



# Rhododendron News

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Chin Human Rights Organization

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## Special points of interest:

- More than 3,000 Chin refugees marched in downtown Delhi, India, marking the 60th anniversary of World Refugee Day...
- ILO made an 'unannounced' visit to Hakha, Chin State, meeting with more than 160 officials ...



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## Arbitrary Taxation and Extortion

### Soldiers Demanded Money for Alcohol License

**04 May 2011:** 49 households from Bukphir, Fartlang and Bulfek villages of Fartlang village tracts, Tedim Township were ordered in mid April to give 1,000 Kyats of a monthly fee for their alcohol license to the military authorities, according to Chin Human Rights Organization's sources.

An 'unnamed' local said that the order came soon after a Corporal from Tedim Police Force, and a Lieutenant and his soldiers from Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion No. 89 stationed in Bukphir village held a meeting on 14 April 2011.

"We have learned that families from villages in Fartlang village tracts along the Indian-Burma border that sell alcohols have got to pay one thousand kyats per month and are threatened that failure in making payment will result not only in terminating the license but also in taking legal actions against the licensees," added the local from Fartlang village.

"The local people work closely with the military authorities to obtain licenses for selling alcohols. There will be problems in the communities and it would be completely opposite to what the local religious groups have been campaigning and trying to stop the sale and trading of alcohols in the areas."

In Matupi Township last month, Burma Army soldiers were accused of breaking their own rules by selling alcohol to the local people against the restriction they supported.

The local communities and religious groups across Chin State have been actively engaged in combating alcoholism and fighting against the trading of alcohol in their areas. #

Local ways of processing alcohol  
(Photo: CHRO)



### Soldiers Demanded Money for Crossing Bridge

**07 May 2011:** Burma Army soldiers stationed in Tamu Town of Sagaing Division collected what is called 'road taxes' for crossing the bridge on Tamu-Kalaymyo-Kalaywah road, according to sources of Chin Human Rights Organization.

The Burmese soldiers charged 10,000 Kyats for big lorries, 5000 for buses and 2,000 for smaller vehicles for one way on a daily basis, according to one of the drivers, who asked not to be named.

"The Tamu road that we are using was built for free by the Indian government, not the Burmese authorities. What they are doing right now with the people is not right and fair."

On the Tamu-Kalaymyo-Kalaywah road, the bridge has got about 10 buses, 20 lorries and 15 smaller vehicles crossing it in a single day.

It is claimed that the money collected from the local drivers goes to the pockets of the authorities' families.

"Based near the bridge at the outskirts of our town, the soldiers collect money from the people. They even unfairly demand taxes for our motorbike when we buy rice for our families to eat," complained a local from the nearby town.

The Burma Army soldiers based in Tamu Town are from Light Infantry Battalions No. 228, No. 361 and No. 89 and each battalion takes turns to collect taxes for the bridge every three months. #



### Soldiers Forcibly Demanded Money from Local Trader

**08 May 2011:** Soldiers from Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 89 stationed in Darkhai village of Tonzang Township forcibly demanded 20,000 Kyats from a local trader from Tuilang village on 15 April 2011, according to Chin Human Rights Organisation's sources.

The 'unnamed' Company Captain of Kalay-based LIB No. 89 and his five soldiers stopped the local trader in Fartlang village of Tedim Township while he was travelling with 20 horses carrying general commodities toward Mizoram State in India.

**Five soldiers were put on duty along the trading roads between Tonzang and Mizoram, and Tedim Township and Mizoram to forcibly demand money from the traders ...**

"I was asked to give 20,000 Kyats as I was accused of trading illegally between Burma and India," said the trader, whose name is kept private for security reasons.

Five soldiers were put on duty along the trading roads between Tonzang and Mizoram, and Tedim Township and Mizoram to forcibly demand money from the traders, according to the locals.

The locals said that eighteen soldiers of Kalay-Based Burma Army LIB No. 89 arrived in Darkhai military camp in Tonzang Township on 13 April 2011 but the name of the Company Captain has not been known. #

### Hakha Traffic Police Provided Extra Motorbikes

**17 May 2011:** Dozens of additional new motorbikes have arrived in Hakha Town for the traffic controllers to keep tabs on an increasing number of bike users in the capital of Chin State, a Chinland Guardian source said.

The authorities in Naypyidaw have sent a total of 10 brand new motorbikes to Hakha, with another 15 on the way, according to a local traffic controller.

"The new motorbikes, which are meant for the traffic controllers and policemen to use in town, are still kept in the office," said the traffic controller.

A set of new traffic rules have been issued warning the local motorcyclists to wear helmets and take their driving license with them on the roads, according to a Hakha local quoted as saying by the *Khonumthung News*.

"I think the new rules will be helpful because some motorbike users are driving too fast and it is not safe for people on the streets. There were some occasions where a motorbike user, who was stopped for not wearing a helmet, ended up in an accident while running away from the traffic police," a resident in Hakha told Chinland Guardian.

The local resident also noted that a motorcyclist used to be fined about 3,000 kyats for not using a helmet before but this time, the new rules require a penalty with the motorbike to be taken to the police station.

About 7,000 to 8,000 two-wheeled motorbikes are being used Hakha Town alone, with an estimated 4,000 registered, according to the *Khonumthung News*. #



**Hakha Town**  
(Photo: Pu Ro Thawng)





Chin victims of physical assaults, sexual harassment and attacks in India (Photo: CHRO)



Chin refugee Christians marched on World Refugee Day in India (Photo: CHRO)

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*"The students were told that they had to bring money to the school for their teacher training,"*  
- Parents

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Each family household has since been ordered to contribute 5,000 Kyats every year for hiring farmers to work on the summer rice fields."*

## Land Confiscated, Locals Forced to Pay for Summer Rice Cultivation

**17 May 2011:** Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonels of Burma Army Light Infantry Battalions No. 89, 228 and 361 has since 2005 used for summer rice cultivation a 5-acre land forcibly seized from a local farmer in Tamu town of Sagaing Division.

A resident from Thantapin village told Chin Human Rights Organisation (CHRO) that each family household has since been ordered to contribute 5,000 Kyats every year for hiring farmers to work on the summer rice fields.

"They [soldiers] hire the farmers at a daily rate of 2,000 Kyats," said the Thantapin local.

"It has been five years that the money has been collected. The collection is actually done by the local headmen, who are given an order to do so," another local from Thantapin told CHRO.

The locals admitted that the summer rice didn't produce high yields and they would have got more rice using the money collected than selling the summer rice.

When asked if the local whose land was confiscated said anything about the situation, the local headman replied: "Clearly the farmer is not happy but what can he say?"

With more than 200 Chin households, Thantapin is a village situated near the main road between Kalay and Tamu towns, about five miles away. #

## Students Forcibly Demanded Money for Teacher Training

**08 June 2011:** Students of Middle Schools in Zawngte village tracts were forcibly demanded money for transportation of teacher training materials under the order of Head of Education Department in Falam Township.

A total of 14 middle schools were ordered to provide 6,000 Kyats each by the end of May for transportation expenses of curricular materials used during the training attended by 27 teachers from 12 to 21 May 2011.

"The students were told that they had to bring money to the school for their teacher training," complained a parent of one of the students, who asked not to be named.

It is claimed that each headmaster from the villages submitted the collected amount of money to the headmaster of Zawngte Middle School and that another round of collection would take place in June.

On 3 June 2011, the headmaster of Haimual village was said to have started collecting money from his school, according to one of the locals. #

## Soldiers Extorted 23 Lakhs and 10 Cattle from Traders

**15 June 2011:** Sergeant Tun Tun and Sergeant Than Shwe from Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 269 based in Lungler village stopped six local traders who were on their way to Mizoram State with a total of 56 cattle on 14 June 2011.

The soldiers were forcibly demanding a total amount of 56 Lakhs from the traders, of Dawrhulun Ward of Hakha Town, under the direct order of Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Zaw Tun of LIB No. 269 on patrol in the region.

"They threatened and told us that if we couldn't pay the amount demanded, all our cattle would be taken away and we would be penalised in accordance with the laws," said one of the traders.

"As we didn't have that much money, we tried to borrow from the locals of Tlanglo village. But the villagers didn't have enough. So, we explained the soldiers about our situation politely but they said they wanted the money."

The traders managed to get a total of 23 Lakhs and paid to the soldiers led by Company Sergeant Major Tun Aung after being taken to the nearby village, Tlanglo.

"Since we couldn't make a payment of what they [soldiers] demanded, they also took 10 cattle from us," said one of the cattle owners told Chin Human Rights Organisation.

Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel Zaw Tun was said to have provided three motorbikes to Lieutenant Colonel Myint Zaw, Sergeant Than Shwe and Tun Tun for checking on the local traders along the Indian-Burma border.

Since February this year, at least two to five soldiers have been put on duty at one of the local shops with two more soldiers with motorbikes at hand, extorting money from traders without issuing any receipts or vouchers of payments made. #

### School Fund Milked by Falam Township Admin Officer

**19 June 2011:** Falam Township Administration Officer U Khin Maung Win has been accused of exploiting fund given for construction of new school buildings in Falam Township, Chin State.

The local leaders of one village, whose name is kept anonymous, were late last month said to have received only a certain amount out of a total estimated 2million Kyats

sanctioned for building school premises, according to a source by Chin Human Rights Organisation.

A Chin witness, who travelled to the village last month, told Chinland Guardian: "It was the third visit by U Khin Maung Win when I was there. He called a meeting for three hours on Saturday and told the locals that the school buildings would be renovated within ten days."



One of the schools being renovated in Falam Township (Photo: CHRO)

The local people, who seemed to have known of details of the fund from internal sources, were not happy at all with what the Admin Officer said and did to them, according to the witness.

During his second visit to the village, former Chairman of Falam Township Peace and Development Council U Khin Maung Win was said to have intentionally summoned a meeting on Sunday.

A local was quoted as saying: "Only three locals turned up for the meeting as all the villagers went to church. The officer got so upset and even told, out of his anger, our headman to get everyone out of the church."

Making an 'uncomfortable' situation during the worship service, U Khin Maung Thein incontrovertibly called a meeting later on the day, according to the local villager.

It is claimed that U Khin Maung Win was under the influence of alcohol when arriving in the village and chairing the meeting during his visits. #

## Cattle Trader Forced to Pay Money by Police Officers

**20 June 2011:** A 42-year-old trader from Haiphai village was stopped and forcibly demanded 4.5 Lakhs for 10 cattle by two police officers from Falam Police Force on duty as security guards to Tlangzar Hydro-Electric Power Station on 13 June 2011.

The local trader, who was on his way to Mizoram State of India, was threatened that his cattle would be taken to the police station in Falam if he didn't pay the demanded amount of money.

It was not the first time but local traders have faced extortion and forcible demands from Burma Army soldiers and police officers, according to the trader.

"The problem is that the police officers never issue a receipt or voucher to us and after a few miles, another group of police officers or soldiers did the same thing to us. And at the end of our journey, we had nothing left."

The local trader said that he managed to get to Farkawn village of Mizoram State after travelling overnight while the Burmese soldiers from LIB No. 269 were busy dealing with 56 cattle from other traders near Tlanglo village on 14 June. #

## Freedom of Religion

### Complained by Monk, Pastor Interrogated over Christian Mission Work

**15 May 2011:** A Chin Christian pastor working in Kyaw Town of Gangaw Township has been warned by the local authorities after being accused of constructing Christian buildings without permission, preaching and teaching children the gospel early this year, Chin Human Rights Organisation's sources revealed.

Pastor Ngun Cem, 48, and Headmaster Pu Kyaw Khe, from Matupi Township, were interrogated by U Hte Lwin, of Magwe Religious Department and Major U Tin Aung, of Magwe Police Forces soon after an allegation was filed to authorities in Magwe Division in February 2011.

The two Chins were summoned and questioned if they also preached the gospel to the children in the teaching classes at their boarding premises, according to a local source.

Pastor Ngun Cem, from a baptist church in Tahan, was also reportedly alleged that he baptized new believers under the age of 18. Immediately after the interrogation, Headmaster Pu Kyaw Khe was known to have been transferred to Madu village in Matupi Township, Chin State.

In early 2000s, the Chin pastor, who has been in the village since 1996, received a verbal warning three times from the village's headman U Taw Kyaw to stop construction of Christian buildings on a plot of land bought by the church in 1998.

The Christian pastor was quoted as saying: "I told the headman [U Taw Kyaw] that the construction would continue as there was no officially written document signed by the relevant authorities."

A total of 22 children being looked after by the pastor were said to have stopped coming to the classes after they were allegedly threatened by the local authorities.

There are about 700 households in Kyaw Town, about 37 miles away from Gangaw Town, Gangaw Township in Magwe Division. #



State-sponsored Buddhist monasteries and pagodas in Tedim Township (Photo: CHRO)







Chin children with their Buddhist robes (Photo: TNST)

## Photos of Chin Buddhist Children and Buddhist Institutions in Tedim

**19 May 2011:** The number of Buddhist monasteries, pagodas and learning centres built under the leadership of government-backed Development of Border Areas and National Races is on the rise across Chin State in recent years, according to sources from Chin Human Rights Organisation.

It is estimated that there are four pagodas and three Buddhist learning centres constructed in Tedim Township, with about 180 children having joined the government-run institutions in the northern township alone. #



One of State-sponsored Buddhist schools in Tedim

## Records Revealed Forcible Contributions for Buddhist Monastery Construction

**27 June 2011:** A total of 35 villages in Cikha Sub-township of Chin State were forced to make contribution of 347 Kyats per household for building a Buddhist monastery in Cikha Town in June 2004, according to the official records of the local authorities.

The locals from two of the 35 villages said that Burma Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) No. 269 in collaboration with Cikha government authorities ordered them to contribute wood planks or money for the monastery construction in June 2004.

*About 180 Chin children have joined the government-run Buddhist institutions in Tedim township alone in Chin State ...*

It was known that the amount of contribution demanded was different from one village to another depending upon the direct order of Lieutenant Colonel Tint Khine of Burma Army LIB No. 269 based in Cikha Town.

An official record of Tuimui authorities revealed that a total of 184 households were forcibly demanded to give 470 Kyats each in place of a one-cubic wood plank.

Another record from Vaivet village showed that 59 households made a payment of 347 Kyats each. "We were forced to make a contribution and it was an order," recalled the locals. #

## Other Human Rights Violations

### Burmese Police Detains Theological Student in Kalay

**27 May 2011:** A Chin student studying in a theological college in India was detained by local police in Kalay, Sagaing Division at 9:30 a.m. local time yesterday morning, Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) has said.

Khung Uk Thang (22), a native of Matupi Town, is now in police custody after he was arrested at 8-mile security check point in Kalay on his way to the Indian border. The police confiscated a mobile phone and a student card from him, according to an eyewitness.

"As soon as we approached the checkpoint, the police finger-pointed at him, ordered him off the vehicle and arrested him. They searched his bag and found a mobile phone handset and a student card. Then they said to the driver he can pass through," said one of the passengers who witnessed the incident.

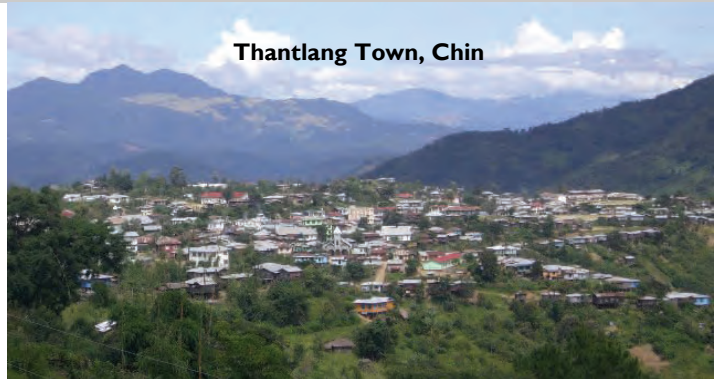
"I don't think he was arrested just because he was studying in India. I think the police got suspicious of him because he was in possession of a mobile phone, which not many people can have in Burma and is dangerous to carry around," the witness said.

Khung Uk Thang studies at Bethel Bible College at Kuntur in Andrapradesh State in India. He was on his way to India to continue his third year course in Bachelor of Divinity in India when he was arrested. #



**Chin refugees demand an end to religious persecution in Burma (Photo: CHRO)**

**Thantlang Town, Chin**



### Police Officer Threatened Locals with Axe and Knife

**22 June 2011:** A Burmese police officer walked on the main street brandishing his knife and axe, and made threats against the locals in Thantlang Town, Chin State yesterday.

The policeman, known as Aa Kyi, was said to have shouted using extremely offensive language against the Chin locals as he waved his tools stabbing and hitting the chair on the platform in the morning.

A local witness said the policeman was accusing a local shopkeeper, Pu Al Cung, of not quickly removing a motorcycle parked in front of his shop while a group of Burma Army soldiers were arriving in the town yesterday.

"We believed that he [police officer] felt that his performance in making sure that the road was clear for the soldiers on arrival was not good enough due to the locals."

He also confronted and threatened Pu Chan Ham, Head of the Municipal Department, with his knife, according to the witnesses.

There has also been rumour that the policeman was acting intentionally to create a reason to be dismissed from his current post.

Yesterday, about 100 newly trained Burma Army soldiers arrived in Thantlang Town, about 20 miles away from the capital of Chin State, Hakha.

The local community in cooperation with YMCA and MPs are said to have held a meeting with aims of taking necessary actions against the police officer following the incident. #



## 'Corrupt' Township Medical Officer to be Transferred

**24 June 2011:** Thantlang Township Medical Officer Dr. Thet Tun Nwe, described as 'cruel and corrupt' by the locals, has been confirmed to be relocated to Shwebo, a city in Sagaing Division of Burma.

The announcement of transference came months after a series of complaints made by the local patients and hospital staffs in Thantlang Town who are said to be seriously disappointed with Dr. Nwe's treatment and behaviour.

One of the local pastors told Chinland Guardian: "We have learned that Dr. Thet Tun Nwe will be transferred to a new location in charge of leprosy hospital. Being aware that there is no or little way for him to get money out of the service, he does not want to go yet although the letter of transference has already been received."

The Burmese doctor has been branded as 'rapacious and inhuman' for his excessive greediness and immoral behaviour towards his own midwives and patients.

A source close to the doctor revealed that the medical officer sent local midwives to villages without giving them travel costs and instead pocketed all the funds provided for the medical projects in rural areas of Thantlang township.

Recently, a local man who had got injuries on his face was charged 80,000 Kyats for just stitching the cut, which was carried out by the midwives, not Dr. Thet Tun Nwe, according to the witnesses.

The local witnesses also said there have been several occasions where the Burmese doctor mistreated and left pregnant women in labour to suffer for hours or overnight at the hospital, adding: "Sometimes, he didn't even come out to see them."

Dr. Thet Tun Nwe was also reported having asked for the rent and petrol fees whenever a training, which he forced to organise at his office or the hospital, was conducted.

A town elder from Thantlang was quoted by *Khonumthung News* that the central authorities transferred Dr. Thet Tun Nwe from his previous post to Chin State because of his 'immoral' behaviour.

The local authorities have also been accused of turning a deaf ear to complaints by the local people and of ignoring the situation facing the local patients and medical staffs.

"Now that he is going to another place, we feel relieved. But we are not sure who will be sent to replace his position. We pray that a kind and good doctor come to our town," the locals told *Chinland Guardian*. #

## Soldiers Accused of Dispensing Expired Medicines

**29 June 2011:** An elderly man came down with a serious case of diarrhoea for three consecutive days after ingesting what is believed to be 'expired' medication provided for free by Burma Army medics from Kalay-based Light Infantry Battalion (87).

In a rare show of concern for public health, a group of six medics from Burma Army LIB (87), was touring villages in Kalay Township, Sagaing Division last week.

The army medics arrived in Than Pho Village on June 21, last Tuesday and opened a free mobile clinic out of the home of the village administrative head.

Among the 36 villagers seen by the medics was a 60

year-old local villager who was given 10 energy vitamin tablets. But soon after consuming the free medication, the elderly became sick with diarrhoea that lasted for the next three days, according to one villager who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Villagers suspected the free medications were expired.

"I was given some tablets for headache but I decided not to take them because they looked all soaky and soft. I think the medication had passed the expiry date," one villager explained.

"This is strange because the Burmese soldiers have never done this kind of free clinic before."

Inhabitants of Than Pho, a small village in Kalay Township, are predominantly ethnic Chins.#

## Food Crisis and Humanitarian Situation in Chinland

### Chin Youths 'Ignorant of HIV/AIDS'

**24 May 2011:** More than 89 percent of young people between 14 and 25 years of age in Chin State admitted they have no knowledge of what HIV (human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome) actually means, according to a survey conducted by CAD (Country Agency for Rural Development).

The survey carried out among 322 youths from 10 villages in Thantlang and Hakha townships in January and February this year revealed 67.1 percent are ignorant about its risks and prevention while more than 70 percent said they have never had an opportunity or access to health education or training in a year.

73.3 percent admitted that they have never known or seen any condoms in their lives and more than 60 percent said they have never had sex, according to the report released today by CAD.

CAD said: "We identified their [youths] levels of knowledge and attitude towards the 'infectious' disease and its risks. The results indicate that most of them show a high level of attitude, with low knowledge and no understanding of the risks."

The report stressed that the knowledge level is immensely related to the age and education status of the respondent, which can also be much influenced by the family's income, occupation and educational background of the parents.

Chin youths living closer to the bigger towns such as Thantlang and Hakha are claimed to have higher knowledge of HIV/AIDS than those in the remote areas in Chin State.

CAD highlighted the needs of putting more efforts in raising awareness about the disease and its risks, and providing health education and information to youths and families in rural areas of Chin State.

Meanwhile, rights groups have accused the new government of Burma of allocating 24 percent of its budget for the military, 4.3 percent for education and only 1.3 percent for health.

The Country Agency for Rural Development (CAD), a local non-governmental organization founded on 6 May 2004, has been working for remote villages in three townships (Hakha, Matupi and Thantlang) in the central part of Chin state and some parts of Sagaing Division in Burma. #

### Massive Shortage of Teachers Puts Education, Communities in Jeopardy

**29 May 2011:** A massive shortage of govt-salaried teachers in Chin State is causing increasing drop-out rate among primary-level students and putting additional economic burdens on the largely rural communities still struggling with the effects of severe food crisis in Burma's most impoverished State.

On average, there are only two govt-salaried teachers in a primary school, and three teachers in a post-primary school in Chin State, regardless of the size of the students. To overcome the teacher shortage and to meet the students' educational needs, more rural communities have resorted to the practice of hiring additional 'private' teachers at their own expense.

Having to pay for additional teachers is putting extra financial strains on the communities and increasingly forcing them into debts.

A village headman in Thantlang Township explained: "In our village, the government provides only one teacher for the primary school and two teachers for the post-primary school. It is impossible to manage with only three teachers. So we are forced to hire nine additional teachers by ourselves to meet the needs of our children. At 50,000 Kyats per teacher, our village ends up paying 450,000 Kyats per month. The community now has over one million Kyats in debts."

The headman said that parents who cannot contribute money for the teachers' salaries have stopped sending their children to school out of shame, adding that 13 students have dropped out in 2011 as a result.

A local researcher, who recently conducted an independent survey in three townships of Chin State, said: "Only two villages in the over 90 villages I visited had not hired 'private teachers.' On average, the communities are supporting at least two additional teachers in every village." - *continued on next page*





A classroom shared by multi-grade students  
rural Chin State (Photo: CHRO)

But according to official figures, in the 2009-2010 academic years, Chin State has 109,422 students in 1590 schools, with 4890 teaching staff. This, in theory, translates into an average number of 22 students for every teacher.

In his report to the Human Rights Council in March 2011, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Burma Tomas Ojea Quintana said that the crumbling education system in Burma results from the regime's 'woefully insufficient' spending on education. At only 0.9 percent of the Gross Domestic Product being invested in education, Burma spends three times as low as that of other countries in the region.

### Schools in Shambles

Most schools in rural Chin State are in shambles. Although the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is supporting construction of new schools in Chin State, more schools in the rural areas are yet to benefit from the program.

A village elder from Thantlang Township explained, "Our village school teaches up to the fourth grade. The school has no partition that separates the classrooms and the teachers' office. Kindergarten and grade one classes share the same room with the students facing opposite directions. Grade two and three would sit in the same classroom in similar fashion and so on. The situation is really concerning."

### Religious indoctrination

Meanwhile, the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) has reported that the Burmese regime is providing free education to Chin children from poor family backgrounds at training schools run by the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and Development of National Races Affairs where students are asked to convert to Buddhism as a pre-requisite for admission. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Tomoas Ojea Quintana calls this an 'indoctrination,' which in effect is a gross violation of Burma's international human rights obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.#

## Food Shortage Likely to Worsen As More Farmlands Destroyed

**30 May 2011:** Damage to farmlands and irrigation canals following heavy torrential rains that hit Chin State last October will likely result in significant reduction in local harvest this year and will further aggravate the ongoing food crisis in Burma's most impoverished State.

A recent independent study conducted in three Townships in Chin State found that an estimated 1,500 acres of farmland on valleys along some major rivers and streams were lost either because parts of the agricultural fields were washed away by flood or the irrigation canals that supply water to the farms were completely destroyed.

The study looked at three townships in central Chin State: Surveyors visited 32 villages in Thantlang, 34 villages in Matupi and 28 villages in Hakha Townships – villages that have paddy fields on the valley along the Kaladan River and Thanghorva stream. – *continued on next page*

Worst hit among the 94 villages surveyed is Sate Village of Matupi Township, which has lost 80 acres of a total 120 acres of paddy field belonging to its villagers. With the ploughing season now upon them and damaged irrigation canals not having been fixed, villagers are unlikely to use vast areas of the remaining paddy fields this cultivating season.

One Sate villager explained: “We are worried by the looming food shortages. We depend on the paddy fields for our livelihood. About two-thirds of our paddy fields were washed away by flood last year. Only small portions of the fields were fixable.”

The finding corroborates the initial situational assessment by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), which said in the immediate aftermath of the heavy rains in October 2010 that Matupi Township suffered the greatest loss of farmlands. The OCHA said an estimated 3539 was likely to suffer from food shortages as a direct result of loss of farmlands due to floods.

Heavy and continuous rains caused floods and landslides in several townships of Chin State in early October 2010. It damaged paddy fields, roads, bridges and irrigation systems. The Kaladan River rose to 20 feet on October 9, flooding about 90 houses and displacing nearly 300 people in Paletwa Township.

Continuous downpour was also blamed for several deaths, including one death in Thantlang Township when an elderly farmer was killed by flash floods. #

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This farmland near Sate village remains unploughed as the irrigation canal was damaged by heavy rains last October (Photo: CG)

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## Event and Protest

### Rights Groups Slammed Burma at UN Forum

**9 June 2010:** Human rights groups on Wednesday lambasted Burma for continued utter failure to improve its human rights practice during the session of UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, despite having claimed to have transitioned to democracy following national elections held in November last year

The Burma Forum – UPR, a coalition of human rights groups representing 14 Burmese rights organizations yesterday delivered oral statements at the plenary session of the Universal Periodic Review on Burma, during which final recommendations made to the country under review, were adopted by the UN Human Rights Council. Burma underwent a review of its human rights record for the past four years in late January for the first time.

Speaking on behalf of the coalition before the Council, Aung Myo Min said: “We are extremely disturbed that the situation in ethnic nationality areas continues to deteriorate.” He said that the situation has led to extrajudicial executions, state-sponsored sexual violence against women and the mass displacement of civilians.

During Burma’s review in January, the Burmese delegation flatly denied all allegations of systematic human rights abuses against civilians and dismissed them as “baseless and merely aimed at discrediting the Burmese Armed Forces.” But the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Tomas Ojea Quintana said that alleged crimes committed by the Burmese military may amount to Crimes Against Humanity and called for the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry.— *continued on next page*



Urging the Human Rights Council to mandate the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry, Dr. Thaung Htun, another representative of BF-UPR warned that failure to independently investigate the widespread and systematic human rights violations will only allow further abuses to take place.

The Burma Forum on Universal Periodic Review consists of Assistance Association for Political Prisoners Burma (AAPP-B), Arakan Rivers Network (ARN), Burma Fund UN Office, Burma Lawyers' Council (BLC), Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), Emergency Act Team vs Backpack Health Worker Team, Federation of Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB), Foundation for Education and Development (FED), Human Rights Education Institute of Burma (HREIB), Human Rights Foundation of Mon Land (HURFOM), Kachin Women's Organization Thailand (KWAT), Kaladan Press Bangladesh, Shwe Gas Movement, Women and Child Rights Project (WCRP).#

## Famous Chin Female Singers to Entertain Fans in Australia

**13 June 2011:** Famous Chin singers Sung Tin Par and Van Dawt Cin, aka Moe Moe, are to wow fans and audiences in Melbourne, Australia on Saturday, 25th June 2011.

The event 'Chin Cultural Promotion 2011' organised and hosted by the Australia Chin Community (Eastern Melbourne) is expected to draw hundreds of supporters across Australia as well as New Zealand.

David Ca Lian Thang, of Australia Chin Community (Eastern Melbourne), said: "The singers have been granted Australian visas and hopefully will make their way to Australia soon. We have arranged a concert hall and other equipment as well as facilities required for the event."

The Chin concert is set to take place in George Wood Performing Arts Centre at 6pm in Melbourne, the capital and most populous city in the state of Victoria.

Ms Van Dawt Cin aka Moe Moe, 26, of Thau village, Chin State, rose to fame when she won the second prize of 'Melody World' nationwide singing contest in Burma in December 2009.

On 5 June, Burma's famous Chin singer Sung Tin Par alongside Chin gospel singer Sangpi and others performed in the Music Festival of Praise held at Kuala Lumpur Baptist Church in Malaysia.

It is estimated that there are over 4,000 Chins currently living in Australia.

Formed in 2007, the Australia Chin Community (Eastern Melbourne) Inc., is a community-based non-profit organisation committed to providing services to Chin community members with various programs including integration with Australian society, educational functions, youth workshops, sports and cultural activities. #



## Memoir of Chin Freedom Fighter to Be Launched in Malaysia

**15 June 2011:** A book by Chin freedom fighter Victor Biak Lian about the struggle for democracy, freedom and justice in Burma is set to be launched in Malaysia and Singapore this weekend.

The 172-page memoir in Hakha-Chin dialect contains a collection of selected articles written since 1998, exposing a 'gripping' account of experiences as a university student during the uprising in 1988, as a refugee in India, as a guerrilla fighter in Kachin State and as an activist speaking across the globe for change in Burma.— *continued onto next page*

Chin MP in exile, Pu Lian Uk, said: "This is a book about blood and sweat shed by many Chin patriots, written with aims of saving the Chin people and their land that have been swept away by a raging torrent."

Winner of St. Stephen's Prize 2010 awarded by the Norwegian Mission to the East in honour of his magnificent contributions towards bringing democracy, human rights and reconciliation in Burma, Victor Biak Lian works as a member of the Ethnic Nationalities Council, of the Chin Forum, and of the Board of Directors of Chin Human Rights Organisation.

A former student activist and ex-Chin revolutionary soldier, the 46-year-old father of three unveils his literary skills of writing and telling stories through his book, a fictional memoir.

Pu Zing Cung, Chairman of Chin National Front, remarked: "In his book, Victor can clearly describe our tribulations during a 103-day trip on our way back from Kachin State across Naga Hills to India amid attacks by Burmese and Indian troops."

"I strongly believe that this well-written book will bring among the people patriotism and love for our land and nation."

The book titled 'Remembrance Days', which also has poems, photos, cartoons and lines of dedication to those who worked tirelessly and gave lives for the cause of democracy, will be available for purchase in Singapore and Malaysia this weekend, in Australia and USA on 1 July, and in Europe on 27 July 2011 respectively. #

## Situations of Refugees

### Chin Community Network Formed in Delhi

**03 May 2011:** A new community-based Chin network was last Tuesday established in a meeting attended by nearly 20 people including representatives from Dai, Lemro, Mara, Matu, Mün and Zotung Chin tribes based in New Delhi, India.

The newly formed body, called Chin Community Network-India (CCN-India), aims to stand as a platform for sharing information and news, exchanging ideas and building closer communication among the communities in the Indian city.

Chairman of CCN Pa Salong, from Matupi Town in Chin State, told Chinland Guardian: "This [CCN-India] is not a political or religious party but purely a community-based network through which people can communicate better and help each other."

"We are not limited to specific areas or regions as such in terms of scope and partnership. Our intention is only to create a ground for information sharing towards strengthening our relationship, understanding and unity," added Mr. Salong.

CCN-India also aims to educate Chin refugees in Delhi on human rights, politics, economics and social

knowledge in a bid to help solve the many problems facing the Chin communities in India.

It is estimated that there are about 10,000 Chin refugees and asylum seekers currently living in Delhi, India.

The statement issued today by CCN-India noted that it will focus on working together with other Chin communities, different ethnic groups from Burma and international social organisations.

Meanwhile, about 44 Chin refugees including children and elderly have since late March been camping out in makeshift shelters in an open space near the UNHCR Office in Delhi in hope of getting assistance and protection from the UN refugee agency. #



Chin refugees in Delhi  
(Photo: CHRO)





Chin refugee children in Malaysia (Photo: CSO &amp; CHRO)



Preparing to go home

## Chin Refugee Children Fall Prey to Drug Dealing

**11 May 2011:** The number of Chin refugee children between 8 and 15 years of age coaxed into drug dealing in Malaysia has risen in recent months, Chin community leaders in Kuala Lumpur said today.

At least 40 people, of which about half are children, have been involved in a hole-and-corner selling and taking of drugs in association with 'secret' illegal dealers reportedly including Burmese nationals, according to sources from Chin Disciplinary Action Committee (CDAC) and Chin Student Organisation (CSO).

Mr. Lal Siam Mawi, CDAC Chairman, said some 14-year-olds hang out with their drug-dealing friends, sleep under the bridges and don't come home, adding: "We caught them and taught them not to take drugs for weeks. Some have stopped while others continue as usual as they have already been addicted."

He told the Chinland Guardian that about 13 under-age children are said to have been involved in selling drugs and at least four teens addicted in Kuala Lumpur alone.

Roger Khua Hup, Chairman of CSO, a community-based group that provides informal educational services to Chin refugee children said: "Most of these children are of families coming from remote areas in Chin State, where there is no school or educational system. When they arrived in Malaysia, they had no understanding of education and could be easily enticed."

When asked if CSO has tried to get those children back to school, Roger said: "We managed to get some children back to classes but they ran away after a few days or weeks. What we found out was that some had already been addicted to drugs and others have fallen into getting a small amount of money rather than

studying."

Total lack of proper education or dysfunctional school system in Chin State, Burma has been ascribed by Chin community leaders to the root cause of problems facing Chin children.

Other reasons identified to have led children and teenagers into drugs are related to family problems where children are not properly taken care of after parents are separated and a long-drawn condition of joblessness among new arrivals in Malaysia.

To this, Roger highlighted that some parents themselves do not understand the value of education and that they do not seem to care at all even if their children do not go to school.

"If children come to classes as soon as they arrive in Malaysia, they behave well and are willing to keep on studying. It is very important that parents support their children to go to school," added the CSO Chairman.

Lal Siam Mawi also noted: "Some people who are looked after financially by their family members in other countries can get easily spoiled and attracted to this kind of situation. Other drug addicts include those who had been to Phakanh and other mining places in Shan State, Burma."

Recently, the Immanuel Charity Home (ICH) has been set up in Kuala Lumpur for providing food, accommodation and pastoral services to victims of alcohol drinking and drug addiction in an effort to help dealing with community problems facing Chin refugees in Malaysia.

About half of 5,000 refugee children estimated by the UNHCR are of Chin ethnicity currently living in Malaysia. #

## Malay-Aussie Refugee Deal to Go Despite Protest by Rights Groups

**20 May 2011 - KUALA LUMPUR:** The refugee and asylum seeker swap deal between Malaysia and Australia is still on despite protest from Bar Councils and non-government organizations (NGOs) in both countries.

Malaysian Home Minister, Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein has explained that the deal is a pioneering, courageous and cutting-edge solution to tackle people smuggling worldwide.

"All worries (from Bar Councils and NGOs) have been taken into account. We roped in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) much earlier in discussions."

"The government would not have announced this deal unless all parties concerned were on-board," he said.

The minister was responding to reports of lawyers and human rights groups condemning the swap deal which would see 800 people trying to get to Australia by boat being taken immediately back to Malaysia in exchange for the country resettling of 4,000 refugees from Malaysia over a period of four years.

Hishammuddin said the details of the swap between the two countries will only be revealed once he has discussed these with his counterpart from Australia.

"The agreement is one-off, but we will want to institutionalize it if it works out," he said.

**Reporting by Thomas Chong**



**Rickshaw driver Thangpi was injured on his right foot (Photo: CHRO)**

## Five Chin Refugees Injured in Road Accident in Delhi

**25 May 2011:** Five Chin refugees were injured after a cycle rickshaw they were riding in was hit by a speeding car from behind on Monday evening in west Delhi, India.

The refugees were on their way to a local bank to collect Subsistence Allowance from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) when they were hit by a speeding car. The passengers, all female, were thrown on the road and sustained some serious bodily injuries. The rickshaw driver, a Chin refugee himself, was also hurt in the accident.

The driver, Thangpi (35), suffered injuries on his right foot. Two girls, both 17 years old, were injured on the hands, head, neck and chest. Two passengers escaped the accident with only minor injuries.

The victims were transported to a nearby hospital with the help of the local Delhi Police, where they were treated for their injuries. The driver of the car, a woman has not been charged.

The two girls with more serious injuries are living in Delhi as 'unaccompanied minors' without their parents, while the Thangpi, the rickshaw driver is head of the family providing for his family by servicing his rickshaw.

**Reporting by Plato Van Rung Mang**



**Chin refugees in India (Photo: CHRO)**



## Chin Eviction Case Reaches India's National Human Rights Commission

**27 May 2011:** A local Mizo right group on Tuesday called on the National Human Rights Commission of India to intervene to protect Chin refugees who face forcible return to Burma at the hands of the local Mizoram authorities.

Aizawl-based Zo Indigenous Forum (ZIF) lodged a formal complaint with the Indian rights watchdog on behalf of 22 Chin families, who have been ordered to leave Saikhum Phai, a small settlement on the Chin State-Mizoram border, before the end of the month.

According to ZIF, the eviction was jointly initiated by Vaphai Village authorities, Champhai District Police, as well as groups such as the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Upa Pawl (MUP) (Mizo Elders Association), and Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) (Mizo Women's Association). The local branches of three main political parties, including the ruling Congress Party were also involved in the eviction drive.

The National Human Rights Commission today formally registered the complaint and issued a case number – the first step in the process of adjudicating the case.

“We hope that the National Human Rights Commission will recognize the seriousness and urgency of the case and intervene at the earliest time possible,” said ZIF Director C. Laremruta.

In its complaint letter the ZIF recommended that NHRC investigate the conduct of non-state actors involved in the eviction and direct the Mizoram State Government to prosecute organizations and individuals under relevant provisions of Indian Penal Code and Criminal Procedure Code for ordering the eviction of Chin families.

Meanwhile, Chinland Guardian has learned that the Deputy Commissioner Office of Champhai District yesterday summoned a meeting involving all the parties, including the District Superintendent of Police, local administrative officials, individuals and organizations behind the eviction, as well as representatives of

the evicted Chin families, and asked them to settle the dispute immediately.

### Caught in local politics

With a little over 60 households, Saikhum Phai is a small village located near the Chin State border, and falls under the administrative jurisdiction of nearby Vaphai Village Council. Over the years, Chins have settled in the village and now make up the majority of the population. Many of them have been included in the Indian electoral roll.

During the previous Mizo National Front administration, the Vaphai Village Council encouraged Saikhum Phai villagers to apply for separate administrative jurisdiction for their village. But with the election of the Indian Congress Government in the last election, Saikhum Phai villagers were pressured to end their bid to have separate administrative jurisdiction. The disputes led to the forcible eviction of 23 Chin families last month, and are now displaced in nearby villages inside Mizoram. A further 22 families were given an ultimatum to leave the village by the end of May.

### Children's education disrupted

Children of the 23 families who were evicted from the village last month have since had their education disrupted. According to a source in the village's school, only ten children from these families remain at the school, which teaches up to eighth grade.

These children now either live with relatives or family acquaintances that remain in the village as their parents are banned from entering the village. Some parents who are hiding in nearby villages reportedly come to Saikhum Phai secretly during the night to keep their children company.

Calling the situation unacceptable and gross violation of the right of the child, the Zo Indigenous Forum last month submitted a complaint letter to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). ZIF said the forced separation of the children and their parents make the children vulnerable to exploitation and harm and urged the Commission to take urgent action to address the issue.#



Chin children playing in the field at Saikhum Phai (Photo: CG)





(Photo: Salai Paw Lung)



(Photo: Salai Paw Lung)

## Thousands of Chin Refugees Marched on World Refugee Day in Delhi

**21 June 2011:** More than 3,000 Chin refugees yesterday took to the streets of downtown Delhi, India, marking the 60th anniversary of World Refugee Day.

The rally organised by Chin Refugee Committee (CRC) called on the Indian civil society and government for providing a legal protection and on the UNCHR to improve services given to Chin refugees stranded in Delhi.

Mr. Ral Kap Tluang, President of Chin Refugee Committee, said: "Under the limited services of the UNHCR and lack of legal protection by the Indian government, we, the urban Chin refugees, are subjected to all kinds of hardships for survival, discrimination, exploitation, physical assault, rape and sexual harassment on women and children."

During their march, Chin refugees including mothers and children chanted slogans such as "We need human rights, we demand dignity, we want your support, and stop discrimination."

Plato Van Rung Mang, Coordinator of Chin Human Rights Organization in Delhi, said: "We are demanding

the basic rights and dignity of a refugee, which the urban Chin refugees do not have in India."

The mass rally received support and solidarity from prominent human rights activists including Mr. Deena, General Secretary of The Other Media; Mr. Ravi Niar, Executive Director of South East Asia Human Rights Documentation Center; Dr. Prakash, Director of Jesuit Refugee Services, South Asia Region; and Dr. Achan Mungleng, Coordinator of Euro-Burma Office, India.

Started with an opening prayer by Rev. Sui Neih Piang at noon, the rally program had sessions of reading statements and speeches by key guests and leaders of the refugee communities, with a closing prayer by Rev. T.K Lian at 2pm.

It is estimated that there are about 12,000 Chin refugees stranded in New Delhi after fleeing various forms of repressive measures perpetrated by the ruling military authorities in Chin State, Burma.

20 June has been observed as World Refugee Day since 2001 in recognition of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees after the UN General Assembly made a resolution on 4 December 2000. #

Chin refugees in India (Photo: CHRO)



## Full Crackdown to Follow Short Period of Amnesty in Malaysia

**27 June 2011 - KUALA LUMPUR:** Foreign workers and refugees in Malaysia will be able to sleep peacefully in the months to come as the government halts all operations against undocumented foreigners after an amnesty program takes effect on 11 July.

Peaceful nights, however, will soon change into sleepless ones as major crackdown will commence after the amnesty program expires at the end of this year.

Recently, the country's Deputy Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin announced that the first-time-ever amnesty program will commence with a two-week registration drive beginning 11 July for undocumented foreign workers or their employers.

The so called 'whitening program' will be followed by

amnesty for all foreign workers who are willing to register under the newly introduced biometric system, a system that will help the government to locate and identify them in the future.

Meanwhile, it is reported that several self-proclaimed agents have offered services as 'middle man' for foreign workers who want to register under the amnesty program.

A spoke person from the Ministry of Interior Affairs has warned that stern action will be taken against the 'middlemen' who collects fees illegally from workers intending to participate in the amnesty program.

According to another report, Ministry of Interior Affairs was instructed to review and standardize the processing fees to avoid fraud targeting foreign workers.

**Reporting by Thomas Chong**

## Chin State Government

### ILO Met Local Authorities in Chin State

**21 May 2011:** The International Labour Organisation (ILO) made an 'unannounced' visit to Hakha, Chin State this week, meeting with more than 160 officials from across the State's authorities, according to a statement by Chin Human Rights Organisation (CHRO) today.

During the meeting held on Wednesday, the UN agency raised awareness about the issue of forced labour to the local authorities including general administrative officials, judges, police and Burma Army personnel.

In its statement, CHRO said the visit was an important first step towards tackling the issue of forced labour in Chin State, adding: "The authorities have agreed to distribute the ILO complaint mechanism booklets to the wider population."

In a State where more than 90 percent of the people have been subjected to forced labour by the authorities, the ILO's visit was both timely and appropriate, according the statement.

In welcoming the recent event by ILO, Salai Bawi Lian Mang, Executive Director of CHRO: "We hope

that the ILO awareness program has positive impacts on the Chin people. On the one hand, the authorities, including the Burma Army, have been clearly informed that it is both illegal to impose forced labour and to punish people for reporting forced labour incident."

"On the other hand, we hope that more Chin people feel empowered to exercise their right to make official complaint to the ILO against the imposition of forced labour by the authorities."

In this context, the Burmese authorities have a unique opportunity to demonstrate their commitment by taking proactive and concrete actions to crackdown on the practice of forced labour.

CHRO also stressed actions should be taken to enforce existing domestic laws that criminalize the requisition of forced labour by both civilian authorities and the military, and by taking advantage of the ILO's expertise and assistance in ending the practice of forced labour in the State.

In Chin State, the Burmese military is the primary institution responsible for the widespread and systematic use forced labour, according to CHRO.

Sources revealed that the Burma Army still exacts forced labour to construct roads and military camps,



and forcibly recruits civilian for porters and militia service, on a widespread basis and with complete impunity.

The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), formed in 1995 on the India-Burma border by a group of Chin activists, is a non-profit, non-governmental primary rights-based 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, an instrument of the State authorities. #



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

## First Emergency Session of Chin State Assembly Summoned

**18 June 2011:** A two-day 'emergency' session of the Chin State Parliament is set to take place at the Parliament Building in Hakha Town, Chin State on 29-30 June 2011. But no notification has been given to Parliamentarians as to the agenda to be discussed.

The meeting, summoned by the Chin State government, requires from each party a list of names that will attend the session, to be submitted on the 27th-28th of this month.

Salai Ceu Bik Thawng, General Secretary of the Chin National Party, told Chinland Guardian: "As of today, we haven't got any information as to why the meeting is called and what will be discussed. Therefore, we are not sure about what to prepare and to do."

"As it will be only for two days," Salai Ceu Bik Thawng added, "I don't think there will be time for us to submit or discuss any kind of proposals or state-ments."

One outstanding issue yet to be resolved is the withholding of appointment of one ministerial position at the state level. Currently Chin State has only a total of eight ministries, one less than other states or regions, which have all instituted nine ministries.

With eight ministers appointed in April 2011, Chin State has still got one post vacant in its ministries to date, after nominee Mr. Kui Thang, of the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) from Kanpetlet Township No. 1 constituency, was disqualified due to not having attained the 'required' age of 35. The 2008 military-backed constitution requires a government cabinet member to be at least 35 years of age.

To this, Salai Ceu Bik Thawng said his the party would like to raise a question over why the last ministerial seat is still kept vacant, if there is a chance to do so in the State Hluttaw upcoming session.

"We would like to know why Mr. Hung Ngai, as Chin State Chief Minister, can not appoint the required ministers until today. This is in reality a big loss for the Chin people." #



## Opinion

## Why Civil War Will Continue in Burma

**27 June 2010:** The recent breakdown of a 17 year-old ceasefire between the Burma Army and the Kachin Independence (KIO) has once again reignited renewed interests in the country's fragile state of political stability. The Burma Army's advances on the Kachin strongholds earlier this month was met by fierce resistance from the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) – the military wing of the KIO, which has for months readied for the imminent offensive.

The latest hostilities in northern Burma followed months of fighting in the country's northeast and southeastern parts where the Burma Army has been launching relentless offensives against ethnic Shan and Karen resistance groups, including the Shan State Army – North (SSA-North), the Democracy Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) and the Karenni National Union (KNU). The fighting has sent tens of thousands of civilians fleeing across the border into China and Thailand.

Worrying is the pattern of the recent military offensives, where the regime seems to have been targeting some of the strongest ceasefire ethnic armies – breaking nearly 20 years of truce agreements. Burma Army's attacks against ethnic groups have escalated since the day of Burma's national elections on November 7 last year.

Although not surprising given the regime's record of breaking promises, the recent attacks against the KIA has only reaffirmed the long-held view that the army-turned quasi-civil administration in Naypyidaw will not seek to embark on the path of a negotiated settlement to address the long-standing ethnic grievances against central domination.

Some 18 ethnic resistance groups have entered into some forms of ceasefire agreement with the regime over the last 20 years. But in the months leading up to the November 2010 elections, the military regime has been pressuring them to accept its Border Guard Program, where the ethnic armies are to come under the command of the Burma Army.

These ethnic armies were offered some form of joint development programs in their areas with then State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in exchange for a temporary end to hostilities, on the promise that any political negotiation regarding their underlying grievances would be discussed with the 'new civilian' government.

That was never to take place. The KIO, which waited for 17 years in the hope of genuine political negotiation with SPDC-successor 'civilian administration', was deliberately attacked only less than three months after the new 'civilian government' was sworn in, in late March 2011. But it is interesting to note that the attacks weren't

accident. In fact, the KIO had been expecting offensives many months ahead.

In anticipation of imminent assaults, six ethnic armies had founded a new military alliance as early as before the 2010 November elections in Burma. The significance of this new alliance was that it include both ceasefire and non-ceasefire groups. The alliance is made up of three ceasefire groups; Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Shan State Army - North (SSA-N); and non-ceasefire groups; Karen National Union (KNU), Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and Chin National Front (CNF).

Recently transformed as the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC), the six ethnic armies have agreed to come under a NATO-style one central joint military command to coordinate a collective military response against any Burma Army's aggression against anyone of its members.

Even with all the sophisticated weapons and modern military hardware it has acquired from China, it is unlikely the new Burmese regime can find a military solution to the decades-long conflict with the ethnic groups. Heavily out-gunned and outnumbered, the ethnic armies are still confident in their ability to maintain resistance capabilities because they know the terrains of the battle grounds, that they enjoy the support of their people, and above all, that they are fighting for the right cause – defending their people from the policies of extermination.

Why would civil war continue in Burma after more than 60 years of fighting that has seen so much bloodshed and suffering?

The answer lies in the continued failure by the successive Burmese regimes to accommodate the simple demands of ethnic and cultural rights and of secular pluralism in the Union of Burma. This is best expressed by none other than Aung San, the founding father of the Burma Army and the architect of the historic Panglong Agreement, which formed the legal basis for a multi-ethnic independent Union of Burma.

"What is it that particularly agitates a national minority? A minority is discontented because it does not enjoy the right to use its native language. Permit it to use its native language and this discontentment will pass of itself. A minority is discontented because it doesn't not enjoy liberty of conscience etc. Give it these liberties and it will cease to be discontented. Thus, national equality in all forms (language, schools, etc.) is an essential element in the solution of the national problem."

Even after more than half a century, Aung San's prescription cannot be more valid today. Civil war will continue unless these essential elements are met in Burma. But to do so will require a fundamental change in the basic State philosophy that underpins the thinking of governance in the Union of Burma. # [The editorial of Chinland Guardian news]

## Poem &amp; Cartoon

## Waiting for You All the Time

So many times I cry hopelessly  
Without making any sound  
And still silent, I'm sitting helplessly  
Watching and waiting for you  
In full hope of your rescue.

If you are far away from me,  
I am good for nothing at all  
And life seems to stop for me  
Without you, there's no peace  
There is no hope, and no life.

If you are right beside me,  
The world is a place full of hope  
And my future becomes perfect  
As on your shoulders I'm strong  
Then all my worries fade out.

Sometimes in my dream at night  
You come and hold me up tight  
But when I am awake, I only know  
That I see myself left in sadness  
I wish that it would become a reality.

I have a dream and faith  
That you'll come to me someday  
And I'll live in your bosom forever  
So I wait for you all the time  
Cause you are all I need in life.

17 May 2011! By Robert Ngun Sang

[This verse is composed by a Chin refugee  
in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.]

## Religious Repression: No Time to Watch and Wait



## Killing against Law in Burma



## Questionnaire of Burma



## Global Chin Passenger in Destination Dilemma

