



Chin Human Rights Organization

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Electoral Violence and Intimidation in Tedim Township, Chin State

[Chiang Mai, Thailand] The Chin Human Rights Organization has received several reports of electoral violence and intimidation in Tedim Township, northern Chin State.

This afternoon, in Buan village, close to Tedim town, Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) agents in campaign uniforms stood at the gate of the polling station, checking people's voter registration documents. They asked villagers waiting to cast their votes if they intended to vote for the USDP. Those who said yes were allowed into the polling station, but those who said no were turned away by the USDP party agents.

Villagers who were refused entry to the polling station reported the incident to agents from the Chin National Party and Chin Progressive Party. The agents went to the polling station to complain, and a fight broke out.

At 5pm yesterday afternoon, USDP organizer Go Lun Mang went to the house of a local resident and told him and his family that there was no need to go to the polls, as he had already voted in favour of the USDP on their behalf. When the family objected, and said they would still vote for the party of their choice, Go Lun Mang told them that soldiers from a nearby army camp (LIB 269) would come and arrest them.

On arrival at Sakollam polling station in Tedim town this morning, the local resident and his family members found that their ballot papers had already been used. The resident reported that theirs was not an isolated incident.

On 5 November, the USDP branch in Tedim town summoned all village tract clerks in the township locality and ordered them to tell villagers in their respective areas to vote for the USDP. In Chin State, village tract clerks are government appointees who oversee all local government staff in the area.

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About the Chin Human Rights Organization

The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) is a non-governmental, non-profit advocacy organization legally registered in Canada. It was formed in 1995 on the India-Burma border by a group of Chin activists committed to promoting democracy in Burma, and documenting previously unreported human rights abuses being perpetrated against the Chin people by the Burma army and local authorities of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). CHRO is the primary rights-based advocacy organization for the Chin.

About the Chin people of Burma

Around 500,000 ethnic Chin live in the northwestern area of Chin State in Burma. The Chin are ethnically very diverse. The six main tribes of Aso, Cho (Sho), Khuami (M'ro), Laimi, Mizo (Lushai), and Zomi (Kuki) can be further broken up into at least 60 different sub-tribal categories. The Chin speak more than 20 mutually distinct languages. Despite such diversity, the Chin are unified through a common history, geographical homeland, traditional practices, and ethnic identity. The missions of the American Baptist Church starting in the late 1800s served to further unify the Chin people through religion. In a country that is predominantly Buddhist, the Chin are 90 percent Christian with most belonging to the American Baptist Church.