



# Chin Human Rights Organization

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## MEDIA ADVISORY

### Press Conference: Report Launch -

### “*Threats to Our Existence*: Persecution of Ethnic Chin Christians in Burma”

[Bangkok, Thailand] On Wednesday 5 September 2012 the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) will hold a press conference to launch its new report, “*Threats to Our Existence*: Persecution of Ethnic Chin Christians in Burma.”

The report examines the issue of freedom of religion for ethnic Chin Christians, both under previous military regimes, and the current nominally-civilian government in Burma. The report exposes serious ongoing human rights violations, even as the government claims to deepen its reforms in the country.

For years, state-sanctioned deep-rooted discrimination against the Chin on the dual basis of their ethnicity and religion has given rise to widespread and systematic violations of fundamental human rights, particularly religious freedom. Based on over 100 qualitative interviews and in-depth research conducted over the past two years, the report reveals that the Chin continue to be denied religious freedom and are targeted for induced and coerced conversion to Buddhism, in pursuance of an unwritten State policy of forced assimilation.

In publishing this report CHRO hopes to deepen understanding of religious freedom violations in Burma, and their far-reaching impact. CHRO also aims to highlight the urgent need to place minority and indigenous rights at the heart of the democratic transition process in the country.

**What:** Press conference to launch “*Threats to Our Existence*: Persecution of Ethnic Chin Christians in Burma.”

**When:** 10.30am Wednesday 5 September 2012

**Where:** **The Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand**

The Penthouse, Maneeya Center

518/5 Ploenchit Road

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**Speakers:** Salai Za Uk Ling, CHRO Program Director  
Rachel Fleming, CHRO Advocacy Director

-ENDS-

For more information, please contact:

Sam Cartmell, CHRO Project Manager: +66 53 210 302 or email [info@chro.ca](mailto:info@chro.ca) (Office hours: 10am – 6pm)  
Rachel Fleming, CHRO Advocacy Director +44 7938 610 288 (UK: 6 hours behind Thailand time)

#### **Notes to editors:**

**Salai Za Uk Ling** is the Program Director at CHRO who has been working with the organization for more than 12 years. He is the co-author of the CHRO's 2004 report *Religious Persecution: A Campaign of Ethnocide against Chin Christians in Burma*. He has travelled around the world to lobby governments and the United Nations to promote religious freedom in Burma.

**Rachel Fleming** is CHRO's Advocacy Director, and author of “*Threats to Our Existence*: Persecution of Ethnic Chin Christians in Burma.” She has been based on the Thai-Burma border since 2008, and began working with CHRO in early 2010. Prior to that she worked for the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners – Burma and Amnesty International.

#### **About the Chin Human Rights Organization**

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

#### **About the Chin people of Burma**

Around 500,000 ethnic Chin live in the northwestern area of Chin State in Burma. The Chin are ethnically very diverse. The six main tribes of Asho, Cho (Sho), Khumi (M'ro), Laimi, Mizo (Lushai), and Zomi (Kuki) can be further broken up into at least 60 different sub-tribal categories, including the Mara. The Chin speak more than 20 mutually distinct languages. Despite such diversity, the Chin are unified through a common history, geographical homeland, traditional practices, ethnic identity and religion.