

# THE *Mon Forum*

News, Report, Analysis and Activities on Human Rights Situation in Mon Territory

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THE PUBLICATION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION OF MONLAND (HURFOM)

## NMSP FIGHTS AGAINST CORONAVIRUS IN THEIR CONTROLLED AREA



Photo: Mon Region Land Policy Affair Committee

March 31, 2020

**HURFOM:** The township and district level health department authorities of the New Mon State Party (NMSP) are cooperating to provide public education to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus, also known as COVID-19.

*“We’ve been educating people in accordance with the guidelines from the World Health Organization (WHO). We are educating people to protect themselves*

*(against the infection) and not to go to crowded areas. The infection is spreading very quickly so prevention is the best,”* said an official of the Thaton District NMSP.

In the last week of March, the Committee for Mon Region Customary Land Tenure and Ah R Journey – a charity group led by an activist Mon monk visited the Thaton District NMSP by providing infrared thermometers, personal protective equipment (PPE), hand sanitizers, vinyl and surgical masks as well as information about COVID-19.

*“As soon as we got this equipment and supplies, we called authorities and health workers from particular townships and instructed them to take the body temperature of people, to collect a list of returnees, and to put them in home quarantine for 14 days,”* said the official.

[Read more on page2>>](#)

**ETHNIC PARTIES SAY ELECTORAL LAW ARTICLE #10, GRANTING TEMPORARY MIGRANTS LOCAL VOTING RIGHTS MUST BE ABOLISHED FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS**



[Read more on page 3>>](#)

## CELEBRATING THE 73RD MON NATIONAL DAY: UNITY AND INCLUSION



February 9, 2020

Today, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) is celebrating the 73<sup>rd</sup> Mon National Day, together with Mon communities throughout Burma/Myanmar and many parts of the world. We believe it is through unity that Mon communities can

continue to heal and grow, and this year is particularly special for Mon communities who will head to the polls in the 2020 Elections with the recently formed Mon Unity Party (MUP) which merged the two largest Mon political parties.

Speaking on the importance of this year’s celebrations, HURFOM’s Executive Director Nai Kasauh Mon said, “This year, Mon National Day is unique for all of us Mon people. The ethnic Mon parties have merged into one party [Mon Unity Party] and are preparing for the upcoming 2020 Elections. For all

[Read more on page2>>](#)

News

NMSP FIGHTS AGAINST CORONAVIRUS IN THEIR CONTROLLED AREA



Because the data collection is on-going it is not yet known how many people returned from foreign countries.

Nai Zaw Min Oo, a Central Executive Committee member with the Thaton District NMSP added "As we do not have enough infrared thermometers, we can't measure the body temperature of every single person. We prioritized those who just returned from foreign countries. We don't have enough equipment so we can't perform the action every day."

The NMSP is prepared to inform the government health department of presumptive or suspected cases of the infection in order to ensure cooperation and further treatment.

CELEBRATING THE 73RD MON NATIONAL DAY: UNITY AND INCLUSION



Mon people, we are hoping that the Mon Unity Party wins the most seats in both the state and upper houses. All Mon voters should show their unity and support the candidates".

While unity is important for the Mon community in the upcoming 2020

Elections, ensuring women's and youth's participation in the MUP is equally as important and not just as an afterthought. Rather, inclusivity policies should be treated as strategic imperatives rather than as perfunctory exercises in diversity. As HURFOM reported previously, despite

a recent policy decision to pursue the inclusion of youth and women as electoral candidates, the MUP still suffers from low participation rates by both, due to a number of systemic challenges blocking their full and meaningful participation.

In addition, Nai Kasauh Mon also added, "I would like to urge the government and the UEC (Union Election Commission) to pay more attention and provide more support to marginalized and disenfranchised communities in Mon and other ethnic areas for their political inclusion in order to ensure a freer and fairer election".

The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) is a non-governmental human rights organization founded in 1995 by a group of Mon relief workers, students, and community leaders. HURFOM works to monitor the human rights situation in southern Burma, publishing print and online news, lengthy reports, and analysis of ongoing human rights violations.

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In this issue

- News: Confiscated farm lands sold, and original owners protest against corruption
- News: HURFOM's 2020 International Women's Day Statement: Gender Equality in Burma/Myanmar Impossible until Gender-Based Violence is Addressed
- News: Locals demand rural health center for their village
- News: Landmine blast injures villager in Yebyu



News

# LOCAL VILLAGERS STILL WORRIED OF POTENTIAL ARMED CLASHES BETWEEN BURMESE ARMY AND THE NMSP'S CAMP IN JAPAN WELL



January 9, 2020

**HURFOM:** Local villagers remained frightened there may be more fighting between the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Tatmadaw after they and the Border Guard Force (BGF) set up a camp just 300 yards away from New Mon State Party (NMSP) camp in Hin Thar Tine, Japan Well village, Three-Pagoda Pass, near the Thai-Myanmar Border, according to Dr. Banyar Aung Moe, a former Amyo Thar Hluttaw Representative.

*“They (military) set their camp at the junction of the toll gate. They [have] not withdrawn. Therefore, the*

*villagers are worried there will be fighting. They are frightened. If big weapon will be used, even people in Three-Pagoda Pass could not stay. Residents of Three Pagoda Pass town are also worried. Even though villagers of Japan Well village [returned to] their houses, they are ready to run away,”* said Dr. Banyar Aung Moe.

The school in Japan Well village has been closed since the November 26th clash broke out and the underlying conflict remains unresolved.

According to Nai Ong Ma Ngay, central committee member of the NMSP, “... they [the military re-established] their

*forces with 20 soldiers. It is not finished yet and we are negotiating to withdraw their camp. We planned to discuss [this issue] with Joint Ceasefire Monitoring (JMC) committee. We will negotiate how to resolve this problem,”* said Nai Ong Ma Ngay.

Although the monitoring committee is intended to negotiate and resolve problems stemming from conflicts, Nai Ong May Ngay noted the structures weak point has been implementation.

*“According to JMC’s procedure, there will be monitoring, investigation, review, [followed by] negotiation responses within 24 hours after fighting. All of these [steps are] included in the process but there is a weak point — that being implementing [remedial measures that] caused the problem. It should not be like that,”* continued Nai Ong Ma Ngay.

About thousand victims fled to Thailand from their homes when the clash between the NMSP and Tatmadaw/BGF broke out on the 26th of November 2019.

# ETHNIC PARTIES SAY ELECTORAL LAW ARTICLE #10, GRANTING TEMPORARY MIGRANTS LOCAL VOTING RIGHTS MUST BE ABOLISHED FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS



January 17, 2020

**HURFOM:** Five non-Burmese ethnic political parties are calling for the abolition of Article #10 of the Electoral

law in order to get free and fair elections in 2020. The five ethnic political parties include the Kachin State People’s Party, Kayah State Democratic Party, the Karen National Democratic Party, Chin National Democratic Party and the Mon Unity Party.

The parties sent a report to Ethnic Affairs Committee of the Union Parliament, late last month demanding the abolition Article #10, according to Nai Laye Ta Ma, the Joint Secretary #1 of Mon Unity Party.

According to electoral law Article #10, a person who temporarily lives outside

his/her constituency, for at least 90 days is granted voting rights for local candidates in their temporary place of residence.

If temporary migrants are allowed to cast their vote in accordance with article #10, there will be an impact on the voting result of local candidate and the representation of local candidates is getting controversial, said Nai Laye Ta Ma.

*“The votes of temporary migrants can change the election result so we can’t say this election is free and fair. If we want a free and fair election, article #10 must be abolished,”* argued Nai Laye Ta Ma.

The five ethnic political parties are urging the government to find other means for temporary migrants to cast their votes in their permanent place of residence.

News

# FAMILY MEMBERS DEMAND MILITARY HAND OVER SOLDIER TO CIVIL COURT TO FACE CHARGES OF SEXUAL ASSAULT OF A MINOR



January 9, 2020

**HURFOM:** On December 28, 2019, a sergeant lieutenant from the Southeast Command was reported to have sexually assaulted an 11-year-old minor in Naung Kha Ri Ward, Mawlamyine, Mon State.

25-year-old Sergeant Lieutenant Ohm Than lived in a house in the compound of the victims family. On December 28, 2019, the neighbors witnessed the sergeant sexually assaulting the minor.

*“Her father was going on a trip on the day when the incident took place. When we went to the police station to file a charge, the police didn’t accept our lawsuit [because] the culprit was from the military. They said they could do nothing without the (victim). However, the father was unwilling as there was pressure from [the military]. So we asked Daw Khine Kine Lei, the Chair of Mon State Parliament Woman and Child Rights Committee and she told the Township Administrator to give us a hand. The Township Administrator told the village administrator who in turn told the father (to press charges against the*

*sergeant). Then the father filed a lawsuit against the soldier in the police station,”* said U Myint Thein, the President of Bright Star Interfaith and Human Rights Support Group.

According to the charges, the sergeant had repeatedly assaulted the minor.

The Mu Pon Police Station charged the sergeant under the Burmese Criminal Act #377 – Punishment for Unnatural Offenses, with the potential of life imprisonment or 10-year imprisonment and/or fine.

*“On the day we (filed) the charge against the sergeant, two military officials came [to the police station] and monitored the process. They wanted the case to be handled by the military court. We want the military to depose the sergeant and handover him over to civil court. He has committed such a horrible crime so he should be punished. If he gains impunity, he’ll assault another one,”* said a family member.

The victim had a medical check at the Mawlamyine General Hospital on January 2, 2020, according to Police

Captain Aung Nyne Oo, the Chief of Mu Pon Police Station.

*“We did a medical check-up but haven’t gotten the results yet. The sergeant was jailed in the Southeast Command. [The military] hasn’t handed over him to us yet,”* said the Police Captain.

The police force requested the military hand over the sergeant to civil court on January 7.

*“The military replied that they have to depose the sergeant in accordance with military law first. After that they will hand over to civil court. Currently, the sergeant is being detained by the military. They said they would contact us after they finished the military procedures. If the military doesn’t hand over the culprit to civil court, I’ll send the report to the Commander-In-Chief,”* said U Myint Thein.

According to the Mon State Police Force, in 2018, there were 80 rape cases and among them, 57 cases involved minors. From January to November, 2019, 69 out of 90 rape cases involved minors.



## News

## HOUSES ALONG THE ATARAN RIVER SUFFER DAMAGE: HOMEOWNERS POINT THE FINGER AT MAWLAMYINE CEMENT'S SHIPPING VESSELS.



January 13, 2020

**HURFOM:** Mawlamyine Cement Limited (MCL) relies on the Ataran river to transport supplies for its cement plant located near Kaw Pa Naw and Kaw Don villages in Pyar Taung area, Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State.

However homes located along the river have suffered damage due to MCL's transport vessels creating waves that hit the river bank.

Representatives from the company visited the homeowners and promised to fix the houses for them, however, according to one woman from Kwan Ngan village, that promise has gone unfulfilled.

***"Our house was getting lower and lower gradually starting from November and now we could not stay anymore. The (window) glass in the upper story has cracked. The company came two times. They said they will fix it. However, we have been waiting for 3 months now. No news from them. the***

***entire house will collapse while we wait for them. We dare not stay inside the house anymore. We need to fix it with our own money."***

Many local people believe their property damage has been caused by coal vessels that create waves that shift the shoreline causing cracks and structural damage to homes.

***"I have been living here for over 40 years. Never witnessed this kind of crack before. It is getting worse in the last 3 years. I think it is worse every year. We would like to request the government to come and check the situation. We don't have any other place to relocate,"*** said a woman from Kwan Ngan village.

Although the company promised they will submit this case to the upper officials, there is still no action from them.

***"There was a loud sound (sign of collapsing) while we were eating. We had to run outside. If it collapsed on***

***me, I would die and if it was on children, they would die. No one knows when it will collapse. Our house is made of concrete. We feel unsafe staying at home. We feel afraid while sleeping,"*** said another local woman, whose house has been damaged.

Kwan Ngan villagers homes have the most damage amongst other villages located along the Ataran river. There are 466 houses and 44 houses have been seriously damaged while others are showing signs of cracks, according to Village Administrator.

An appeal letter was submitted to Kyaikmayaw Township administration office in the last week of December 2019. However, there has been no action from the company to date, according to the Village Administrator.

Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) attempted to contact the Kyaikmayaw Township Hluttaw representative Daw Khine Myo Myint regarding the situation, but she did not answer the call.



News

# CONFISCATED FARM LANDS SOLD, AND ORIGINAL OWNERS PROTEST AGAINST CORRUPTION



January 23, 2020

**HURFOM:** In 1997-98 the State Peace and Development Council of Pha An Township confiscate 90.85 acres of land from 20 farmers in Zar Tha Pyin village, Pha An Township, Karen State. The plan was to use the land as part of village extension development project.

The project could not be started within the designated time frame, and the Township Court officially declared the project a failure. However, Village Administrators and staff from the land record department apparently sold the land for personal benefit. The original owners had requested the lands be returned to them.

According to one of the original land owners from Zar Tha Pyin village, ***“The original owners are facing trial with land buyer in the court now. The land record officer never (tried) to solve (the case). They (the land record officers)***

***sold it and (new land owner) had fenced the land. So we could not work anymore.”***

Approximately 10 farmers held a protest on Strand Road in Mawlamyine on 22 January, demanding the State Counsellor and President take action against the implicated departments and Village Administrators for their corruption.

***“When we were growing plants on the remaining land, some people living (on the land) came to threaten us and they destroyed our plants. We complained about it to the police and Village Administrator. But, there was no action,”*** said one of the farmers whose land had originally been confiscated.

Most villagers of Zar Tha Pyin are ethnically Mon and they can not speak Burmese well. As communities there are relying on agriculture and farming,

there are no other options for them. The farmers have submitted appeal letters to various government departments many times since 2008 until present day. There has been no response from the authorities say the farmers.

***“I have submitted a letter [about this situation] 3 times to the Township administration, but they do not allow a protest. In fact, local farmers are losing their civil rights”***, U Aye Thein aka Yan Naing, a former 8888 student.

There will be protests if our demands are not resolved by the state government and related departments, noted U Aye Thein. According to the Central Committee Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands, there are 7,119 cases have been reported and only 3,168 cases have been solved.





News

# LAND GRAB VICTIMS CALLS ON NMSP TO HELP RESOLVE MILITARY CONFISCATION OF THEIR LANDS



February 4, 2020

**HURFOM:** During the decades of military rule in Myanmar, rubber plantations in Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State were confiscated and deemed to be “military-owned lands.” The New Mon State Party (NMSP) believes it is time to address this form of land grabbing. The NMSP is calling for the military to withdraw from these lands and return the properties to the original owners.

Between 2001 to 2004, plantations nearby Wae Kalee Advanced Military Training School No. 4, and plantations near the Sakhan Gyi military battalion as well as plantations near the Artillery Regiment Command No. 315 were

confiscated as deemed to be “military-owned land” because they were close to a shooting range. It is estimated that in total approximately 2,500 acres were confiscated by the military.

The original land owners have approached the NMSP to request their assistance in opening a dialogue with the government to repatriate (return the lands).

*“We believed in the NLD (National League for Democracy) in the past. We think if they can form the government, we’ll have a chance to get our plantation back. We believed like that. But in reality, it’s different. We made several attempts but there was no improvement. Now, the NMSP has*

*signed the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) and has had a dialogue with the government and the military. We want the NMSP to present [our case] about the land confiscation during their discussions. If the NMSP makes an attempt, there will be something different, we think,”* said a land grab victim from Thanbyuzayat.

Although Mon lawmakers had made efforts in 2010 to address this issue, they were unsuccessful and the issue did not gain any attention in the 2015 general election.

*“In 2010, there were many (Mon) lawmakers and they tried well enough (to have the military withdraw from their lands). But in 2015, there was no lawmaker who stands for the plantation owners. Then, even [though] the NLD government came into power, the chance to get our plantations back is getting fewer. So the plantation owners don’t want to make an attempt,”* said a land victim.

The military also collected tax from the original land owners, allowed some to work on the confiscated plantations, or sold the lands.

*“Now, we have no one to rely on. If the NMSP has a good dialogue (with the government and the military), there will be a chance to get our land back. We lost our (land) rights from government to government. So even if there is a small chance, we’ll hold out our hope. If it’s impossible to get our land back during this government, we’ll keep trying in the next government term. We’ll keep trying until we get our land back,”* said an activist supporting land grab victims.

The Mon State government has recognized this to be an important issue, and on January 30, 2020, the Mon State Chief Minister Dr Aye Zan attended an opening ceremony of the new office of Mon State Committee for Scrutinizing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands.





News

# LOCALS DEMAND RURAL HEALTH CENTER FOR THEIR VILLAGE



February 6, 2020

**HURFOM:** Hinthar villagers in Ye Chaung Pyar, Ye Township, Mon State, are making demands for a health clinic in their community. Currently, there is difficulty accessing health care services for women giving birth, for children to get vaccines and residents are concerned they do not have access to enough medicines.

*"This village is far from others. The main point is there is not even a local*

*nurse [to help with] births. The mother had to deliver the baby herself. There is no medicine and no vaccines for newborn babies,"* according to a field explorer, Nai Byuhar Mon.

This village has 24 houses and a population of 36 residents. Hinthar was established in 2015 by the venerable monk, Ko Yin Lay. Villagers make their living by farming and gardening.

*"There is only one Mon National School and a monastery in the village.*

*There is nothing else. The villagers request to have a health care clinic. The road is really bad, although it is summer now, it will be worse in the rainy season. Villagers also face difficulties registering newborn births due to their remote location and poor roads,"* added Nai Byuhar.

Nurses from Pa Nan Pone, 4 miles away from Hinthar village, used to come and provide health service but they stopped coming as it is a remote village.

*"I had been there once for a malaria prevention program. The villagers build their huts while farming and gardening. It has become a village later. There are too few houses and population to open a clinic. We also don't have the human resources in our center. There is no exact plan (to provide health care services) as the village is newly established. It is impossible to have a clinic yet",* said a member of Mon National Health Committee (MNHC). MNHC has been exploring how to raise awareness about malaria prevention and has future plans to develop a monthly health monitoring program.

# GIRL RAPED BY FATHER IS 6-MONTHS PREGNANT



February 17, 2020

**HURFOM:** A 39-year-old male from Kyar Inn village, Mawlamyine Township, Mon State has been charged with repeatedly raping his 13 year old daughter. The child is reportedly pregnant. The charges were filed with the Mu Pon Police on February 11 by an elder brother.

While visiting his sister, the brother noticed her enlarged belly and brought her to a clinic for a medical check-up. It was discovered that she was 6 months pregnant. The girl revealed that she was repeatedly raped by her father approximately 6-7 months ago.

*"The girl was living with her father. Her mother is in Thailand for work. She is a Grade-8 student. Now the Department of Social Welfare is taking care of her,"* said an official from the Mu Pon Police Force.

The Police Force has formally filed charges against the father under section #376 of the Criminal Act – punishment for rape, however it is reported he is not yet in custody.





News

# NO PROGRESS WITH MCL TO USE PLASTIC WASTE AS AN ALTERNATIVE ENERGY TO COAL



February 18, 2020

**HURFOM:** Mawlamyine Cement Limited (MCL) operates a coal-fired cement factory in Pyar Taung Region, Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State. In August, 2019, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation for Mon State informed the factory to use plastic waste as an alternative energy source to coal, but there has been no reply, according to the Minister Dr Min Kyi Win.

The National Environmental Conservation and Climate Change Central Committee (NECCCC) held its 8th central meeting in August, 2019 where it was decided particular government departments would negotiate with companies who used coal-fired power to switch to energy derived from plastic waste.

**“According to the meeting decision, each State and Division government who has coal-fire cement factories have to [hold] discussions with the companies. If the companies accept the decision, coal will be replaced with plastic waste [as the fuel source]. We**

**already informed MCL but they haven’t replied yet,”** said the Minister.

The Minister continued, there is a need for technology and investment to start using plastic waste as a source of energy and it is difficult to collect sufficient amounts of plastic, because cement factories consume a great deal of power. He added the plan to use plastic waste as an alternative energy source to coal is under negotiation.

MCL cement factory was designed for a coal-fire power system and requires a new system to use plastic waste. This conversion would be time-consuming, according to U Min Thein Tun, the Deputy Director of Mon State Environment Conservation Department.

A 100% conversion from burning coal to using plastic waste will require time. **“For instance, 2 or 4 % in the first year of operation. A system of percentage per year is the only appropriate way. But what I’m worrying about is that we need**

**limestone and chemicals to control carbon dioxide emitted from coal and coal-fired cement factories already have a system in place. If we burn plastic waste, we don’t know what is emitted. We need experts to control what is emitted from burning plastic waste. It is not possible to start a new system immediately,”** said U Min Thein Tun.

In addition, to use plastic waste as a source of energy, there must be an organization who collects plastic waste (across Mon State) and there must be technology to control the toxins and emissions from plastic waste, noted U Kyi Maung Win, an official of MCL.

**“Thailand uses plastic waste (as a source of energy). But they’re struggling to control the bad smell. It’s really smelly. It’s smellier than coal. In other countries, the government supports those who use waste as a source of energy. In our country, it’s very difficult to control the bad smell along the transportation route of the waste. The government must support everything [to start using plastic waste as a source of energy]. In other countries, the government supports everything,”** said U Kyi Maung Win.

Local people have repeatedly protested against MCL, demanding they stop using coal-fired power and convert to alternative energy sources that are less environmentally damaging. The Mon State Parliament has also urged the company to replace coal with alternative energy sources. MCL cement factory has invested 400 million US dollars in their operation and produces 5,000 tons of cement per day.

**“**According to the meeting decision, each State and Division government who has coal-fire cement factories have to [hold] discussions with the companies. If the companies accept the decision, coal will be replaced with plastic waste [as the fuel source]. We already informed MCL but they haven’t replied yet.**”**

News

ACTIVISTS CALL FOR A REVIEW OF THE LAW PROTECTING THE PRIVACY AND SECURITY OF CITIZENS, CITING ARTICLES DIRECTLY VIOLATING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION



FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION ACTIVIST ORGANIZATION

နိုင်ငံသားများ၏ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ဆိုင်ရာလွတ်လပ်မှုနှင့်ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ဆိုင်ရာလုံခြုံမှုကိုကာကွယ်ပေးရေးဥပဒေ အသုံးပြု၍ လွတ်လပ်စွာထုတ်ဖော်ပြောဆိုခွင့် ချိုးဖောက်မှုများ

၁၈ ရက်၊ ဖေဖော်ဝါရီလ၊ ၂၀၂၀ ခုနှစ်။

အသံ - လွတ်လပ်စွာထုတ်ဖော်ပြောဆိုခွင့်လှုပ်ရှားမှုအဖွဲ့ ၏ ၂၀၂၀ ခုနှစ်၊ ဖေဖော်ဝါရီလ (၁၇) ရက်နေ့ အထိ မီဒီယာစောင့်ကြည့်လေ့လာမှု အချက်အလက်၊ မှတ်တမ်းများအရ နိုင်ငံသားများ၏ ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ဆိုင်ရာ လွတ်လပ်မှုနှင့် ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ဆိုင်ရာလုံခြုံမှုကို ကာကွယ်ပေးရေးဥပဒေဖြင့် တရားစွဲဆိုမှုများ ၄၆ မှု အထိရှိလာပြီး တရားစွဲဆိုခံရသူ ၁၁၃ ဦး အထိ ရှိလာပြီ ဖြစ်သည်။

အစိုးရအဖွဲ့နှင့် လွှတ်တော်ကိုယ်စားလှယ်များကို ဝေဖန်သဖြင့် တရားစွဲဆိုခံရမှု ၁၅ မှု၊ နိုင်ငံရေးပါတီများက တရားစွဲဆိုမှု ၉ မှု၊ တပ်မတော်က တရားစွဲဆိုမှု ၅ မှု၊ စီးပွားရေးလုပ်ငန်းရှင်များက ဒေသခံများကို တရားစွဲဆိုမှု ၃ မှု တို့အသီးသီးရှိကြပြီး နိုင်ငံတော်၏အတိုင်ပင်ခံပုဂ္ဂိုလ် ဒေါ်အောင်ဆန်းစုကြည်နှင့် ဗိုလ်ချုပ်အောင်ဆန်းအား ဝေဖန်ရေးသားသည်ဆိုကာ ကြားလူမှ တရားစွဲဆိုထားမှုများအပြင် အရပ်သားပြည်သူ အချင်းချင်း တရားစွဲဆိုထားမှုများလည်း ပါဝင်သည်။ တက်ကြွလှုပ်ရှားသူ ၁၂ ဦး၊ အရပ်သားပြည်သူ ၇၅ ဦး၊ သတင်းမီဒီယာသမား ၄ ဦး၊ နိုင်ငံရေးပါတီဝင် ၁၅ ဦးနှင့် အခြား ၇ ဦးတို့ တရားစွဲဆိုခံခဲ့ရပြီး ၃၃ ဦးသည် လူမှုကွန်ရက်တွင် ထုတ်ဖော်ရေးသားသည့်အတွက် တရားစွဲဆိုခံခဲ့ရခြင်းဖြစ်သည်။

“နိုင်ငံသားများ၏ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ဆိုင်ရာလွတ်လပ်မှုနှင့်ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ဆိုင်ရာလုံခြုံမှုကိုကာကွယ်ပေးရေးဥပဒေ” အား ၂၀၁၇ ခုနှစ်၊ မတ်လ (၈) ရက်နေ့တွင် ပြည်ထောင်စုလွှတ်တော်မှ အတည်ပြုပြဋ္ဌာန်းခဲ့ပြီး ယခုအချိန်တွင် ဥပဒေသက်တမ်း ၂ နှစ်နှင့် ၁၁ လ ရှိလာပြီဖြစ်သည်။ ယခုအချိန်အထိ ဥပဒေ၏ အဓိကရည်ရွယ်ချက်ဖြစ်သော ပြည်သူများ၏ လူပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ဆိုင်ရာ လွတ်လပ်မှုနှင့် လုံခြုံမှုပေးရာတွင် ထိရောက်ခြင်းမရှိဘဲ ပြည်သူများ၏ လွတ်လပ်စွာထုတ်ဖော်ပြောဆိုခွင့်အား ချိုးဖောက်ရန်အတွက်သာ ဥပဒေကို အသုံးပြုလာခြင်းအပေါ် အသံအဖွဲ့အနေဖြင့် များစွာစိုးရိမ်မိပါသည်။ ဥပဒေတွင်ပါရှိသော ပုဒ်မ ၈(၈) သည် အသရေမျက်ခြင်းဆိုင်ရာ ပုဒ်မတစ်ခုသာဖြစ်ပြီး ယင်း ပုဒ်မ ၈(၈) ကြောင့် လွတ်လပ်စွာထုတ်ဖော်ပြောဆိုခွင့်ကို ချိုးဖောက်သည့် တရားစွဲဆိုမှုအမြောက်အများ ပေါ်ပေါက်လျက်ရှိပါသည်။ စစ်မှန်သည့် လူပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ဆိုင်ရာ လွတ်လပ်မှုနှင့်လုံခြုံမှုကို ကာကွယ်ပေးနိုင်သည့်ဥပဒေတစ်ရပ် ဖြစ်လာစေရေးအတွက် ယင်းဥပဒေပါ ပုဒ်မ ၈(၈) ကိုဖျက်သိမ်းရန်၊ အခြားပုဒ်မများကို ပြင်ဆင်ရန်နှင့် ဥပဒေတစ်ရပ်လုံးအား ပြန်လည်သုံးသပ်ရန် အသံအဖွဲ့က ထပ်မံ၍ အလေးအနက်ထားတိုက်တွန်းအပ်ပါသည်။

Website - athanmyanmar.org | Email - athan.info@gmail.com
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February 20, 2020

HURFOM: On March 8, 2017, the Union Parliament approved a law named, Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens

On February 18, 2020, Athan, an organization that promotes freedom of expression, has called for the abolition of Article 8(F) of the law, and to amend other articles that gravely impact on freedom of expression.

Athan (“Voice” in Burmese) was founded on 15th January 2018 by

young people who value and promote freedom of expression in Myanmar.

“Article 8(F) of the new law is related to defamation. [It states that] those who criticize political leaders, political parties, the army and the government can be charged with this article. Since the approval of this law, there has been an increase of violations of freedom of expression. That’s why we are demanding this article be abolished,” said U Ye Wai Phyo Aung, a Research Manager of Athan Organization.

As of February 17, 2020, there have been 46 legal cases related to alleged violations of the Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens and 113 people faced charges under this law, according to Athan. According to U Ye Wai Phyo, there is a need to revisit the law in its entirety from a freedom of expression standpoint.

The breakdown of those charged include, 12 activists, 75 citizens, 4 reporters, 15 political party members and 7 other individuals and 33 of them were charged because of their posts on social media.

If the law is not amended, there will be an impact on the upcoming 2020 election as most of the violations relate to freedom of expression matters that surfaced during the 2015 election, pointed out U Ye Wai Phyo Aung.

“Most people (activists) who were arrested were also sued during the 2015 election. If this law [remains in its current form, during] the 2020 election it will be more dangerous. So this law must be abolished before the election,” said U Ye Wai Phyo Aung.

On February 18, 2020, a judicial and legal affairs committee submitted a draft amendment to the law, to the Pyithu Hluttaw (House of Representatives).

However, U Ye Wai Phyo Aung noted, “The amendment excluded the voice of people. Most victims of this law were ordinary people. If they didn’t listen to the people’s voice and amend the law (themselves), the amendment is useless.”

Athan believes any amendments to the law must include the voices of civic scholars, lawyers and civil society organizations.





News

# GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTION TO STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND LABOUR VIOLATIONS IN THE FISHING RAFT INDUSTRY



February 24, 2020

**HURFOM:** On February 14, 2020, at the 15th regular meeting of the second-term Mon State Parliament, Dr Aung Naing Oo, and lawmakers from Constituency #1 of Chaung Zone Township, Mon State submitted a proposal urging the government to take actions designed to stop human trafficking and human rights violations in the Tiger fishing raft industry and to promote Mon States offshore fishing industry.

The lawmakers said they were motivated to submit their proposal

following media reports of human trafficking, forced labor, exploitation, torture and killing taking place in the Mon State Tiger fishing raft industry.

***“The number of illegal fishing boats in Ye has been increasing dramatically. So there is a huge demand for laborers. In order to meet the demand, not-well-educated persons in the village and those who are desperate for work were directly or indirectly trafficked to fishing boat owners,”*** said Dr Aung Naing Oo.

The situation has gotten worse for a variety of reasons. This includes some

fishing boat owners not following rules and regulations in recruiting workers; the department of fisheries not having an accurate list of workers in the sector; a skills shortage of workers; and no proper cooperation between government departments.

***“Mon State Anti Human Trafficking Police has 12 staff and Ye Department of Fisheries has only 4 staff. So it’s very challenging to monitor and check (illegal) fish boats and rafts,”*** said the lawmakers in explaining their proposal.

The department of fisheries, the Myanmar Fisheries Federation, representatives from the General Administration department, police and media went to the sea to check on fishing boats and rafts from January 21 to 24, 2020.

***“57 fishing boats were checked (during the trip) and none could produce a proper fishing licence. Also, more than 4,000 fishing workers who are working for the boats couldn’t show labor cards,”*** said Dr Aung Naing Oo.

In his proposal, Dr Aung Naing Oo urged the government to make sure that fishing boat owners recruit their workers in accordance with rules and regulations. Further that the Department of Fisheries must check and punish illegal fishing boat operators. Also the police department tasked with addressing human trafficking and other relevant government departments must supervise the fishing industry and ensure enforcement and compliance.

There are 125 offshore fishing areas in Myanmar; 45 in Tenasserim Division, 40 in Irrawaddy Division, 26 in Arkan State and 14 in Mon State.

It has also been reported that the Mon State government has been negotiating with the South East Command in order to seek the cooperation of the Navy to arrest illegal fishing boats and rafts.



News

# POLITICAL LEADERS VIEW EFFORTS TO ADVANCE CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS IN PARLIAMENT AS INEFFECTIVE



March 6, 2020

**HURFOM:** During the 15th regular meeting of the second term of the Union Parliament, in February of this year, lawmakers have been discussing the articles and sub articles of draft amendments to the 2008 Constitution.

Some political leaders are not optimistic about the task. The Chair of the New Mon State Party (NMSPP), Nai Hong Sar commented on February 27 that trying to amend the Constitution in the parliament was ineffective.

**“We can’t rely on parliament regarding constitutional amendments. It’s difficult and might not work, I think,”** said Nai Hong Sar.

The most effective way to amend the Constitution is to follow the union accords developed by multi stakeholders in the 21st Century Panglong Conference, commented Nai Hong Sar.

**“The constitution was drawn by the military and they don’t want to amend it. So we can’t rely on the Parliament to amend the Constitution. Even if the parliament is able to amend the Constitution, only unimportant articles are amended,”** continued Nai Hong Sar.

Secretary #1 of the Mon Unity Party, Nai Laye Tama noted opposing opinions and arguments regarding constitutional amendments between the National League for Democracy (NLD) government and the military persist, signalling agreement is unlikely.

**“As far as I know, among 114 articles of the draft of constitutional amendments, there was no article related to ethnic rights, self determination and federal system. So this attempt at constitution amendments has no hope for (non-Burmese) ethnic people,”** said Nai Laye Tama.

The NLD’s attempts to amend the constitution at the time near to the election, has also received criticism that the party may use the impasse as propaganda during the 2020 election.

“The constitution was drawn by the military and they don’t want to amend it. So we can’t rely on the Parliament to amend the Constitution. Even if the parliament is able to amend the Constitution, only unimportant articles are amended



## News

## HURFOM'S 2020 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY STATEMENT: GENDER EQUALITY IN BURMA/MYANMAR IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IS ADDRESSED

March 8, 2020

Today, the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) is celebrating International Women's Day and the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women not only in Burma/Myanmar but around the world.

As this year's theme is **#EachforEqual**, HURFOM wishes to highlight the need to mobilize to end widespread gender-based violence in Burma/Myanmar if gender equality is to be realized. Sexual violence against women/girls and lack of access to justice is pervasive throughout Burma/Myanmar. Until violence against women is addressed throughout Burma/Myanmar, including at the highest levels of power, gender equality will remain a far-off goal.

Women's participation in politics and the peace process is one way to start challenging the status quo:

*"The current reality of women's representation in sectors across the country and progress on gender equality remains slow. We need to work on these challenges. We welcomed the policy decision of the Mon Unity Party...to pursue increased participation of women as candidates in the 2020 Election. But equality's meaning is not just one-quarter of the seats at the tables of power; this is the gender gap.*

*I believe that in order to promote women's participation in politics and peace, those who are already in positions must create special spaces and have concrete plans for women."*

Mi Cherry Soe, Coordinator and Steering Committee Member of the Mon Women's Network

According to women's rights activist, Lway Poe Ngeal, gender equality is essential not just for women but for every individual and all nationalities within Burma/Myanmar.

*"In our society, gender equality is as important as other fundamental aspects of equality, and we need to be concerned with equal opportunities, equitable outcomes, and be able to maintain Substantive Equality. When we talk about Substantive Equality or make equality a reality, we need more collective action, affective policy, and social justice to meet this aim. Whenever we talk about gender equality in our society, we have to use an example. For instance, one is equal to one. However, often women have fewer opportunities for progression and are more vulnerable to exploitation. That's why when we approach gender equality, we need to understand the concept of women and men as operating on a level playing field. Gender equality requires equal*

*enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources, and rewards. Therefore, if we want stability, peace, and a developed society in Burma, empower them [women], focus more on access to opportunities and resources so that we can hope for the acceleration of gender equality in our country."*

Lway Poe Ngeal, women's rights activist and General Secretary of the Women's League of Burma. She recently received the EU's 2020 Schuman Award for her outstanding merits in defending women's and minority rights in Burma/Myanmar

Together with women's rights activists and feminists, we call for economic justice, access to reproductive health rights, bodily autonomy, feminist action for climate justice, the creation and innovation of opportunities for women, and an end to gender-based violence in Burma/Myanmar.

The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) is a non-governmental human rights organization founded in 1995 by a group of Mon relief workers, students, and community leaders. HURFOM works to monitor the human rights situation in southern Burma/Myanmar, publishing print and online news, lengthy reports, and analysis of ongoing human rights violations.



News

# LANDMINE BLAST INJURES VILLAGER IN YEBYU



March 10, 2020

**HURFOM:** In the late afternoon of February 29, 2020, a local villager from what is known locally as the Ka Lae village, Yar Phu village track, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division suffered injuries from a landmine blast.

The victim, 26-year-old Min Seik Lwin was riding a motorcycle to his plantation to investigate a fire. The front wheel of his bike came into contact with a landmine that exploded, and he suffered injuries to his right arm.

*“The plantation nearby his, was on fire and he rushed there to stop the fire. He stepped on a landmine planted in the lane to his plantation and got a small injury in his arm. The front wheel of his bike was totally destroyed,”* said the victim’s mother.

Min Seik Lwin was taken for medical treatment and his condition has improved, though he is currently unable to work.

On March 1, 2020, landmines were discovered on a lane between the Taw Lawi and Ka Lae villages, according to the Yar Phu village track Administrator, U Khin Maung Oo.

Currently villagers are afraid of going to their plantations along this laneway.

*“We don’t know who set up the landmines. In the past, both parties (the NMSP – New Mon State Party and the KNU – Karen National Union) have been responsible for landmine blasts,”* said the Administrator.

In order to avoid future incidents, officials from the NMSP and the KNU will have a meeting on March 9, reported the Administrator.

Ka Lae village is mostly inhabited by Mon plantation owners and workers. There are 20 houses hosting a population of approximately 100 people.

In 2018 and 2019, there were approximately 8 landmine blasts in Yebyu Township resulting in injuries to local villagers.





News

# TWO LANDMINE BLASTS IN ONE DAY SERIOUSLY MAIM TWO VILLAGERS



plantations have been on fire at least 5 times.

*“The incidents happened in the Karen (KNU – Karen National Union) controlled area. Nothing happened in our controlled area. We have to increase the number of security forces to control the situation. If we have enough security forces, we can control the situation,”* said an official of Dawei District New Mon State Party (NMSP).

The Taw Lawi Administrator, Nai Bnyair added the opinion that only negotiations between the NMSP and the KNU can solve the problem.

Although both parties had decided to meet on March 9 to discuss a February 29 landmine blast, that meeting did not happen due to the absence of the members from the KNU.

*“If the problem can’t be solved quickly, villagers will face more problems in the future. The villagers rely on plantation and rubber farming. If they are not allowed to go to their plantation and to protect their plantations from fire, their livelihood can be ended. That’s why both parties must settle the problem quickly,”* said the Administrator.

There have been 3 landmine blasts within two weeks in the area with villagers suffering serious injuries.

March 12, 2020

**HURFOM:** On March 10, 2020, two villagers from Ka Lae village, Yar Phu village track, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division lost their legs in two separate landmine explosions.

35-year-old Maung Ah Pine was enroute to repair a damaged water pipeline between Myauk Chaw and Ka Lae villages. On the way, he stepped on a landmine and lost his right leg.

On the same day, while going to his plantation in Ka Lae village, 45-year-old

U Win Hline also stepped on a landmine and lost his left leg.

Both victims were admitted to the Ye General Hospital, where the medical staff determined the victims had to undergo leg amputation surgeries, reported the Taw Lawi Administrator, Nai Bnyair.

The public water pipeline near the landmine blast was also destroyed.

Villagers expressed suspicion behind the incident because nearby



News

# ANOTHER VILLAGER KILLED IN LANDMINE BLAST

March 26, 2020

**HURFOM:** While on a hunting trip, two villagers from Yin Yel village, Ye Chaung Phyar Region, Mon State suffered from another land mine explosion. One of the two villagers stepped on the landmine and was killed on March 18 2020.

40-year-old Nai Ah Log was killed by the landmine. He lived in Kan Ne village and worked on a plantation.

*“The two villagers went into the forest to hunt. They [initially] went by bike. When they couldn’t go [any further] by bike, they went on foot. They took a break from betel nut chewing and one of them sat down where a landmine was buried. When he stood up, the landmine exploded. One of them was [thrown from the blast site] and fainted for about a half hour. They*

*[eventually] helped each other back to the village, and one of them died on the way back. Nothing happened to the other one,”* said a villager who learned the event from U San Win, the survivor.

Because the territory involves both the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and the Karen National Union (KNU), the parties have formed township level committees tasked with helping to stop landmine incidents and to rapidly share information.

The NMSP and the KNU had recently held a meeting at the Yar Phuu Monastery in Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division on March 25, 2020.

The two parties discussed prioritizing farmland disputes, by ensuring plantation workers and owners are the genuine residents or migrants and to

take steps to remove landmines that have been buried.

*“They (KNU) want to solve the land disputes issues first. Plantation workers in that area are mostly migrants. At first, KNU listed only about 35 workers but now there are more than 100 workers. 60% of them are residents and the rest are migrants. So they (KNU) wanted to make a check. They only accepted workers who already migrated before 2017. Those who migrated after 2017 must be inquired,”* said a local senior monk.

The KNU said they would remove installed landmines but they would not take accountability for further landmine explosions. They also agreed to arrange meetings with the local plantation workers/owners.

...





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](mailto:info@rehmonnya.org)

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

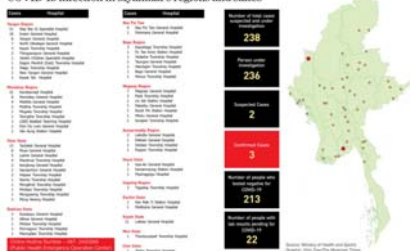
With regards,

Director

Human Rights Foundation of Monland

## COMMODITY PRICES RISE SHARPLY AS COVID-19 CASES CONFIRMED IN MYANMAR

Number of people being tested for suspected COVID-19 infection in Myanmar's regions and states



March 26, 2020

**HURFOM:** Since the Ministry of Health and Sports confirmed the presence of 2 cases of COVID-19 in Myanmar, on March 23, 2020, people in Ye, Mon State have started panic buying. The price of rice and other commodities has risen sharply. There are also shortages, and some shops are closed, according to local people.

*“This morning, lots of people rushed to shops to buy commodities. They mainly bought rice and instant noodles and prices rose sharply. There is a shortage of commodities,”* said Nai Oo Lay, a community worker in Ye.

Soon after the statement by the Ministry of Health and Sports, the Ministry of Education announced all university exams and student registration processes were postponed. The Ministry also ordered all university students to leave their residence on March 24.

The return of university students has further fueled the worries of local people resulting in panic buying and shortages at local grocery stores.

*“The price has risen from 5,000 to 7,000 Kyat per bag of rice but there is still lots of demand. In the evening,*

*there was no rice to sell in some shops. Rice from Mawlamyine was transported to Ye, but it can’t fulfill the demand. Rice and instant noodles in Ye are nearly out of stock,”* said Nai Oo Lay.

The President’s Office announced that people must not raise the price of rice and other commodities and warned there will be punishment for price gouging.

Many migrant workers in Thailand have also returned to Ye, via both legal and irregular routes, adding further to local residents worry about the spread of the virus. This situation has also fueled panic buying.

As of March 25, 2020, there are 3 confirmed cases of COVID-19, and 238 suspected cases. Another 26 cases are awaiting laboratory test results.

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# RETURNEES MUST REPORT TO THE AUTHORITIES TO SLOW COVID-19 INFECTION RATES

**စေလကြောင်း၊ စေလကြောင်းနှင့်နယ်စပ်ဒေသများမှတစ်ဆင့် ပြန်လာနိုင်ခြင်းအတွင်းသို့ ဝင်ရောက်လာသူများအတွက် COVID-19 ရောဂါနှင့်ပတ်သက်သော ကျန်းမာရေးဆိုင်ရာ သတိပေးချက်အလက်များ**

ကိုရိုနာဗိုင်းရပ်စ်ရောဂါ COVID-19 ပြစ်ပွားရာဒေသမှ ပြန်လာသူများအနေဖြင့် စေလဆိုင်ရာ အုပ်ချုပ်ရေးဌာန (သို့မဟုတ်) ကျန်းမာရေးဌာနသို့ မဖြစ်မနေ သတိပေးရမည်။ ပြန်လည်ရောက်ရှိပြီး ၁၄ ရက်အတွင်း ကျန်းမာရေးနှင့် အာဏာအာရုံကြီးစွာရှိ သက်မှတ်မနေရာများတွင် (သို့မဟုတ်) မိမိနေထိုင်သော နေထိုင်ခန်း၊ မိသားစုများနှင့် ရင်းနှီးစွာ ပူးတွဲနေထိုင်ခြင်း မပြုရပါ။ သီးသန့်ခြံခြားနေထိုင်ပါ။

မိမိတွင် ရောဂါလက္ခဏာများ ပြင်းထန်လာပါက နီးစပ်ရာ ကျန်းမာရေးဌာနသို့ အကြိမ်ကြိမ် သတိပေးပြီး ကုသမှုခံယူပါ။ ရောဂါ/မရှိမသေချာချိန်တွင် သတိပေးခြင်း၊ သီးသန့်ခြံခြားနေထိုင်ခြင်း၊ အသွားအလာကန့်သတ်ခြင်း (Quarantine) ပြုလုပ်ခြင်းဖြင့် မိမိတို့ပတ်ဝန်းကျင်ကို ကာကွယ်နိုင်မည်ဖြစ်ပြီး မိမိတို့အား ကုသမှုများ နည်းလျှင် အသက်အေးစေခြင်းမှ ကာကွယ်နိုင်မည်ဖြစ်ပြီး မိသားစုဝင်များ အတွက် သန့်ရှင်းရေးဆိုင်ရာ အချက်အလက်များအား ကာကွယ်ပေးနိုင်မည်ဖြစ်ပါသည်။

နာရီချ စေ့စပ်ဆိုင်ရာဆိုင်ရာဆိုင်ရာ နာရီချဆိုင်ရာ ဖိစပ်မှု တစ်ခါတစ်ရံ (သို့မဟုတ်) တစ်ခါတစ်ရံတွင် လုံခြုံစေရန် ဖွဲ့စည်းပေးသော တစ်ရပ်တည်း အဖွဲ့အစည်းများကို အဖွဲ့ဝင်များသည် ဝန်ထုပ်ဝန်ပိုးများကို ဝန်ထုပ်ဝန်ပိုးများ ပြန်ပေးရမည်။ မိမိတွင်ရောဂါ/မရှိမသေချာချိန်တွင် အခြားသူများအား ဟောပြောပေးရန် ဖိစပ်မှုနှင့်အညီ (Surgical Mask) ကို ဝန်ထုပ်ဝန်ပိုးများ အချိန်ကြာမြင့်စေရမည်။

လက်ကို ချေ့ဆေးခြင်း အသုံးပြုခြင်း အချိန် ၂၀ ကြာအောင် မကြာခင် ချေ့ဆေးခြင်း (သို့မဟုတ်) Alcohol ၆၀% နှင့် အထက်ပါဝင်သော လက်သန့်စင်ဆေးရည် ကို အသုံးပြုပါ။

လူထုဝန်းဝန်း လူထုဝန်းဝန်းသောနေရာများကို သွားလာခြင်းမှ လှောင် (လှောင်) ရှောင်ကြဉ်ပါ။ အထူးသဖြင့် အချိန်အချိန် ၂၀ မကြာခင် ချေ့ဆေးခြင်း၊ မိမိအချိန်အချိန် အချိန်အချိန် (ဥပမာ - အတတ်အသင် ပန်းကန်ခွက်လောင်းများ) ကို သီးခြားထားရမည်။ နေရာတစ်နေရာတည်းနေထိုင်ရမည်။

ကျန်းမာရေးနှင့် အာဏာအာရုံကြီးစွာရှိသူများအနေဖြင့် လိုအပ်ချက်အရ သင့်တော်သော ဝန်ထုပ်ဝန်ပိုးများတွင် ထောက်ပံ့မှု ဝင်ရောက် အသွားအလာ ကန့်သတ်ခြင်း (Quarantine) ပြုလုပ်ပါက ပူးတွဲပါ အစာအာရုံစွက်ပေးပါ။

March 30, 2020

**HURFOM:** Due to the spread of COVID-19, the Kyaikmayaw township and village level General Administration Department (GAD) and Township Public Health Department are cooperating to develop a list of returnees to Myanmar from foreign countries. The intent is to be able to conduct a medical check on these individuals. Health authorities are insisting returnees must follow a strict home quarantine for 14 days, in order to prevent the infection from spreading further and faster, throughout the country.

*“If those who returned from foreign countries have symptoms, such as a fever and cough, they must be brought to the nearest hospital and they must stay separated from their family members. We’re giving these instructions while collecting the list of returnees. Returnees must be in a strict home quarantine for 14 days. We also put a notice that those who returned via illegal routes must report to their*

*village administration. We urge villagers that if they are aware of illegal returnees, they must report this to the authorities,”* said U Kyaw Myint, the Chief of Kyaikmayaw Township GAD.

On March 24, there were more than 4,500 returnees from Thailand and 643 of them returned to Mon State.

A Mon State government led group, including the Karen Ethnic Affairs Minister, Saw Aung Myint Kine went to Myanmar to bring back returnees.

*“Among those returnees brought by the State government, workers who are from our township, must have a medical check first. Then, they may be sent to their homes and they must stay in strict home quarantine for 14 days,”* said U Kyaw Myint.

The Mon State government is emphasizing that returnees must stay at home at all times but separately from family members. Proper protections means not touching any family members, to wear surgical masks during 14-day home quarantine, not to have meals together with family members, not to go to any crowded areas, and to report to the public health department if there is any symptom of illness. It is also critical for all family members to wash their hands frequently with soap and water.

*“The government delivered a pamphlet with (COVID-19) education. There were medical checks in the village. Now the list of returnees is being collected in the villages,”* said a local resident.

As of March 27, there were 5 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Myanmar and there were 21 suspect cases in Mon State. According to the State Public Health Department, the Mon State government has prepared about 800 beds for coronavirus patients.

U Thein Swe, the Union Minister for the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, made clear that returnees who failed to cooperate with a medical checkup requirement of COVID-19 will face punishment in accordance with the Infectious Diseases Prevention Act.

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