

LOCAL VILLAGERS PROTEST AGAINST GRAVEL PRODUCTION PROJECT IN PAUNG TOWNSHIP



June 6, 2016

On June 5th, 2016, World Environment Day, 500 people from Ouktada village, Paung Township, Mon State, took to the streets to protest against gravel production by Long Life Aggregate Mining Company Limited.

The protest started at 9:00 AM and lasted until 12:00 AM. The main speakers and leaders of the protest were: U Mya Thwin, U ZawHtwe, U Aung Lwin, U Tin HtunNaing, U San Aung, U Myint Aung and Ma Thida.

The slogan of the protest was to protect Kalarma Mountain range, and to protest against stone mining which affects water resources and ruins farmland and plantation gardens. The protesters hope to put a stop to the stone mining project led by Long Life Aggregate Mining Company Ltd.

“In Ouktada village, we have four streams [rivers]; one of them has started to become ruined. No clean water is flowing in the river but now there is cloudy water. We are witnessing it”, expresses one of the speakers. Furthermore, “Currently, Kalarma Mountain is not completely affected yet but if we cannot protect it, we will suffer in the future. We will suffer from cancer. On Kalarma Mountain base, there are plantation gardens, farmlands, and Buddhist temples and pagodas that we value. This mountain is our life.”

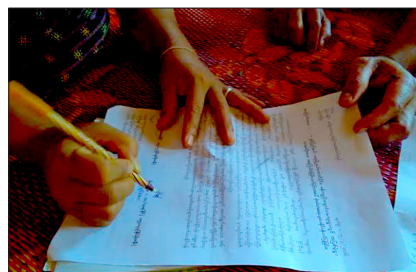
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MON LANGUAGE PRE-SCHOOL OPENS IN MAWLAMYINE



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MILITARY THREATS REPORTED AS ACTIVISTS SEEK JUSTICE FOR YE TOWNSHIP DOUBLE MURDER



April 6, 2016

Last month various news outlets reported the murder of two fishermen by a military captain in Mon State’s Magyi Chaung Wa village. In recent days Magyi Chaung Wa’s village administrator has made further allegations, claiming that the

implicated battalion threatened him following the murders, as they attempted to assure his silence.

Two Magyi Chaung Wa villagers were shot and killed by Captain Zaw Myo Thet on the night of March 8, as the fishermen left their house to board their fishing boat. According to military sources, the alleged perpetrator, Captain Zaw Myo Thet, has been charged with murder under Burma’s penal code. However, the captain – who is affiliated with Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 280 – is currently missing, having fled by ship three days after the incident.

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News

WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOR HELD IN YE TOWNSHIP



June 16, 2016

On June 15, 2016, World Day against Child Labor was held in Kan Nee and Andin villages, in southern Mon State. The event started at 9am in Kan Nee village and 02:30pm in Andin village. A total of 75 students, village chairmen, village youth groups and parents of students participated in the event.

The event was organized by Jeepyah Civil Society Development Organization (JCSDO), who cooperated with the ILO and other local organizations. Mi Ah Mon Bloi from the women’s empowerment program, also an organizing member, voiced to HURFOM “The purpose of organizing this event is to raise awareness, especially to parents, about child rights and how it affects child education.”

She continued, “The reason these villages were chosen to hold this event was, according to the ILO, is that these villages have the largest amount of child labor, where children are working in plantation gardens and farms, depending on the season. In Andin village, many children are also working in the fishing industry.”

The ILO revealed that many children between the ages of 14 to 17 have dropped out of school to work, in order to help their parents who cannot afford basic necessities. There are 6 villages in this area that the ILO focused on. The ILO mainly supports these villages with child labor, education and supporting the parent. WEP is also involved in this program, mainly focusing on monitoring and evaluating the project.

For child labor policy, there is a law regarding child labor rights but the law only discusses children who are being sold and children working in factories, however, in Mon State this is not the case. There are no children working in factories, but instead they work on farms or plantation gardens. This law does not cover these children that are working on farms or plantation gardens.

The same event was also held last year in other villages. It is important to consistently and repeatedly organize this event in order to raise awareness about this issue. World Day against Child Labor was first launched in 2002 by the ILO and is held, worldwide, on June 12 every year, with the aim to raise awareness on child labor.

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LOCAL VILLAGERS PROTEST AGAINST GRAVEL PRODUCTION PROJECT IN PAUNG TOWNSHIP



On the west of the village, there is a lot of farmland that is owned by ethnic villagers. Villagers rely on water from the stream for farming and their income. One of the speakers added:

“Today, due to the mining activities, we have lost water to farm and it is destroying our plantation gardens. It affects our lives. That is why we are opposing this mining project”.

Ma Thida continued: “Due to this project, we are divided even amongst family member. We argue with each other. Do we need this kind of project that divides us? This project also has no transparency. We need to stand united and oppose it”.

“We are here today to protest against this mining because it destroys our farm, plantation, and water supply” stated another speaker.

Since the beginning, this stone mining project has lacked transparency. The company has been operating their project by cheating the local people by not informing locals on decisions and what they are undertaking. The previous government has not taken responsibility and accountability for the issues that occurred. That is why this problem still continues today.



News

SPLINTER GROUP EXTORTS 100000 KYAT PER HOUSE FROM HAN GAN VILLAGERS

May 31, 2016

According to a monk from Han Gan village, an armed group, who were coordinated by two leaders called Nai Lon and Nai Song, were demanding payments of 100000 kyat per house in Han Gan village, Ye Township, Mon State.

The group visited farms across the village demanding 100000 kyat per house from those who owned farms. For people who do not own a farm, they did not have to pay but villagers were also scared to go outside freely.

“At the moment, some people have already paid them but some have not paid it yet. The Burmese government did not take action and we also do not see any response from the Mon

authority. Last month, the splinter group, who were coordinated by Nai Mon Chan were active in southern Ye Township, Mon State and Yebyu Township, and surrendered their weaponry to Tatmadaw but now the other group has come and extorted money from the villagers. The villagers are frightened and no one has come to help us,” added a monk.

There are several gangs active throughout southern Ye Township and Yebyu Township. The groups still demands money from villagers in those areas.

A monk explained that, “southern Ye is under Burmese authority and is labeled as a black area, the splinter group can be active as much as they want here. The New Mon State Party also can’t

stamp on it. That is the biggest threat to the local’s livelihoods and safety in those areas and they also don’t receive the protection from the Burmese government.”

The area like southern Ye is mostly active by the armed group that demands payments from the villagers and are also using other tactics such as killing, kidnapping and, occasionally, rape to aid their extortion.

“The leaders of the gangs mostly come from New Mon State party. The gangs have demanded money from the villagers, after they are satisfied, they surrender their weaponry to the Burmese government and their life is sufficient. Even if they did a lot of bad things in the past, no one gives them a punishment. Later on, other groups will follow-on like that too, because there is no punishment, the gangs will never disappear,” said a monk from Han Gan village.

ANTI-DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING DAY MARKED IN MAWLAMYINE



June 29, 2016

On 26 June 2016, an event marking the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was held in Mawlamyine, Mon State. It took place at PaingKhit Hall, MyineTharYar, Mawlamyine, from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

The event was organized by several Mon youth groups from around Mon State, including: Mon Youth Progressive Organization (MYPO), Mon Youth Educator Organization (MYEO), Gita Mon, Mawlamyine University Student’s Union, Technology University Student Union (Mawlamyine), Mudon Township Mon Youth, Chaungzone Township Mon Youth, and Kyaikmayaw Township Mon Youth group.

Over 240 people attended the event including Hluttaw representative, government departments, political representatives, community-based organizations, students, media, and youths from around Mon State.

In the opening speech, Mon State Hluttaw representative, U Tun Ling Aung, stated that the drug-abuse problem is more widespread than expected. This is due to the lack of rule of law, law enforcement, and the weaknesses in controlling and regulating drugs issues. It is important to cooperate, not only with the government and security sector but also with youth groups to combat drug problems.

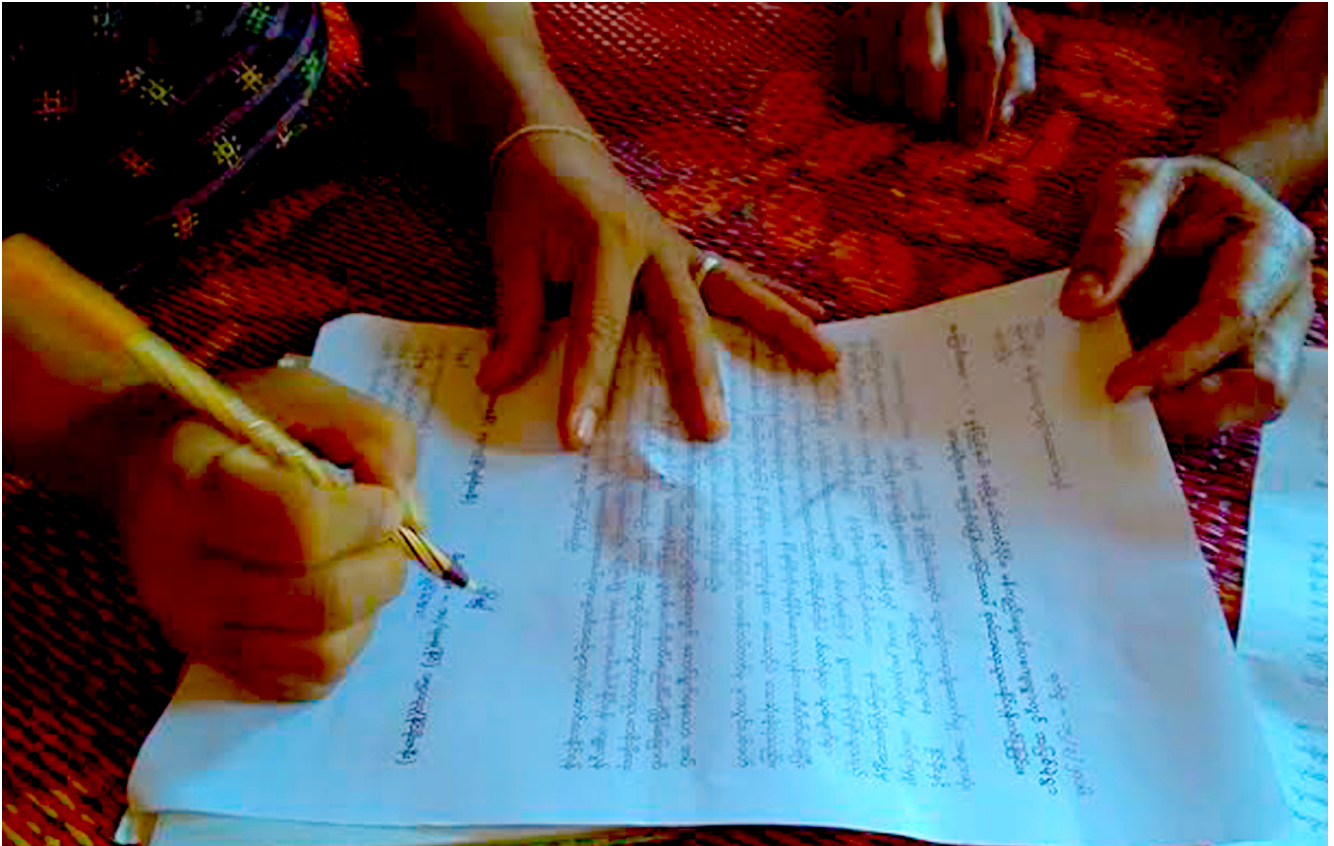
The New Mon State Party (NMSP) representative, Nai Kaung Htaw Jit talked about how to eradicate the drug issue and activities they are involved in to eradicate it. He said that there are difficulties when conducting activities to combat drug issues because of territorial limitations. They are restricted to certain areas and cannot

take action freely. NMSP suggests that those who are in a position of authority should take action against drug abuse. For instance, they should arrest those that are taking drugs and those who are trafficking it. It is important to raise more awareness in order for youths, parents, and communities understand the issues on drug abuse. To eradicate drug abuse, NMSP needs to cooperate with the government and the police.

The event also discussed issues around the impact of drug use for youth and women. Sai Aung Khant from the Drug User Network discussed that there is a gap for young people that needs to be filled. Many young people have no activities like football or skate boarding and therefore turn to drugs to keep busy. Villagers should have the opportunity for more social activities for young adults such as having a shared football field, skate park, and activity center for young people.

The event was closed with a local Mon music band, that played music which educate listeners on how to combat the drug problem.

MILITARY THREATS REPORTED AS ACTIVISTS SEEK JUSTICE FOR YE TOWNSHIP DOUBLE MURDER



Speaking on April 3, village administrator Nai Kai explained that his attempts to seek justice for the case have been overshadowed by threats from military officials. He detailed, “The authorities from Light Infantry Battalion No. 280 threatened me and tried to force me in various ways not to talk to anyone about the two victims shot and killed in Magyi Chaung Wa village.”

According to Nai Kai, military authorities were left particularly unsettled by a visit to Magyi Chaung Wa on April 2 by Mon armed group the New Mon State Party (NMSP). During the visit NMSP authorities met with the wives of the two victims and offered some financial assistance.

Immediately following the NMSP visit, Nai Kai claims that he received a call from high-ranking LIB No. 280 authority, Major Aung Ko Win. Nai Kai detailed, “They phoned me to ask

about the visit and I told them that the people from NMSP came here about the murder, and that they just came to visit the families.”

He continued, “[The military] said that they can arrest me at any time and send me to prison. I think they were not satisfied with my answers. They threatened me in many ways. So, I don’t want to talk to anyone [about the murders] because I am afraid of them. If they are serious [about their threats] then I don’t dare live here much longer. I didn’t do anything bad [...] I feel bad because I lost two of my villagers and the military has threatened me.”

Ko Jimmy from the Human Rights and Justice Initiative (HRJI) has offered his support, saying, “We can’t accept the military abusing villagers like this in a time of reform, democratic governance and civilian-led government. We should all press for justice for the two victims in Magyi Chaung Wa.”

Ko Jimmy continued, “In the past there were many cases like this, where the military intimidated citizens, and those cases did not see any punishment. But we can’t accept this in a time of reform. Frankly, in this incident the military has ignored all activists, citizens and the judiciary. We need to fight until the end for justice. We need all CSOs and CBOs to join us.”

“The authorities from Light Infantry Battalion No. 280 threatened me and tried to force me in various ways not to talk to anyone about the two victims shot and killed in Magyi Chaung Wa village.”

News

FIVE THANBYUZAYAT TOWNSHIP VILLAGERS MURDERED IN DRUG-FUELLED VIOLENCE



Nai Chan Mon, a teacher in Wae-Win-Kara, described the attack, “We saw him set fire to his house and then he started stabbing Nai Lon and other people. Some were killed and some were injured. The militia shot at him but it didn’t work, so then the militia ran away and one member left their gun near [Nai A Yone]. He got the gun and started shooting at the militia group.”

Reports suggest that Nai A Yone, a known drug addict, was under the influence of drugs at the time of the attack. According to villagers, he was earlier seen singing and clearly incapacitated, before threatening to kill all of the people in the village.

The violence ended 20 minutes after the attack began, when a group of Burmese soldiers and police arrived at the scene and shot Nai A Yone in the head. Nai A Yone, who eyewitnesses say had already sustained injuries to his leg during the attack, died immediately at the scene.

Following the incident, injured residents were sent to Mawlamyine Hospital, while the bodies of the dead were transferred to Thanbyuzayat. Firefighters were eventually able to extinguish the fire, which left four houses destroyed in addition to Nai A Yone’s home.

April 6, 2016

Five villagers in Wae-Win-Kara village, located in Mon State’s Thanbyuzayat Township, have been killed, following the worst case of drug-related violence on record in Mon State.

On April 4, at approximately 9 am, 40-year-old Nai A Yone set fire to his own home and began stabbing multiple villagers, in a spree of violence that left five dead, four injured and four homes destroyed.

The dead included the head of a local militia group, Nai Sein Kine, and his wife. Others who died from their injuries were named as Nai Aung Tun, 40, Nai Lon, 40, and Nai Tun Kyi, 80.

According to eyewitnesses, the damage Nai A Yone inflicted worsened when, following a stabbing spree, he seized a gun from local militia forces as they unsuccessfully attempted to subdue him.



News

MON PEACE AND DEFENSE FRONT DESTROY RUBBER PLANTATIONS

June 29, 2016

On 22 June 2016, 4 rubber plantation owners in Thanbyuzayat, Mon State, have reported that the Mon Peace and Defense Front (MPDF) have dug into their local plantation land in the hopes to search for metal.

The 4 rubber plantation owners: Nai Htun Ngwe, Nai Mai Chao, Nai Mai Aye, and Nai Ton Lwin have said that MPDF have dug into the ground on their land and on Nai Htun Ngwe's land 200 rubber plants were destroyed and 100 plants from Nai Ton Lwin. Nai Ngwe also said his rubber has only been planted and used for the last four seasons (equivalent to 4 years).

"We used to also grow Durian and other fruits. For the past 4 years, we have been planting rubber trees".

Nai Ngwe told HURFOM "last week, they came to our plantation and dug into the

ground to search for metal. Our plantation is located in Kwan Hlar and Phaung Sein villages between Mudon and Thanbyuzayat Townships. Yesterday, Kwan Hlar village administrator asked both sides to meet: MPDF leader, Nai Chit Soe, and us, the local people".

Nai Chit Soe claimed that he was granted permission from the suitable authorities to dig into the ground on the land from the plantation owners. However, the permission documents have not yet been revealed.

According to sources, Nai Chit Soe has stepped down from his position of power. However, his pupils still call him "General" and it has clearly not been revealed what his current position of power is.

"Coming to dig on our land is one issue, and the loss of our rubber plantation is another issue. For the loss of rubber

plants, we will have to sue them. Currently, Kwan Hlar village administrator has convinced them to stop for a moment. However, they said they will continue digging and we will also continue reporting to Mining Ministry if they don't stop." Plantation owners have stated that they have sent letters of complaint to the Mining Minister.

At a similar location, there was another metal mining operation, also dug by MPDF. They also did not inform land owner about any plans or changes. This led to conflict and because of this; the Irrigation Ministry stopped the company from further conducting their activities.

"They came to dig on our land without informing us which is breaking the law. We assumed that they wouldn't dare to come to us without permission. They must have been granted permission to do so", said plantation owner Nai Ngwe.

9 YEAR-OLD GIRL RAPED IN YE TOWNSHIP

June 17, 2016

On June 11, 2016, a 9 year-old school girl was raped by a 24 year-old man in A Baw village, Ye Township, Mon State.

According to a witness, Mg Min Oo, 24 year-old living in Quarter 5, A Baw village was the man who raped her on Saturday around 3pm at a rubber plantation, which is 3 miles away from the village. It was claimed that he first raped her, threatened her and then left her unconscious. He threatened that if she confesses to her parents about the incident, he will come back and kills her. She was left unconscious for a few hours, and after she woke up she had to walk 3 miles back to her village. When her mother saw her injuries, including vaginal bleeding, she took the child to the hospital and there it was then revealed, by the doctor in Ye, that she had been raped.

The young girl is currently in grade 3, however, due to her medical condition, she has to drop out of school for a while. Ma Tin Win, chairwoman at Township

level of Mon Women's Network stated: "She may need a lot of treatment because she has got a lot of injuries. Even when she leaves the hospital, she may have to rest at home for a while. She has to take time off school. The police also need to investigate the case and they said it could take about one month."

After the incident, the mother of the rape victim reported the case to the village administrator and they reported the case to the Police station in Ye. On June 12, the police arrested the perpetrator, who was charged under Article 376 of Burma's penal code.

The officer in charge is Min Sawe from Ye police station is responsible for the case proceedings. Currently, the perpetrator remains in detention at Ye police station and they will transfer him to Mawlamyine soon for further actions.

The Mon Women's Network (MWN) has met with the family for counseling and support. On June 13, MWN also

visited the village headmen, the local women's group and villagers in order to inform and educate them on access to justice.

Mi Sauhtajo, steering committee member of Mon Women's Network expressed that, "We are linked to the available medical response team for rape. We visited the village headman and the police station for supporting and checking best access to justice and counseling to those suffering. I think, due to the lack of justice and no strong rule of law and punishment for perpetrators, it creates an environment where rape occurs more, especially the raping of young children. I would suggest for stronger law and punishment. Therefore I recommend approving, as soon as possible, the new version of Pro VAW (Violence against Women) Law that has been drafted."

Related to this rape case, a 5 year-old girl from A Baw village, where many migrant workers live, disappeared last week and another child disappeared 2 months ago. There was also a 17 year-old girl who was raped. The problem is that no one takes responsibility to investigate and solve these cases.

News

LOCAL RESIDENTS CONCERNED ABOUT FIRE ACCIDENTS AT THE MILITARY SHOOTING TRAINING FIELD



May 20, 2016

Thanbyuzayat: In 2006, 100 acres of rubber plantations from Sakhan Gyi village, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State, have been confiscated by the military light infantry No. 4, to build a military training camp [shooting training field].

They cleared these rubber plantations and built the shooting training field. Rubber plantation workers live at the plantation site and these plantations were confiscated by force without any compensation.

U Ngwe Win, resident of Sakhan Gyi village told HURFOM “Sometimes when they were practicing their shooting, their bullets dropped on our plantation. Their bullets hit our rubber plants and destroy them. The main thing is that we

always live at our plantation site and our children play around there. As we always have to live in worry, something like this should not happen.”

They carried out the shooting training every three months. When they practice shooting, they use big bullets. When they miss their target, the big bullets drop on the nearby plantation and cause a fire.

“They came to plant their camp three days before their shooting training started. They informed the village administrator. Then the village administrator informed the villagers. During the shooting training period, villagers cannot usually work. Once they left the site, after shooting training, fire destroys the plantation gardens nearby. Villagers usually have

to go and stop the fire themselves” said local resident Nai Thint.

This fire accident happens every year. Sakhan villagers lose rubber plants due to this accident and there is no compensation or responsibility from the military.

“ Sometimes when they were practicing their shooting, their bullets dropped on our plantation. Their bullets hit our rubber plants and destroy them. The main thing is that we always live at our plantation site and our children play around there. As we always have to live in worry, something like this should not happen.”

Statement

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) Accreditation by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC) Sub- Committee on Accreditation (SCA)

May 18, 2016

1. **SCA Session:** 16-20 November 2015

2. **Recommendation:** *The SCA recommends that the MNHRC to be accredited with "B" status, which means that such National Institution being accredited does not fully comply with Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (Paris Principles).*

3. **Notes by SCA regarding MNHRC:**

#	Key Issues	Concerns	Recommendations
a	Selection and Appointment (<i>Paris Principle B.1 and its General Observation 1.8 on 'Selection and appointment of the decision-making body of NHRIs'.</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Composition of the Selection Board (established by the President of the Republic) includes a significant number of members of the government. No quorum requirement in prevailing laws with regard to the Selection Board. The most recent selection process was not made public. 	Selection and Appointment Process required: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Publicize vacancies broadly; Maximize the number of potential candidates from a wide range of societal groups and educational qualifications; Promote broad consultation and/or participation in the application, screening, selection and appointment process; assess applicants on the basis of pre-determined, objective and publicly-available criteria; and Select members to serve in their individual capacity rather than on behalf of the organization they represent.
b	Operation in situations of internal unrest or internal armed conflict (<i>Paris Principles A.3(a)(ii)-(iv), and its General Observations 1.2 on 'Human rights mandate' and 2.6 on 'National Institutions during the situation of a coup d'etat or a state of emergency'.</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to conducting inquiries and making public statements, MNHRC is expected to conduct itself with a heightened level of vigilance and independence, and to promote and ensure respect for the human rights of all individuals in all circumstances and without exception. MNHRC should undertake rigorous and systematic follow-up activities, and should advocate for the consideration and implementation of its findings and recommendations. 	MNHRC to be able to interpret its mandate in a broad, liberal and purposive manner, and to promote and protect human rights of all including the rights of Rohingya and other minority groups.

Statement

c	<p>Pluralism (Paris Principle B.1 and its General Observation 1.7 on 'Ensuring pluralism of NHRIs'.)</p>	<p>At present only two (2) of the eleven (11) MNHRC members are women.</p>	<p>MNHRC to advocate for the inclusion of provisions in its enabling law to ensure diversity in its membership and staff.</p>
d	<p>Adequate Funding and Financial Independence (Paris Principle B.2 and its General Observation 1.10 on 'Adequate funding'.)</p>	<p>Current MNHRC budget arrangement (approval required by President's Office and funds are then transferred from this Office on a quarterly basis) provides the Executive with substantial control over the MNHRC's ability to continue to operate.</p>	<p>MNHRC must be provided with an appropriate level of funding in order to guarantee its independence and its ability to freely determine its priorities and activities. It must also have the power to allocate funding according to its priorities.</p>
e	<p>Monitoring places of deprivation of liberty (Paris Principle A.3 and D (d) and its General Observation 1.6 on 'Recommendations by NHRIs'.)</p>	<p>Section 44(3) of the Law provides for the MNHRC to visit all places of confinement upon prior notification.</p>	<p>MNHRC to be able to conduct 'unannounced' visits, as this limits opportunities for detaining authorities to hide or obscure human rights violations and facilitates greater scrutiny.</p>
f	<p>Interaction with the international human rights system (Paris Principles A.3 (d) and (e) and its General Observation 1.4 on 'Interaction with the international human rights system'.)</p>	<p>While it is appropriate for the NHRIs to provide information to the government in the preparation of the State report, NHRIs must maintain their independence and where they have the capacity to provide information to human rights mechanisms should do so in their own right.</p>	<p>Effective engagement with the international human rights system includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. submitting parallel or shadow reports to the UPR, Special Procedure mechanisms and Treaty Bodies; b. making statements during debates before review bodies and the Human Rights Council; and c. monitoring and promoting the implementation of relevant recommendations emanating from the international human rights system.
g	<p>Annual Report (Paris Principle A.3 and its General Observation 1.11 on 'Annual reports of NHRIs'.)</p>	<p>In accordance with article 22(m) of the Law, special reports of the MNHRC are submitted to the President rather than tabled in Parliament.</p>	<p>MNHRC to advocate for changes to its enabling law to provide the explicit power to table all reports directly in the legislature, rather than through the Executive, and in doing so to promote action on them</p>



Information on HURFOM and Invitation for Feedbacks from Readers

Dear Readers,

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 situation in Mon territory and other areas in southern Burma
- ☐ Protecting and promoting internationally recognized human rights in Burma,

In order to implement these objectives, HURFOM produces the monthly "Mon Forum" newsletters. 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:

HURFOM, P.O. Box 35, Sangkhalburi Post Office,
Kanchanaburi, 71240 Thailand

E-mail: info@rehmonnya.org

Website: <http://www.rehmonnya.org>

With regards,

Director

Human Rights Foundation of Monland

THE IMPACT OF DRUG USE IN THANBYUZAYAT

April 25, 2016

On April 24, a 9-year-old girl named Mi Mercury was taken by an unidentified 30-year-old man while she was attending Mon summer school in Thanbyuzayat, Mon State.

At 11am the unidentified man took the young girl to buy ice, which would be served in the school. The ice collection took 5 hours, which normally would take no more than 1 hour.

The young girl was returned at 3pm. When she arrived at home, the family found that she had lost one of her earrings; her clothing was dirty; and her face had turned darker. It looked as if she has been coerced into something. When people asked the girl what the man did to her, she said he did not do anything.

It is said that he had taken the girl to the Eastern part of Thanbyuzayat. He took one of her earrings and kept her in a place while he went out to buy drugs. Mi Mercury said he did not harm or hurt her but people assumed and suspected that he had done something.

Currently, Thanbyuzayat police are still investigating the case.



MON LANGUAGE PRE-SCHOOL OPENS IN MAWLAMYINE

News from page no.1



June 20, 2016

On June 16, 2016, a new pre-school called “Mi” opened in Myine Thar Yar quarter, Mawlamyine, Mon State. This school is a pre-school which will be using Mon language instead of Burmese, making it very special. In the past, in Mawlamyine, there was no Mon language pre-school. Most school are taught in Burmese or English. Additionally, the school will also be teaching Burmese and English classes as well but the main language will be Mon.

Mi Cherry Soe, who is the founder of the school, explained “the purpose of opening this pre-school is to mainly focus on Mon children who can use and keep up their native language. Children don’t need to learn in a second language. They can start to learn their main language at pre-school now.”

“Mi” pre-school is a private school run by an individual committee of Mon individuals and teachers. “There are wealthy Mon people who offer support because they believe this is a good foundation for the Mon people. This school is very new and has just opened, I first want to check the school can run smoothly before accepting support [funding]”, Mi Cherry Soe continued.

Mi Cherry Soe also said that the pre-school will initially be accepting 30 children between the ages of 3 to 5, and the tuition fee will only include the charges for food and the school uniform.

The school is still working on developing a curriculum in the Mon language. It is easier for Burmese and English school because they have access to teaching resources in the languages as teaching materials are already available and published. For the Mon Language, the school still needs to figure it out.

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