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Elections 2010

Forcible Training Called in Preparation for 2010 Elections

11 July 2010

Falam Township Peace and Development Council General Secretary U Tin Htun issued an order that nine representatives from each village group of 34 villages in Tihbual area attend the election preparation training held in Tihbual village of Falam Township.

The village delegates were told to bring their own foods during the training that took place from 17 to 19 July 2010.

One of the trainees said: “We were told that under the direct order of TPDC Secretary U Tin Htun we have to bring at least sixteen cups of rice and 10,000 Kyats for the training and to stay at friends’ houses.”

The training focused on how to arrange poll boxes at the polling station, to monitor the voting systems and control the whole process.

After the four-day training, we were told to go home in the evening of the last day and given nothing but just one handbook on laws and regulations prepared by Election Commissions, according to the local trainee.

USDP Wooed Voters by Promising Road Improvement

13 July 2010

The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) told Chairman of Khuahlun Block in Hakha Town that it would improve the main road in the area if the locals vote in favour of the government-backed party.

On 10 July 2010, USDP Campaign Officer U Hrang Thang informed Hakha Old Town Secretary U Tha Khar of making a new ‘tarred’ road in the Old Town area if the locals cast their votes for the party in the upcoming elections.

“They [USDP members] came to our block and the block office while inspecting the tea plantation last week. Then the next day, the secretary informed the block leaders of the vote offers,” said one of the local leaders regarding the USDP’s promises in exchange of the votes.

The Secretary’s wife of the Old Town block was quoted as saying: “Some leaders proposed to the Chairman not to accept the offers while some USDP members in the block argued the need of making the right decisions and importance of road improvement in the area.”

It is claimed that the Old Town block leaders are to hold a public meeting on 22 July 2010 to make a decision as there are different opinions among the locals.

Out of five political parties contesting in the 2010 Elections, USDP is said to have got more campaign privileges and rights while others are struggling just to run the parties amid strict restrictions.

Tedim Locals Forced to Attend Election Training

15 July 2010

Eight village representatives from each of 59 village groups including four blocks of Tedim Town were forced by Chairman of Tedim Township Peace and Development Council under the direct order of District Peace and Development Council Chairman to attend the election training on 12 June 2010.

The local representatives were told to contribute 2,000 Kyats per head for foods when attending the training held at Tedim Town Peace and Development Council Office.

“There were about 350 people attending the election training from 13 to 15 June 2010. The training was about the election processes and how the three different poll boxes, which included one for State Hluttaw, another for National Hluttaw and the last for Union Hluttaw, would be arranged in each village and monitored by the trainees,” said one of the local trainees.

We were told to go back to our respective village by 16 June 2010 after we were given a handbook of Election laws and regulations prepared by the Election Commissions, added the local trainee.

USDP Collects Money from Members in Hakha Township

17 July 2010

The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) collects money from its party members in Hakha Township to raise fund for campaign expenses, said one of the party members.

The local member said different amounts of money have been collected from different members.

“As just a member, we didn’t have to contribute a lot – only 2,000 Kyats for last month. I am not sure how much the leaders had to contribute but I believe it would be around 20,000 Kyats,” said the party member, who asks not to be named for security reasons.

It is not sure how long the collection would go but it might go until the end of the campaign periods, added the local party member.

There have reports on the USDP party that government employees are forced to become the party’s members, that at least ten locals in some villages are forcibly enlisted to be USDP

supporters under the leadership of local leaders and that some other poor villages are persuaded by promising development in the areas.

It is reportedly claimed that the combination of votes from government employees and 'forced' local members would make a total of between 70,000 and 80,000, according to the party, according to the USDP's estimates.

Prisoners to be Released Ahead of Elections

05 August 2010

Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC) informed Block Peace and Development Council (BPDC) offices that all prisoners will be given an amnesty in Chin State before the upcoming 2010 Elections.

In the announcement letter where no specific date for the release was mentioned, chairmen of six main blocks in Hakha including Khuathar, Khuahlun, Pyidawta, Dawrthar, Dawrhlun and Cawbuk were told to make sure that the released prisoners behaved well.

"Those locals from six blocks of Hakha who have done the militia training were given a preparation session where a set of important points that needed to be focused on was explained by the policemen on 1 August," said one of the trainees whose name is kept anonymous.

Some of the lessons included how to collect and report information and to keep an eye on suspects, according to one of the trainees.

It is estimated that about 1,000 people attended the preparation training.

Arbitrary Measures

Burma Army Sweeps Through Arakan and Chin Villages

03 July 2010

Burma Army is reported sweeping through Chin and Arakan villages near the Burma-India border region on its new drive to hunt out pro-democracy resistance group and army defector from the region.

According to Free Burma Ranger (FBR), a multi-ethnic humanitarian service movement formed in 1997, two battalions of army composed of over 180 men are conducting sweeps against villagers in Paletwa Township, Chin State.

Villages under threat are Pumnya Wa, Nygeliwa, Doe Chawn Wa, Parkarwa, Aumthiwa, Shwe Lie Pue, Phe Lie Wa, Satanwa and Mariwa.

The Burma army was reported setting up headquarters at Mariwa Village which is located only half a kilometer from the Indian border to hunt down Arakan Liberation Army (ALA) members and another six army defectors who have been in connection with the ALA.

According to FBR relief team based in Arakan State, thousands of villagers are suffering from the sweep with some being forced to act as guards in the military camp without any provision.

Some villagers are also forced into slavery by becoming porters to carry uniforms, backpacks, ammunition and other military equipment for the soldiers.

Meanwhile, villagers are required to give food such as chickens, pigs, goats and other domestic animals and motorboats to be used by the military on their patrol to drive out anti-government groups.

Soldiers are also reported forcing villagers to sell diesel fuel under the market price.

"The current price for diesel in the area is 22,000 kyats for one gallon (1 kg or 6 bottles) but the Burma Army is only paying about half of the price," according to the latest FBR newsletter.

By Thomas Chong

Burma Army Extorted Money from Local Traders

09 July 2010

Captain Thiha of Burma Army Khahlahya No. 274 stationed in Bukphir village of Tedim Township demanded by force money from local traders travelling to Mizoram State of India.

On 22 June 2010, the Tedim trader, who was carrying betel products with 20 horses, was ordered to give 80,000 Kyats after being threatened by Captain Thiha and his soldiers that he would not get all his stuffs back if he refused to give as demanded.

The Captain was quoted as saying that the traders were illegally doing businesses.

Last year, the traders were asked for only 500 Kyats for a single horse, but the demand has gone up to 4,000 Kyats.

The local traders were threatened of exaction and imprisonment if they didn't follow the order.

"The local traders travelling between Burma and India's Mizoram State have been targeted by the military soldiers on patrol along the Indian-Burma border. The traders were stopped and extorted money by one soldier group to another," said one of the local traders.

“One soldier group would say they knew nothing about the other group. Therefore, the local traders just suffered so many times even in a month under the military control,” added the local Tedim trader.

Soldiers Extorted Increasing Amount of Money from Local Traders

18 July 2010

A group of soldiers from Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion No. 274 stationed in Darkhai village of Tonzong Township forcibly stopped and demanded a large sum of money from local traders travelling towards Mizoram State of India, one of the cattle owners said.

On 5 July 2010, the Captain along with a company of 20 soldiers arrested the local traders in the jungle about 4 miles away from Ngente village near the Indian border and demanded a total amount of 1200,000 Kyats, of which the local traders were short of 300,000 Kyats.

“We were told to get the remaining 300,000 Kyats after they [the soldiers] retained our Identity Cards and a flock of 20 cattle,” added one of the local traders.

It was later known that the local traders managed to fetch the outstanding amount of money and get their Identity Cards and cattle back in the morning on 7 July 2010.

Meanwhile, another incident happened in Tedim Township where Captain Thiha of Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion No. 274 patrolling in the areas stopped by force the local traders with six cattle and demanded 500,000 Kyats per one cow on 6 July 2010.

“We were threatened that they would detain the two local paid porters hired by us and our cattle unless we gave them the amount demanded,” said one of the traders, who managed to get the money later.

Authorities Collected Tax for Keeping Dogs

04 August 2010

Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC) in partnership with Township Municipal Department issued an order in the capital of Chin State, demanding the locals to give taxes if they would like to keep dogs in their houses.

With no specific details on the amount of tax, the order which was meant to be effective from 31 July 2010 came out with an aim of avoiding accidents caused by vehicles on the streets of Hakha town.

“Basically, we are told to keep our dogs just as the way we keep our chicken, cows, goats and horses. They say if we don’t do like this, it will increase the level of chances for accidents to happen with vehicles,” said Chairman of Nazareth Block in Hakha.

It was claimed that those families who have dogs or would like to keep dogs would have to pay taxes to Township Municipal Department from August 2010 and that one officer

together with one policeman would visit and each household in the town from September 2010.

Police Officers Extorted 20 Cattle and 6 IDs from Local Traders

13 August 2010

Two officers from Myanmar Police Force in Tedim Town exacted a flock of 20 cattle and six National Identity Cards from the local traders, one of the victims disclosed.

A group of Tedim traders led by U Sian Maung of Haikawl village was stopped and demanded by force at 10pm on 9 August 2010 in a Tonzang village, about 20 miles away from Tedim Town on their return journey after purchasing 20 cattle from Sagaing Division to sell in Mizoram State of India.

The Police Officers immediately made a call to their office. Within a few minutes, another five policemen turned up and took away the cattle, and one of the cattle owners named Hung Thang was arrested.

“We spent over 60 Lakhs for a total of 20 cattle. Some of the cattle were bought on credit. We haven’t even sold any cattle yet and I am not sure how I dare go back to the village empty-handed. Our identity cards are still detained and I don’t really know what to do,” said one of the cattle owners, who is hiding from the possible arrest.

Unreasonably High Taxes Collected from Local Traders

15 August 2010

Police Officers in Tedim Town of Chin State demanded ‘exorbitant’ taxes from the local cattle traders, one of the cattle owners said.

The local traders, who were stopped and arrested in the jungle between Tuivel and Tuifang villages, were ordered on 4 August 2010 to pay a whopping sum of 300,000 Kyats for six cattle by two Police Officers after being accused of engaging in an illegal business.

“Normally, the police ask between 2,000 and 3,000 Kyats for one cow. There was something really wrong with what they asked for only six cattle. It was beyond what we could afford and it would not be possible for us to continue our work,” said the cattle owner.

Cattle Extorted as Local Traders Accused of Passing Information to Foreign Media

20 August 2010

A herd of 20 cattle belonging to local traders was extorted in Darkhai village by Burma’s army soldiers of Light Infantry Battalion No. 266 while patrolling in the area on 12 August 2010.

One of the local traders said: “It cost us about 2 or 3 Lakhs for one cow when we bought them in nearby villages of Kalay Myo. When we got to Darkhai village, the soldiers stopped us and took our cattle.”

“The soldiers accused us, local traders, of passing negative information about Burma’s army to foreign media. They said they collected some money from local traders in mutual understanding and local traders kept contacts with foreign media to deface the army.”

We were, said the local trader, even threatened of arrests and imprisonment.

There have been reports on Burma’s army soldiers stationed in Chin State extorting cattle and forcibly demanding money from local traders for years.

Forced Labor & Portering

Locals Forced to Contribute Wood Planks for Military Barrack Construction

05 July 2010

The commander of Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion No. 274 stationed in Tibual village of Falam Township ordered 11 villages to contribute wood planks to build the military barracks.

A local said a total of eleven villages under the Tibual military control area had to bring three wood planks each by 30 May 2010 to the Tibual military camp, adding: “It was an order that we would be punished seriously if we failed to do so.”

Local villagers, who are skilled at construction, were forced to give voluntary building services for the military barrack under the supervision of three Burma Army soldiers.

Another local said: “The villagers didn’t get anything from the military authorities for all these services they gave. Every year, we were ordered to repair and build the camp gate, camp buildings and even to draw buckets of water for the soldiers.”

In May 2010, ten people from each village were ordered, the local added, to build the fences and to repair the barracks.

Families Forced to Give Voluntary Services to Build Elementary School

07 July 2010

Chairman of Town Peace and Development Council (TPDC) ordered local households, forcibly demanding one member from each family in four blocks of Hakha Town to contribute towards building a new elementary school, CHRO’s sources disclosed.

The Chairman was said to have ordered four blocks including Nazareth, Bethel, Panchian and Chin Oo Si to take turns from the first week of July 2010 when constructing the school.

“We were told it was just a voluntary service. But it was an order we could not deny. We were asked to do smoothing the wooden planks. Especially those parents living near the school were asked to bring their own lunch,” said one of the local parents who participated in the construction.

The government gave a total sum of 40 Lakhs in May 2010 for the school construction, announcing there was no need of payment for 2010-11 school fees.

“In reality, each student was asked to give not only school fees but also 1,000 Kyats for school construction,” added the parent.

The building, being constructed under the supervision of Chin Oo Si Headmaster U Tin Tawng and Head of Township Education Department U Aung Tual, would cost a maximum amount of between 35 and 40 Lakhs, according to an estimate made by a local designer-cum-carpenter.

There are over 300 students of up to Seventh Standard studying at Chin Oo Si Elementary School, which has so far 12 buildings for class rooms.

Government Employees Ordered to Plant Coffee to Replace Jatropha

21 July 2010

Chairman of Falam Township Peace and Development Council ordered all the government employees in Falam Town to start planting coffee in substitution of jatropha, according to CHRO’s sources.

After the unsuccessful practice of jatropha cultivation initiated by the SPDC, the coffee planting was conducted in the same land plot owned by government-sponsored No. 1 High School in Falam Town under the leadership of the TPDC Chairman in June 2010.

The military authorities is said of introducing the cultivation without no proper research and feasibility study in advance, aiming that it would generate some sorts of incomes for schools.

“Almost every day, the TPDC asks for the so-called voluntary services. Between one and four staff members from each department have to work in the coffee plantation. I believe this will keep going on until the project is done,” said one of the government employees in Falam, who asks not to be named.

One of the Falam locals said: “When teachers are working in the plantation, they could not teach in the classes anymore and the students learn nothing. Until today, we haven’t got any successful results from the government-introduced cultivations so far. The only thing we have got is problems and forced labour from the authorities.”

At least 50 government employees have to work on a daily basis in the farm, estimated to be about 3 acres, and we all have to do planting as we are teaching, according to one of the local teachers.

Villagers Forced To Plant Chillies

02 August 2010

The unnamed Major of Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion No. 268 stationed in Lungler village issued an order asking the villagers to plant chillies in the area which includes Ralpel, Fungkah and Bungkhua villages.

The major summoned the village headmen to Lungler Military Station on 30 June 2010 and ordered them that each village had to plant three acres of chillies.

“We properly explained the major that it was not the season for cultivation and asked what they could do but the major paid no attention to what we said, instead told us to sort ourselves out,” said the headman of Ralpel village.

Ralpel villagers were said of planning to collect from each household an equivalent amount of contributions that could be earned by selling chillies of three acres while Bungkhua and Fungkah villagers still remained worried and confused.

Government Employee Asked To Work without Pay

03 August 2010

The officer-in-charge of Department of Information and Public Relation in Hakha, Chin State treated his member of staff as a house servant for his personal benefits, the victim revealed.

Pa Hei, who works as an office keeper, was asked by the officer-in-charge to clear and clean the compound of his private house from 31 July to 1 August 2010 without any payment.

“I was told to clean his house compound for two days without even a single kyat of payment, apart from a cup of tea and a slice of bread for lunch,” said Pa Hei.

It was the third time Pa Hei had been asked by his boss to do house chores without any payment, with the first in the middle of June 2010 and the second on 15 and 16 July 2010.

In addition to his official duties, Pa Hei was said to have cleaned and taken care of the tea plantation of the Department only for the personal benefits of the officer-in-charge.

Even though Pa Hei worked so hard and even more than other employees, he was the one being ignored when there was an opportunity in the Department such as government loans, according to one of the employees of the Department.

Villagers Forced to Restore Military Camp Fences and Hostel Buildings

11 August 2010

Darkhai villagers of Tonzang Township were forced by the ‘unnamed’ Major of Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion No. 269 to repair the fences and hostel buildings of the military camp.

Ten people each from the nearby five villages including Darkhai, New Darkhai, Zampi, Tuitang and Tar-ek were ordered to work alternatively on the military camp from 20-24 July 2010.

Whenever we have a new battalion coming into Darkhai village, the local people are forcibly ordered to do the restoration, and last time we even dug out the drenches for Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion No. 274, according to a former chairman of Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC).

“We are ordered to do all these works by force and yet we receive nothing from them. Moreover, we have to bring our own tools and equipment.”

Villagers Forced To Carry Military Rations

17 August 2010

The Captain of Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion No. 269 stationed in Tonzang Township forcibly demanded local villagers to carry military rations for a group of 10 soldiers on 27 July 2010.

Eight locals from Darkhai village were forced to carry food supplies including rice, oil, salt, and fish paste, estimated to be weighing about 20 viss (equivalent to 3.6 pounds or 1.6 kilo) each from their village to Zampi village, where another eight locals were made waiting to continue forced-portering.

The local porters from Zampi village were said to have had no ideas where they had to go.

“We normally arranged a car or a flock of horses to carry military supplies as Darkhai village is quite far from Tonzang Town. From the nearest villages, between 10 and 12 locals would carry on their backs up to Zampui village. Sadly, the local villagers would get nothing from the military soldiers, instead they had to bring their own tools and lunch,” said one of the former Chairmen of Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC).

Freedom of Religion

Christian Cross Dismantled In Southern Chin State

14 August 2010

The military regime has destroyed yet another Christian cross in Chin State in a continuing policy of religious persecution against Chin Christians.

On 24 July 2010, the MPDC (Mindat Peace and Development Council) in Southern Chin State issued an order to the local Christian villagers, destroying the Christian cross planted on the hill top of Khyauk-yaw village, Mkui Circus.

The order came soon after a meeting led by Head of Mindat District Religious Affairs and Hill Regions Buddhist Missionary monk (Abbot of East Mindat), with Chairman and Secretary of Mindat District, Chairman of Mindat Township, District Law Officer, Township Law Officer, Township Judge, Township Chief of Police and Officer of Township Religious Affairs.

A Chin pastor, whose name remains anonymous, said: "The authority threatened and intimidated the Christians who built the cross. They ordered to destroy the cross by 24 July 2010 and the authority destroyed it."

With an official acknowledgement and permission from the authorities, the Christian cross was erected on 7 April 2008 in the middle of a local "Prayer Garden." It is situated on the mountain top between Pyung and Bawng villages, more than 24 miles away on Mindat-Matupi motor road.

The Christian cross, built with bricks and cements contributed and donated by the local villagers, is 24ft long, 3ft wide and 1ft thick.

"The purposes of the Christian Cross and Prayer Garden were solely for religious activities including prayer services for peace, healing, harmony and seeking spiritual food," added the Chin pastor.

News of the destruction has spread around the surrounding towns and villages, making the Chin Christians saddened and dismayed as their spiritual sanctuary was destroyed.

Until today, the authorities have not made any explanation as to the eradication of the Christian cross.

By Jeremy Hoipang

CHRO CONDEMNS DESTRUCTION OF CHRISTIAN CROSS IN CHIN STATE

For Immediate Release

24 August 2010

Chiang Mai, Thailand: The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) strongly condemns the destruction of another Christian cross in Chin State on the orders of Burma's military regime. CHRO has learned that the 23-foot high concrete Christian cross in the Mindat Township area, southern Chin State, was forcibly destroyed on 24 July by direct order of the authorities, including the District and Township level Peace and Development Council, the District Religious Affairs Department, and a Mindat abbot from the Hill Region Buddhist Mission.

CHRO Executive Director Salai Bawi Lian Mang said, "This latest order for the forcible destruction of an important Christian symbol is yet another manifestation of the long-standing state policy of persecution and discrimination directed against ethnic Chin Christians."

Since 1994, at least nine crosses have been destroyed or dismantled on the orders of the local authorities, in all of Chin State's nine major Townships.

"The SPDC claims to respect religious freedom for all faiths in Burma and yet they are actively pursuing a policy to persecute religious minorities in contravention of their own constitution and other international human rights standards, which they claim to observe," added Salai Bawi Lian Mang.

Originally built with wood, the cross was replaced with a concrete structure in 2008 with official permission from local authorities. The cross had been built on a 20-acre "Prayer Garden" that has traditionally carried spiritual significance for the local people.

Food Crisis in Chinland

CAD: Rat Infestation Still Hits Chin Villages

13 August 2010

Villagers in Zokhua area of Hakha Township face a fresh challenge of rat infestation that has brought serious damage to their crops and cultivations, according to a report released yesterday by CAD (Country Agency for Rural Development).

The report said 66,675 tins of corn and 2,337 tins for millet have been completely destroyed by a plague of rats in three villages such as Malsawm, Tinam and Zokhua. The villagers have lost 82% of their corns and 72% of millet only in Malsawm of Hakha Township.

"All corns and millets are severely eaten and destroyed by rats and the most difficult period is expected to be from September 2010 to July 2011 when existing stocks will run out and

new crops will not yet be harvested. The food gap will have been prolonged due to the rapid multiplication of rats and their destruction of food crops," stressed the CAD report.

Other villages, the report continued, have also been severely affected by the rat infestation.

Sources confirmed that food crisis caused by bamboo-and-rat-related mautam still continues in Southern Chin State, affecting villagers in the remote areas of bamboo-covered jungles.

As many as 200 villages were affected by severe food shortages associated with the bamboo flowering, and no less than 100,000 people, or 20 percent of the entire population of Chin State, were in need of immediate food aid according to a CHRO's report *On the Edge of Survival: The Continuing Rat Infestation and Food Crisis in Chin State, Burma* published in September 2009.

Since 2007, Chin people have been facing severe food crisis, locally called mautam, caused by a once-in-fifty-year phenomenon in which bamboo flowers, bears fruits and dies consequently, which is followed by an influx of rats that destroy crops, fields and food storages.

In the wake of mautam-caused food crisis in Burma's Chin State, CAD has been actively involved in responding to alleviate the effects and helping those victims suffering from starvation.

The Country Agency for Rural Development (CAD), a local non-governmental organization founded on 6 May 2004, has been working for remote villagers in 3 townships (Hakha, Matupi and Thanglang) in the central part of Chin state and Monhla village in Ye Oo township of Sagaing division.

Situations of Refugees

Chin Community School Thriving despite Limited Supports

18 July 2010

Despite facing enormous challenges, the Chin Student Organization (CSO) that manages seven community schools in Malaysia is thriving as the major education provider for refugees' children in the country.

Starting from a flat lot at Imbi in the heart of Malaysia's capital city, CSO currently is running seven schools that housed 470 students both in Kuala Lumpur and the state of Selangor.

With a team of 35 full time teachers who are Burma's university graduates, the school is teaching English, Mathematics, Science and Chin Literature to children aged between five to 16 years old.

They were grouped into five classes based on their age and their level of understanding, and Haka Chin dialect, which is spoken by the majority of Chins now living in Malaysia, is used to teach all subjects.

For many of the students, Malaysia is the only place for them to learn to speak and write their mother tongue since teaching of Chin language is not allowed in government school in junta-controlled Burma.

Improved Security Environment

For CSO President, Roger Khua Hup, although it is still very challenging to run a community school in Malaysia, he is thankful that the worst part is over.

“Last year was the worst year for our children, the local authorities were conducting raids on our children who are 15 or 16 years old, they were stopped on their way to school and treated as illegal immigrants.”

“The situation however changed, we provide our students with student identity cards and this help to free them from any problem with the police or RELA.

“The Malaysian authority also began to understand that we are refugees who are different from illegal migrants,” he told Chinland Guardian in an interview at Kuala Lumpur.

Roger said the year 2010 marks a better year for most Chin refugees in Malaysia as many of them are allowed to work without harassment from the local authority.

“In 2009 many refugees were not allowed to work, making it difficult for many parents to afford to pay the nominal RM10 (USD \$3.20) monthly school fees.

“We cannot reject our students just because their parents are poor, this mean CSO have to bear the extra costs.”

“Thank God the situation is getting better this year, most of the students' parents are working and they are able to pay the school fees on time, ” he said.

Roger said the school fees from parents however are far from enough to cover all the expenses to run both five schools in Kuala Lumpur and another two in Selangor.

Limited Supports

He said CSO is very much depended on local churches and donors in Malaysia to cover the cost for seven school that totaled RM18,000 (USD \$5,620) every month.

“The rental for our biggest school at Imbi for example is quite expensive, we rented two unit flats as class room and teachers’ residential for RM3,100 (USD \$966 every month).”

“We have around 130 students at Imbi and even if all of them pay the RM10 school fees, it still not enough to cover the rental, not to mention the costs for stationery, electricity and water supply bills,” he said.

According to him, budgets constraints also stopped them to set up more schools in other area inhabited by Chin refugees.

“We received calls from three other community schools in Seremban at Negeri Sembilan State, Sungai Long at Selangor State and Sungai Besi at Kuala Lumpur, they are requesting for help.”

“There is not much we can do, our money and resources are very limited,” he said.

By Thomas Chong

Long-Detained Refugees Reunite With Family

29 August 2010

Shing Aung Ling, 24, and Kee Aung Thang, 26, who were arrested on the Thai-Malaysian border and detained at different detention camps, had today a happy reunion with family members, relatives and friends in Malaysia.

The two Chin refugees fleeing military-ruled Burma were released last Thursday after having spent 9 and 7 months respectively in the Malaysian immigration detention camps. The two were arrested together with other 10 refugees while crossing the Thai border en route to Malaysia.

A member of CRC (Chin Refugee Committee) told Chinland Guardian: "We all are very happy to meet them [Shing Aung Ling and Kee Aung Thang] here in our office. After staying with us for two days, they went to see their families living at different places outside of Kuala Lumpur."

"As they were just released, their skin colours were dark and looking unhealthy. They are not very strong mentally as they had been going through difficult times at different detention camps near the border, which we cannot reach from the capital," continued the CRC member who talked to the two Chin refugees.

Shing Aung Ling, from Sungtawng village, and Kee Aung Thang, from Muiwai village, of Mindat Township in Southern Chin State were arrested on 24 November 2009 and 4 January 2010 respectively.

Kee Aung Ling escaped from the hands of human-trafficking agents by jumping off a moving motorbike heading toward a deep forest on the Malaysia-Thailand border where

traffickers are known to operate. After hiding in the cane fields for two days, he was arrested by the local Malaysian authorities in a small village and handed over to the police.

Hundreds of Chin refugees still remain in detention camps in Malaysia, according to CRC.