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**STOP
FORCED
LABOUR
IN BURMA**

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**Christian Crosses Demolished in Kanpetlet
Township, Chin State (Photo: CHRO)**



Landslide-Destroyed roads in Chin State (Photo: CHRO)

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Arbitrary Taxation & Extortion

Extortion, Forced Labor Wears Down Chin Villagers

07 September 2011:

Chin locals in Thantlang Township, Chin State have been forced to provide chickens and tree trunks as punishment for their animals reportedly entering the military base in Lungler village last week.

Major Ko Ko Aung and his soldiers from Burma Army Infantry Light Battalion (LIB) No. 268 based in Falam town forcibly demanded domestic animals and the tree trunks after claiming that a herd of cattle belonging to Fungka villagers broke through the military fences.

"It is not possible even for people to get into the military quarters, let alone our cattle. The military quarters are surrounded with layers of fences. We have learned that our cattle have been intentionally driven into their fences through the gates of the army camp by the soldiers themselves," said one of

the villagers, who asked not to be named.

The villager also said that the soldiers continually do this kind of coercion and extortion, as they are not provided enough rations by the authorities.

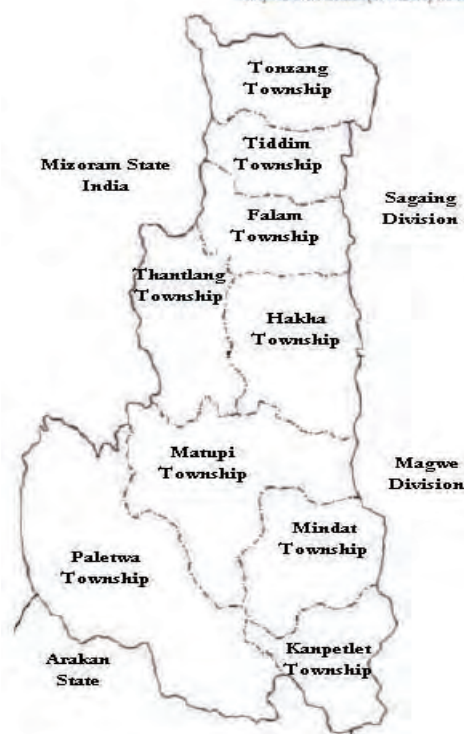
"... This time, they warned us that they would shoot all the cattle dead if we didn't meet their demands..."

"When this happens, we, the villagers, are the ones suffering. This time, they warned us that they would shoot all the cattle dead if we didn't meet their demands. They asked for a total of 200 tree trunks besides our chickens, and we were ordered to carry it all to the military camp."

Based in Lungler village, which is about 4 miles away from Fungkah, Major Ko Ko Aung and his soldiers are still on patrol in the area, forcibly demanding military rations from the nearby villages, according to the locals.

"We hoped that the soldiers would change their behaviour after the new government was established. But so far, we haven't seen any real changes as we are still suffering from this repression," complained the villager.#

Map of Chin State (© CHRO, 2008)



Money Collected from Households for Construction of Village Tract Office

10 September 2011: A total of 6000 kyats per household.

6000 kyats was collected from every household to construct a village tract office in Zawngte village in Falam, Chin State, the locals reported to Chin Human Rights Organization.

Falam Township Administration Officer U Khin Maung Win issued an order to build the office with wooden and corrugated iron roof. The order was carried out by Pu Run Hlei Thang, head of the village tract of Zawngte, and collected

6000 kyats per household. "Till date, 121 households have been collected and the construction is to be accomplished in October 2011. U Khin Maung Win will come for inspection," said a member of Block Peace and Development Council from Haimual Village.

The village group includes Zawngte, Ngailan, Thipcang, New Hnahthial, Old Hnahthial and Haimual. #

Money Collected from Students for Township Funds in Falam

16 September 2011: The Burmese authority is collecting money from school students in Falam Township for various government funds, one of the principals of local primary schools reported to Chin Human Rights Organization.

The money was collected from students in six villages in Zawngte Village tract with an order from Mr Thura, township education officer of Falam, in August 2011.

The amount collected from primary, middle and high schools was not the same. On August 23, 2011 the fund was collected at those schools and each student from Primary to Grade 4 had paid 500 kyats.

Schools from the six villages include a middle from Zawngte, and primary from Thipcang, New Hnahthial, Old Hnahthial, Ngailan and Haimual.#

Soldiers Forcibly Extorted Money from Cattle Traders

15 October 2011: A group of Burma Army soldiers on patrol from Light Infantry Battalion No. 266 based in Tibual Village in Falam, Chin State arbitrarily extorted 50,000 kyats each from two cattle traders near an Indo-Burma border on 12 September 2011, a local eye-witness reported to Chin Human Rights Organization.

Pakai, a villager of Sim/Dihai in Falam Township, and an owner of two cattle and four mythuns, and his friends were arrested at Leilet Village on their way to Mizoram State, India.

The Chin traders were forcibly demanded 50,000 kyats. Another extortion by Burma Army soldiers happened to Muana, owner of two cattle and one mythun, and a villager from Tlangkhua in Thantlang Township. Mr. Muana was extorted 50,000 kyats after he and his group were stopped at Singai Village.

Army soldiers are patrolling along the Indo-Burma border to extort money from traders travelling from Burma to India. The soldiers have been accused of conducting a series of extortion illegally, with no invoice issued to the traders. #

Army Extorted Money and Goods from Villagers

10 October 2011: Burma Army soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion No. 304 based in Matupi, Chin State has been checking local travelers from southwest of Matupi Township since July 2011 and collecting 2,000 kyats and above from anyone who does not bring national identity card with them, a local reported to Chin Human Rights Organization.

A local Chin pastor of Evangelical Mission Church (EMC) from Valangte Village was forcibly collected 2,000 kyats on 31 August 2011 for his failure to present his national identity card on demand.

He also said that any biker who passes the gate has been extorted a certain amount of diesel on a daily basis.

Along with the monetary extortion, the soldiers have been seizing other items from the local travelers who pass the gate. Though the matter was reported to the senior officers, no action has been taken unfortunately and the villagers have to bear the crunch, according to sources.#



Chin locals travelling with horses carrying items (Photo: CHRO)

(Photo: CHRO)



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"The army has no rule of laws and everything they say is law."

Army Extort Money from Bull Traders Again

09 September 2011: Traders selling bull in Hakha township lost their profit from 45 bulls worth Kyat 150 lakhs while the animals were being taken from Gangaw, Magwe division to Mizoram state, India. Money was extorted by two military personnel.

A source said that two soldiers seized the bulls near Lungcawite village, Thantlang township, Indo-Burma border on 26 August and demanded Ks. 15 lakh Kyat.

"We three traders spent about a month on the way. We spent lots of money on food and labour charges. We'll get no profit as we faced extortion by the military," said Tial Cung, one of the bull traders.

Similarly, on 15 August Police officer-in-charge Myint Taung and his team in Surkhua village, Hakha township had seized 45 bulls from Lian Thin of Ukhla village, Gangaw township. They took 3 lakh Kyat and released the bulls.

"Soldiers and policemen are now very active in extorting money from civilians again. There was no such activity during the 2010 election period," said a local in Surkhua village.

Besides, military personnel in Vuangtu village based camp also seized a bull of worth 4-5 lakh Kyat in Ngaphaipi village, Thantlang township and then they killed the bulls for meat.

"We cannot make profit from bull trading as the Rupee and Kyat exchange rate is down and Rs. 1 is equivalent to 14 Kyats only and the slaughtering houses take the bulls one a day and we have to wait for payment. They buy on credit or installment system.—*Khonumthung news*

Soldiers Extorted Money and Seized Goods from Local Trader

20 October 2011: Burma Army soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion No. 274 seized goods and forcibly extorted money from a local trader in Bukphir Village in Tedit Township, Chin State, the victim reported to Chin Human Rights Organization.

Captain Zarni Htun and his soldiers stopped the Chin local from Tungzang in Tedit Township along with ten horses loaded with kerosene, another ten horses with diesel and two horses with Khaini (chewing tobacco) on his way back from Champhai, Mizoram State in India on 18 October 2011.

He was arbitrarily extorted 180,000 kyats.

"All the goods cost 50,000 kyats. The army extorted 180,000 kyats from me and I am not getting even the capital, let alone the benefit. The army has no rule of laws and everything they say is law," complained the victim. #

Forced Labour

Burmese Authority Forced Residents to Floor Sand in Tahan

3 September 2011: The head of Block Peace and Development Council (BPDC) of Block D in Tahan, Kalaymyo in Sagaing Division forced residents including widows and single-parents to floor sand in their respective compounds.

Local residents were ordered to complete within a month's duration from 17th June to 5th July 2011 and the inspection will levy a fine to those failing to do so, according to one of the Chin residents.

"The reason for sand flooring is for better perambulation. But a widow like me is having trouble with this. Livelihood is difficult and this order burdens us amidst having no job. 4,000 kyats cost us for hiring a truck. I totally have no idea to solve this problem. People have to pay all the time if government does something," complained a Chin widow.

"I have information that the head of BPDC and his members charge for penalty after inspection. I am worrying that they would charge me. I am now in great trouble thinking how I could manage to pay back my debt," she added.#



(Photo: CG)



Tahan Bazaar, Kalay Myo (Photo: Kalay/Flickr)

Army Soldiers Interrogated and Forced Villagers to Sign

12 September 2011: Captain Ko Ko Aung, second commanding officer of Light Infantry Battalion No. 268 based in Lungler military camp in Thantlang Township, Chin State, and his 12 soldiers went to Dawn Village on frontier security patrolling and interrogated village elders to mention the camping and movement of the Chin National Army (CNA) and demanded their signatures, one of the Chin leaders told Chin Human Rights Organization.

"The captain and his 12 soldiers came to Ralpel village, which is a part of Lungler military Camp at 7am in the morning on 22 August 2011. They summoned the village head, one member and another village elder. They asked us to report the movement of CNA and threatened to assault us physically if we did not provide the correct information," he added.

"We told them that the CNA has not come to our village for the past five years. They went on asking whether Indian soldiers and Mizoram Police came to the village. We said no and they asked our signatures for assurance and we did it," continued the village leader.

"The army proceeded and arrived in Dawn Village at around 8:00 a.m. They asked the same questions. I said the CNA has not come for the past five years. Later, the Burmese soldiers collected signatures from the village head, a member and one elder for assurance and we did so," said a villager from Dawn.

"They asked me to name any CNA soldiers and I said I know no one. And he ordered to report to the army as soon as we know any names of the CNA member," added the villager.

Seven of the 12 soldiers went to Tio River on the Indo-Burma border and were known to have got back to Lungler military camp on 23 August 2011.#

Students Forced to Attend Classes on Saturday due to Buddhist Sabbath Day

13 September 2011: Local students and teachers in Thantlang Town, Chin State have been forced to go to school on Saturdays in replacement of Buddhist sabbath day that falls on a weekday, mostly Monday.

The Basic Education High School (BEHS) of Thantlang is closed on Mondays to observe a Buddhist day, known as *uposatha*, and all the students and teachers are made to come to classes on Saturdays, according to one of the local parents in Thantlang.

A local father, whose name is not revealed, told *Chinland Guardian* that it is something completely new to the community, something that has come out without their knowledge, and something that has kept on going on for weeks.

One of the school teachers was quoted by *Seibnam* newsletter as saying: "I think it's good that we have day-off on Mondays as we don't go to the Buddhist monastery. And going to school on Saturdays sounds even better for us because we don't have to contribute the so-called voluntary services to places including the Buddhist monastery."

In Burma, the Buddhist 'ubot' day is commonly observed on full moon and new moon days while devoted Buddhists perform their religious practices in accordance with the four phases of the moon such as waxing, waning, full and new.

Speaking to *Chinland Guardian*, a government employee said that it is something weird as it is not a

public holiday, adding: "This happens only to the No. 1 High School, but not to other schools in town. Obviously, our family has been much disturbed as we don't have the same day off now."

It is reported that the unusual change has been introduced to the Chin community with the majority being Christian since a new Burmese headmaster has been appointed to Thantlang High School.

One of the No. 1 BEHS teachers said in an interview with *Seibnam*: "As we go to school on Saturday, we don't have much to prepare for worship services on Sunday. Normally, we wash the clothes, clean the house and get some foods ready for the next day as we tend to gather at a house after the church service."

Another local complained saying that an important day for Christians such as Good Friday is not observed while schools are closed on the Buddhist days.

A mountainous town having more than 1,600 houses, Thantlang has got three primary and two high schools including a newly upgraded BEHS branch, with a number of the No. 1 BEHS students estimated to be over 2,000.

There are only dozens of Buddhists in Thantlang, mostly government employees including about 15 Burmese teachers from the No. 1 BEHS, according to sources.

Among a population of more than 65,000 people with 8,532 houses in 38 villages of Thantlang Township, there are only 54 Buddhists and three monasteries, according to a recent statistics of religions in Chin State by the government.#

Township Officers Ordered Village Heads to Collect 'Guest Fees'

14 September 2011:

Township Administration Officer U Khin Maung Win in Falam, Chin State ordered every village head to collect 200 kyats per head for guest registration fee, a source of the Chin Human Rights Organization said.

The Burmese Administration Officer instructed that every village must keep a book separately for guest lists and keep track of record on a daily basis which will contain guest's name, identity number, address, details of departure and arrival with correct dates along with registration fee.

A Chin local said village heads have to bring the registration book along with the fees whenever the Township Administration Office summons them. It is very difficult socially for village heads to collect registration fees from guests from nearby villages, he added.

"According to the guest registration instructions, we have to get letters from local authorities and bring identity card to visit even our relatives and friends. It costs us 800 kyats to visit Falam," he complained. #

Burma Army Soldiers Forced Villagers as Porters

25 October 2011: Captain Zarni Htun and four soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion No. 274 ordered four villagers from Bukphir, Tedim Township forced to carry their military rucksacks up to Darkhai village in Tonzang Township, one of the Chin porters told Chin Human Rights Organization.

“The captain and four soldiers forced four villagers to carry a generator and their rucksacks from Bukphir to Darkhai village for about 12 miles on 13 October 2011. Two villagers carried the generator and the other two carried their rucksacks,” he added.

The four Chin porters from Bukphir village are Khai Hau Suan, 30, Nang Za Thawn, 20, Thang Sian Muang, 25, and Cin Khan Khup, 21.

“Two of us carried a generator for playing China-made DVD and it was previously carried by Darkhai villagers for Captain Zarni Htun when he was in Bukphir village. We don’t really know what are inside the rucksacks carried by the other two.”

“We spent two days but got nothing for our labour and lost two days’ wages. We had to stay and eat at our relatives’ house in Darkhai Village,” he lamented.#



(Photo: CHRO)

Locals Forced to Mend Roads ahead of Transport Minister’s Visit

29 October 2011: Local people were forced to mend roads in preparation ahead of an official visit to the area by Minister for Transport, a villager from Haimual in Falam Township told Chin Human Rights Organization.

Thantlang Township administration officer was known to have ordered villagers near the Falam-Thantlang Township border to repair the road connecting Falam, Chin State to Vaphai village, Mizoram State in India.

The road was constructed years ago with donation from local households in the region without any assistance from the government, sources claimed.

Pu Tawk Ling, Secretary of Thantlang Township Administration Department, sent a letter pertaining to the order to an administration head in Tlangkhua

village in Thantlang Township on 7 October 2011.

On 8 October 2011, the village head sent two villagers from Tlangkhua on a bike to pass the order orally up to Leilet village, Falam Township near the Indo-Burma border.

“According to Tawk Ling’s letter, Transportation Minister of Chin State was to inspect bridges and roads from Vaiphai in Mizoram to Falam in Chin State that local villagers were required to work on.

The order was implemented through the village head,” he added.

“Regarding the Minister’s visit, we, villagers from Lairal village tract, have patched up the roads and bridges,” said a villager.

“In our village, one person from each household had to work on the road for two days from 15-16 October 2011 with our own rations. We get nothing for our labor. The minister has not come yet and I have no idea what is happening,” added the villager.#

...The four villagers received no money for carrying the military supplies

Freedom of Religion

Chin Christian Pastor Ordered to Leave Town in Magway Division

03 September 2011:

A Chin pastor, who has been living as a Christian missionary in Kyaukhtu Town, Magway Division for nearly three years, was ordered to discontinue his work and leave the town by the local authorities on 20 August 2011.

The Dai Chin Christian missionary, whose name is not revealed, was forced to return to his native place after allegedly being accused of not participating in the so-called 'voluntary work' and not contributing financially to the authorities.

In Burma, religious minorities including Christians and Muslims have been forced to 'donate' money, food, labour or materials to maintain Buddhist monasteries, and to serve as military porters, according to an annual report 2011 by USCIRF (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom).

One of the Chin Christian leaders from Mindat Town, Chin State, said the Chin pastor and his family who stayed in their mission quarter were ousted from Kungpho block after the authorities gave them warnings and cut off electricity and water as punishment.

"The local government authorities warned that further action might be taken if he didn't listen and that an order would be issued to the State School teacher to ban their children from going to school," added the local who asked not to be named.

Having no other options, the Chin family, who had lived in the town since 2009, was known to have left the town and gone to the nearest town in southern parts of Chin State.

Speaking over the phone last Saturday, the Chin pastor in his mid 30s said: "I am worried and concerned about my church members. I really want to go back as soon as possible. Please pray for me so that the door will be open to continue my work and for the church members to be faithful and strong in this difficult time."

The junta sent in Buddhist monks to various towns and villages in Chin State, with soldiers to protect them, according to the magazine of Barnabas Fund in January-February 2007.

"Anyone who converts to Buddhism is exempt from forced labour or portering and all other kinds of persecution," added the magazine.

Religious leaders in Burma are not eligible to vote in the election under Section 392 of the 2008 constitution.

It is estimated that there are over 70 Christian believers in the areas near Kyaukhtu town, the second largest in Saw Township of Magway Division where approximately 98 percent of the total population, 4.4million, is Buddhist.#

Reporting by Shwekey Hoipang
[hoipangs@yahoo.co.uk]



Chin Preacher from USA Ordered to Leave Town in Thantlang

10 September 2011: Mr. Tial Lian Thang, a Chin Christian from the US visiting his family, has been ordered to leave town by the local authorities while preaching at a local church in Thantlang, Chin State.

A Burmese officer, Head of the Immigration Department was said to have warned Tial Lian Thang to make a report to the government authority in Hakha this afternoon after interrupting a Christian crusade organised by the Johson Memorial Baptist Church.

"He was told that he is not welcome here in the town. After making himself known to the authorities in Hakha, he was told to leave Chin State for Rangoon," one of his relatives from Thantlang town told *Chinland Guardian*.

Another source suggested that he has been accused of gathering people in a church and of telling them about politics besides the gospel.

Tial Lian Thang, a US citizen, who has been in the town for more than a month, was banned from preaching and staying in the town days after Burma's President Thei Sein's call on Burmese citizens in exile



to return last month.

Some local churches including Thantlang Baptist Church have been threatened why he was allowed to preach to their congregation, according to a local who works for one of the churches.

"He is stopped during the gathering and now on his way home from School Block where the Christian crusade is held. He is going to Hakha very soon," added the local.

Currently based in Maryland, USA, Mr. Tial Lian Thang in his early thirties is visiting his family in Thantlang town for the first time after having left



Two Christian Crosses destroyed in Chin State (Photo: CHRO)

Two Christian Crosses Demolished, Burnt Down in Chin State

21 September 2011: 15 local Chin Buddhist youths were ordered to destroy two Christian crosses planted near the newly completed suspension bridge on Mung (Hmolong) River in Kyindwe village, Kanpetlet Township, Chin State on 28 July 2011.

The Chin crosses erected on both sides of the bridge were reported to have been cut off and burnt down on

the locations around 9pm at night under the direct order of six members of the authorities.

It is confirmed that the six members of authorities who gave the instruction for the demolition were a Buddhist monk from Kyindwe village; U Win Tin, Police Officer in charge of Kyindwe Police Force; two village headmen U Mya Phyu and U Aung Kyaw; U Chit Sein aka Thang Bu, a school teacher graduated from the University of the Development of National Races; and a local villager, Mg Mg aka Kyin Htwe.—
continued onto next page

Another source claimed that some local Chin Buddhists were not happy with the fact that the people were using the bridge to trade in villages of Magwe Division rather than other Chin villages nearby.

Some Kyindwe villagers were supposedly known to have suffered from economical impacts after the opening of the bridge as the villagers started using it for travelling to Magwe Division to sell local products, which were traded locally before.

The suspension cables of the Mung bridge were reported bearing iron saw-cut marks on both sides and it has not been used by the locals after the incident had happened and it was not safe for crossing any longer.

It was believed the cables were intentionally slashed in protest, according to the villagers.

Till to date, no action has been taken by the authorities against those responsible for the destruction of the Chin Christian crosses near the bridge, about 2 furlongs away from the village, Kyindwe.

On 30 September, the local Christian communities from Kanpetlet and Mindat townships are set to organise a concerted peaceful protest against the demolition of the two crosses.

Reporting by Jeremy Hoipang and Van Biak Thang



Remnants of Chin Christian crosses demolished (Photo: CHRO)



Other Human Rights Violations



Infantry Battalion 304 Recruited Child Soldiers

6 September 2011: Burma Army soldiers from Infantry Battalion No. 304 based in Leisin village, Matupi Township in Chin State recruited child soldiers, according to Chin Human Rights Organization's source.

Sergeant Kyaw Aung and his soldiers captured 5 children in Leisin Village in last November 2010. The chil-

dren chanced to escape on the way to the army camp at a village called Kala at night and due to fear of the consequences, some fled to Malaysia and the rest to Mizoram State in India.

The captured children are Mg Bi, son of U Lai Kung from Leisin Village; Mg Jonathan, son of U Khaw Tuai from Tibual Village; Mg Sawng Lian, 16, from Tibual Village; a female, younger sister of U Sui Tang from Bawng Hung Village; and Mg Lai Kung, from Wankai Village.#

Authority Forcibly Held Election for Village Head

19 September 2011: Pu Bawng Lian, Township General Administration Officer issued an order to hold election by force for the post of village head in Dawn village, Thantlang Township in Chin State, according to Chin Human Rights Organization's source.

And it was carried out by the secretary and one of the students in the village, according to the locals.

Pu Bawng Lian arranged a meeting at Thantlang administration office for Pu Tawk Lin, Secretary of Thantlang Township Administration Department and U Tei Kul, a high school teacher from the village on August 8, 2011 and the election took place with only 30 voters the following day.

Pu Bawng Lian, leader of Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), sought the help of the town-

ship administration in favour of his party member for the post.

"The villagers accept any person for the post from any party on condition that the person is elected unanimously. However, 15 of the voters are from the USDP party and the rest are handpicked by Pu Bawng Lian," one of the local leaders said.

"We have 194 eligible voters in terms of one from each family and this is purely a conspiracy by responsible authorities in the government," said the local.

Pu Bawng Lian was claimed to have boasted about the post reserved for the USDP party even before the election was held. Later, Pu Mang Luan, a member of the party, won the post with 30 votes.

The villagers were displeased with the result but no one dared to speak out against the outcome, according to sources. #



Local Chin woman feeding her pigs (Photo: CHRO)

Soldiers Killed Domestic Animals in Chin State

23 September 2011: Burma Army soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion No. 304 based in Leisin Village, Matupi in Chin State have been accused of killing pigs, cows, mythuns, buffaloes and horses at will from 2002 to 2010.

It was reported that the soldiers gave half the meat of the killed animals to the owners and kept the rest for their rations without any payment, according to a source from Chin Human Rights Organization.

The soldiers killed two cows and a buffalo belonging to Pu Sui Thang, another cow of Mr Lawng Bun, and

a cow and a horse of Pu Lai Peng. The soldiers said they killed them because the domestic animals trespassed on their military camp.

Sergeant Myint Han killed four pigs in Tibaw village, Matupi Township while he was on duty. It was reported that 15 pigs have been already killed from 2004 to 2010 and the owner got only half of them.

No one really knows the exact number of domestic animals killed by the soldiers but it was estimated between 300 and 400, according to the locals.

Lt Colonel Saw Kyi Naing from Light Infantry Battalion No. 304 issued an order to the villagers to keep their pigs or they kill any 'wandering' pigs on sight as punishment. #

New Government Brings More Burdens to Traders in Tahan

26 September 2011: The new local government authorities have made more trouble to shopkeepers in Tahan, Kalaymyo in Sagaing Division, said a local businessman to Chin Human Rights Organization.

The municipal department forcibly instructed vendors and shopkeepers not to sell on benches and to take temporary canvas roof off their shops ahead of a 'scheduled' visit to Tahan Market by U Tha Aye, Chief Minister of Sagaing Division, in the second week of September in 2011.

Around midnight, the municipal department seized the benches and rain proofs of some shops into their cars, which have never been returned to the local shop-owners, according to the locals.

Shopkeepers often had to sell in the scorching sun as they were ordered not to put up their canvas roofs over their shops when U Tha Aye was making a visit to Kalay Myo. "The local authorities thought that U Tha Aye might drop by the market as it was built dur-

Tahan Bazaar (Photo: zoin.info)



ing his time as Divisional Head of Sagaing," said the locals.

It was claimed that U Tha Aye made a fleeting visit to the market four or five days after his arrival in Kalaymyo, making the local shopkeepers suffer for a few days in the burning sun.

"The traders complained that they did not suffer when U Tha Aye was a divisional head in the former government. Now, the new government makes more trouble for us," continued the businessman.#

A village in Chin State (Photo: CHRO)



Chin locals travelling (Photo: CHRO)



Burma Army Soldiers Killed Pig for Their Rations

18 October 2011: Burma Army soldiers from Daikhai military camp in Tonzang Township and some soldiers on patrol in Bukphir Village from Light Infantry Battalion No. 274 killed a pig belonging to a villager for their rations, an eye-witness from Bukphir Village reported to Chin Human Rights Organization.

"Captain Zarni Htun and seven soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion No. 274 killed the pig with a gun about a furlong away from the village. It belonged to

Pu Cin Ngaih Thang, 28, a farmer from Bukphir Village. The army took one third of the meat for their rations," said the local eye-witness.

"The owner has two children and his family is very poor. He politely approached Captain Zarni Htun to compensate 150,000 kyats, which is the current market price for a pig. However the captain reprimanded him that the pig was not confined properly and they thought it was a boar and he even asked him to contribute one third of the pig for the cost of the bullet. He had no choice but to bestow the demanded meat to the soldiers."#

Food Crisis & Humanitarian Situation



(Photo: NST)



People Face Difficulties as Heavy Rain Damaged Roads

1 September 2011:

People in Kalay Myo, Sagaing division are facing difficulties as roads have been damaged badly due to heavy rain, a local reported to Chin Human Rights Organization.

Torrential rain on August 18, 2011 flooded creeks and they damaged bridges in Vaphai, Tlangzawl, Tuithim and Tuingo villages. Road transportation was totally halted and people are having grave difficulty for survival.

Flood victims are provided food with tiffins by people from Tahan, said the local.

“The flood killed no one but damaged their paddy badly. Our country has government not like others and people are in great trouble due to the damages of their plants”, the local lamented.

The flood decreases now and people are mending the roads voluntarily. Flood happens there every year but the government never offers assistance to the victims, according to sources.#

Appeal for Flood-hit Villagers as Recovery Works Progress in Chin State

03 September 2011: The Chin Youth Organisation (CYO) has launched a fund-raising appeal to assist the flood-affected victims in Tedim Township of Chin State in their rebuilding and recovery activities.

In its statement, CYO said that it makes efforts in raising fund in collaboration with the Tedim Youth Fellowship (TYF) to contribute toward helping Chin locals recover from destruction caused by heavy rains in recent weeks.

About 20 villages in Tedim Township, Burma's Chin State, were severely affected in early last month by 'unusual' torrential rains that had caused flash floods and heavy landslides damaging houses, roads, farmlands, bridges, water pipes, mini-hydro plants and forests.

CYO urges communities, churches and business owners as well as capable individual across Chin Diasporas to

make contribution for natural disaster-hit villagers in Chin State, the poorest among 14 States and Divisions in Burma.

Dr. Salai Van Thawng Lian, CYO General Secretary, said: "It is great that our brothers and sisters in flood-affected areas have taken their own initiatives as much as they can in rebuilding rather than just waiting for help from heaven. However, it is very slow. Our collective effort and contribution will surely make their recovery works faster and help them to get back on their feet."

The Zomi Association of USA, a non-profit organization engaged in working for the welfare of refugees and promoting human rights and democracy in Burma, has also called for emergency aid and long-term assistance for Tedim villages.

Formed in 2001 during the first Lai Seminar held in Battle Creek, Michigan State, CYO is committed to working for development in various forms of Chin migrant youth, protection of Chin indigenous literature and cultural heritage in particular, and for the cause of democracy, peace, equal rights and freedom in Burma.#



Chin villages in Kanpetlet Township (Photo:CHRO)

Alarm as Opium Consumption Increases in Chin State

11 September 2011: Despite government's 'declared' efforts to combat drug production in Burma, authority-run opium plantation has continued to increase in Chin State, with a rise in its addiction among the Chin people.

The local community leaders in the northern parts of Chin State are deeply concerned over an upsurge in the cultivation, production and addiction of opium along the Indian-Burma border, according to the BBC Burmese today.

A Chin local told BBC that the opium plantation has stretched across Cikha sub-township in Chin State to Tamu in Sagaing Division from Tonzang Township, where Meitei rebel groups from Manipur State, India are currently based.

A Chin university student said in an interview by Chin World Media that almost all men including youths in some villages in remote areas have used opiates although the figures of opium users across Chin State still remains unknown.

The local from Tonzang Township also said the cultivation has grown rapidly since 2008, with an estimated area of land up to 500 acres although it was first started in 2000 under the control of Burma's military authorities and the Manipuri Meitei rebels.

In July, a Christian pastor working in Tonzang Township told Chin World Media that the estimated acres of land used for opium poppy plantation must be around 5,000 while other sources claimed to be about 1,000.

Another local admitted that it is not easy to know the exact sizes and locations of the opium cultivation as the areas are restricted under tight security measures.

Recently, a secret meeting took place in Falam Township between an Indian businessman and Major Aung

Aung, Second Commander of Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion No. 274 over opium trading along the Indian-Burma border, according to Khonumthung news.

Sources said that Colonel Aung Kyi, from Burma Army LIB No. 89 based in Khampat town, Tamu District of Sagaing Division has been engaged in buying and selling raw opium produced from Chin State.

Opium from Chin State sells wholesale at about 6 lakhs (600,000 kyats) a viss, equivalent to about 1.5 kg or 3.5 lbs, whose market price on the streets is around 16 lakhs, according to BBC Burmese.

Members of the Meitei underground rebel groups are said to be able to freely move around the region including Tonzang Township, and Kalay District in Sagaing Division with their Burmese national identity cards.

After Afghanistan, Burma remains the second largest opium poppy producer in the world, with an increase in its cultivation by 20 percent last year, according to the UN report in June this year.#

"...almost all men including youths in some villages in remote areas have used opiates although the figures of opium users across Chin State still remains unknown."

Victims of Landslides Still Left Homeless in Chin State

12 September 2011: Six families whose houses were completely destroyed by recent landslides in Khayaing village, Kanpetlet Township of Chin State have not still got proper places to stay, a Chin Christian pastor said.

More than 30 members of the Chin families have been sheltering in local churches since heavy rains that swept away their houses in the landslides on 28 August 2011, according to the pastor, whose name is kept anonymous.

"Community leaders and church members are looking for places for them to stay. But there is no re-

sponse or help from the government until today yet," the Khayaing pastor told *Chinland Guardian*.

"The villagers have been helping and taking care of each other in this difficult time. As they are in such remote areas, their sufferings cannot be heard easily. Now that we have heard, we believe their problems could be solved with our collective prayers," appealed the pastor.

No casualty is reported following massive landslides in the region caused by 'unusual' torrential rains for nearly a week from 12 to 25 August.

The victim families, from a Dai Chin tribe, are of Pu Saw Mana, Pu Thang Bu, Pu Kui Saw, Pu Mana Paing, Pu Hung Ling and Pu Mana

Hung.

The Chin Baptist pastor also mentioned that another two families have been moved to a safe place as their houses, believed to be swallowed soon, stands on the verge of landslides.

In other parts of Chin State, where flash floods and landslides ravaged houses, bridges and farm fields, local communities have made a concerted effort to rebuild their livelihood in collaboration with and help from Chin people living in foreign countries.

Khayaing village, locally spelled in Dai dialect as Kham Jäng, is about 50 miles away from the biggest town, Kanpetlet, in Kanpetlet Township, Chin State.#

Chin Food Crisis: A Helping Hand from Afar

29 September 2011: Villagers in the remote southern parts of Chin State, Burma are still reeling from the effects of severe food crisis, locally known as mautam – four years after massive infestations of crop-destroying rats were first reported from the northern townships in a devastating natural phenomenon that followed the mass flowering of indigenous species of bamboo in the area.

For a people over 70% of whose population already lived in abject poverty according to the UN, the effects of the cyclical flowering of bamboo and rat infestations, which began in 2007, are debilitating.

But local groups, including church-based organizations quickly organized themselves to respond to the

crisis with very little resource, and made tremendous positive impacts, but in the face of utter neglect and denial of even the existence of the food crisis by the State, there was little room for civil society response to have any life changing impacts.

Yet the initial response from the Chin communities outside of Burma, as well as concerned humanitarian agencies and rights groups across the world did make significant difference in the lives of hundreds of individuals and communities.

While the regime was ignoring the crisis and refused to provide any meaningful assistance to the affected communities, the response from outside the country has been nothing but generous. In 2010 – 2011, some 60 most affected villages in the remote southern townships received emergency food assistance from humanitarian aid

channeled in from abroad, despite a tight ban against delivery of any foreign relief assistance legally.

"We feel we are blessed for receiving relief aid from a foreign country while our own government has been ignoring us and to the worse, blocking delivery of food assistance from other parts of Burma," said one local Chin community leaders engaged in the relief work.

In 2010, the Czech Republic Humanitarian Aid, Burma Centre Prague (BCP) and Global Health Access Program (GHAP) financially contributed to the relief work in southern Chin State, to villages many of which have not been reached by UN agencies working in Chin State such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) due to difficulty of access and other reasons.—

continued onto next page.

Christoph Amthor, Co-founder of Burma Center Prague, said: "For our organization, famine relief for the Chin people is particularly important because we feel that the foreign support going into the central areas of Burma needs to be complemented by more cross-border aid, and this not only from the Thailand side."

"While the amounts that we collect in the Czech Republic may not seem huge, they are a lot considering the Czech standard of living that is well below the Western European level. We know that every single donation given by Czech supporters to this far-away country means a sacrifice for them."

The BCP has been making public awareness and fund-raising campaigns in the Czech Republic to support relief work inside Chin State since 2009.

Reena Sattar, Project Manager of BCP, said: "We are glad that we have found CHRO as a partner. Only this way were we able to start in 2009 without having to worry about the coordination of the relief groups working from India. And what is more, the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Czech Embassy in Delhi are very interested in the developments and express their continued support of the famine relief."

As of May 2011, more than 200 metric tons of emergency food aid has been distributed to over 60 villages in southern parts of Chin State, according to the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), which coordinated the work.

Salai Bawi Lian Mang, Executive Director of CHRO said: "We are grateful to the people and government of Czech Republic for their generosity, supports and concern for the Chin people. These supports provided a life-line for so many people in one of the most remote, isolated and neglected areas of Burma."

He said that while the aid has not solved the problems entirely, it served to ease hunger, for however short, provided hope for many people and deterred further migration out of Chin State due to extreme shortages of food. He said the Chin will need continued support because it takes several years before people can fully recover from the effects of Mautam.

Earlier this year, UNOCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) said the food insecurity in Chin State was expected to get worse with the

'unusual' weather condition and the coming of monsoon which dramatically reduces access to other off-farm income-generating activities.

The report said food insecurity in Kanpetlet, Matupi, Mindat and Paletwa townships of Chin State still remains a challenge following severe devastation caused by the ongoing rat infestation and crop failure last year.

The Chin food crisis has also triggered high level of children drop-outs from school, as well as migration of the local people in Chin State into neighboring countries. A report by the World Food Programme found that school enrollment rate in 2010 was only 59 percent.

In June 2011, the report by the United Nations ranks Chin State the poorest among all the 14 states and divisions in Burma, which said rural and remote areas are worst affected by poverty.

"Food poverty incidence is more than twice as high in rural than urban areas. Rural areas account for over 85 percent of total food poverty," the report said. The vast majority of people Chin State live in the rural area.

Mautam is caused by a massive boom in the population of rats following the blossoming bamboos which produce avocado-like fruits. After feeding on the bamboo fruits/seeds, the rats begin to reproduce in an accelerated birth surge. The rodents often grow to particularly large sizes and can gnaw through wood floors, walls, storage containers and granaries. Swarms of these nocturnal rats quietly invade farms and villages to devour crops, stored rice and others such as potatoes, maize, chili and sesame.

Former President of the Czech Republic, Václav Havel, accused Burma's government of exacerbating the already devastating humanitarian consequences brought about by natural disasters in Burma.

"The international community encountered similar Burmese government practices during the destructive Cyclone Nargis, when for a long time international aid was not allowed into the country. The funds raised by the Burma Center Prague's collection will help the afflicted areas despite the indifference of Burmese officials."#

Situation of Refugees

Malay-Aussie Refugee Swap Deal Made Invalid

02 September 2011 - KUALA LUMPUR:

The controversial refugee swap deal between Malaysian and Australian governments has reached a dead end as Australia's high court ruled that it should be terminated because the rights of asylum seekers could not be guaranteed.

The court found that Malaysia was not legally bound to protect the rights of asylum seekers under the agreement which was signed by both countries in July 2011.

The ruling means victory for non-government organizations (NGO) which fight against the deal, but not for many refugees staying in Malaysia.

Although there are different views among refugee groups on this issue, most Burmese refugees in Malaysia however hope the swap deal will open more resettlement opportunities for them in Australia.

International media reported that Australia will still have to accept the 4,000 confirmed refugees from Malaysia, but the threshold is high enough for new badge

of refugees.

Under the initial deal, Australia will send 800 asylum seekers detained in the country to Malaysia in exchange for 4,000 verified refugees.

Constitutional law specialists from Australia said the swap deal could only be revived if Malaysia signed the United Nations Refugee Convention, which is quite unlikely to happen in a near future.

With a moderate population of 28 millions, Malaysia is housing approaching one million refugees/asylum seekers and up to three million of legal and illegal foreign workers.

Since independence in 1957, Malaysian government was rather doubtful with the influx of refugees from Vietnam, southern Philippines, Aceh (Indonesia) and now Burma.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has reiterated several times that Malaysia is not ready to sign the United Nations Refugee Convention because it will put extra burden for the government to take care of big number of foreign refugees.#

Reporting by Thomas Chong

Cheated Immigrants Urged to Bring Cases to Malaysian Tribunal

03 September 2011 - KUALA LUMPUR:

Foreign workers including undocumented immigrants who were cheated or paid exorbitant charges for registration under the 6P amnesty programme are urged to file their cases with the consumer tribunal to get back the excess money.

Consumer tribunal provided an alternative for the immigrants to claim for any losses incurred, in a less cumbersome and speedy manner by just paying RM5 (USD\$1.70) to file a complaint.

It was noticed that thousands of illegal immigrants had paid more than the stipulated amount fixed under the 6P amnesty programme.

The government has fixed RM35 as a maximum rate for registration of illegal immigrants through 348 appointed managing companies or agents, while the maximum service charge for legalisation is RM300.

Former consumer tribunal chairman, Pretam Singh Darshan Singh, said those who have been charged more than what is necessary could file a case (to recover the excess) under the consumer tribunal.

"Those who misrepresent the cost of the service could be charged under the Consumer Protection Act 1999"

"In such a consciousness, foreigners who have been duped into paying the additional cost may file their cases," he told Malaysia National News Agency, Bernama in an interview.

Over 2.5 million foreign workers had registered under the 6P amnesty programme since its beginning on 13 July until 31 August. Of the number, 1.6 million were legal foreign workers while the rest were undocumented.#

Reporting by Thomas Chong

Chin Refugee Father of Three Killed in Malaysia

05 September 2011: Chin refugee, Pu Za Thio, a father of three children, was brutally beaten up to death by a gang of Indians around 11pm at night in Puchong, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia last Saturday.

The Indian men on motorbikes started an unprovoked attack on them while Za Thio, 35, and his brother Thla Bawi, 28, were seeing their Chin friend off to a 14 bus stop near their house, according to the brother. "Za Thio and his friend were attacked while they were on their way to a toilet near the bus stop. And both of them ran but in different directions. His friend managed to escape," said Za Thio's brother.

Later in the night around 1am, the body of Za Thio was later found dumped in a nearby ditch after a thorough search by Chin friends and communities in the neighbourhood.

Za Thio's body has been kept at Serdang Hospital and there are some injuries on his face, according to the Malaysian Police.

His friend, who cannot be reached at the moment, was quoted as saying that he was beaten up and left by the gang after falling onto the ground unconscious.

"His wife is deeply grief-stricken and keeps crying. No

one can talk to her properly," said Salai Biak Hmun Lian, editor of Seihnam newsletter in Malaysia.

Mr. Za Thio, survived by wife Par Cia and three children aged between 7 years and 6 months, was described by friends and communities as a kind and humble man.

"We are much saddened by the sudden loss of our friend, who is a good and kind-hearted man," said Siang Nawl, who is from the same village, Hriang Khan in Thantlang Township, Chin State.

No detailed information about the killers has been known up to date although the police are conducting an investigation.

One source from Malaysia suggested that the Chin victim must have been killed by mistake as there was a riot in the Malaysian capital prior to the incident.

A postmortem examination is known to have been carried out in the hospital today but the result has not been revealed yet.

Pu Za Thio and his family are UNHCR-registered Chin refugees from Burma in Malaysia awaiting to get transferred to a safe country under the UNHCR Resettlement programme.

The funeral service is scheduled to take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia tomorrow.#

Chin Refugees Extorted, Beaten up by Thugs in Malaysia

25 September 2011: A number of Chin refugees in Malaysia have faced extortion and physical attacks by a group of South Asian thugs in recent weeks.

Mr. Ngun Thawng, 54, was beaten up by four thugs near his rented flat in Kuala Lumpur when he came back from a church service around 4pm on 11 September while another incident on 10 September involved Mr. Cung Lian Hup, 31, and Mr. Bawi Lian Thang, 26, being attacked by a taxi driver and his four friends.

The Chin victims said they were stopped, threatened and beaten up by a group of thugs believed to be from South Asian countries after all their belongings including mobile phones and money were forcibly extorted.

"A group of four people near our house asked if I had a cigarette and I said I didn't. Then, they started asking if I had money and I said the same. After that, they asked for a mobile phone and I didn't have any. So, they slapped me three times for no reasons," explained the 54-year-old refugee from Thangzang village in Thantlang Township, Chin State.

The two Chin refugees, Cung Lian Hup and Bawi Lian Thang, got beaten up in an unprovoked attack when a taxi driver from Kotaraya in Kuala Lumpur deceived and took them to a group of thugs.

"We were driven to a different location and when we got there, there were his four South Asian friends waiting for us. They started asking for 1,000 Ringgits each. As we didn't have any money with us, they forced us to make a call to our friends and family members," the Chin refugees told Seihnam newsletter. — *continued onto next page*

"As our calls didn't get through to anyone, they started threatening, beating and groping to see if there was anything valuable that they wanted to take from us. Finally, we managed to escape to the nearby Chinese restaurant," the victims told CDAC (Chin Disciplinary Action Committee).

The two Chins were said to have lost their UNHCR registration cards and 60 Malay Ringgits to the South Asian thugs.

One of the two Chin victims was taken to hospital with the help of the Malaysian police after the incident was reported to the Police Station.

Earlier this month, a group of six Chin refugees working on the cultivation farm near Kampah were robbed and attacked by thugs in the early morning while they were still in bed.#

Chin refugees in Malaysia being briefed by community leaders
(Photo: ACR)



21-yr-old Chin Refugee Stabbed to Death in Malaysia

14 October 2011: A Chin refugee young man, Simon Lian Uk, was knifed to death last night by two unknown thugs who appeared to be of South Asian origin, near Time Square Shopping Center in Kuala Lumpur around 8:20pm.

The 21-year-old, from Falam Town, Chin State, Burma died soon after he was stabbed several times in an unprovoked attack while walking along Jalan Brunei near Pudu LRT Station to go home, according to an eyewitness.

Salai Bawi Ling, who witnessed the incident, told the Malaysian police and forensic team Simon Lian Uk was running about 20 metres and falled into a ditch after being attacked.

Simon Lian Uk, who arrived in Malaysia in April 2010 and has already got registered as a refugee with the UNHCR, is known to his community as a quiet, promising young man, according to Coordinator of the Falam Refugee Organisation (FRO), Salai David Nun

Tho.

Salai David Nun Tho said Simon was a good man and he didn't smoke or drink alcohol, adding: "The Chin communities as a whole in Malaysia have come across many incidents like this but this is the very first time FRO has suffered from a sudden loss."

The body of Simon Lian Uk is currently kept in General Hospital in Chowkit of Kuala Lumpur for a post-mortem examination.

Speaking to Chinland Guardian, Pi Sui Khaw Nuam, mother of the victim, said: "I don't know what to say. My son is dead. We don't even know who did this. Please don't forget us in your prayer."

The Falam Refugee Organisation and Chin communities are said to be in liaison with the local Malaysian authorities regarding the funeral service.

Simon Lian Uk, who has got one elder brother and one younger sister, is the second son of Pu Khaw Za Thawng and Pi Sui Khaw Nuam, who arrived in Malaysia in 2008.#

Malaysia-Burma Detainee Swap Plan Sparks Outrage

19 October 2011 - KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia and Burma have agreed in principle to exchange detainees, a move that immediately sparked 'shock' and concerns among human rights groups.

Malaysian Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said the exchange is aimed at reducing congestion at immigration depots in the country.

Malaysian detention centers are notorious for overcrowding.

He told a news conference after meeting with Burma Deputy Foreign Minister U Maung Myint who is on a three-day official visit to Malaysia.

U Maung Myint said arrangements will soon be made to send Burmese nationals detained at Malaysian immigration depots back to Burma.

This proposal comes on the heels of the abandoned Malaysia-Australia agreement in July to swap asylum-seekers and refugees between the two countries, which was later struck down by the Australian High Court as illegal.

The majority of asylum seekers from Burma on Malaysian soil are ethnic Chins. According to the Chin Refugee Committee (CRC), at least 500 people from different ethnic groups are currently in detention centers, of which around 200 are ethnic Chins.

But Malaysia is set to launch a major crackdown on undocumented migrants and rights groups fear more asylum seekers and refugees may be arrested and detained in the process.

The idea to send back Burmese na-

tionals has raised serious concerns and outrage among rights groups which said it would breach human rights as most Burmese nationals fled their country to escape persecution.

Salai Bawi Lian Mang, Executive Director of CHRO (Chin Human Rights Organization) said the proposal is extremely worrying because the root cause of refugee flight - the systematic violations of human rights - still continues on a widespread scale in Burma.

"Despite recent cosmetic changes from Naypyidaw, we continue to document serious violations of human rights committed by the Burma Army and other state officials in Burma," he said.

Migrant Care Malaysia Director Alex Ong told local media that the situation of Burmese nationals was different from that of Indonesians and Bangladeshis.

"The Indonesians and Bangladeshis mostly come to Malaysia as economic migrants, meaning they are seeking wealth and a better life."

"The majority of Burma detainees, however, are seeking political asylum, and are not here for economic reasons. We also have to consider their refugee status," he said.

The detainee swap announcement has also 'shocked' the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), according to local human rights activists who contacted the agency yesterday.

Yesterday six leading Malaysian human rights groups issued a joint statement, cautioning that Malaysia inevitably risks violating international human rights law if it went

ahead with the deal.

Malaysia is a member of the 47-member UN Human Rights Council.

"The deportation arising from the swap with Burma for immigration detainees contravenes the principle of non-refoulement because of the presence of detainees in detention centres who are potentially refugees and asylum seekers."

Non-refoulement principle is a customary international law, which prohibits the forced return of people who fled persecution in their country of origin.

"Ethnic and religious minorities in Burma have been experiencing ongoing persecution leading to the exodus of several hundreds of thousands of people over the past twenty years fleeing oppressive conditions of forced labor, confiscation of lands/homes, systematic rape, torture and other forms of religious and ethnic persecution. The majority of the population from Burma in Malaysia are persons fleeing such persecution," said the leading human rights groups.

Malaysian Home Minister was quoted as saying by local media on Monday that asylum seekers will not be included in the deal. However, rights groups say they remain highly concerned despite the reassurance.

Representatives of local human rights groups are meeting with UNHCR today to discuss the matter, according to refugee community leaders.#

Based on Reporting by Thomas Chong

Possible Deportation and Crackdown Worries Chin Asylum Seekers

21 October 2011: 'Unregistered' Chin refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia said they are in fear of possible deportation to their country under the new Malaysia-Burma deal.

And concerns have grown in light of Malaysia's plan to launch a major crackdown on 'undocumented' as early as within the next two months.

Some believe that the crackdown will start as early as the first week of November with RELA, a volunteer corps, police and soldiers being in charge of the raid.

There are more than ten thousand Chin refugees, who have not been registered with the UNHCR, according to ACR (Alliance of Chin Refugees) and CRC (Chin Refugee Committee).

"Chin asylum seekers, who are still in the process of the UN registration or are not registered yet, are so worried about the impending crackdown. There is not much we can do to help them," a 'registered' Chin refugee told *Chinland Guardian*.

Malaysia has recently introduced a '6P programme' under which undocumented foreign workers and migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees are required to register with the government in an effort to 'regularize' their status.

The move has created much confusion and concerns among the refugees, as many of those trying to register under the program were given a slip that says "Return to your home country."

The '6P' registration is believed to resume early next month. And about 2.3 million people, of which half are undocumented, have registered with more than 60,000 children on the list, according to reliable sources.

There is much confusion among the refugees over the question of what will happen to those who have not registered and what will follow, as the re-registration under the 6P program and the crackdown may happen at the same time.

Meanwhile, rights groups have condemned the newly

agreed Malaysia-Burma deal that will allow deportation of Burmese nationals detained in Malaysia back to their country, saying the move will put their lives in serious danger. Under the deal, Malaysia and Burma are to exchange prisoners detained in each of the two countries. But it is unclear how many Malaysians are being detained in Burma.

In response, Malaysia has tried to reassure that asylum seekers and refugees will not be included in the swap deal. But rights groups point out that the lack of proper mechanism to screen potential asylum seekers raises serious concerns that those with otherwise genuine refugee claims may inevitably be included.

About 1,000 Burmese nationals are currently detained in Malaysia, according to Malaysia's Home Minister, Hishammuddin Hussein.

Since early June, Burma's new government has launched fresh military offensives in the ethnic areas, resulting in the killing of civilians and the displacement of thousands of civilians IDPs (internally displaced persons) and refugees, especially in Kachin State.

In its statement on Tuesday, SUARAM said: "Due to such situations happening in Burma, there is a large possibility that a majority of Burma nationals detained in detention centres are genuine refugees."

"By returning these detainees (refugees) to country or places where they may face persecution or threats to their life, Malaysia is in breach of international customary law of non-refoulement which prohibits the return of people to places where they may face persecution or threats to their life or freedoms."

As of last month, the UNHCR has registered over 94,000 refugees, of which more than 90 percent are from Burma. It is estimated that about 50,000 Chin refugees are stranded in Malaysia.

Burma still remains on the list of the world's worst human rights abusers alongside Libya, North Korea and Sudan, according to a 2011 report by an independent watchdog organization, Freedom House.#

"Chin asylum seekers, who are still in the process of the UN registration or are not registered yet, are so worried about the impending crackdown. There is not much we can do to help them"
- a registered Chin refugee

Chin State Government



**Chin State Parliament Building, Hakha, Chin State
(Photo: CHRO)**

Regular Session of Second Chin State Hluttaw to be Held Soon

06 September 2011: The new government of Chin State is likely to convene the regular session of Chin State Hluttaw for the second time in Hakha on 22 September 2011.

Members of Chin political parties have reportedly been informed of dates for arrival in the capital and the meeting, according to sources today.

Although the details of the Hluttaw session have not

been revealed, opposition Chin parties believe that the Chin government will appoint a new cabinet member by creating an additional ministry - presumably a Health and Education Ministry - and confirming the the State level financial budget that was set during the recent Hluttaw session held in Naypidaw.

The regular session of Second Chin State Hluttaw might take weeks if party members are to submit updates and proposals, and to raise questions during the meeting.

The regular session of First Chin State Hluttaw took place at the meeting hall of the State Hluttaw of Parlia-

Forced Labour Continues under New Government in Chin State

07 September 2011: Local residents and civil servants have been forced to carry out manual labour in Chin State under the direct order of Chief Minister Hung Ngai, a report by the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) has said.

According to the statement released today, CHRO has documented a series of forced labour and portering imposed upon government employees and villagers in Hakha, Falam and Thantlang townships over the past two months.

Civil servants in Hakha town have been ordered to clear a construction site of government-owned

guesthouse and the roadside leading up to Burma Army base of Light Infantry Battalion No. 266 on top of Mount Rung.

In August, three high school students were coerced into carrying heavy loads for soldiers from Light Infantry Battalion No. 266 from Congthia village to Thantlang town, according to the report.

CHRO's Program Director Salai Za Uk Ling said: "All officials in Chin State have been made aware that forced labour is illegal, and that those who order it are liable to be punished under the law. Chief Minister Hung Ngai should be setting a

positive example to the officials under his command. Instead, he seems to consider himself above the law and is confident that he can act with total impunity."

Chief Minister Hung Ngai was said to have threatened the civil servants with a salary cut and a monetary fine of 3,000 kyats if they failed to follow the orders.

One local civil servant was quoted by CHRO as saying that they had to do the work despite heavy rains on Saturdays and that some got sick as a result.

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Another local from Hakha complained about authority-foisted forced labour making him miss out on work for his own survival and livelihood, according to CHRO's statement.

Earlier in May this year, the International Labour Organization's official made a trip to Hakha, holding human rights awareness-raising workshop, with more than 160 people including government administrative officials, police, judges and Burma Army personnel.

Salai Za Uk Ling continued: "This seems like the latest move by Thein Sein's administration to convince the international community that it

is making positive changes. But we have yet to see any concrete improvements in the human rights situation on the ground in Chin State."

"Are we really going to see the new human rights body investigate and hold powerful ministers like Hung Ngai to account? We believe that a UN-mandated independent, impartial Commission of Inquiry into grave human rights violations in Burma is the only way to end the culture of impunity."

A January 2011 report by Physicians for Human Rights, Life Under the Junta: Evidence of Crimes Against Humanity in Burma's Chin

State, found that almost 92% of people surveyed had been subjected to at least one incident of forced labour in the year before February/March 2010.

Around 500,000 ethnic Chin live in the north-western area of Chin State in Burma.

The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) is a non-governmental, non-profit advocacy organization 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, instruments of the State.#

Chin Government Met with Humanitarian Leaders amid Rights Violations

08 September 2011: The new government of Chin State held a closed-door meeting with representatives and leaders from 21 development and humanitarian agencies working for the northwestern state and some parts of Kalay District of Burma last Thursday.

The first meeting of its kind convened by the Chin authorities at the Chief Minister Office in Parliament Building in Hakha town was attended by about 25 people including departmental ministers and administration staff from 9am to 2pm.

Chief Minister U Hung Ngai firstly addressed the forum, which was followed by presentations on organisational backgrounds, works and updates from each NGO, according to sources from Hakha.

One of the NGO staff said the Chin ministers showed their willingness to step up communication and collaboration for the development of Chin

State, which they also described as the poorest in Burma.

However, they warned that the works of any NGOs should not include anything that would disturb or interfere with the government.

The development and humanitarian groups were asked to make a report on their projects at upcoming meetings, which the Chin government said they would organise every six months.

And the government also said that it will open doors to an official organisational registration in the near future, which has never been allowed in Chin State before.

It was claimed that the government is soon to give a green light to freely travelling in and out of Chin State, which has been designated as a conflict zone up to date for years.

One of the Chin activists in exile said: "They have made a lot of promises. We are not sure if this is just to improve their image in line with the current situation in the whole country. Time will tell whether it is actually true

or not. But for us, it is still very difficult to believe in until practical evidence has been made in their deeds."

During the meeting, the government also said that the majority of development projects on road constructions and electricity across Chin State will be completed in the next year 2012 following a recent 8million donation by the Indian government.

The meeting has also been slammed for its restriction saying all the attendees had to be of Burmese nationality and for having only 4 women invited.

Yesterday, the Chin Human Rights Organisation (CHRO) reported that a series of forced labour and extortion have still been conducted under the direct order of Chief Minister in Falam, Hakha and Thantlang townships in Chin State.

Meanwhile, victims of flood-hit villages in Tedim and Tonzang townships as well as other parts of Chin State are known to be still struggling with their day-to-day survival and a large part of the destruction has still remained untouched.#

Chief Minister: Poverty Rate in Chin State to Reduce by Half

20 October 2011: U Hung Ngai, Chief Minister of Chin State, has claimed that work is now underway to halve poverty rate in Burma's poorest state, according to the official New Light of Myanmar yesterday.

Ex-Brig Gen Hung Ngai said in his report to the second programmes of the work coordination meeting for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation in Naypyidaw, more schools, private banks and 337 libraries will be opened across Chin State, with ongoing follow-up tasks for rural development.

Meanwhile, during the second regular session of first Amyotha Hluttaw on Tuesday, Chin MPs raised questions about the basic needs of getting 'safe and sufficient' drinking water in their constituencies.

More than 70 percent of people in Chin State are under poverty line, with 68 percent having no access to health care, according to a report in June this year by the UNDP, which ranked the northwestern state as the poorest among Burma's 14 states and divisions.

Earlier this year, the UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) said the increase in urban population, and the depletion of water sources as well as aging water supply systems in rural Chin areas are affecting water availability.

The Chief Minister also stressed the ongoing cooperation with NGOs and INGOs in agricultural sectors and plans to increase the use of energy to improve the living conditions of Chin people, some of whom are still recovering from the bamboo-and-rat-caused food crisis.

But a local rights group said that tackling poverty in Chin State needs a parallel effort to address the basic human rights of Chin people, as rights violations exacerbate or are the root of poverty.

"Forced labor, extortion and arbitrary taxation by Burmese army and local authorities are contributing to, and exacerbating poverty in Chin State. These kinds of violations have substantial negative impacts on the people in a State where more than 70 percent of the population are living in abject poverty," says Salai Bawi Lian Mang, Executive Director of CHRO (Chin Human Rights Organization), which monitors rights situations in Chin State.#

India-Burma Deal to Allow Travel without Passport

25 October 2011: Nationals of India and Burma will be able to travel crossing the Indo-Burma border without a passport or a visa up to a period of one week following a meeting held in Falam Town, Chin State last week.

The official announcement was made after Tuesday's meeting between the two countries with the Indian delegation led by Mizoram's Champhai district Deputy Commissioner Vijaya Kumar Bidhuri and Falam Township Administration Officer U Khin Maung Win accompanied by other Burmese officials.

Burmese authorities have made an agreement with the Indian government to allow 'unrestricted entry' of Indian citizens from

Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh up to 16km inside its territory with no requirement of obtaining a visa or passport, according to the Mizoram government official.

Likewise, the new Indo-Burma deal will open up border for Burmese nationals to make a visit up to 16km inside the four northeastern states of India.

India and Burma share a 1643 km long border.

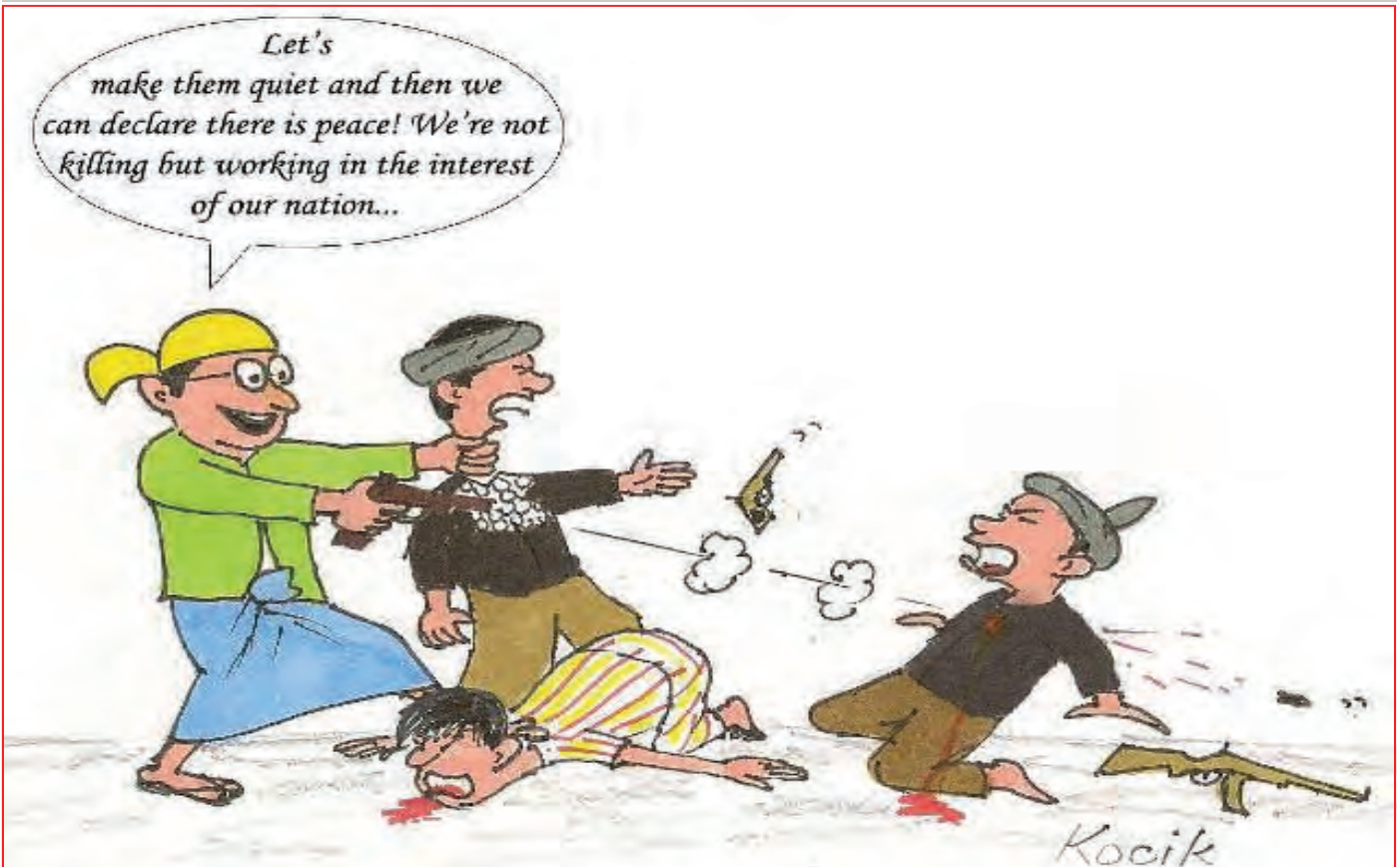
The Economic Times of India said that the two countries have come to terms with issues on tackling the 'illegal' trading of rare orchids, animal organs, drugs and sandalwood.

It was the third meeting held by officials from India and Burma, with the first taking place in Mizoram State in November last year.

'Unconfirmed' sources said that dozens of trucks carrying weapons from India have recently been seen entering Burma, with speculation that they might be used in the ongoing armed conflict in ethnic areas, especially in Kachin State.

Bilateral relations between India and Burma have strengthened considerably in the past few months after exchange of visits by leaders of both Asian countries, including a recent state tour to India by President Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win.#

Cartoon



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