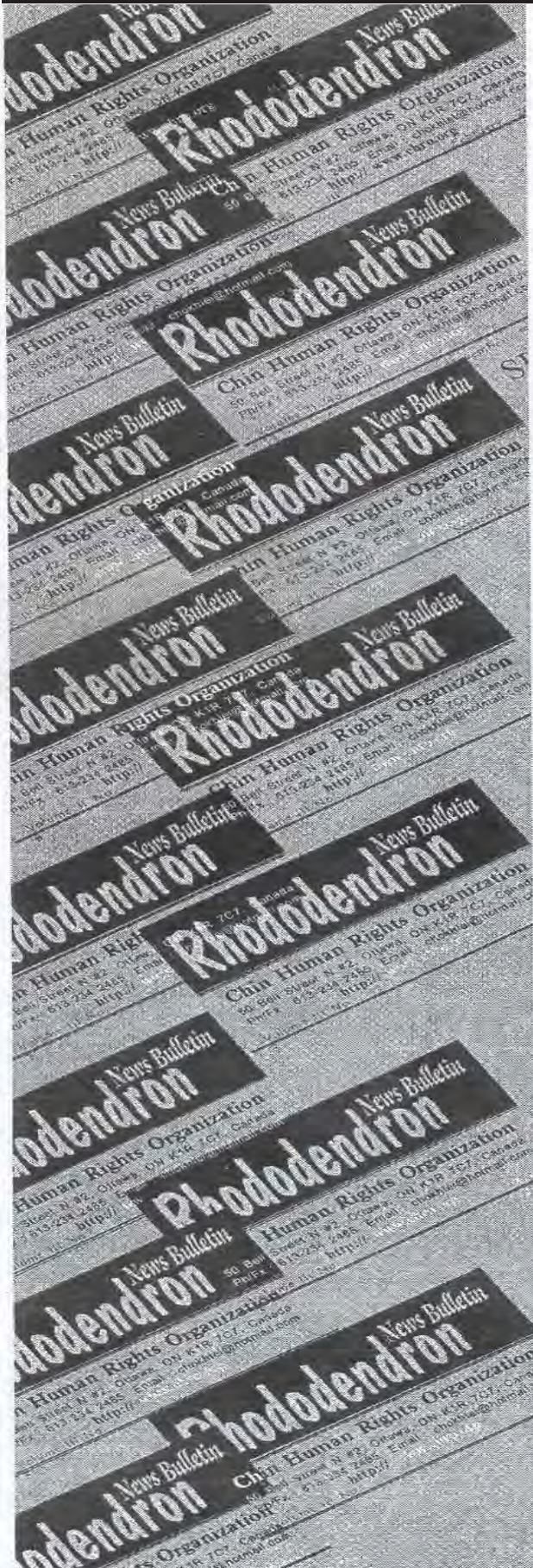


Rhododendron

Chin Human Rights Organization



Putting up a banner that reads "Chin National Day" for its official celebration has been banned. Instead, Burma's authorities ordered "Chin State Day" to be used for celebrating the auspicious day in most places including Hakha, the capital of Chin state.



CHRO TEAM

Executive Director

Salai Bawi Lian Mang

Program Director

Salai Za Uk Ling

Field Director

Terah Thantluang

Advocacy Coordinator

Rachel Flemming

Media Project Coordinator

Van Biak Thang

Project Officers

Plato Van Rung Mang (India)

Ms. Malsawmtluangi Sailo (Thailand)

Project Assistant

Salai Sang Bik

Ms. Lalropuii

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ms. Amy Alexander

Ms. Dawt Chin

Ms. Lalcerliani

Victor Biak Lian

Salai Sang Chin

Terah Thantluang

BOARD OF ADVISORS

Dr. Za Hlei Thang

Rev. Dr. Chum Awi

Chris Lewa

Jack Sterken

Jannie Lasimbang

Pierrette Birraux-Ziegler

Dr. Lian Hmung Sakhong

Pu Nang Lian Thang

Table of Contents

EDITORIAL

- Malaysia: Inching Toward Refugee Protection

ARBITRARY MEASURES

- Millions Collected from Public for School Construction
- Burmese Soldiers Extort Money from Women Traders
- Junta orders people to shift for airport expansion

FORCED LABOR & CONSCRIPTION

- Pervasive Use of Civilian Porters in Southern Chin State
- Dozens Flee as Junta Steps Up Conscription Drive

PUBLIC SAFETY & WELFARE

- Community Safety Still under Threat in Chin State's Capital
- Water Scarcity Poses Growing Concerns in Hakha

SITUATIONS OF REFUGEES

- *Press Release:* CHRO Lauds Malaysia for Plans to Issue IDs to Refugees

REVISITING HISTORY: CHIN NATIONAL DAY

- Interview with Pu Lian Uk MP Elect
 - Banner of "Chin National Day" Banned in Burma
-

**Chin Human Rights Organization
2 Montavista Avenue
Nepean, Ontario K2J 2L3
Canada
www.chro.ca**

Malaysia: Inching Towards Protection of Refugees

Malaysia is one of the leading economies of Southeast Asia. With a stable civilian government for the last many decades, Malaysia is also a leading and respectable member of the 10-nation member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Its fast growing economy during the last decades has made Malaysia an attractive destination for foreign migrants in the region. Among these migrants are political refugees fleeing from oppressive nations from across the region, including from Burma.

But in recent years, Malaysia's reputation and international image has been compromised and even tarnished, ironically by its domestic policy. Despite being a member the prestigious United Nations Human Rights Council from 1996 to 1999, Malaysia's commitment to human rights was regularly challenged by domestic and international rights group, mostly due to its mistreatment of undocumented migrants such as refugees and asylum seekers within Malaysian soil.

The US Committee for Refugees' World Refugee Survey, for example, has regularly cited Malaysia as one of the worst countries in the world that violate the rights of refugees and asylum seekers – a position shared by Malaysian rights groups.

In April of 2009, the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee released a scathing report accusing Malaysia of seriously violating the rights of refugees and asylum seekers and of being complicit in the trafficking of Burmese refugees across its northern borders with Thailand.

However, the Malaysian government has recently announced plans to issue documentations to refugees to regularize their undocumented status, and to possibly integrate them into the workforce on a temporary basis. Chin Human Rights Organization has welcomed this new initiative. Like other rights groups concerned with the protection and well-being of refugees inside Malaysia, CHRO considers this new policy to be a step in the right direction.

This new policy should be further pursued with the view of protecting the rights of the most vulnerable groups. It should take into consideration the status of asylum seekers as being potential refugees, and should provide necessary latitudes so that asylum seekers can also enjoy protection while they are in the process of getting recognized as refugees.

Malaysia has only to gain from being sympathetic to the plight of the world's most vulnerable groups. With this new policy, Malaysia is now inching toward refugee protection.

Millions Collected from Public for School Construction

9 January 2010

A project to construct a primary school building at Lung Rang Village, Falam Township, has not started despite the fact that the authorities have collected millions of Kyats from area residents.

By order of Chairman of Lung Rang Village Peace and Development Council U Tin Maung, the local authorities started collecting money from residents in the entire Village Tract since May of 2008. Although the collection was completed by September 2009, the construction work has not started as of January 2010.

“The two-storey building measuring 60 x 20 feet is projected to cost 10 million Kyats, with the public having to contribute half of the total costs,” said one school teacher who cannot be named for his security.

He continued, “There are at least 450 households in the Village Tract. Households are made to pay the money according to a four-tier system created by the authorities. Households belonging to the first tier had to pay 40,000 Kyats, the second tier 30,000 Kyats and so on. This is so the money totals up to five million Kyats.”

When asked by villagers, U Tin Maung said that the construction had to be put on hold because the State Peace and Development Council has not released the budget, the remaining half of the total projected cost of 10 million Kyats.

Similarly, local authorities in Kalay Township have yet to start repairing a damaged bridge between Htautkyant and Thayakung Villages, though they have collected money from the public for it.

Burmese Soldiers Extort Money from Women Traders

20 January 2010

Burmese Army soldiers in Paletwa township, Chin state extorted Kyat 60,000 from women, threatening them with their guns on January 4.

Commander Than Lwin and his soldiers in Shin Let Wa, village in Paletwa based military camp LIB 234 extorted Kyat 60,000 from four women from Ramri village, Paletwa township. They were selling sesames in Shwe Lai wa village.

“When the sesame sellers arrived in Shwe Lai Wa village, soldiers fired their guns twice in the air, threatening them and asking for money,” said a member of the Peace and Development Council (BPDC) in Shin Let Wa village, sources said.

The soldiers demanded Kyat 60,000 for the women’s 11 tin of sesames and those of a man. The women had two tins of sesames each and the man had three tins. The sesame sellers had to borrow the money from members of the BPDC in Shwe Lai Wa village in order to pay Kyat 60,000.

The present market price of sesame is Kyat 1000 per tin. The sesames are purchased by traders from Arakan state in Burma annually. – *Khonumthung News*.

Junta orders people to shift for airport expansion

22 January 2010

The Township Peace and Development Council in Kalemyo, Sagaing division, Burma has ordered local people in Pinlun block no. 7 and 8 to move to other places before February 2010. The shift is apparently necessary for expansion of an airport.

“There are about 147 houses in these blocks. The airport already extends to TaDaO (bridge). Now it will be extended up to the RTC gate,” said a local.

The order came in the first week of January and the deadline is for February 2010. The local people between Bo Chauh Road to the Southern Primary School (9) will be shifted to other places.

The airport now is only suitable for small aircraft carrying 42 passengers, but it can handle bigger jet aircraft with 75 passengers after the expansion.

A source said that the people to be affected will receive compensation of Kyat 4 lakh for each house. They will be relocated in vacant plots near Kalmyo railway station, Taungphila block and Industrial Estate.

“The allotted location is the land confiscated from the people by the Burmese Army,” said a local.

Each family will be given 70 feet by 40 feet of square land. However, 57 out of 147 families are staying in rented houses. They are facing problems regarding renting other houses in the new location. The relocated place is near LIB 89 military camp and training area.

The junta had tried to demolish the graveyard in Taungphila block in order to extend airport in 2007. –

Pervasive Use of Civilian Porters in Southern Chin State

28 January 2009

Burmese soldiers stationed at Chin State’s southern border with Arakan State and India regularly force civilians to perform porter service, according to a group of Chin youths who recently fled to India.

“Villagers from Kwin Pyi, Bedin Wa, Kha Ong Wa, Karamait and Te O Wa in Paletwa Township have to regularly perform porter services for the army,” former residents of the area testified. They say that the villagers are forced to carry army rations and equipments from one village to another.

“It is not on a daily basis. But we have to porter for the army at least two times a week, sometimes for an entire week. If there are no porters, the soldiers would beat the Village headman and throw him in a pit for several days for failure to produce porters for them,” the youths explain.

“They even threatened us with burning down our village if we failed to serve as porters.”

Ma Li Boih, a Chin girl who had performed porter service for the army said, “Women and girls are also regularly recruited as more young men are fleeing the country to avoid portering for the army.”

She said that although she hadn't come across incidents of sexual assault on woman porters, they are often inappropriately touched, and verbally teased and harassed.

According to U Saih Kung, another resident of Paletwa Township, villagers in the Township are facing survival difficulties as a result of frequent forced labor demands such as portering, as well as, delivering messages for the army from one village to the next.

Dozens Flee as Junta Steps Up Conscription Drive

30 January 2010: More than 40 youths from southern Chin State have escaped to India in recent days to avoid ongoing forcible recruitment drive that targets people between the age of 15 and 45.

The latest in a series of measure to boost local supports for the junta ahead of the planned 2010 elections, the conscription is currently being implemented in Paletwa Township, which consists of about 400 villages.

The ongoing drive, in effect since the beginning of January, is sparking fears among Chin youths in the area whose names have been collected without their consent for enlistment in various pro-junta groups, including militia and vigilante groups. The conscripts have been made to sign a document pledging their supports for junta-backed political parties at this year's planned elections.

"My name was included in the list of people to train as militia from our village. Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion (LIB-55) has set a 15-person recruitment quota for our village for militia service through the Village headman," said a 17 year-old conscript from Balai Village who has recently arrived in India's Mizoram to dodge the conscription.

According to the order, each village in Paletwa Township, numbering as many as 400 villages, is to contribute 15 people between the ages of 15 and 45 for militia service, 15 people between the ages of 15 and 60 for Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), and 10 persons each for two youth groups set up by the junta.

One leader of a group of 21 draft evaders who recently made it to Mizoram capital city Aizawl, said that he also know of another group of 20 people who have recently arrived in Saiha, another town in Mizoram, due to similar circumstances.

"More people are likely to flee from the area in the coming days because nobody wants to serve," said Aung David a native of Paletwa Township.

Community Safety Still under Threat in Chin State's Capital

23 January 2010

Residents of Hakha are still gripped by rising incidents of violent crimes on the streets, several months after the issue was raised by community leaders with the local authorities and requested them to provide adequate security for the public.

Organized youth gangs were responsible for sending at least 10 people to the hospital since October last year. However, no security measures have been taken by the local police department in response to the rising incidents of assaults and robbery on the streets of Hakha.

A loading operator was the latest victims of rising violent crimes when he was attacked and robbed by a group of about 20 youths on the night of December 12. He was hospitalized for his injuries.

“The police are just standing around on the main intersection and don't bother to patrol the streets,” said one community leader.

Residents are now afraid to go out after dark.

The police's failure to provide security for the people of Hakha had a local youth group take matters into their own hands by patrolling the streets. In October, they apprehended four suspected members of the gang.

There are around 500 police personnel in Hakha, according to residents.

Water Scarcity Poses Growing Concerns in Hakha

25 January 2010

During its booming population as a result of people moving in from the rural areas since 2005, the residents of Hakha are struggling with water scarcity problems.

But instead of finding ways to help solve the growing problems, the authorities are obstructing efforts by private groups and Non-governmental organizations to solve the water scarcity problems, a local resident said.

Residents are now bracing for an even more serious problems come summer time.

The Township Municipal Office has done nothing to improve its water supply to residents, although households regularly pay 5000 Kyats each year of the services.

Hakha now has over 10,000 households, a near double increase from 2004 when it had only about 60, 00 households.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

4 February 2010

CHRO Lauds Malaysia for Plans to Issue IDs to Refugees, Urges to Implement Further Protection Measures

Ottawa, Canada: The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) welcomes the recent statement by the Malaysian Home Ministry secretary-general Mahmood Adam regarding plans to issue identification cards to UN-recognized refugees. This initial measure, if followed through, will provide greater protection to refugees and ensure their security well-being in Malaysia.

For years, refugees fleeing from oppressive governments in the region, the vast majority of who are from Burma, have suffered gross human rights violations in Malaysia. The harsh immigration policy has increased their vulnerability, resulting in the indiscriminate arrest, prolonged detention, abuse and deportation of refugees and asylum seekers.

Salai Bawi Lian Mang, CHRO Executive Director said, “While this new policy initiative is laudable, concrete measures should be taken by the Malaysian government to ensure that the rights of refugees and asylum seekers are well protected. The new policy should also provide latitude for asylum seekers who are not yet documented so that they can enjoy protection while in the process of getting recognized.”

We would like to encourage the Malaysian government to continue holding discussion and consultation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other relevant parties so that an appropriate solution can be found to better protect the rights of refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia.

To show its new commitment, it is important that the Malaysian authorities refrain from further actions to round up and indiscriminately arrest refugees and asylum seekers while the new policy is being formulated.

The CHRO hopes that this new policy will lead to greater recognition, as well as, respect for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers within Malaysia.

INTERVIEW WITH PU LIAN UK

19 February 2010: [CG Note: Pu Lian Uk is an elected Member of Parliament of the 1990 General election in Burma as an independent. He was also a former Secretary of Chin Literature and Culture Sub-committee, of the Rangoon University during his student life. He is a former political prisoner in Burma for leading the Chin federal movement of the 1970s and for submitting the “Proposals from Chin Youth” to the military regime demanding federalism for the Union of Burma. He is one of the founding members of the Chin Forum and is presently residing in the USA.

To commemorate the 62nd anniversary of Chin National Day, Van Biak Thang of Chinland Guardian talked to Pu Lian Uk in this exclusive interview about the significance of this special day and its historical background as well as the difference between Chin National Day and Chin State Day.]

Chinland Guardian: What are the significant features of Chin National Day and its celebrations?

Pu Lian Uk: February 20th is for the Chin people a great day on which democracy dawned as the first time to their society anywhere else; because the traditional hereditary aristocratic rulers of the Chin territory and their subjects in unity and on equal status decided their national cause as the first time in democratic process of majority consent.

Thus, the political status of the subjects was raised to have equal political status with the aristocratic rulers because of the adoption of democratic election system in running the administration of their territory at the first political conference of delegates from all parts of the Chin territory on Burma side at Falam town.

The reason why the Chin leaders in those days of 1948 particularly designated the name of the festival holiday on 20 February as the Chin National Day was that they wanted the Chin population in the generations to come to be conscious and aware of their distinct national identity as a people by retaining and developing their distinct culture, language and literature.

After they had signed to form a federal Union with other territories of different people under the Panglong Agreement, the founding fathers of the Chin National Day knew that they were no longer as independent as they were before the British annexation. In the same way, they no longer felt free like they were during the British rule at which period they had a kind of immigration law provision to the Chin territory known as inner line permit in which any person outside the residents of the Chin territory was admitted into the Chin territory only with the permission of the authority in the Chin territory as it was provided in the Chin Hills Regulation 1896. But they had lifted up the law of that inner line permit after Burma independence though we still have that inner line permit-like law in Mizoram, India.

So the founding fathers of the Chin National Day foresaw the need to protect their culture, language and literature from the assimilation in the long run by other culture and language to its extinction as they formed the union with other national territories, which were more populated than the Chins. Thus to have that holiday as the Chin National Day in their belief was one of the best ways for the Chin population to keep their traditional culture and language by celebrating the day in Chin national culture and tradition. It has become one of the most celebrated traditional festivals now for the Chin people wherever they are.

Celebrating the Chin National Day for the Chin communities anywhere else is the best way to teach our daughters and sons that they are Chins as they are the children of the Chin parents who care them most in the world. The reason is either parents or both are Chin descendants who have a very wide territory known as Chin country or Chinland or at present, Chin State as their home land which no other people except the Chin people can claim legitimately as their territory.

However it is now a constituent state of the Union of Burma (UB). The children can say they are Chins or if necessary they are to say Burma Chins like Burma Chinese or Burma Indians. But they cannot say Burmese or Burmans, as Chins are not Burmese or Burmans in strict sense. If necessary they can say they are from Burma or Burma citizens as the term Burma is the abbreviation of the Union of Burma in the UN though we prefer to use here UB as its abbreviation.

Celebration of the Chin National Day is not only to commemorate our historical event of replacing traditional aristocracy system of administration with the system of election to rule our territory, but it is also a way of seeking friendship and support from people who should have interest on us.

We must not forget our forefathers who have created this Chin National Day. Their spirits will be hovering over us on the day we celebrate the Chin National Day and they will be with us in spirits so that the Chin people around the world are in unity in the Chin national cause.

Chinland Guardian: Is there any difference in the meaning and importance of celebrating Chin National Day between today and before? And why is it important to celebrate this day today?

Pu Lian Uk: Actually the meaning of celebrating Chin National day between today and before should be all the same. But as a saying goes: the harder you strike a rubber ball to the ground, the higher it will jump, the awareness of the Chin national identity is increasing ever wider than before due to the severe persecution launched on the Chin people by the Burmese military regime. So the Chin people celebrate it ever wider around the world wherever they are.

There have been now Chin communities in tens of thousands in many countries around the world in the North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, India, Thailand, Singapore, Bangladesh and still in many other countries in diasporas as they fled their mother homeland due to the persecution of the Burmese military regime and are given resettlements as political refugees and asylums by the Governments concern of the countries mentioned here in great compassion. The Chin people everywhere around the world are so grateful to the governments and the people concerned of those compassionate countries.

It is very important that we celebrate it every year in unity especially under this Burmese military regime that are violating democracy and the human rights upon us to destroy our existence as a people to our extinction against the wish of the founding fathers of the Chin National Day. The founding fathers' wishes have been for the coming generations to celebrate the day in festivity in Chin traditional culture and literature successively in all the generations to come.

Thus celebrating the Chin national day festival is also for the Chin people to fulfill the wishes of the founding fathers and to take courage and strength from the achievement and success of our forefathers in unity establishing democracy system to lead us to self-determination for which we are continuing on struggling to restore.

Chinland Guardian: Tell us more about the history of Chin National Day

Pu Lian Uk: The British annexed India round about in 1760 and Burma in 1885. They discovered a territory outside India and Burma that was independent of the two in between them. They found out later that the inhabitants of this vast independent territory were the people who practiced the language and culture of a people inscribed as Chin people in a stone inscription created in 750 AD long before the first Burmese king Anawrahta founded the Burmese/Burman kingdom in 1044 AD. The stone inscription was discovered in 1500 AD before which no trace of the Burmese/Burmans settlement was found beyond Mon-ywa up above the Chindwin River which was named after the Chin people meaning "within the Chin territory".

The native chieftains and landlords in many principalities ruled the territory of the Chin people. The whole population in the territory was controlled together in cultural uniformity by their common native religion as if a native king ruled them. Their common native religion believes in life after death and every human being to have soul at death and those souls were believed to rest at a place known in several different names in different dialects of the Chin language such as Mithikhua, Misikhua, Pial raal, M'htay khaw, Gawang etc. Their belief in their common native religion was very close to the belief of Christianity except that it was much in superstitions and taboos.

The similar faith they all have in their native religion also molded many similar affinities among them that makes people beyond their common frontier see them and accept them as a people. They themselves all accept even today that they have undeniable similar affinities in common though they identified themselves in several different names like Lushais, Nagas, Kukis, etc.

The British invaded the Chin territory since 1888 as the Chin native rulers refused to allow them to construct land route that will connect British India and British Burma through the Chin territory. The Chin resistant fighting against the British invasion also was so fierce that even a British soldier Surgeon Major Lee Quiesne was awarded Victoria Cross (VC) at a battleground of Siallum Fort in the Chin territory in May 1889. The Fort is now marked as a monument of historical spot to be visited by interested people.

At this historical battle ground was erected monument stone inscription in which Rev. S.T. Hau Go, once English Lecturer in the University of Mandalay and later in the University of Rangoon and author of the inscription on the Memorial Stone in 1977, wrote : -

SIAL LUM FORTRESS

(Battle of Sial lum 4th May 1889)

Mark ye well this honoured spot,
Stained with blood of heroes slain;
they to keep our ancient lot,
Fought a hoarde from Great Britain.

Mark ye th' historic date,
Eighteen eighty nine May fourth;
When for us who born of late,
They their precious blood poured forth;
Sowed the seed of liberty.

S.T.H .’52

Since they were not easily defeated, the invading British forces commanders concluded several agreements in peace talks with the Chin native rulers that the British recognized the traditional hereditary ruling system of aristocracy practiced by the Chin native rulers in their usual ranks and usual areas in which they respectively ruled provided that the Chin native rulers paid tribute to the British.

That peace agreement was included in the law known as Chin Hills Regulations 1896 which was adopted by the British Governor General in Council that ruled both British India and British Burma then. The definitions of “Chins” were provided in the Chin Hills Regulations 1896 as Chins include Lushais, Kukis, Nagas and Chins in the Chin Hills and any persons who practice Chin culture and language.

The British thus declared the Chin territory as a part of the British Empire and enforced the Chin Hills Regulation 1896 in all the Chin territory since August 13, 1896 though the territory was added in divided pieces to Assam, Bengal and Burma provinces. Those provincial governors ruled each piece of the divided Chin territory within their respective provinces with the Chin Hills Regulation 1896 outside the provincial governments of those provinces in British India and British Burma virtually till independence of India and Burma in 1947 and 1948.

The territories in which the Chin Hills Regulation 1896 was once enforced are what are now known today as Nagaland, Mizoram on Indian side and Chin State, Naga Hills or Khamti District on Burma side. The common native religion belief they had in their history has great impact on them till today that all the territory in which the Chin Hills Regulation 1896 was once applied in the British Empire converted in full to Christianity in a matter of one century now since the Christian missionaries from America and England came to the Chin country in the 19th century AD. Today, they all have transformed their common native religion into their modern common religion, the Christianity.

Not less than 80% of the over whelming majority of the Chin State population have been now Christian to be the only Christian State out of the 14 provinces of the UB. So is the Christian population not less than 80% in Nagaland and Mizoram respectively as the only two Christian States in India, too. Thus they still have a common religion in Christianity as they did in the past in their native religion. The reason why they could make their whole three states into Christian states in overwhelming majority in such a short period at the same time is believed that Christianity was so adaptable to them as their native religion belief in life after death and other belief have in some way very close to Christian belief.

There was a Crown Colony scheme, the plan of which was to carve out all the territory in which the Chin Hills Regulation 1896 was enforced and created it as a province under a British governor in 1945-46. But that plan was lost for some reasons. The Chin territory on the British Burma side was ruled outside Burma provincial government as a territory of Burma Frontier Areas (BFA) with the Shan and Kachin territories by a Secretary of British national under the British governor that ruled British Burma.

When British Burma Province was to take independence, the British could no longer rule the BFA as colonies. So the British were to give the BFA to the UN Trusteeship system as the BFA were not to be able to rule by themselves as non-self-governing territories. So the UN was to give them self-governing territories respectively when the UN completed to train them to become self-governing territories.

General Aung San during his meeting with the British stated that Independent Burma would be the most qualified country to be a Trust country of the BFA if the British is of opinion to hand over the BFA to the UN trusteeship system. So the British Government and General Aung San made an agreement that a conference be held at Panglong to ask the frontier areas leaders their desire on the future of their territories

Thus the frontier areas leaders and General Aung San as the head of the Burmese Ministerial and representative of the Burmese territory signed Panglong agreement on February 12, 1947, in short, to form the Union of Burma in which the signatory territories should all have their own territorial government and form the federal Union legislative Assembly as Parliament and the federal Union government in their common cause and interest. Thus the constitution of the Union of Burma was adopted in September 1947 including the amendment clause.

The Chin Affairs Council of the Chin Special Division was created in the Union constitution as an interim arrangement so that the Chin territory could form their state legislative assembly and State government at their convenient time. The CSD had eight seats of Parliament in the upper Chamber of the Union Parliament known as Chamber of Nationalities and 6 seats of parliament in the lower Chamber as Chamber of Deputies in total 14 MPs.

It would be only the chieftain royal families who were to select eight members of Parliament to the Chamber of Nationalities out of the chieftain royal families like Chin delegations that signed the Panglong Agreement were selected only by the chieftains and chiefs out of the Chief and chieftains in their respective areas according to the Chin Hills Regulation 1896 as the new law then was not yet passed at that time.

The first conference of all the delegates from all parts of the Chin territory on Burma side was held at Falam town on the future ruling system of the Chin Special division. The delegates of the aristocratic ruling chieftains themselves could see in majority that the hereditary aristocratic system was no longer up to date in the new era after independence. So the chieftains and their subjects in overwhelming majority in unity adopted a resolution to replace the traditional aristocratic hereditary ruling system with the democratic election system at all level of the administration of the Chin territory at that conference on February 20, 1948.

The Chieftains were given compensation in gratuity for giving their consent in unity for the change. The Chin Hills Regulation 1896 was thus amended as Chin Special Division Act 1948 transferring many sections to it from the Chin Hills Regulation 1896 including the Chin definitions. It was enforced in the CSD throughout the period under the parliamentary system since 1948.

Thus the Chieftains and their Councils were substituted in the new law with Circle Chairmen and Circle Councils. They were elected by the population in their respective Circle areas (known as Tlangkulh in some Chin dialects) according to the Chin Special Division Act 1948. The Circle Chairmen, in every administrative Subdivision/ township became township advisory council to the Civil Service Administrators under the Chin Affairs Minister.

The Eight seats of members of parliament to the Chamber of nationalities members of Parliament to the Chamber of Nationalities also were elected by the population out of any qualified persons from the CSD after the new law was adopted as Chin Special Division Act 1948. The Chin Affairs Minister was the head of the Ministry of Chin Affairs as a member of Council of Ministers led by the Prime Minister of the UB. The Chin Ministry was supposed to be an interim arrangement before the Chin people were ready to form their State Legislative Assembly and Government at their convenient time.

This temporary arrangement showed that the Affairs of the Chin State and its people were under the Burmese Prime Minister's control. The reason was he could appoint as the Minister of Chin Affairs any one out of the 14 Members of Parliament from the Chin territory

In the Chin Ministry were the Minister of the Chin Affairs as the head of the Ministry and a Parliamentary Secretary and a Chairman of the Chin Affairs Council. The 14 members of the Chin Affairs Council out of them elected the three of them provided that any of them could be a pointed as Chin Affairs Minister by the Prime Minister in his discretion.

Chinland Guardian: Is the day officially approved in Burma as a national day and can the people celebrate freely?

Pu Lian Uk: February 20 has been made an official holiday legally as Chin National Day within the Chin territory by the Chin Affairs Council since 1949 with the approval of the Parliament of the UB under the Negotiable Instrument Act. We know that the President of the UB usually sent facilitations to the Minister of the Chin Affairs on the occasions of the Chin National Day during the early days of independence of the UB under Parliamentary democracy.

It is violation of the Parliamentary law if it is not allowed to celebrate. So there is no way action could be taken if it is peacefully celebrated in the Chin traditions and culture though we cannot tell the attitude to it of the illegal government like the Burmese military regime in lawlessness in the absence of the legal government elected by the citizens.

Another thing is the celebration of the Chin National Day has become to be the most popular traditional festival within over sixty years since its inception as a social function. So the Chin people can celebrate the Chin National Day festival as a social function in Chin tradition and culture anywhere around the world as Chin National Day is just the name of a traditional festival given to the day February 20. Actually the Chins feel the whole month of February as their traditional festival month.

Chinland Guardian: Inside Burma, the military regime (SPDC) forces the Chin people including university students to celebrate ‘Chin State Day’ instead of ‘Chin National Day’ almost every year. What is the difference and why do you think the SPDC wants this day to be ‘State Day’ rather than ‘National Day’? And what is your view and reaction to this?

Pu Lian Uk: There is a great difference between Chin National Day and Chin State Day. We have expressed on the significant features of Chin National Day and its celebrations in the previous part in the beginning part of this interview and it could be read there about it.

Chin State Day is to derive from January 3rd or 4th on which the Chin territory has been designated and proclaimed as Chin State in 1974 due to the constant demand of the Chin people to have self-governing territory as a constituent State of the Union of Burma (UB) to establish Chin State Legislative Assembly and Chin State Government in full autonomy in federal Union of Burma.

All the Panglong agreement signatory territories including the Chin territory are determined to fight on for that rights not only that the constitution of the UB adopted in May 2008 has been strictly in rigid unitary form in one party system as worse as it could be no different from the Burma Socialist Program party (BSPP) and the National Unity Party (NUP), but it was also adopted in fraud. The Burmese military regime is to monopolize all the power of legislating even for the culture and literature of all the non-Buman States in the strictly rigid unitary form of constitution controlled by the armed force of the country the army from above the constitution as it is today depriving of the power legislating on their respective state internal subjects. So there will be no countries to recognize the constitution legally as we the democratic forces in the whole country are not recognizing it as the legitimate and valid constitution of the U.B.

The military regime forcing the Chin people and the Chin University students to celebrate Chin National Day, which falls on February 20 as Chin State Day, is an insult to the Chin people and contempt of Panglong Agreement and the principles of democracy.

It shows also their inconsistency in ruling the country by proclaiming that their seven-step road map is leading to democracy whereas they are against the rule of law to respect the people elected Parliament law by forcing the Chin people to celebrate the Chin National Day as Chin State Day against the parliamentary law and against the will of the Chin population and the Union of Burma on the wrong date though the Chin State day be observed on 3rd January.

It is also exposing to the Chins and the Union population how cruel the Burmese military regime chauvinism and ulterior motive will be to destroy the existence of the Chins as a people and loot their vast Chin national territory to be the Burmese/Burmans land to enslave them to serve the Burmans people forever to discriminate them as their slavery class as the Military regime is practicing it now.

Chinland Guardian: What could be the negative impacts of celebrating Chin National Day among the Chin as a whole? Have there been problems among the Chin in terms of celebrations?

Pu Lian Uk: There can be no negative impacts of celebrating the Chin National Day. If the Chin National Day that has been once established and celebrated as a traditional festival every year be no longer celebrated and not observed any longer in any generations, it will amount to violating their human rights to practice their traditional culture and literature as it has become their traditional culture and traditions by now since its inception. So the Chin people are rather to feel so angry and so sad if it is the downfall and destruction of the Chins as a people feeling homelessness not knowing where to seek their national soul which usually has also been in the Chin National day.

One of the true interpretations of the Chin National Day has been, as we mentioned above, the day on which the aristocratic Chin native rulers and their subjects in overwhelming majority changed the hereditary aristocratic ruling system into the democratic election system of the Chin territory administration in all levels in peaceful democratic process as the aristocratic Chin royal families themselves were of majority opinion that the hereditary aristocratic system of ruling the territory was out of date to carry on the Chin Affairs.

But there was a time once the Chin National Day was temporarily abolished unilaterally in executive order as the true interpretation of the Chin national day was misunderstood that it was the day the subjects defeated the royal hereditary aristocratic rulers not being aware that the aristocratic rulers themselves also voted in overwhelming majority for the change. But the temporary abolition of it in executive order was illegal. So it was revived to celebrate as usual in majority votes in the Chin Affairs Council with the approval of the Union parliament till today.

As a matter of fact, there has never been class enmity between the subjects and the ruling aristocratic class in the Chin territory. The evidence was that Pu Za Hre Lian, the son of Zahau Chieftain of aristocratic descendant was elected as the Minister of Chin Affairs by the Chin people elected 14 MPs from the constituencies of the Chin territory though all the MPs at that time were not aristocratic family descendants.

The Burmese military regime seized the Chin territory as other parts of the UB, with the force of arms against the will of the Chin people in 1962, at the time the constitutional government was over thrown. Thus it totally has stopped the Chin territory to form their State Legislative Assembly and the State government for the State internal affairs since then.

The Circle Area Chairman ruling system, which was in democratic elected system, has been abolished by the Burmese military regime by executive order, and Chin Special Division Act 1948 is now enforced only in civil suits in Chin State and no further amendment has been made to update it. Chin Hills Regulation 1896 also is still enforced in civil suits in the Naga Hills or Khamti District of Sagaing Division in the UB with no amendment to update it since its last amendment till 1927.

Their intention to be the result of not amending the Chin special Division Act 1948 where there is their family law is: to keep the Chin people in lawlessness to let them create enmity to each other to lead them to their ruin in their social life or to induce them to let them adopt to Burmese/Burmans traditions by having no other alternative to Burmanize them to their extinction as a people and to loot their territory.

The Chins and the Burmese mutually recognize each other traditionally as two distinct people much different in cultures and languages. Though there are some areas as low as 150ft above sea level, most of the areas of the Chin state are on the high land above 150-10,000 ft above sea level whereas the Burmese territory is mostly flat land below 500 ft above sea level. So the situation in the two territories is much different apart. The Burmese therefore know nothing about the highland condition to where they have never been nor have they interest to know about it due to difficult communications as it is not a familiar way of life for the plain people.

The result, when the whole political life of the highland territory of the Chin political life is totally controlled by the various Ministers elected from the low land who do not know about the Chin traditions and life and their hilly

topographical condition, is: they run everything against the life of the Chin people as the lowland Burmese ministers control the high land people in the same law and in the same conditions as they control the life of the lowland people who are their electoral constituencies who elect them to become ministers directly or indirectly.

On the other hand when the low land Ministers run the highland against their needs and way of life, they [the Chin territory constituencies] cannot vote them down in the election as they are not in their electoral constituencies.

It is worse for the highland Chin people when their territory is controlled by military regime in which they cannot have voice totally to be under the dictation and oppression of the military regime. That has been all the reasons why the Chin State has been left barren for over sixty years with no meaningful development for the lack of no state government level planning and effective infrastructures to develop it.

The state legislative Assembly and the state government created now under the constitution of the Union of Burma 2008 due to the continuous fighting for it adopted in fraud is: also in namesake as no power is given to all the non-Burman State Legislative Assemblies to legislate the laws even on their respective literature, culture and other fundamental democratic rights on their respective territories.

All governmental departments in the Chin State have been under the control of the Burmese military officials by force to dictate with no proper laws and suppressed the Chin people in lawlessness against humanity. They stopped thus teaching Chin language in all the schools of the Chin territory, which is a blatant cultural genocide.

They have neglected building infrastructure like transport motor road and electricity in the Chin territory leaving the Chin state as a barren land with no transport communication, no airport, no train and no motor road and no electricity. They are deprived of all radios and TV services to run their cultural and educational programs in full time to announce in their various dialects of the Chin language.

Those not worthy to mention of few miles of motor roads even are not all weather road of muddy and dusty roads and some feeble electricity in some few towns are not useable by the public as they are mainly for the convenience of the civil and military operation to better control in limitation of the democratic freedom and human rights of the Chin civilian population. It is ruled as an enemy territory of foreign land to destroy their whole existence as a people.

That is, they (the Chin people) have been disarmed of infrastructures like all sorts of transport communications and electricity without which no meaningful progress could be made in a country. The persecution on religious, racial and political ground has been unabated as the Chin territory is in total Christianity.

So it is so horrible to tolerate the severe repression against humanity except the only option and alternative they have is to die in long-sufferings as it is the disarmed human nature at the gunpoint of the enemy with full arms or to flee their home land in great risks as the only choice and options in tens of thousands as refugees to several countries mentioned before. Many Chins died being killed or in accident in the sea on their way to running for life.

We therefore need the support and help of the governments and people of the world around in our struggle to fight against this brutality and restore democracy and self-determinations in all the territories that constitute the Union of Burma in federal form. We are now temporarily in Diasporas before we liberate our country to return reclaiming our motherland as its proud citizens.

Chinland Guardian: We could clearly see from the history of this auspicious day that the Chins were united as a family for their national cause. About 5000 people gathered in Falam where the Chin people from different corner had to travel days and weeks for the mass conference. What kind of reflections and lessons do you think we can learn in line with today's generation?

Pu Lian Uk: Our forefathers, the many delegates to Falam conference who marched on foot for days crossing many mountains and deep valleys on jungle routes for days and weeks in those days from all corners of our vast territory especially from Paletwa, Kanpetlet, Matupi, Tedim and Haka and Falam rural areas had clearly shown their strong desire and will and their high inspiration and aspiration for democratic freedom, unity, equality and fraternity within our Chin society.

They had completed the conference in great success as they had expected resulting in their great achievement in it creating a great day of February 20th as the first dawning day of freedom in democracy to their national society anywhere else with the great inspiration and desire that the Chin people in the coming generations be in unity, equality in democratic majority consent and freedom to ever keep our Chin national identity by constantly practicing our culture and literature to be in ever prosperity in celebrating the great day as Chin National Day ever more to ever seek friendship and fraternity in peaceful coexistence with all the people and religions around the world in ever respecting our ancestries and fore fathers to keep on their good works as it has been expressed on the significant features of Chin National Day and its celebrations.

We, the Chins people from various parts of our vast territory when we think of our national unity in our Chin national common cause, are to pay great heed to the seriousness of the strong desire, will and inspiration and aspiration of our forefathers that we, as every single descent of the Chins territory or as the descendant of the Chins people ancestry anywhere else, are to check ourselves whether we are living and leading our land and national cause according to the great inspiration, aspiration and hope of our fore fathers.

We all are to denounce any deviating activities in betraying that inspiration, aspiration and hope of our forefathers in ever endeavoring to fulfill their hopes and aspirations for the ever prosperity of the Chin people in unity freedom and peace.

Chinland Guardian: What is your message today to the Chin people across the globe on this special day?

Pu Lian Uk: My message today to the Chin people across the globe on this special day is: we are to stick to celebrate the Chin National Day ever more in any condition and to stick to our historic national name Chin ever more as it is the only name that evidently shows our existence as a people ever since long before 750 AD and long before the founding of the Burmese kingdom by Anawrah-tha in 1044 AD. We have the clear-cut Chin territory in our long history in the name Chindwin as no trace of the Burmese/Burmans settlement was traced above the Chindwin River beyond Mon-ywa before 1500 AD.

Because no names of our territory except the Chin cannot trace any clear evidence of our existence as a people even as early as 750 AD, our present territory in any new name created after and around the date of the independence of India and Burma could be denied to us one day to be claimed by others as their territories. The reason further is no new name created after and around about the independence date of India and Burma never had legal standing for any territory in the history like the Chin territory under the Chin Hills Regulation 1896 which was once recognized by the modern international law as it was the law of internationally recognized British law.

Such territorial denial to the Mizo people was even raised by a scholar at the International Seminar in 1992 for the lack of historical existence of Mizo back in the history before the name Mizo was adopted round about in 1949 as some papers read on the Mizo people were based on the Chin historical facts. Some Mizo scholars reacted very angrily to his statement looting the mike by one another to response to him why the Mizo should not be concerned correctly at the historical facts of the Chins. The panel of Chairman had to confiscate even the mike in their hands to control the order of the seminar.

His point was that Mizo people were nothing concerned with the Chins on Burma side as they (the Chins) have a deep historical existence as a people even long before 750 AD with their definite territory though there was no historical existence of Mizo people in the history as it is created within the territory of India round about in 1949 after the independence of India.

So any territory the name of which is created after Independence of India and Burma could have territorial problem in the future whereas such territorial denial cannot be raised in the case of the territory like ours with its historic name Chins and its clear cut boundary of territory with the name Chindwin since time immemorial long before 750 AD and recognized by the modern international law once again through the Chin Hills Regulation 1896.

However any territory that claimed to be a part of Chins may not have any territorial problem as they could refer their back ancient history to be a part of the Chins. Thus we are unshakable to stick to the national name Chin in order to prove our existence as a people known in its national name as Chin with its clear cut boundary of territory basing directly on our ancient history rather than to base indirect historical evidence.

Banner of Chin National Day Banned in Burma

24 February 2010: Putting up a banner that reads ‘Chin National Day’ for its official celebration has been banned in Burma as the Chin people commemorated the 62nd anniversary of their national day on 20 February 2010.

Instead, Burma’s authorities ordered ‘Chin State Day’ to be used for celebrating the auspicious day in most places including Hakha, the capital of Chin State.

Veteran Chin politician Pu Lian Uk, who is in exile in the US, said: “The military regime forcing the Chin people and the Chin University students to celebrate Chin National Day, which falls on February 20, as Chin State Day is an insult to the Chin people and contempt of Panglong Agreement and the principles of democracy.”

The elected MP of the 1990 General Election also remarked that Chin State Day is to derive from January 3rd or 4th on which the Chin territory was designated and proclaimed as Chin State in 1974 due to the constant demand of the Chin people to have self-governing territory as a constituent State of the Union of Burma (UB).

In Kalay and Mandalay, the celebration was organised by Chin university students with a banner reading ‘Chin National Day’ while Chin students in Rangoon had the day without any words related to Chin National Day.

One of the student leaders from Kalay University said: “We applied for permission to celebrate within the campus. Since we didn’t get any sign of permission, we held our celebration at Zomi Hall, Satawm.”

A local from Thantlang told Chinland Guardian that the celebration organisers had no choice since the authority didn’t allow them to use a ‘Chin National Day’ banner on stage but we had a very good day with a variety of traditional dances, shows and activities.

Chin communities outside Burma have been celebrating their national day without any restrictions on the use of ‘Chin National Day’ banner. But in Burma, the military junta has for decades rejected and forced the day to be called ‘Chin State Day’.

February 20, 2010 marked the 62nd anniversary of Chin National Day, the day that the Chin people abolished the ancient traditional aristocratic ruling system and adopted democratic principle at a mass conference in Falam in 1948.



The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) is a non-governmental, non-profit advocacy organization. It was formed in 1995 on the India-Burma border by a group of Chin activists committed to promoting democracy in Burma and raising international awareness of previously unreported human rights abuses being perpetrated against the Chin people by the Burmese military regime. As it is impossible to register the organization in Burma and its neighboring countries, it is legally registered as not for profit organization in Canada.

The scope CHRO's activities have expanded since the days of its founding to cover not just monitoring and documentation but also internationally-focused advocacy campaigns, capacity-building trainings, and support for grassroots community initiatives. CHRO is the primary rights-based advocacy organization for the Chin people and has worked with Chin communities throughout the world continuously since the very beginning of the conflict in Burma. Over the years, CHRO has nurtured working relationships with the Chin, developed the institutional capacity, and become a trusted voice of the Chin people and a leading and respected advocacy organization for Chin communities throughout the world.

CHRO Aims:

1. To promote human rights and democratic principles among Chin people
2. To empower the people, especially the victims of human rights violations
3. To provide accurate and reliable information about the human rights situation in Chin State and Burma to the international community.

To learn more about the important works of CHRO, please visit us at;
www.chro.ca