

# The Mon Forum

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## Some Acronyms in This Issue

- KNLA- Karen National Liberation Army  
SPDC- State Peace and Development Council  
LIBs- Light Infantry Battalions  
VPDC- Village Peace and Development Council  
AMRDP- All Mon Regions Democracy Party  
USDP- Union Solidarity and Development Party  
TPDC- Township Peace and Development Council  
KNLA- Karen National Liberation Army  
TBBC- Thai Burma Border Consortium

## News

### Thousands flee from Three Pagoda Pass Town, support and basic supplies a concern

November 9, 2010

*Due to fighting which began yesterday in Three Pagodas Pass town between the DKBA and local Burmese SPDC forces, an estimated 10,000 refugees have now fled over the Thai-Burma border, and into ceasefire NMSP controlled territory. These refugees, judging the fighting to be a sever threat, fled without personal belongings or supplies. As a result of this sudden exodus, refugee encampments on Thai side of TPP and in NMSP controlled territory are likely to suffer sudden shortages of food, shelter, mosquito nets, and even the most basic food supplies.*

On November 8th, a day after the national election, fighting erupted at 10:45 AM between the local Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) battalion No. 907 troops led by Major Aye One with another unidentified DKBA battalion against the Burmese State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No.283. Since then, four Three Pagodas Pass (TPP) residents estimate nearly 10000 people have left their homes during the armed clashes between the two groups. According to these witness most of the residents fled to the southern parts of TPP town where rubber plantations and orchards are located, while others fled to Jon-Kwee [Japanese Well] village and other places located in the NMSP controlled area. The majority of refugees so far have traveled to Jon-Kwee though it is 2 miles away, due to the greater security and support they get in NMSP territory, which currently retains its ceasefire with the SPDC. Alternatively, while residents were able to enter Thai side of TPP last night, the borders have been reclosed,



Three Pagoda Pass residents are seen, after fleeing during fighting between DKBA and SPDC soldiers, on November 8th, 2010.

## WELCOMING THE RELEASE OF DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND GENUINE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

Along with the people in Burma and international community, the Mon people and Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) are glad to see that Burma's democracy leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, was released on November 13.

Many people expect she can make a change for Burma, as she also officially spoke about building up a 'national reconciliation'. But since the regime change after November 7 was not significant, whether she can move forward or deal with the regime in getting genuine national reconciliation remains a question.

The people in the entirety of Burma have suffered enough because of no 'national reconciliation' in this country. The regime has not tolerated the people's freedom of speech and assembly since 1988 and the people's and Buddhist monks' peaceful demands for national reconciliation and peace are always rejected.

Ceasefire talks with ethnic armed groups do not proceed toward peace and reconciliation. The regime uses them just for show and never guarantees them rights to their lands, property, language, and culture preservation. By the end, when there is no political guarantee, a dozen ethnic armed groups again oppose the, now new, USDP (Union Solidarity and Development Party) government. When the new civil war breaks out the ethnic people in all of the border regions will face more suffering through displacement and migration from their homes.

Yet, ethnic people have always been expecting national reconciliation because they want to stay at their homes safely and work in their farms without harm. If Daw Aung San Suu Kyi can bring peace and reconciliation, then change for all of the people will really happen.

leaving refugees only illegal crossings which effectively trap them in Thai territory, as they are placed under strict travel restrictions.

Mi Sam, a mother of three children, explained how she managed to flee from fighting between DKBA battalions and LIB. No. 283:

Yesterday around 11, when my two sons and I went back home from the market, we heard the gun and shell sounds; then we ran back to my home located in quarter No.4. At that time, most of my neighbors already left their homes. The gunshots were more and more, then, me and my three children ran without collecting anything from [our] home. Now, we want to go back and look at the condition

of our home but many people suggested not doing that and no one dares to go back.

Ko Nyan Win, a snack shop owners whose home is located near the Sa Ya Pha (Burmese military intelligence) office, explained his fears after hearing the Sa Ya Pha office had been burned by the DKBA:

I am very worried [about] my house. When I left around 11:30 [AM], the DKBA burned down some government offices near my house. I also don't know my shop's condition. Most [people] got scared and ran away and as for my family, we had to leave everything behind.

According to a HURFOM field reporter, yesterday evening close to 5 PM, DKBA troops patrolled quarter



Refugees from fighting are seen waiting for a food delivery, during fighting in Three Pagoda Pass ,on the Thai side of the border on November 8th, 2010.

to quarter announcing to remaining residents that after sunset DKBA soldiers would not be responsible for any accidental shootings that occurred when trying to differentiate between residents and Burmese troops.

At 7 PM yesterday evening TPP residents were still fleeing to Thai side for security. Thai authorities have given them temporary shelter first in a nearby temple, then later moving them to a primary school that was further from the border and possible stray weapons fire.

### Injuries

An accurate number of the wounded and casualties amongst civilians' has been difficult to judge. HURFOM has been able to confirm at least two cases in which civilians have been injured. Early this morning, before 10 AM, a woman and two teenage girls stepped on a landmine crossing into Thailand from the Burmese side of TPP through an illegal DKBA checkpoint originally controlled by Cpt. Htoo Aung. No other refugees were with them, but they were found by Burmese civilians that had already reached Thai soil, and were taken to an unknown clinic. Also before 10 AM a group of 7 Burmese refugees were struck by a mortar shell after having fled TPP Burmese side in front of a Thai resort. 5 of the victims from the mortar attack were civilians while 2 were monks

### Supply Shortages?

The major concern of the sudden exodus from TPP has been the volume of food and water available to residents fleeing. As refugee groups have been divided during their flight, mixed reports have come in about the number of refugees and the overall support they currently have.

Numbers range between 9000 to 1000 over all in both NMSP controlled territory and on Thai side TPP. The break down is estimated to be 6000 in NMSP controlled territory and possibly 3000 on Thai Side TPP.

Nai Kon Tar, a truck driver from Three Pagoda town, explained his estimates of the refugees from the situation he witnessed so far:

Until now we have about 2500 people who have left their homes from the four quarters of Three Pagodas border town. Currently, the village is crowded with refugees included women, children and elderly persons. I guess another 6000 are now hiding in many rubber plantations outside of the town. The rest of another 2000 are temporary sheltered in TPP Thai soil. Most of these people who are currently here are factory workers [at factories] run by Thai businessmen.

While border-based support groups have reportedly been well coordinated, and local residents have provided some assistance, some refugees and witnesses predict there will

be severe shortages of basic supplies if the displacement continues.

Nai Ong Pha, 44, a resident of Japanese Well village told HURFOM his concerns over how the large numbers of refugees would be supported:

For me I am worrying about the lack of food, drinking water and security because this village is much closer to the places where the fighting occurred. Right now, I have only seen some members of MSF [Belgium]. We need basic supports to survive here...because most [of the] refugees fled their homes with empty hands. Many children seem hungry and [are] crying as they have left their homes since this morning without having their morning time rice [lunch]. The NMSP's relief team members came and surveyed the conditions. Hopefully they will come and assist [us] by tomorrow.

A mother with 2 children, who was temporarily sheltered in the Jon-Kwee Village, NMSP controlled area, described her concern of the lack of supplies:

As for me, I need to go back. It is very difficult to hide here as there are a lot of mosquitoes and bugs. My food will run out soon.

At the time of the writing of this report, HURFOM's reporters have confirmed that fighting has mostly stopped. However, the potential increase of Burmese troops to the area, and the possible involvement of the Karen National Union's (KNU) Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) sets conditions that could lead to a significant increase in fighting within the area, as well as compounds the number of residents who might additionally flee to either Thailand or NMSP controlled territory.

Refugees remain in Thailand and in NMSP controlled territory with no clear time frame of when they will be able to return home. This large number of displaced persons face a potentially severe risk from lack of basic shelter, mosquito netting, food, and water, if they remain unable to return home. HURFOM wants to highlight that while the Mywayddy/ Mae Sot area has seen significant attention and support, the areas around TPP also are in severe need of resource and medical support. The continued support of internationally based NGOs such as Thai Burma Border Consortium (TBBC), Medicine Sans Frontier (MSF) (Belgium), and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) is crucial at this time.

Lastly, given the obvious dangers these refugees have faced, and could face if returned to their homes before fighting is conclusively over, HURFOM hopes that the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR) will exhaust all efforts in working with the Royal Thai Government (RTG) to insure that these refugees will continue to be supported until conditions improve.

## Report

### SAND ON THE MEAT: CITIZEN VOICES ON ELECTION INTIMIDATION, MANIPULATION AND LOSS

The following accounts compiled by HURFOM field reporters detail the voices of election participants as the November 7th polling day unfolded. These civilians were the predominant eyewitness observers to the on the ground operation of the election in Burma. These detailed accounts provide information that confirms concerns of widespread government election manipulation and ballot fraud practiced by Burmese government staff, soldiers, and the key government backed party, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP).

The following abuses of the election polling station rules fall in to several categories that are briefly detailed below. Predominately all abuse of election and polling rules came from either government staff or pro-government USDP members. Government staff included polling station employees, soldiers, administrative staff and members of the election commission (EC) that have dictated rules throughout the entire period of this election.

Abuses ranged through 5 predominant categories, all resulting in either a vote for the pro-government party, a loss of a vote for the opposition, or failure to address in anyway blatant violations of election and polling station rules. Cases of intimidation of opposition voters were mostly carried out by USDP members with large numbers of members grouped in key areas, or through intimidating language or action. Similarly in cases of partial security and staff, polling station staff, guards, and USDP members would openly pressure voters to support the USDP by, or attempt to drive opposition voters away. In cases of ballot manipulation polling both staff or USDP members either pressured voters to support the USDP, or they actively filled in ballots for voters with votes for the USDP despite a voters possible preference for another party. In cases of voting record manipulation polling station staff and possibly members of the election commission appeared to have lost crucial lists of valid voters who were subsequently unable to vote when they arrived, or voters found they have been listed as advanced voters and denied a ballot as votes had been cast in their name by unidentified person. In the same category civilians reported cases where large numbers of 'advanced votes' appeared at the beginning of the day, or the end, that overwhelmingly favored the USDP. Lastly, in cases where polling staff or USDP members were either intimidating voters or using voters ballots to cast votes for the USDP, no serious effort was made or action was taken by area election commission to stop abuses of election rules and the manipulation of votes.

All off the accounts were gathered on November 7<sup>th</sup> as polling events unfolded, or the day after when victims of abuse were able to speak with HURFOM's field reporters. The interviews were collected in 5 townships in Mon State– Mudon, Kyaikmayaw, Thanbyuzayart, Ye and Chaung Zone, over two days. Given the widespread and fractured nature of reporting on the November 7<sup>th</sup> election in the sever security conditions set by SPDC, these accounts provide a strong clear sampling of abuses more widely practiced throughout Burma.

#### November 7

##### 7:00 AM - Wattae village, Mudon Township, Mon State

Min Thet Naung (not real name), 30, a resident Wattae village, Mudon Township, Mon State resident and a workshop worker described witnessing USDP violations of poling station rules through and intimidation of voters:

Since 7:00 am, the USDP (members) were active at the No. 1 polling station wearing diaq pouns with green longis<sup>1</sup> or ordinary clothes. Around 7:30 am, I don't know whether (they) got the poll station officer's permission or not; U Cho, a member of Wattae VPDC, and 3 members were found entering the poll station wearing USDA diaq pouns. In reality, no one is supposed to interfere without permission, except poll station workers and voters. What happened next is those persons began shouting 'The right mark is beside the Lion. Support the Lion. The Lion! The Lion Logo!', which was intended to pressure the prominent persons and locals who came to vote. The

<sup>1</sup> Traditional Burman clothes worn by the nationalistic pro-government USDP party members. This defacto uniform consist of a white collared shirt, a white traditional jacket called a diaq poun, and a green crosshatched traditional skirt called a longi.



A ballot used during the election in X Township, Y State.

other party members were unhappy with what happened. Especially, [the members of] the All Mon Region Democracy Party, who reported [the event] to the polling station officer. However, the poll station officer passed [the case] to the Township Commission. These cases continued up until 9:00 am. After analyzing, it was found that the USDP members were very afraid of their rivals, the AMRDP<sup>2</sup>. Since 7:00 am, the locals had predominantly voted for the Mon party. It seemed that their [USDP] informants [likely polling staff] in the poll station informed some USDP members and the VPDC authorities of [the AMRDP success]. As I guess, up to two weeks prior to the election, Mon citizens had already proclaimed that any party except the Mon party would not win. It was not a surprise that the locals had mostly voted for the Mon party on the voting day of [November] 7. At that time, it was possible that the USDP [members] entered the poll station

and pressured the citizens because they knew that they were in a bad situation. Anyhow, based on the fact that they conducted the campaigns with government support, [they collected] the early votes, and that they had the right to interfere at the polling station manipulate the votes on the last day...no one could deny that they are not the government party. The advanced vote collecting was not included in the aforementioned interference and election manipulation. Everybody knows that according to the votes the USDP got on the 7th, they would lose to the Mon party by a landslide if the advanced votes were not included.

#### 7:45 AM - Kaw-Kha-Loe village, Mudon Township

A local election monitor who visited polling stations in several villages in Mudon Township, Mon State, described situations in which there had been cases of ballot manipulation and intimidation by the USDP members and polling station staff at the poll stations:

As I knew, at the Kaw-Kha-Loe polling station of Mudon Township, the members of the USDP robbed the ballot paper from the voters and made marks in the USDP's places. They stayed in front of the poll stations. Even some of them were going into and out of the poll stations [without IDs]<sup>3</sup>. It could not be differentiated clearly between [who were] USDP members and poll station workers. The way [of election abuse] I encountered was ballot manipulation. [This case] occurred at 7:40 am. Daw Htay Hla of Nyaung Gone polling station No. 2, who was responsible for checking [the voters' list and delivering the ballot papers, urged the voters to vote for the USDP. I definitely heard [her say this]. Some voters made their marks in the Lion's square with fear<sup>4</sup>, and some had to reluctantly make their marks in the square she [Daw Htay Hla] pointed at, without getting [to go to a] voting room. It is not acceptable that the poll station workers themselves said to vote for the USDP. It is significant that some of the poll station workers had already pressured by the USDP members.”

#### 8:00 AM - Kamawet village, Mudon Township

Several residents of Kamawet village reported to a HURFOM field reporter a case of ballot manipulation and voting record manipulation that led to 64% of the villages eligible voters being unable to vote. Prior to the election, Kamawet village had 2500 eligible voters listed on election documents, according to residents. On election day only 900 of the valid voters were able to collect their ballot papers to fill out at the polling booths. It is unclear where the remaining ballots went, though reporters were able to confirm that 1200 of those ballots had been transformed into advanced votes without the voters' knowledge or consent, and had already been cast by unknown people.

<sup>2</sup> The All Mon Region Democratic Party (AMRDP).

<sup>3</sup> Polling station rules required people entering polling stations to present their ID to identify who they were, before entering polling stations. In this case USDP were making no effort to present ID or follow the other requirement.

<sup>4</sup> Ballots were marked with icon representing each party. In this case the speaker is referring to the USDP's icon of a lion adjacent to the spot for a tick mark.

A Mudon town resident who wished to remain anonymous, describes the case of voting record manipulation and ballot manipulation he encountered committed by members of the USDP:

As I know, the particular poll station authorities did not deliver the ballot papers for all the voters. According to Min Oo, a USDP member, these [advanced] ballot papers were already put in on the list of advanced votes during the previous days [before the election]. As I noticed, most of the marks on the advanced votes ballots were made by themselves [the USDP]<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, there was a lot of evidence that the USDP was using [the power of] the authorities; their party [USDP] forced the locals to mark in the Lion's squares in front of them...I want to say that it will not be a surprise on me if they win. What I said now exactly represents what has happened in our region.

#### **8:00 AM - Nyaung Gone village, Mudon Township**

A resident named Daw Khin San May describes how she witnessed two teachers who were working as polling station staff at the No. 2 poll station of Nyaung Gone village, Mudon Township, tried to pressure voters to support the pro-government USDP. Seeing this effort at election manipulation, AMRDP observers attempted to contact the local EC which resulted in the two staff leaving before possible action could be taken against them:

On the morning of that day the time was about 8 o'clock. Two school teachers – Ma Htay Hlaing and Daw Swae who are USDP members – pressured the students' parents who came to vote in the poll station saying, 'Vote for the USDP. Tick the right marks.' That's my own experience. They are schoolteachers, so no one replied. I am not sure whether some students' parents voted [for the USDP] because of their children's teachers' campaign. I didn't vote for them. I mean that unlike other party members, they [the teachers] could interfere as they wanted in the voting processes since they [had the duties of] polling station workers. It was unfair. And then they left the poll station because the AMRDP members immediately informed the Township [Election] Commission [about those efforts]. In conclusion, I don't feel surprised that they won the votes in this region. People said that they won the vote with the early votes which they got unjustly.

#### **9:00 AM - Juin Pan, Wad Tal, Winn Dar villages, Mudon Township**

The AMRDP's secretary Dr. Min Nwe Soe, who is competing for a seat in the State Hluw Htaw at polling booths in three villages in Mudon Township, described cases of ballot manipulation that he witnessed by USDP candidates and polling station staff when he visited several polling stations in Mudon Township:

This morning at 9 AM or so, when I came to the polling station where I am competing for State Hluw Htaw candidate, I saw the USDP candidates were [committing] electoral fraud in the station, especially it [was] happening in Juin Pan village. At the polling station, three USDP candidates are casting the voters [ballots] in the station. When I become angry with that, they stopped casting the votes. They are casting [other peoples] votes as they think it is legal. Besides casting the votes illegally at the polling stations in Juin Pan village, the members of Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) are casting the votes for the USDP at polling station No.2 in Wad Tal village [and Winn Dar village]. The polling station officer did not say anything even though he saw that the VPDC members are casting the ballots for the USDP. However, because of this, we went to the Mudon Township Election Commission to file a case with them about that. They only said they would pass the word on to the right people. And in Nyaung Kon village, Daw Htay Htay Hlaing, who is a Health Department servant and who was giving the ballots to voters, aged 32, checked the ballots on behalf of voters even though that is not her responsibility. Yet despite this, when we told the polling booth officers, they ignored those [abuses]. That is how they are cheating at the polling stations.

#### **10:00 AM - Wattae village, Mudon Township**

Ma San San Aye, 29, who is a tutor, described to HURFOM her experience encountering USDP members who were posted at polling station No. 1 of Wattae village, Mudon Township and engaged in ballot manipulation:

At that day, I and my mother went to [the poll station to] cast our votes. We brought our national ID cards. My mother is over 60 and needs help to walk because she has arthritis in legs. So I and my uncle had to accompany her. When we reached near the polling station, it was impossible to vote simultaneously. My mother needed my help, so I cast my vote first. While I was voting, all the persons

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<sup>5</sup> *In this case the villager was present at the beginning of the day during voting when advanced ballots were brought in to include with other ballots that would be cast during the day. At that time no security was taken to conceal the advanced vote ballots that were brought in.*



The above map notes the number and area in which HURFOM documented election abuses in Mon State.

I met were government supporters except the poll station workers, other party representatives and sub-poll station officers. I [also] saw some familiar USDP members. They were sitting in the registration-seats [waiting] to vote [on other peoples ballots]<sup>6</sup>. In fact, they [USDP members] should not have been there. The place is only for the responsible polling station workers. After voting, I accompanied my mother, but the USDP members forcibly pushed me and my uncle saying 'You don't enter. We will accompany this aunt' and escorted her to go vote. After she came out, I asked my mother whom she voted for. She said she did nothing. The person who escorted her did the registration by themselves, ticked the mark, and cast her vote. After that I clearly understood that to get a vote for them [USDP] from my mother, they behaved in that way. I found that when the old men and women were voting, they [USDP members] continuously accompanied them to 'help'. What bad men!

#### 11:00 AM - Kankalay, Kangyi, and Kyone Phite villages, Mudon Township

In another instances reported by a Mudon township resident, members of the USDP were engaged in intimidation of voters and ballot manipulation. Mi Than Htay, a resident, reported by phone that most of the poll stations in

<sup>6</sup> In polling stations throughout Burma, rooms were divided to separate voters from outside influence. Only voters were allowed to pass three check in desks before reaching voting booths. These desks check IDs, distributed ballots, and checked that the ballot was valid and signed. Under election rules these tables were only supposed to be attend by election commission polling station staff. A places for polling station observers from different parties were separated on the other side of the room in a quartered of area. However, in this case the speaker is indicating that the USDP members were sitting with polling station staff behind the 3 check in desks.

Kankalay, Kangyi, and Kyone Phite villages, all of which are situated in southern Mudon Township, were occupied by USDP members. She described seeing USDP members gathered in along the road to the poll stations and inside polling stations, in mass. She also witnessed a USDP member taking her aunts ballot and filling it out as a vote for the USDP party despite the Aunt's wishes:

They are USDP's members. Up to forty or fifty members were active around each polling station to show their strength. In our Kankalay region, over 60 [members] was standing up at the entrance [of the] road of the poll station and outside the poll station. And then, in a poll station of Nyaung Gone where they [were] found; I think they felt awkward seeing Mon citizens were voting for the Mon party<sup>7</sup>, so two or three of them came to the voters pretending to help, and made the marks on their [USDP party] spaces. A woman in our ward described this type of event. She had a surgery on one side of her eye, and a USDP [member] accompanied her [to the voting room]. After that, saying 'Please give me [your ballot], Aunt', he made a mark [for her]. That aunt retold me that she went [to the polling station] to vote for the AMRDP but her vote was transformed into the other [parties] vote after her arrival [at the poll station].

### **11:00 AM - Lamine sub-township, Ye Township, Mon State**

Villagers from 12 villages in Lamine sub-township, Ye Township, Mon State, were ordered by Burmese Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 106 Captain Khin Maung Cho to go to polling stations to cast votes. In this case the direct involvement of the local battalion was related to the previous anti-election protests the villages had participated in on October 25<sup>th</sup> and the 31<sup>st</sup> <sup>8</sup>. At the time local residents conducted protests that promoted boycotting the election due to the absence of fair representation and election standards. Here a resident who wished to remain anonymous, described to a HURFOM field reporter, this direct pressure by the local Burmese LIB was blatant effort at election manipulation. These villagers are the villagers who are from the villages involved in Junta-led election protest on Oct.25<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>:

Captain Khin Maung Cho ordered village headmen to gather the villagers in their respective villages and to go to the polling stations to vote. The reason why the order was given is that on Nov.7<sup>th</sup>, until 11 AM, no one came to the polling stations to cast the votes; therefore, they [USDP] become worried about the turnout, and they the USDP asked the LIB No.106 Captain Khin Maung Cho to give order. And there come an order from Captain Khin Maung Cho.

Those villages ordered by Captain Khin Maung Cho to come to polling station are predominantly Karen. Despite the orders residents from 9 of the villages continued to refuse participation and no villagers were known to have traveled to polling stations<sup>9</sup>.

### **2:00 PM - Mudon Township**

According to member of the AMRDP who wished to remain anonymous, after cases of ballot manipulation and intimidation against voters by USDP members was witnessed in Mudon Township, representatives from the AMRDP tried to report the violation of election rules to the township Election Commission. However, the complain was effectively ignored as the AMRDP members were told by the EC officers that their party should try to negotiate with the offending USDP members to reach some sort of agreement or settlement.

### **2:00 PM - Mudoon village, Chaung Zone Township**

Another instance of election fraud though the manipulation of election lists and ballot manipulation was reported In Chaung Zone Township. There a list of legitimate voters was collected by the government and initially shown to Chaung Zone parties. But on election day close to 500 names on the initial list had been removed. It is not entirely clear why or when the names were removed, but the absence is believed to have a significant impact on electing representatives for three Hluttaws(Houses).

A representative from the AMRDP who coordinated reporting on election abuses described how in key villages such as Mudoon village in Chaung Zone Township, only 10 miles from Moulmein, the Capital of Mon State, hundreds of votes from authorized voters mysteriously disappeared from voter lists at polling stations on November 7<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> The speaker is referecing to the AMRDP, which was the only ethnic Mon party to run in the election.

<sup>8</sup> For further information on the anti-election protests that occurred prior to the November 7<sup>th</sup> polling date, please see HURFOMs article, "1700 villagers join anti-election protests in Karen and Mon state"

<sup>9</sup> Due to security concerns the names of these villages have been withheld. For further information, please contact HURFOM directly.



Those cases had occurred at the big villages of our Chaung Zon Township. I first had known about [these cases] only after 9:00 am. Especially, it was found that the number of Mon voters, who voted for us, in Mudoon village constituency significantly decreased. Therefore, what is the outcome? If the number of voters who registered for our ethnic group has decreased, it will be unfair in competing against the rivals. According to an estimated list, about 500 ballot papers were lost. We must report this case to the Township and State Election Commissions. After that, we will also discuss about rejected ballot papers. Our informants have themselves told us [about this]. It is no doubt that some rejected ballot papers were intentionally removed because we knew after inquiries that most of Mon ballots which voted for us were rejected by the poll station workers [who] gave no reason. That was the case at around 2:00 pm.”

### **2:30 PM - Kamawet village, Mudon Township**

In southern Mudon Township cases of ballot manipulation and intimidation were reported. A resident who wished to remain anonymous noted that the identical dress of polling staff to USDP members significantly intimidated voters who were concerned about retribution by the USDP or government forces for voting against the USDP. Additionally the resident noted the comparative lack of intimidation by the older NUP and AMRDP:

There was a load of ballot manipulation at Kamawet village [Seintaung quarter]. The main problem is that we cannot differentiate between the polling station workers and the USDP's members. Especially [because] the school teachers who work in the polling stations are dressed like the USDP's members. Originally, the citizens see the USDP's members as problem-makers<sup>10</sup>, so they are worried when they could not determine whether the people in the polling stations were USDP members or poll station workers. Because [of this] some [voters] are stressed that if they did not vote for the USDP, they will face problems as a consequence. Today there is no problem to [be] discussed regarding the National Unity Party (NUP). They acted with great care. The Mon party group has stayed clear [of ballot manipulation]... The busy persons were the USDP members with the white Diaq Poun and were noisy and found everywhere.

### **Between 1:00 and 3:00 PM - Thanpyuzayat town, Thanpyuzayat Township**

A Thanpyuzayat resident, who lives in Kyaung Paen quarter in Thanpyuzayat Town, describes how he witnessed intimidation and ballot manipulation by members of the USDP, who acted with impunity, at polling stations:

Now we are talking about the ballot manipulation that is happening on this [November] 7<sup>th</sup> election day but not about the unfair advance votes obtained by junta-backed political parties. It happened like that [ballot manipulation, intimidation] at almost every polling station, [with] the members of USDP waiting at the entrance of polling booths and frightening voters to vote for it [the USDP]. By acting like [they are] helping voters on how to vote and list their names on the voting-registration document, the USDP members make the voter [ticks in] their vote box [USDP's vote box] and by saying, 'Just check here [indicating the USDP's vote box].' Also by driving away other political parties' members outside of the polling booths; so, here, when they [other political parties' members] are outside, they [USDP members and assistants of USDP members] can do whatever they want to. Despite [the efforts] to do things illegally like this, we Mon people still prefer to vote for the AMRDP rather than other political parties.

### **Between 1:00 and 3:00 PM - Kyaik Paran village, Mudon Township**

A resident from Kyaik Paran village, Mudon township, who wished to remain anonymous, describes cases of partial guards in front of polling booths banning members of the AMRDP from entering polling stations:

That village is the Kyeik Paran village where AMRDP candidates are not allowed to enter the polling stations. The polling station guards said to AMRDP members that 'you are not allowed to go into because the logo stamped by Township election commission is not inked clearly.' That is the guard who is waiting at the entrance of Kyeik Paran polling station and who does not allow the AMRDP members get into the station. Well, here apparently that guard is a proxy of the USDP. And in order to do whatever they [USDP] want to do in the polling station, they drive the opposition members out.

### **Between 1:00 and 3:00 PM - Kyone Phite village, Mudon Township**

Ko Nai Linn Aung, 36, a Kyone Phite resident, who runs a battery charging business, describes his frustration at encountering efforts by members of the USDP to intimidate voters and manipulate ballots:

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<sup>10</sup> The USDP was created as a pro-government party from the now defunct Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA). The USDA which was a government run NGO ostensibly used for civil development, has been widely criticized as a directly involved in government directed violence against democracy supporters and political activists including Aung San Su Kyi.

Everywhere there were mostly USDP members. The other parties did nothing. They stayed calmly at their specified places. Only they [the USDP members] and VPDC members were in a rush. They were entering and leaving the poll station as they liked. I was going to vote on that day. My name was on [the list of people who can vote] but I did not vote. I didn't thoroughly know about ballot manipulation. One unjust thing that I encountered was that at the poll station No. 2 of Kyone Phite village, USDP member U Soe Thein and his village organizing groups entered the poll station and closely told the voters to tick the right mark at their Lion image. I heard about that from my friend who casted his vote in person. There is no one in this Kyone Phite village who does not know USDP member Ko Soe Thein. [He is] he not popular [and does not have] a good reputation. And then, I could see from the tea shop that there were the USDP members – Ma Moe Khine and Ko Soe Aung outside the poll station, and those youths [that tired to] coerce the people at the entrance of the poll station. Why I said that was unfair, is that even the similar party derived from the government, the National Unity Party [NUP], had no right to do so. I heard that in some places, the Mon party had no right to enter the poll station. There was no equal rights.

### **3:30 PM – Mudoon village, Chaung Zone Township**

Indicating the widespread knowledge of this particular event, HURFOM received another account relating to the loss of 500 ballots in Chaung Zone Township. The resident from the western portion of the township, 35, described how hundreds of eligible voters' ballots that had been mostly cast for the AMRDP had been lost. Notes that those involved in the loss should be held responsible as a loss of votes like this will cause longer term problems:

Yes, that is right about the lost votes. When we talk about the lost votes we mean that the AMRDP lost numerous votes that it could have gained. That happened in Mudoon village... In Mudoon village, Chaung Zone Township, there are over 500 eligible voters. And over 500 ballots have been lost. The reason why over 500 ballots have been lost is, I think, because of how the people who are in charge of polling stations, have done. I think, they should be [held] responsible for that [loss] for the upcoming [election related] problems.

### **4:00 PM - Mudon Township**

While monks were banned by election laws from participating in the voting, in certain cases voters reported election related abuses to local monks. In this case a HURFOM reporter spoke with a 34-year-old monk living in Mudon Township who described cases of intimidation and ballot manipulation by members of the USDP:

As I knew from my monastery supporters, who went [to the poll stations] to cast their votes, the USDP's members did a ton of ballot manipulation on that day....If the voters seemed [to] know-nothing and [were] afraid, they [USDP members] would themselves make the marks on the ballot papers. And then [there were] ways in which they mentally pressured the voters. They indirectly said, coerced and even intimidated [voters] – inside the compound of poll stations – saying that if you did not support them [the USDP], you will likely be in trouble. My supporters told me that this sort of indirect intimidation has occurred very frequently. Therefore, if they [USDP] win in the end, we needn't feel surprised.

## **November 8<sup>th</sup>**

### **Kyaikmayaw Township**

According to a member of the AMRDP who wished to remain anonymous, from Kyaikmayaw Township, he and other observers saw many bags of the advanced votes which they estimated contained around 5,000 votes per bag from unknown places during the vote counting at the Election Commission Office in Kyaikmayaw Township after all polling stations closed:

By checking closely, I found that all votes have been marked by similar ink color and suspected that they might marked by the same person. Of course, the ballot papers were marked only in the box for the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) candidate...Many candidates from AMRDP and NUP asked the Election Commission in Mon State to investigate the advance ballots issue. However,

**Information on HURFOM and  
Invitation for Feedbacks from Readers**

Dear Readers,

The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) was founded in 1995 by a group of young Mon people. The main objectives of HURFOM are:

- monitoring the human rights situations in Mon territory and other areas Southern Burma,
- protecting and promoting internationally recognized human rights in Burma

In order to implement these objectives, HURFOM produces the monthly "Mon Forum" newsletter. If publication is delayed it is because we are waiting to confirm information, and it comes with our heartfelt apologies.

We encourage you to write to us if you have feedback or if you know someone who you think would like to receive the newsletter. Please email or mail a name and address to:

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E-mail: [hurfomcontact@yahoo.com](mailto:hurfomcontact@yahoo.com)  
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With regards,

Director  
Human Rights Foundation of Monland

it [EC] took no action to investigate accusations of election fraud according to a supporter of AMRDP in Moulmein City, Mon State. The candidates from those two parties [AMRDP and NUP] in Mon State sent the letter requesting an investigation and action regarding voting advances on November 8<sup>th</sup> morning. However, all requested letters had been rejected by the Mon State EC.

### **Kyaikmayaw Township**

Nai Ngwe Thein, the chairman of the AMRDP, who was expected to prevail with the majority of the votes in his constituency in Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, describes how he lost the seat he contested for. His appeal to the EC for an investigation into the suspect advanced votes was refused:

Yes. I lost the seat after the Election Commission (EC) brought in illegal advance votes. I know that I got the majority of the votes from my [Mon] people but later, we [AMRDP] discovered that I had lost...after they added a bag of at least 5,000 advanced votes from an unknown place. The Kyaikmayaw election commission office informed me already about that. As soon as I got the results, I required them to count and investigate the advanced vote issue; however, they refused to do that. I think the SPDC military commander based at the Southeast Command, Moulmein has power more than the Mon State EC. The Mon State EC members did not dare to hold an investigation into false advanced votes at our request.

### **Kamawet village, Mudon Township**

Nai Htit, 38, who lives in Harat quarter of Kamawet village, describes a case of voting record manipulation in which valid voters were denied ballots after an unidentified person removed lists validating the voters ballots. In this case the list, which did not preserve voter anonymity due to the presence of individual ID numbers, contained mostly names of AMRDP supporters:

In this Kamawet village, some people cast their votes, but most people did not go to the polling station. Some people wanted to vote for the party they supported, but had no right to vote. Those people are Mon from Harat quarter. They were already on the list of people who can vote. They already knew their list numbers. However, the list was lost on the voting day. They had to return without voting [after] being informed [they had] no right to vote. It was later known that [the lost list] was due to that the USDP, as they [USDP] knew they are the supporters of the AMRDP and did not allow them to vote. According to

the news from internal sources, the VPDC authorities had torn up the list of the people who can vote. As a proverb says “Throw sand on the meat if its not for you.” The votes which would not become theirs were lost from the list. The right to vote was denied by showing there was no list. The Mon party lost (the election) in Kamawet. The whole village knew that the loss was due to the cheating of the USDP and the VPDC. The Mon party has suffered [for it].

## Conclusion

These accounts collected as the election was occurring or the day after, highlight points at which the regime was able to either actively or through ignorance and confusion, able to manipulate the election in its favor. Strait forward intimidation and ballot manipulation was the most common abuse practiced by government polling both staff and members of the



Residents of Mon State are seen checking polling station lists to identify with polling station they must vote days before November 7, 2010.

USDP, in the absence of international observers. This was aided by the bias USDP, government administration, polling staff, and soldiers, actively implemented in their jobs throughout election. In cases of voting record manipulation significant swaths of valid voters were denied the opportunity to cast ballots, after either being told they were not on lists, lists had been lost and the ballots were thus invalid, or being told they had in fact already voted in ‘advanced’ despite their not having cast any ballot. In all these cases the failure of the election commission to take action to resolve or curtail these ongoing abuses directly allowed the manipulation of ballots and intimidation of voters to continue with impunity.

Having banned international observers and placed strict controls on media during the election, the value of direct accounts of November 7<sup>th</sup> from eyewitness participants is significant. These accounts highlight the direct evidence of efforts by the regime to manipulate the first poles in 20 years in favor of a party intended since its formation, to perpetuate the rule of the SPDC through a new pro-regime manifestation. Crucially, these accounts also highlight the ways in which the heavy manipulation of the tentative democratic process occurred on the day of the election. With the next election 5 years away, such observations could be crucial in assisting communities to increase awareness of democratic rights and processes’, and how to curtail future abuses of the election system.

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