

'GENERAL AUNG SAN BRIDGE' PROTESTERS VOW TO FIGHT TILL THE END



April 25, 2017

HURFOM: On April 23rd 2017, the central committee of protesters against renaming the Than Lwin (Chaungzone) Bridge held an event in the Mon Community Hall in Thanbyuzayat, Mon State to collect signatures from supporters for a petition opposed to the controversial decision to rename the bridge after General Aung San in Chaungzone Township, Mon State.

The committee vowed to continue to fight until the bridge is named according to the wishes of local civilians.

"The government says they have been developing a democratic culture and adopting a federal system, but they ignore minorities and exercise the tyranny of the majority. So today, we are collecting [signatures for a] petition to oppose the renaming of the Chaungzone Bridge. If [the government] continues to ignore the voices of the minorities, the civil war will never end," said Nai Ong Mon, a leader of the central committee of protesters against renaming the Than Lwin (Chaungzone) Bridge.

The process of collecting petition signatures began April 13th and was organized by the central committee of protesters against renaming the Than Lwin (Chaungzone) Bridge. Signatures have been collected from townships throughout Mon State and the petition will be sent to the Union-level Minister for Ethnic Affairs.

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HURFOM: WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY STATEMENT



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NMSP ARREST DRUG TRAFFICKER, SEIZE 100 METHAMPHETAMINE PILLS



May 26, 2017

HURFOM: On May 23rd 2017, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) anti-drug task force in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township, Karen State, arrested a drug dealer and seized methamphetamine pills, gold, and cash. The perpetrator has been handed over to the NMSP Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township authorities who in turn

asked the NMSP Mawlamyine District Court to administer the criminal charges, according to an official from the NMSP in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township.

"We received information about the drug dealer from local civilians and our anti-drug team raided the dealer's house during the investigation. The dealer's name is Nai Kyaw Aye and he is about 60 [years old]. He has a history of imprisonment with the NMSP, [having previously been incarcerated for] 3 years and released for [the last] 2 two years. We found pills on his body and also in his bed. We also discovered gold jewelry and cash. There were 715,000 Burmese kyat and 820 Thai baht. We caught him

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HURFOM: WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY STATEMENT



June 5, 2017

Today, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) celebrates World Environment Day. Villagers in Mon State and Mon areas of southeast Burma/Myanmar have strong economic, social, and cultural ties to their land and environment. Many villagers rely heavily on their surrounding environment to meet their daily livelihood needs, whether it is for farming, collecting water, or feeding livestock. It is with this knowledge that HURFOM calls for the promotion and protection of Mon State's vast and resource rich environment. In doing so it seeks to draw attention to the concerns of villagers in Mon State and Mon areas of southeast Burma/Myanmar regarding environmentally harmful, large-scale development projects near their communities.

Over the past year, HURFOM has documented several development projects within Mon communities and their environmentally destructive practices. In July 2016, HURFOM published 'Examining Foreign Direct Investment in Mon State,' which looked at the increasing influx of foreign direct investment and large-scale development projects. This report highlighted coal mining and coal-powered projects, stone

mining, gold mining, and the environmental impacts these projects have had in nearby communities. Communities reported the destruction of farming lands and water resources, as well as air pollution as some of the major consequences of these development projects. Furthermore, environmental damage often went hand in hand with health issues, as polluted resources negatively affected the health of nearby communities. These projects continue to raise concerns from local villagers regarding their effect on the environment.

Stone mining is of particular concern to Mon villagers, as nearby residents report the damage to the environment is negatively impacting their daily lives:

"When it rains, soil from the stone [limestone] mining washes away with rain and goes into the river. It kills sea [aquatic] life and the river becomes dirty causing us to get itchy skin. We normally use the water from the river, but now we try not to use it often as we are afraid to use it. When it rains, we use rain water, but summer is approaching and therefore there will not be as much rain and we are worried about not having enough drinking water."

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Nai B—, Kwan Ngan village, Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, 2016

Recently, the environmental consequences from a planned coal-powered cement factory in Pyar Taung area of Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, has also raised concern and protests from local civilians. On February 18th 2017, over 2,000 locals from the Pyar Taung region demonstrated against the use of a coal power plant to provide electricity for the local cement factory:

“We would like to prevent the usage of coal power plants in our area. If the company MCL [Mawlamyine Cement Limited] was good, we wouldn’t need to demonstrate. It is also dangerous for the health of the community. If the factory affects our land and water, our community can’t accept this kind of factory in our community. The locals understand about the impact of using coal power; therefore, they demonstrate to stop the usage of coal power plants for the factory.”

Nai C—, Ka Don Si village, Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, 2017

It is not just the negative environmental consequences that concern villagers in Mon areas, it is also the lack of consultation and transparency by companies with affected communities. Many communities report a lack of initial consultation, as well as misinformation about projects that are being operationalized nearby:

“When they [MCL] purchased the land, they only said that they were going to build a cement industry. They only explained the good side of the industry. They hid the negative impacts. And completely hid the fact that they would be using coal to fire the power plant. There was no discussion, information, or explanation about the environmental impact or impact on the people.”

Nai M—, Ka Don Sit village, Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, 2016

Recommendations

Government, local administration, political parties should:

- ◆ Make concrete efforts to enhance local villagers’ capacity to handle disputes; particularly by offering accessible legal counsel and financial skills trainings;
- ◆ Educate local people on the environmental impact from coal mining and coal power plants;
- ◆ Establish an Environmental Protection Agency to solve conflicts and inform local people about environmental issues;
- ◆ Eliminate corruption, ensure transparency, and provide access for local villagers in communities being affected regarding environmental impact assessments prior to project approval.
- ◆ *Investors active in Mon State should:*
- ◆ Follow responsible conduct, ensuring that free, prior, and informed consent is sought from all parties and fair compensation for land and damages is paid. Where appropriate, investors must make the effort to translate any information into the Mon language when negotiating with local people;
- ◆ Coal power should be resorted to only if all other forms of generating electricity have been eliminated as viable options, and only upon consent of the local community.

The International Community should:

- ◆ Call on the government to more fully commit to protecting the rights of farmers and local people in all cases;
- ◆ Promote responsible conduct by all foreign investors active in the Mon State region.

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'GENERAL AUNG SAN BRIDGE' PROTESTERS VOW TO FIGHT TILL THE END



"Even if the government opens the bridge with a name that we don't want, this will not stop our activities. We will continue to collect signatures for the petition and will fight till the end to get the name that the local people want," continued Nai Ong Mon.

On April 5th 2017, 14 political parties including the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) released a joint statement voicing their opposition to renaming the Than Lwin (Chaungzone) Bridge and requested the National League for Democracy (NLD)-led government to respect the wishes of the local civilians in the matter.

According to Mon State Chief Minister Dr. Aye Zan, the bridge is scheduled to open on May 1st 2017 under the name 'General Aung San Bridge' after the Mon State Ministry of Construction gives final approval.

NMSP ARREST DRUG TRAFFICKER, SEIZE 100 METHAMPHETAMINE PILLS

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100 methamphetamine pills, 163.29g of gold jewelry and both Burmese and Thai currencies.

According to the NMSP's drug laws, a drug user will be imprisoned for 2 to 6 months; individuals who farm drug-related plants will be imprisoned for 1 to 3 years; a drug mule will be imprisoned for 2 to 5 years with all associated properties being seized by the law; and a drug dealer will be imprisoned for 3 to 7 years and all associated properties will be seized by the NMSP.

We received information about the drug dealer from local civilians and our anti-drug team raided the dealer's house during the investigation. The dealer's name is Nai Kyaw Aye and he is about 60 [years old]. He has a history of imprisonment with the NMSP, [having previously been incarcerated for] 3 years and released for [the last] 2 two years. We found pills on his body and also in his bed. We also discovered gold jewelry and cash. There were 715,000 Burmese kyat and 820 Thai baht. We caught him yesterday and now he has been sent to the Mawlamyine District Court [of the NMSP]

yesterday and now he has been sent to the Mawlamyine District Court [of the NMSP]," said Nai Raja, the Chairman of the Kyar Inn Seik Kyi NMSP.

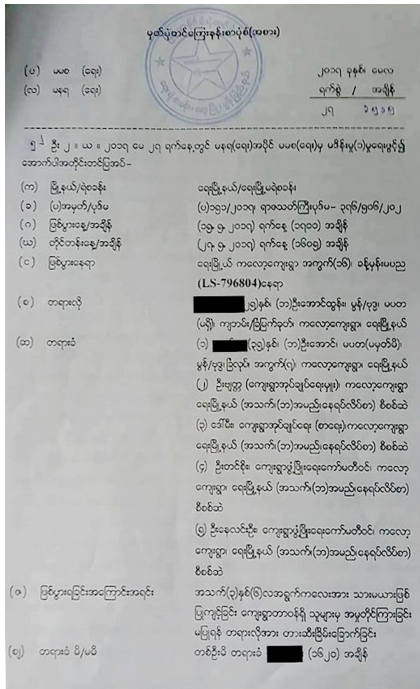
As the anti-drug task force believes the cash and gold jewelry are associated with the drug trade, the have seized all

of the associated properties, according to the official.

NMSP anti-drug task forces have frequently caught small-time drug dealers engaged in the local drug trade amongst the villages; however, big-time dealers have continued to elude authorities. The team confiscated

News

3-YEAR-OLD RAPE VICTIM IN CRITICAL CARE, VILLAGE ADMINS ORDER FAMILY NOT TO SEEK MEDICAL TREATMENT OR REPORT TO POLICE



June 7, 2017

HURFOM: On May 15th 2017, a three-year-old girl from Ka Log village, Ye Township, Mon State, was raped by a 35-year-old, male neighbor. The child is currently in critical care in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Mawlamyine's Women and Children Hospital, according to Chief Physician Dr. Nine Oo.

Deputy Chief of Ye City Police, Officer Soe Mon, stated that the child was playing in her home compound when she was taken by her neighbor and raped in the plantation behind her home. The assault was discovered after the girl's 25-year-old aunt and guardian, Mi B—, questioned the victim after the child was seen crying in pain. When asked, the child disclosed that she had been slapped in the face by their neighbor, while also indicating that a sexual assault had taken place.

On May 16th the girl's aunt filed a report with the Ka Log village administration office. Upon arriving at the office, the aunt found that Village Administrator U Pyat Ta, Office Clerk Daw Mee, and two Village Development Committee members — U Tin Soe and U Nay Lin — had already gathered. Mi B— reported

that after listening to her report of the rape of her niece, the village administrator and others present told her that they would solve the problem at the village level. Mi B— also reported that they pressured her not to report the case to the police, telling her that she had no witnesses to corroborate her story even if she did, while intimating that the perpetrator would seek revenge on her, endangering their lives upon his release from prison if he were convicted. The girl's aunt was persuaded to accept 1 million kyat (US \$740) in cash as compensation in exchange for signing an agreement stating satisfaction with the outcome of the case. In addition, the village administration office told her not to seek any medical treatment for the child, including going to Ye General Hospital or consulting with health workers or midwives.

Mi B— was told to report to the village administration office on May 22nd to receive her 1 million kyat compensation, however according to police records the victim's family only received 400,000 kyat (US \$296).

After receiving the compensation, the victim's family remained silent about the rape, however the young girl continued experience severe pain from her injuries sustained during the attack. The girl was brought by her aunt to the Ye General Hospital where upon examination the doctor determined that the girl had been raped. The hospital refused to start treatment until the family reported the assault to the police.

"Before reporting to the Police Station, the victim's family, the village administration, and other prominent persons in the ward, tried negotiate a mutual agreement and the problem was settled after the victim received 400 thousand kyat of compensation. When they [the family] reported to the police, we seized 350,000 kyat (US \$259) in cash as evidence," explained the Deputy Chief of Police.

After receiving the rape report by the girl's family, the police questioned Village Administrator U Pyat Ta, Office Clerk Daw Mee, U Tin Soe, and U Nay Linn. However, they all denied their involvement with the case and stated that the issue was solved by mutual agreement negotiated between the victim's family and the perpetrator.

On May 28th, Ye City Police arrested the perpetrator and charged him with rape under Burmese Penal Code 376 and criminal intimidation under Penal Code 506. The village administrator and others present at the meeting with Mi B— were charged under Burmese Penal Code 202, or intentional omission to give information of offense by person bound to inform.

According to reports, the Ye City Police need permission from the Ye Township General Administration Department (GAD) office in order to arrest the Ka Log village administrator, his clerk and the two committee members. The police have requested permission from the Ye Township GAD, however there has been no reply to date.

An unnamed social welfare group transported the three-year-old girl to Mawlamyine's Women and Children's Hospital where she finally received treatment two weeks after sustaining her injuries.

Sexual violence toward children in Burma has been an increasingly visible and controversial issue. Official police statistics show that reports of sexual abuse of children, especially young girls, has increased significantly over the last three years, rising from 43% of all reported rapes in 2013 to 61% in 2016.

For more information on trends in sexual violence toward children in Mon State and Mon areas of Burma see the Human Rights Foundation of Monland's (HURFOM) March 2017 report: **Cracks in the Silence: Sexual violence against children and challenges to accessing justice in Mon State and Mon areas of southeast Burma.**

News

NUMBER OF KRATOM-LEAF USERS RISES AGAIN IN KALOGTAW



April 10, 2017

The number of young people using kratom in Kalogtaw village, Mudon Township, Mon State, has increased as anti-drug campaigns by both the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Burmese government lose momentum, say locals.

Kratom is grown mostly in southern Thailand and increasingly in Mon State. Locally it is known as ‘opium leaf’ for its opiate like properties when ingested.

“During these days [nearing the end of the dry season], there are religious ceremonies in every village. Now, the kratom leaf drink has replaced liquor and beer. The drink has become essential during those religious events,” said a Kalogtaw resident who has witnessed the use of kratom in the village.

“I’ve been in the village now for 12 days and realized the smaller houses who held the religious ceremonies didn’t have the kratom leaf drink, but I reached two houses where big ceremonies were celebrated. One house had four pots of the kratom leaf drink and another had six pots of the drink. The kratom leaves cost them from 150,000 to 200,000 kyat. Moreover, there were also two packs of cough

medicine [used to mix with the kratom leaf drink],” said Nai B—, a Kalogtaw villager.

Eight kratom leaves cost 5,000 kyat and some people store kratom leaves in anticipation of a future shortage. Kratom leaves are boiled in water in order to produce the kratom drink and the leaves can be used up to two or three times.

According to locals, in general, households who hold large religious ceremonies can spend up to 2-3 million kyat on the festivities and they treat the young people who come to help with the ceremonies with kratom. In the past, according to local villagers, households competed with each other over who could provide best kind of beer; however, this year, most of the larger households have been competing with each other over how much kratom drink they can provide.

“A Pepsi or Coke bottle full of kratom drink is enough for four people to have fun. However, a person who is addicted to kratom has to drink the liquor as he drinks water,” said another villager with experience using kratom.

Although kratom produces a pleasant effect when used, it has severe consequences with prolonged

usage. *“[At first], when a person uses kratom he or she is in a good mood and active. Some people who suffer from numb limbs can be cured by drinking kratom. The young people use kratom to make them strong and active. As for the consequences, kratom drink leaves skin dry, causes tremors, and people become addicted to the liquor,”* said Nai C— of Kalogtaw village.

Even though the villagers know using kratom is illegal, they are still using it and most of the villagers who return from Thailand are familiar with kratom.

In 2016, the NMSP and the Burmese government launched anti-drug campaigns against the use of kratom, resulting in the destruction of large amounts of kratom leaves. Early this year, the NMSP withdrew from checkpoints in A-Bit village, Mudon Township, after escalating tensions with the Burmese Army. Since then, villagers have noted the increasingly free trade of methamphetamine pills and kratom leaves in the area.

According to ‘Bitter Pills’, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland’s (HURFOM) 2013 report on drug use in southeast Burma, approximately 55% of young people in Mudon Township had experimented with an illicit drug.

I’ve been in the village now for 12 days and realized the smaller houses who held the religious ceremonies didn’t have the kratom leaf drink, but I reached two houses where big ceremonies were celebrated. One house had four pots of the kratom leaf drink and another had six pots of the drink. The kratom leaves cost them from 150,000 to 200,000 kyat. Moreover, there were also two packs of cough medicine [used to mix with the kratom leaf drink]



News

PROTESTERS SAY RIGHTS VIOLATED AFTER MON STATE GOVERNMENT SILENTLY OPENS BRIDGE UNDER CONTROVERSIAL NAME

April 30, 2017

HURFOM: While locals in Mon State have been preparing to send an appeal letter to the Minister of Ethnic Affairs and other relevant government departments, the Mon State government silently opened the Than Lwin (Chaungzone) Bridge under the controversial name of “General Aung San Bridge (Chaungzone)” on April 27th 2017.

According to the central committee of protesters against renaming the Than Lwin (Chaungzone) Bridge, the Mon State government has abused the rights of the indigenous people of Mon State.

“Forcefully changing the name of the bridge is not only a violation of human rights, it also abuses the rights of the indigenous people. [The National League for Democracy (NLD)-led

government] has abused the [rights of the] ethnic minorities,” said Nai Man Raja, a leader of the central committee of protesters against renaming the Than Lwin (Chaungzone) Bridge.

Nai Man Raja had pointed out that in Chapter 2 – Objectives, Title No. 3, Subtitle (c) of the laws that protect the rights of ethnic minorities which was approved in February 25, 2015, says that languages, literature, arts, cultures, traditions, national identities, and historic heritages of the ethnic minorities must be preserved and developed.

Now, the central committee of protesters against renaming the Than Lwin (Chaungzone) Bridge have been trying to collect signatures from their supporters in order to send a petition to the Union Minister of Ethnic Affairs.

They have already collected approximately 120,000 signatures.

The move by the Mon State government to open the Than Lwin Bridge under the name of “General Aung San Bridge (Chaungzone)” was preceded by months of local controversy, leading locals to voice voluble criticism against the ruling by the NLD.

The *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)* released their 2017 Annual Report on April 26th 2017, in which Burma is named as a ‘country of particular concern.’ The report goes on to note the oppression of ethnic and religious rights under the former military regime, as well as the ongoing oppression of religious and ethnic freedom in the country.

YE TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS WANT A FAIR ELECTRICITY FEE

May 25, 2017

HURFOM: During a consultation with local residents on May 12th 2017 in Ye City, Ye Township, Mon State, Chief Minister Dr. Aye Zan announced that all of Ye Township would have access to electricity within 18 months. In response, locals remarked that they expect to pay a fair electricity fee commensurate with other townships in Mon State.

“If we have electricity, the benefit is indescribable. Our Ye Township has had electricity hardships for a long time. Now, locals have to use the electricity provided by [private] companies and it’s a bit pricey. If the government is planning to provide the electricity, we want a fair electricity fee that is equal to [the fee paid by] others,” said Nai Ong Janae in R’ru Taung village, Ye Township.

Companies have been providing electricity in some villages of Ye Township and villagers have to pay up to 600 kyat per unit. State sponsored electricity costs only 35 kyat per unit, revealing a huge gap between the two prices.

“We dare not use the rice cooker. Sometimes, my children iron their clothes for only a few minutes. We use some [fluorescent] lights and watch some movies. We have to pay over 20,000 kyat every month,” continued Nai Ong Janae.

Companies provide electricity from 4:00 am to 6:00 am in the morning and from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm in the evening. The villagers have two hours in the morning and four hours in the evening to use electricity.

Regarding electricity in Ye Township, there have been lots of promises from government officials and now locals do not trust in what the government promised to them.

“They [the government officials] have been talking about [providing] electricity for a long time. Every time, they say something different. We’re tired of hearing it. The local people don’t have much trust in what they say,” said Nai Oak Sar from Tong Pa Ran (Taung Pyin) village.

As there has been a government plan of establishing a coal-fired power plant in Ann Din village, Ye Township, local villagers are also worried that companies that provide the electricity in Ye Township will use coal energy.

News

LOCAL PLANTATIONS IN SOUTHERN MUDON TOWNSHIP EXPERIENCE THEFT AS YOUNG PEOPLE MISTAKENLY BELIEVE THEY GROW KRATOM



“When night comes, young people arrive with a group on motorbikes. They stop their motorbikes in the street and steal the leaves [of the chukla kyine]. They mistakenly consider the leaves as kratom leaves. [Chukla kyine leaves] are very similar to those of kratom both in appearance and taste,” said a resident of Taw Gu village, Mudon Township, who lives near a chukla kyine plantation.

Being similar to kratom leaves, chukla kyine leaves have a bitter taste, but when they are fully grown they are bigger than kratom leaves. However, the younger, less mature leaves of chukla kyine trees are often difficult to distinguish from kratom leaves.

As young people in many villages in Mon State continue to abuse kratom leaves, the leaves have become scarce, driving up the price. Previously, a single kratom leaf cost 100 kyat; however, it now costs double the price. The price of the leaf is also dependent on the size of the leaf.

In 2016, the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Burmese government launched anti-drug campaigns against the use of kratom in Mon State, resulting in the destruction of large stashes of kratom. However, earlier this year, these campaigns were halted and young people have begun again to abuse kratom again.

“When night comes, young people arrive with a group on motorbikes. They stop their motorbikes in the street and steal the leaves [of the chukla kyine]. They mistakenly consider the leaves as kratom leaves. [Chukla kyine leaves] are very similar to those of kratom both in appearance and taste,

May 3, 2017

HURFOM: Young people near Kamawat City, Mudon Township, Mon State, are stealing leaves from chukla kyine trees on local plantations in the mistaken belief that they are kratom leaves, according to a local plantation owner.

The leaves of the chukla kyine — a large species of tree — are similar in both appearance and taste as the kratom leaf. Kratom is known locally as ‘opium leaf’ for its opiate like properties when ingested and is commonly used as a recreational drug.

News

OVER 500 CHILDREN CONTRACT DENGUE IN MON STATE

June 15, 2017

HURFOM: Between January 1st and June 10th 2017, there have been 563 reported cases in Mon State of children contracting dengue, according to Dr. Nyan Sint, Deputy Chief of Mon State Public Health Department.

Children under the age of nine are the most likely to suffer from dengue and Mawlamyine Township has one of the highest rates of dengue in Mon State.

Dengue is very common during the rainy season and there are usually two outbreaks of dengue every year, according to Dr. Nine Oo, the Chief Physician of the Mawlamyine Women and Children Hospital.

"Not every [type of] mosquito spreads dengue. There are mosquitoes that spread dengue and there are mosquitoes that spread malaria. The mosquitoes that spread dengue bite during daytime and grow in clean water. The mosquitoes that spread malaria grow in dirty water and bite at night," explained Dr. Nine Oo.

There was an outbreak of dengue in Mon State in 2015 and four out of every 5,293 dengue patients died. According to Dr. Nine Oo, there is a possibility of a dengue outbreak in 2017.

In 2016, there were 398 dengue patients, but no reported deaths. However, compared with other states and divisions in Burma, Mon State has lower numbers of dengue patients this year. All of the dengue patients in Mon State have been able to access treatment in time so there is no reported death toll from dengue infection, according to the Public Health Department of Mon State.

The staff of the Public Health Department, cooperating with the public, have worked toward eliminating mosquito larvae by hosting education events and encouraging villages and wards to check for mosquito larvae in standing water.

"When doing 'Cover, Empty, Change, Filter', [1] there are water tanks and

pools that you can't empty out the water. In this condition, you have to put mosquito-larvae-killer in the water," said Dr. Nyan Sint.

According to villagers, public health staff are unable to provide larvae-killer to every village or ward and they have to prioritize the villages or wards where more dengue patients have been detected.

"Mosquito-larvae-killer is expensive so we can't provide it to every house. This year, Mon State has 2,000 buckets [of the mosquito-larvae-killer] and we've already used 1,000 buckets," said Dr. Nyan Sint.

According to the Mon State Public Health Department, only three wards or villages per township are able access mosquito-larvae-killer.

[1] . The slogan of the Public Health Department for mosquito elimination – cover water containers, empty water with mosquito larvae, change water containers regularly, and filter water when using it.

CEREMONY TO MARK THE 6TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESUMED WAR IN THE KACHIN REGION HELD IN MON STATE

June 12, 2017

On June 9th 2017, a ceremony marking the sixth anniversary of the resumed war in the Kachin region was held in Mawlamyine, Mon State. More than 50 participants joined together at Pine Khit Hall, in Mawlamyine's Myine Thar Yar Ward, to spread awareness about the ongoing conflict and build cooperation amongst civil society.

The event lasted two hours and included a speech by Mi Lawi Han from the Mon National Education Committee (MNEC), an overview of the impact of the conflict on civilians in the war-torn Kachin region by Kachin peace negotiator La Mai Kun Jar, as well as a question and answer period.

"We have had to flee from the war-torn area for six years. If we do nothing, [the

civil war] will only go on longer and longer. That shouldn't happen. We're holding this ceremony in order to encourage cooperation from all citizens throughout Burma [to stop the civil war]," said La Mai Kun Jar.

The ceremony was organized by six groups: MNEC; Mon Women Network (MWN); Saytanar Foundation; Mon Youth Educator Organization (MYEO); Jeepyah Civil Society Development Organization (JCSDO); and Border Health Initiative (BHI).

"We're confident that if we're united, we can stop the civil war. Previously, civil society didn't have a chance to contribute to the peace process and there was no budget for civil society to participate in the peace process. Today, we have seen some improvement. Now, many

organizations talk about peace and we have a broader peace network. In order to achieve genuine peace and justice in Burma, I urge everyone to give their support," said Lai Mai Kun Jar.

The majority of participants were members of local Mon youth organizations, as well as members belonging to groups composing the event's organizing committee. Event organizers declined to invite government officials.

The Kachin ceasefire with the Burma government collapsed in June 2011 after mounting tension over the Kachin Independence Organization's refusal to transform the Kachin Independence Army into Burma Army controlled Border Guard Forces erupted in fighting.

HURFOM Statement



June 20, 2017

Today the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) commemorates World Refugee Day and the estimated 65 million asylum-seekers and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) around the world. Despite ongoing political and economic transformations in Burma/Myanmar which saw the election of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in the country's first free and fair elections in 25 years, the number of displaced persons have continued to climb. With the violence in northern Rakhine State and the ongoing armed conflict in northern Kachin and Shan states, recent **estimates** put the total number of Burma/Myanmar refugees and IDPs at over 1.1 million.

HURFOM stands in solidarity with the displaced persons of Burma/Myanmar and wishes to highlight the protracted displacement of individuals and families along the Thai-Burma/Myanmar border. After almost 70 years of conflict there are still over 100,000 refugees in nine camps in Thailand and approximately 400,000 IDPs throughout southeast Burma/Myanmar. The political and economic changes in Burma/Myanmar has led many donors and aid organizations to reprioritize their funding streams away from the border area in the erroneous belief that with the changes taking place, the voluntary and dignified return of refugees and IDPs will shortly follow.

In August 2016, HURFOM published '**Invisible Lives: The Untold Story of Displacement Cycle in Burma**' with Burma Link and Progressive Voice. In this report on Mon IDPs and

refugees, many interviewees expressed their desire to stay in their current location and voiced their opposition to return.

The lack of sustainable peace, as well as the continuing occurrences of armed skirmishes between government forces and Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAO), as well as between EAOs, leave many Mon refugees and IDPs wary of returning.

"We worry that the ceasefire will break. If the ceasefire agreement breaks, we are worried that the Burmese troops will come here and cause problems for us."

Nai T—, Mon IDP, Male, Jo Haprao

"I am still afraid of Burmese soldiers throughout my life because of what I have faced. Because we have stayed here for ages, they would suspect that we all are Mon soldiers if I go back. Even if I go for a visit, they will question me and put me on the list. Then they will create problems for our relatives who live in the village when the ceasefire is broken. I worry for them."

Mi L—, Mon IDP, Female, Halockhani, (cousin was killed due to suspected connection to the Mon National Liberation Army)

Another major factor cited for preferring to stay in their current locations is the absence of land, property, and housing (LPH) rights needed in order to create sustainable livelihoods. Land confiscations in their former villages leave many refugees and IDPs skeptical about the ability to support themselves upon their return. [Read more on page11>>](#)

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HURFOM Statement

"Some people want to go back to their origin, but there are no houses, no place, no properties. So here they have a house. And also here is the NMSP [New Mon State Party]-controlled area, so they live in peace...That's why they live here. They still want to go back, but there is no place, there are no houses, no farms."

Nai B—, Mon IDP, Male, Jo Haprao

Military impunity for past and current human rights violations, land confiscations, landmines, and the absence of inclusive ceasefires and ongoing conflict in the northern and western parts of Burma/Myanmar are all barriers to legitimate, dignified, and voluntary return of refugees and IDPs.

Housing, property, and land rights must be acknowledged and restored, and landmines must be removed before meaningful discussions of dignified and voluntary return can occur. The current peace process must include meaningful provisions for the return and restitution of rights for refugee and IDP communities.

"It has been over a year since the NLD government took power in the country and the government has set up some refugee repatriation pilot projects, but the results were not very promising. The government should dig down to the root causes of decades old displacement and begin addressing this using United Nations (UN) guidelines, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the Pinheiro Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons, in order to ensure those communities are receiving justice."

All steps of any repatriation plans must be dignified, voluntary, and sustainable, and guarantees of non-repetition should be included. During rehabilitation processes, all representatives from the government, EAOs, and other stakeholders must recognize the IDP/refugee issues inclusively and ensure that all levels of decision making on repatriation and rehabilitation plans must be in meaningful consultation with affected individuals and communities."

Nai Aue Mon, Program Director, HURFOM

News

WORLD REFUGEE DAY: NAI P—'S STORY

June 20, 2017

In May 2017, Nai P— spoke with Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) to share his and his family's experience being displaced from their village and starting a new life in an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) settlement site along the Thai-Burma border.

"When living in our village [Kaw Zar], we faced lots of hardship because of the Burmese military. So we decided to flee to Thailand, but we were unable to go to Thailand and were stuck here. We didn't have a good relationship with the Burmese military so we had to avoid them."

It has been 17 years since Nai P— and his family fled their home in Kaw Zar, Ye Township, Mon State, to escape the conflict between the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Burma government. Although a ceasefire between the two sides was signed in 1995, tension between the NMSP and the Burma Army, as well as NMSP splinter groups, often spilled over into armed skirmishes, and villagers were subject to forced labour and other human rights abuses.

"We were forced to porter [for the Burmese Army] two times when living in Kaw Zar. We were forced to guide them when they were searching for the Mon [NMSP] splinter group. Some who were in the group were my relatives. If they knew that, they would have beaten me...we had to leave our village. If I continued to stay in our village, I would surely be beaten [by the Burmese soldiers]. If they were suspicious that you're related to the NMSP, they beat you...So the whole family had to move here."

But leaving their ancestral land for the border was not easy and they faced many hardships in establishing a life and meeting their daily livelihood needs. After being denied asylum and a safe haven in Thailand, Nai P— and his family settled in a site on the Burmese side of the border with many other IDPs.

"As soon as we reached here, we faced hardship. The Mon National Relief Committee supported us with food. We didn't have land so we had to do every job we could find."

Nai P— says his family are doing much better now. They own their own plantation and Nai P— supplements his income working as a carpenter. For now, they will stay where they are, but the memory of their home is never far away.

"We can live peacefully here. All the plantations in our [old] village have been sold. We don't have any properties there. [But] we want to go back. My mother still lives there."

Kaw Zar residents still continue to face uncertainty in their safety and livelihoods. In March of 2014, a spate of kidnappings and assaults were perpetrated by a NMSP splinter group after several residents could not afford to pay their extortion demands. In addition, Burma Army Infantry Battalion (IB) #31's base is located nearby, leaving residents fearful of patrolling units. HURFOM has documented 127 cases of sexual assault in the Kaw Zar sub-township zone alone by police, soldiers, and government authority figures since 2000. In the most recent case, a 13-year-old girl was raped by an IB #31 soldier and faced intimidation and threats by army officials after she reported the incident.

News

9-YEAR-OLD GIRL RAPED BY HER BROTHER-IN-LAW IN KYAIKMAYAW TOWNSHIP

June 21, 2017

On June 11th 2017, a nine-year-old girl from Pha None village, Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, was raped by her brother-in-law.

Ma S— had been living with her elder sister, Ma M—, along with her brother-in-law, Mg K—, and her brother Mg T—. They had recently moved to Pha None from Ye Pyan village, West Zee Gon Township, Bago Region, to work on a nearby farm.

Around 5:00 pm on June 11th, Ma S— went with her brother and brother-in-law to the farm they worked on as there was a heavy insect infestation and they needed to rescue as many plants as possible before they were destroyed. Mg K— and Ma S— collected the eggplants while Mg T— transported the rescued plants to their home.

After two trips by Mg T—, Mg K— returned home with Ma S— on his motorbike around 7:00 pm. As soon as they arrived home, Mg T— noticed bleeding from around Ma S—'s vagina

and reported it to his elder sister, Ma M—.

Ma M— asked Ma S— what happened to her and the young girl replied that she had been bitten by a leech. However, upon inspection Ma M— found no indication of a leech. As the bleeding did not stop, they went to the village clinic. The Pha None village clinic were unable to stop the bleeding so Ma M— called her husband Mg K— and her neighbor Daw T— and they brought the child to the Mudon Hospital.

The doctor at the Mudon Hospital was suspicious about the cause of the bleeding and gently asked Ma S— what happened to her in privacy. Ma S— revealed that she was raped by her brother-in-law Mg K—. Upon learning the truth, the doctor phoned the Mudon Police and Mg K— was arrested at the hospital.

After arresting him, Mudon Police transferred Mg K— to the Khaung Hna Kwa Police Station in Kyaikmayaw Township near where the assault took place. Ma M— has filed a lawsuit

against her own husband and the Khaung Hna Kwa Police Station have charged Mg K— under with Penal Code #376 (punishment for rape) and Penal Code #363 (punishment for kidnapping).

Ma S— has been transferred to the Mawlamyine Women and Children Hospital, where Dr. Zar Chi Oo, confirmed she was raped. Ma S— later revealed that her brother-in-law raped her in a hut and threatened that he would kill her if she told the truth.

On June 12th the Khaung Hna Kwa Police Station transferred the case to the Kyaikmayaw City Police Station.

Ma S— is currently receiving treatment from the Mawlamyine Women and Children Hospital and the perpetrator is being detained at the Kyaikmayaw Police Station.

Sexual violence toward children in Burma is an increasingly visible and controversial. For a more in-depth discussion of the issue, see HURFOM's March 2017 report, '[Cracks in the Silence: Sexual violence against children and challenges to accessing justice in Mon State and Mon areas of southeast Burma.](#)'

DRUG USE BY YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE RISE IN KYAR INN SEIK KYI TOWNSHIP

June 22, 2017

HURFOM: Seventy per cent of young people in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township, Karen State, have experienced using drugs, according to estimates by an official of the New Mon State Party's (NMSP) anti-drug team.

"[For villagers] between 14-years-old to 50-years-old, I've estimated that 70% of them have experienced using drugs. [The younger ones], they are out of control. We can't stop them. Even their parents have given up on them and come to our office and request us to arrest them," said Nai Raja, chief officer of the Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township NMSP anti-drug team.

In the past several weeks, the Kyar Inn Seik Kyi NMSP have already arrested 15 drugs users and dealers and sent them to the NMSP Mawlamyine District Court.

"We didn't arrest drug users before because we want to catch big dealers. But now, the number of small drugs users and dealers has been escalating. More young people are using drugs, so we have no choice but to arrest [both of] them," said Nai Raja.

After the Burma Army took control of two NMSP checkpoints in February 2017, the NMSP withdrew from several checkpoints in Mudon and Kyar Inn Seik Kyi townships in order to decrease the escalating military tension. Since then, reports of the trade and use of illicit drugs in nearby villages in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township have risen dramatically.

As Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township is under the control of both the NMSP and the Karen National Union (KNU), the administrative system is complicated and unlawful activities, including the use and trade of drugs, are more likely to occur.

"Even though there has been advocacy and education related to drug eradication by the NMSP and the Myanmar Police Force in the Mon and Karen villages of Kyar Inn Seik Kyi area, the use and trade of drugs has not declined but risen," said the NMSP official.

According to the official, the NMSP has decided to increase its momentum on drug eradication and elimination of all unlawful businesses in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township. However, earlier this month, Col Win Naing Oo, Mon State's security and border affairs minister, **lamented the lack of funding** by union and state governments to fight the drug problem in Mon areas.

According to HURFOM's 2013 report on the drug trade in Mon State and Mon areas, the proportion of young people estimated to have experimented with drugs in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township was approximately 40%. For more information, see '[Bitter Pills: Breaking the silence surrounding drug problems in the Mon community.](#)'

News

LOCALS IN MIX-CONTROLLED AREAS OF KYAR INN SEIK KYI TOWNSHIP CONTINUE TO COMPLAIN OF DOUBLE TAXATION

May 22, 2017

Twenty-four ethnically Mon villages in the mix-controlled areas of Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township continue to experience double taxation due to the absence of a mutual agreement on tax collection between the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Karen National Union (KNU), according to a local source.

Although the 24 villages are located in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township, Karen State, they are under administrative control of both the NMSP and the KNU. The NMSP has reportedly banned the KNU from collecting tax in the 24 Mon villages in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township under mixed-control, heightening tension between the two parties. Local residents report facing many challenges in conducting business under an ambiguous system of taxation.

Last month, eight pigs belonging to Nai Sa Khnit Kine, a local butcher from Doe Htoon village, Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township, were seized by the KNU at a checkpoint near his village. The NMSP went to the KNU base to negotiate a

solution; however, they were unable to come to an agreement and the KNU has refused to return or compensate for the arbitrary seizure of Nai Sa Khnit Kine's livestock. Nai Sa Khnit Kine's livelihood has suffered since his property was seized by the KNU.

Last month, the KNU sent a letter to the 24 Mon villages in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township stating that local businesses, such as gas stations, automobile repair shops, and other small-medium enterprises (SMEs), in the 24 Mon villages must pay tax to the KNU. However, the NMSP has ordered villagers not to pay tax to the KNU as those villages are under the administration of the NMSP. It is believed that Nai Sa Khnit Kine's livestock was seized as a method of collecting tax despite the NMSP's order to locals not to pay.

As the 24 Mon villages are located in mix-controlled areas administrated by both the NMSP and the KNU, local villagers are required to inform and acquire approval from the NMSP in advance of any business dealings with the KNU. Vice versa, villagers must follow the same procedures with the

KNU when conducting business with the NMSP.

"It is unlawful that the KNU has demanded tax from the 24 Mon villages. If they really want to do this, they first have to negotiate with the NMSP. Now, we have stopped the taxation by the KNU as there was no negotiation between us. Because of our refusal [to allow taxation by the KNU in the Mon villages], the KNU has abused the local villagers. We certainly oppose their actions. We'll inform the upper levels [of the NMSP] and will negotiate to solve the problem," said Nai Raja, the NMSP Chairman of Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township.

Now, both the NMSP and the KNU are collecting tax on rubber businesses. The NMSP taxes 10 kyat per sheet of rubber and the KNU taxes 15 kyat per sheet. According to a rubber plantation owner in Wae Kami village, Thanbyuzayat Township, the KNU has been collecting tax from both Karen and Mon villages nearby.

"The local villagers have to struggle between the NMSP and the KNU. In our region, we have the NMSP so we can protect them [from being taxed by the KNU]. As they are unable to collect tax, the KNU has targeted the local villagers so the villagers are afraid that the KNU will abuse them," said Nai Jae Toi Nai, a local gas station owner.

LOCALS IN KYAR INN SEIK KYI TOWNSHIP UPSET WITH ARMED GROUP'S NEW TAX

April 6, 2017

Locals in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township, Karen State, have expressed displeasure with the Karen National Union's (KNU) recent imposition of a tax on local businesses without notifying and negotiating with the New Mon State Party (NMSP) first in the mixed-controlled areas of the township.

"We have never seen the Karen armed group [KNU] collecting tax in the 24 villages that are in the NMSP and KNU mixed-control areas [in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township]. The KNU did not notify the NMSP that they would start collecting money from the owners of businesses. I feel unhappy about this. We informed

the NMSP about this and they told us not to give tax money to the KNU," said Mi Aue, the owner of a gasoline shop in Kraone Ka Yai village.

On March 24th, Battalion #6 of the armed-wing of the KNU — the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) — sent letters to local business owners in the 24 villages in the mixed-control area of Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township informing them they must come to meet them at the NMSP-KNU joint administration office in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Town on March 30th.

The NMSP administrator of Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township explained to HURFOM, *"We have previously talked with the authorities from the KNU*

about collecting tax from the locals in the mixed-controlled areas of the NMSP and KNU. They have never collected [tax] in the past and we have not approved it [this time as we were not notified]. We [NMSP] told the locals not to pay them [KNU] as well."

While gasoline shop owners are taxed approximately 100,000 kyat, for other businesses the amount of tax varies depending on the size of their business.

Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township residents told HURFOM's field reporter that the NMSP and KNU have an agreement that in their mixed-controlled areas, they must discuss and reach an agreement before new initiatives are implement in those areas.

News

ATTEMPTED SEXUAL ASSAULT OF A 13-YEAR-OLD GIRL IN HALOCKHANI

June 14, 2017

HURFOM: On May 24th 2017, a 26-year-old man attempted to sexually assault his 13-year-old neighbor in the Sin OrTaung Ward of the Halockhani Internally Displaced Person (IDP) settlement site near Three Three Pagodas Pass, Karen State.

The girl and her three siblings had been spending nights with an elderly neighbor, as her parents were working and sleeping in the plantation fields. On the night of May 24th, her younger brother had fallen asleep while watching a video at their parent's house, so she stayed the night there to look after her brother as she could not carry him to the neighbor's house.

At midnight, Mg A—, holding a headlamp for light entered the house and raised the girl's skirt in an attempt to touch her thigh. The girl was awake

and Mg A— told her not to shout out. However, the girl cried, "U A— came into my house," and called for her elderly neighbor.

Mg A— ran away and escaped via the back of the house, leaving his headlamp behind. When the girl cried out, no one except the elderly neighbor appeared as most of the neighbors are Mg A—'s relatives.

The next morning, the girl called her mother and after discussing the incident with her school's principal, they reported the case to the village headman. The village headman did not take action immediately; however, Mg A— was arrested on May 26th 2017 and an investigation was started.

During the investigation, the abuser replied that he knew nothing about the incident because he was intoxicated with drugs.

Mg A— is currently being detained at a nearby base of the New Mon State Party (NMSP).

This is the third incident of sexual violence against children in Mon State and Mon areas of southeast Burma occurring in May 2017 that HURFOM has received. On May 4th, a **16-year-old girl was kidnapped and raped** by a relative and on May 15th a **3-year-old girl was raped** by a 35-year-old male leaving her in critical condition.

Sexual violence toward children in Burma is an increasingly visible and controversial. For a more in-depth discussion of the issue, see HURFOM's March 2017 report, '**Cracks in the Silence: Sexual violence against children and challenges to accessing justice in Mon State and Mon areas of southeast Burma.**'

MON NATIONAL SCHOOLS APPEAL TO MON STATE GOVERNMENT FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT AMID DONOR CRISIS

June 12, 2017

HURFOM: Mon National Schools are facing a funding crisis after their main donor UNICEF ended support, leaving the Mon National Education Department (MNED) having to request funding from the Mon State government, according to an official from the MNED. The MNED is a department under the Mon National Education Committee (MNEC).

"We don't have any donors this year so we can't provide notebooks for the children. We can only provide curriculum [text] books. Due to the lack of donors, we have to request funding from the students' parents if we want to make repairs to the school. They willingly pay the first and second time, but if we frequently make demands, they don't want to pay anymore," said an official from the MNED.

A meeting held by UNICEF in January of this year invited members of the Mon State Parliament, other Mon State government representatives, Mon State Chief Education Officers, and officials from the MNED to discuss the future

of funding for Mon National Schools. UNICEF announced in the meeting that they would not be supporting the Mon National School system during the 2017-18 academic year and requested the Mon State government to take accountability for the sustainable operation of Mon national education.

"The Mon National Education Committee (MNEC) has to submit a proposal to the Mon State government to get funding for the Mon National Schools. In the proposal, the department has requested that the government, like UNICEF, should support school fees and the stationary for Mon National School students," according to Nai Min Aung Zay, a program coordinator in the MNED.

During the 2015-16 and 2016-17 academic years, UNICEF supported each Mon National School with 50 students or fewer with 400,000 kyat (US \$295), each school with more than 50 but fewer than 100 students with 800,000 kyat (US \$590), and each school with 100 and more students with 1,200,000 kyat (US \$885) per academic year.

"The [Mon] State government can't make the decision [alone to fund us] as our schools are Mon National Schools [and under under the management of the MNEC]. So they must report to the Union Government. The Union Government also needs the approval of the President's Office," said Nai Min Aung Zay.

Although the MNED sent their proposal to the Mon State government in February 2017, there has been no reply from the government to date. However, the MNED has met with the Mon State government and the State Chief Education Officer U Myo Tin Aung several times since submitting their proposal.

Mon National Schools have previously received support from the Union Government one time before during the 2014-15 academic year. The Union Government supported the cost of curriculum books and stationary for Mon National School students.

There are 133 Mon National Schools throughout Mon and Karen States, as well as Tenasserim Division. Despite the lack of funding, the 2017-18 Mon National School academic year began June 1, 2017.

News

YE TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS CONCERNED ABOUT PLANNED COAL-FIRED POWER PLANT



June 28, 2017

Concerns are being raised amongst residents of Andin village, Ye Township, Mon State, after reports that Toyo-Thai Public Company Ltd. (TTCL) will renew their plans to build a US\$2.8 billion, 1,280 megawatt coal-fired power plant nearby.

On April 9th 2015, the Ministry of Electricity and Energy and TTCL signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) on its construction under the previous Thein Sein government. However, the project was suspended in early 2016 after strong opposition and protest by local villagers.

"The people are unhappy as the NLD government is trying to build coal-fired power plants. There is more fear amongst the public," said Mi Ni Mar Oo, a member of the Andin Youth Association.

"The residents in the Andin and Kyaikmayaw regions have been showing their opposition to coal-fired power plant projects," said Mon State Chief Minister Dr. Aye Zan in a press conference on June 1st 2017. He added

that, *"if coal-fired power plant projects have been rejected [by locals], there should be no more development."*

Andin village residents in the Parlain region are concerned that the coal-fired power plant would degrade and destroy natural resources, including water resources, aquatic life, as well as contribute to health problems.

"The people in our region rely heavily on the surrounding natural resources. If these resources are destroyed, who will take accountability? [Even] people from central Burma come here and earn their livelihoods from the sea," Mi Seik Son, an activist from Andin village.

According to Mi Ni Mar Oo, the Andin village monastery has hosted a four-day event from June 21-24 which sought to educate villagers about the use of renewable energy sources. Even though there is high usage of solar energy in Andin village, villagers have a limited understanding of how to use solar energy, including how to maintain solar batteries, how to use power inverters, and how to structure electrical wiring.

"Our region has good sunlight. More people will use solar energy [in the future]. The people in this region are very united. The villagers will use more solar energy in order to make [the government] realize that they don't want coal-fired power plants," continued Mi Ni Mar Oo.

While meeting with local media on the issue, the Mon State Chief Minister noted that coal-fired power plants are often used in wealthier countries, such as Thailand, Japan, and the United States. U Min Htin Aung Han, the Mon State Minister for Electricity, Energy, and Industry, added that the clean coal technology used by Mawlamyine Cement Limited (MCL) was not harmful.

However, Mi Seik Son, an Andin activist who has extensively studied coal-fired power plants in Thailand, said, *"I went to Thailand to study [the use of] coal. We also met with the affected population who have suffered [from the consequences of the coal-fired power plants]. Their natural resources have been destroyed. They also lost their marine resources. It has had a huge impact on health. I saw their suffering with my own eyes."*

HURFOM Statement

HURFOM: INTERNATIONAL DAY IN SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF TORTURE

June 26, 2017

Today Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) commemorates International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. HURFOM wishes to express our solidarity with the many survivors of torture around the world.

In doing so we wish to show our concern regarding the ongoing torture of civilians and political prisoners throughout Burma/Myanmar. We are particularly troubled by the reports of violence and the systematic torture and rape of individuals in northern Rakhine State and during the ongoing conflict in northern Kachin and Shan states by Burma/Myanmar army soldiers. In addition, we are deeply disturbed by a recently released video purporting to show Burma/Myanmar soldiers beating six men under interrogation. Furthermore, HURFOM calls for greater attention to the torture and abuse of political prisoners during interrogation and imprisonment, as highlighted by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) and Former Political Prisoners Society (FPPS) in their joint report outlining commonly used physical and psychological torture tactics.

Over the last 23 years, HURFOM has documented the extensive use of torture and sexual violence as a weapon by the Burma/Myanmar army, Burmese police, and administrative figures, as well as by members of Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAO) in Mon State and Mon areas of southeast Burma/Myanmar. HURFOM has collected numerous reports of Burma/Myanmar army soldiers beating villagers, arbitrarily arresting them, and in some cases summarily executing individuals if they were believed to have any connection to an EAO. In addition, HURFOM has extensively reported on the systematic rape and sexual assault of women with impunity by Burma/Myanmar army soldiers, Burmese police, and administrative figures. In one sub-township alone in Mon State, HURFOM has identified 127 cases of rape or sexual assault by soldiers, police officers, and government administrators over a ten-year period. This abuse and exploitation by Burma/Myanmar soldiers and officials has been a driving force for villager displacement and the large populations of ethnic nationalities in IDP or refugee camps along the Thai-Burma/Myanmar border.

It is time for the Burma/Myanmar government to demonstrate its commitment to peace-building and national reconciliation by recognizing past incidents of abuse and torture, immediately stopping further abuses, and ending impunity by bringing perpetrators to justice.

"By looking at the facts and evidence that we have documented, we can say that torture is systemic and a continuation of a long trend of abuse committed by the Burma/Myanmar government army and some administrative units in the country. However, there is still no accountability and rehabilitation services available for the victims or their families.

We call for a reparations policy for victims, the ratification of the Convention Against Torture, plans for prison reform, and the repeal of repressive legislation such as the Unlawful Association Act that target human rights defenders and ethnic minorities."

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We call for a reparations policy for victims, the ratification of the Convention Against Torture, plans for prison reform, and the repeal of repressive legislation such as the Unlawful Association Act that target human rights defenders and ethnic minorities.

Nai Aue Mon, Program Director, HURFOM [Read more on page18>>](#)

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

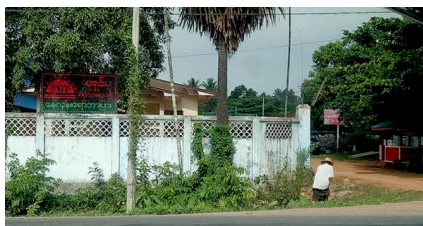
Website: <http://www.rehmonnya.org>

With regards,

Director

Human Rights Foundation of Monland

ODOURS FROM THE FUSHIN RUBBER TRADING CO. LTD. FACTORY IN MUDON SPOILS LOCAL WATER RESOURCES



May 12, 2017

HURFOM: Local water resources are being polluted by waste run-off from a nearby Fushin Rubber Trading Co. Ltd. factory, according to residents in Mudon Oo Ward and eastern Kwan Tarr village in Mudon Township, Mon State.

“A bad smell has been emitting [from the factory] for a long time. Even the people in the ward are familiar with the smell. As the smell is very strong, the water in the wells nearby the factory is getting smelly. The stream water near the company has turned really black. This has been happening for a long, long time. The local people tolerate it as

they're familiar with the smell. But if outsiders come here they suffer from shortness of breath. Even the travelers who use the main [Mudon-Mawlamyine] road have to hold their breath, so you can imagine how badly it smells,” said Nai Ba Lai, a resident from Kwan Tarr village, Mudon Township.

Many locals from Mudon Oo Ward and eastern Kwan Tarr village of Mudon Township have moved into downtown Mudon City as they could no longer tolerate the odour, according to Nai Ba Lai. However, it is unknown how many households have moved.

The Fushin Company had started its work with a small project; however, later it expanded its workload and now its project site has bought enough land that its compound has reached the paddy field near eastern of Kwan Tarr village.

There will be more expansion in the future, which has locals worrying that the company will be based permanently in the area.

“Now, the local people in the ward are starting to make complaints. The company staff have also heard about this. However, the company is very generous and make donations to the local monastery and fund projects to set-up local water supply systems. Therefore, the local people don't hate them too much. Not many people have complained about the bad smell. No one has a plan to make an official complaint,” continued Nai Ba Lai.

Along side with the Fushin Company there is Yone Shin Company, Fu Li Company, Shwe Myanmar Company, and High Win Company in the area and they all have been dumping their waste water into the stream nearby.

From Mudon Oo Ward to Kwan Tarr village, there are five alcohol distillation plants and the travelers who have to use the Mudon-Mawlamyine highway have to hold their breath when they pass that area.

News from page no.16



Human Rights Foundation of Monland

Make Burma a TORTURE FREE ZONE!

International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

June 26, 2017

Recommendations

The Burma/Myanmar government and military must:

- ◆ End all military offensives against ethnic nationalities and immediately cease all activity that leads to human rights abuses, including torture and maltreatment, and withdraw all Burma/Myanmar army troops from these conflict areas;
- ◆ Sign and ratify the International Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) and ensure obligations under the CAT are met in order to prevent further torture and abuse from occurring;
- ◆ End impunity for perpetrators of human rights abuses and establish an accountability system for perpetrators of torture, including an independent judiciary while guaranteeing fundamental human rights consistent with the constitution and with international human rights standards;

- ◆ Enact meaningful reform of the prison and security sector, particularly the police and military;
- ◆ Release all remaining political prisoners without conditions and without delay;
- ◆ The National League for Democracy government must establish a reparations policy which recognizes victims of state-led torture and abuse and must implement rehabilitation programs.

Local community-based organizations and the international community should:

- ◆ Continue to raise awareness of the use and prevalence of torture, using the media and other means;
- ◆ Continue to document the extent of human rights violations committed against individuals and communities.

HURFOM

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