

THE Mon Forum

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MON STUDENTS IN NEED OF EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSITY STUDY



April 19, 2018

According to Mon students from Bop Htaw Education Empowerment Program (BHEEP) —run by the Mon National Education Committee (MNEC) — many struggle to find financial support to continue their studies after graduating.

"After finishing our program, we have to serve with the New Mon State Party (NMSP) for two years. During this time, we're preparing to get into a suitable university. When the university accepts our application, we have to apply for a scholarship program [in order to get funding]," said Mehm Kyae Chan, a Bop Htaw student from Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township, Karen State.

On April 2nd 2018, the MNEC held a graduation ceremony for BHEEP students at the Nai Shwe Kyin Library in Mawlamyine, Mon State.

"We don't know if we will win a scholarship or not. I want to continue my studies, but if I can't get any support for my education it's impossible to continue," said Mi Rai Chai, a student from Yin Yel village, southern Ye Township.

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**HURFOM STATEMENT:
WITHOUT ENDING
TORTURE, IMPLEMENTING
TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE,
THERE CAN BE NO
CHANCE OF NATIONAL
RECONCILIATION**

 Human Rights Foundation of Monland

**International Day In Support of
Victims of Torture**
26 June, 2018



*Without ending torture, implementing transitional justice,
there can be no chance of national reconciliation*

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MON POLITICAL DIALOGUE URGES THE MILITARY AND THE ETHNIC ARMED GROUPS TO COOPERATE IN ELIMINATING DRUGS



May 15, 2018

Representatives from the Mon State National-level Political Dialogue which was held in Ye Township from May 5 to 7, 2018 have urged the military and the ethnic armed organizations (EOs) to cooperate to eliminate drugs.

While the Mon Political Dialogue have not yet reached an accord regarding building a "Federal Union", one of the

major issues on which they came to an agreement was "Social Affairs". During the "Social Affairs" discussion, the representatives agreed to call on the military and the EOs to work together to eliminate drugs.

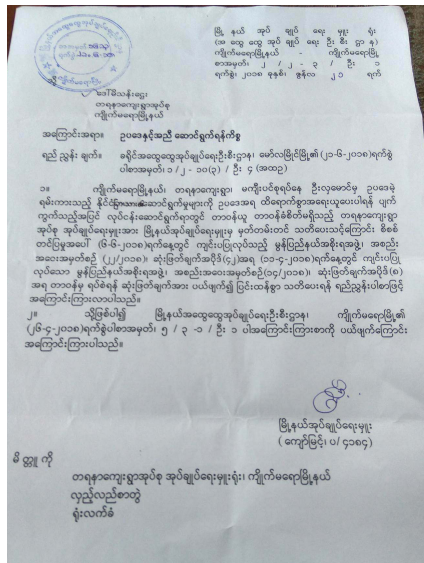
Representatives from the "Social Affairs" discussion group noted that the drugs trade and the use of drugs amongst the youth community in Mon State have dramatically increased recently. Therefore, they agreed, the government military and the EOs urgently need to cooperate to counter these trends.

"We can't wait till we have 'Federal Union'. Too many Mon youths have

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News

FOLLOWING PRESSURE FROM VILLAGERS, MON STATE GOVERNMENT U-TURN ON THEIR DECISION TO DISMISS VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR



June 26, 2018

HURFOM: On June 21st 2018, the Mon State government declared that they had reversed their decision to dismiss Mi Than Htay, also known as Mi Jaloon Htay, of Taranar village, Kyaikmayaw Township, who had been removed from her position as village administrator on April 26th 2018.

According to a villager, local residents lack trust in the Mon State government's decisions.

"They decided to remove Mi Than Htay without any investigation on the ground. I think they're corrupt [biased against her]. This [the Mon State government's U-turn] happened only after I led about 1,500 villagers to sign a petition, and appealed the decision to the Union level," said Nai Kyin, a Taranar resident.

The villagers issued an appeal to the President's Office, the Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives), the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the Mon State

Complaint and Appeal Letter Review and Assessment Committee.

U Kyin continued, *"I want to say that this happened [the Mon State government's U-turn] because of pressure from above. Without pressure from above, they wouldn't have reversed their decision. And there was also a strong effort from the local villagers."*

Mi Than Htay was fired after U Hla Maung, a Taranar resident, reported her for not taking action against U Cho, a US citizen. U Cho was accused of destroying U Hla Maung's fence. Mi Than Htay also failed to notice that U Cho, a foreigner, had stayed in the village for a long time without registering. U Hla Maung further claimed that Mi Than Htay did not take action against U Cho's violent and drunken behavior.

"The Mon State government's letter reversing their decision reached my house on June 21st. I was travelling at the time, so I didn't receive the letter until June 24th. I feel now that the truth has been uncovered. And I'm happy because, thanks to the efforts of the members of parliament and the villagers, I have regained my reputation," said Mi Than Htay.

She added that the letter did not fully satisfy her, as the Mon State government did not admit that their decision to remove her from her position had been wrong. Instead, the letter stated that the government had amended their decision, and reprimanded her for her lack of responsibility.

Mi Than Htay said she has not decided yet whether to resume her position as village administrator, even though the

Mon State government had made the decision on June 6th 2018 to cancel her dismissal.

"I have to listen the voice of the people. I'm satisfied because I have regained my reputation, but I don't want to resume my position. But the people [the villagers] have made a huge effort to help me resume my position. I will let people know that I would like to retire, and if they accept my decision, I will retire. If they want me to resume my position, I will continue my work for the next one and a half years," continued Mi Than Htay.

According to U Myint Than Win, the Chief Director of the Mon State government, more than a thousand villagers signed a petition appealing against Mi Than Htay's dismissal. On June 6th 2018, at the 14th meeting of the Mon State government, the government decided to amend their previous decision, and to reprimand her for her behavior.

"She wasn't re-appointed. We just changed our decision. She has the right to compete in the next village administrator election in accordance with the third edition of the village administrator law. If she wins the election, she can be a villager administrator again," said U Myint Than Win.

Nai Kyin, Taranar resident, told us that Mi Than Htay would certainly win the village administrator election if an election is held.

Mi Than Htay was the first female administrator in Mon State when she was elected in 2015.

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MON STUDENTS IN NEED OF EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSITY STUDY



BHEEP focuses on teacher training and English language skills for young adults from Mon State, followed by a two-year teaching internship. The program often serves as a bridge for students wishing to attend a foreign university.

"After finishing this program, the students have to choose which departments they want to work for during their internship program. For instance, the NMSP have educational, administrative, and other departments. During their internship, the students

have to find a university and financial support for further study. We also support them to find donors and to develop a network for applying to university," said Nai Rot Ka Kao, a central committee member from the NMSP.

Due to financial constraints, the Bop Htaw program only accepted 30 students last year and 24 students have already finished their studies. However, the program has been preparing to accept more students in the coming project year, according to Mi Krat Non, Deputy Chief Education Officer of the MNEC.

BHEEP, formerly known as Post Ten Education Program, was established in 2000 by the MNEC under the policy of the NMSP. The program was renamed in the 2004-05 project year. Previously the program was run in Nyi Sar, a NMSP-controlled area, but now operates in Mawlamyine.

MON POLITICAL DIALOGUE URGES THE MILITARY AND THE ETHNIC ARMED GROUPS TO COOPERATE IN ELIMINATING DRUGS

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become addicted to drugs. We can't control them. The New Mon State Party and the Burma Army should discuss how to cooperate in eliminating drugs. All representatives from the 'Social Affairs' group have already agreed on this point. The government and the armed groups (the military and the EAOs) should take full responsibility for eliminating drugs," said Nai Pa Lon Gata from Ah Nin Village, Thanbyuzayat Township.

On April 2-3, 2018, the Mon Youth Progressive Organization (MYPO) and

the Thanbyuzayat Youth Organization held a conference related to the drugs issue in Thanbyuzayat Town. The conference released a statement urging the Monk community, the Media, the author community, parents, the General Administration Department (GAD), and the rehabilitation departments for drugs users to increase the momentum of the anti-drugs campaign.

According to research carried out by the MYPO in 2017-18, about 73% of Mon

young people had previously used drugs.

In 2013, according to a study by the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), 40% of youths in Ye, 55% of youths in Mudon, 50% of youths in Thanbyuzayat, 30% of youths in Mawlamyine, 35% of youths in Kyaikmayaw, 10% in Paung, 30% in Chaungzone, 40% of youths in Hpa-an, 40% of youths in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi and 45% of youths in Kawkareik had used drugs.

In 2017, the MYPO conducted a study of drugs usage in the Mon youth community. The results showed that 80% of youths in Ye, 78% of youths in Mudon, 77% of youths in Thanbyuzayat, 75% of youths in Mawlamyine, 72% of youths in Kyaikmayaw, 75% of youths in Paung, 65% of youths in Chaungzone, 70% of youths in Hpa-an, 70% of youths in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi and 70% of youths in Kawkareik had used drugs.

HURFOM statement:

HURFOM STATEMENT: WITHOUT ENDING TORTURE, IMPLEMENTING TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE, THERE CAN BE NO CHANCE OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION



June 26, 2018

Today on International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, HURFOM wishes to express solidarity with survivors of torture around the world, as well as draw attention to the serious violations ongoing in Burma.

The military, police, and Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) in Burma have for decades used torture against civilians, in direct violation of international customary law.

The United Nations Convention against Torture, which came into force on this day 31 years ago, has still not been signed by the Burmese government.

HURFOM calls on the government and the military to respect international law, immediately end the use of torture, and to provide justice for victims of torture. The effects of torture go beyond merely the act itself, or the individual. The mental as well as physical trauma can last a lifetime, and the consequences for families and communities can multiply. The government and the international community should therefore also support victim rehabilitation programs, such as AAPP's **Mental Health Assistance Program**.

The time has come to demand justice for victims of human rights violations.

The government and people's desire for national reconciliation cannot progress without acknowledging the wrongs of the past, ensuring justice and redress for victims, and guaranteeing that human rights violations never happen again.

Victims of torture have the right to compensation and rehabilitation. They also deserve and have the right to know the truth. That is why it is so critical to investigate instances of torture, identify the perpetrators, and bring them to justice.

On this International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, HURFOM wants to draw attention to both ongoing and past cases of torture in Mon areas of Burma, and to point to ways forward to end these gross violations.

One of the most important ways by which the ongoing torture of civilians by police and military can be ended is through institutional reform.

The current judicial system perpetuates impunity for perpetrators, by institutionalising a division between civilian, military, and police law. This means that military and police are not subject to civilian courts, and are not held accountable for torture and other violations. Impunity for perpetrators,

which is encoded in the 2008 constitution, as well as being guaranteed in practice through the judicial system, impedes justice for victims of torture.

Following a case of police torture from May 2018, the policeman charged with the crime will be tried under police law. Police Sergeant Thein Hline Oo allegedly tortured two villagers from Paung Township, Mon State. He was charged under three sections of the Penal Code. In June 2018 the same policeman went back to the village and beat up a witness to the first incident. The Police Chief reported that the police sergeant will be **charged under police law**.

Likewise in cases of military torture, the military are charged according to military law. In August 2017, members of Burma Navy Unit #43 **arrested and tortured six marine workers**, resulting in the death of one worker. The naval soldiers arrested and tortured the marine workers despite the workers having the required licenses and recommendation documents for fishing. The five injured workers filed a lawsuit at the Ye City Police Station. Navy officials told them that the legal proceedings would take place in accordance with military or civilian laws.

Impunity for perpetrators, and lack of access to justice, also extends to past instances of torture.

In December 2017 HURFOM published a report **"I Still Remember": Desires for acknowledgement and justice for past human rights violations in Mon areas of southern Burma**.

This report pointed to opportunities for building trust and achieving meaningful national reconciliation for all victims of past violations.

Between 1995 and 2017, HURFOM documented a minimum of 108 incidents of arbitrary arrest, detention, or torture by Burma Army soldiers and EAOs, affecting well over 3,300 individuals. Over 30 Burma Army battalions were implicated in these

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HURFOM statement:

abuses, the majority of which occurred in Ye Township in Mon State and Yebyu Township in Tenasserim Division.

From 1995 until 2017, HURFOM documented over 57 incidents of extrajudicial killings by the Burma Army and EAOs, for a minimum of 190 deaths of villagers. While the majority of victims were male, HURFOM also documented the killing of women as well as children, some as young as ten months old. Over 27 different Burma Army battalions have been implicated in these abuses.

Since 1995, HURFOM documented over 67 separate incidents of sexual violence committed by the Burma Army, affecting over 106 women, children, and men. These incidents ranged from rape, gang rape, sexual slavery, and forced participation in beauty shows. Over 27 Burma Army battalions were implicated.

The entrenched culture of impunity benefitting perpetrators is by far one of the biggest challenges Burma faces in acknowledging and addressing human rights violations.

Reform of the judicial system, and removal of the impunity encoded in the 2008 constitution, are needed in order to abolish impunity for military and police perpetrators.

The Burma Government, military and ethnic EAOs must also acknowledge both ongoing and past violations. Without ending violations, and instituting meaningful mechanisms of transitional justice, 'national reconciliation' will be no more than empty rhetoric, and will not achieve truth and justice for all victims.

Recommendations

HURFOM recommends the Burma government to:

- ☐ Immediately cease all torture and other human rights violations by the military and police.
- ☐ Immediately release all remaining political prisoners.
- ☐ Sign, ratify and implement the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- ☐ Encourage trust building between communities and perpetrators through guarantees of non-repetition, truth-seeking commissions, reparations, compensation, and public apologies.
- ☐ Eliminate impunity for the military and past regimes, ensuring all perpetrators of human rights violations, regardless of rank, are held retroactively accountable for their actions.
- ☐ Eliminate all forms of corruption in administrative and judicial systems and ensure adherence to rule of law.

HURFOM recommends the Burma parliament to:

- ☐ Abolish provisions in the 2008 Constitution which allow amnesty for past actions by members of the military and government.
- ☐ Abolish oppressive laws such as 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law and 17(1) of the Unlawful Associations Act used to condemn and persecute critics of the current administration and military.

HURFOM recommends EAOs to:

- ☐ Immediately cease all human rights violations
- ☐ Eliminate impunity, ensuring all perpetrators of human rights violations, regardless of rank, are held accountable for their actions.
- ☐ Publicly acknowledge responsibility and publicly apologize for participation in past human rights violations.
- ☐ Facilitate the safe, voluntary return of IDPs and refugees.

HURFOM recommends the International Community to:

- ☐ Continue to pressure the Burma government to acknowledge and address past human rights violations and cease all ongoing human rights violations.
- ☐ Pressure the Burma government to enact truth-seeking processes and reparation policies.
- ☐ Continue to support IDP and refugee communities until they voluntarily repatriate.

News

LOCALS WORRY ABOUT DAMAGE TO THEIR PLANTATIONS AS MON STATE GOVERNMENT GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO TREASURE HUNTERS



June 15, 2018

HURFOM: Just weeks after Thanbyuzayat Township General Administration Department forced **Golden Geo Myanmar Co. Ltd. to halt illegal excavations** on the same site, on April 22nd 2018, the Mon State government officially granted permission to the Royal Eagle Myanmar Development Group Co. Ltd to excavate fabled caches of buried gold and other valuables said to have been left by retreating Japanese troops during World War II. The company has been given three months to excavate at Mount Mane Mala (Samane Blai) at the western edge of Thanbyuzayat Town, Mon State. The excavations have local residents worried about the potential damage to their plantations, as well as about the possibility of the company accidentally uncovering and detonating old Japanese cluster bombs.

Neither the government nor the company asked for the consent of the local farmers or plantation owners before undertaking the excavation project. Local residents are not satisfied with the project.

"We've worried that they haven't specified an exact place to excavate treasures and that they've just randomly dug everywhere. If they dig at random, there will be landslides and damage to our plantations. Because of how deep they've dug into the earth,

they're going to cut the main roots of the plants in our plantations.

"We totally rely on durian, betel nut, and rubber plants for our livelihoods. Our plantations are our lives. We're worried that our plantations will be damaged. They never informed us about the excavations and we don't know what they are searching for.

"Moreover, according to our great-grandparents, the Japanese troops also buried a cluster of explosives when they buried the treasure. If one bomb explodes then all the bombs will explode as they all are in a series. We have nothing to say about their project but we're worried about the damage this could cause to our plantations," said Nai Will, a resident of Pa Nga village whose plantation is near Mount Mane Mala (Samane Blai).

The excavation site is about one acre and has been fenced off with galvanized iron sheets. No one has been allowed to enter the site.

"My plantation is close to the project site. Our livelihoods rely on our plantation. We don't have anything else. We don't know if they've excavated in our plantations or not. If they do excavate in our plantations, we'll have to suffer the loss. We're worried about landslides and possible damage to our plantations," said Nai Tun Shin, a farmer from Pa Nga village whose plantation is near Mount Mane Mala (Samane Blai).

The locals have been planning to sign a petition against the company and file a report to the Mon State government. Most of the plantations near the project site are rubber, betel nut, durian and other fruit plantations.

Since the Royal Eagle Myanmar Development Group Co. Ltd was granted permission by the Mon State government on April 22nd they have been excavating at night.

According to the Mon State Chief Minister, Dr Aye Zan, the company has also got permission from the Union Parliament, and from the Department of Archaeology and the National Museum. The Mon State government has agreed to provide security to the company during the project period.



News

MON YOUTH AND DRUG FORUM RELEASES 6-POINT PLAN TO COMBAT DRUG USE AMONG TEENS

April 20, 2018

A youth and drug forum was held April 2–3, 2018, in Kwan That village, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State. The forum welcomed 153 youth participants and was organized by the Mon Youth Progressive Organization (MYPO) and several local youth groups.

The forum concluded with the release of a six-point plan to raise awareness among young people in Mon communities about the dangers of drug use. The six action points included: 1) provide education on drugs through dharma talks by monks; 2) encourage the media to increase their coverage of the drug problem to raise awareness; 3) encourage ongoing education on the impact of drug use through village administrators and parents; 4) encourage civil society organizations to actively promote anti-drug campaigns in their regions; 5) establish a drug prevention and eradication group in Mon communities; and 6) encourage musicians and artists to incorporate anti-drug messages into their work.

“The participants from the forum recommended establishing a drug prevention and eradication group in Mon communities. We agreed to collaborate with other civil society and local youth organizations to implement our program in various Mon populated areas. For MYPO, we have the results of our survey on [youth] drug use [in Mon communities] and we plan to meet with locals to explain our findings,” said Mi Rot Chan, chairman of MYPO.

According to research conducted by MYPO in 2017, the proportion of youth in Mon populated areas who have experimented with illicit drugs is estimated to be: 80% in Ye Township; 78% in Mudon Township; 77% in Thanbyuzayat Township; 75% in Mawlamyine Township; 72% in Kyaikmayaw Township; 75% in Paung Township; 70% in Bar Ann Township; 70% in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township; and 70% in Kawkaireik Township.

The Human Rights Foundation of Monland’s (HURFOM) own research conducted in 2013 concluded that the approximate rates of youth in these

areas experimenting with drugs was significantly lower: 40% in Ye Township; 55% in Mudon Township; 50% in Thanbyuzayat Township; 30% in Mawlamyine Township; 35% in Kyaikmayaw Township; 10% in Paung Township; 30% in Chaungzone Township; 40% in Bar Ann Township; 40% in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township; and 45% in Kawkaireik Township.

However, while MYPO figures seem high, they echo estimated rates of drug use reported by village administrators and youths in these areas during HURFOM’s field research.

Mon populated areas of southeast Burma have seen rates of drug use rapidly increase over the past several decades, in part due to the widespread availability of narcotics and lack of a coordinated response by the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Burma government authorities. Recently, activists have **pointed** to police corruption and inaction over high-level drug traffickers as primary drivers of the drug problem in Mon communities.



News

DISAGREEMENT OVER REPRESENTATION PREVENTING NMSP FROM JOINING MON STATE CEASEFIRE MONITORING COMMITTEE



April 21, 2018

The New Mon State Party (NMSP) have yet to join the Mon State Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC-S) due to a disagreement over NMSP representation in the Karen State and Tenasserim Division monitoring committees, according to an April 9th statement by NMSP Chairman Nai Htaw Mon.

"The NMSP signed the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) to solve political problems in our country. Regarding the Union Level Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee (JMC-U), we've already appointed our representative. But we haven't taken any post in the [Mon State] JMC-S, as the government has not allowed us to join the state committees in both Karen State and Tenasserim Division. [We should be able to join], because we still have military bases in Karen and

Tenasserim regions," said Nai Htaw Mon.

On February 13th 2018, the NMSP signed the NCA, after which they planned to join the Mon State JMC-S in order to organize national-level political dialogues and to participate in the union-level monitoring committee.

Currently, the Mon State JMC-S is comprised of 14 members: five from the Karen National Union (KNU), five representing the military, government, and parliament; and 4 civilians. According to officials from the NMSP, since the KNU has representatives in the Mon State JMC-S, the NMSP should also have representatives in the state-level monitoring committees in both Karen State and Tenasserim Division.

"We haven't had a clear message on who can be involved in JMC-S meetings. So the NMSP has challenges in participating in JMC-S meetings [in

regions where they have military bases]," said Nai Ong Ma Ngay, a central member of the Committee for Organizing Mon Political Dialogue.

The refusal to let the NMSP join state-level monitoring committees in Karen and Tenasserim regions has only added to worries about the peace process.

"We've been worried that there will be difficulties after signing [the NCA]. In order to avoid difficulties, we've already talked with union-level leaders. After signing [the NCA], what we are seeing is that our public consultation meetings have been blocked and there are problems with our involvement in JMC-S meetings," said Nai Htaw Mon.

Last month it was **reported** that Burma Army Southeast Military Command had ordered the NMSP to limit the number of participants in forums planned to discuss the recently signed NCA with Mon citizens.

News

LOCAL FARMERS UPSET WITH LACK OF COMPENSATION FOR LAND USE IN ELECTRICITY PROJECT

May 4, 2018

Farmers in three townships in Mon State are upset with Khin Maung Nyunt Co. Ltd. after the company failed to pay compensation for using their land. Approximately 21 local farmers in eight villages in Mawlamyine, Thanbyuzayat, and Kyaikmayaw townships are owed compensation from the electricity-providing company, who has been planning to provide 24-hour electricity in nearby villages.

The company installed 66 kV utility poles in paddy farms and promised they would provide compensation for using the farmland.

"They said compensation would be paid so we've been waiting. But as time has passed and the rainy season came, they had to stop their work [and have not paid]," said Nai Jee, a farmer from Kaw Pee Htaw village, Mudon Township.

The utility poles were installed in 2017, and farmers have requested that the electrical engineers, who came to setup the electric cables, help them with meeting officials from the company.

"In the first week of March, U Nyo Win—an official from the company—came to the village to meet with the farmers. When the farmers asked for the compensation, he said, 'the state government hasn't allowed us to pay compensation as the project is for the local development of Mon State. So, we won't pay compensation. You can file a report with the union government to complain about compensation,'" said Daw Myat Mon, a representative of the farmers in Kalogtaw village, Mudon Township.

One or two utility poles have been installed in each plot of farmland, and the poles have been disturbing farmers' work.

"The base of the utility poles is made up of concrete. When ploughing with tractors, it is difficult to turn around. We can't move freely and have to be careful in those places. We have to leave out 3-sq-ft of land per farmland plot. So it's a huge loss for the farmers who don't possess too many acres of land. This loss will last forever," said Daw Myat Mon.

Regarding the loss, local farmers filed a report with the Mon State Chief Minister, relevant ministries, lawmakers from Parliament, and the General Administration Department (GAD) on March 21st 2018. However, they have yet to receive a reply.

Similarly, another 24-hour electricity project in northern Ye has started. Local farmers there asked for compensation and officials from the company met with them and explained why they should not pay compensation for the project.

"They can't plough only within 2-sq-ft of land. That amount of land can produce only half a can of condensed milk. If we have to pay compensation for those small losses, no one can invest [in Mon State]," said an official from the 24-hour electricity project in northern Ye.

According to an official from the company, the Mon State Chief Minister told them that the state government would take responsibility when farmers asked for compensation.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN MON STATE UP 42% IN 2017

May 1, 2018

WCRP: Reported cases of sexual violence against children in Mon State rose by 42% in 2017, according to statistics from the Mawlamyine Police Station. This follows a trend seen around many parts of Burma, leading to widespread media coverage and public outrage. The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) itself saw an 83% increase in the number of reported cases received in the last 12 months, as well as an 11-fold increase over the last five years.

"Cases of child rape are currently increasing...We have a network in local communities and they inform and send us cases on child sexual abuse. These days we receive child rape cases very often. From December [2017] to April 2018, we received about 20 rape cases and half of those involved children," said Daw Khin Than Htwe, from the Mon

Women and Children Upgrade Committee (MWCUC).

Sexual violence against children in Burma has become an increasingly visible and controversial issue over the last several years. Just over a year ago, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) released **Cracks in the Silence**, which explored the significant increase in the number of reported cases of sexual violence against children in Mon State, and the challenges to accessing justice in Burma's complex pluralistic legal system.

The report followed a surge in the number of reported cases of sexual violence against children in Burma, with official police statistics noting cases of such violence rising from 43% to 61% of all reported rapes in Burma. This upward trend only continued

throughout 2017, according to statistics released in February by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

However, it is likely that the number of actual cases is much higher than reported, as traditional beliefs and the surrounding stigma of sexual violence lead many to remain silent. This is also compounded by the lack of faith in formal legal systems among ethnic minorities, leading to a reliance on customary law at the village level.

"The biggest challenge is village administrators using customary law to solve rape cases in villages. For example, we have heard of rape cases in villages where the village administrator asks the victim to agree to marry the perpetrator, and if both of them agree, they sign a marriage certificate and the case is finished. Sometimes, they negotiate with both sides and finish the case through compensation," continued Daw Khin Than Htwe.

News

LOCALS CALL FOR THE SHUTDOWN OF ANTIMONY FACTORIES IN MON STATE IF THE GOVERNMENT FAILS TO CONTROL THE FACTORIES' AIR POLLUTION



May 15, 2018

HURFOM: On May 4, 2018, local people from Mawlamyine, Mon State called for the government to shut down Myanmar Shin Shin Antimony Purifying Factory and Myanmar San Zaw Antimony Purifying Factory in the Industrial Zone of Nyaung Pin Seik Ward, Mawlamyine, citing the factories' air pollution.

At a consultation meeting with members of Mon State government, officials from government departments and the above-mentioned companies on May 4, local representatives said that the government should shut down the factories if they could not control the bad smell the factories emitted.

Local people explained that the factories have been using coal-fired energy to purify low-quality antimony.

"We've accepted that there are varieties of bad smells in the industrial zone. We can tolerate smell from the other factories but the smell emitted from the antimony factories is worse. Even the children can't tolerate it. We have to run away (from the smell). So we request (the government) to stop or control the bad smell. If they can't control it, we demand that they shut down the factories," said U Thant Zin, a local resident.

Locals told us that the smells emitted from the factories are like rotten eggs or acid burning. Moreover, particles

emitted from the factories have also dropped into water wells and pools and locals have been worried that the particles would harm their health.

"The smells are really bad. If we inhale too much, it causes tachycardia and nausea. It dries our mouth and we feel thirsty, headaches and dizziness. After inhaling the smell, we want to do nothing (feel exhausted). We can't tolerate the smell. I want them to shut down the factories," said Daw Myint Myint Aye, a local resident.

An official from Myanmar Shin Shin Antimony Purifying Factory responded, "There are lots of factories in this industrial zone and varieties of smells have been emitted from them. If the locals think the smell is emitted from our factory, we invite them to come to our factory and have a look. They can also call us and ask questions. We are ready to explain. We always try to get better results. I think we should check the air quality around every single factory. To know exactly which factory emits the bad smell, the other factories must be closed when checking our factory."

"We would like to control the bad smell rather than shut down the factories. The factories should be closed for a while to correct the bad smells. If there is no bad smell after correction, it doesn't matter if (the government) allows the factories to operate forever.

The main point is (to control) the smell. We don't want to destroy their profit and we don't want to deduct from the tax receipts of our country. We just want to solve the people's problem," said U Bo Bo Win from "Bo Bo Win Rescue Team".

All businesses must be run in accordance with the law, and businesses that do not follow the rules and regulations must be punished, said Dr Min Kyi Win, the Mon State Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

"The people use their voices and point out what should be done. We also have principles and policies. The particular government departments have to file reports. But shutting down the factories is the last resort," said Dr Min Kyi Win.

Air quality meters have shown different results. Sometimes the air quality was above the safe limit for air pollution and sometimes it stayed below the limit, according to U Soe Nyne, the Deputy Director of the Director Office of Mawlamyine District Environmental Conservation Department.

"We've measured the smoke emitted from the chimneys of the factories. After the smoke has dissolved into the atmosphere, the meter shows different results. Some measurements indicate the air condition is above the limit. Iron melting factories in the industrial zone have used coal-fired energy. Sometimes, there were smells of burning chilly, rubber and curry powder. We shouldn't target only the big business. We must be fair. We must take every single condition into account," said U Soe Nyne.

"In the past [under the previous government], shutting down and re-opening the factories had happened alternately. Local people had felt faint after inhaling excess amount of bad smells and the factories had been closed. But after the new government came into power, they've temporarily allowed the factories to operate again and the locals have again been suffering the effects," said U Zaw Zaw Han.

News

WITNESS TO POLICE TORTURE CASE BEATEN AND THREATENED BY POLICE IN PAUNG TOWNSHIP

June 15, 2018

HURFOM: On May 21st 2018, Police Sergeant Thein Hline Oo and Police Private Shine Htet Aung, from Yin Nyein Police Station, **tortured two villagers from Kyauk Ye Twin village**, Paung Township, Mon State. Police Sergeant Thein Hline Oo has been charged under three sections of the Penal Code. On June 10th at around 4pm, Sergeant Thein Hline Oo was found back in the same village beating another villager, as he was reportedly angry with having been charged for the first beating.

The victim of the second beating, U Aung Kyi, is the uncle of U Maung Kyi, the man who was beaten on May 21st.

"While I was drunk and sleeping in my cousin's house, Police Sergeant Thein Hline Oo came into the house and woke me up. He asked me if I was U Maung Kyi or U Aung Kyi. I said I was U Aung Kyi. Out of nowhere, he punched me twice on the nose, and my nose and lip started bleeding," said one of the victims, U Aung Kyi.

A witness to the event, Daw Zar Htay, explained that, *"I didn't see the police sergeant come into the house. When I heard voices, I saw that U Aung Kyi was sleeping there. The police started asking about the owner of the house. U Aung Kyi got up and said that the house owner wasn't home, and then went back to sleep. The police said, 'who do you think I am? I'm the police.' And then the policeman said to U Aung Kyi, 'are you a man or a woman? If you're a woman you should wear a female longyi.' And then he hit U Aung Kyi."* Daw Zar Htay added that, after the

police sergeant beat U Aung Kyi, he also swore at U Sein Aung, the chairman of Kyauk Ye Twin branch of the National League for Democracy (NLD), who has been helping U Maung Gyi with the case.

According to the victim's neighbor, Daw Mar Aye, , it isn't possible that the policeman beat up the wrong person, as U Maung Kyi and U Aung Kyi's body structures are very different. The villagers think the policeman beat U Maung Kyi because he is a relative of the victim. Moreover, Daw Mar Aye saw the police sergeant in Kyauk Ye Twin village two days before he beat U Aung Kyi. *"The police also came round and looked at my house after the first beating. I locked the house and he didn't see me. Then he went to U Khin Win's house and threatened them, saying he would kill Maung Kyi, Khin Win and 'those ladies' before he was sent to prison."*

Police Sergeant Thein Hline Oo has reportedly visited Kyauk Ye Twin village frequently and has been threatening witnesses who will give evidence in the U Maung Kyi case.

"Right now I don't dare to sleep in my own house. I take my child and we sleep at friends' houses. I feel safe during the day time, but at night, especially when the rain is loud, I don't dare to sleep at home. I am worried that the police will come and do something to me. I'm afraid of him and I don't feel safe," said witness, Daw Mar Aye.

Two days after the incident, on June 12th at around 5pm, the Chief of the Yin Nyein Police Station came to U Aung

Kyi's house. He said he had nothing to say regarding the case, and if U Aung Kyi wanted to file a lawsuit against Police Sergeant Thein Hline Oo for torturing him, he just had to come to Paung Police Station.

U Sein Aung, the chairman of Kyauk Ye Twin NLD branch, explained that, *"I asked the Chief of the Police Station about the detaining of the police sergeant. The Chief told me that they had detained the sergeant in Paung police station. Then he told me that he did not know about the current incident as the perpetrator was detained in Paung, not Yin Nyein, police station. If the perpetrator, police sergeant Thein Hline Oo, was detained under house arrest by Paung police station, he could not have gone to Kyauk Ye Twin village and tortured the villager again. There is no rule of law; nobody has taken action on this case,"* said U Sein Aung.

U Maung Gyi filed a lawsuit at Paung police station against Police Sergeant Thein Hline Oo and Police Private Shine Htet Aung for torturing him on May 21st. The chief from Paung police station, U Tun Kyaw Oo, said, *"The police sergeant will be charged under police law. We don't know for sure yet about the new case of torturing the villager. A tribunal has been formed to charge him for the previous incident of torturing a villager on May 21st."*

Regarding this most recent case, U Aung Kyi filed a lawsuit at Paung Police Station against Police Sergeant Thein Hline Oo for torturing him on June 13th.

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News from page no.10

On November 11, 2017, Myanmar San Zaw Company Ltd., asked the government for permission to re-open their antimony-purifying factory as a pilot project and on December 7, 2017, the Mon State government granted permission for the factory to be re-opened under the supervision of the Mon State Environmental Conservation Department.

Similarly, Myanmar Shin Shin Company Ltd., also got permission to re-open their factory, according to the Director Office of the Mon State Environmental Conservation Department.

"Even if they just re-open their factories as a pilot project, we have to undergo too much suffering. If they got permission to operate permanently, we would rather die first," said local resident U Hla Kyi.

U Soe Nyne, the Deputy Director of Mawlamyine District Environmental Conservation Department, said the government plans to use air quality meters to measure the smoke emitted from the factories' chimneys. Dr Min Kyi Win said that after cooperating with particular departments of the Mon State government, these problems would be filed to the Union Government.

News

DEFENSE SECURITY AGENCY CONTINUES TO SURVEIL CIVILIANS



May 15, 2018

The Defense Security Agency, a special intelligence service formed by the Myanmar military, continues to collect information related to civic activities, according to the organizing committee of the 22nd Honorable Ceremony for the late President of the Mon People's Front (MPF).

The 22nd Honorable Ceremony for the late President of the Mon People's Front – MPF Nai Aung Tun – was organized by the Mon Literature and Culture Committee, Pa Nga Village, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State. The ceremony was held on April 29, 2018 in front of the Nai Aung Tun Statue at the Kyne Dee Pagoda in Pa Nga Village.

"Two members of Sa Ya Pha (the Defense Security Agency) came to the ceremony. They've been making inquiries just like they did under the previous military government. They asked for the names of the high officials who joined the ceremony. And they also wanted to know which party they belonged to. They especially wanted to know who was from the New Mon State Party. They also recorded who gave the

speech. They're acting just like they have done in the past," said Nai Thein Tun, the Joint Secretary of the Pa Nga Mon Literature and Culture Committee.

Even though Myanmar has had two consecutive civilian governments, when organizing a public event or ceremony today it is still necessary to inform the Defense Security Agency about the event.

"In our country today, it is like there are two governments. When organizing an event, we have to report to the General Administration Department – GAD. That's all we have to do with the administrative body. But the military and the police also came themselves to collect information. If they (the military and the police) collect information in this way, civilians will be afraid. We can't organize the event freely and we also don't have freedom of expression," said Nai Thein Tun.

The Pa Nga Mon Literature and Culture Committee holds the Honorable Ceremony for the late President of the Mon People's Front – MPF Nai Aung Tun – every April 29 and former members of the MPF are always invited to the ceremony.

"In fact, they can get the information from us – the organizing committee. We're ready to give them the information. This time, they asked us nothing but made inquiries and took photos at the event. It looked like they were trying to intimidate everyone there," continued Nai Thein Tun.

Officials from the New Mon State Party, the Mon National Party and Community Based Organizations from Thanbyuzayat Township, as well as former members of the Mon People's Front, joined the ceremony.

The President, Nai Aung Tun, passed away in Mawlamyine on April 29, 1970.

In fact, they can get the information from us – the organizing committee. We're ready to give them the information. This time, they asked us nothing but made inquiries and took photos at the event. It looked like they were trying to intimidate everyone there,

News

PARENTS STRUGGLING TO PAY FOR EXTRA CLASSES NEEDED TO GRADUATE



May 17, 2018

WCRP: Even before the start of the new school year, middle school and high school students in Mon State start their “tutoring” classes—fee-based extra study sessions before and after their regular classes. Such “cram schools” are common throughout Burma, where school teachers or people from outside the school system charge a fee to teach the same lessons taught during class time.

A teacher who also works as a private tutor in Thanbyuzayat Township explained that, “Every student pays for private classes – even students in first or second grade. But the students who study in sixth (Standard 5), seventh (Standard 6), eighth (Standard 7), ninth (Standard 8), and tenth grade (Standard 9) are taking extra tuition before their school year even starts. Some students stay at home if their private classes are not far from their house but some students are forced to live at their teacher’s house and access regular tuition there. Alternatively if students

have relatives in the town where they take tuition then they live with their relatives.”

Most parents want their children to study in private “cram schools” or take extra tuition classes in order for them to pass their exams. Therefore, parents have to find a place for their children before the start of the school year, even if they have to spend a lot of money to cover the extra cost.

Daw Moe Khine, a Mudon Township parent said, “My child’s teacher has not even told us the cost of the tuition fee yet. The teacher will start negotiating later. In addition, for the eighth grade (Standard 7) and ninth grade (Standard 8) students who live at their teacher’s house, they need to pay annually 1,200,000 kyat (\$898.89) to 1,500,000 kyat (\$1,123.61), including food costs. And if you want to live and study at the famous private school hostels where students get the best scores, you need to pay about 3,000,000 kyat (\$2,247.23) per year.”

Before the school year even starts many parents face difficulties in covering the cost of tuition fees. This is fine for the parents who have money to spend. For the parents who cannot afford the fees, this is unfortunately reflected in their children’s test results.

“My child is trying really hard in his studies but in this education system you can’t pass exams without taking extra instruction. We couldn’t afford the 1,000,000 kyat (\$749.07) or 2,000,000 kyat (\$1,498.16) per year for the fee. My child is in ninth grade and I have no money to support him to join tenth grade. I’m really sorry about that,” said the parents of a student from Pa Nga village, Thanbyuzayat Township.

All the students in Mon State have to rely on these extra study sessions before and after regular classes. What they study in the class room is very general and both students and parents know they need to take extra tuition to pass their exams. The students have no time to rest, and the parents are forced to worry about the cost.

News

FARMERS SUFFER AS ELECTRICITY COMPANIES FIGHT IT OUT FOR POWER MARKET



May 28, 2018

HURFOM: On May 22nd 2018, according to a local farmer, farmers from villages in northern Ye Township, Mon State, plan to petition the Mon State Parliament to remove utility poles from their farmland, which were installed by Bedok Construction & Engineering Co. Ltd. (BCE).

"They installed some poles in the middle of our farmland and some at the boundaries, all without our consent. That's why we are planning to file a complaint," one local farmer said.

In November 2017, the Mon State government granted Southeast General Energy and Power Co. Ltd. (SEGEP) permission to provide electricity to

southern Ye Township. At the same time they **granted BCE permission** to provide electricity to northern Ye Township.

"We've asked Member of Parliament Nai Soi Ha to advise us. I think they are erecting between 30 to 50 utility poles.



Perhaps even up to 80. Some farmers have had to accept two poles and some have had to accept five. The laying of the foundations for the poles has interrupted our ploughing. We can't farm any more. They didn't inform us before installing the poles. We, the farmers, are not satisfied. So we're planning to file a report to Nai Soi Ha, a Mon State Member of Parliament in the Amyotha Hluttaw (House of Nationalities)."

In Taung Pyin village, northern Ye Township, SEGEP and BCE have both installed utility poles. There is currently a conflict between the two companies.

"In our region, only BCE was granted permission to provide electricity. But now SEGEP has also installed their own poles. It's complicated," said Nai Oak Sar, a member of the Negotiation Committee for Electricity in Taung Pyin Village.

On May 11th 2018, the Taung Pyin Village Administrator instructed SEGEP to remove their utility poles, since BCE planned to begin rolling out electricity provision starting May 20th.

"SEGEP still haven't removed their utility poles, even after the May 20th deadline. So we're notifying them that we are going to remove the poles ourselves. We can't get electricity if the SEGEP poles are there. We'll inform SEGEP by letter before we remove the poles," Nai Oak Sar said.

Households in northern Ye Township have to pay 285 kyat (US \$0.21) per unit for electricity. The price fluctuates within 20% according to the price of

News

FAMILY LEARNS OF DAUGHTER'S RAPE BY MONK OVER SOCIAL MEDIA

May 18, 2018

In August 2017, a 46-year-old monk who was teaching at a Mon Literature summer school in Lawka Thukha Monastery in Kwan Hlar village, Mudon Township in Mon State, repeatedly raped a nine-year-old student who was studying at the school. The monk's nephew saw his uncle, the monk, rape the girl and he made a video recording which he shared with his friends.

The girl's grandmother explained that, *"she was raped about ten months ago, but the video started spreading among the children in April. I heard some people say that the girl in the video was my granddaughter. On April 19th, I got some children to show me the video and I saw that the girl was my granddaughter."*

According to a relative of the girl, the video clip had spread on social media. Apparently after the incident the

perpetrator fled from the village. The relative added that, *"according to the video clip the monk committed the rape systematically. There were five students in the monastery. The monk put on a movie for the others to watch to distract them. Then the monk covered the girl with his robes and raped her. She was raped twice by that monk."*

After the grandmother saw the video clip, she reported the incident to a monk from Pinekamar village monastery, who is also the chairman of Mudon Township Monk Association. On May 15th 2018, the township Monk Association, the township administrator, the police, and the monks held a meeting to discuss the case.

"This incident has caused a lot of damage to the Buddha. At the meeting, we decided that he cannot be a monk anymore. We haven't found him yet. We asked village administrators and police

to investigate and help us find him. They will inform us if they have any news about the perpetrator," said the chairman of the Mudon Township Monk Association.

The girl's grandmother explained, *"a girl's life was destroyed. Even if she gets 10 million or 20 million kyat (US \$7412.87 or \$14,825.75) as compensation that cannot make her life any better. We will only be satisfied if the perpetrator is punished for his crime. My granddaughter was not the only girl to be sexually abused by that monk; another girl from the village was also abused by him but no one dares to talk about it as they don't have evidence."*

U Myo, a relative of the girl, stated, *"We can't ask her about the incident because she starts crying as soon as we start talking about it. She won't answer our questions about it. She seems fine and plays with her friends so long as no one asks her about the rape. She never told us what happened. Before the rape she was fine, but it looks like she has been mentally scarred by what happened."*

LOCALS UPSET WITH INDISCRIMINATE TAXING OF VEHICLES ON THANBYUZAYAT-YE HIGHWAY IN MON STATE

April 4, 2018

HURFOM: Villagers in Ye Township, Mon State are crying foul over an entrance tax to Lamine Town that indiscriminately taxes travelers along the Thanbyuzayat-Ye Highway. The Lamine Sub-Township Municipal Department erected the toll gate at the Mawkanin village junction along the highway, however travelers who pass straight through and do not exit the highway at the junction toward Lamine Town are still forced to pay the fee.

"The municipality said the gate is there to collect tax on vehicles that go to [Lamine] Town. Lamine Town is situated to the west of Mawkanin village. The gate should be inside or outside Mawkanin along the road to Lamine. Instead they've installed the gate at the entrance to Mawkanin on the highway so the ones who want to use the Thanbyuzayat Highway also have to pay the tax. The ones who go to Ye also have to pay the tax even though they don't pass through Lamine Town. So it's not

logical," said Nai Tar Oo, a Mawkanin village resident.

Locals angry about the gate say they have submitted several reports to Dr. Min Kyi Win, the Mon State Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, but no changes in the situation have occurred.

Responding to the public outrage, Dr. Min Kyi Win addressed the issue in parliament, saying, *"Lamine is not on the Thanbyuzayat-Ye Highway ...so the Lamine Municipality should not collect tax at the entrance of Mawkanin village."* Dr. Min Kyi Win added that local members of parliament have attempted to negotiate with the [Lamine Municipal] Department to move the gate closer to Lamine Town, however those efforts have been unsuccessful.

According to U Min Kyaw Lwin, the Mon State Minister for Construction and Municipal Affairs, the government has no plans to order the removal of the

gate, saying *"municipal departments are legally allowed to collect tax on vehicles that use roads in their municipal zones."* He added, since Mawkanin village is within their municipal area, the Lamine Municipality has fair game to collect tax.

Unsatisfied with the outcome in parliament, locals admit they are not sure what to do next, except express frustration over the unwillingness of parliament to listen to local voices.

"We've filed a report with authorities, but there has been no improvement. We've also informed the [Mon State] Parliament, but again nothing has changed. It is absolute nonsense," said Nai Tar Oo.

Vehicles passing through the gate are taxed progressively according to size, with large trucks paying 500 kyat, middle-sized trucks paying 300 kyat, and small vehicles paying 200 kyat.

After the National League for Democracy (NLD) came to power, villagers in Mon State have reported a proliferation of 'town entrance fees' instituted by local municipalities.

News

VILLAGER TORTURED BY POLICE REFUSES HUSH MONEY; FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST POLICE

June 7, 2018

HURFOM: On May 21st 2018, Police Sergeant Thein Hline Oo and Police Private Shine Htet Aung, from Yin Nyein Police Station, tortured two villagers from Kyauk Ye Twin village, Paung Township, Mon State. On May 23rd the Chief of the Police Station and the Village Administrator came to the victims asking them to accept compensation and cover up the case, according to U Maung Gyi, one of the torture victims.

"On May 23rd, the Chief of the Police Station, the Village Administrator, and a Surveillance Officer came to the hospital where I had been admitted and talked to me about money [compensation]. They asked me to forget what had happened, and told me they would give me what I want [medical fees and compensation for missed work]. I replied that I didn't want anything but justice. I didn't want the money. I'm the victim. I knew how much I was beaten. But they kept talking about money [compensation]. I didn't accept it," said U Maung Gyi.

On May 21st three villagers from Kyauk Ye Twin Village – Phoe Tuu, U Maung Gyi and U Khin Win – went to a hill to pick wild mangosteens. As they started for home, they saw two policemen and a villager coming up the hill on motorbikes. Phoe Tuu ran away upon seeing the police, but U Maung Gyi and U Khin Win just continued what they were doing. After they finished picking the wild mangosteens, they walked back to the village and talked with their friend U Aung Gyi at Daw Cho's house.

On seeing two policemen come into the house, U Kin Win and U Aung Gyi left to avoid them. But U Maung Gyi stayed where he was.

"One of my legs was hurt, and I hadn't done anything wrong, so I stayed sitting down. They came into the house and ordered me to give them my chopping knife. As I earn my livelihood with the

knife, I told them I couldn't give it to them. They yelled at me, 'What are you?' and 'Why won't you give us what we ask for?' After that they beat me with a stick, and punched and kicked me. I shouted out, 'I did nothing wrong. Please don't beat me.' But they beat me like an animal. I fell and rolled over on the ground as they kept on beating me," said U Maung Gyi.

Similarly, Phoe Tuu was beaten by the same two police officials at his elder sister Ma Su's house on May 21st.

"Phoe Tuu's elder sister Ma Su asked the Village Administrator to call the police to give her brother a lesson. This wasn't the first time but the third time as far as I know. The case is complicated as Phoe Tuu accompanied U Maung Gyi to collect wild mangosteens this time," said a local source.

"Phoe Tuu's elder sister and her husband reported to me three or four times that Phoe Tuu was drunk and behaving violently. I couldn't control him so I contacted the police to control him. But that day I wasn't in the village as I was travelling to Paung (Town). I didn't know what they had done. Later, I found out that U Maung Gyi had been tortured and admitted to the hospital. They didn't file a report about Phoe Tuu's case as his own elder sister had asked the police to control him," said U Win Kyine, the Administrator of Kyauk Ye Twin village.

U Win Kyine said he had tried to negotiate with U Maung Gyi to settle the problem without filing a lawsuit, however, U Maung Gyi rejected this attempt.

Moreover, on May 22nd and 23rd, the Chief of the Yin Nyein Police Station and Police Sergeant Thein Hline Oo came to U Sein Aung, the chairman of Kyauk Ye Twin National League for Democracy (NLD), who has been helping U Maung Gyi. The police asked U Sein Aung to persuade U Maung Gyi not to file a lawsuit against them.

"The Surveillance Police (Police Sergeant Thein Hline Oo) has admitted his wrongdoing and the Police Chief also promised that this would be the first and the last time. He wanted me to negotiate with the victim. They kept on asking me, for two or three days, to get him to take the compensation. They came to my home and said everything depended on me," said U Sein Aung.

On May 24th, U Maung Gyi filed a lawsuit at Paung Police Station against Police Sergeant Thein Hline Oo and Police Private Shine Htet Aung for torturing him.

U Maung Gyi is a day laborer and one of his leg was injured after falling off his bicycle two months ago. At the moment, he has been admitted to the Yin Nyein General Hospital. He reportedly has had hardship due to no longer being able to do any work.

On May 23rd, the Chief of the Police Station, the Village Administrator, and a Surveillance Officer came to the hospital where I had been admitted and talked to me about money [compensation]. They asked me to forget what had happened, and told me they would give me what I want [medical fees and compensation for missed work]. I replied that I didn't want anything but justice. I didn't want the money. I'm the victim. I knew how much I was beaten. But they kept talking about money [compensation]. I didn't accept it,

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:

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E-mail: info@rehmonnya.org

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

With regards,

Director

Human Rights Foundation of Monland

SECOND CASE OF CHILD RAPE IN A MONTH IN YE TOWNSHIP

May 24, 2018

On May 7th 2018, a 33-year-old man named Maung Naing Oo, from Duya village, Ye Township, in Mon State, was reported to have raped a 12-year-old girl from the same village in Ye Township. The perpetrator has fled from his home.

A police officer from Ye Police Station reported that the perpetrator, who had fled the scene, was charged on May 11th under Burma's Penal Code Article #376 (punishment for rape).

The police officer explained, *“The girl's mother returned from Thailand and reported the incident to the village administrator. The village administrator transferred the case to the Ye Police Station. After we received permission from the girl's mother, we checked her medical report. We are currently*

searching for the perpetrator to arrest him.”

The incident happened on May 7th 2018 at around 9 pm, when the 12-year-old girl and her friend went to a light festival in the village. The perpetrator, Maung Naing Oo, came on his motorbike and threatened them with a knife and ordered them to follow him. Once they were out of the village, he stopped his bike, left the girl's friend with the bike, and took the girl to the forest and raped her.

“The girl shouted and called out to her friend when the perpetrator took her, but the perpetrator threatened to kill her friend if she followed them. After he raped the girl, he brought the two of them back to the village and threatened to kill them both if they told anyone about the incident,” said Duya village administrator U Hla Aung Nge.

However, the young girl told her grandmother about the rape once she got home and on May 11th they reported the incident to the village administrator. The young girl is living with her grandmother as her mother is in Thailand. The girl has been taken to Mawlamyine Hospital for a medical examination. Members of the Mon State Hluttaw's Women and Children's Rights Committee and members of the village's informal Mon women's group are supporting the victim.

In a similar case on April 24th 2018, in the same village, a 12-year-old girl was raped by a 19-year-old man who was working in the fishing industry in A Baw village tract, Patamyar Kout Tan quarter, Ye Township, Mon State.

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MON WOMEN'S NETWORK TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S VOICE DURING NATIONAL POLITICAL DIALOGUE



April 27, 2018

WCRP: From April 24–25, 2018, the Mon Women's Forum was held at Dhamma Karmi Monastery, Mawlamyine, Mon State. The Mon Women's Network (MWN) organized the event in order to record the voices and opinions of Mon women, which they plan to present at the national-level political dialogue on the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) in Ye City from May 5–7.

"All of our women's [groups] can't join the dialogue. In order to present women's voices and opinions [during the dialogue], we have organized this forum," said Mi Lawi Han, chairperson for the MWN.

According to Mi Kon Chan Non, vice chairperson of MWN, politics, social issues, the economy, and land and natural resources were the main topics discussed during the forum, and recommendations by the forum will be presented either at the national-level political dialogue or the 21st Century Panglong Conference.

"We have to prepare for what we should do [in the future], but we don't know if they'll accept [our recommendations] or not," said Mi Kon Chan Non.

The MWN is promoting women's voices at the national-level political dialogue because it wants to create space for women to be involved in politics, social issues, economics, and land and national resource sectors, according to Mi Lawi Han.

"Everyone assumes women are not related to political and economic issues. It is nearly impossible for women to be involved in land issues. They can only contribute to some social issues. Women must be involved in the discussion in these four sectors," continued Mi Lawi Han.

"It's traditionally believed that women are not related to politics and their contribution doesn't make a significant change. It's difficult for women because they're asked: 'What have you done before and how much experience do you have?'" said Mi Kon Chan Non.

The MWN urges that not only women but also men encourage more women to have a decision-making role in politics.

Seventy-six female participants from all over Mon State joined the two-day Mon Women's Forum.

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