sold small quantities of food daily, but people in my group didn't have money. We mixed rice, fish paste, salt and turmeric together and just ate that. Of course, we were usually weak and sickly, as we were doing hard work but eating poor food. While I was absent, my family survived on about 900 kyat a month. My wife collected fire wood and cut bamboo which she resold to traders on the riverside, earning about 10 kyat per day.

It's a lot easier to stay in an urban area than in a small rural village. Since I've stayed in town, I've never had to go and work like the villagers are called up to do. If a young or middle aged man stays in a rural village, then any demand falls on your head, as there's few people. This was increasingly the case when I stayed in my wife's village, so I told her "let's move to the town." I remember that at that time we had little food left, and my clothes were ragged, but when you don't have enough food you don't think about buying new clothes.

In my wife's village of about 100 houses, I would say that around 90 households are living in poverty. But poverty has different levels of severity. What generally prevents people from improving their incomes is that they have no money to get some capital items to do more lucrative work. This is a big difference between people like myself who are able to survive reasonably well and those who are struggling to fill their stomachs every day. For example, nearly everybody in my wife's village had the ability to do logging work like I was, but they needed the money to buy a saw, which cost about 1500 kyat a few years ago, and they simply don't have any money. It's not that they can't do the work.

In my opinion there are definitely serious food shortages among the rural poor. I would say that 60-70% of the villagers face the threat of hunger on a daily basis. Every day the only foods that people ever eat are rice, fish paste and leaves. For a lot of them, to have their income generation interrupted for even one day means that they have no food. Some have single sets of clothes and no blankets, or only the most threadbare ones.

In the towns there's still a lot of poverty, but it's not so bad as the rural communities. I would put the urban poor at 60-70 % of the population. In town, the wealthy are traders, video hall owners, loan sharks and so on. I would say that 30 to 40% of the urban population have food problems daily. Mostly, these are farm laborers or petty traders of vegetables and so on. A lot of them are migrants from the rural areas trying to escape the same kinds of problems in their home villages. Between those who are getting by and those who are not, it's again a matter of having some materials or equipment on which to base your income. For example, a porter who carries stuff off boats can get up to 100 kyat per day, but somebody with a bicycle-sidecar can get 200-300 kyat per day.

Poverty has certainly been on a steady increase, it has never dropped. Since 1988, prices have risen to four to eight times what they were back then, which is especially shocking to our people who were previously used to stable prices. Just once around 1984-85 there was a really big increase in the cost of rice. It was prior to the new crop. Overnight the price jumped from 40 to 800 kyat for one basket and stayed like that for a couple of months until the new crop was in, when it fell back to 70-80 kyat. For two or three months people were eating only one meal of rice porridge with some leaves per day. I'm not sure exactly why it happened, but I heard that the BSPP government had been taking very high quotas and this led to shortages. I don't know really what they were doing with all that rice and how they worked things out.

Poverty increases problems among people, especially in towns. In villages, people are still tight-knit and try to face their difficulties without undermining each other, but in towns that's not so. People bring everything into their houses before nightfall, so that it won't be stolen. Chickens are often thieved. I lost a whole melon vine one time- somebody just came and ripped the whole lot up from along side the house during the night. Unfortunately, it's not so easy to bring plants in!

People lose their lives working for the army without receiving a salary and then their families get no compensation. Health is bad, but there are no decent clinics, so people die who shouldn't have to. School children lack materials and struggle

amid poverty. As we are all suffering from the military government's oppression we must join hands to overthrow them. It is clear that the people have the right to take this course of action.

The following is additional material received from this source as of December 1998. It highlights the worsening food-crisis in the Irrawaddy Division.

Since last year, the cost of almost all foodstuffs and basic goods in the delta have doubled. In August 1998, I met with a corporal from IB 93. I didn't ask him anything, but of his own accord he complained about the rations received by his battalion. They are still receiving 6 pyi of rice per month, but all of the surplus items- oil, salt, sugar, condensed milk, beans, fish paste- are being rationed at only half of the previous level.

To get extra money, soldiers in the delta go out on "conscription" drives. They go to the village/ward council officers, inform them they want to conscript one or two people, and tell them how much it will cost to opt out. They don't make the cash amount too high, and right now nobody wants to become a soldier, as their conditions aren't as good as before, so the soldiers know that people will pay the money. The money is split between the soldier collecting it and his superiors.

Fishing is not as good as before, as there is little water in tributaries. This in spite of good rains in 1997-98. There is heavy deforestation in the delta, and also intensive irrigation. Wells are increasingly empty too. In the past, people were happy to let neighbors share water from wells, but in this last year, families were reserving their wells for their own use only, and even then some don't have enough.

In June-July 1998, there was a lot of rain and many children died from dengue fever. Adults also suffered the disease, but didn't die. Every day children came into the town hospital and two to three per day were dying for a period of some weeks. In one case on July 26, a father paid 2000 kyat for a boat to bring his child to the hospital, and then the doctor told him it was too late, and refused to treat the child. The father told him, "Whether too late or not, give the medicine!" and was ready to pay for it. But the doctor refused, and shortly after the child died. The father in a fury swore and abused the doctor and hospital staff. For those children who survived, it took 2-3 weeks in hospital to recover, which cost parents more than 20,000 kyat. At the hospital, absolutely everything must be purchased and paid for.

Now, a large number of children are forced to drop out of school after Standard 2 or 3. A member of my family works at a school where most of the children attending are particularly poor. At that school, the children who attend often come with no food for the day, no shoes, etc. The school materials are also all insufficient.

In July 1998, I met with a schoolteacher. The teacher was pushing a bicycle loaded with dried goods, basic household items, etc. He explained to me that he and his sister are both primary school teachers, and must take the main responsibility to support their family of 6. The 1200 kyat salary is not enough, but also they are not given permission to resign their positions and find other work. Therefore, to survive he goes to buy small goods in town and resells them in his village, a couple of times per week. It takes about one and a half hours traveling time on the bicycle each time. Most teachers must find extra sources of income like this to survive. While teachers, like other civil servants, continue to receive 6 pyi of discounted rice at about 30 kyat per pyi each month, it is generally poor quality, and sometimes rotten. Some resell it, some re-polish it.

In my opinion, the main issue in the last year has been the price of food- it's doubled, but wages are unchanged. As a result of this, regular people are slowly understanding more about how this government is no good for them. They see that the authorities are only working for themselves and the country. People have stronger political ideas than before, mainly rooted in the economic difficulties of the present. More and more people consciously recognize that they are poor due to the bad government. There is more cautious resistance than before, both out of the need to survive and out of resentment to the administration. For example, 5-6 years ago, farmers absolutely had to give the paddy quota that was set, whatever the case. Nowadays, they try to find ways not to give full amounts, and the government is more cautious. Traders recognize that taxes are high and there are a lot of problems for them under the regime. They think that if there was "democracy" then economic conditions would improve. In fact, most people equate democracy with better economic circumstances.

27. A teacher's lament

A 35 year old woman from Pyapon Township, Irrawaddy Division, speaking in June 1997.

Due to the high cost of living, government wages are not sufficient to make ends meet. I receive a salary of only 900 kyat per month. At present, we have a monthly deduction of 500 kyat for the loans given last year. We then use 280 kyat to buy 14 pyi of rice and by the time all other deductions for teachers welfare funds and the like are made there's only about 80 kyat left. In residential areas there are further collections for construction of roads, receptions for officers and other compulsory donations that all add to the burden of poor workers. Those contributions amount to at least another 50 to 100 kyat per month. On top of all these, there are weekly work teams organized to clean the ward. If we can't send someone to join the team it's 30 kyat per household. Road repair work is required twice per year. We have to take our own food and tools. That work lasts for three days to one week each time. If we cannot attend then we have to find a substitute or pay a fine directly. The fine is up to 1000 kyat. When we tell them that we are government employees, the authorities turn a deaf ear to our complaints. We all have to do the same work.

Eight years ago, we got 450 kyat a month. At that time we used about 100 kyat for our 14 pyi of discounted rice. Although we had to make a contribution to the welfare fund, we still had about 300 kyat left. Five members of a household could basically live on 8 kyat per day, for oil, salt, chilies, onions and a few vegetables. At that time a viss of onions was only about 8 kyat, and pork 25-30 kyat. Now a viss of pork is 220-250 kyat. The costs of foodstuffs have risen 9-10 times since then. Our pay has only doubled. Given our current incomes, workers are doomed to starve, or work up debts. To survive I give private tuition to 15 students at my home, for one hour each morning and again each evening. I charge 50 kyat per month, per student. That's enough to cover basic expenses for oil, salt and so on.

Food and commodity prices are rising daily. I have thought about leaving my teaching position, as I feel very frustrated. On second thoughts, I realize that I would have no money. If I resign my job, I would also have to explain why I want to leave. It is a very complicated process and I would be subjected to suspicion and interrogation. My husband was previously also a government employee. Now he has a job as a watchman at a commercial firm. We are lucky that he has been able to send some money to us, otherwise we would be in deep trouble.

Some public servants cannot afford to keep their children in school. Once they are old enough, they have to join their parents in working for the household. When we think about our education, we realize that even university graduates have a hope of only becoming government employees, which would not do anything to improve one's life. To make money is the overwhelming solution to our problems.

28. The summer paddy program

Kyaw Win, a 30 year old male farmer from Pyapon Township, Irrawaddy Division, speaking in June 1997.

I farm six acres, and give a quota of 11 baskets paddy per acre. I would like to try the summer crop, but I am unable to irrigate. Farmers close to the roads are required to cultivate summer paddy without fail. In some areas, once the directive was given to start the summer cultivation, farmers were forced to harvest unripe monsoon paddy crops. Some who had planted soya beans after the first crop had to destroy or uproot the plants to start the summer paddy on orders from the township council. Then, due to poor irrigation, crops failed and many farmers had to face severe losses and bankruptcy.

The lower level administrators, seeking only to satisfy their superiors, demanded that villagers cultivate summer paddy along the whole length of both sides of roads. I'm lucky, because my farm is quite a distance from any road. I made a cover-up by cultivating a small plot of land in accordance with their demands. I sowed the seeds for the administrators to see, and the paddy sprouted. The local officials who came were taken in. Later, due to the lack of water supply, the plants shriveled and died.

A lot of farmers have to play along to make things easier for themselves. They pretend obedience. If there is a plot of land available for summer cultivation and there are people who want to use it, then it must be given up. A lot of people only contributed half of their quotas on monsoon paddy. I too have contributed only half. We have been pressed many times by

council officials to complete our contributions. We tell them that we will supplement what we've given and after they go away at least we're left in peace for a while. In the last couple of years, there were arrests and detentions. People had to sell their cattle to pay fines and get relatives released. This year there haven't been any arrests. However, owners of land who failed to meet their quotas for last year are being required to pay a 1000 kyat fine per acre before they begin re-cultivating their fields.

As the government didn't get full quotas, the rice mills have been closed down to prevent farmers from secretly milling withheld grain. Those who are determined to mill their paddy have to bribe police between 100 and 200 kyat. The police get their cut and the farmers get their paddy nicely milled. The policemen too have insufficient incomes upon which to live. But when the district or township council officials approach then the mills have to stop functioning. The authorities know what is going on. They have their own corrupt practices and they know all too well about this sort of behavior. This kind of corruption is nothing new. But it's obvious that there's no progress for farmers. We have to tell lies in order to use our own possessions and property. That's the way of life these days.

29. An outspoken elder

In January 1997 a meeting was called in Pyapon Township, Irrawaddy Division, to receive instructions from the Agriculture Minister, Lt-Gen Myint Aung. A farmer who attended the meeting gave this account of proceedings:

The government has been giving instructions for the cultivation of summer paddy crops, and have placed district, township and village council officials in charge of implementation. These officials seek only to keep their superiors pleased, by ordering farmers to grow summer crops without fail. As a consequence, farmers who do not have adequate facilities or money for this cultivation have had to face tremendous difficulties. As the farmers are living under a military dictatorship they do not dare to present the unpleasant reality to officials.

On 10 January 1997, the Agriculture Minister was to meet farmers at Ohn Bihn village, Pyapon Township. The township council issued orders that one person from every farming household in the township must attend without fail. The meeting commenced with a speech by the Agriculture Minister, after which members of the audience were invited to submit their views. Two people deliberately selected by local authorities stood up and presented positive views on the summer crop. They didn't present any negative issues. After these two speeches, the minister again called for comments or questions. At that time, a 60 year old farmer took the unprecedented step of standing up and risking arrest in order to outline reality. He spoke as follows:

"Although the summer cultivation scheme will have benefits, it cannot be so in every place and every circumstance. There are three elevations to take into account- high, middle and low lands. This paddy planted on low lands with good access to water sources will succeed, but on middle level lands there will be a lot of difficulties in irrigating, and in spite of high investments by farmers the land will not hold water for long, so ultimately the expense will outweigh the value of the yield. As for the high-level farmlands, summer paddy cultivation will simply not work. Also, most farmers are in poverty, and cannot meet the cost of labor for the scheme. On top of these miseries, the local officials are putting a lot of pressure on us to produce the summer paddy, in spite of how inappropriate it is. Farmers have to bear impossible burdens."

At that point the members of the audience started cheering and clapping, whistling, jumping up and down and making somersaults. Then other farmers were encouraged to speak one by one about their problems and make known the real difficulties they have had to endure. There was constant applause and clamor, the sound of which spread throughout the neighborhood.

After hearing the complaints of the farmers, the general said that he himself had been traveling all over many townships and had repeatedly heard fabricated reports by the township council officials. He then started to remove officials from their positions. He thanked the elderly farmer and those others who had revealed the facts to him. He stated that the dry season crop must only be undertaken in appropriate conditions. He warned local officials not to molest and overburden local farmers. After the meeting closed, people thronged to congratulate the elderly farmer for his outspokenness.

Appendix 4: Testimonies Presented to the Tribunal

30. No more livelihood

This information came from a friend of farmer U Po Gyi's family in Wakema Township, Irrawaddy Division.

Before 1991, U Po Gyi had 3 acres of land which could yield up to 30 baskets per acre. The government quota was 12 baskets per acre. U Po Gyi also had to put aside six baskets for next years crop, leaving him with a net total of approximately 48 baskets of paddy per year. He also had to hire cattle and farm implements. These expenses didn't leave him with too much, but he could net about 20 baskets of rice per year, enough to survive on.

1991 was a very dry year, although there was still enough water at U Po Gyi's farm for the crop. However due to many insects the crop was halved. In January 1992, village council officials and three police rounded him up with many other farmers who had been unable to give their quotas. They sentenced him to two years in jail, and his family had no way to get him out. In his absence, his wife worked as a subsistence laborer, but in June 1993 she sold their land out of desperation, at 8000 kyat per acre. She used 20,000 kyat to have her husband released. But he was in poor physical condition and died of a heart ailment about 2 months later. That same year, there was a big increase in demand for labor on road constructions. In the absence of his father, U Po Gyi's only son, Maung Ta Ta, who at the time was 15 years old, worked on the Wakema - Shwe Laung road for one month. During that time the boy drank unsanitary water and ate poorly. He contracted dysentery and a fever, and died at the road site.

Since that time, the remaining members of the family, U Po Gyi's wife and four daughters, have had to split up. None of the daughters is in school, and two of them have gone away to find work. Only the mother and youngest daughter are staying together doing daily wage labor to survive.

These kind of events go on all the time. I can give this example because I know the people involved. Others always just look on these situations with pity, and recognize suffering, but don't think that they can do anything about them. They become normal. In Burma, each level of society puts a little more pressure on the next one down, until by the time you get to the very bottom the greatest pressure is there- those people bear everything, that's the result.

31. Death of a child

This story of a girl who was four years old at time of her death in Wakema Township, Irrawaddy Division, was told by the same person as the previous testimony.

Naw Paw Wah was the youngest of three children in her family. She died during the rainy season of 1996, as her parents were unable to get enough food and couldn't take good care of her.

When they married in 1981, her parents had two acres of residential land. They sold their land in 1988, in order to do some trade, but after their first child was born, and prices and taxes were rising, they became increasingly poor. Later, her father began to work as a laborer. In 1996, he could earn only 60 kyat per day. But their daily average food expenses were 80 kyat. For typical workers like these, the cost of basic foodstuffs, like oil, onions and beans, are totally unaffordable. If the parents don't work or are sick for one day then they go without food. Their neighbors are all in the same situation, so they are unable to help.

Naw Paw Wah's mother mostly did odd jobs, like carrying things for people in the marketplace. The children had to be watched by their grandmother during the daytime. She couldn't take very good care of Naw Paw Wah. The child developed a fever and weakness. The fever continued at a low level for about a month. If the child rested and ate well she could easily survive, but if she felt well then she ran off and played, and then became sick again. Her mother would return to work. After three days of more serious fever, Naw Paw Wah fell unconscious, and her grandmother called her mother to take her to the clinic. Although rushed to the hospital, the child died. The hospital staff said that she was sick due to poor nutrition. She would not have died if her parents had time to take good care of her; if she had enough food for adequate nutrition.

32. A fisherman

A crab catcher and fisherman in Bogalay Township, Irrawaddy Division, spoke on conditions there in June 1997.

A lot of people are catching crabs at the moment. Ten years ago very few people were interested in catching crabs- only fish. Now crab catching is on the increase, so brokers and buyers are too. A crab catcher can earn up to 3000 kyat per month. But the rising price of rice doesn't result in improved living conditions.

The Maingma Hla Kyun forest reserve in Bogalay Township is being decimated for firewood. There are streams there where shrimp can be caught, but the license fee costs up to 100,000 kyat. We heard that this license is issued by the People's Pearl and Fisheries Corporation. If they utilized the money they got from licenses on jetty projects and road repairs then the people wouldn't be left bearing such heavy burdens. But now we have to make twice annual financial contributions for road repairs. We have to pay for repairs of bridges, new school buildings, expenses for officials visits, firewood for the military, soldiers meals and everything. All this amounts to about 100 kyat per month per household. If we complain that we lack the money, we are usually told to report to the village council. We can't do that. If we say anything they don't like then we risk detention. So, in spite of our lack of money we do our best.

We're not facing starvation yet, but we have to eat with thrift. Sometimes we have to borrow rice from our neighbors, and later we do them good turns back. We are living "hand to mouth." Having a full sack of rice in reserve is a thing of the past. Fishermen earn our food off the day's work. Whether or not we get democracy isn't a big issue for us. We just need to do our work in order to survive.

33. A failed irrigation scheme

A 58 year old widow from Hlee Ku Township, Rangoon Division, speaking in August 1997.

The government made us dam the Ngamoeyeik River then called on us to grow summer paddy. The construction site was 5 miles away, and we walked back and forth every day in the hot season, when it was really stinking hot. Each family in the region had to send people to dig. I heard that one pregnant woman died carrying loads of soil on her head. I had to hoe the ground. The work was enormously tiring. After we went home in the evening, they videotaped the day's progress. The dam opened in 1995.

Summer paddy started in 1996. They didn't give seeds, we had to buy them. I'll tell you something, they made us buy seeds taken from other farmers. But different strains of rice were all mixed together, one from here, one from there. When we planted we didn't notice the difference, but they grew at different rates. There were three different kinds of rice, so what can you do about that? You can't do anything! You would have to harvest one field three different times, which is too much work. Farmers were furious—some destroyed the whole lot and planted beans or sesame, then bought paddy in the market for their quota.

Well, by this time most monsoon paddy had been harvested, and people had planted their beans. But with the dam finished everybody had to grow summer rice. They told us we couldn't grow nuts, we had to grow paddy. Officials from Rangoon, not soldiers, came and ripped up the beans and even unharvested rice. That was just about the last straw. The government said, "We are making you grow summer paddy for you yourselves to eat." They said monsoon paddy is for government and summer paddy would be for farmers.

When we needed water they didn't open the dam; when we didn't want water they gave it! At first they didn't release water as some people hadn't finished harvesting all of their crop. Summer paddy needs water, so the government opened the dam and way too much water poured out. People who hadn't finished harvesting their first crop rushed out to gather it all up. In bean fields, water flooded the landscape. Villagers asked, "What are you doing? We can't even live here any more." Then the government answered "If you can't stay then get out—we're just following instructions." Later they cut the water and the summer rice started drying up in the fields. People ended up pumping in water themselves, which was expensive. The administration said, "You farmers are dishonest. When you need something we give it, then you protest. We can't follow your whims any more." The authorities said farmers are inconsistent and don't do things right.

Appendix 4: Testimonies Presented to the Tribunal

Farmers were now losing their crops. So villagers went to break open the dam themselves. The authorities became angry and said, "You went to break open this dam, so you must relocate!" The village leaders outlined their case step by step, then the authorities understood a little. We didn't have to relocate, but we had to help repair the dam. We nearly died in the stinking hot weather.

The authorities didn't come to see areas where the paddy was flooded. You can't know about that. They come and take video footage of areas where the crop is good, where it's green and ripe. The stuff that didn't grow they don't show- you can't say anything about that. Due to flooding, a lot of paddy got wet and smelled foul, so when we took it to the procuring agents they said that it wasn't good paddy and refused to accept it. As a result of all this, nobody is producing enough paddy. No farmer has enough to eat. This is what I know from my own experiences and what I myself have witnessed.

All of the fields in this area are in this situation. This year there's a lot of grasses and weeds among the paddy, and a lot of insects too- that's Burma paddy, not the same as Thailand. The whole of the township has these conditions. The government just says that the farmers don't behave honestly. They say that if we behaved honestly things wouldn't be like this.

My son-in-law and I had to give more than 80 baskets of paddy quota. He has about six acres of fields, and if he works the paddy problem-free he can get 200 baskets. This year, he got less than 200. The administrators come and calculate the paddy grain production per acre by walking around to find an area where there's a lot of stalks, and stripping stalks until the grain has filled one cup, so then they can say how many stalks it takes to fill one cup and from that how much each acre will produce. If you take stalks from an area where there's dense growth like that then two or three stalks will fill one can. So they said that one acre would produce 80 to 90 baskets. My son and I have six acres of land to plant, but now, through deliberate over-estimate by officials, it's become seven! Really it's six, but they registered it as seven. When the paddy has actually fully grown they don't calculate on the basis of the true yield- you have to give what was demanded based on estimates.

Our land was flooded, so we hired a pump. He had only about 60 baskets left, which we took to the administration—the entire lot, and not a single basket was left. But they said, "This grain is no good, we don't want it," and they made him bring it all back. He couldn't think any more, and went to get the whole lot husked. They said that the paddy was rotten, and wouldn't accept it. They're also looking at the chaff, and if there's too much rubbish they're not taking it. This is because some people started to mix their grain with dirt and other stuff to increase the apparent quantity. People said, "There's a lot of chaff and dirt because we stay in a dusty place." Others use bribes- a couple of bottles of alcohol here and there and maybe you can get 10 baskets off your quota.

Now I've come to Thailand to do some trading, sell medicines and stuff, instead of working there. There's nothing to be gained from it.

34. A civil servant

A 40 year old government administrator from Pyinmana Township, Mandalay Division, speaking in June 1997.

I have been a member of the civil service for 18 years, and my current salary is only 1200 kyat. A government salary nowadays isn't worth enough for a single trip to the market. My wife is also a government employee and our combined income is not much more than 2000 kyat per month. There are the usual deductions made from our wages- this is a common thing for government employees. The net total of our salaries leaves only about 1400 kyat for food. The government, however, has a scheme for disbursing an additional 300 kyat per month to employees. Anybody who is absent from 5 days of work in a month is not eligible. In actual fact, the government is not increasing workers' wages. This 300 kyat welfare payment is simply a ploy to get workers to do more and stay in their workplaces. Previously, although our wages were low, we were better off. Nowadays, if only one member of a household works, the wage wouldn't even be enough for oneself, let alone the whole family. So workers these days have to plan their families carefully to avoid having additional children. They don't need new members of the family causing everybody to be sucked further into the agony of poverty and want.

APPENDIX 5:

ARTICLES FROM NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

1. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR (Wednesday, 25 June 1997)

All-round efforts being made to develop agriculture sector for farmers' benefit

YANGON, 24 June — Secretary-2 of the State Law and Order Restoration Council Li-Gen Tin Oo met secretaries of State/Division Law and Order Restoration Councils and chairmen of District Law and Order Restoration Councils of States and Divisions and chairmen of 45 Township Law and Order Restoration Councils of Yangon Division and officials at Myanma Farms Enterprise today.

The Secretary-2 said he met secretaries of State/Division Law and Order Restoration Councils and chairmen of District/Township Law and Order Restoration Councils to look into their requirements in thoroughly implementing the objectives of the Five-Year National Economic Plan regionwise.

In addition to economic matters, administrative affairs will be also coordinated at this meeting, he added.

National economic progress depends on agricultural development as Myanmar is an agro-based nation, he noted, saying all-round and sincere efforts are being made in improving the agriculture sector for the benefit of farmers, who are the nation's majority.

All should work dutifully and with sincerity and goodwill for significant advancement of the sector, he stressed.

Efforts are being made

to extend land put under monsoon paddy as well as summer paddy to boost paddy output to one billion baskets, he said. Priority has been given to increasing paddy production to ensure food sufficiency for the growing population, he pointed out.

Li-Gen Tin Oo said currently, efforts are being made to accumulate capital required in all-round devel-

such as cotton, sugarcane and beans and pulses at suitable places to accumulate capital for the nation, said

He stressed the need to change from the system of depending on a single crop to four crops, saying the national economy must be supported by four pillars instead of one.

Some States and Divisions might be suitable to plant two or three crops, he

can be accomplished, he stressed.

The Secretary-2 urged officials to be careful in giving priority to these four crops. They must conduct coordinations with farmers to their satisfaction to make sure that their programmes never have ill affects farmers' regular crops.

Personnel of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and farmers should un-

People's Desire

- * Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views.
- * Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation.
- * Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State.
- * Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy.



Secretary-2 Li-Gen Tin Oo addresses secretaries of State/Division Law and Order Restoration Councils and chairmen of District/Township Law and Order Restoration Councils and departmental officials.—MNA

oping the nation from the agricultural sector. However, there were many difficulties encountered in striving to gain capital from paddy alone, he pointed out.

Plans are under way to give priority to extending cultivation of cash crops

said. Careful considerations must be made in choosing crops that are actually suitable with the respective regions, he advised, warning officials against doing the impossible. They should strive to achieve success in implementing tasks which

derstand and cooperate with each other, he stressed. Service personnel should avoid acts that may cause burden to farmers and farmers on their part should be dutiful to the State, he said. There will be growth in

(See page 6)

(from page 12)
production only if there is understanding and smooth relationship between the two, he noted.

Local authorities should render effective assistance in ensuring smooth relationship between the two and in timely fulfilling of the requirements, he pointed out.

Regional authorities with firm conviction must take the leading role in striving towards agricultural and economic progress, he stressed.

Departmental personnel must also join hands with regional authorities in collectively implementing the tasks, removing departmentalism and personality cult.

Efforts should be made regionwise for the agricultural banks to benefit the people of rural areas.

Regional authorities should strive to develop their political outlook and economic outlook in addition to their normal duties, he said. They should also strive to attend to the needs of the grass-roots level and for the development of fish and meat sector, forest sector, industrial sector, energy sector and other sectors in parallel to the agri-

cultural sector.

Firm foundations could be set up after successfully implementing the Five-Year National Economic Plan, he noted.

The duties of local authorities are to maintain regional stability, expedite regional progress and to implement economic plans, he said, stressing the need to

make cooperative efforts among respective ministries. Weakness in cooperation among departments will have ill effects on departmental functions and regional stability, he stated.

Local authorities at different levels should harmoniously work with departments for national development,

tranquillity and regional progress as their functions are interconnected, he said.

Law and Order Restoration Councils at different levels have been formed to give leadership to and to cooperate with other departments, he said.

They should love their work and should strive ac-

tively with far sight, he said.

Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Li-Gen Myint Aung, Minister for Industry-2 Maj-Gen Kyaw Than, officials of State Law and Order Restoration Council Office and Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and guests were also present.

MNA

2. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR (Monday, 11 August 1997)

Nation will prosper as living standard of peasants rises

YANGON, 10 Aug—Secretary-2 of the State Law and Order Restoration Council Lt-Gen Tin Oo and Ministers toured townships in Yangon South District and attended a ceremony to mark the completion of ploughing in the district and transplanting skill contest this morning.

The Secretary-2 and party met township-level officials.

Accompanied by Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Lt-Gen Myint Aung, Ministers at the Office of the Prime Minister Col Pe Thein and Brig-Gen Lun Maung, Minister at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister U Khin Maung Yin, Chairman of Yangon Division Law and Order Restoration Council Maj-Gen Khin Maung Than, Chief of Staff (Navy) Commodore Nyunt Thein, Chief

of Staff (Air) Brig-Gen Kyaw Than, senior military officers, Deputy Minister for Livestock and Fisheries U Aung Than and departmental officials, the Secretary-2 arrived at Kungyangon Township where he was welcomed by Chairman of Yangon South District Law and Order Restoration Council Lt-Col Ko Gyi, officials and local residents.

The Secretary-2 and the ministers inspected completion of ploughing on a 100-acre model plot, weeding and feeding fertilizer and spraying pesticides in Kamarpar Village.

Ploughing was completed with the use of high technology for 100 baskets of paddy per acre yield.

The Secretary-2 and the ministers cordially greeted women transplanters and officials. They then visited the completion of ploughing cer-

emony and transplanting skill contest.

Transplanting teams from Thanlyin, Khayan, Yangon Thongwa, Kawhmu, Twantay, Kungyangon and Kyauktan Townships participated in the contest.

Altogether 12 transplanters each of various townships planted paddy nurselings on the 85x30 feet plot. A total of 10,200 paddy plants were to be grown in 40 rows in the plot.

In meeting with departmental officials and farmers, the Secretary-2 expressed his pleasure for their performance in the contest and said out of 45 townships in Yangon Division paddy is cultivated most in 17 townships and completion of ploughing was held successfully in Yangon South District.

He said efforts are being made for completion of tar-

geted monsoon paddy cultivation under the supervision of the Chairman of Yangon Division Law and Order Restoration Council and coordination with officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

Most of the people in our country are peasants and the nation will prosper as their living standard rises. Necessary assistance has been provided to boost income of the peasants, spending large sums of money to help agriculture in accord with the guidance of Senior General Than Shwe, he added.

The Secretary-2 stressed the importance of cooperation among the respective organizations, personnel of the ministry and peasants as the government is providing assistance for agricultural development.

(See page 7)

(from page 1)

He spoke of the need to adhere to instructions of Myanmar Agriculture Service for 100 baskets of paddy per acre yield, to gain progress in agriculture as the national task for ours is an agricultural country.

He also spoke of the Senior General's guidance on successful cultivation of paddy, the ministry's implementation on extension of cultivation, multiple cropping and ratooning and cooperation with departments concerned and peasants.

He also stressed the need to implement four-pillars system of paddy, sugarcane, cotton and beans and pulses starting from the Second Year of the Five Year Economic Plan.

High technology is applied in model plot for 100 baskets of paddy per acre yield and urged peasants to help spread of such accomplishment from one township to another and departments to organize the people to participate in the task with four views.

Next, Minister Lt-Gen Myint Aung reported on the ministry's undertakings for development of agriculture and matters to be undertaken by peasants.

Next, Chairman of Yangon Division Law and Order Restoration Council Commander Maj-Gen Khin Maung Than said that out of the scheduled 1.2 million acres, 1 million acres have been placed under monsoon paddy, accounting for 92 per cent.

He cited progress of monsoon paddy cultivation. In Yangon South District, out of the scheduled 780,000 acres, 770,000 acres have been cultivated, accounting for 99 per cent. In Yangon North District, out of the scheduled 350,000 acres, 260,000 acres have been cultivated, accounting for 75 per cent.

The commander noted that Yangon Division and Yangon South District had to take pride in this ceremony which was held to mark the first and foremost completion of monsoon paddy cultivation of Yangon South District in the entire country after holding a district-level paddy transplanting contest.



Secretary-2 of the State Law and Order Restoration Council Lt-Gen Tin Oo inspects application of advanced technology for cultivation in Kawhmu Township.—MNA

3. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR (Tuesday, 14 October 1997)

Agriculture sector meeting focuses on exceeding per acre paddy yield, producing one billion baskets

YANGON, 13 Oct.—The second four-monthly work coordination meeting for agriculture sector in 1997-98 was held at the Myanmar Farms Enterprise at 9th Mile, Pyay Road, here this morning with an address by Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Lt-Gen Myint Aung.

It was attended by Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Khin Maung, directors-general and managing directors of the departments and enterprises under the ministry, the chairmen of State/Division Agricultural Supervisory Committees and farm managers.

Minister Lt-Gen Myint Aung said the State Law and Order Restoration Council is striving for national reconsolidation, emergence of an enduring constitution and building of a modern and developed new nation in accordance with the new constitution. Economic progress is essential for the emergence of a new nation, he said, adding agriculture sector is the most basic economic undertaking. Hence, he said, efforts are being made in conformity with the objective—development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well.

Emphasis is placed on the four major crops, namely, paddy, beans and pulses, cotton and sugarcane and efforts are being made to boost the per acre yield. It has been targeted to exceed 100 baskets an acre in paddy to produce one billion baskets, he said.

As the second year (1997-98) of the second five-year short-term plan is being implemented at present, he

said, only an extent of success has been achieved. He called for efforts to achieve success fully.

He recalled that five working groups were formed this year to ensure success of tasks. They were water supply group, cultivation group, agricultural education group, finance group and supervisory group. They should have the ardent wish to help farmers and sympathy towards them, he said. He spoke of the need for them to get down to the grassroots levels to meet farmers and help solve their problems instantly. Rural development could be brought about only when they get in touch with farmers and see to their needs. He noted economic progress will contribute towards political stability. The nation would then be in a position to strengthen the Tatmadaw for national defence, he said.

Concerning water supply, he called on the group concerned to prevent the wasteful flow of water from rivers

and creeks into the sea. He cited a large sum of funds allocated for irrigation projects this year and efficient use of water would result in the rise of sown acreage where water supply is certain. Out of 12 million acres of monsoon paddy; the sown acreage with sufficient water supply stands at over six million which will increase to ten if water supply is ensured, he said. The group concerned will have to strive for exceeding the per acre yield of 100 baskets and produce one billion baskets.

The minister spoke of the need to use quality strains to boost the per acre yield. With sufficient water supply there will be multiple cropping, he said.

He pointed out that ten million out of 12 million acres of monsoon paddy will be put under the crop fully through close supervision of the working groups. By cultivating summer paddy on four million acres and producing 75 baskets per acre the targeted paddy surplus will be

achieved, he said. He said 800 million baskets will be enough for domestic consumption but the government is striving for achieving paddy surplus.

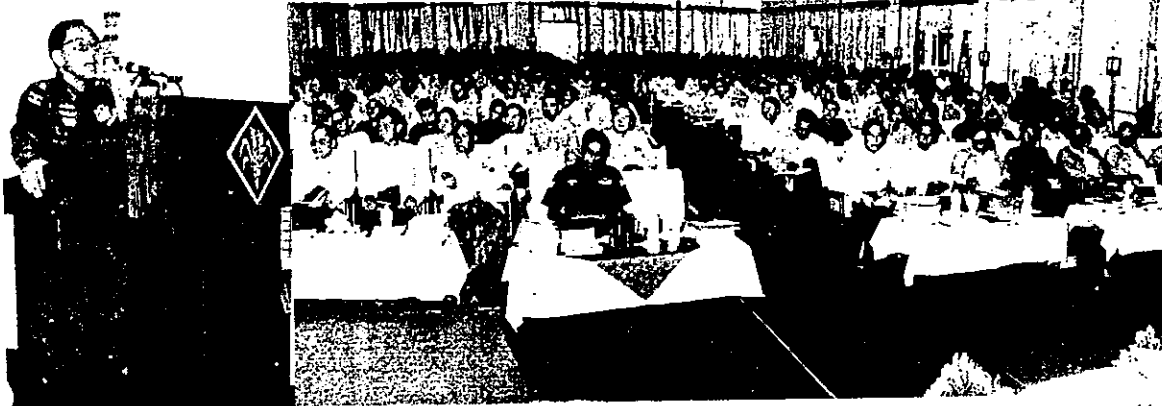
He also called for efforts to attract internal and external entrepreneurs to invest in cash crops such as rubber, oil palm, jute, coffee, corn, mulberry and tea in addition to the four major crops.

He also called for taking interest in the work, cooperation and coordination among the departments and discharge of duties most conscientiously.

The working groups then reported on 1997-98 monsoon paddy cultivation and production, preparations for cultivation of monsoon paddy and cultivation and production of the four major crops.

The Minister replied to the points in the reports and looked into the requirements. The first day meeting was adjourned at 4.30 pm.

MNA



Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Lt-Gen Myint Aung addresses 1997-98 second four-monthly meeting.—A&I

4. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR (Friday, 17 October 1997)

More food being grown to eradicate hunger, malnutrition

YANGON, 16 Oct — World Food Day was celebrated in Myepadehkyun at Kandawgyi, Bahan Township, at 8.30 am today, attended by Secretary-2 of the State Law and Order Restoration Council Lt-Gen Tin Oo.

The Secretary-2 presented prizes for outstanding performances in food production.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Lt-Gen Myint Aung said:

I feel greatly honoured for having the opportunity of delivering the statement to all of you who are gathering here today for the celebration of World Food Day. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations was established in Quebec, Canada, on the 16th of October, 1945. Hence, World Food Day is annually celebrated on that day in commemoration of the founding of this organization. As a member nation of FAO and an agricultural country, we, Myanmar also celebrate the World Food Day every year.

Being endowed with equitable weather conditions and abundance of land and water resources, Myanmar has made great accomplishments in the production of food through the joint effort of the government and the people.

The World Food Day, being celebrated today has special significance in that it reflects the effort, contribution and accomplishment made by our country in accord with the policies laid down by the FAO.

Two objectives

The two main objectives of the FAO are to supply sufficient food for all and to eradicate hunger. The principles laid down by FAO, aiming at achieving these objectives are:

- Having accessibility to food security and social well-being by all individual.
- Improving food production and distribution system.
- Elevating the living standard of rural popu-

lance. Striving for global economic growth toward eradication of hunger.

The World Food Day is celebrated each year by all member nations throughout the world, in commemoration of the main objectives and principles of FAO. At this juncture, allow me to cite some of the themes adopted in the nineties—



Minister Lt-Gen Myint Aung addresses World Food Day ceremony.—MNA

Harvesting Nation's Diversity in 1993, Water for Life in 1994, Food for All in 1995, Fighting Hunger and Malnutrition in 1996. The theme for this year's World Food Day is "Investing in Food Security".

The slogan is to encourage people to produce more food to wipe out malnutrition, hunger and poverty. In other words it is an encouragement to produce sufficient food for the consumption of the world's population.

People in some parts of the world are still suffering from malnutrition and famine. According to the estimation of the FAO, there will still be 800 million people who will be in malnutrition by the year 2010. In the year 2030, to cope with the increasing population of 3,000 million, we need to produce 75 per cent more to add to the existing food supply.

"The FAO is striving for

the reduction of the number of people suffering from malnutrition to half of the existing number not later than the year 2015. This will be the national cause concerning the people of all member nations. Eight hundred million people, especially from developing countries, are still in need of the basic food items that will sustain them and be well

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Kindly allow me to refer to certain measures related to the efforts made to increase food production in Myanmar. Myanmar is striving to achieve all round development and concentrating primarily on agriculture sector. Therefore several possible measures have been employed for promoting agriculture sector which is the primary economic sector of the country.

Tremendous amount of capital has been invested for the implementation of increased food production programs. We have been engaged with the development of virgin lands, expansion of cropping areas and intensifying the cropping intensity.

The cultivable land area in Myanmar is estimated as 45 million acres. The area currently being utilized is 23 million acres and the expandable land area is 22 million acres. To expand the cultivable land area, permission to cultivate the virgin and waste land has been granted. Embankments and drainage canals are made in flood-prone area and deep water area. In this same area rice-fish farming has been successfully developed and adopted. Hill side farming system is being implemented to secure water and soil erosion. Due to these efforts, in the year 1996-97, 383,110 acres of fallow land, 7,370 acres of deep water land, and 10,333 acres of rice-fish farming pond could have been reclaimed for use to enhance food production.

(See page 5)

(from page 12)

food production. Due to these measures, improvements have been materialized dramatically.

Myanmar, being endowed with natural resources, it creates better opportunity for livestock and fishery sector as well. Hence, integrated farming, off-shore fish and prawn catching and livestock breeding has been extended accordingly. Today about 51 per cent of the country is still covered with forests. From these forests, food, roots and tubers are readily obtainable for daily consumption, thus benefiting to food security.

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At this point allow me to point out the fact that water is indispensable in crop production and the State is finding ways to get more water for agricultural purposes. Of the 870 million acre-feet of water available annually from streams and rivers, only 5 per cent has been utilized for agricultural purposes. Hence, the government is momentarily implementing some works to obtain sufficient irrigation water, by making use of six water harvesting methods, a technology already in hand.

Since the assumption of national responsibility, the State Law and Order Restoration Council, capital investment, man power and machinery were utilized in full force with the technical know-how of local engineers to get irrigation water. Up to now, a total of 81 dams and reservoirs have been constructed and from which over 1.3 million acres of crop land could have been irrigated. Some 23 more irrigation projects are still in the process construction, including four and a half miles long the Thaphan Seik dam.

Apart from constructing dams and reservoirs; eight huge weirs projects, 23 electrical pumping station projects, and 228 diesel engine pumping station projects are under the process of implementation. In this endeavour of getting sufficient irrigation water, extraction of underground water is also given due attention. The State has invested tremendous amount of its capital budget in numerous irrigation project to realize significant area increase of irrigated crop-land. The total cost for construction of dams and reservoirs and cost for water resources utilization facilities amounted to 10.4 billion kyats and 1.3 billion kyats respectively. In 1987-88, the total irrigated area was recorded only as 12.5 percent of the total cropped land, but by 1995-96, it has increased up to 21 percent.

Today, the agriculture sector of Myanmar is being momentarily developed and consequently its overall production has intensified. At this juncture, relying solely on traditional animal draft power as well as on man

power is no longer in a position cope with the currently expanding agricultural industry. Hence, the tradition of Myanmar way of farming is being transformed into mechanized farming. In the hope of accomplishing this target, agricultural machinery and equipment, required for land preparation, planting, harvesting, winnowing and drying of crops are being manufactured locally, while some have to be imported. The increased mechanization in agriculture sector has multi-beneficial effects on the farming communities—it tremendously reduces hard working hours for the farmers, alleviates production cost and relieve farmers from the hard work. Besides, the cropping intensity is elevated.

Transformation

In this transformation process, private sector is invited and encouraged to participate. In view of expediting the process, the State has founded the Myanma Industrial Development Committee and at the same time industrial zones have been established in each and every state and division. Arrangement for financial backup are also made available for these entities through the Myanma Industrial Development Bank.

On the other hand, proven technical know-how of crop production are being transferred to the farmers through our well organized agricultural extension network along with the regionally adaptable cropping pattern, effective method in utilizing agricultural inputs, and environmentally friendly plant protection techniques. Concurrently, research and development works are actively engaged in the area of hybrid seed production and plant breeding to obtain high yielding and good quality seeds for our major crops. At the same time high quality seeds and seedlings of vegetables and fruit trees are being introduced for testing and multiplication. Technical cooperation made between governments and with the international institutions such as UNDP, FAO, IRRI and ICRISAT are eminent in developing the sector.

Credits are made available to the farmers by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation to cover certain

portion of the cultivation cost. The Myanma Agricultural Development Bank, was established with a view to instigate the farmers and create more investment opportunity in agriculture sector.

Due to land development scheme, implemented by the Ministry, more virgin land become available for crop production. Foreign investors are encouraged and invited to participate in these area to grow any crop of their choice and interest.

Fishery sector, both off-shore marine and inland fisheries, is being extended and developed, in hope of producing more seafood for local consumption and export. Today, Myanmar is capable of exporting its fish and shrimp to the international market, after reserving the required amount of local consumption. Government loans required for investment in this sector are made available through the Myanma Livestock Breeding and Development Bank.

Myanmar has become a full-fledged member of ASEAN this year and as a member country, Myanmar is working closely with other nations in numerous area within the region, including food production sectors such as agriculture, livestock and fishery.

Very recently, Myanmar delegation lead by the Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation had attended the Nineteenth Meeting of ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) which was held in Bangkok from 11th to 12th of September. In that meeting, future co-operation in agriculture, food security and forestry sector could have been discussed with other member countries. We strongly believe that the outcomes from the discussion will ensure food security within the region and will be of great assistance to the world food supply.

Food policy adopted for the country is aiming at supplying sufficient amount of food for the entire nation and at the same time to guarantee better health and social well beings of the populace. In compliance with that, the State is making all possible efforts to enhance food production from agriculture as well as livestock and fishery sector.

Today, unity of the nation could have been reconsolidated and the whole nation is in tranquillity. Besides the centrally planned economic system have already been transformed to the market oriented system. It become obvious that private sector participation in agro-industry and livestock, fishery industries has been increasing due to political and economic stability achieved within the country.

Changing economy

Myanmar is on the verge of developing its agriculture, livestock and fishery industry in accordance with the changing economic atmosphere. In this process, the role of private sector's participation is becoming more and more important. Accordingly investment in the production of agricultural products, livestock and fishes is increasing steadily so as to guarantee food security for the public and at the same time to be able to export more to the food deficit countries. The prevailing investment opportunities and natural resources are, in fact, quite favourable.

I must say that today's motto of "Investing in Food Security" is felicitously selected in commemorating this year World Food Day. Bearing that in mind, I would like to invite and urge anyone of those who are interested to make more investment in Myanmar's food production programme for the benefit of the entire world in securing food availability, in eradicating under nourishment and starvation of the world.

Resident Representative of FAO Dr Prem Nath read the FAO Director-General's message.

Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Tin Oo presented prizes to Bogale Township, Ayeayawady Division, for outstanding performance in monsoon paddy cultivation, Mawlamyinyegyun Township, Ayeayawady Division, for outstanding performance in summer paddy cultivation and Thongwa Township, Yangon Division, for outstanding performance in 'pedisein' cultivation.

5. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR (Tuesday, 11 November 1997)

Myanmar making all-round efforts for food-sufficiency, surplus

YANGON, 10 Nov— Myanmar delegation led by the Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation and comprising officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Ministry of Forestry and Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries is attending the 29th Session of UN Food and Agriculture Organization being held in Rome, Italy, from 7 to 18 November.

Leader of the delegation Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Brig-Gen Khin Maung delivered the Country Statement at the FAO Conference this morning:

(from page 12)
precious nature of sustainable food production of the world. However, we, the 186 countries, that participated in the first-ever summit, pledged our political will and national commitment to the continuing efforts to eradicate the tragedy of hunger and malnutrition. Once again, on the occasion of the seventeenth observance of World Food Day this year, we highlighted the need to promote investment, both by private and public sectors, to enhance food production and supply as well as to improve physical and economic access by all to sufficient food.

Mr Chairman,

Allow me to outline in brief the development of agricultural sector development and investment in irrigation sector of our country. Like most of the developing agrarian economies, agricultural production in Myanmar is in the hands of the small farm-

Mr Chairman, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

It is a great honour for me to address the Twentieth Session of the FAO Conference. At the outset, my delegation would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr Chairman, on your unanimous election as the chairman of this important assembly. We are confident that under your able and wise leadership, our deliberations will come to a fruitful conclusion.

It is with a sense of pleasure that my delegation welcomes Kazakhstan for

ers. With over 87 per cent of peasant families holding the average size of under 10 acres, we are in the process of transforming from subsistence to commercial farming system. Therefore, investment is focused on rural poor, agriculture, natural resources and infrastructure.

In this context, I have the pleasure in informing this conference Myanmar's experience in investing in irrigation sector, as a case in point. Crop production in Myanmar is mainly based on rainfed agriculture with the total irrigable area of about 20% of the net sown area in 1995/96. The Government of Myanmar is heavily investing for the development of a nationwide irrigation network in order to ensure the availability of adequate irrigation water. Since the assumption of the state responsibilities in 1988, the State Law and Order Restoration Council has constructed 81 dams with the total investment of 10.4 billion kyats.

joining our organization. The growing membership of FAO, once again reaffirms its commitment to achieve food security for all and its dedication to reduce by half the more than 800 million people currently undernourished, no later than 2015.

The transition towards a hunger-free 21st century, will not be possible in the absence of strong will and commitment of the international community. The 1996 World Food Summit adopted a very challenging declaration and plan of action. These commitments have (See page 5)

Moreover, 8 major large-scale, 23 medium-scale and 228 small-scale pump irrigation projects by utilizing the water from rivers and streams were also implemented at a cost of 1.3 billion kyats. Such irrigation infrastructure is being undertaken almost entirely with available resources within our country.

The increasing quest for sources of adequate water without disturbing the environment is becoming a global feature. Utilization of water resources in the most efficient and effective manner has direct impact on increased agricultural and food production. At the same time, it will help improve the quality of life of the rural populace and environmental conditions. In our country's case, we are utilizing only 6.3% of the total water resources available annually which is estimated at 870 million acre-feet. It clearly indicates the immense potential to expand irrigation

to increase food production and to arrest environmental degradation in the dry zones.

In tandem with increased cropping intensify due to availability of irrigation water, the cultivation practices of farmers are improving rapidly. The most obvious being the transformation of traditional to mechanized agriculture. Agricultural mechanization programme in our country is being implemented by importing as well as by domestic production of agricultural machineries and implements. At present there are about nine thousand farm tractors, thirty thousand power tillers, and over seventy thousand water-pumps owned and operated by farmers in agricultural activities. Myanmar Industrial Development Committee, an inter-ministerial committee consisting of 10 Ministers, has been formed with the main objective of mechanizing the agriculture sector and establishment of agro-based industries. Other changes that are taking place in parallel are: use of improved seeds

and varietal changes in accordance with the emerging cropping patterns and efficient use of agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, and agro-chemicals. In 1996-97, altogether seventy six thousand tons of seeds and nine million seedlings of good variety crops and plants were distributed to increase crop production.

The shift to a market economy in our country, has led to increased agricultural productivity and also generated increased investment by the private sector in food, livestock and fisheries sectors as well. New financial institutions both semi-government and private, have emerged to support agricultural, livestock, fisheries and farm mechanization sectors. The Myanmar Livestock and Fisheries Development Bank and Myanmar Industrial Development Bank remain the most outstanding contributors for these sectors.

Mr Chairman,

Myanmar, with a long coastline of 2832 kilometres

tries up till 1989 due to unfavourable conditions. Only three thousand hectares for fish ponds were established at that time. However, due to the encouragement and promotion by the State through the Law Relating to Aquaculture, the Aquaculture industry expanded by over thirty eight thousand hectares of fish pond at the end of 1996-97. To keep up the momentum, the State has provided with inputs such as technology transfer, seeds, feeds and extension services. In addition to this, the Department for Fisheries has been releasing fingerlings into lakes, reservoirs and open natural water to increase the national fish stock and to maintain a sound balance of flora and fauna.

With the improvement of production in livestock and fishery products, per capita consumption of meat and fish has been increasing annually. According to the 1996-97 data, per capita

(See page 8)

(from page 5)
meat consumption was 2.2 kg as compared with the previous year's level of 2 kg, while per capita fish consumption has risen to 6.6 kg from 5 kg at the same period.

and extensive river systems is rich in both marine and freshwater fisheries resources. In Myanmar, the production of fish is showing a steady increase from 0.73 million metric tons in 1989-90 to 0.85 million metric tons in 1996-97. It is noted that 0.61 million metric tons of fish, accounting to about 73% of total production come from marine fisheries. The Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) is about 1.05 million metric tons and the current status of exploitation amounts to only 0.61 million metric tons, leaving a large potential for further development.

As Myanmar marine fisheries has been steadily developing and its productive forces still unmatched in regard to its rich resources, over-exploitation of resources has not been observed. Fisheries management is pursued by proper licensing, prescribing exploitable species, fishing method and gears, regulating closed seasons, etc.

Aquaculture played a minor role in fisheries indus-

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm our commitment and determination to further advance the noble ideals and principles of FAO in promoting food and nutrition well being and economic progress of mankind throughout its long years since inception. I am confident that our endeavours at this gathering will help fulfil the hopes of the rural poor for their better future.

Thank you Mr Chairman.

6. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR (Tuesday, 16 December 1997)

National objectives remain unchanged despite emergence of new government

Government, people and Tatmadaw are together building a strong, powerful nation

YANGON, 15 Dec — Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Chief of the Bureau of Special Operations Chief of Staff (Army) Lt-Gen Tin Oo gave counsel on nation-building tasks to Tatmadaw officers and other ranks at the new hall of the Ministry of Defence this morning.

He said the purpose of the meeting was to clarify the country's situation to Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, Air Force) officers and other ranks.

He said that today, the government is building the nation to become peaceful, modern and developed and that the government, the Tatmadaw and people have to work hand in hand for emergence of a peaceful, modern and developed nation upholding Our Three Main National Causes namely non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty.

The State Law and Order

Restoration Council was dissolved and the State Peace and Development Council constituted, he said, adding that he would clarify various matters on constituting the new government.

Due to unavoidable circumstances, the Tatmadaw took up duties of State in 1988 as anarchy was rife and the administrative machinery came to a halt, and the State Law and Order Restoration Council was formed on 18 September

1988, he said.

Though the government was constituted as the State Peace and Development Council on 15 November 1997, Our Three Main National Causes remain unchanged for they are the duties that will perpetually exist, he said.

Today's government is no longer the State Law and Order Restoration Council. It has been constituted as the State Peace and Development Council in response to the time and circumstance of the

nation's situation, he said, noting that after constituting, the aims remain —

- (a) non-disintegration of the Union,
- (b) non-disintegration of national solidarity,
- (c) perpetuation of sovereignty, and
- (d) building a peaceful, modern and developed nation.

For realization of these four aims, efforts must be expedited to implement the four political, four economic

and four social objectives, and once the nation can be built on the basis of these 12 objectives, three powers — political, economic and military powers — will become strong, he said.

Three powers

Political power does not mean party politics, but the power acquired from national politics, and for steadfastness of political power, national unity must be built through organizational capability and correct

policy must be practised for peace and tranquillity, he said.

He noted that for economic power, endeavours must be made for easing the livelihood of people, uplift of their living standard, increase of individual income, non-occurrence of unemployment problems and longevity of people and that for military power, the Tatmadaw must be built to be modern and strong.

(See page 7)

7. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR (Tuesday, 6 January 1998)

Efficient application of new paddy purchase system, cultivation of summer paddy coordinated

YANGON, 5 Jan — Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Tin Oo attended a coordination meeting on efficient paddy purchase through the new system and summer paddy cultivation project at the Ministry of Commerce this afternoon.

Also present were Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Minister for Commerce Maj-Gen Kyaw Than, Minister at the Office of the Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Brig-Gen

Maung Maung, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Ohn Myint, Deputy Ministers for Energy U Tin Tun, Deputy Ministers for Commerce Commodore Myo Tint and Col Kyaw Shwe, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and departmental heads.

Lt-Gen Tin Oo said that during his recent tour of Aycyawady Division, he found out that the new paddy purchase system which is more compatible with the market economy was being applied.

As the tender system had not been applied for years, it seemed new to the rice millers, merchants and farmers, he noted.

He said the government is seeing to successful application of the new paddy purchase system that will be beneficial to both farmers and private entrepreneurs and that will also help boost paddy output, all have to fulfil the requirements.

He also spoke of the need to fulfil the needs of farmers in time to enable them to grow summer paddy.

Minister Maj-Gen Kyaw Than also spoke about the tasks for the new paddy purchase system and future programmes.

The deputy ministers and departmental heads put forward suggestions on the smooth undertaking of the tasks for applying the new paddy purchase system and programmes to provide assistance ministry-wise to farmers for cultivation of monsoon paddy.

The meeting ended with the Secretary-2's concluding remarks.

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8. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR (Wednesday, 28 January 1998)

Farmers sell paddy freely in festive atmosphere

YANGON, 27 Jan — Farmers led by chairmen of Village Peace and Development Councils collectively sold paddy in Paungde Township, Pyay District, Bago Division, on 24 and 25 January

morning.

Farmers from ten village-tracts of No 2 Region, from six village-tracts of No 6 Region and from three village-tracts of No 7 Region sold 4,272 baskets of paddy

with 250 carts, 3,541 baskets of paddy with 202 carts and 1,857 baskets of paddy with 130 carts respectively on 24 January.

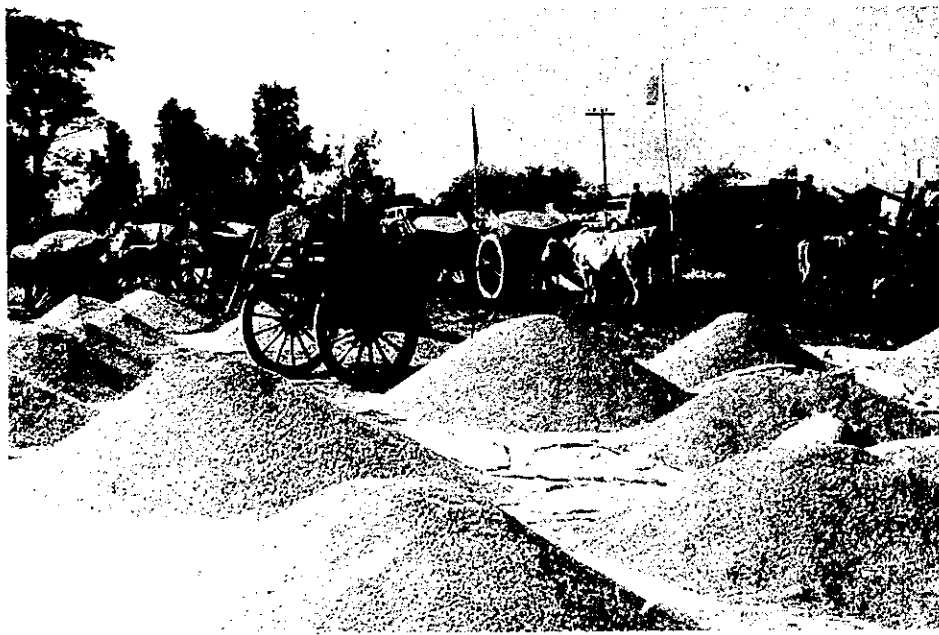
Farmers from ten village-tracts of No 1 Region, from

six village-tracts of No 3 Region, from six village-tracts of No 4 Region and from two village of No 5 Region sold 4,797 baskets of paddy with 261 carts, 2,424 baskets of paddy with 134 carts, 3,395 baskets of paddy with 169 carts and 461 baskets of paddy with 45 carts respectively on 25 January.

Chairman of Township Peace and Development Council U Ba Win and members, Township Manager of Myanma Agricultural Produce Trading U Tin Hla Oo and members of the paddy purchase supervisory committee attended to the requirements.

Similarly, farmers from Thabyaygon Village-tract, Pynmana Township, led by

(See page 6)



Circulation
23,402

9. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR (Sunday, 6 September 1998)

Minister for A&I inspects Ngamoeyeik Dam, paddy fields in Bago Division

YANGON, 5 Sept- Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin visited Ngamoeyeik Dam in Hlegu Township this morning.

Accompanied by officials, the minister inspected water control structure, left main canal and small canals of the dam and instructed officials to carry out systematic maintenance work, to ensure smooth flow of water at canals, to prevent loss and wastage of water and to pump water from canals in high areas.

The minister then inspected fields of quality strain paddy of Myanma Agriculture Service in Bago as well as paddy fields in wetlands by the motor road between Bago and Thanatpin together with officials of Bago Division Agriculture Coordinating Committee.

He met farmers and discussed with them requirements of their fields and preparations for summer paddy.

Due to this year's weather, paddy could be cultivated early in some areas of Bago Division and farmers will soon harvest the paddy at those fields.

The minister then proceeded to Ale Village, Thanatpin Township, and inspected monsoon paddy cultivated late due to floods in the area around the village and met farmers.

Next, the minister went to No 34 Tractors Depot of Kawa Township Agricultural Mechanization Department where he inspected maintenance of tractors and paddy thrashers and other farming equipment which are made available for use.

He gave instructions to carry out paddy harvesting and cultivation with the use of farm machines.

It is scheduled to put 2.2 million acres of land under monsoon paddy this year in Bago Division. Of them, over two million acres have been put under paddy to date. Even in the areas where paddy is cultivated late yearly due to floods, about 400,000 acres have been put under paddy. Farmers will soon harvest the paddy cultivated early.

Accompanied by Yangon Division Agriculture Coordinating Committee, the minister also inspected the temporary camp of a pest control team of MAS near Khamat Village in Khayan Township.

The minister met farmers near Padoke Village in Thongwa Township and discussed with them arrangements for pest control and agriculture loans and boosting of monsoon paddy production.

10. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR (Friday, 11 September 1998)

Ayeyawady Division to put over 3.2m acres under monsoon paddy

YANGON, 10 Sept- Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin inspected monsoon paddy cultivation and the work at jute mills in Ayeyawady Division on 8 September.

Ayeyawady Division has projected to put over 3.2 million acres under monsoon paddy this year. Over 3.1 million acres have been put under paddy in the division till 7 September. The division is now preparing to start cultivating the second monsoon paddy on harvested fields. It puts land twice under monsoon paddy annually.

Accompanied by officials, the minister inspected storage of jute at a jute mill of Myanma Jute Industries in Myaungmya Township in the morning.

He oversaw work at pulping division, machinery division, jute separation division, preparation division, spinning division, spindling division, looming division, quality checking division, workshop, lathe division, spare parts manufacturing division, storage division and gunny bag division.

At a jute packaging factory in the township, the minister inspected jute spreading and baling and quality of products. During his visit to Myaungmya Agriculture School, he met teachers and students.

At Kyonwa village, he met farmers and transplanters at work, coordinating means to boost monsoon paddy cultivation. On arrival at Einme Township, he observed paddy threshing at a farm near Takaw village.

The minister met members of Union Solidarity and Development Association in Einme and Kyaunggor townships.

In the evening, he inspected storage of water at a dam on Bawdi village in Pantanaw Township to cultivate summer paddy.

11. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR (Wednesday, 14 October 1998)

All preparations under way for purchase, storage and milling of paddy

YANGON, 13 Oct- A coordination meeting on rice, paddy and beans and pulses trading for 1998-99 was held at the Myanma Agricultural Produce Trading on Pansodan Street this morning and Minister for Commerce Maj-Gen Kyaw Than delivered an address.

It was also attended by Deputy Minister Commodore Myo Tint, Managing Director of MAPT U Saw Aung and officials.

Minister Maj-Gen Kyaw Than said the central level dignitaries and responsible personnel at the grassroots levels have been engaged in paddy purchase for 1998-99 since cultivation of paddy. At the same time, he said, efforts are being made for boosting paddy yield. He said that paddy purchase this year would be carried out after signing paddy purchase agreements in advance. Reasonable price has been prescribed and up to 12 October, contracts for purchase of 96.586 million baskets of paddy have already been signed.

The minister called for maintaining good relations in direct contacts with farmers individually.

He said instructions had been given to get rice mills throughout the country to be ready for the paddy season this year. Rice mills are to run full capacity depending on the amount of paddy purchased, he said, adding private mills are to assist when State-owned mills could not do the job by themselves.

He also called for efforts to produce 1,440 tons of bran oil at the bran oil mills.

Surplus broken rice and bran will be exported to earn foreign exchange, he said.

The minister pointed out that new crop of paddy will be milled properly beginning November and December and distributed to the respective regions. Paddy surplus States and Divisions would have to send rice to the paddy deficient States and Divisions up to January according to the requirements.

He spoke of the need to take measures since the time of paddy purchase, to store quality paddy and to mill it systematically for exporting high quality paddy.

12. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR (Wednesday, 27 January 1999)

National entrepreneurs urged to do large-scale farming and build agro-based industries and take lead in market economy in future

YANGON, 26 Jan- Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe addressed Tatmadaw members and families of Patheingyi Station in Ayeyawady Hall of South-West Command in Patheingyi Township, Ayeyawady Division, at 8 am yesterday.

Guidance given by Senior General Than Shwe during tour of 16 townships in Yangon, Ayeyawady Divisions.

Agriculture should be based in building the nation as the nation has vast land resources and agriculture has been carried out since the time of forefathers.

Agricultural, industrial and trade sectors should be developed mainly in building the nation, Due to the conditions of the nation which lacks in technology and capital, agriculture which has good foundations must be the basis.

National entrepreneurs who have the capital, management skill, techniques and know-how should be encouraged in taming wetlands, vacant, virgin and fallow lands to do agriculture on commercial scale.

The agricultural sector will advance significantly and the countryside which is the home to farmers will develop only with the emergence of modern private farms stretching thousands of acres.

More nationals should emerge as entrepreneurs who do agriculture on the vast lands; so should other national entrepreneurs; entrepreneurs should be those who can lead the market economy and those of international standards; they must not be just compradores of foreign entrepreneurs.

While serving their own interests, national entrepreneurs would have to serve the interests of the State and the national people; they need to have goodwill toward the country and spirit of patriotism.

The Government with true goodwill is helping and promoting nationals, who are living on this soil and partaking of water from the same source, to do well in their enterprises.

Entrepreneurs who have come to engage in agricultural production are regarded as colleagues who have come to cooperate with the Government of the State within the framework of the plan of the State.

While strenuous efforts are being made to achieve success in agriculture production, the goal to set up agro-based industries, and from there, to build other industries as well must be laid down.

As the population of the country will be about 60 million in 2010, arrangements are to be made to be able to cultivate monsoon paddy on 14 million acres of land and summer paddy on four million acres of land with a view to providing sufficient food for the growing population.

Efforts are to be made to boost the production of paddy, the main crop, as well as to extend the cultivation of oil crops with a view to achieving domestic sufficiency in oil.

Efforts are to be made with the objective of achieving 100 basket-per-acre yield of paddy and 15-basket-per-acre yield of sesame...

The Government, the people and the Tatmadaw must cooperate in building the State.

APPENDIX 6: SAMPLE MILITARY ORDERS

Village names are omitted from these orders for security reasons. Copies of the original orders follow the translations

1. Paddy cultivation

To:

Headman
(deleted) Village

Date: 14/8/1998

Subject: Invitation to meeting

Regarding the above, we want to discuss the agricultural cultivation situation with you, so everyone must come to the following meeting.

(To: pay back left over loans given for crops)

Details:

Date: 16/8/1998
Time: 8:30 am
Place: Kyaing Ton Village

(signed)

Chairman

Village Peace and Development Council

Tisekha Village, Loikaw Township

Note: You must bring a list of people in each house, whether they are under or over 18 years of age, male or female.

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ရွာသုဉ်း



ကျေးဇူး

နေ့စွဲ ။ ၁၇ - ၈ - ၉၀

အရှေ့ဘက် အရပ် ။ ညောင်ဦး အစား ဘီတီဘီ ခင်း

အထက်ပိုင်း နှင့် ပိုက်ဆံကိုင်လှူဒါန်း မင်း နှင့် လက်ထောက် ချိန်စိုး နှင့်

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ပါသော နှင့် နှစ်ဦးနှစ်ဖက် အစဉ်အတိုင်း ပြုလုပ် ပြုစု ကိုယ်တိုင် ရေခဲစာ နှင့် နှစ်ဦးနှစ်ဖက် အပို ပါသည်။

အစီအစဉ် (လက်ဖြေစာလက်ဖြေ ပြေ ဖွားလာ ရေခဲစာ ၃၁၅ ခွဲ)

နေ့ရက် ။ ၁၆ - ၈ - ၉၀

အချိန် ။ နံနက် (၈ : ၃၀) နှင့် ၅ : ၃၀

နေ့ရက် ။ နေ့စွဲ

ကျေးဇူးအားသွင်းသော နှင့် နှစ်ဦးနှစ်ဖက် ကောင်းစွာ တိုးတက် ကျေးဇူး ပြုလုပ် ပြုစု ပြုစု ပြုစု

မှတ်စု - စာအုပ် (၁၀) ခွဲ စာအုပ် ၅၀၀ ။
စာအုပ် (၁၀) နှင့် စာအုပ် ၅၀၀ ။ စာအုပ်

အိမ်ထောင်စု အဖေ

2. Provision of food to army

Seal:

Training Camp No.1 (Phayapyu)

Sa Ka Kha (Department of Operations Management) #7

To: Headman

(deleted) Village,

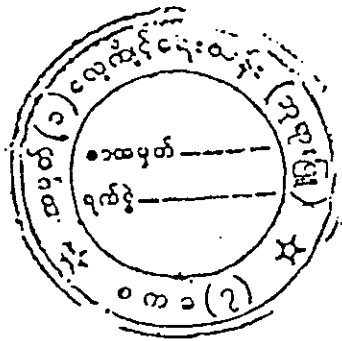
Subject:

Send a viss of chicken and 2 viss of chilies on 9/8/1998 at 6 a.m.

If these things do not arrive, you will be held responsible.

(signed)

Camp Commander



၂၆ ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ

မာဠောဇွဲ မာဂာ [Redacted] ကျေးဇူးဗွဲ

ခြောက် တစ်ပိတ်သား ငြိမ်းစိစိ ဖွပ်ပိတ်သား

၉.၈.၈၈ ၉.၈.၈၈ နံ ၂၈၄ ၀၆၀၀ မာချီကွန်

မပျက် ထွက်စိစိ ၅၅၀-၈၈ မာချီကွန်

မာဂာဇွဲပါစာ လူကြီးစိစိ ၀၈၀ နံ ၂၈၄ ၀၆၀၀

တပ်မတော်

3. Porter duty upon failure to fulfill paddy quota

(Seal)

Frontline No. 48 Light Infantry Battalion
Mone Area, Kyauk Kyi Town
Letter No.48/1000/(deleted)
Date: 1997, December 30

To: Chairman
Peace and Development Council
(deleted) Village/Tract

Subject: Notification that those unable to fulfill the paddy quota will be employed as Kyauk Kyi military operations servants

Reference: Frontline No.48 Light Infantry Battalion, 1997, Dec. 18, No.48/1000/(deleted)

1. Regarding the above matter, despite our directive that paddy farmers give 3 baskets of paddy per acre by not later than 31 December 1997, we have determined that to this date (deleted) Tract has contributed only 481/16 baskets and have yet to give 586/30 baskets.
2. Therefore, those paddy farmers unable to fulfill their paddy quota contributions will be arrested and sent to the Kyauk Kyi military operations servants unit. The Tract Chairman and Secretary are instructed to draw up a register of all those farmers unable to fulfill the paddy quota and come personally to submit it to the Column Commander, Mone Camp, not later than 1 p.m., 3/1/98.

(signed)
Column Commander
No. 2 Column
Mone Army Camp

Appendix 6: Sample Military Orders



ပြည်ထောင်စုတပ်မတော် (၄၀၇) ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန
မှ: ၂၀၁၁ ခုနှစ်၊ ဇူလိုင်လ ၁၅ ရက်နေ့
အမှတ်: ၄၈ / ၁၀၀၀ / [Redacted]
ရန်ကင်း၊ ၁၉၉၂ ခုနှစ်၊ ဇူလိုင်လ ၁၅ ရက်နေ့

အကြီးအမှူး
ဦးစီးဌာန: [Redacted] ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန
[Redacted] ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန

အကြောင်းအရာ: ကာကွယ်ရေးဌာန၏ ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာနအဖွဲ့ဝင်များ
ရပ်စဲရေး (လျှောက်ကြားခြင်း) ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန၏ ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန
ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန အကြောင်းအရာများ

ပြည်ထောင်စုတပ်မတော် (၄၀၇) ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန၏ ၁၉၉၂ ခုနှစ်
ဇူလိုင်လ ၁၅ ရက်နေ့တွင် အမှတ် ၄၈ / ၁၀၀၀ [Redacted]

၁။ ကာကွယ်ရေးဌာန၏ ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန၏ ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန
အဖွဲ့ဝင်များ အဖြစ် အင်အား (၃) ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန (၃၁ - ၂၂ - ၉၅) ဖွဲ့စည်း
ပြီး ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန အကြောင်းအရာများ အဖွဲ့ဝင်များ (ဒီ.စီ.စီ.စီ.
) အဖွဲ့ဝင် အဖွဲ့ဝင် (၄၈၁၁၆) အဖွဲ့ဝင် ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန (၅၈၆ / ၃၀)
အဖွဲ့ဝင် ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန

၂။ ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန၏ ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန
ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန အဖွဲ့ဝင်များ အင်အား (၃) ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန (၃၁ - ၂၂ - ၉၅) ဖွဲ့စည်း
ပြီး ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန အကြောင်းအရာများ အဖွဲ့ဝင်များ (ဒီ.စီ.စီ.စီ.
၄ - ၄ - ၁၁) ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန အဖွဲ့ဝင် အဖွဲ့ဝင် (၃၁ - ၂၂ - ၉၅) ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန
ဖွဲ့စည်းရေးဌာန

[Signature]

အကြီးအမှူး

၁၉၉၂ ခုနှစ်၊ ဇူလိုင်လ ၁၅ ရက်နေ့

4. Instruction to send porters

(Seal)

Township Security and Administrative Support
Committee, Kyauk Kyi Town

Stamped: IMPORTANT
 URGENT

Letter No.(deleted)/2/1-25/La Sa Hta

Date: 1998, January 10

To:

Chairman
(deleted) Village Tract
Kyauk Kyi Township

Subject: The matter of sending military operations servants

Reference: Ya Ta Hka La Ya #48, 98 Jan 10, Cheinmo Ka Na Hka Ya

1. Regarding the above matter, in relation to the provision of military operations servants, the Village Tract Head must arrange for the sending of four military operations servants as outlined below, without fail.

 Date: 12/1/98

 Time: 10 a.m.

 Place: Kyauk Kyi Police Station

Note: The VPDC (Village Peace and Development Council) will be held responsible for failure to comply, lateness in compliance or under-provision.

Monetary compensation will
(absolutely) not be accepted.

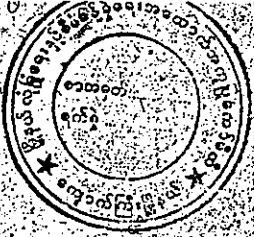
(signed)

Joint Secretary

Security and Administrative Support Committee

Kyauk Kyi Township

Appendix 6: Sample Military Orders



အမိန့်ကြီး

မြို့နယ်လုံခြုံရေးနှင့် ပိမာန်ခံရေးအဖွဲ့အစည်းတပ်ဖွဲ့
 ကော်မတီ ကျောက်ကြီးမြို့
 စာအမှတ်: [Redacted] / ၂ / ၁၂၅ / ၂၀၀၈
 ရက်စွဲ: ၁၉ ၆.၈.၂၀၀၈ ခုနှစ်

ဥက္ကဋ္ဌ [Redacted] မှူးမတ်/ကျေးရွာအုပ်စု
 ကျောက်ကြီးမြို့နယ်၊

အကြောင်းအရာ: **ခန့်အပ်ရေး ၁၀၂၂ ဝန်ထမ်း** စီစဉ်ပေးပို့ရန်ကိစ္စ၊

ရည်ညွှန်းချက်: ၇.၁၁.၁၀.၇.၂၄၈ နှစ် ၆၈၊ ၈၂၊ ၁၀.၁၄.၄၅၂၂ ခုနှစ်၊ ၁၃

၁။ တထက်ပိက်နှင့်ပတ်သက်၍ ရည်ညွှန်းပါ ခန့်အပ်ရေး ၁၀၂၂ ဝန်ထမ်း
 မှား စီစဉ်ပေးပို့ရန် ညွှန်ကြားလာပါပြီး ညွှန်ကြားရေးအဖွဲ့က
 ခန့်အပ်ရေး ၁၀၂၂ ဝန်ထမ်း (၈၈၈) ဦးကို အောက်ဖော်ပြပါ
 ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ကွက် ဝင်ပို့အပ်ပေးရန် အကြောင်းကြားအပ်ပါသည်။

နေ့ရက်: ၁၂.၁.၂၀၀၈
 အချိန်: ၂ နာရီ (၁၀.၀၀) နာရီ၊
 နေရာ: **ကျောက်ကြီးမြို့နယ်**

မှတ်ချက်: ပျက်ကွက်ခြင်း၊ နေ့ရက်ကျခြင်း၊ အရေးအတွက် လျော့နည်းခြင်းဖြစ်ပါက သက်ဆိုင်ရာ
 ၃၀ တစ်အစုတွင် တာဝန်ရှိပါသည်။

မှူးကြီးမြစ်လာရောက်ဖြေရှင်းခြင်း
 (လုံးဝ) လက်ခံပါ။

ကျောက်ကြီးမြို့နယ်
 မှူးကြီး
 [Signature]

၁၂.၁.၂၀၀၈
 ၆၈

5. Order for dam construction

Date: 31/5/96

The matter of voluntary labor contribution to construct a dam
(deleted) Village

Ten people must come with tools for voluntary labor contribution on Kyone Doe Dam. Bring mosquito nets. Bring 3 days rations.

The voluntary labor force must present themselves for inspection.

Arrive on 1/6/96 at South Kamayeit Camp, report to the Camp Commander at 10 a.m. as notified.

(signed)

South Kamayeit Camp

6. Order to relocate

Front Line Light Infantry Battalion No. (104)

Pah Klu village

Ref. No. 104 /02 /Oo 1

Date: 1998 August

To: Chairman
(deleted) village

Subject: Order to vacate issued to villages.

1. An order has been issued to (deleted) village to vacate the place and move to Kwih Lay village or to any other place where the villagers have relatives, at the latest by 10th September 1998.
2. After the date of issue of this order, it is warned that the Army will go around clearing the area and should any village or small huts in the paddy fields be found still standing, they will all be dismantled and destroyed.

[signed]

(for) Battalion Commander

Front line, Light Infantry Battalion No.104

Source: Karen Human Rights Group, *Uncertainty, Fear and Flight: The Current Human Rights Situation in Eastern Pa'an District*, 18 November 1998, p. 9.



ဣတန်းစာမတ် (၁၀၄) ခြေမြန်တပ်တော်

ဖားကလေးရွာ

စာနာမတ်၊ ၁၀၄ / ၀၂ / ခြီး ၁

၁၉၆၅ ခုနှစ် ဩဂုတ်လ ၁၅ ရက်

၂၅၃၅



ဧည့်သည်

စာကြောင်းအရား ကျေးဇူးများ ပြောဆိုရန် အစီအစဉ်ပြင်ဆင်ပါ။



၁။ ဧည့်သည်သည် ၁၉၆၅ ခုနှစ် ဇူလိုင်လ ၁၅ ရက် (၁၀၄) ရက်နေ့ ဧည့်သည်အဖွဲ့အား နေရာပေးရန် အစီအစဉ် ပြင်ဆင်ပါ။

၂။ ဧည့်သည်အဖွဲ့အား နေရာပေးရန် အစီအစဉ် ပြင်ဆင်ပါ။

တပ်မှူးမှူး
ဣတန်းစာမတ် (၀၀၄) ခြေမြန်တပ်တော်

7. Conscription to a militia

Seal:

DKBA Brigade 999 Special Battalion
Ba Ma/0169 Lt. Col. Chit Thu

Date: 14/3/99

To:

Chairman

Here is a written notification. It is the matter of new recruits and notification that you must send them without delay. All other regions and villages have sent their recruits. Send them or face the consequences.

No.999 Brigade

Special Battalion Co. 2

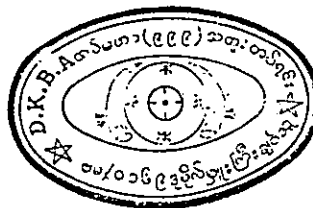
Capt.

(signed)

DKBA

2
20
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2125
— a —



ආරක්ෂක අංශයේ මානව සම්පත් වාර්තාව 14.3.99.

අනුමත: ජනරාල් ජනරාල් ජනරාල්

ප්‍රධාන: ජනරාල් ජනරාල් ජනරාල්

විකල්ප: ජනරාල් ජනරාල් ජනරාල්

කමන්ඩර් ජනරාල් ජනරාල් ජනරාල්

අනුමත: ජනරාල් ජනරාල්

අනුමත (සේනාපති)

අනුමත (විකල්ප)

ජ/ආ

ආරක්ෂක අංශයේ

3.6.99

8. Threat to lay landmines

Seal:

DKBA Brigade 999 Special Battalion

Ba Ma/0169 Lt. Col. Chit Thu

Karen Buddhist Army

Number 999 Brigade

DKBA

Letter Number: 999/Ah Hta Ta Ya-01/002

Date: 2/2/99

To

(deleted) Tract/Village

Subject: Notification

As has come to light, tracts, elders and villagers of Mehpletloe region have all heard KNU's notice that it will plant land mines 4 1/2 feet from the edges of roads to be set off by its enemies. While we don't intend to further increase the problems of the people and villagers, [nonetheless] as the KNU is doing, we also hereby inform our village parents, brothers and sisters that we will also start to do the same thing. We have great love for you all. We cannot protect you all.

- Note:
- (1) We will start to lay mines and ambush as of 20/2/99.
 - (2) Whatever place/village we enter, absolutely don't run away.
 - (3) We won't accept responsibility for anyone who runs.

(signed: Chit Thu)

Battalion Commander

Special Battalion

Number 999 Brigade

DKBA

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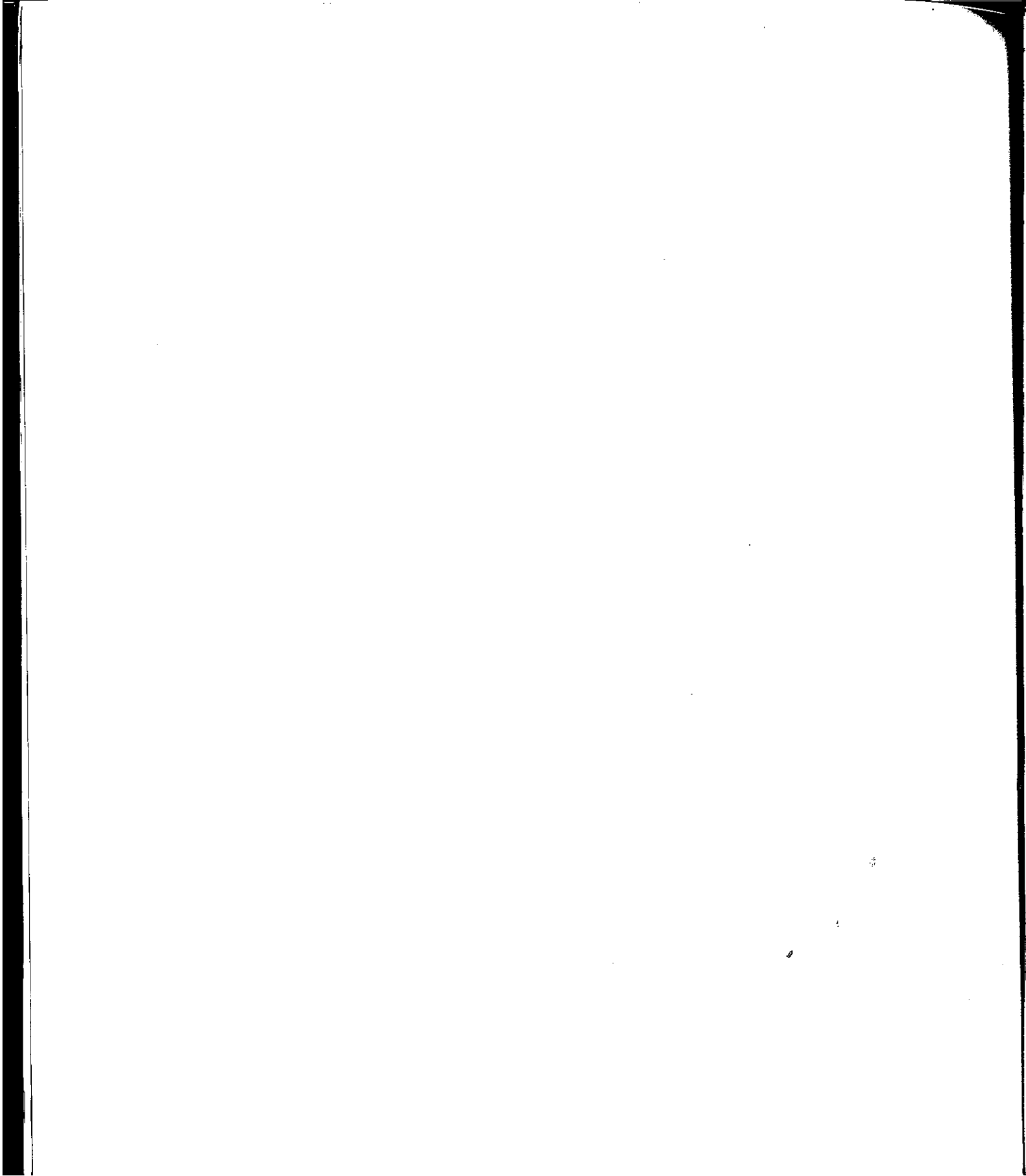
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Concerned by reports of growing food scarcity in Burma (also known as Myanmar), Asian Human Rights Commission began preparing in 1997 for a People's Tribunal to investigate why so many people are going hungry. Two years later the Tribunal convened to review evidence and consider the charge that militarization is denying millions of people their basic human right to food. The Tribunal uncovered the grim realities of everyday life for Burma's farmers, landless workers and the victims of its decades-old civil war. *Voice of the Hungry Nation* presents the Tribunal's findings on how and why food scarcity occurs, and what this nationwide trend means for Burma's future.



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