

Rhododendron

Chin Human Rights Organization

Democracy involves the right of the people freely to determine their own destiny. The exercise of this right requires a system that guarantees freedom of expression, belief and association, free and competitive elections, respect for the inalienable rights of individuals and minorities, free communications media, and the rule of law.

— (From NED's founding *Statement of Principles and Objectives*, 1984)

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EDITORIAL

A Year in Review: Message from CHRO Executive Director

Dear Friends,

2009 was a tumultuous year for Chin communities throughout the world, as Chin in Burma struggled with pervasive human rights violations and extreme food shortages; Chin in India struggled with limited refugee protections and humanitarian concerns; Chin in Malaysia struggled with security abuses; and Chin in resettlement countries struggled with a faltering world economy. However, CHRO rose to the challenges presented in 2009 and made significant in-roads to respond to the hardships and tribulations facing our Chin brethren. As the Executive Director of CHRO, I am proud of the commitment, love, and concern CHRO's staff, board members, and supporters have demonstrated in 2009 to ensure the rights of the Chin people are protected.

This year marked CHRO's tenth year of prioritizing international advocacy as a core activity. Upon receiving status as a non-profit in Canada in 1999, CHRO began raising attention to Chin issues in world forums, such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (now Human Rights Council), the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, as well as with governments, international agencies, and advocacy groups throughout the world. These achievements have ensured that the Chin concerns are not ignored.

In 2009, CHRO organized a series of concerts in Australia, the U.S. and Europe to raise awareness and donations for community-based relief teams providing essential aid to families affected by food shortages in Chin State.

CHRO released two full-length reports: one report, released in April, highlighted the humanitarian hardships of Chin refugees and asylum seekers in Delhi, India, and the second report, released in September, raised further attention on the continuing food crisis in Chin State. CHRO contributed substantially to the Human Rights Watch report released in January and participated in advocacy events in connection with the release. CHRO also participated in advocacy trips to Korea, Japan, the U.K., Czech Republic, France, Norway, and Canada. In 2009, CHRO continued to document human rights violations through the bi-monthly Rhododendron publication. We continued work closely with and support Chin communities living as refugees in India and Malaysia.

CHRO's work in 2009 would not have been possible without donations and financial support from several institutions, individuals, and churches. We are grateful for this support and hope that continuing support of CHRO's programs will result in increased protection, security, and well-being for the Chin people in 2010.

Sincerely,

Salai Bawi Lian Mang

EXTORTION & ARBITRARY MEASURES

Soldiers Extort Money from Cattle Traders

2 November 2009

Burmese army patrol column commander from Light Infantry Battalion (LIB-266), based at Vuangtu army camp in Thantlang township, northern Chin state, on 15 October 2009, extorted nearly two million Kyats from cross-border cattle traders, one of the victims reported to CHRO.

“We got arrested just past Hriphi village. The route is a new one. Some one must have informed the army. We were followed after and got captured. They then took us back to the village where they demanded the money” said Pu Thang Sang.

Major Pyi Sone, patrol column (II) commander and his troops had captured 22 cows from three cow traders between Hriphi and Tluang Ram village. They were asked to pay Kyat 1,600,000 to bail out their cows.

Unable to pay the demanded amount at one time, the traders paid one million Kyats on the condition that they would pay up the remaining amount on their way back from the Indian border, which was set for October 25, 2009. To ensure that they comply, the soldiers confiscated their national registration card as collateral.

“We were told to reach back Hriphi village on October 15, 2009. If we fail to reach on time, they will seize our ID,” explains Pu Thawng Uk, one of the three traders.

Cross-border Traders Extorted 600,000 Kyats

9 December 2009

A group of cross-border businessmen who sell cattle and pigs to India’s Mizoram State were extorted more than half a million Kyats by Burmese soldiers on 20 October 2009.

Group leader U Hre Lian reported to Chin Human Rights Organization that on the day of the incident he and his associates were herding 20 cows to the Indian border when they were stopped by a patrolling Burmese army unit from Light Infantry Battalion (268) at Tlangzaar village near Falam Town. The soldiers immediately demanded 300,000 Kyats as the price of ransom for their cows.

In demanding the money the soldiers threatened the traders; “Life would be much easier for you if cooperate with us and give us the money. You can be charged for illegally exporting goods. All your cows can be confiscated.”

The soldiers let go of the group after they got paid the money. But U Hre Lian and his group were chased after by the soldiers when they decided that the money they demanded was not enough. They caught up with the group 30 miles later and demanded an additional 200,000 Kyats.

“One of my associates complained about the injustice. But an enraged soldier jumped up and punched him in the face four times,” U Hre Lian said.

In a similar incident, Sergeant U Tin Aung from the same Burmese army battalion based at Tihbual camp extorted 100,000 Kyats from a pig trader on 18 October 2009.

Arbitrary Measures Blamed for Declining Crop Yields

9 November 2009

Local farmers in southern Chin State have been facing crops deficit in recent years, because they have been forced to grow only green pea by Burmese troops from Light Infantry Battalion (LIB-289), based in Paletwa township of southern Chin state.

The commander of LIB-289 had seized a plot of land of about twenty one acres in the vicinity of the army compound and asked the local farmers to grow green pea on it. As a result, the productivity of local farmers has been greatly compromised.

“The land is not fertile enough to grow green peas, and in addition, there is no fence around the plantation so the vegetations get eaten up by domestic animals,” said a local farmer Lian Thang.

He said that about 20 households are involved in cultivating the plantation, a ratio of one family per acre, but no one got successful results. He said that the main reason was that the local climate is not compatible with growing the green pea.

The arbitrary measure has been in place since 2002 and farmers have been struggling with crop productivity decline for the last seven years.

Lian Thang said that local households are making turns cultivating the pea crop each year, and are required to purchase the seeds at the rate of 8000 Kyats per tin out of their own pockets.

Farmers from northern Chin State’s Tonzang Township and parts of Thantlang Township are also facing similar hardships due to the arbitrary measures imposed by the army.

Funds Collected to Support Militias

14 November 2009

Beginning 10 October, local authorities in Htauhkyant Village have been collecting funds from the public in order to finance the salaries of local militias.

Citing directives from higher authorities, the Chairman of Htauhkyant Village Peace and Development Council ordered seven villages Htauhkyant Village Tract to contribute 2000 Kyats per household in order to pay for the salaries of militia trainees. The villages include Thayakung, West Santha, East Santha, Yuathit, Kyun Chaung, Kya Inn and Htauhkyant.

The deadline for payment was fixed as the end of October.

“I was at the Village Tract meeting held on 8 October where the Chairman read out a directive from higher authorities, which stipulated that each household in the area contribute 2000 Kyats for the militia training,” said one member of the VPDC.

There are roughly 1800 households in the Village Tract, which consists of seven villages. A total of 85 persons in the Tract have attended the militia training.

Money Collected from Residents of Paletwa Town

20 November 2009

Starting in September, authorities in Paletwa town of southern Chin State began collecting money from local residents at the rate of 5000 Kyats per household.

The money was meant to power a diesel fuel-powered electric generator so that are seen as enjoying the comfort of electricity when the SPDC Minister of Electricity visits the town in late October.

Of about 2000 household in Paletwa town, only a third have access to electricity. Local authorities have warned that any household who failed to pay the money would have their electricity supply cut off. They also warned residents that they would be charged double for failure to meet the payment deadline set for 20th October.

“The minister’s visit is to last only 78 hours and residents are to enjoy a 24-hr supply of electricity for the 5000 they are required to pay. The rest of the money will be squandered off by the town’s officials,” said a government employee working at the Township Peace and Development Council.

Residents Pay Municipal Tax without Getting Service

7 December 2009

Residents of Chin State's capital Haka are complaining about not receiving any municipal services despite the fact that Township Municipal Office is regularly collecting taxes from the public.

Each household is required to pay 3000 Kyats in municipal tax, which includes services for water, street lights, garbage removal, environmental maintenance etc. But residents are saying that the municipal office has provided little services to the residents.

A local resident U Biak Lian said, "It is understandable that we are paying property tax, but it is not fair that we have to give them money for the services they never provided. The streets are lit only areas where military officers live; we received our water from NGOs who built us the piped supply system; we disposed our own garbage ourselves and they made us clean the environment too."

Another resident and mother said, "I got into an argument with the people who are collecting the taxes. They said that they were just doing what have been ordered by higher authorities. They said that if I have anything to complain then I complain it to the higher authorities. You know what is like in Burma, if you dare to complain such things you would get sent to jail in an instant."

Residents Ordered to Build Street Drainage

10 December 2009

Residents living on the main street in Haka were ordered by the Township Municipal Office to build a street drainage system in front of their houses stretching through their property area. Failure to comply with the order is to result in a half a million Kyats in fine.

The drainage should measure three feet in depth and three feet in width and is to be properly walled with stones.

"The order affects all the residents living on each side of Bokyoke Street. As the drainage is to be properly walled, we have to hire a mason. This cost anywhere from 30,000 to 50,000 Kyats. Residents with stretched areas along the street could end up spending up to 400,000 Kyats to do the work," an unnamed resident explained.

Many residents were driven in debts as they tried to complete it before the deadline to avoid a fine of half a million Kyats. The deadline for completion was set for the end of October.

"Our family was in debt of 200,000 Kyats to build the drainage. This was why I came to Mizoram to seek jobs so we could repay the debts," said a Haka resident.

There are around 6000 households in Hakha and about 2000 of them estimated to be affected by the order. It is learned that the Municipal Office is planning to build a

sidewalk platform in the summer of 2010. Residents are bracing for yet another hardship associated with the development plans.

THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Child Worker Physically Abused by Employer

4 November 2009

On October 17, a child laborer working at a teashop was severely beaten by his employer resulting in injuries on the child's head.

The victim Thang Ngai is only 13 years old and is employed as a help by U Win Bo who runs a teashop in Kalaymyo, Sagaing Division.

The beating happen when the boy requested an advance payment on his salary so that he could send the money to his parents who live in Chin State.

A relative of the boy said, "The employer got ticked off when the boy simply asked for help by requesting an advance pay so that he could send the money to his parents."

In Kalaymyo, people working at teashops normally earn 10,000 to 15,000 Kyats per month. But child workers like Thang Naing gets paid 5000 Kyats due to their minor status.

U Win Bo currently employs five child workers at his teashop, which is located on Natchaung Street in Kalaymyo. He is said to regularly physically mistreat his child employees whenever they made a mistake.

U Win Bo has reportedly threatened the child not to reveal about the beating to his parents.

Boy Escaped to India to Avoid Forcible Recruitment

7 November 2009

A 14 year-old Chin boy has fled to India following an attempt to forcibly recruit him to join military service by the Burmese army.

A school dropout, the boy [name withheld] is from Sakta Village of Haka Township.

Testifying to Chin Human Rights Organization, the boy said that in mid August 2009, he was approached by recruiting officer U Kyaw from Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion (266) based in Haka and tried to lure him into the army.

A warrant officer with the Burma Army, U Kyaw is in charge of recruitment in Haka Township and has traveled the area extensively. Getting wind of the boy's situation as a school dropout who was in very good terms with his parents, U Kyaw started enticing the boy.

Initially agreeing to join the army, the boy later got cold feet when his parents strongly objected to him joining the Burma Army. Upon learning that the boy has second thoughts, U Kyaw forcibly took the boy and tried to take him to Hakha.

The boy escaped on the way to Hakha and took shelter at a relative's house at Zokhua village, some 12 miles away from his native village. He later accompanied travelers heading to the Indian border and made it to Mizoram.

FORCED LABOR & CORRUPTION

Corruption Leads to Civilian Forced Labor

12 November 2009

Local army authorities resorted to using civilian forced labor after much of the budget appropriated for constructing a rural health center at Lungler village of Thantlang Township has been embezzled by the Tactical Operations Command (II) commander and the Health Officer of Thantlang Township Health Department.

Contracted to U Aung Thein, the construction job was started in the beginning of August 2009. But Burmese soldiers stationed at Lungler village began forcing civilians to perform forced labor when it was discovered that the remaining budgeted funds were insufficient.

“Civilians were made to contribute gravels and sand for the construction at an average of 10 tins of sand per ordinary household,” a villager of Lungler said. “Several other villages in the surrounding areas were affected by the order,” he continued.

The order compelling civilians to engage in forced labor came from Captain Pyi Sone, Lungler army camp commander belonging to Light Infantry Battalion (266). But the captain had all the headmen of each village sign a document indicating that the villagers did so voluntarily and on their own accord.

The new health center, measuring 100 by 60 ft, is projected to be completed by the end of 2009.

The jurisdiction of Lungler army camp consists of at least 15 villages in the surrounding area and each of these villages is affected by the forced labor order.

Authorities Refuse to Accept Donations in Fear of Corruption Exposure

13 December 2009

Authorities in Haka have refused to accept dozens of street light bulbs donated by a local youth group *Vazuun Bu*, which fear that unlit streets in the Chin State capital were cause of increased crime rates.

A youth member who was among the group delivering the light bulbs to the Township Peace and Development Council said, "The reasons they refused to accept our donation was because they fear that the public would come to know of the corruptions within the TDPC office."

He said that one official had privately told them that there is a one million budget sanctioned for the street lights, but that money had been squandered up and that accepting a donation from the public would expose the corruptions.

Crime rates have considerably gone up in Hakha in the past years, with increased numbers of assault and robbery at night especially on unlit areas of the streets. In October 2009, a group of thugs robbed a 60 year-old man of 700,000 Kyats that was sent to him by one of his sons working in a foreign country as he passed through a dark area of the street carrying the cash.

Suspicious Monk Confiscate Public Owned Pool for Personal Profits

18 December 2009

A Buddhist monk confiscated a pool owned by the local people and turned it into a money generating business to profit himself. Transferred from Rangoon to a monastery in Kanthaya Village of Kalay Township, Sagaing Division, in 2006 the local people suspect that the monk is a member of the Burmese military intelligence.

With about 120 households, and located in the plain areas of Sagaing Division, Kanthaya has been struggling with water scarcity, especially in summer times. In 2005, villagers pooled together money and built a piped water system, sourcing the water from a stream 4 miles away from the village. The water is stored in a pool built near a Buddhist monastery so all the villagers can share the scarce resource.

Immediately upon arriving in the area and manning the monastery in 2006, the monk confiscated the pool and started charging the villagers for their use of water. According to the residents, the monk charges 20 Kyats for three gallons of water, and 50 Kyats for bathing.

The monk has now built a fence around the pool and locked it at night. He has a youth standing guard by the pool. A recent visitor to Kanthaya village said that as recently as November 15, he had paid 50 Kyats to the monk both times he took a bath at the pool.

Local people said that the monk is often seen together with Burmese intelligence personnel in Kalaymyo.

“In June 2009, the monk confiscated a 7-acre farmland adjacent to his monastery without any compensation to the owner. He has been making a personal profit out of the produce of the farm ever since,” said one local person.

FOOD CRISIS IN CHINLAND

Hunger Forced Man, Nephew to India in Search of Food

15 December 2009

A 58 year-old man and his 17 year-old nephew from southern Chin State ended up in the streets in Mizoram after abandoning their native village in southern Chin State where they faced severe hunger and crossing the border into India in search of food.

The two arrived in India on November 22, 2009.

Unable to speak the local Mizo language, U Htay Saing and nephew Maung Soe Boh ended up on the streets in Aizawl. Native of Kyat Ma Ain Village of Paletwa Township, the two are from a family member of five and they left behind three other family members at their village. U Htay Saing is visually impaired in both eyes but the nephew can see on his left eye.

“I am not ashamed to say that we came here to beg for food,” said U Htay Saing. “We were discovered by a pastor at the Assembly of God Church when we were preparing to go to bed on the streets,” he continued.

The pastor stumbled upon the two on the side of the streets and took them to his home when he discovered that they came to Mizoram in search of food.

U Htay Saing said that his village has about 30 households with a population of about 100 people. Un-reached by any kind of relief aid, at least 6 households have migrated to Mizoram in recent months.

Chin Food Crisis Worsened By locusts and Unusual Wind

15 November, 2009

The ongoing food crisis initially caused by a plague of rats has gone from bad to worse due to the unexpected outbreak of crop-devouring swarms of locusts and sparrows in Burma's Chin State.

And this year's crop yields have plunged to a record low as a result of the unusual 'warm wind' in September that made the crops parched and unproductive in the mautam-affected areas.

Some villages with farmers predicting for this year a total crop yield of 400 buckets (1 bucket = 10.5kg) from their paddy fields have now got about 50 buckets or less, according to a recent survey by cross-border relief aids groups.

Making another fact-finding trip to Indian-Burma border, Victor Biak Lian of CHRO (Chin Human Rights Organisation) said: "I would like to repeat the existence of food crisis in our land and now it is not only the rats that cause problems to our people but also grain-eating birds and crop-destroying wind that make the situation worse. Let's make our mind clear and work together to help our brothers and sisters fight against starvation."

Recently, another new wave of an estimated 2,000 Khumi-Chins in Southern Chin State have fled into Mizoram State of India in search of food, he added.

Reports confirmed that this crisis has not only divided families but also torn communities and villages apart, pushing children to drop out of schools in order to help find edible foods in the jungles.

In some bamboo-covered areas of Southern Chin State, the bamboo seeds begin to grow flowering and bearing fruits just after germination.

General Secretary of Zomi Baptist Convention, Rev. M. Thawng Kam, said: "Mautam has not for sure ended in Chin State. People in some areas have gradually seen a positive change but their sufferings have not ended immediately as the effects of mautam still continue."

"There are some new areas that are worst hit by mautam in Southern Chin State such as Paletwa township. And there are still some mautam-hit victims who have not received any relief aids till today due to difficult communication and transport. Our people need a collaborative and collective support."

As part of global campaign against starvation in Chin State, a series of concerts has since late 2008 been organised by Chin communities in Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, Germany, Denmark, Norway, UK and USA, with aims of raising awareness and fund for mautam-hit victims in Chin State.

Food assistance has been delivered to some areas by both international and local NGOs as well as cross-border aid groups. But there are many mautam-affected villages in the remote region of Chin State that have not been reached until today due to difficult access.

Locally known as mautam, the ongoing food crisis has been ravaging Chin State since 2007 after a once-every-fifty-year natural phenomenon in which bamboos flower and bear fruits started in late 2006. The rats, after eating the flowers and fruits, start to make a dramatic increase in their population and subsequently turn to forage on crops, stored grains and barns. This results in the birth of the so-called mautam food crisis.

PERSONAL SECURITY

Violent Crime on the Rise due to Lax Law Enforcement in Capital

16 November 2009

The lack of proper law enforcement in Haka has led to increased violent crimes in the capital of Chin State. Since August, four people have been admitted to hospital due to injuries sustained from indiscriminate violence at the hands of local thugs, a local youth leader has reported to Chin Human Rights Organization.

An organized gang of about 30 youngsters have wreak havoc by beating people up on the streets and deliberately damaging private and public properties at night in Haka, causing fear and panic among the public.

“This gang of youth smashed up motorcycles and other properties and beat people on the streets for no reason. Now people dare not go out beyond 8 p.m. at night unless they really have to,” said a leader of the local youth group.

He said that the local authorities have not made any intervention in curbing the rising crime despite the public attempts to have proper law enforcement on the streets of Haka.

Four known members of the gang were reportedly apprehended by citizens and were handed over to the police. More than a dozen people have fallen victims to the gang in the last two months.

Burmese Army Allow Indian Rebels to Commit Violations in Chin State

20 November 2009

Members of an insurgency group from northeast India have been reported to commit a litany of human rights abuses against people in northern Chin State, adding to the existing violations committed by the Burmese military.

Among the allegations of human rights violations committed by the Indian rebels include extortion, involvement in drug business and compelling the local people to cultivate opium, forcing them to porter and turning an increasing number of local women into prostitutes.

The Burmese military stationed in the area is not only condoning their presence and behavior, but also is said to have financial interests in having them around, according to a local observer.

“The Burmese army is benefiting from allowing them to freely cultivate opium and extorting money from the local people. They [the rebels] have been getting the local women addicted to drugs and turning them into prostitutes,” said a local man from Cikkha where the rebels are most active.

The Indian rebels from Manipur State have been active in the area since 2005. Having reached an understanding with the Burmese military, they have since been expanding their operations in northern Chin State, as well as, their opium cultivation areas in recent years.

According to the headman of one village in the area, the Indian rebels have been collecting tax from local people whom they have forced to cultivate the opium at the rate of 100,000 Kyats per one acre of poppy. He also said that the Wa armed group from eastern Burma has been making a presence in the area helping them to refine the drug.

STATUS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

Political Prisoners Mistreated in Kalay Prison

20 December 2009

Political prisoners serving their sentences at Kalay Prison are receiving regular mistreatment and inhuman conditions, and eye witness has told Chin Human Rights Organization.

A recent visitor who secretly documented the conditions at the prison said that there are currently 19 political prisoners being held in the facility. It used to house 28 political prisoners but nine have been released to date. Among the currently held in the facility are Nu Nu Swe, Bawi Thang, Ashin Kabira, Aung Naing and Aye Aung.

“These prisoners are treated differently (worse) than ordinary inmates. They can’t be seen by just anyone. They don’t receive any medical treatment when they get sick or fed properly. I saw it with my own two eyes the conditions of Ashin Kabira who had his hands in his back for two full months and even got infested with maggots in his wrists,” the eyewitness said.

According to him, some of the abuses suffered by political prisoners include unexpected beatings, torture and other inhumane treatment, deprivation of sleep and medical attention and denial of visitors from outside.

He also said that the prison guards usually confiscate food and other items brought in by outside visitors.

Six prisoners are currently serving sentences of more than 15 years. They are Aung Naing (65 years), Sandah (aka) Nyi Nyi (45) years, Aye Aung (45 years), Nay Lin Aung (22 years), Kyaw Kyaw (20 years) and Tin Maung Aye (20) years. Student activists and

members of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) make up the majority of political prisoners.

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Church Construction Materials Storage Destroyed

14 November, 2009

A shack intended to store remains of church building foundation destroyed last year by military-backed thugs, and construction materials donated by Chin Christian students has been torn down during holidays in Tharyarwaddy village, Kalay Township early this month.

The tarpaulin-roofed shack, which was built on 6 June, 2009, had its two pillars cut down, roof torn apart and other parts completely shattered, according to a student eyewitness who visited the place last Tuesday.

The student was quoted as saying that some villagers who got involved in the destruction did not say anything when they were asked questions regarding the incident.

With a small contribution collected out of their pocket money by Chin Christian students for a few years, a plot of land was bought and the building foundation laid in 2005. In November 2008, some pillars and parts of building framework were erected by the students themselves voluntarily.

Late last year, Chairman of Kalay TPDC (Township Peace and Development Council), U Ko Ko Lat, ordered the construction to be stopped, and the construction materials were confiscated and kept in the compound of the village headman after the church construction was completely destroyed by military-backed thugs.

It has been claimed that after the order was issued, the construction was not destroyed immediately in attempts to avoid the possible clashes between the students and Junta-backed USDA and 'Shuan-aa-shin' members, who are responsible for the destruction.

One of the student leaders said the loss at this time was not worth mentioning compared to the previous one which was estimated to be over 2million Kyats.

The building plot and all construction materials owned by Technology Christian Fellowship based in Tharyarwaddy village, Sagaing Division were intended to use for building a chapel and a student hostel for those who are from remote places having difficulties in renting accommodation.

Till today, there has been no reply from Regional and District Office to an official letter of complaint written and submitted by the Student Union in 2008. Meanwhile, it is

claimed that Rector of Kalay Tehnological University has also given pressure on the students not to continue the construction.

For decades, Chin Christians have faced systematic practices of religious discrimination and persecution including denial of permission to construct church buildings and to print Bibles in the country, destruction of Christian crosses planted on top of mountains, closures of Bible colleges, orphanages and churches, and various forms of restrictions and forced labour targeting Christian Chin and pastors.

Chinland Guardian

CHRO'S ANNUAL ACTIVITY FOR THE YEAR 2009

2009 Highlights

- *Coverage in more than 14 media sources and participated in five radio interviews*
- *Raised more than US\$150,000 to support food aid relief efforts in Chin State, and at least US\$94,000 to support Chin community-based partner organizations in India and Malaysia.*
- *Organized a concert series in Australia, U.S., Europe*
- *Released two full-length reports highlighting issues of concern within the Chin community*
- *Visited Chin communities and engaged in advocacy in Korea, Japan, Czech Republic, U.S., U.K, Canada, India, Malaysia, France, Australia, and Norway*
- *Provided briefings to high level government officials, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, and advocacy groups.*

Key Activities of January 2009

- Executive Director Salai Bawi Lian and Board Member Victor Biak Lian, in cooperation with leaders from Chin Baptist Fellowship of America, provided a briefing to the American Baptist Churches (ABC) at Valley Forge on the human rights and humanitarian situation for the Chin people.
- CHRO spoke at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand in Bangkok, Thailand on the occasion of the launch of the Human Rights Watch (HRW) report, "We Are Like Forgotten People," The Chin People of Burma: Unsafe in Burma, Unprotected in India, which CHRO contributed to substantially. CHRO was one of the main presenters during the event and also responded to media inquiries.
- CHRO engaged in several advocacy meetings with HRW related to the release of their report. Meetings included:
 1. US Embassy officials;
 2. Indian Embassy officials;
 3. Australia Embassy officials;
 4. World Food Program officials, including the Asia Regional Director and his deputies; and

5. UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

- CHRO provided a briefing of conditions in Burma and the situation for Chin refugees in India and Malaysia to representatives of Christian Solidarity Worldwide.
- CHRO in coordination with the Canadian Chin Christian Fellowship met with an official from the Canadian International Development Agency as well as the Senior Policy Director and Advisor to the Minister to provide a briefing on the food crisis and political situation in Chin State.

Key Activities of Feb. 2009

- CHRO led a three-person delegation from the nongovernmental organization Children on the Edge (COTE) on a visit to the Chin communities in Malaysia.
- CHRO provided a briefing on the political situation in Chin State to the Political Officer and Vice Consul of the U.S. Embassy in Malaysia.
- CHRO participated in United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) annual consultation meeting with non-governmental organizations in Malaysia and gave a presentation about the Burmese refugee community in Malaysia.
- CHRO in cooperation with the Chin Christian Fellowship in Malaysia led a six-person delegation of the American Baptist Churches from the U.S. in a visit with the Chin community in Malaysia. Following their visit, ABC agreed to remain in communication.
- CHRO Board Member Victor Biak Lian attended the Burma Donor's Consultation meeting in Manila, Philippines.
- CHRO provided information to a researcher from Japan who is working to pressure the Japanese government to grant applications for asylum and become a refugee resettlement country.
- CHRO released the report, *Waiting on the Margins: An Assessment of the Humanitarian Situation of Chin Refugees from Burma in Delhi, India*.
- CHRO published the *Rhododendron* January – February 2009 issue, documenting human rights abuses committed against the Chin people.

Key Activities of March 2009

- CHRO-New Delhi assisted with the visit of an official from Australia Embassy based in Kuala Lumpur to Mizoram State.
- In collaboration with Chin community from three different cities in Australia- Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra- CHRO organized a series of concerts to raise awareness and support for relief teams providing food aid to famine victims in Chin State. Top Mizo singers from India and top Chin singers from Burma participated in the concerts.
- Dawt Chin from CHRO-Delhi attended the Asia Regional Prep-Meeting on UN Mechanisms and Indigenous Peoples in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- CHRO was actively involved in "Free Burma's Political Prisoners Now" Signature Campaign.

- CHRO participated in a Voice of America interview to discuss the report released by Internal Displacement Monitoring Center based in Geneva regarding the Internally Displacement situation in Burma.
- CHRO visited the Chin communities in Malaysia, South Korea, and Japan.
- CHRO organize a meeting in Aizawl with four border-based relief organizations providing food aid to communities affected by food shortages in Chin State. CHRO evaluated the cross-border relief activities.

Key Activities of April 2009

- CHRO met with community-based partner organizations in Malaysia and provided training on writing activities reports and financial statements to the Burma Ethnic Assistance Program (BEAP).
- CHRO met with representatives from the Burma Center Prague from the Czech Republic to discuss the situation of Burmese refugees in India.
- CHRO assisted two Indian film-makers from Free Lance media who are making a documentary about the situation of Burmese refugees in Delhi.
- With the help of the Chin Refugee Committee, CHRO updated the list of refugees having problems with the Foreign Regional Registration Office (FRRO) in Delhi, India.
- CHRO Executive Director met with the Chin community and church leaders in the Washington, DC area to discuss responses to the humanitarian crisis in Chin State.
- US Senate Foreign Relations Committee released its report Trafficking and Extortion of Burmese Migrants in Malaysia and Southern Thailand, to which CHRO contributed material.
- CHRO assisted the Global Health Access Program with their basic health training in Mizoram, India.
- CHRO published Rhododendron Human rights newsletter March-April 2009 issue.

Key Activities of May 2009

- CHRO attended a conference in Bangkok organized by the Global Access to Justice Center and the Burma Lawyer's Committee on the potential of bringing war crimes and crimes against humanity to the International Criminal Court.
- CHRO met with the Oslo Peace Center in Bangkok.
- CHRO met with the Burmese communities in India to discuss a response to Aung San Suu Kyi's trial and later participated in a demonstration in the New Delhi Diplomat quarter.
- CHRO facilitated the visit of two documentary film-makers from Free Lance Media to the homes of Chin refugees living in Delhi, India.
- CHRO joined a sit-in protest in Delhi, India calling for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners in Burma.
- CHRO assisted IOM with the resettlement process of Chin refugees.

- CHRO Board Member Victor Biak Lian represented CHRO at the Burma Roundtable meeting in Toronto and made a presentation on the role of ethnic people in the struggle for democracy in Burma.

Key Activities of June 2009

- CHRO attended Donor's Forum Conference on Migration in Malaysia, a two-day workshop with non-governmental organizations and donor organizations working with migrant workers.
- CHRO visited the Chin partner community-based organizations in Malaysia and discussed conditions in Malaysia.
- CHRO met with the US Embassy in Malaysia and provided a political briefing on the situation in Burma and discussed the situation of refugees in Malaysia.
- CHRO met with a representative of the International Country Orientation Department in Malaysia of the Organization of Migration to discuss problems with the resettlement process to the US
- CHRO joined a "Tibet Youth Camp" in Dharamsala, India.
- CHRO joined a demonstration in front of the Burmese Embassy in Delhi, India in recognition of the 64th birthday of Aung San Suu Kyi.
- CHRO facilitated the visit of a journalist from the Philippines to the homes of refugees in Delhi, India.
- Mai Dawt Chin of CHRO-Delhi gave an interview to the Democratic Voice of Burma about the role of Chin students in the democracy and human rights movement in Burma.
- CHRO met with the Human Rights Education Institute of Burma trainer team to evaluate participants of the Human Rights, Women Rights, Gender, and Child Rights workshops and trainings from 2006-2008.
- CHRO held its annual board meeting in Canada.
- CHRO published Rhododendron Human rights newsletter May-June 2009 issue.

Key Activities of July 2009

- CHRO arranged a trip for the non-governmental organization, Voice of Witness, to visit the Chin community in Malaysia to conduct interviews for a book project.
- CHRO assisted with the editing of the Voice of Chin Refugees Newsletter, an English-language community bulletin published in Malaysia.
- CHRO met with the non-governmental organization, Children on the Edge, to discuss support for partner organizations in Malaysia and India.
- CHRO provided services to the refugee community in New Delhi, including:
 1. counseling services to 10 new refugee families;
 2. translation of cases for seven asylum seekers with UNHCR;
 3. intervention of landlord-tenant (refugees) problems;
 4. house visits with refugee families to document their living situations;
 5. meeting with the Social & Legal Information Center (SLIC), a UNHCR partner, on how to develop better relations and communications with regards to the problems of refugees

- CHRO met with officials of the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs to discuss problems facing Burmese refugees in receiving residential permits through the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO).
- CHRO organized a demonstration in Delhi, India, marking the anniversary of the student massacre in Burma in 1962.

Key Activities of Aug. 2009

- CHRO met with Refugees International to discuss the refugee situation in India and Malaysia.
- CHRO met with a representative of the Norwegian Mission to the East to discuss the famine relief efforts in Chin State.
- CHRO held several meetings with UNHCR and its implementing partners in Delhi, India regarding the case of Burmese refugee who was held for the last two years in a mental facility run by one of UNCHR's local partner without the knowledge of the victim's family or community. CHRO eventually gained this man's release.
- CHRO visited three nursery schools run by UNHCR implementing partners to document conditions of Burmese refugee children in Delhi, India.
- CHRO published Rhododendron Human rights newsletter July-August 2009 issue.

Key Activities of Sept . 2009

- CHRO released an update on the food crisis in a report entitled, [On the Edge of Survival: the Continuing Rat Infestation and Food Crisis in Chin State.](#)
- CHRO prepared an unpublished preliminary assessment on CHRO investigations into the Mwetaung mining project in Kalaymyo.
- CHRO conducted a basic human rights training with the Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HRIEB).
- CHRO facilitated a workshop on "Women under Militarization," sponsored by Burmese, Indian, and Tibetan women living in Delhi, India.
- CHRO initiated a community discussion on the situations of women from Burma.
- CHRO presented a paper entitled, "A Community-Based Approach to Protection: Case Study of the Chin Community in India and Malaysia," at a conference in Oxford University.
- CHRO gave a briefing on the refugee situation in Malaysia to the French Ambassador on Human Rights in Paris.
- CHRO gave a presentation at the Unijazz Center in the Czech Republic during the inauguration of a photo exhibition on the Chin food crisis.
- CHRO gave an hour-long interview with the Czech Republic national radio station "Radio Wave" discussing the famine in Chin State. CHRO also gave radio interviews to the London-based Christian Premiere Radio and BBC.

- CHRO participated in the conference “Promoting Partnership for Transition in Burma” sponsored by Foreign Affairs Department of Czech republic and Euro-Burma office
- CHRO provided briefings on the situation in Chin State and in exile to the following government officials and agencies in Europ

Key Activities of Oct. 2009

- CHRO team participated at Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Networks, where CHRO’s advocacy officer Amy Alexander was elected as Vice Chair Person of the Southeast Asia Working Group
- CHRO represented the issues of refugees in India and Malaysia at the NGO-UNHCR consultation in Bangkok.
- CHRO attended the Detention and International Advocacy Workshop sponsored by the International Detention Coalition in Bangkok.
- CHRO visited our partner community-based organizations in Malaysia and met with the Community Development Unit of UNHCR to discuss its new initiative to provide small grants to refugee community organizations.
- CHRO provided an overview of CHRO and the situation of refugees in Mizoram and Malaysia to representatives of the Norwegian Baptist Mission.
- CHRO met with the Burma Relief Center in Thailand to discuss CHRO’s involvement in the food relief programs in Mizoram.
- CHRO published Rhododendron human rights newsletter September – October 2009 issue.

Key Activities of Nov. 2009

- CHRO attended the Chin National Council meeting in Mizoram, India.
- CHRO assisted Refugee International’s visit to Mizoram and Delhi.
- CHRO helped arrange the visit of Christian Solidarity Worldwide and the Humanitarian Assistance Relief Trust to Delhi and Mizoram, India. Baroness Caroline Cox of the UK House of Lords was among the delegation.
- CHRO prepared expert support testimony for Chin asylum cases being tried in Florida.
- CHRO helped facilitate the production of a four-part photo exhibition on the Chin people.

Key Activities of Dec. 2009

- CHRO participated in the Euro-Burma Office consultation meeting held in Chiang Mai, Thailand.
- CHRO met with the Burma Relief Center in Thailand to review the cross border food aid activities.

- CHRO participated as observer of the Network for Human Rights Documentation-Burma (ND-Burma) meeting in Chiang Mai, Thailand. CHRO was later invited to join as a member of ND-Burma.
- CHRO Executive Director discussed the food crisis and relief efforts in Chin State with the United Nations Humanitarian Aid Reporter at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.
- CHRO conducted a human rights training in Bangalore, India.
- CHRO visited community-based partner organizations in Malaysia and met with representatives from Malaysian non-governmental organizations, SUARAM and Tenaganita. CHRO also raised issues of concern with the head of UNHCR's protection unit.
- CHRO published Rhododendron human rights newsletter November – December 2009 issue.