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Chin IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) taking shelter near the Kaladan river after being forced to flee conflicts between the Arakan Army and the Burma Army (Photos: Khumi Media Group)



**Chin Human Rights  
Organization (CHRO)**

2-Montavista Avenue,  
Nepean, K2J 2L3,  
Canada

Ph: 1-613-843-9484  
Email: [info@chro.ca](mailto:info@chro.ca)  
Web: [www.chro.ca](http://www.chro.ca)

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## Arbitrary Taxation & Extortion

### Police extort money for bamboo and firewood

**24 March 2015** -- Police Sergeant Cung and four private police, from 8-Mile Police Station on the Sagaing-Chin State border, extorted money from locals in Kimlai village, Tedim Township.

A local reported to the Chin Human Rights Organization that the police led by Cung forcibly demanded 1,000 kyats per bullock cart carrying bamboos and firewood in the first week of February. More than 50 bullock carts were stopped and demanded, besides forcibly taking one or two pieces of bamboos for themselves.

"The number of bullock carts demanded will exceed 50. They ordered the locals to unload one or two pieces from the bamboo-carrying bullock cart for them. We didn't dare to speak out as they had guns. They didn't still let us go even though we told them they were carrying bamboos and firewood for family use, not for business. In reality, what they were doing was the duties of the forest department. But we had no choice but to give them what they demanded," another local said.

other local said.

According to the local, what the police had done to the locals were unfair, illegal and dishonest as the forest department didn't issue any order for fine or punishment although it prohibits cutting down trees in the areas. #

"...what the police had done to the locals were unfair, illegal and dishonest as the forest department didn't issue any order for fine or punishment ..."

### Police extort money from local traders

**27 March 2015** -- A group of police led by Corporal Myo Lwin Htin, from Thanthaung village, Paletwa Township, Chin State extorted money from local traders using Laymyo river, a local, who does not want to be named, told the Chin Human Rights Organization.

Corporal Myo Lwin Htin, aka Nga Lwin Boo, and his men forcibly demanded 5,000 kyats per ton of wood and bamboos from traders, charging 1,000 kyats per 100 bamboos every day, according to the local.

In addition, local traders carrying other goods including *gamone* and yams were also extorted without a fixed rate. The local said that Thanthaung police also demanded money from traders at another checkpoint opened at Karapin village, about seven miles away from Thanthaung, adding traders faced extortion twice.

A religious leader, who asked not to be named, said that the two checkpoints extorted money from traders without issuing a receipt and that only 300,000 out of the total amount of extortion was given to the Thanthaung Police Station, with the rest being pocketed by the checkpoint guards.

According to a report by the Paletwa Township Forest Department, an average of 2,000,000 bamboos a year is exported from the township. An officer from the department said that the department established a checkpoint in Karapin village for collecting an official tariff and that the activities conducted by police were illegal.

Since 2010, the Thanthaung Police Force has started extorting money from local traders using Laymyo river after having established two checkpoints, one in Thanthaung and another in Karapin. #



## Families demanded money to release child soldiers

**06 April 2015** -- A soldier from the Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion No. 289 based in Paletwa town said that he would release three child soldiers if their families gave him a ransom of more than 1,000,000 kyats.

Family members reported to the Chin Human Rights Organization that Warrant Officer Shwe Kyaw Oo and wife Daw Thazin persuaded their 17-year-old sons, Maung Win Naing, Maung Ein Gar Aung, and Maung Nilar Htun during their visit to Bawngkoo village on 10 March, and took them to Paletwa town after tell them that they [the couple] would teach them how to drive a car and use a computer and that they would be able to earn a lot of money.

The three students, of Grade 6, 7 and 8, ran away to Bawngkoo when they realized that they would be forcibly conscripted into the army. On the same day, the Burmese couple followed them by motorbike and caught them while staying at U Aung Saih's house in Bawngkoo. U Aung Saih and his wife were accused of calling the students to their house and were slapped in their faces and kicked to their bodies by Shwe Kyaw Oo.

Warrant Officer Shwe Kyaw Oo and wife Thazin took the students to the military recruitment centre of LIB No. 20 based in Sittwe of Arakan State, and warned them to say that they were coming to join the army of their own accord.

Shwe Kyaw Oo and Thazin were known to have frequently conscripted children into the army. He was first posted as a sergeant to LIB 289 but later promoted to a warrant officer when he was transferred to

LIB 20. The promotion was partially because of his effort, together with his wife, in recruiting children to the army, according to a local.

The local said: "Daw Thazin persuades and brings children, students under the age of 18, to the army, and gets 300,000 kyats per head. In addition, her husband gets promotion. The responsible authorities must take serious action against them if what they have been doing is illegal and against the laws."

Upon hearing what had happened to their sons, the families reported the case to Paletwa Town Police Force and told the police to take necessary action against the couple. According to the investigation conducted by the police, Maung Win Naing and Maung Nilar Htun were seen at Shwe Kyaw Oo's house on 28 March 2015.

U Sani Aung, Maung Ein Gar Aung's elder brother, went to Shwe Kyaw Oo's house on 1 April in an attempt to get information about his brother from Maung Win Naing and Maung Nilar Htun. Shwe Kyaw Oo told him: "If you give me 350,000 kyats now, I will get your brother straight away." U Sani Aung replied: "How would I give you money if I don't see my brother first?" Angered by his reply, Shwe Kyaw Oo hit him in the face with his knee, and U Sani Aung got injuries on his mouth.

The students are from Saihkay village, Waa-yung Village Tract, Paletwa Township [translator's note: can't locate the village in Paletwa Township, but found same name in Kanpetlet]. Maung Win Naing and Maung Nilar Htun are being detained at the residence of Shwe Kyaw Oo and Daw Thazin. But Maung Ein Gar Aung is not seen in Paletwa. The couple demand 350,000 kyats per head to release the three students.#

### Children's Names:

1. Maung Win Naing Age: 17, Grade 8, Father: U Kan Tin
2. Maung Ein Gar Aung Age: 17, Grade 7, Mother: Daw Wait Ta Li
3. Maung Nilar Htun Age: 17, Grade 6, Father Aye Htun

### Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO)

[www.chro.ca](http://www.chro.ca)

2-Montavista Avenue, Nepean, K2J 2L3, Canada  
Ph: 1-613-843-9484; Email: [info@chro.ca](mailto:info@chro.ca)

## Staff's salaries deducted by dept head

**MATUPI, 10 April 2015** -- U Tual Lian Thang, head of the Matupi Township Education Department, cut 6,000 kyats off their March salaries from each staff member across the township on 1 April 2015, a school teacher reported to the Chin Human Rights Organization.

He said that the deduction was for buying presents and holding a farewell party for U Ha Shing Kee, deputy head of the Matupi Township Education Department, and another staff member, both of who had

retired in March.

The Township Education Department Office said that a total of each 2,000 kyats from the deduction per head would be used for the party and another 2,000 kyats for the presents to each of the two retirees.

"Although they say there is no more salary deduction in Burma, we are not exempt from it," the headmaster said.

It is estimated that the deductions could total up to 6,500,000 kyats as the department has 1,090 staff members across the township.#

## Other Human Rights Violations

### Matupi Times threatened for writing about robbery by Na-Ta-La students

**20 March 2015** -- The authorities in Matupi town, Chin State threatened staff members of the Matupi Times, a weekly newsletter, for publishing a news story about three Na-Ta-La students stealing a motorbike.

Editor Pu Bo Phuih reported to the Chin Human Rights Organization that Matupi police superintendent Htay Win summoned and interrogated him and reporter Pa Ting on 21 February regarding the story published on 19 February.

He said: "Htay Win told us that the story shouldn't be published in the news as Na Ta La school is part of a government department, asked why we published it and said 'You are not fair.'"

Pa Ting said: "A Na Ta La school teacher warned him to be 'careful' as he was not happy about the news, saying 'Your media agency only publishes stupid news. Be extra careful'."

Peng Bawi, Nga-lar ward general administrator, who attended the regular meeting of government departments on 23 February 2015, said that U Kyi Thet Maung, Matupi Township General Administration Head, strongly criticized the publication of the story. U Kyi Thet Maung said in his criticism, according to Peng Bawi, : "This is the final warning to the *Matupi Times*."

Matupi police station commander Phone Aung tried

to persuade Pu Len Bawi, owner of the motorbike, saying: "Na

Ta La students who stole the motorbike are under the age of 18 and therefore, they cannot be legally punished effectively. Even if they are to be kept in custody, it can only be a juvenile detention. In addition, they will have to be freed as they are under 18. It will be much better if you are given a compensatory payment at the current price of the motorbike."

Pu Len Bawi also said that he finally accepted the offer and received 500,000 kyats in compensation because of the imploration by Na Ta La School Headmaster Ke Ling Maung, the honest request by Phone Aung and the fact that it was very difficult for me to get a new motorbike on my own.

Pu Bo Phuih said: "The children are protected just because they are Buddhist and Na Ta La students. I don't think they will get this kind of protection if they follow Christianity or other religions - they will definitely be sent to prison on a certain ground and ordered to give a large amount of money in compensation. Just because they are of the same religion, the authorities stand with them and take the case very lightly."

The three students stole Pu Len Bawi's motorbike (Kenbo-125) around 11:30pm on 15 February 2015 and ran away along the Mindat road until the motorbike got problems and stopped near the Union Theological College, about one mile outside Matupi town. They destroyed the motorbike by setting it to fire.#



## State govt deny permission for Falam human rights training

**20 April 2015** -- The government of Chin State didn't allow permission for holding training in human rights in Falam town.

The training organized by a Falam youth group called Falam Mino Pawlkom and scheduled for today was cancelled after the State government said in an official letter that permission was not granted.

FMP Secretary Salai Siang Cung Luai said in the *Chin World Media* that the government didn't explain the reason for rejecting their permission application letter.

He said: "The government asked us to include topics of our training and we re-submitted our letter. We received a refusal letter yesterday, one day before the training, without any explanation whatsoever."

"What I want to say is that the government does not care about us and our organization. I am not sure if

they are afraid people will understand human rights."

Luai said that they had made a call to the State Government Administration Office and that the office head had told them only Chief Minister Hung Ngai would be able to answer the question regarding the refusal.

According to the FMP, the training topics as submitted to the government were the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, to both of which Burma is a signatory, and other international human rights treaties.

To lead the planned one-day training, the FMP had invited Salai Nge Pi, a secretary of the Chin National Democratic Party, and Mai Cheery Zahau, a 2015 election candidate for the Chin Progressive Party.

Established in 2010, the FYO said that it had organized similar training in the past without obtaining permission from the government as it was on a small scale.#

## Two policemen rape Chin girl in Tonzang Township

**23 April 2015** -- A Grade 8 student girl, 15, was raped by two policemen in Tonzang Township, Chin State around 8pm on 11 April.

The incident took place near a coffee plantation when Phyo Ko Ko and Phyo Paing, both lance corporals, were taking the girl on a motorcycle toward her elder sister's house.

In a report delivered by letter to a police station, the victim's father said that the two policemen had come to his house to get his daughter to look after his elder daughter who had fallen ill at her house.

He said that he had let her younger daughter go and that they hadn't taken her to her sister's residence

but to another place where she had been raped.

Locals told the Chin Human Rights Organization that the two policemen were friends of her elder sister's husband, who had asked for help to get the girl.

According to the CHRO, the victim told her mother what had happened to her as she lay in bed the whole of the following day.

On 15 April, the two policemen offered 3,000,000 kyats to her parents in an attempt to settle the case, saying they would be able to make the full payment only on 25 April as they didn't have the cash then.

The parents refused the offer and filed the case to the police station on 20 April, requesting action to be taken against the perpetrators in accordance with the law.#

... the two policemen offered 3,000,000 kyats to her parents in an attempt to settle the case, saying they would be able to make the full payment ... as they didn't have the cash then.



## Man arrested for beating 4-yr-old Rezua girl to death

**24 April 2015** -- A 40-year-old man identified as Kaw Ling has been taken into police custody for killing a girl, aged four, in Rezua, Chin State .

The Rezua police said that action would be taken against the murderer in accordance with the law.

Ling, who is known to be mentally challenged and an ex-prisoner, beat the family in an unprovoked attack on Wednesday, killing the girl and injuring three others.

The three injured are the girl's mother, Sung Nah, her elder sister and grandmother.

Pastor Thang Bawi Lian said in the *Hakha Post* that the girl had died on the spot, adding: "Her young sister was seriously injured and is being taken to the Hakha General Hospital."

The Chin pastor also said that Ling had killed a guest staying at his family's house in 2010 and had been imprisoned.

"Now, he did it again although he was released from prison following the investigation that said he was normal," the pastor added. #



(Photo: CHRO)

## UN urge Burma's govt to end impunity

**30 April 2015** -- UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the government of Burma to put an end to the practices of impunity for sexual violence crimes.

He said that the government should 'take practical and timely actions to protect and support survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and prosecute 'security personnel accused of such crimes'.

His recent report submitted to the UN Security Council contained an account of how the Burma Army had tried to settle the case of a 10-year-old girl raped in early 2015 by a soldier by offering money to her family.

He said that sexual violence remains widespread in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine State, as well as 'areas subject to ceasefire agreements in Chin State and the south-east of the country.

Burma's government endorsed the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict in June last year.

"Nevertheless, during 2014 there continued to be a high level of impunity for conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by State actors and a lack of transparency in military courts," the report added.

While welcoming the country's democratic transition process, Ban Ki-moon urged the inclusion of 'sexual violence' as an element in all ceasefire and peace negotiations. #

## Humanitarian & Development Situation

### Five children died, dozens hospitalized for diarrhoea

**16 March 2015** -- At least 69 children infected with diarrhoea have been admitted to the Hakha General Hospital in this month only, according to the hospital on Saturday.

A hospital staff member said that they were receiving an increasing number of children having gastroenteritis mostly caused by a virus called 'Rotavirus'.

Three children under the age of one died from the

infection in Surngen village, Thantlang Township last week, and the deaths of two children were recorded in Hakha in February and March this year, according to the State Health Department.

The infection spreads easily mainly because of lack of public awareness and health education on the issue, and patient's conditions can get worse because of no medical facilities or equipment as well as skills in villages, thus leading to death, the department said.

Inadequate availability of water has also been ascribed to one of the factors that have caused the disease.#



### Hakha hit hard by water shortages

**19 March 2015** -- Residents in Hakha, the capital of Chin State, are experiencing serious water shortages, the situation facing its residents every summer for years.

Salai Uk, a community leader and a father, said: "This time, it is different. The situation is getting worse as our water pipelines are destroyed by the road works."

He said that the authorities just left the pipelines unfixed and didn't even allow residents in some parts to fix them on their own.

Worst-affected areas include Khuathar and Chin-oo-si ward in which the majority of civil servants stay in rented houses and government housing for employees.

Some are relying on water brought in by cars while others go to nearby streams, about half an hour's drive away, which are running low as summer ap-

proaches.

Ko Soe, a Burman government employee, said that he paid 200 kyats for a five-gallon bucket of water, adding: "He hasn't taken a shower for days."

Some government employees get their shirts and longgyis washed for 1,000 kyats each as they do not have time to go to the stream, according to the *Chinland Post*.

Uk, from Khuathar, said: "I have spent the whole morning queuing up for collecting just two gallons of water from a communal water supply."

"The authorities didn't and haven't done anything to help us get water. So, we have been dependent on community-based water supply."

Patients in Hakha complained that they were struggling for water at the Hakha General Hospital, part of which was recently opened by Dr. Than Aung, Union minister of Health, during his visit to the capital with President Thein Sein.

"We don't have water for washing and for use in toilets. It is very difficult for us as we are supposed to keep ourselves clean every day," said a Hakha patient, from Tlangkhua village.

Meanwhile, the government says that it has started construction of a dam in Timit river to provide water for Hakha. But it is expected to be completed around the end of this year.#



## Villagers flee clash between Arakan and Burma armies in Chin State

**01 April 2015** -- Hundreds of people from a village identified as Pyin-so in Paletwa Township, Chin State have fled from a fire exchange between the Arakan Army and Burma Army around midnight on 29 March.

The villagers are taking refuge in nearby villages following the hours-long fighting between soldiers from the Arakan Army Tactical Unit No. 5 and the Burma Army Infantry Battalion No. 289.

U Aung, village general administrator, told the Chin Human Rights Organization: "We [villagers] ran away to other villages and farms as more Burma Army soldiers from Paletwa arrived in our village. We are worried that the fighting will continue."

The administrator, who is currently taking shelter in Paletwa, said that the villagers were afraid of re-turning while the soldiers remained in their village.

A Pyin-so resident said on condition of anonymity to the CHRO that the fighting had broken out mainly because the Burma Army soldiers stationed

in his village had captured a Arakan Army soldier, three days before the clash.

"Therefore, the Arakan Army attacked the Burma Army in revenge for the capture," added the villager.

Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Nyo Tun Aung, AA deputy commander-in-chief, said in a Narinjara interview that two bodies - a captain and another a private, both from the Burma Army - were recovered, and that they arrested two soldiers.

U Aung said that there was always a possibility of clashes if soldiers remained in the village, adding: "We all fear our village would be destroyed and many villagers don't dare to do farm. We want soldiers to stay outside of the village, not inside the village."

Pyin-so, about three hours' walk to the Bangladeshi border and situated in the west of Paletwa town, is a Chin village of 75 households with 472 residents.

The Arakan Army was formed in 2008, initially based in Laiza, Kachin State, alongside the Kachin Independence Army, and has been active in the Bangladesh-Burma area for months, according to sources.#

## Villagers worried as Arakan-Burma armies clash continues

**14 April 2015** -- A new clash between the Arakan Army and Burma Army broke out in Pyin-so of Paletwa Township, forcing more residents to flee the village.

Soldiers from the Arakan Army and the Burma Army Infantry Battalion No. 289 exchanged fire the third time on 10 April, with the first on 28 March and the second on 29 March.

According to the *Khumi Me-*

*dia Group*, locals were afraid of coming back to their village because of the fighting [hyperlink to previous news piece to be inserted] and they were worried about food security.

"What we are eating now is food from last year's harvest. Now we are not able to work on our farms at the required time. We are very worried about our survival next year," a Pyin-so villager told the *KMG*.

The *KMG* reported that some families were fleeing to Kaladan river while others had taken refuge in nearby villages.#

**"What we are eating now is food from last year's harvest. Now we are not able to work on our farms at the required time. We are very worried about our survival next year,"**

**- Pyin-so villager**

Mount Surbung in Falam Township, Chin State  
(Photo: Chinland Today)



## Govt approve airport construction in Chin State

**16 April 2015** -- Burma's parliament gave the green light to a proposal to build an airport in Chin State, the only one of the nation's 14 states and regions without airline services.

The parliament recently approved a bill submitted by the Ministry of Transport, which requests 1 billion kyats for construction of a domestic airport in the country's western state bordering Bangladesh

and India.

The new move came as a welcome surprise to Chin communities after years of attempts to get permission and support from the authorities.

So far, the site chosen for the construction is on Mount Surbung, about 10 miles away from Falam town.

The initial funding is for the years 2015-16 to start the project, according to sources.#

## Villagers fleeing conflicts in need of humanitarian aid

**27 April 2015** -- Chin villagers fleeing conflicts between the Burma Army and Arakan Army are still hiding and in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.

Hundreds of residents in villages near the Arakan-Chin border, who have fled the clashes occurring in March and April, fear to return home, according to the Khumi Media Group.

More than 320 people from Pyin-so village alone have been taking temporary shelters in nearby villages and farms, and receiving no humanitarian aid, the KMG said.

Last week, the Burma Army authorities at checkpoints

did not permit a group of aid workers from Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State to deliver aid to villagers displaced by the conflicts.

A Pyin-so resident told the KMG: "Although some are staying with friends and relatives, it is getting difficult for them and for the host families."

"Some locals think about leaving their villages for good as they are afraid to go back. They left all their belongings including rice and domestic animals."

On 21 April, the *Global New Light of Myanmar* reported clashes between the two parties and the arrest of two soldiers with weapons and other ammunition in Arakan State.

Fire exchanges between the two armies began early last month, according to media reports.#



## In pictures: villagers taking shelter from conflicts in Paletwa Township

**29 April 2015** -- Some images showing villagers taking shelter near the Kaladan river from conflicts between the Burma Army and Arakan Army. (Photos: Khumi Media Group/Facebook)





## Villagers worried as bad weather disrupts cultivation

**28 April 2015** -- Continuous rains in parts of Chin State, Burma since last month have caused problems for farmers, interrupting seasonal work in their subsistence farming.

Chin farmers from at least 30 villages in the two townships of Thantlang and Falam have not been able to burn their fields in time to prepare for crop cultivation.

"Weather conditions have become very irregular. Those whose fields have not been burnt by now are likely to reap bad harvests. It is a real worry for them for the next year," Ngun Hre, from Hriphi village, told the Hakha Post.

Pu Thla Kio Lian, an NGO manager who had seen the situations during his recent trip to villages, spoke of his grave concern about possible food shortages facing the villagers following failure to burn their paddy fields, according to the *Chinland*

News.

He added that villagers normally burnt their paddy fields before the end of March.

In an attempt to get prepared in advance for weather conditions like this, residents in Hakha had made requests publication of weather forecasts in the news.

To this, Papui, chief editor of the Hakha Post, replied that the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology said they didn't have the authority to pass the information to the media.

"At first, they said they would be able to give us copies of the reports which had already been sent to the authority. But later, they said they could not give them to us without official permission from the authority," the Hakha-based chief editor said.

The majority of people in villages and remote areas in Chin State depends on shifting subsistence farming.#

## Event

### Chin State to host third ethnic media conference

**10 March 2015** -- The third ethnic media conference is to be held in Hakha, Chin State from 18 to 20 March, with an estimated participants of about 200 from across the country and abroad.

Ye Htut, Union minister of Information, and Hung Ngai, chief minister of the Chin State government, as well as other State ministers are expected to attend the event in the capital.

Papui, chief editor of the Hakha Post, one of the local newsletters involved in organizing the event, said that the conference would help Chin media improve into a new level.

Organized by the Burma News International, an umbrella body of 13 news organizations, the event will discuss various issues regarding the sustainability and improvement of ethnic media in the changing Burma.

Papui also said that it would build a new bridge for the

public and the State government to get better understanding of the media.

Sources from the event committee said that leaders from different organizations including political parties, civil society groups, NGO/INGOs and churches are invited to the annual conference.

Initiated in 2013 by the BNI in partnership with local ethnic media agencies, the first event was held in Moulmein, Mon State in 2013 and the second in Taunggyi, Shan State in 2014.

Established in 2003 with four Burmese news organizations based in the western border of Burma, India and Bangladesh, the Burma News International is a network of 13 independent media organizations such as Mizzima News, Narinjara News, Kaladan Press, Karen Information Center, Khonumthung News, Chin World, Network Media Group, Independent Mon News Agency, Shan Herald Agency for News, Phop Htaw News, Than Lwin Times, Kantarawaddy Times and Kachin News Group.#



Union Minister Pike Htwe speaking at the third ethnic media conference in Hakha (Photo: CHRO)

### Third ethnic media conference held in Hakha

18 March 2015 -- The third ethnic media conference kicks off at the Carson Hall in Hakha, Chin State today, with Union and State government officials in attendance.

Deputy Union Minister of Information Pike Htwe, Chief Minister of the Chin State government Hung Ngai and State ministers, and leaders of the Chin National Front gave opening speeches.

Pike Htwe said: "Media in our country face challenges but have made achievements to some extent. One of them is the fact that we can hold this conference in Hakha."

He also highlighted the need to prevent media from being completely controlled by the government or owners, and to get new skills from international news agencies.

Both the Union minister and chief minister stressed the importance of media development in a democratic country as the fourth estate.

Meanwhile, CNF leader Dr. Sui Khar urged in his speech the Union and State governments to get involved more in supporting and promoting ethnic media as part of the peace-building process.

He also said that the peace-talk agreements included the establishment of a community radio broadcast program in Chin dialects.

However, the governments have not taken the initiative in implementing the agreement provisions in an attempt to improve the media in Chin State.

The Hakha event attracts participants from news organizations from both the country and abroad, political parties, civil society groups and journalists as well as well-known Burmese writers.

Organized by the Burma News International, the three-day conference is to focus on how to sustain ethnic media in the country.

Speaking about the aim of the conference, BNI Board of Director Nan Paw Gay said the importance of making the voices of the public in ethnic areas heard through the media as the freedom of media is currently on the way. #





CHRO Executive Director Salai Bawi Lian Mang answering media questions at the seminar in Rangoon (Photo: CHRO)

## Multilingualism will continue to be hallmark of Burma: CHRO

**31 March 2015** -- The Chin Human Rights Organization said that Burma would continue to be a nation of rich diversity in terms of ethnicity, languages, dialects and cultures.

In its statement today following a two-day national seminar titled 'Continuum of the Richness of Languages and Dialects in Myanmar', the CHRO emphasized the importance of multilingualism in the country as a hallmark of the nation.

It said: "Multilingualism is an essential resource rather than a hindrance to any country. Numerous scientific studies have demonstrated that encouragement of it has many potential social and other benefits."

It urged the government of Burma to develop a formal language policy in its national building process and to guarantee the preservation, protection, and the promotion of all of its language and dialects, alongside the majority language.

The government should provide 'adequate institutional and financial support for the promotion of multilingualism' in the country, the organization said.

The event organized at the Summit Parkview Hotel in Yangon from 25 – 26 March 2015 brought together key stakeholders from different ethnic groups, including ethnic political parties, literature and culture committees, student and youth representatives, and ethnic armed groups, as well as renowned academics from prestigious universities around the world.#

## Chin pastor to receive Religious Freedom Award

**08 April 2015** -- Rev. Dr. C. Duh Kam, executive director of the Chin Baptist Churches USA, is one of two Christian pastors, originally from Burma, selected to receive the Suzan Johnson Cook Religious Freedom Award.

Kam and Rev. Dr. Saw Ler Htoo, general secretary of the Karen Baptist Churches USA, will be presented with the award in recognition of their selfless work in promoting religious freedom.

Rev. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III,

executive director and CEO of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, said: "We have identified the Chin and the Karen Conventions as exemplary entities which were created and sustained by the precious value of religious liberty."

The two pastors had met with international organizations and government officials including the U.S. State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom to advocate human rights and religious freedom in Burma, a country ruled by military regime for decades.

Kam, senior pastor of the Chin Baptist Mission Church in Washington DC Metropolitan Area, has made trips to Malaysia, Thailand and

Burma in an effort to visit and help refugees, especially from Burma.

The Chin pastor, from Thau in Thantlang Township, Chin State, worked as a schoolteacher in Falam Township before he studied at the Myanmar Institute of Theology and in the US.

The ceremony to present the award is likely to take place on 26 June 2015.

Dr. Suzan Denise Johnson Cook served as the United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom from April, 2011 to October 2013.#



## Chin minister attends youth conference in Tedim

29 April 2015 -- Nang Za Mung, State minister of Finance and Revenue, attended a youth conference titled 'Unity and Holistic Development' held in Tedim, Chin State from 23 to 26 April.

At the opening ceremony of the event, the Chin minister, of the ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party, read a message sent by Hung Ngai, chief minister of the Chin State government.

The four-day event, organized by the Zomi Community in Singapore in collaboration with the Zomi Youth Association in Tedim, drew participants from across Burma and other countries including India and Singapore.

Their discussions covered issues involving the development of the Zomi youth, and the need to forge closer communication between them in Burma.

A Tedim youth leader said: "It is great that we have the opportunity to meet like this. But this will make sense only if we go beyond the discussion and translate decisions into action."

Meanwhile, 10 youths from Mizoram State invited to the event for teaching English were sent back to

their country under the instruction of Chief Minister Hung Ngai.

During 13-17 April, Zomi doctors and nurses provided free medical treatment to 371 residents from Langzang and nearby villages as part of the meeting programmes held in Langzang, Tedim Township.#

"It is great that we have the opportunity to meet like this. But this will make sense only if we go beyond the discussion and translate decisions into action."

- Youth leader

## Chin university students meet in Thantlang

29 April 2015 -- More than 200 Chin students from universities in Rangoon, Kalay and Monywa met in Thantlang town from 24 to 26 April.

They discussed issues related to ways in which they could make improvement in their respective professional expertise and how they could strengthen co-operation between university students across the country.

In the three-day gathering, they had training in federalism and human rights presented by Ral Hnin, a committee member of the Chin National Front Supreme Council, and Salai Mang Hre Lian, chief editor of the Chinland Post, a local newspaper in

Hakha.

Salai Min Lian Thang, chairman of the Thantlang University Family, said in the *Hakha Post*: "We strongly believe that the training is of benefit to everyone involved. These are the two topics that we should understand in the current context of our country."

The Chin University Students' Fellowship organize a function during each university year break, varying the location, with this year's event marking the 17th such gathering.

Formed in 1998 following the 1996 shutdown of universities and colleges in the country by the military authorities, the CUSF aim to promote communication among students between various universities in Burma.#

## Situation of Refugees

### Dozens of Chin refugees arrested in Malaysia crackdown

**13 March 2015** -- Malaysian authorities carried out a night crackdown on Chin refugees in three areas of Kuala Lumpur today.

Police together with officials from the Criminal Investigation Department conducted a raid from 6pm to 8pm in Jalan San Peng, Jalan Loke Yew and San Peng, Kenanga Shopping Mall, according to the Faiceu journal.

One of the Chin detainees told the *Faiceu* newsletter that more than 200 Chin refugees were believed to be arrested, of which about 80 were not regis-

tered with the UNHCR.

A Chin eye-witness said that the authorities went from house to house in the raids, arresting those registered and non-registered, adding: "Only two orphans and a woman are left in the one house that I know."

It is expected that those registered with the UNHCR would be released soon with the help of the UN Refugee Agency based in the Malaysian capital.

More than an estimate of 40,000 Chin refugees are currently living in Malaysia, out of the total 140,590 from Burma, according to the UNHCR.#

### Chin refugee killed by lightning in Malaysia

**16 April 2015** -- Thang Tin Lian, 16, died at a hospital in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia minutes after he was struck by lightning around 3pm on Sunday.

The incident happened while he was playing football in Sungai Besi, a town in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur.

He was injured in the chest, armpit and eyes, according to friends and family members.

Van Nun Thang, his elder brother who was on the football pitch during the incident, said that Lian was not bleeding and that he was rushed to the hospital.

He also said that Lian didn't last long at the hospital but succumbed to his injuries, adding: "His inside was badly affected."

The funeral service was held on Tuesday.

Together with his parents, Sui Khar and Par Zing, and brother, he has been in Malaysia as a refugee from Burma for over five years.#

### Chin refugee mother seriously injured after attack in Delhi

**23 April 2015** -- A Chin refugee mother has suffered serious injuries in an attack in New Delhi, India around 10:30pm last Sunday.

Mai V (name changed for security reasons), 21, was suddenly pulled out of a rickshaw to the ground by three Indian men on a motorbike while she and her three female friends were on their way home from a job interview in Gurgaon, southwest Delhi.

She told the Chin Human Rights Organization: "One of the three men pulled my hair and I fell down from the rickshaw. And I was unconscious for hours. When I woke up, I was in Mata Chanan Devi

hospital."

"I was badly hurt in my head and it was bleeding a lot. My whole body was wounded. I felt dizzy and pain everywhere. The doctor suggested to me to get treatment in the hospital. But I spent only one night as I didn't have money."

According to the CHRO, her friends paid for the hospital charges.

The case was reported to the Socio-Legal Information Centre, an 'implementing partner' of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and to the police on Monday.

Mai V also said that she had been raped by an Indian man in 2011 and given birth to a baby son that De-



Mai V with her head injuries at home in Delhi, India  
(Photo: CHRO)

-cember.

"I worked at a wedding party at night. I was tired and standing outside the room for a while. and finished work at night. All of a sudden, a man grabbed me from behind, closed my mouth with cloth and dragged me into a room downstairs."

"He said he would kill me if I screamed for help. I was only 17 years old. I felt ashamed but was not able to hide the truth as I got pregnant. I felt helpless and ashamed even to mix with friends and the family with whom I stayed. I cried secretly all the time and decided to end my life many times," she added.

Eventually with the help of her friend, she reported the case to the SLIC and the UNHCR in Delhi.

However, she has never received a response from either organization.

She said: "I had a baby by operation at a hospital and realized after a few days that I got breast cancer. As I was not healthy, my baby was looked after by the refugee family with whom I stayed."

She was working as a housemaid for a Korean family and was able to spend time with her son only over the weekend.

Mai V had been looking for a job since the Korean family had moved back to their country about a month ago.

But currently, she is still on medication, and unable to stand up, let alone walk. #

## Refugee youth from Burma speak out in the universal language of narrative art

**25 April 2015** -- Children forced to run away from brutalities inflicted by Burma's successive regimes reveal through watercolor drawings their 'daunting' life stories as refugees.

A book containing a collection of narrative art by and about youth from Burma entitled 'Forced to Flee: Visual Stories by Refugee Youth from Burma', published last month, bears witness to real-life situations facing refugee children today.

Hayso Thako, Principal, Shalom Arts and Leadership College in Mae La refugee camp along the Thai-Burma border, said: "In Forced to Flee, refugee youths' real-life stories illustrate complex issues related to ethnic conflicts, religious tension and political persecution in Burma." - *continued on next page*



"The book doesn't just describe the issues; it promotes the voice of refugees who have lived in exile for decades while remaining committed to bringing freedom and peace to their displaced communities."

A statement by Erika Berg, author of this powerful new book, said that 196 of the youths' "visual stories" bridge language and cultural barriers that have shielded the outside world from haunting, humbling and awe-inspiring truths behind Burma's decades-long civil war.

The book is a testament to the indomitable spirit of those forced to flee injustice in Burma, and to the transformative power of art, the statement added.

Many of the visual stories in *Forced to Flee* were painted by youth who fled conflict and persecution in Burma's Chin State and found refuge in Aizawl, situated in India's far northeastern Mizoram State, and in Delhi.

Rachel Fleming, advocacy director of the Chin Human Rights Organization, said: "*Forced to Flee* illustrates the incredible resilience of Burma's ethnic youth in the face of horrific human rights abuses ... The country's leaders could learn so much from the visionary solutions so eloquently expressed here by the youth. They provide such hope for Burma's future."

The book concludes with an extensive "Ways to Help" appendix, which is also available on *Forced to Flee*'s website: [www.burmavisionsforpeace.org](http://www.burmavisionsforpeace.org)

*Forced to Flee* "is dedicated to the courage, resilience and irrepressible hope of the refugee youth who dared to share their stories, to dream of peace."

100% of the royalties from the sale of the book will be donated to peacebuilding efforts in Burma.

For a preview of *Forced to Flee* or to order a copy of the book online, please visit [www.burmavisionsforpeace.org#](http://www.burmavisionsforpeace.org#)



These visual stories were painted by Chin refugee youth. (Photos: Erika Berg)

## Other News

### Three killed, four injured in Tedim car accident

**15 March 2015** -- A car accident between Mualbem and Tedim town in Chin State killed three persons and injured four including a 6-year-old girl around 8pm yesterday.

The incident taking place on the Mualbem road, about 12 miles away from Tedim, claimed the lives of twin sisters identified as Daw Aye Aye Soe and Daw Aye Aye Moe, in their forties and Lo Lam Mung, 33.

The two sisters were lecturers of Physics and Burmese at the Monywa University and the other was from Tedim.

Two of the injured were taken to a general hospital in Kalay today after they had received treatment at the Tedim hospital.

It is not yet known as to how and why the accident happened.#

### Two died, two injured in Tedim jeep accident

**24 March 2015** -- Two Chin men were killed and two Chin passengers injured after their jeep plunged about 700 feet off the hill road near Taingen, Tedim Township yesterday.

Zo Uk, driver and owner of the vehicle, and Ngun Hri, his assistant driver, died instantly when the accident happened on the Hakha-Kalay road around 4pm.

The two injured and bodies of the deceased were taken to a hospital in Kalay, Sagaing Region for treatment and a post-mortem examination.

According to families as quoted by the Chinland Post, the body of Zo Uk, father of six, will be taken to Hakha, and that of Ngun Hri to Leipi, his village, in Hakha Township tomorrow.

As of today, it is not yet known as to how the accident took place.#

### Chin Media Network to focus on monitoring elections

**02 April 2015** -- The upcoming meeting of the Chin Media Network will discuss how to get prepared for the 2015 general election in Chin State, according to the organizing committee.

Jacob Thang, a CMN executive committee member, said that the discussion would mainly focus on ways in which the election, scheduled for October or November this year, could be effectively monitored.

"We will try to find out how to strengthen communication and cooperation between Chin media agencies in ensuring a free and fair election," said Thang in a *Chin World Media* interview.

The fifth Chin Media Network conference will be held in Mindat town from 10 to 12 April, as agreed during the fourth event held in Kalay of Sagaing Region last year.

They will also discuss other issues including defining

an organization structure, appointing full-time staff members and renting an office.

It is expected that the event will be attended by journalists, reporters and leading members of about 20 Chin media agencies from both inside and outside the state.

Formed as the Chin Journalists' Network in 2011 in an effort to assist Chin media in improving their coverage and skills, the Chin Media Network agrees to hold a meeting for committee members every six months.#

**"We will try to find out how to strengthen communication and cooperation between Chin media agencies in ensuring a free and fair election."  
- Jacob Thang**

## Pyin-so villager missing following clashes

**PALETWA, 12 April 2015** -- A resident from Pyin-so village, Paletwa Township has gone missing since 28 March when the first clash between the Arakan Army and Burma Army took place in the village, U Aung Phit, village administrator, reported to the Chin Human Rights Organization on 11 April.

U Ling Min, 30, went missing around 3pm and was known to be wearing a firefighting uniform to go hunting on 28 March. Phit said that he had not since returned to the village and that the search team had not found him in nearby villages.

"We keep looking for him as much as possible. He didn't contact home. Families are very worried as they don't know whether he is alive or not. We don't know what to do," Phit said.

When the Burma Army Light Infantry Battalion No. 289 based in Pyin-so was informed, they said that they didn't arrest him and that he might have run away in fear. The Paletwa Town Police Force was also informed but they said that they didn't know anything about it.

U Ling Min, who is married and has two children, is a farmer and a member of the local fire-brigade in Pyin-so. #

## One dead, two injured in Kaladan boats collision

**14 April 2015** -- Two boats plying along Kaladan river between Paletwa, Chin State and Kyaukdaw, Arakan State collided around midnight last Saturday, killing one passenger and injuring two.

The accident took place near Hna-ma-dar village in Paletwa Township when a Honda boat, driven by U San Thein Htun, 26, from Hna-ma-dar, carrying seven passengers and another Honda with two passengers crashed into each other.

But the Pwe-wone Police Force said that the boat driven by Zaw Min, 31, from Paletwa, slammed into the other, which instantly sank, according to the Khumi Media Group.

Driver U San Thein Htun and one passenger, Maung Win Naing, 21, were injured and 34-year-old Maung Win Maung went missing in the river. His body was later found around 1pm on Sunday.

Those injured were taken to the Paletwa General Hospital. #

## Two Chin pastors killed in car accident

**21 April 2015** -- A car accident happening near Zawngkawng, Tedim Township around 11:30am yesterday killed two Chin Christian pastors and injured two children.

James Khai Tual, youth secretary of the Chin Baptist Convention, and Cin Thian Nang, a church pastor in Taingen village, died on the spot, according to the Hakha Post.

Tual's two sons suffered minor injuries and were taken to the Falam General Hospital.

CBC Vice President Rev. D. Vai Lian Zul said that they couldn't identify a cause for the accident and that the bodies would be taken to their respective villages in Chin State after a post-mortem examination in Kalay, Sagaing Region.

The SUV plunged about 500 feet from the road while the two pastors were returning from a conference held in Limkhai, Tedim Township.

The bodies of the two pastors arrived in Falam around 4am today and a prayer service was held at the CCOC (Chin for Christ in One Century) Hall, according to the Chinland Today.

James Tual Khai, father of six from Khuasak, was a pastor of the Siyin Region Baptist Association and Cin Thian Nang worked as a pastor in his village, Taingen, while studying his master's in Divinity at the Chin Christian Institute of Theology. #





## US ambassador to Burma visits Chin State

**21 April 2015** -- Derek Mitchell, the US ambassador to Burma, is making his first trip to Chin State, arriving in Hakha today.

The 50-year-old American diplomat and his team were greeted at the entrance to the capital by a group of town-elders, pastors and leaders in traditional dress.

He visited the Caarcaang hill where the Christian cross, which had been ordered to be removed from its location by the State government, is planted in the western part of Hakha.

Later in the day, he met with members of the Chin Peace and Tranquility Committee, the Chin National Front, and town leaders, according to the *Hakha Post*.

Mr Mitchell is scheduled to have a meeting with the government of Chin State and other department heads tomorrow.

Derek Mitchell, whose appointment as US Ambassador to Burma was confirmed by the US Senate in June 2012, is the first in more than 20 years to hold that post. #

## US ambassador meets with Chin media groups

22 April 2015 -- US Ambassador to Burma Derek

Mitchell today met with Chin media organizations in Hakha.

In the one-hour meeting, he stressed the importance of media freedom and human rights in a democratic society, especially in ethnic areas in the context of Burma.

According to the *Hakha Post*, the US diplomat highlighted the need for media organizations to report stories about political parties contesting in the upcoming general election in a fair and unbiased manner.

Arriving in Hakha yesterday, Mr Mitchell visited the location of the Hakha Christian cross on Caarcaang Hill and the graveyard of the American Baptist missionaries to Chin State.

He also held meetings with the Chin National Front, Chin Peace and Tranquility Committee, Christian leaders, civil society groups and Hung Ngai, chief minister of the Chin State government on separate occasions yesterday.

The US ambassador took the chance to visit the Chin Christian University, recently upgraded from college status, and donated books for its library, according to Hakha-based media reports.

Mr Mitchell met with the government of Chin State today. #

## Government

### Chin State Hluttaw meeting postponed

**11 March 2015** -- The 10th regular session of the Chin State parliament has been put off to take place in the end of this month, according to sources from the State government.

Kyaw Ngein, State minister of Forestry and Mines, said it had been initially scheduled for 20 March but it would take place on 30 and 31 March.

According to the Chinland Post, Deputy Hluttaw speaker Ohn Lwin said the reasons for the postponement were because of issues related to the 2015-16 budget and the schedule for an official opening ceremony of the new Matupi-Paletwa road.

The session should be held before the first of April, the start of the new fiscal year, according to the Chin minister.

Speaker Hau Khen Kham said the session would mainly have discussion focusing on the 2015-16 budget estimates.#



### Govt promise to support disabled people in Chin State

**25 March 2015** -- Dr. Ba Maung, State minister of Social Affairs, said that the government pledged their support for the development of disabled people in the country.

Speaking at the training jointly organized in Hakha by the Department of Social Welfare and the Eden Centre for Disabled Children, the Chin minister said the new administration had put effort into improving the lives of persons with disabilities.

"We will continue to work and provide necessary assistance in finding ways for them to be equally accepted in the community," he added.

The two-day training held last Tuesday and Wednesday was aimed at increasing public awareness of persons with disabilities, and protecting

their rights and dignity.

According to the Chinland Post, the event was held in the capital of Chin State as part of the government's program to organize training on disabilities across the country.

Dr. Ba Maung indicated that the country would make good progress only if we could promote and ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with

disabilities.

Pastor Cung, a disabled leading member of the Disabled Children Development Programme in Kalay of Sagaing Region, said that children with disabilities struggled to get access to public schools.

The Chin pastor also highlighted that disabled children still faced discrimination in communities mainly because of lack of public awareness and the fact that they were not yet viewed as a full member of the society.

"We can clearly see that the government has not done enough to help people fully understand persons with disabilities. For instance, we don't have toilets or access ramps for the disabled."

Burma ratified the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, an international human rights treaty of the United Nations, on 7 December 2011.#



## Govt inaugurate new Matupi-Paletwa road

**07 April 2015** -- The government of Chin State held an official ceremony yesterday to open a new road connecting Matupi and Paletwa towns.

Deputy Union Minister of Construction Dr. Win Myint and State Chief Minister Hung Ngai, together with other Chin ministers, inaugurated the 135-mile long road at the event held in Matupi.

The new route, whose construction was reportedly

started early last year, will now serve as a link road between the north and south of mountainous Chin State sharing borders with India and Bangladesh.

Many Chins posted Facebook messages welcoming the development. Some are surprised by the fact that the new road was actually constructed while others ask if it would be tarred to make it last longer.

However, the authorities have been criticized for ignoring local farmers whose land including paddies was destroyed during the course of the road construction. #

The opening ceremony of the Matupi-Paletwa road in Chin State (Photo: Khumi Media Group)



## State govt still being centralized: Chin minister

**11 April 2015** -- The government of Chin State still functions in a highly centralized system under Thein Sein's administration, according to Minister of Transport Ngun San Aung.

The 62-year-old Chin minister indicated in a Radio Free Asia interview that the State government followed instructions from the central government for much of their work.

It was contrary to what President Thein Sein had said to members of Union level organizations, chief ministers of states and regions, and Union deputy ministers on 6 April 2011, days after the new government was formed.

According to the April 7 edition of the New Light of Myanmar, a state-run newspaper, he said that a new system and new era had emerged. So, it was required to make changes in ideas and procedures.

"Duties and responsibilities have been assigned to respective ministries and states and regions. The centralization has been reduced and governments from states and regions have been entrusted with rights and powers. They will have to take charge of their own duties."

The Chin minister said that they were not able to work freely as they wished as they had to work in accordance with directives from the Union government.

"We would be able to do much more if we worked under the direct authority of the State government," added Aung, who was appointed a minister by the Chin State legislative assembly in September 2011.

Originally from Matupi, Chin State, Aung got his Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the Rangoon Institute of Technology in 1979, and retired as State Chief Construction Engineer in Hakha. #



## Statement

### Myanmar: Protect and Promote Multilingualism

Tuesday 31 March 2015

**MEDIA STATEMENT: for immediate release**

[Yangon, Myanmar] Following the conclusion of a two-day national seminar focused on the rich diversity of languages in Myanmar, and the need to preserve, protect, and promote them, titled Continuum of the Richness of Languages and Dialects in Myanmar, the Chin Human Rights Organization issues the following statement.

Myanmar has always been a nation of rich diversity in terms of its ethnicity, languages, dialects, and cultures. Multilingualism will continue to be a hallmark of the nation. Myanmar should ensure the continuum of the richness of languages and dialects, as they represent this country's rich historicity, culture, and traditions, and the overall collective wisdom of its ancestors.

Multilingualism is an essential resource rather than a hindrance to any country. Numerous scientific studies have demonstrated that encouragement of it has many potential social and other benefits. Many countries with highly multilingual populations like Myanmar's have in the past lost their linguistic wealth, and many more in the present stand to lose their languages due to complex factors.

We, therefore, recommend that Myanmar, in its nation building process, develop a formal language policy which takes into consideration the need to:

- Guarantee the preservation, protection, and the promotion of all of its languages and dialects (as practiced by its various ethnic groups), alongside the majority language;
- Adopt multilingualism in primary, secondary, and tertiary education to adequately prepare and empower future generations to fully and equally participate in the development of the country;
- Ensure adequate institutional and financial support for the promotion of multilingualism in Myanmar.

#### About the Seminar

The Continuum of the Richness of Languages and Dialects in Myanmar, organized by the Chin Human Rights Organization at the Summit Parkview Hotel in Yangon from 25 – 26 March 2015, brought together key stakeholders from different ethnic groups, including ethnic political parties, literature and culture committees, student and youth representatives, and ethnic armed groups, as well as renowned academics from prestigious universities around the world.

The panelists presented papers exploring the rich linguistic diversity of Tibeto-Burman languages, which include Kachinic, Kuki-Chin, Mon, and Lolo-(Burmish) languages and dialects, and discussed the risk factors for language endangerment in Myanmar. The academics also explored models and theories of second language acquisition and language shift, and examined language policies in other countries, as well as models of non-State ethnic education in Myanmar in Mon and Karen States.

To arrange a media interview, please contact:

Mai Thin Yu Mon, CHRO Program Officer: +95(0)942 004 5830

Salai Bawi Lian Mang, CHRO Executive Director: +95(0)924 502 .65