

CATWALK TO THE BARRACKS

**Conscription of women for sexual slavery
and other practices of sexual violence
by troops of the Burmese military regime in Mon areas**

by

Woman and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma)

In collaboration with

Human Rights Foundation of Monland (Burma)

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Woman and Child Rights Project (Southern Burma)

The Woman and Child Rights Project (WCRP), Southern Burma, was founded in 2000 in order to monitor and protect the rights of women and children and focus international attention on Burma in order to pressure Burma's military regime to respect the rights of women and children.

WCRP's main aim is to promote and protect the rights of women and children according to CEDAW and CRC. WCRP is implementing various activities to expose how the regime and its Burmese Army are widely involved in violations of women's rights. It also seeks to educate and empower women and children to know their rights, so that they can become involved in the protection of these rights.

Objectives

- To educate women about the rights of women and children.
- To inform international organizations about violations of the rights of women and children in order to focus international attention on Burma

Activities

- Quarterly publication of *The Plight*, with news and reports on the rights of women and children (in English)
- Reports on specific issues related to the rights of women and children (such as education or health)
- Women's Journal (in Mon and Burmese)
- Women's Empowerment Workshops

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Human Rights Foundation of Monland (Burma)

The Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) - Burma is a non-governmental local human rights organization formed in 1995 by Mon students, Mon youth and community Leaders displaced from Mon areas in the lower part of Burma (or Myanmar). The main aim of HURFOM is to work for the restoration of human rights, democracy and genuine peace in Burma.

HURFOM's main activities are human rights advocacy and education to achieve the above-mentioned aim. The objectives of HURFOM are:

- To monitor the human rights situation in Mon territory and the southern part of Burma
- To protect and promote internationally recognized human rights in Burma

HURFOM produces a monthly publication *The Mon Forum*, and distributes information on the human rights situation in Mon areas and the southern part of Burma to the international community to raise international awareness in order to protect human rights in Burma according to international human rights principles.

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Executive Summary

This report exposes the ongoing and increasingly brazen use of sexual violence by Burmese Army troops in Mon areas of Burma. This is despite the ceasefire between the main Mon political party, the New Mon State Party, and the Burmese military regime, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) since 1995, and despite the regime's repeated denials during the past few years that its troops are practicing systematic sexual violence.

The report details 37 incidents of sexual violence against 50 women and girls, aged 14 to 50 years old, and reveals evidence of widespread conscription of women into sexual slavery by Burmese Army troops. Since many women are unwilling to reveal that they have been raped owing to fear of stigma and reprisals by the army, detailed information has only been collected about a small portion of the actual number of women who have been raped.

The report corroborates the findings of earlier reports on sexual violence in Shan and Karen States, showing the use of rape as a strategy of control by the junta's troops, and revealing a pattern of abuse that provides strong evidence that rape has become systemic under military rule in Burma. The lack of rule of law and climate of impunity for military rape have caused SPDC's troops to become increasingly emboldened in their acts of sexual violence.

Many rapes took place during military operations against armed groups still active in southern Burma, such as the Karen National Union and a Mon splinter group; SPDC troops gang-raped, beat, kicked, slashed and killed women as "punishment" for supporting rebel groups.

However, sexual violence is not only occurring in areas of conflict, but in "peaceful" areas under full SPDC control. The SPDC has deployed 20 more battalions in the southern Mon area since 1998; these troops have seized land from local villagers and forced them to work on military plantations and guard infrastructure projects such as gas pipelines. The increased troop presence has caused increased incidents of rape of local women.

During operations in 2003-2004 against rebels in southern Ye township, SPDC troops brazenly conscripted scores of "comfort women" from nearby villages, who were forced to work for the troops by day and were forced into sexual slavery at night. They also forced about 30 young women, including schoolgirls, to stay at their base and take part in a military "fashion and beauty show."

Over half of the documented cases of rape were committed by military officers, often in front of, or together with their troops. Many of the rapes took place in the women's homes or in other villagers' houses, frequently in the presence of other family members.

In contrast to the SPDC's claim that "effective action is taken against those who commit rape according to the existing laws of the Myanmar Armed Forces," in none of the cases in this report was legal action taken against the perpetrators of sexual violence. In most cases, the community leaders did not dare to report the incidents of sexual violence to the military battalion commanders for fear of reprisals. Those that did were scolded, beaten or threatened to be killed. In one case complainants were forced to sign a written statement pardoning the rapist.

Significantly, half of the rape cases documented in this report took place *after* June 2002, when the Shan report "Licence to Rape" first drew international attention to the Burmese regime's use of sexual violence, and UNGA resolutions on Burma began highlighting the issue. Burmese Army troops have therefore continued to flagrantly commit sexual violations in Mon areas precisely while the regime has been denying to the world that this practice exists.

It is evident that political reform is urgently needed to address the problem of military rape in Burma. Unless the system of impunity for military rape is ended, and the political problems relating to equal rights for ethnic peoples and the restoration of democracy in Burma are solved, the culture of violence

will continue to escalate, and the suffering of all civilians - including women and children - will continue.

Recommendations

The (Mon) Woman and Child Rights Project – Southern Burma (Myanmar) in collaboration with the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) make the following recommendations:

To the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)

1. To immediately stop its militarization program throughout Burma, implement a nationwide ceasefire and withdraw all Burma Army troops from the ethnic areas;
2. To fully implement the resolutions on Burma adopted by the UNCHR since 1992.

To the Royal Thai Government

1. To provide protection and allow humanitarian assistance to civilians who have fled from human rights abuses (and not just "armed conflict") in Burma, and allow UNHCR to extend its activities for the protection of the refugees from Burma who suffer from systematic persecution;
2. To continue the RTG's efforts for democratization in Burma by coordinating with Burma's immediate neighbours and other ASEAN countries, to demand that the SPDC hold genuine political dialogue with the pro-democracy opposition, including the National League for Democracy (NLD) and United Nationalities Alliance (UNA), and non-Burman ethnic nationalities.

To members of ASEAN:

1. To raise the issue of state-sponsored sexual violence in Burma with the SPDC, based on its obligations under the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN region which was signed by SPDC on June 30, 2004;
2. In order to end state-sponsored sexual violence, to use economic and diplomatic means to pressure the SPDC to begin a process of meaningful political reform, and to actively support the efforts of the UN and other key stakeholders to achieve peace, human rights and democracy in Burma.

To the international community:

1. To call for UN bodies to authorize comprehensive sanctions against the regime including an arms embargo until genuine democratic reform takes place in Burma
2. To coordinate with Burma's regional neighbours, particularly ASEAN members, to pressure the SPDC to begin a process of meaningful political reform, which will lead to a restoration of democracy and the rule of law.

Introduction

This report was compiled by the 'documentation program' of the (Mon) Woman and Child Rights Project (WCRP) – Southern Burma documentation program, with the help and collaboration of the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM). Since the WCRP was set up in 2002, it has constantly monitored the rights of women and children in the southern part of Burma (Pegu Division, Mon State, Karen State and Tenasserim Division), with the objective of exposing continuing violation of their rights by the current military regime in Rangoon (Yangon), the capital of Burma (Myanmar), even after it ratified CEDAW and CRC.

During the course of five decades of civil war in Burma, the government troops have used rape as a punishment to stop the ethnic communities from supporting the ethnic rebels. However, few records of rights violations were kept in the past and the people in the rural areas had also become accustomed to the violations.

The growth of local human rights groups and civil society organizations along the Thailand-Burma border after the 1988 pro-democracy uprising in Burma, has led to increased documentation of human rights violations, including rape. In 2002, the Shan Human Rights Foundation and Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) produced the report 'Licence to Report' that compiled information about rape cases committed by Burmese Army troops against women in Shan State between 1996-2001.¹ In 2004, the Karen Women's Organisation published "Shattering Silences," documenting incidents of rape by the Burma Army in Karen areas.²

To provide evidence that similar patterns of sexual violence are occurring in Mon areas of Burma, the WCRP has during the past few years been compiling cases of rape by the SPDC military. Some of these have been documented by the HURFOM and included in its monthly publication, "The Mon Forum". Some cases have already been released by local Mon media groups, such as the Independent Mon News Agency and Kao Wao News group, which have conducted interviews with witnesses, or sometimes directly with rape survivors. Some of the cases were also included in the report "System of Impunity" by the Women's League of Burma in 2004, which documents systematic sexual violence perpetrated by the regime's armed forces and authorities throughout Burma.³

WCRP has verified all the cases of sexual violations which are included in this report, conducting its own interviews with rape survivors and witnesses, and relying also on written records from local SPDC authorities and sources close to the New Mon State Party.

WCRP's and HURFOM's human rights documentation workers travel not only in Mon areas, but also often pass through Karen ethnic areas and receive information on sexual violations against Karen women. Therefore, this report also includes information about rape cases against Karen women (not included in "Shattering Silences").

WCRP encountered various difficulties in compiling information for the report. Owing to the strong feelings of shame associated with rape, village leaders, community members and the rape survivors often try to keep information of sexual violence to themselves. Villagers also fear repercussions by the Burmese Army if news of violations in their area is publicized. In December 2003, local SPDC battalions ordered hundreds of villagers from two Mon villages to stand in the midday sun for up to 6 hours in punishment for news of forced recruitment of porters by the Burmese Army being broadcast from the Democratic Voice of Burma on December 22, 2003. WCRP has therefore not included the real names of women or villages in the detailed cases of sexual violence, except in cases where the women have been killed.

¹ The report can be viewed at http://www.shanland.org/shrf/License_to_Rape/license_to_rape.htm

² The report can be viewed at <http://www.karenwomen.org/Reports/SHATTERING%20SILENCES.pdf>

³ The report can be viewed at http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs3/SYSTEM_OF_IMPUNITY-1.doc

Background

The Mon in Lower Burma

The Mon, members of the Mon-Khmer language family, were the first people to migrate to Burma from China, arriving in Burma over 2,500 years ago. Later, as the Burman people migrated to Upper Burma, the Mon gradually moved down to the southern part of Burma and reached the Andaman Sea⁴.

The Mon people had water and inland communication with India for several hundreds of years and developed close trade links with India. They also had similar links with Sri Lanka. Thus, the Mons brought culture, customs, administrative systems and other traditions from India, and they also received Buddhism from Sri Lanka in the 2nd Century BC⁵.

The Mon people established a kingdom in the southern part of Burma which lasted for several hundred years. They enjoyed an advanced administration system⁶, and developed their own unique culture, literature, agriculture, architecture, etc. Their civilization was based on Buddhism, and they also spread Buddhism to neighbouring countries.

Five decades of civil war

The start of Mon resistance

In 1947, when the British Government offered independence to Burma after nearly 100 years of rule in southern Burma, the Mon political leaders demanded ethnic rights for the Mon people. These demands to the Burman leaders -- to maintain Mon literature and culture, and to form a 'Mon Council' representing the Mon people -- were rejected. After Burma's independence on January 4th, the new democratic government of Burma cracked down on Mon political activities, assassinating Mon leaders, arresting and detaining them, and burning down their villages⁷.

As a result, the Mon had no choice but to take up arms like the Karen against the Burman-dominated government. During the early days of armed resistance, the Mon National Defense Organization (MNDO) and Karen National Defense Organization (KNDO) were involved in fighting against the Rangoon government.

Democratically elected governments in Rangoon were also unsupportive of political negotiations and increased the size of their armed force, the Burmese Army (BA), intensifying the war against the Mon and Karen ethnic armed resistance groups.

From 1948 until 1962, during the civil war against the Mon and Karen ethnic nationalities, human rights violations such as forced relocation, destruction of village communities, assassination of political leaders, summary killing and detention, occurred. Sexual violations against Mon women in the rural areas of southern Burma by the troops of Burmese Army also occurred, according to elderly people who had experience of that period.

⁴ The Mon: A People Without A Country by the Mon Unity League: "the Mon people arrived into Burma probably between 2500 and 1500 BC. They are close cousins of the Khmer in Cambodia."

⁵ The Mon: A People Without A Country by the Mon Unity League: The ancient monastic settlement near a Mon State town, Thaton, was founded by Indian Emperor Asoka's missionaries, which was mentioned in early Ceylonese (Sri Lankan) records as being represented at a great religious synod held in Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

⁶ The first strong Mon kingdom in Burma was well-known as 'Suwannahumi', The Golden Land, and it was situated near Thaton, in the northern part of Mon State.

⁷ Two Mon leaders from Mon Freedom League (MPF): Nai Maung Maung Gyi and Nai San Thu, were assassinated by the soldiers of Burmese Army, and Nai Shwe Kyin was arrested by the government and imprisoned for two years. Some Mon villages in Pa-an Township in Karen State were also burned down by the Burmese Army.

Intensification of civil war under Burmese military rule

The civil war gave the Burmese Army the opportunity to build up its forces under the leadership of Gen. Ne Win⁸. In early March 1962, Gen. Ne Win seized political power from the democratically elected government, having built up a strong army. The army then detained hundreds of Burman and non-Burman political leaders in order to abolish democratic institutions entirely.

The Burmese Army intensified its military offensives after its seizure of political power. From 1962 until 1970, the Burmese Army continued to expand, adopting a policy to crush all rebellion in the frontier areas. From the 1970s until 1988, the Burmese Army adopted a "four-cuts campaign" to cut civilian support (food, funds, intelligence and recruits) to the rebel armed forces.

Under this 'four-cuts campaign' thousands of ethnic civilians in the remote areas or village communities were forced to move into the Burmese Army's designated 'concentration or relocation camps' along motor-roads and near military bases, or into villages under firm Burmese Army control. During this campaign, the troops of the Burmese Army killed large numbers of civilians, burnt down their villages, forced the villagers to move without warning, destroyed food belonged to civilians, and ethnic women were raped as 'punishment' because they belonged to the same ethnic group as the rebel organizations.

Post-88 offensives and the Mon ceasefire

In late 1988, after killing thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators in cities and towns, the Burmese Army under the name of the 'State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)' reasserted political power. The Burmese Army then carried out a series of major military offensives against the ethnic armed forces along the borders with neighboring countries. After the uprising thousands of students, civil servants, Buddhist monks and civilians had fled to the border areas under the control of ethnic armed groups. The pro-democracy opposition and ethnic political parties were then able to establish alliances or political fronts. The Burmese Army's offensives aimed to suppress these political activities.

During these offensives, the troops of the Burmese Army used more terror campaigns against the ethnic people in the rural areas. In 1995, the Burmese Army had almost completely seized control of the border bases that had previously been occupied by the ethnic armed groups.

In mid-1995, the main Mon political party, the New Mon State Party (NMSP)⁹, agreed to a ceasefire with the SLORC.

Increased Burmese Army deployment, forced labour and land confiscation in Mon areas

After the NMSP ceasefire, the Burmese Army troops took the opportunity to increase military deployment into Mon areas. Since 1998, the Burmese Army has deployed over 10 Light Infantry Regiments or Battalions and an additional 10 Artillery Regiments in the southern part of Mon State especially in Thanbyzayat and Ye Townships¹⁰. The Burmese Army cited 'the possibility of foreign invasion' as the reason for setting up strategic positions along the Thai-Burma border in defense of its

⁸ Some Burman dominated political parties during the parliamentary era from 1948 to 1958 had fully supported the Generals in the Burmese Army to increase the number of troops and crush all armed struggle conducted by non-Burman political armed groups in the border areas.

⁹ The New Mon State Party (NMSP) began resistance against the Rangoon government in 1958, after the surrender of the initial Mon political party, the Mon People Front (MPF) to the central government. The NMSP was founded by the prominent Mon leader, Nai Shwe Kyin.

¹⁰ NO LAND TO FARM: A comprehensive report on land confiscation in Mon State produced by the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) describes how the military regime, SPDC, confiscated about 8,000 acres of land belonging to the Mon people, especially in Ye Township of Mon State in order to deploy new Burmese Army battalions during the period 1998-2002.

sovereignty¹¹. This has enabled Burmese Army troops to move closer and closer to NMSP-controlled areas, which had been agreed upon by both parties as ‘permanent ceasefire zones.’

As more Burmese Army battalions have been established in Mon areas, the troops have increasingly been forcing local villagers to work without pay on their army bases, constructing and maintaining the barracks, digging bunkers and trenches and erecting fences. Villagers have also been conscripted at the bases to make food, and fetch water and firewood for the troops. On top of this, the Burmese Army has been confiscating land from local farmers, and forcing villagers to work on these confiscated farms in order to raise income for their troops. 1

During the NMSP’s ceasefire talks in 1995, the military regime promised to discontinue the use of forced labour, but these promises were not kept. Under the name of its border area development project, the regime (renamed the State Peace and Development Council of SPDC in 1997) built the 110-mile-long Ye-Tavoy railway that connected Mon State and Karen State, and the Burmese Army conscripted hundreds of thousands of local ethnic Mon, Karen and Tavoyan villagers to contribute their labour until February 1998¹². Since the conscription of forced labour was ongoing, local Mon villagers became dissatisfied with the ceasefire agreement and a new Mon armed group, which did not have a proper political agenda and structure, rose up to fight against the Burmese Army. The Burmese Army’s command in southern Burma apparently felt that this small Mon splinter group could obstruct its military deployment in the area, as well as development projects such as the Yatana gas-pipeline.¹³ They therefore carried out military operations against the Mon splinter group beginning in late 1997.

Thus, while enforcing restrictions on movement of the NMSP and its armed faction, MNLA, after the 1995 ceasefire, the Burmese Army carried out full-scale military operations against the Mon splinter group and the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) in the southern part of Burma.

Effects of the civil war and militarization on women and children

In operations by the Burmese Army against resistance forces, the Burmese troops commonly target non-combat ethnic civilians in rural areas, including women, who they suspect of being relatives or wives of members of the rebel groups. For five decades, the women have suffered from summary executions, cruel and inhumane treatment, summary detention, and sexual violations including rape.

The Burmese Army has deliberately destroyed Mon villages which it suspects of being "rebel bases", causing women and children to become homeless. Normally, when the troops of Burmese Army approach an ethnic village, the men flee, leaving only women, elderly people and children in the villages. When the troops of the Burmese Army shoot into villages with artillery shells, the victims are more often than not minors. For several decades, the Burmese Army has also targeted the educational institutions of non-Burman ethnic nationalities; there has been repeated evidence of burning down of ethnic schools providing education to boys and girls in the rural areas

Due to the increased Burmese military deployment in the southern part of Mon State during the past decade, women who live near the newly deployed military bases have suffered increasingly from sexual violations and many types of harassment. When conscripted to do forced labour for the troops, they are also particularly vulnerable to abuse.

¹¹ After the Depeyin massacre on May 30th 2003, the local Burmese Army commanders in Mon State gave speeches in the basic military training schools during late 2003 predicting a possible foreign invasion of Burma like American’s invasion of Iraq.

¹² Reports on the conscription of forced labour in construction of the Ye-Tavoy railway have been published by the Mon Information Service (MIS) and the monthly publication of the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), *The Mon Forum*, during 1995 to 1998.

¹³ The multinational oil & gas companies UNOCAL (United States) and Total (France) constructed the 220-mile-long ‘Yatana Gas Pipeline’ in the area with security and protection provided by members of the Burmese Army. The gas pipeline crosses from the sea 65 miles inland through Tenasserim Division to reach the Thai border. By selling gas to Thailand, the current military regime receives about 400 Million US \$ annually.

The ongoing human rights violations have caused many ethnic villagers in rural Mon areas to become displaced. Displaced women in hiding are vulnerable to killing, rape and torture if the Burmese Army troops discover them in jungles or forests or other hidden places. Furthermore, during displacement, the local villagers cannot get easy access to food supplies, medical care and other necessities.

Many ethnic villagers, including women, have fled to the Thai border to seek refuge. According to a report produced by an international relief agency, the Thailand Burmese Border Consortium (TBBC), there are over 150, 000 ethnic refugees in Thailand's refugee camps and over 600, 000 people who are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Shan State, Kayah (Karenni) State, Karen State, Mon State and Tenasserim Division¹⁴.

Publicity gained by reports about the Burmese military's systematic use of sexual violence against women in ethnic areas during the last few years has strengthened demands for increased international pressure against the regime. Sexual violence has been an issue at all recent UN forums relating to Burma. The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burma has raised the issue in each of his special reports to the UNGA since 2002, and the UNGA Resolutions since 2002 on the situation of human rights in Burma have also raised the issue.

However, efforts to increase pressure on the regime over the issue of sexual violence have been undermined by the fact that UN agencies and international organisations based in Burma have chosen to keep silent on systematic human rights abuses by the junta's troops, including sexual violence. Furthermore, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which Burma is a member, has also kept silent in the interests of diplomatic and economic relations, although ASEAN issued a Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in June 2004.

Role of women in Mon society

Traditionally, Mon society is male-dominated, like other communities in Burma. This is partly due to the influence of Buddhism, as only men can become monks, who play a leading role in communities in the maintenance of the religion and also of Mon literature and culture.

At the same time, men were usually the main family breadwinners, working in farms and orchid plantations, etc. Since all family members mainly relied on the income from crop production in farms, the heads of the families – men – had the main role in the decision-making process in families.

It was felt that women's main responsibilities were in the kitchen and with their families. Women were expected to respect their husbands and spend most of their time at home. These centuries-long cultural norms meant that women themselves tended to accept that they should not play any role in decision-making processes in the community.

However, owing to the deterioration of the economy under military rule, the role of women has been changing. Nearly all Mon families have their own paddy-growing farms and orchid plantations and the men take responsibility to produce crops and seek income. However, after the start of military rule in Burma in 1962, government authorities collected heavy taxes on crops, causing the majority of Mon people, who are traditional farmers, to face economic hardship, like many other farmers in the whole country.

Both married and unmarried women in Mon communities have therefore increasingly been seeking various forms of employment outside their homes in order to earn income and help their parents and families. Many Mon women who cannot find work in their homes or villages or towns have been forced to migrate to neighbouring countries for work. Many of them are working for Thailand's fishing industries, construction firms, and agriculture industries where the Thai employers need manual labourers

¹⁴ Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) report: "Internal Displacement and Vulnerability in Eastern Burma, October 2004.

Even though more women have been working outside their homes and communities, their increased economic role has not yet been reflected in greater access to decision-making processes in their communities. Women continue to shun the public sphere, and are reluctant to raise issues such as sexual violence publicly. Thus, women who have suffered sexual violence tend to keep silent and feel too ashamed to expose the incidents even to their parents or other women¹⁵. It is thus certain that many sexual violations remain hidden.

Analysis of findings

This report contains documentation of 37 incidents of sexual violence committed by Burmese Army troops and authorities against at least 50 women and girls in Mon areas between 1995 and 2004. A third of the cases took place recently, in 2004.

The age range of the women suffering sexual violence was from 14 to 50 years old. Eleven were girls under the age of 18.

The incidents occurred in Ye and Thanbyuzayat townships of Mon State, Kya Inn Sei Kyi and Pa-an townships of Karen State, Yebyu township of Tenasserim Division and Pegu township in Pegu Division, involving officers and troops from 20 different battalions. These are mostly areas where armed resistance groups, such as the KNU and a Mon splinter group have continued to operate.

The report corroborates the findings of earlier reports on sexual violence in Shan and Karen States, showing the use of rape as a strategy of control by the junta's troops, and provides strong evidence that rape has become systemic under military rule in Burma

In many cases, rape was committed as "punishment" to local women for allegedly supporting the rebel armies. These incidents of sexual violence frequently involved extreme brutality, including beating, kicking, slashing with knives and scalding with hot water, sometimes resulting in death.

Evidence of the Burmese Army's open endorsement of sexual violence in Mon areas is the recent trend, during 2003-2004, to recruit scores of "comfort women" from local villages in southern Ye township for purposes of sexual slavery, and also to openly stage a "fashion and beauty show" involving sexual molestation of about 30 young women at an army base.

The fact that in over half of the cases the rapes were committed by military officers, often in front of, or together with, their troops, shows that these officers were confident that they could get away with their crimes because they are above any existing domestic laws.

Many of the cases of sexual violence occurred in the women's homes or in other villagers' houses, frequently in the presence of other family members, again indicating that the troops have become so emboldened that they feel no fear or shame at being witnessed committing rape. This is in blatant contradiction to the regime's claims that "From the point of view of tradition and culture as well as religion rape is totally unpardonable".¹⁶

There is continuing impunity for military perpetrators of sexual violence. In only eight cases, did village headmen and community leaders dare to report the incidents of sexual violence to the SPDC battalion commanders concerned, but no legal action was taken against perpetrators. In only one case were the perpetrators (members of the local pro-government militia) dismissed, but not otherwise punished. Complainants were beaten, threatened to be killed, and forced to sign written statements retracting the complaints.

¹⁵ Sexual violations against women by villagers in rural Mon villages are quite rare. Traditionally, men consider women in their communities as their 'sisters' and if a man is involved in rape and the case is exposed, the entire family or the relatives of the rapist will feel great shame.

¹⁶ Myanmar Information Committee, Information Sheet No. D-3160 (I) September 10, 2004

Owing to the climate of impunity for military rape, sexual violence is not only taking place in areas of conflict, but also in "peaceful" areas fully under SPDC control. The SPDC has deployed 20 more battalions in the southern Mon area since 1998. These troops have confiscated land from local villagers and forced them to work on military plantations and guard infrastructure, which has caused increased incidents of rape of local women.

Context of rape cases

Rape and sexual slavery as punishment for being “rebel supporters”

The context of the civil war continues to be used as justification by the Burmese Army troops for committing gross human violations, including rape, against local villagers as a means of terrorizing and exerting control over ethnic populations, to prevent them supporting ethnic resistance groups.

In spite of the fact that the NMSP reached a ceasefire agreement with the regime in 1995, and only small pockets of armed resistance remained in Mon areas, the SPDC has not desisted in terrorizing local ethnic peoples it suspects of supporting the resistance. As a result, local civilians, both men and women, have been arrested and interrogated under torture by Burmese soldiers about their contacts with the rebels. In the case of women, methods of torture included rape.

In ten of the cases documented in this report, women or girls were raped by Burmese Army soldiers who accused them or their family members of giving support to the ethnic rebels

An instance of rape being used together with other forms of torture to extract confessions from two Karen girls, took place in October 1999 in Kya-Inn-Seiky township.

The Burmese soldiers arrested 12 villagers including two women.(...) Naw B-- B-- (16 years old) and Naw M-- K-- (17 years old). These two women were married and their husbands had fled from the village to avoid being arrested by the Burmese soldiers. Thus, the soldiers said their husbands were Karen soldiers... First, after beating during interrogation, the soldiers raped these two women repeatedly. As the women denied their husbands, were rebel soldiers, the soldiers also cut Naw B-- B-- 's breasts with a knife. Because of this serious injury, the woman lost consciousness. The soldiers also poured hot water into Naw M-- K-- 's nose. Her whole face was burnt with hot water and her skin was severely damaged. Her face became totally red and severely painful. Naw M--K-- had a four-month-old baby and although she asked to feed milk to her baby, the soldiers did not allow her. Her hungry baby cried for the whole day. (Case no. 7)

In another instance a 50-year-old Karen woman accused of taking rice to rebel soldiers was killed after being gang-raped by SPDC troops in August 2000:

They accused her of sending food to the rebel soldiers. She denied this and said she had just got back from her farm, but the soldiers did not believe her. Then, a group of soldiers raped her one by one. Then, accusing her of being a relative of the rebel soldiers who made military attacks against them in the area, they killed her by stabbing her with army knives. (Case no. 11)

In several cases occurring more recently, in 2003 and 2004, after the arrest of women or girls on the allegation of links to “rebel supporters,” they were kept for periods of days up to several months for the sexual pleasure of the soldiers.

One 14-year-old girl arrested in September 2004 on the accusation that her father had contact with Mon rebels was gang-raped for several days (case no. 35). In another incident, four young women were arrested in October 2004 on suspicion of having contact with rebel groups, and then gang-raped repeatedly for several days by commanders and soldiers in the local army base (Case no. 37).

One 20-year-old woman who was 5-6 months' pregnant, was arrested after her father had been detained (and later killed) on the accusation of being a rebel agent. She was kept as a comfort woman by the troops of LIB 586 for two months (Case no. 22):

She was brought by the Burmese soldiers of LIB No. 586 and repeatedly raped by both officers and soldiers. She was mostly gang-raped by the soldiers when they launched a military operation. She was brought from one place to another by the soldiers and they raped her at night time. She was not fed with sufficient food and could not sleep for several nights... She said that she had asked the soldiers to kill her instead of raping her, but they continuously raped her. She delivered her baby prematurely after only eight months when the troops arrived at a Mon village, Yinye, about 5 kilometers from her village. After she delivered the premature baby, she was taken care of by the villagers.

Rape during conscription of women for “entertainment”

Recently, during the Burmese Army South-East Command’s military offensives against a Mon splinter group from December 2003 until May/June 2004, the Burmese Army systematically conscripted women for entertainment purposes, similar to the Japanese Army’s practice of conscripting ‘Comfort Women’ during WWII¹⁷.

Military “Fashion and Beauty Show”

There is no local tradition of holding fashion shows or beauty contests in Mon areas. However, in December 2003, the No. 3 Tactical Command led by Brigadier Myo Win ordered 15 villages in the southern part of Ye township to provide 2 to 4 pretty young *unmarried* Mon women to take part in a “Fashion and Beauty Show”, to be held in Khaw-za village, where the No. 3 Tactical Command was based.

Brigadier Myo Win, recently appointed from the Southeast Command in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, organized the fashion show, and said it was to celebrate the 46th Anniversary of Burma’s “Independence Day” on January 4, 2004¹⁸.

Selection process

Village headmen were ordered to provide young Mon women aged between 17 and 25 who were slim and tall (over 5 feet 6 inches) to take part in the show. Schoolgirls were also ordered to be recruited, if they were in 8th standard or above. Local military personnel were involved in the selection process, scouting out attractive-looking local girls and instructing the village headmen to include them in the show. As explained by a 20-year-old woman from Kyone Kanya village who was chosen to participate:

Because of my appearance (tall with a fair complexion), the Burmese Army commander and the soldiers, and the headman of the village, ordered me to participate in the “Beauty and Fashion Show” to be held by the Burmese Army in Khaw-za village. (Appendix 3, Interview #1)

The villages that were forcibly ordered to send young women to the show are as follows:

- 1) Khaw-za
- 2) Toe-tat Ywa-thit
- 3) Yin-ye
- 4) Yin-dein
- 5) Kabya-gyi
- 6) Kabya-wa
- 7) The-kon
- 8) Kyone-kanya
- 9) Mi-htaw-hla-kalay
- 10) Mi-htaw-hla-gyi
- 11) Magyi
- 12) Kyauk-I
- 13) Tayoke-taung
- 14) Shwe-hinda Ywa-thit and

¹⁷ The Mon Forum, *February 2004*, Report: Terror in Southern Part of Ye Township – Part II

¹⁸ Burma regained her Independence from Britain colony on January 4, 1948.

15) Khaw-za Chaung-wa

Villages which failed to provide young women for the Fashion and Beauty Show were liable to a fine of 150,000 kyat.

Many of the young women ordered to take part in the shows fled from their homes to avoid having to participate. In cases where the selected women fled from the villages, the village headmen were fined by the local commanders. The headmen collected money from all the families in the village, with the parents of the selected women sometimes being forced to pay more. In some villages, when the headmen could not find enough young women to take part in the show, they had to hire women from elsewhere to fill their quota.

Another two girls from my village were selected to be involved in the fashion show against their will. As the Burmese Army commander had requested four girls to be involved in the fashion contest, the village headmen had to find two girls from town (Ye Town) to take part in the fashion show. The villagers had to pay to hire these women. (Appendix 3, Interview #3)

If the women chosen did not meet the approval of the Burmese Army troops, the village headmen were forced to choose other women.

During December 2003 and January 2004, out of a total of about 400 displaced Mon villagers who arrived at Halockani Mon Refugee Resettlement Camp from southern Ye township, many were young women who had fled with or without their parents to escape from participating in the Fashion and Beauty Show. About 80% of these displaced villagers then crossed the border into Thailand to seek work¹⁹.

“Catwalk” at the army base

Prior to the actual beauty contest, the selected girls from each village were forced to spend several days and nights at the SPDC army base near Khaw Za, to practice on a “catwalk” in front of the army personnel. The girls were ordered to parade in front of the officers and troops, and some who looked too young were sent back to their villages.

“They were asked to live in the battalion for 3 days and 2 nights. During these days, the ladies were asked to rehearse on a “Catwalk” in front of them (the commander and soldiers in the battalion base) and later the commander released 2 of 4 selected girls because of their ages. These two girls were between 8th and 10 standard in their high school classes and even though they were pretty, their physical appearance was still young.” (Appendix 3, Interview #2)

While on the “catwalk” in front of the soldiers, the young women were sexually molested:

“According to the selected girls, they had to go on a ‘catwalk’ in front of the army commanders for hours. If the commanders were not satisfied, they were forced to keep walking. The commanders also came and touched their bodies and pulled at their clothes during the rehearsal.” (Appendix 3, Interview #3)

As well as parading in front of the soldiers, the women were forced to do other kinds of work while staying at the army base, and at night were forced to “entertain” the officers:

“The young women were forced to do work in the army bases, such as by cooking, carrying water and finding food for them during these rehearsal days. At night-time, they were also forced to entertain the officers of the battalion such as by massaging them, especially the commander of the battalion. Nobody knows exactly who was raped by the officers and soldiers.” (Appendix 3, Interview #2)

It was reported that about 30 women in total were forced to stay at the army base prior to the fashion show.

¹⁹ Accordingly to the estimation of the village leaders who arrived at the border area, nearly 25% of the total population in the area have left from their native villages and become displaced.

The show itself was held on January 4, 2005 at the Khaw-za Army Base. During the show, the selected women were made to parade on stage and pose in a number of ways. Finally the winners were chosen and awarded with small prizes.

Conscription of women for sexual slavery in army bases

During the military operation in southern Ye township, Burmese Army units setting up temporary bases in villages would request the headmen to provide them with several young women every day for entertainment purposes, as well as to do menial tasks for them. The villages affected were the same as those from which women were ordered to take part in the "Fashion and Beauty Show."

According to a village headman from Kyone-kanya village, who fled to a Mon refugee resettlement camp in the second week of February 2004:

They (the commanders and soldiers) asked for 3 women every day to stay (for 24 hours) at their bases. Their (temporary) bases are normally in a good house in a village or in a school close to a village. Soon after they set up their base, they asked for a television, a CD player and a generator. We had to find CDs for them to sing songs and gasoline for generators.

They took 3 women, married or unmarried, every day. They said they wanted only women under 30 years old. In their bases, they forced the women to sing songs, serve liquor to them, feed them with food, give them a massage at nighttime, and at daytime, they forced them to do work such as cooking food, carrying water, and finding fire-wood. They also threatened the women that if they fled, they would be killed.

After one night and one day, we had to send another 3 women. At first, I refused to send women to them. Then they beat me severely and said that if I didn't obey their orders, they would kill me. Therefore, I was afraid and had to approach the community women to send the women.

... After the (karaoke and drinking) party, the officers took the beautiful women and raped them

This headman said that about eighteen women from his village alone were forced to go to the military base to sing karaoke songs during the night with the military officials, while some village leaders were asked to participate in giving presents to the women. He said he did not know exactly how many women had been raped, but thought that about sixty percent of the women who were forced to stay the night in the military bases were probably raped by SPDC troops.

While serving the troops, the women were forced to drink Black Label whiskey or alcohol mixed with Star Cola juice, so that they would become drunk and more easily raped.

One of the women, 23 years old, who was raped in this way (case 23) explained that attractive women were called again and again by the soldiers to sleep in their bases, not on a rotation basis.

Some of the women who had participated in the January 4 Independence Day 'Fashion and Beauty Show' had then repeatedly been ordered by local officers to stay at their bases at night time.

Some parents who lied that their daughters were not at home when Burmese Army personnel arrived to take the women, were forced to buy expensive foreign produced liquor like Black Label, worth about 25,000 Kyats (25 US dollars) in Burmese currency as a punishment.

Rape during porter service

Several incidents of rape documented in this report took place in the context of the Burmese Army's practice of forcible conscription of porters.

During the course of the civil war in Burma, the Burmese Army troops have constantly recruited local ethnic civilians to carry food supplies and ammunition for them without payment. In areas where the SPDC and the Burmese Army exert full or partial control, village headmen are ordered to take responsibility for arranging porter recruits. But in most 'black areas', where the Burmese Army has no

control, the Burmese Army troops will arrive without warning in villages and arrest villagers, usually men, as porters. As a result, men in such areas often flee in advance when they hear that Burmese Army troops are approaching their villages. This means that the women remaining in the village are vulnerable to be conscripted as porters instead, or to suffer violations committed by the Burmese Army troops.

In one case in this report, a woman was killed when resisting attempted rape after most of the men in her village had fled from a Burmese Army patrol (Case 5).

In June 1999, when IB No. 25 troops entered Maw-khani village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division, all the men in the village except elderly people fled to escape being taken as porters. Some soldiers also climbed into many villagers' houses and looted belongings and attempted to rape women.

When a low ranking commander, Corporal Myo Myint, tried to rape Mi M-- (25 years old), she refused and fought against him. He lost his temper and killed her by stabbing her with his army knife. She died on the spot.

When women are taken as porters, they are expected to carry heavy loads during the day like men, and at night have to fear sexual violence by the Burmese soldiers. In the following case, 4 young Mon women suffered gang-rape while being forced to be porters in April 2000 (Case no. 9):

The soldiers seized 13 ethnic Mon women in the village...The age range of these women was between 23 and 60 years old, some married and some unmarried. The soldiers took these women for porter service in their military patrol for three days and three nights.

During porter service, the soldiers forced the women porters to carry about 25 kilograms of ammunition or food supplies and forced them to walk for the whole day with that weight. When the women could not walk as fast as the soldiers, they shouted, beat and kicked the women porters, treating them like the male porters who had been seized from another village...

After sunset, the soldiers grouped them in one place and let them sleep. After midnight, some soldiers came and pointed their guns at some young women and separated them from the group and some commanders raped them.

Rape during forced labour

Several cases of sexual violence documented in this report took place when women had been conscripted to do forced labour for Burmese Army troops.

The SPDC has implemented a policy in recent years to create self-reliance in each battalion of the Burmese Army. Thus, battalions in Mon areas have been confiscating farmlands or taking possession of wild lands to create their own paddy-farms or rubber plantations or fruit gardens. In farming or cultivating crops, or planting fruit trees, the Burmese Army battalions force local villagers to do this work without payment. Women who work in these agricultural work places are vulnerable to be raped or gang-raped by the soldiers.

In one incident documented in this report, a woman was raped in September 2000 while being forced with other villagers to work on a palm plantation for the local military battalion (Case no. 12):

Among the 25 villagers (forced to work), there were 12 men and the remaining 13 were women. This group of villagers worked together in the plantation for three days. Their main work was to clear the grass, dig holes and plant small palm trees. On the evening of September 23, just before the villagers were due to return home, one of the women was raped.

In the evening, at about 7 o'clock, after the group of villagers finished having dinner, the commander, Sergeant San Win told the group leader, Nai Maung Sein, that he would like to meet with Mi S-- H--, to give some tree plants to her. The leader said that it was night-time, so it was

not good to meet with the woman and he suggested he should meet her the next day. However, the commander refused, so the group leader told Mi S-- H-- to meet the Sergeant and suggested that she take another girl to accompany her.

When she arrived at the barracks, the commander ordered the other girl to stay outside the barracks, saying he wanted to meet only Mi S-- H--. Then the commander brought Mi S-- H-- to a kitchen building near the barracks, where he pushed her over and raped her.

Not only are women being forced to work on military agriculture projects, they are also sometimes forced to guard railways, motor roads, gas-pipelines, dams and other government infrastructure projects in order to protect them from sabotage by rebels.

The isolation of the guard outposts means that women conducting such duties are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence. One incident of sexual violence happened to a 17-year-old Mon woman forced to take guard duty in Ye Township in February 2003 (Case no 21):

Mi M-- P--'s household was due to take the roster for guarding the railway line and the Kanbauk-Myaingkalay gas pipeline (near the same route), but her husband had gone fishing late in the evening and he had not returned home. Therefore Mi M-- P-- took the roster on behalf of her husband. At about 12 pm, the Sergeant and one of his privates came to the hut where she was on duty.

He said: "Women don't have to perform this duty, so go home." Then Mi M-- P-- was taken along with them to return home. On the way, at Kyauk-tan village, the private walked ahead and the boss put his hand on her mouth, pushed her down and raped her.

Rape caused by Increased Military Deployment and Land Confiscation

"When there are more and more Burmese soldiers arriving into our areas, we feel this is more and more dangerous for our daughters and women"

(Mon villager from Aru-taung village, Ye Township, Mon State)

The increased deployment of Burmese Army troops in Mon areas since 1998, and the subsequent large scale confiscation of farmland by the military, has meant an increased risk of sexual violence for local women. This is because more Burmese troops have been deployed close to local communities in order to guard the confiscated farmlands.

For example, in October 2001, after the Burmese Army's South-East Command had recently confiscated lands in the northern part of Ye Township, Burmese troops from IB No. 61 in Ye town were deployed for a while in the area in order to guard the confiscated lands. One of the low-ranking commanders of these troops raped a local woman while returning drunk to his outpost one night (Case no. 14).

Another incident of sexual violence took place after the deployment of new troops from LIB No. 587 near Kun-doo village in the northern part of Ye township, where many hundreds of acres of land have been confiscated from local villagers (Case No. 19):

On July 8, 2002, three soldiers from LIB No. 587 arrested an 18-year-old Mon girl near Kun-doo village, and gang-raped her. (...)

She and her two friends (a boy and a girl) had been paying a visit to Kun-doo village. When they returned to their home in XX village, in the evening at about 4 o'clock, they met those 3 soldiers. Fearing the soldiers, they turned back to Kun-doo village. However, the soldiers followed them and dragged Mi K-- H-- into a rubber plantation. Although the boy who was with her tried to stop them, the soldiers pointed their guns at him and threatened to kill him. Then the boy ran to XX village to ask for help from the villagers.

The soldiers repeatedly raped Mi K-- H-- in the rubber plantation until she lost consciousness. When a group of villagers arrived at the scene, the soldiers had already left and they found only the unconscious and injured girl lying near a rubber tree. They then carried her back to the village.

The threat of sexual violence has been one of the means used by local Burmese Army battalions to prevent villagers from harvesting rubber or fruit from the local plantations which have been confiscated from them.

Following the confiscation by SPDC of thousands of acres of plantation land from Mon villagers during 1998-2003, some farmers and the New Mon State Party complained to the South East Command, and requested the return of the land or suitable compensation. The South East Command then agreed that the land owners would be allowed to collect fruit or tap rubber sap from their lands for three years as compensation. However, in reality, the land owners who are returning to their lands to harvest their crops are being faced by threats from the local soldiers. Some women or girls who tried to tap rubber sap early in the morning (from 1:00 a.m to 6:00 a.m.) have also faced sexual assault by the soldiers. Thus, the land owners are being denied even the concession to harvest the crops from their confiscated lands.

Continuing impunity for military rapists

In contrast to the SPDC's claim that "effective action is taken against those who commit rape according to the existing laws of the Myanmar Armed Forces,"²⁰ in none of the cases in this report was legal action taken against the perpetrators of sexual violence.

In most of the cases documented in this report, community members or village headmen did not dare to complain to the local military authorities for fear of punishment.

In only eight cases were the incidents of sexual violence reported to the SPDC military authorities, and in only one case was action taken against the perpetrators (members of the local pro-government militia), who were dismissed, but not otherwise punished. This shows clearly that the military authorities do not regard sexual violence committed by their troops as a serious crime.

Instead of seeking to ascertain the facts surrounding reported incidents of rape, the military authorities in some cases scolded family members or community leaders who had reported the incidents and warned them not to pursue the cases (Cases no 2 and no 33).

In one case the complainants were beaten (Case no. 4), and in another case, after the woman's relatives and the village chairman had complained to the local battalion commanders, they threatened to kill her (Case no. 16).

In one incident, the battalion commander gave a small amount of cash to the girl who had been raped, and then ordered her to keep silent about the case (Case no. 21).

In a recent case, in early 2004, when the parents of a girl who had been raped complained to the local army commanders for legal action against the rapist, the commanders forced the girl's father and the village headmen to sign a document pardoning the rapist instead (Case no 25).

It is thus evident that, despite the international publicity surrounding the report *Licence to Rape* in 2002, which exposed the climate of impunity for military rapists, there has been no change in policy by the SPDC to ensure punishment for perpetrators of sexual violence within their ranks.

What happens to victims?

Community responses to rape

²⁰ Myanmar Information Committee, Information Sheet No. D-3160 (I) September 10, 2004

In several of the interviews conducted for this report, family and community members actively assisted rape victims, in some cases physically intervening to stop the rape occurring. For example, villagers rushed to assist a woman raped in her house by a soldier (Case no. 2):

As she shouted for help, the villagers nearby altogether ran to help her, holding sticks, swords and spears. Sergeant Than Sein, the rapist, ran away, leaving his jungle hat and military trousers behind.

However, if many soldiers were involved, villagers would be too intimidated to intervene (Case no. 10):

Even though many villagers and the village headman knew she was being raped, nobody dared to help her because many soldiers were guarding her house compound.

Generally speaking, families and community members provided sympathy and support to rape victims, but in some cases, the survivors faced censure from their communities, who blamed the women for being raped.

For example, in the case of three young women raped by troops of LIB 586 in separate incidents in villages in Ye township in early 2004 (Cases 28-30), all three decided to flee from their villages after the incidents because they felt “blamed and despised” by local villagers. One of the women, a 17-year-old, stated that she felt too “ashamed” to cry out for help while being sexually assaulted.

Some community members accuse the women of having behaved or dressed improperly, thereby provoking the sexual abuse. Even the wife of a local village headman in southern Ye was quoted as saying that rape cases happened because the women “did not behave properly and dressed up to attract men.”

Physiological and psychological effects of rape

WCRP experienced many difficulties in conducting interviews with the rape survivors in order to identify physiological or psychological problems they were facing. Some women had been so psychologically scarred that it was impossible to talk about their ordeal.

In many cases, the pain of sexual assault had been so great that the victims lost consciousness and had to be carried, as they could not even walk.

In some cases, the victims of rape were also beaten and slashed with knives, particularly when resisting rape. One victim fainted from severe bleeding after being slashed, and had to be hospitalized (case no 13).

In one case (case no. 22), a pregnant woman who had been repeatedly gang-raped by soldiers for a period of 2 months, gave birth prematurely.

It is not common for women who have been raped to go to hospitals to take pregnancy tests or to receive medical treatment for their wounds as they are ashamed and fear stigma. They do not even dare disclose that they were raped.

Physiological symptoms following rape which victims revealed included insomnia, loss of appetite, loss of weight, and extreme fatigue.

Most of them not only suffered from depression, sadness and fear, but also no longer dared to participate in their social surroundings or community gatherings. A woman who was repeatedly raped by a group of men said that she had told them: “Kill me right away.”

In some cases the survivors of rape tried to appeal to the rapist military officers to marry them. Some women wanted to commit suicide.

Most of the raped women wanted to bring legal action against the rapists for the crimes they had committed. The lack of legal action caused increased distress and anger for the women. One woman said she felt ashamed and outraged when the military authorities not only failed to put the offender in court, but actually punished the people who had complained about the offence. In this way, the victims are doubly punished.

Some women revealed that their families and other community members had provided them with care and counseling, which helped them cope with their ordeal. However, some suffered from stigmatization following rape.

Forced to migrate to other areas of Burma

Owing to stigmatization, some women decide to leave their homes after suffering rape, moving to other villages or nearby towns where people do not know what has happened to them. During 2004, several rape victims from the southern part of Ye Township moved to Ye Town or other towns or Halockhani, the Mon refugee resettlement camp on the Thailand-Burma border.

Some women also flee their homes to prevent possible sexual abuse. When Burmese Army commanders took girls to be ‘comfort women’ at their military bases in the southern part of Ye Township during 2003-2004, many parents in villages such as Khaw-zar and Kaw-hlaing in Southern Ye Township sent their unmarried daughters away to Ye Town in order to prevent possible rape.

However, as this was the time when the Burmese Army was conducting an offensive against a Mon splinter group, there were also widespread restrictions on movement of local civilians in the southern part of Ye Township. This made it much more difficult for women to leave their villages.

According to a woman who arrived at a Mon refugee resettlement camp with her sick mother in March 2004:

We were prohibited from going out from the village. If we wanted to go out, we had to get a permission paper. As my mother was seriously ill, I had sent her to the hospital for medical treatment. I left my village saying that I had to look after my mother.

The same woman revealed that she and her mother did not dare go home for fear of arrest after leaving her village. Other families who had fled from their native villages also testified that they had to provide a very strong reason to the military authorities in order to leave their villages.

Forced to migrate to Thailand

The anti-insurgency measures conducted by the military regime and its army in Mon State, involving gross human rights violations including rape, have caused many villagers to flee their homes and head for the Thai-Burmese border.

However, travelling to the border also places women at risk of sexual violence. In one incident documented in this report (case 18), a woman who was arrested with other villagers for travelling illegally to Thailand was detained and raped by an SPDC township immigration official.

At the border, displaced villagers have sought refuge in the refugee resettlement camps or displaced villages set up by a local relief organization and a resistance group on the Thai-Burmese border²¹. However, people living in the refugee camps face a various difficulties, including a lack of sufficient food or other supplies such as blankets, mosquito nets, etc. As a result, many Mon displaced persons migrate across the border into Thailand to seek jobs, often illegally.

Displaced women, including victims of rape, who travel to Thailand to work as illegal migrant workers, are vulnerable to arrest by Thai authorities and exploitation and sexual abuse by their employers²².

²¹ The local Mon relief organization, Mon Relief and Development Committee (MRDC) set up three Mon refugee resettlement camps along Thailand-Burma border after the 1995 NMSP-SPDC ceasefire in order to resettle the Mon refugees from Thailand who were spontaneously repatriated due to pressure from the Thai authorities’ pressure and without international monitoring. MRDC also set up over 10 villages in NMSP controlled areas, to settle the families of Internally Displaced Persons who fled from conflict zones into NMSP areas. According to MRDC, there are about 40,000 IDPs in the NMSP areas.

²² Thousands of ethnic Mon migrant workers, including many women, are working in fishing industries in Thailand’s Samutsakorn, Samutprakan and Ranong Provinces and in agricultures and rubber plantations in the southern part of Thailand. Additionally, many women are also employed as housemaids in many Thai families’ households.

For example, a 15-year-old Mon girl working as a migrant worker in a fish and prawn processing factory in the Mahachai area of Samut Sakhon province was raped by her employer on July 23, 2004. She was staying in a rented apartment with her elder sister. Her employer broke into her locked room, beat her elder sister and raped her.

Similar cases of rape have happened to women working as housemaids, who have been sexually abused by the household heads or their sons. In some cases, even though the wives knew their husbands had raped their housemaids from Burma, they kept silent, believing it preferable to having their husbands visit brothels outside their homes.

Some women have been tricked by human traffickers into prostitution, and some raped by soldiers or police at the border checkpoints which they pass on the way to Thailand²³. In one of the cases in this report, (case 32), a young woman travelling with her husband to Thailand was raped by two former Burmese Army soldiers before crossing over at the Three Pagoda Pass border point.

Conclusion

Testimonies in this and other reports by women's groups of Burma provide strong evidence that sexual violence has become systemic under military rule in Burma. Lack of rule of law and the climate of impunity for military rape has caused SPDC's troops to become increasingly emboldened in their acts of sexual violence, to the extent that have been brazenly conscripting scores of women for purposes of sexual slavery.

It is clear that under the current system, no woman or girl is safe from rape and sexual slavery, regardless of their location, whether in the civil war zones, the ceasefire areas or "non-conflict" areas.

Women's groups have been reiterating that there can be no other solution to the problem of systemic sexual violence in Burma than an end to military rule. Unless the system of impunity for military rape is ended, and the political problems relating to equal rights for ethnic peoples and the restoration of democracy in Burma are solved, the culture of violence will continue to escalate, and the suffering of all civilians - including women and children - will continue.

Recommendations

The (Mon) Woman and Child Rights Project – Southern Burma (Myanmar) in collaboration with the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) make the following recommendations:

To the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC)

1. To immediately stop its militarization program throughout Burma, implement a nationwide ceasefire and withdraw all Burma Army troops from the ethnic areas;
2. To fully implement the resolutions on Burma adopted by the UNCHR since 1992.

To the Royal Thai Government

1. To provide protection and allow humanitarian assistance to civilians who have fled from human rights abuses (and not just "armed conflict") in Burma, and allow UNHCR to extend its activities for the protection of the refugees from Burma who suffer from systematic persecution;

²³ Although the SPDC's GONGO the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation has claimed that it is fighting against human trafficking, corrupt local SPDC authorities in border areas are routinely collaborating with human traffickers and profiting from taxes collected from migrant workers passing through their checkpoints.

2. To continue the RTG's efforts for democratization in Burma by coordinating with Burma's immediate neighbours and other ASEAN countries, to demand that the SPDC hold genuine political dialogue with the pro-democracy opposition, including the National League for Democracy (NLD) and United Nationalities Alliance (UNA), and non-Burman ethnic nationalities.

To members of ASEAN:

1. To raise the issue of state-sponsored sexual violence in Burma with the SPDC, based on its obligations under the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN region which was signed by SPDC on June 30, 2004;
2. In order to end state-sponsored sexual violence, to use economic and diplomatic means to pressure the SPDC to begin a process of meaningful political reform, and to actively support the efforts of the UN and other key stakeholders to achieve peace, human rights and democracy in Burma.

To the international community:

1. To call for UN bodies to authorize comprehensive sanctions against the regime including an arms embargo until genuine democratic reform takes place in Burma
2. To coordinate with Burma's regional neighbours, particularly ASEAN members, to pressure the SPDC to begin a process of meaningful political reform, which will lead to a restoration of democracy and the rule of law.

Appendix 1

no	Date of abuse	Age of woman, Ethnicity	Type of abuse	Perpetrator	Circumstance of abuse	Details	Action taken
		Township of origin					
1	Dec 3 1995	17 Karen	Rape	SPDC Capt Thein Soe, LIB 407	She was returning with other villagers from a Mon refugee camp, when a group of soldiers blocked their path	The commander accused her of being linked to Karen insurgents, then demanded she become his wife. When she refused, he threatened to kill her and raped her.	-
		Yebyu					
2	June 15 1997	27 Mon	Rape	SPDC Sgt. Than Sein, LIB 403	She was at home when a group of soldiers arrived at her village	He climbed into her house and raped her. When other villagers intervened, he ran away leaving his hat and trousers.	When villagers complained to the company officer, he just scolded them and warned them not to tell anyone.
		Kya-inn-seikyi					
3	Aug 27 1997	19 Mon	Rape	SPDC Maj Lin Maung, LIB 273	She was at home with her father when a column of troops came to her village	The troops arrested her father and beat him, accusing him of contacting Karen soldiers. The commander then pointed a gun at her and raped her in the house.	-
		Eastern Ye					

4	July 26 1998	21,26 Karen (sisters)	Gang-rape	SPDC troops from IB 61, led by Col. Than Win	The women were at home when troops entered their village	While the troops were interrogating villagers about Karen troops, a squad of soldiers arrested the two sisters and raped them repeatedly.	The headmen complained to the commander Col. Than Win, but he ignored them and had them beaten
		Yebyu					
5	June 99	25 Mon	Attempted rape, killed	SPDC Corporal Myo Myint, IB 25	She was at home when 25 SPDC troops came and looted her village	When Corporal Myo Myint tried to rape her, she fought back, so he stabbed her with his army knife, killing her on the spot.	Although this case was well-known, no action was taken against the rapist.
		Yebyu					
6	Sept 99	16 Mon	Gang-rape	SPDC troops from IB 103	She was at home when a patrol came to her house.	They pointed their gun and tied her up then raped her one by one.	The headmen were too afraid to complain to the commander
		Yebyu					
7	Oct 3 1999	16, 17 Karen	Gang-rape, torture	SPDC troops from LIB 120, led by Lt. Col Maung Maung Oo	They were in their village when SPDC troops came and accused them of being wives of rebel soldiers	The girls were beaten and raped repeatedly. The troops cut 1 girl's breasts with a knife. They poured hot water into the other girl's nose.	-
		Kya-inn-seikiyi					
8	Oct 15 1999	24 Mon	Rape, killed	SPDC Private Aung Win, IB 77	She was returning from meditating at a pagoda	The soldier raped the girl and then killed her.	-
		Pegu					
9	April 2000	n.a. (4 Mon women)	Gang-rape while being porters	SPDC troops from LIB 104	They were arrested as porters from their village	The women were made to carry heavy loads and were beaten and kicked. For 3 nights, they were repeatedly raped.	-
		Yebyu					
10	June 2000	29 Mon	Rape	SPDC Maj. Khin Soe, LIB 273	She was at home when troops came to her village	The commander raped her while many soldiers guarded the compound	-
		Ye					
11	August 2000	50 Karen	Gang-rape, killed	SPDC troops from IB 31	She was carrying rice from her farm. The troops accused her of taking it to the rebels.	A group of soldiers raped her one by one and then stabbed her to death with army knives.	-
		Kya-inn-seikiyi					
12	Sept 23 2000	28 Mon	Rape	SPDC Sgt San Win, LIB 282	She was doing forced labour for the troops.	The Sgt ordered her to come to his barracks at night and then raped her.	-
		Yebyu					

13	July 28 2001	40,50,20 Mon	Rape, Attem- pted rape	Village militia commander U Aung Win and one of his men	The women were in their houses at night.	The men climbed into the houses and raped two women, slashing them with their knives. They attempted to rape another woman.	The villagers arrested the men, and reported the case to the SPDC military, but the men were only dismissed from the militia.
		Yebyu					
14	Oct 8 2001	30 Mon	Rape	SPDC Sgt Kyaw Myint	The woman was in her farm-hut with her husband and baby.	The soldier seized her, holding a knife at her throat, then raped her. He beat her and almost killed her.	-
		Ye					
15	Jan 5 2002	20 Mon	Attem- pted rape	SPDC Sgt from LIB 343	She was in her house.	He sneaked into her house and tried to rape her, but she called for help and other villagers came and stopped him.	-
		Thanbyu- zayat					
16	Jan 17 2002	30 Mon	Rape	SPDC Sgt. Zaw Moe, LIB 851	She was coming back to her house with her son after watching TV.	He threatened her with his gun, and raped her.	Her relatives took the case to the battalion com- manders but they threatened to kill her.
		Pa-an					
17	June 7 2002	27 Karen	Rape	SPDC officer U Aung Khaing, LIB 343	She was sleeping in her house; her husband was out fishing	He came into her bedroom and raped her.	The family took the case to the village chairman, but he did not dare report it to the battalion commander
		Kya-inn- seikyi					
18	June 14 2002	22 Mon	Rape	SPDC township authority U Than Win	She was traveling to the Thai border.	She was arrested with other travelers for illegal migration. U Than Win detained her in a house and raped her.	Her parents informed intelligence officers but no news of action taken
		Ye					
19	July 8 2002	18 Mon	Gang- rape	3 SPDC soldiers from LIB 587	She was walking home with friends.	The soldiers dragged her into a rubber plantation and gang raped her till she lost consciousness.	The villagers did not dare complain to the battalion commander because they were afraid.
		Ye					

20	July 22 2002	16 Mon	Rape, killed	SPDC soldier Thein Naing, IB 62 (no. Ta- 176399)	She was preparing a meal for Buddhist monks at her grandparents' house.	The soldier raped her in the house. When her father tried to call for help, he was killed by the soldier. Other soldiers joined in the fighting, killing the girl and 3 others.	IB 62 released the news that the villagers had been killed in fighting with insurgents. NMSP lodged a complaint but to no avail.
		Thanbyu- zayat					
21	Feb 26 2003	17 Mon	Rape	SPDC Sgt. Than Hlaing of LIB 587	She was forced to take guard duty of the railway and pipeline route at night	She was told she could go home, but was raped by Sgt Than Hlaing on the way.	Her relatives complained to the SPDC Batt. commander but he told both sides to keep the case quiet and gave her a small amount of cash.
		Ye					
22	Dec 9 2003	20 Mon	Gang- rape, sexual slavery	SPDC Capt. Hla Khaing and his troops, LIB 586	She was arrested after her father was arrested on suspicion of being a rebel agent.	She was taken with the troops and gang-raped repeatedly for 2 months. She was 5-6 months pregnant and gave birth prematurely after the ordeal.	
		Ye					
23	end of Dec 2003	23 Mon	Rape, sexual slavery	SPDC IB 299 officers	She was ordered with other women to do forced labour at the army camp.	After making dinner for the officers, she (and other women) were made to massage the officers and then raped by them.	
		Ye					
24	Jan 1 2004	38 Mon	Gang- rape, sexual slavery	SPDC Lt Ngwe Soe and troops of LIB 586	She and her father were detained for interrogation about Mon rebels.	She was detained for over 3 months and raped repeatedly. She and her father had to pay 250,000 kyats for their release.	
		Ye					
25	Jan 3 2004	17 Mon	Rape	SPDC Corporal Naing Naing of 4 th military training centre of S.E.	She went to meet the Corporal believing he was in love with her.	He raped her, then threatened her and left her.	Her father and village headman complained to the commander of the training

		Thanbyu-zayat		command			centre, but they were forced to sign a document pardoning the rapist.
26	Jan 15 2004	n.a. (2 Mon women)	Rape	SPDC Lt. Thi Min Hteike, IB 61	Their house was looted by SPDC troops and they were arrested.	They were taken to the head office of LIB 586 and then raped by Lt. Thi Min Hteike.	
		Ye					
27	Jan 17 2004	21 Mon	Gang-rape	SPDC Capt. Hla Khaing and his troops, LIB 586	She was arrested after her grandparents were beaten up and accused of being rebel supporters	She was raped by the commander and then raped by his troops.	
		Ye					
28	Jan 19. 2004	20 Mon	Rape, sexual slavery	SPDC Capt Hla Khaing, LIB 586	Her father was arrested and accused of having contact with Mon rebels; she was then called to negotiate the release of her father.	Capt Hla Khaing took her into a house, drove out the owner and raped her. He raped her repeatedly for 2 days.	
		Ye					
29	Feb 14 2004	25 Mon	Gang rape	SPDC soldiers under command of Capt Hla Khaing LIB 586		The soldier threatened her with a knife gang-raped her. When she shouted for help other villagers came and rescued her.	
		Ye					
30	Feb 17 2004	17 Mon	Rape	SPDC soldier under command of Capt Hla Khaing LIB 586		The soldier raped her in her house.	
		Ye					
31	May 11 2004	20,22 Mon	Rape	SPDC Capt Nyi Nyi Lwin, LIB 586	They were in their houses.	The soldiers forced their parents out of their houses, then Capt Nyi Nyi Lwin raped their daughters.	Nobody dared complain about the cases.
		Ye					

32	Aug 10 2004	18 Mon	Rape	SPDC Sgt Tin Oo from LIB 406	She was travelling by boat near her village	He robbed the other passengers, seized her and raped her for a day and night; she had to be hospitalized	Villagers arrested him and tied him up.
		Yebyu					
33	Sept 2004	18,24 Mon	Rape	SPDC troops from LIB 282	They were at home, one was bathing in the river	In one case, the soldier raped the girl in her home, after threatening to kill the family if they shouted. In the other case, the soldier raped the woman when she was bathing, threatening to kill her.	One mother and the village headman went to meet the LIB 282 commander but he denied the incident and even shouted at them.
		Yebyu					
34	Sept 15 2004	19 Mon	Gang- rape	Ex SPDC soldiers U Soe Aung and Maung Yangon	She was her husband were trying to enter Thailand to find work.	They beat her husband unconscious then raped her.	She took the case to NMSP officers, who tried to arrest the rapists but they escaped.
		Kya-inn- seikyi					
35	Sept 04	14 Mon	Gang- rape, sexual slavery	SPDC troops from LIB 282 and 401	She was arrested as her father was accused of contact with Mon rebels	She was taken by the soldiers and gang-raped for several days.	
		Ye					
36	Sept 19 2004	14 Mon	Rape	SPDC Capt Nay Lin of LIB 409	She was at home with her mother.	He and his troops arrived in her house. He raped her, threatening her & her mother with a knife. Her hand was cut.	
		Yebyu					
37	Oct 23 2004- Nov 2 2004	16,18,18,22 Mon	Gang- rape, sexual slavery	SPDC troops from IB61	They were taken as "comfort women" for the troops who had set up base in their village	They were gang raped for several days. The commander claimed the young women had some contact with the rebel group, but in fact did not question them, only raped them.	
		Ye					

Appendix 2

Detailed Cases of Sexual Violations

Case 1

Name: Naw M-- N--
Age: 17 years
Marital status: Single
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (*to parents*)
Location: XX village, Yebyu township
Date of incident: December 3, 1995
Perpetrator: Captain Thein Soe, SPDC LIB 407

When a group of displaced villagers went back to their village from a Mon border refugee camp, they met a group of Burmese soldiers. They were blocked by the soldiers and questioned by the commander. While the commander was interrogating the displaced persons, he also raped a young woman in the group. The victim, Naw M-- N--, told her story as follows:

“When I responded to the Captain that I could not speak Burmese, he said he also was a Karen and interrogated me in Karen.

“He asked me how I was related to that old woman and the man. I answered that she was my grandmother and the man my cousin. Asked whether I knew Dah Leih (the name of a Karen commander) and his (armed) group, my answer was “no,” but he said I was a Karen and so must have known them, the Karen insurgents.

“He asked me why I had gone to live in the refugee camp, rather than in my own village. To this question, I explained that I did so because I no longer had my parents to rely on, and could not earn my own livelihood and so I had no other means except to follow my grandmother to live in the refugee camp. When the Captain asked what we were provided with in the refugee village, I answered that we got rice, prawn paste and salt. Asked what was my job, I replied slash-and-burn farming. He then said it was very tiresome work and I should live together with him, as he pitied me. Also, he continued that if I did so, I would not be in trouble and need to do such hard work and for this he would take me as a wife.

“When I responded that it would not be possible, the Captain forcefully drew me close to him and embraced me. When I struggled out from him and shouted to my grandmother for help, he said I must be killed and buried, pointing to a mattock nearby.

“Scolding me sharply that I must be quiet and not make him become bad-tempered, the Captain forcibly raped me.”

Case 2

Name: Ma T-- N--
Age: 27 years
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Location: XX Village, Kya-inn-seikyí Township, Karen State
Date of incident: June 15, 1997
Perpetrator: Sergeant Than Sein, SPDC LIB 403

On 15th June, 1997, no sooner had a company including about 30 men of LIB No. 403 arrived at XX Village, Taung-bauk Village Tract, Kya-inn-seiky Township, Karen State, when a 27-year-old Mon woman Mi T-- N--, 27, was raped. She was a mother of 2 children.

The company's Sergeant Than Sein climbed up to her house. When he found there were no men in the house, he raped her. The incident occurred even though it was day-time.

When she shouted for help, all the villagers nearby ran to help her, holding sticks, swords and spears. The rapist, Sergeant Than Sein, then ran away, leaving his jungle hat and military trousers behind.

Although the villagers submitted the case together with the items of evidence to the company officer, he just scolded them and gave them a warning not to expose the case to other people.

Case 3

Name: Mi H--
Age: 19 years
Marital status: Single
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (*to parents*)
Location: XX Village, (Eastern part of) Ye township
Date of incident: August 27, 1997
Perpetrator: Commander Maj. Lin Maung, SPDC LIB 273

On August 27, 1997, a column of Burmese Army troops from LIB No. 273 led by Maj. Lin Maung came into a Mon village, XX, in the eastern part of Ye township. The commander of the troops himself raped a girl Mi H--- (19 years old) to punish her father who was accused of contacting the KNLA's local battalion.

Soon after the troops arrived in the village, they arrested the victim's father, Nai P-- (53 years old) and tied him up in the outer open room of his house. During the interrogation, the soldiers beat him and asked him how often he had gone to meet the KNLA soldiers. The soldiers also gathered other village leaders in front of Nai P--'s house during the interrogation. While the soldiers were torturing the man, the commander, Maj. Lin Maung, went into the inner room of the house and pointed a gun at his daughter to rape her. The girl resisted and asked for help from her father, but the commander carried on and raped her. Although the father heard the suffering of his daughter, he could not help because of the gun pointed at him.

Other village headmen also heard the cries of the girl, but they could not help. After the rape, the commander came out from the inner room and said to the man that if he continued contacting KNLA soldiers, he would again be punished and his daughter would be raped.

Case 4

Name: Naw M-- T-- & Naw M-- N--
Age: 21 & 26 years old
Marital status: Unmarried (both)
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependents (on parents)
Location: XX village, Kya-inn-seiky Township, Karen State.
Date of incident: July 26, 1998
Perpetrators: SPDC troops from IB No. 61 led by Col. Than Win

On July 26, 1998, when the troops of IB No. 61 led by Col. Than Win moved from Mon State to Three Pagodas pass, a border town with Thailand, they went into a Karen village called XX on the Zami river bank and a group of soldier raped two Karen sisters.

Before the soldiers arrived at the village, they were attacked by KNLA soldiers and believed that the villagers from XX supported these rebel soldiers. They quickly entered the village and arrested all the headmen and interrogated them about why the rebel soldiers had arrived so close to their village. While the commander and some of his soldiers were interrogating the village headmen, another squad of soldiers went into a house and arrested two sisters, Naw M-- T-- (21 years old) and Naw M-- N-- (26 years old) and took them to another place. Then the group of soldiers raped them repeatedly.

The headmen also knew about the rape and complained to the commander, Col. Than Win. But he ignored the headmen and the soldiers also beat them again.

Case 5

Name: Mi Myaing
Age: 25 years
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Housewife
Location: Maw-khani village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Date of incident: June 1999
Perpetrator: Corporal Myo Myint, SPDC IB No. 25

In June 1999, when IB No. 25 troops entered Maw-khani village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division, all the men in the village except elderly people fled to escape being taken as porters. Some soldiers also climbed into many villagers' houses and looted belongings and attempted to rape women.

When a low ranking officer, Corporal Myo Myint, tried to rape Mi Myaing (25 years old), she refused and fought against him. He lost his temper and killed her by stabbing her with his army knife. She died on the spot.

This incident of attempted rape and murder was well-known to the commander of IB No. 25, but no action was taken against Corporal Myo Myint.

Case 6

Name: Mi T-- A--
Age: 16 years
Marital status: Single
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (*on parents*)
Location: XX village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Date of incident: September 1999
Perpetrators: SPDC troops from IB No. 103

In September 1999, when troops of IB No. 103 went into XX village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division, during their military patrol, some soldiers tried to rape a young girl. The young girl, Mi T-- A-- (only 16 years old) was very beautiful and the soldiers noticed her during the daytime.

In the evening, a group of soldiers discussed raping her. After sunset, the soldiers went to her house and some soldiers took her parents away at gunpoint. They then aimed their guns at her and tied her up. They raped her one by one until she lost consciousness.

As the village headmen were afraid of the battalion commander, they did not report the case to him. Therefore, the soldiers who were involved in this gang-rape were not punished.

Case 7

Name: Naw B-- B-- & Naw M-- K--
Ages: 16 & 17 years
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Housewives
Location: XX village, Kya-inn-seikyi Township, Karen State
Date of incident: October 3 1999
Perpetrators: SPDC troops from LIB No. 120, led by Lt. Col. Maung Maung Oo

On October 3, 1999, SPDC troops from LIB No. 120 led by Lt. Col Maung Maung Oo went into XX village and stayed there for one week to check who were the supporters of KNLA soldiers and wives of rebel soldiers. The Burmese soldiers arrested 12 villagers including two women.

The soldiers tortured 10 men by cutting off some of their ears, as well as beating, kicking and burning them with fire. The soldiers also tortured two women, Naw B-- B-- (16 years old) and Naw M-- K-- (17 years old). These two women were married women and their husbands had fled from the village to avoid being arrested by Burmese soldiers. Thus, the soldier said their husband were Karen soldiers. They tortured the two women cruelly.

First, after beating the two women during interrogation, the soldiers raped them repeatedly. As the women denied their husbands were rebel soldiers, the soldiers also cut Naw B-- B--'s breasts with a knife. Because of this serious injury, the woman lost consciousness. Then the soldiers also poured hot water into Naw M-- K--'s nose. Her whole face was burnt with hot water and her skin was severely damaged. Her face became totally red and severely painful. Naw M-- K-- had a four-month-old baby and although she asked to feed milk to her baby, the soldiers did not allow her. Her hungry baby cried for the whole day.

This rape and accompanying torture by the Burmese Army were apparently intended to instill fear into Karen villagers so that they would not contact KNLA troops.

Case 8

Name: Ma Kwar Nyo Thin
Age: 24 years
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (*on parents*)
Location: Pegu Town, Pegu Division
Date of incident: October 15, 1999
Perpetrator: Private Soldier Aung Win, SPDC IB No. 77

In October, 1999, during the period of communal violence between Buddhist monks and Muslims (then between Buddhist monks and SPDC authorities), SPDC put many hundreds of troops in Pegu Town, the capital of Pegu Division, surrounding many monasteries.

While the soldiers were guarding Pegu town to stop the potential riot, some soldiers also tried to rape women who worshipped at the pagodas. On October 15, a soldier, Aung Win, from IB No. 77 raped and then killed a girl, Ma Kwar Nyo Thin (24 years old), when she returned home after meditation in Shwe Kyet Yet pagoda. The soldier had apparently looked for an opportunity to rape the girl for several days, and had studied the time that the girl went to pagoda and returned.

It is speculated that the soldier killed the girl to prevent her from identifying him, because he was worried the case could be brought against him.

Case 9

Name: 4 women (names unknown)
Age range: ~ 25 to 60 years old
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmers
Location: XX village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Date of incident – April 2000
Perpetrator – SPDC troops from LIB No. 104

In April 2000, when LIB 104 led by Lt. Col Yatkha went into XX village, Yebyu Township, the soldiers tried to arrest all the men as porters. This village is a Mon village with over 500 households. However, the men, who had received advance information about the arrest, fled outside of the village and hid in forests and their plantations. Therefore the soldiers were quite angry and seized some women instead as porters from their houses.

The soldiers seized 13 ethnic Mon women in the village: Mi K-- Y--, Mi Y-- O--, Mi N--, Mi M-- T--, Mi S--, Mi T-- O--, Mi K--, Mi C--. Mi S--, Mi K--, Mi S-- and two others. The age range of these women was between 23 and 60 years old, some married and some unmarried. The soldiers took these women for porter service in their military patrol for three days and three nights.

During porter service, the soldiers forced the women porters to carry about 25 kilograms of ammunition or food supplies and forced them to walk for the whole day with that weight. When the women could not walk as fast as the soldiers, they shout, beat and kicked the women porters, treating them like the male porters who had been seized from another village. During porter service, two women, Mi K-- Y-- and Mi T-- O--, who could not manage to keep up with the soldiers, were kicked by a Sergeant.

After sunset, the soldiers grouped them in one place and let them sleep. After midnight, some soldiers came and pointed their guns at some young women and separated them from the group and some commanders raped them. About 4 women (the witness did not identify their names) were separated from the group during three nights and were repeatedly raped.

Case 10

Name: Mi K-- H--
Age: 29 years old
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Location: XX, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of incident: June, 2000

Perpetrator: Maj Khin Soe, SPDC LIB 273

In June 2000, when the troops from LIB No. 273 went into XX village, the column commander, Maj. Khin Soe, raped a Mon women, Mi K-- H-- (about 29 years old) when her husband was away. When the troops arrived in the village, the commander found her house and thought Mi K-- H-- was a widow. At night time, although the woman resisted and explained she had a husband, the commander did not listen and raped her. Even though many villagers and the village headman knew the woman was being raped, nobody dared to help her because there were many soldiers guarding her house compound.

Case 11

Name: Naw Laung
Age: 50 years old
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Location: Win-laung village, Kya-Inn-Seikyí Township, Karen State
Date of incident: August 2000
Perpetrator: Troops from SPDC IB No.31

In August, 2000, when about 60 troops of IB No. 31 launched military activities against KNLA along the Zami river in Kya-Inn-Seikyí township, Karen State, the soldiers arrested one woman, Naw Laung (50 years old) in Win-laung village. She was accused of being a rebel supporter when the soldier found her carrying rice, and they accused her of sending food to the rebel soldiers.

She denied this and said she had just got back from her farm, but the soldiers did not believe her. Then, a group of soldiers raped her one by one. Then, accusing her of being a relative of the rebel soldiers who made military attacks against them in the area, they killed her by stabbing her with army knives.

Case 12

Name: Mi S-- H--
Age: 28 years old
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Location: XX Village, Yebyu township, Tenasserim Division
Date of incident: September 23, 2000
Perpetrator: Sergeant San Win, SPDC LIB No. 282

On September 20, the army commander from LIB No. 282 asked XX village headmen to provide 25 villagers from the village to contribute free labour in growing palm trees in the plantation. The commander also instructed the village headmen that the villagers had to contribute their labour for three days from 21st to 23rd September, and they could return on 24th September. He also ordered the villagers to carry their own food. The village headmen had to send the requested villager labourers on the evening of the 20th.

Among the 25 villagers, there were 12 men and the remaining 13 were women. This group of villagers worked together in the plantation for three days. Their main work was to clear the

grass, dig holes and plant small palm trees. On the evening of September 23, just before the villagers were due to return home, one of the women was raped.

In the evening, at about 7 o'clock, after the group of villagers finished having dinner, the commander, Sergeant San Win told the group leader, Nai Maung Sein, that he would like to meet with Mi S-- H--, to give some tree plants to her. The leader said that it was night-time, so it was not good to meet with the woman and he suggested he should meet her the next day. However, the commander refused, so the group leader told Mi S-- H-- to meet the Sergeant and suggested that she take another girl to accompany her.

When she arrived at the barracks, the commander ordered the other girl to stay outside the barracks, saying he wanted to meet only Mi S-- H--. Then the commander brought Mi S-- H-- to a kitchen building near the barracks, where he pushed her over and raped her.

Case 13

Name: Mi P--
Age: 40 years old
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Housewife
Location: XX village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Date of incident: July 28, 2001
Perpetrator: Pro-SPDC village militia commander U Aung Win & one of his militiamen

Name: Ma M-
Age: 50 years old
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Housewife
Location: XX village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Date of incident: July 28, 2001
Perpetrator: Pro-SPDC village militia commander U Aung Win & one of his militiamen

Name: Mi K-- L--
Age: 20
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (on parents)
Location: XX village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Date of incident: July 28, 2001
Perpetrator: Pro-SPDC village militia commander U Aung Win & one of his militiamen

On July 28, 2001, two members of the Yapu village militia force raped two women and attempted to rape a woman in XX village, Yebyu township of Tenasserim Division, when they were drunk.

In the evening of July 28, the deputy-commander of the Yapu militia force, U Aung Win and one of his followers, went and visited their friends in XX village, which is about 10 miles away from their village. While they were with their friends, they drank a lot of local alcohol and by

midnight had become drunk, so their friends kept their guns and said they would give them back in the morning.

The two militiamen left their friends' house and tried to climb into other villagers' houses where there were only women because their husbands were away in farms or working in fruit plantations. When they climbed into these houses, they took their knives along with them.

U Aung Win's follower climbed into the house of a woman called Ma M-. He tried to rape her by pointing his sharp knife at her. When the woman refused, he cut her hands with the knife, and pointed his knife at her throat and other body parts and then raped her. She dared not cry for help for fear of being killed.

U Aung Win climbed into another house where there was only one woman, Mi P-- (about 40 years old) and tried to rape her. When she resisted the rape, he cut Mi P--'s hands, then pointed his knife at her and raped her. After the rape, she lost consciousness due to heavy blood loss. Then U Aung Win climbed into another house nearby, where there was only a young lady, Mi K--L-- (about 20 years old) and tried to rape her. When she realized the man was trying to rape her, she cried for help urgently. When he tried to stab her with the knife, she ran out of her house and escaped.

After hearing her cries, the other villagers came to help her. When they found out that the two militiamen had raped some women in the village, they went to help the other two women, Mi P-- and Ma M--. When the villagers arrived, Mi P-- had lost a lot of blood and was in a serious condition. The villagers could not stop the blood flow and they sent her urgently by truck to Yapu village for treatment.

As Ma M-- did not have serious injuries, the villagers did not take her to the medic for treatment. Then the XX villagers arrested the two rapists and sent them to Yapu village and told the military commanders about the rape cases and violence. However, the rapists did not receive any serious punishment and were simply dismissed from the militia.

Case 14

Name: Mi H-- Y--
Age: 30 years
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Location: near XX village, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of incident: October 8, 2001
Perpetrator: Sergeant Kyaw Myint, SPDC IB No. 61

On October 8, 2001, a low ranking commander of IB No. 61, Sergeant Kyaw Myint, who was responsible for the security of a bridge near XX village, about 10 miles from Ye town in the north, went to the village drunk with liquor he had looted from a shop in a village that evening.

When he returned to his temporary outpost by the bridge, he was alone and walked back in the dark. He entered a hut owned by Nai Htai on a plantation on his return journey and asked the farmers to give him 100,000 Kyat as a ransom. He said he was from a rebel group. The farmers did not believe him because of his fluent Burmese and told him that they had no money and begged him to forgive them. The Sergeant also threatened to kill them, but in the end, he agreed that the farmers had no money and told them to show him how to get to his outpost.

The farmer took him part of the way until they came to another farm-hut owned by a villager called Nai M--. The Sergeant then allowed the farmer to return home, and went into the second farm-hut, where he met Nai M--, his daughter Mi H-- Y-- and her husband Nai M-- D--. Mi H-- Y-- was about 30 years old and she had a small baby with her. The Sergeant told them the same story, that he had been sent by a rebel group and he needed 100,000 Kyat ransom from them. The farmer pleaded with him, saying they had no money on the farm to pay him. But this time, Kyaw Myint took a long knife from the farm-hut and kidnapped the woman. He added that if they didn't give him a ransom of 100,000 Kyat, he would take the woman away. He put his knife to the woman's throat and threatened to burn down their farm-hut. When he realized that he could not get the money, he took the woman with him.

About 15 minutes after leaving the farm-hut, he shoved her down onto the ground and he demanded sex from her. The woman begged him not to rape her and explained she was the mother of a baby. But the Sergeant ignored her and punched her in the stomach once and then raped her.

After the rape, he took the woman along with him down the slippery road in the dark. Whenever she could not keep her footing and fell down, the Sergeant beat her. Then, when they got near to the village cemetery, he took her in there, apparently intending to kill her. She cried and said that she would not tell anyone about the rape. He then changed his mind and took her to a deserted farm-hut.

He warned her that there were land mines in the surrounding area, and if she tried to run, she would be blown up by a mine. The woman was too frightened to run away. In the hut, he tried to rape the woman again. But the woman pretended she had a stomachache and appealed to him not to rape her again.

The hut was close to a soldiers' outpost for the security of the bridge and the Sergeant said he would go there to speak to his friends. He warned her again not to run away, saying that if she ran she would be killed by the land mines in the area. Then he left. The woman thought that if a group of soldiers came and raped her, she would also be killed so she decided to run in spite of her fear of the landmines. She was also worried about her small baby and hurried back to her farm-hut. She arrived back at her hut at about midnight.

Case 15

Name: Mi A-- C--
Age: ~ 20 years
Marital status: Single
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Mon teacher
Location: XX village, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State
Date of incident: January 5, 2002
Perpetrator: a Sergeant from SPDC LIB No. 343 (name unknown)

On January 5, 2002, a Sergeant from LIB No. 343 attempted to rape a Mon teacher, Mi A-- C--, at about 7 o'clock in the evening at XX village.

LIB No. 343 was based in XX and that evening, the army sergeant sneaked into the teacher's house while she was alone and tried to rape her. She immediately called for help, and the villagers in the surrounding area arrived in time to prevent him from committing the rape. The villagers knew that the Sergeant had been planning to rape the teacher for some days already, and so they were quick to stop his attempt. However, they did not dare to arrest him.

Case 16

Name: Mi S-- H--
Age: 30 years
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Housewife
Location: XX village, Pa-an Township, Karen State
Date of incident: January 17, 2002
Perpetrator: Sergeant Zaw Moe, SPDC LIB 851

On January 17, 2002, Sergeant Zaw Moe of LIB No. 851 raped a Mon women Mi S-- H--, when she came back from watching TV at 10:30 pm.

She was living in XX village in Pa-an Township of Karen State. When she came back after watching TV with her 7-year-old son, Sergeant Zaw Moe seized her and attempted to rape her.

Mi S-- H-- said: "Release me, or I will scream!" He said: "If you scream, I will kill you," and he showed his gun to her. She was so afraid, she did not dare scream.

People passing by were alerted by Mi S-- H--'s child, who had been left out on the road and was crying. When they stopped to ask the child what was wrong, they saw the rapist.

Mi S-- H--'s relatives reported the rape to the village chairman and then to the battalion commanders. However, when the LIB No. 851 commanders learned about the case, they threatened to kill Mi S-- H--. She therefore did not dare pursue the case.

Case 17

Name: Naw W-- Y--
Age: 27 years
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Karen
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Location: XX Village, Kya-inn-seikyí Township, Karen State
Date of incident: June 7, 2002
Perpetrator: U Aung Khaing (a low-ranking officer), SPDC IB 24

On June 7, 2002, Aung Khaing, an officer from LIB 343, attempted to rape Naw W-- Y-- (27 years old) from XX village, when her husband went fishing at night.

At 10 pm, when she was sleeping in her house, the officer came into the bedroom and raped her. She was afraid and did not dare to scream.

After he raped the woman, the officer Aung Khaing went back to his sleeping quarters. He did not think the woman would speak out about what happened. The family took the case to the village chairman, but the village chairman did not dare to report the case to the battalion commander.

Case 18

Name: Mi K-- H--
Age: 22 years
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Location: XX village, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of incident: June 14, 2002
Perpetrator: SPDC township authority U Than Win

On June 14, 2002, an official of Ye Township's SPDC immigration department raped a 22-year-old Mon woman after she was arrested by officials for illegally migrating to Thailand.

On that day, the Deputy Chief of the township immigration department, U Than Win (about 40 years old), was checking the passengers on all the trucks passing over Ye river bridge, a large bridge in the town, and arrested 23 Mon villagers who were suspected of migrating to Thailand to seek work, including 22-year-old Mi K— H—, an unmarried woman from XX village, Ye Township, Mon State.

The group of villagers, including 2 alleged traffickers, were brought by the officials and policemen to the police station to face trial. The officials also took 700,000 kyat from those traffickers and villagers. They put the 2 traffickers on trial, and the migrant villagers also needed to have their cases processed by the court.

The officials requested money for the release of these villagers. Some villagers paid bribes to the officials and then they were released. However, Mi K-- H-- could not pay in advance and appealed to pay later. But U Than Win did not accept this and brought the young women to a house and raped her for the whole night.

The next day, he released the woman and let her return her home. The woman informed her parents about the rape case and they also informed SPDC military intelligence officers based in Ye township. The MI officers then reported the case to township officials, but there has been no news of action taken against the perpetrator.

Case 19

Name: Mi K-- H--
Age: 18 years
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (on parents)
Location: XX village, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of incident: July 8, 2002
Perpetrators: Three SPDC soldiers from LIB No. 587

On July 8, 2002, three soldiers from LIB No. 587 arrested an 18-year-old Mon girl near Kun-doo village, in the northern part of Ye township, and gang-raped her.

The soldiers repeatedly raped the young girl, Mi K-- H--, until she lost consciousness. The rape incident occurred half-way between the two Mon villages, XX and Kun-doo, in the northern part of Ye Township. The native village of Mi K-- H-- is XX village.

She and her two friends (a boy and a girl) had been paying a visit to Kun-doo village. When they returned to their home in XX village, in the evening at about 4 o'clock, they met those 3 soldiers. Fearing the soldiers, they turned back to Kun-doo village.

However, the soldiers followed them and dragged Mi K-- H-- into a rubber plantation. Although the boy who was with her tried to stop them, the soldiers pointed their guns at him and threatened to kill him. Then the boy ran to XX village to ask for help from the villagers.

The soldiers repeatedly raped Mi K-- H-- in the rubber plantation until she lost consciousness. When a group of villagers arrived at the scene, the soldiers had already left and they found only the unconscious and injured girl lying near a rubber tree. They then carried her back to the village.

The villagers and the headman did not dare to inform the battalion commander, because they were afraid. They kept quiet about what had happened. Among the three soldiers, one soldier was a medic in the battalion and he was easily recognized by the boy, who reported that the other two soldiers were ordinary soldiers. LIB No. 587 had been based near that village since 2001 and it had confiscated many hundred acres of land from the Kun-doo and XX villagers.

Case 20

Name: Mi Thu Zar
Age: 16 years old
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Student
Location: Kalein-pa-daw village, Thanbyuzayat
Date of incident: July 22, 2002
Perpetrator: Thein Naing (soldier), SPDC IB No. 62

Mi Thu Zar, aged 16, was raped by Thein Naing (Army No Ta-176399) at her grandparents' house on July 22, 2002 at 4.00 a.m. local time at Kalein-pa-daw village, in Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State while she was preparing a meal for the Buddhist monks in the morning. Her father, Nai Kun Kyit, secretary of the village, went to call for help from the neighbors, but was shot and killed by the soldier. When they heard the gunshot, other SPDC soldiers outside the house began shooting into the house. They killed Mi Thu Zar (16), Daw Kun Boh (65), wife of Nai Kun Kyit, Mr Wet Tey (41), a hired worker, and Min Chit Thau (10), the grandchild of Nai Kun Kyit. The rapist, Private Thein Naing (18), was also injured.

After the incident, the local Burmese Army IB No. 62 based in Thanbyuzayat released the news that the fighting was between an insurgent group and the Burmese army. Local members of the New Mon State Party then lodged a complaint in order that formal legal action could be taken against the criminals, but there has been no confirmed information about any legal proceedings against the soldiers who committed the violations.

Case 21

Name: Mi M-- P--
Age: 17 years old
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist

Occupation: Dependent (on parents)
Location: XX village, Taung-bone village tract, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of incident: February 26, 2003
Perpetrator: Sergeant Than Hlaing, SPDC LIB No. 587

The incident occurred on February 26, 2003, at night. Mi M-- P--'s household was due to take the roster for guarding the railway line and the Kanbauk-Myaingkalay gas pipeline (near the same route), but her husband had gone fishing late in the evening and he had not returned home. Therefore Mi M-- P-- took the roster on behalf of her husband. At about 12 pm, the Sergeant and one of his privates came to the hut where she was on duty.

He said: "Women don't have to perform this duty, so go home." Then Mi M-- P-- was taken along with them to return home. On the way, at XX village, the private walked ahead and the boss put his hand on her mouth, pushed her down and raped her.

After this rape, the relatives of the victim reported the case to the battalion commander. The commander questioned both sides, Sergeant Than Hlaing and the victim, Mi M-- P--, and he then ordered that the case be kept silent after giving a small amount of cash to her.

Case 22

Name: Mi A-- L--
Age: 20 years
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (*on parents*)
Location: XX village, Ye township
Date of incident: December 9, 2003
Perpetrator: Captain Hla Khaing & his troops, SPDC LIB No. 586

In the second week of December, a woman called Mi A-- L--, 20 years old, from XX village was arrested by troops of Burmese Army's LIB No. 586 soon after her father was arrested on the accusation of being a rebel agent. Her father, Nai W--, had been arrested by the commander of LIB No. 586, Captain Hla Khaing.

She was brought by the Burmese soldiers of LIB No. 586 and repeatedly raped by both officers and soldiers. She was mostly gang-raped by the soldiers when they launched a military operation. She was brought from one place to another or one village to another by the soldiers and they raped her at night time. She was not fed with sufficient food and could not sleep for several nights.

Her father disappeared and she never found him. She believed he was killed by the soldiers.

When she arrived back at her home, she was extremely weak and ill. She said that she had asked the soldier to kill her instead of raping her, but they continuously raped her. When the soldiers arrived at her home village, they let her stay at her home for a while and then when they left for military operations, they brought her along with them again. Therefore, she was raped for over two months in total.

When she was arrested and gang-raped by the Burmese soldiers from LIB No. 586 soldiers, she was about 5-6 months pregnant. Her husband had fled to escape arrest and killing by the Burmese soldiers.

According to the latest information, she delivered a baby prematurely after only eight months when the troops arrived at a Mon village, XX, about 5 kilometers from her village. After she delivered the premature baby, she was taken care of by the villagers.

Case 23

Name: Mi K-- H--
Age: 23 years
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Farmer
Location: XX village, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of incident: end of December 2003
Perpetrators: Soldiers from SPDC IB 299

At the end of December 2003, SPDC No. 3 Tactical Command, which was conducting a military campaign in Southern Ye Township, Mon state, ordered the village headmen to send three women daily in rotation to do basic work such as cooking, carrying water, finding firewood, etc. for the military in the daytime and to be raped during the nighttime. The women from many households in XX village and six villages nearby were forced to send three women every day to the army encampment, where IB No. 299 were temporarily based.

Mi K-- H--, 23, a woman who was raped said that women were forced to do the cooking and the officers raped them during the night-time.

In the daytime they had to cook meals for them and carry water for their shower (for the officers including even low ranking officers). After having dinner, they demanded to have a massage, and when night fell, they raped the women. As the rapes happened at their bases, the women could not resist at all.

The women were changed with another 3 women on a rotation basis the next day. This conscription of 'comfort women' lasted nearly two months, during December 2003 and January 2004.

Only this woman, Mi K-- H--, confessed that she was raped while many women kept silent about what happened to them during night-time at the military base.

Case 24

Name: (not known)
Age: 38 years
Marital status: Married with one child
Ethnicity: Mon
Location: XX, Yetaungshe, Ye Township, Tenasserim Division
Date of incident: Jan 1, 2004
Perpetrators: Lt-Ngwe Soe & his soldiers from LIB 586

On the night of January 1, 2004, the 38-year-old woman and her father were taken by the army to Yaung Yae Village to be interrogated about where the Mon splinter group was. They were detained for over 3 months. While in detention, she was taken out by the soldiers during the nights, on the pretext of being interrogated, but instead she was repeatedly raped. Both were released on April 3, 2004. They had to pay 250,000 Kyats to Lt. Ngwe Soe for their release.

Case 25

Name: Mi M-- H--
Age: 17 years old
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (*on parents*)
Location: XX village, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State
Date of incident: January 3, 2004
Perpetrator: SPDC Corporal Naing Naing

On January 3, 2004, at night, a Corporal from the 4th military Training Center of SPDC's South-East Command raped a 17-year-old girl from XX village, Thanbyuzayat Township.

Corporal Naing Naing of the Military Training Center stationed at Wae-ka-li village, Thanbyuzayat Township, pretended that he was in love with Mi M-- H-- and invited her to meet him. Mi M-- H-- unsuspectingly went to the appointed place, and was raped by him.

After having been raped, Mi M-- H-- begged Corporal Naing Naing to marry her. He not only refused to marry her, but also threatened her and then left her. Some villagers who went to the rubber plantation after midnight to collect rubber sap found her crying, and took her back home.

Mi M-- H--'s father and the village headman complained to the commander of the Military Training Center about the rape, and demanded that action should be taken against Corporal Naing Naing. However, without taking any action against the rapist, the military authorities forced Mi M-- H--'s father and the village headman to sign a document retracting the accusation.

Several women in the area have been forced to run away from their work-place because the soldiers from the artillery battalion near the 4th Military Training Centre of South-East command have been attempting to rape the women workers on rubber plantations.

Case 26

Name: Mi S-- & Mi K--
Age: n. a.
Ethnicity: Mon
Location: XX Village, Ye Township, Tenasserim Division
Date of incident: Jan 15 2004
Perpetrators: Lt. Thi Min Hteike from SPDC IB 61

The soldiers from IB 61 destroyed their house, robbing 6 baskets of paddy, 2 baskets of rice, & household possessions, altogether about 5 cartloads. They were taken to the head office of LIB 586. The officer took the two girls to Nai Yun & Mi Noon's house and raped them.

Case 27

Name: Mi M-- A--
Age: 21
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist

Location: XX village, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of incident: 17 January 2004
Perpetrator: Captain Hla Khaing and his troops, SPDC LIB No. 586

On January 17, 2004, a woman called Mi M-- A-- (21 years old) from XX village was arrested by troops of Burmese Army LIB No. 586 soon after her grandmother and grandfather were beaten up by these soldiers who accused them of being rebel-supporters. She was arrested by the Burmese soldiers of LIB No. 586 and was raped by the commander Captain Hla Khaing.

When the soldiers arrested her, they said they were going to interrogate her about the rebel group. They accused her of contacting the rebel group and then raped her in Nai B-- T--'s house at 9 pm in the village. Then they released her the next morning.

Case 28

Name: Mi M-- H--
Age: 20 years old
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (*on parents*)
Location: XX village, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of incident: 19 January 2004
Perpetrators: SPDC troops from LIB No. 586 led by Captain Hla Khaing

Case 29

Name: Mi S-- W--
Age: 25 years old
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Housewife
Location: XX village, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of incident: 14 February 2004
Perpetrators: SPDC troops from LIB No. 586 led by Captain Hla Khaing

Case 30

Name: Mi Z-- T--
Age: 17 years old
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (*on parents*)
Location: XX village, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of incident: 17 February 2004
Perpetrator: SPDC troops from LIB No. 586 led by Captain Hla Khaing

Captain Hla Khaing of SPDC's 58th IB and his troops who were fighting against a Mon splinter group raped Mi M-- H--, 20, daughter of Nai S--, from XX village. Soldiers under the Captain's command also gang-raped Mi S-- W--, 25 from XX Village and Mi Z-- T--, 17, from XX village.

Other villagers who were aware of the cases have blamed the raped women. Because of this, the raped women no longer dare live in their villages and have run away to other villages. Mi M-- H--'s niece said she was taking refuge in Ye Town. People who are close to Mi S-- W-- and Mi Z-- T-- said they also were hiding in other villages in the Northern Ye area.

Captain Hla Khine arrested Mi M-- H--'s father, accusing him of having contact with the splinter Mon armed group. While the accused was being beaten in custody, the captain called Mi M-- H-- to negotiate with her about the release of her father. At night Captain Hla Khine took Mi M-- H--, who had come to meet him in the hope of helping her father, to a house, drove out the owner of the house and then raped her. He detained her for two days and raped her repeatedly.

In the case of Mi S-- W--, soldiers gang-raped her by threatening her with a knife. When she shouted for help, other villagers came to her rescue. However, the villagers who had saved her, then started blaming her, causing her to run away.

Mi Z-- T-- said she felt too ashamed to cry out for help while she was being assaulted by soldiers in her house.

Case 31

Name: Mi S--, Mi K--
Age: 20 years & 22 years old
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (on parents)
Location: XX village, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of incident: 11 May 2004
Perpetrator: Captain Nyi Nyi Lwin, SPDC LIB No. 586

During the military offensives against the Mon splinter group in the southern part of Ye Township, Captain Nyi Nyi Lwin of LIB 586 also led a military column and went into one village after another.

On May 11, 2004, when his troops arrived at XX village, southern Ye township, he raped two women from the village. After arriving at the village, he said he needed women and then climbed into two houses belonging to the parents of Mi S-- and Mi K-- on the same night. He and his soldiers forced the parents out of their homes and he then raped the two women.

As the villagers and village headmen in the area were already afraid of the Burmese Army, nobody complained about the cases.

Case 32

Name: Mi A-- M--
Age: 18 years
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (*on parents*)
Location: XX village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Date of incident: August 10, 2004
Perpetrator: Sergeant (Tin Oo) from SPDC LIB No. 406

On August 10, 2004 when a young Mon woman was traveling near her village, in Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division, she was repeatedly raped by a Sergeant from the Burmese Army's LIB No, 406, according to a source close to woman.

Mi A-- M-- an 18-year-old woman was from XX village, Yebyu Township. She was travelling with a group of 5 male villagers from her village to Mae-than-taung village by boat in the morning of August 10.

On the way, an SPDC army sergeant stopped their boat and asked them to approach the river bank. When the boat stopped, he robbed the passengers and took all their belongings. The passengers had to give him all their valuables, including gold and silver.

After the robbery, the Sergeant also took the woman, Mi A-- M-- along with him and let the boat and passengers continue on. Then he raped the woman for one day and one night. The next morning at about 10 am, he brought the young woman to the village.

The young woman was immediately brought to the clinic in the village for treatment of injuries. She was hospitalized for 3 days.

On August 12, the Sergeant came back to the village and as the villagers recognized him, they tried to arrest him. He then shot at them, injuring some of them. However, the villagers were able to arrest him and tied him up.

The incident happened near the Kanbawk area, where the US company Unocal and the French company Total are involved in exploitation of gas from the offshore 'Yadana' gas field. LIB No.406 and LIB No, 273 battalions are mainly taking responsibility for the security of the Yadana gas-pipeline area in order to prevent attacks from rebels.

Case 33

Name: Mi Y-- and Mi K-- Y--
Age: 18 & 24 years old
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependents (*on parents*)
Location: XX village Yepyu township
Date of incident: 1st Week September 2004
Perpetrator: SPDC troops from LIB No.282

Two young women from XX village, Yepyu Township of Tenasserim Division in southern Burma were raped by Burmese Army soldiers, while the troops of LIB No. 282 were temporarily based in their village. Although the villagers complained about the rapes, the LIB 282 commander denied that the incidents had occurred.

"Mi Y--, 18 years old, daughter of Daw T-- M--, was raped by a Burmese Army soldier from LIB No.282 on the night of September 3 at her house after her family was threatened to be killed if they called for help," said a witness, a local medic who had treated the victim.

"Mi K-- Y--, a 24-year-old married woman was also raped by a soldier from the same battalion from LIB No.282 when she went to the river to bathe. She was also threatened to be killed if she called for help when the soldier raped her," said the same witness.

"In the case of Ms M-- Y--, her mother told me a (low-ranking) officer of the Burmese Army climbed up to her house and told her he would like to have sex with her daughter. He offered her some money but she refused. The commander then warned that if anyone from her family

shouted for help, all of her family would be killed. The army commander then raped her daughter that night in the presence of the parents and other family members,” added the witness.

The next morning Mi Y--’s mother, Daw T-- M-- and the XX village headmen went to meet the LIB No.282 commander and complained about the rape case to him. But the commander denied that the incident had occurred. The commander also shouted at them, saying it was impossible that any of his soldiers had acted like this, said the witness.

“Even in Mi K-- Y--’s case, nobody has been able to take any action. Her family has kept silent. However if the Burmese Army does not stop its military operation against the Mon splinter groups such violations against women will not stop in this village,” said the witness. The local village has about 300 households, where the medic had set up a clinic. However, the SPDC soldiers accused the clinic of assisting the rebels, and then seized the clinic and all the supplies, worth about 800,000 Kyat.

Case 34

Name: Mi M-- M-- A--
Age: 19 years old
Marital status: Married
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Housewife
Location: Pa-laing Japan Village, Three Pagoda Pass Sub-Township, Kya-inn-seikyí Township, Karen State
Date of incident – September 15, 2004
Perpetrator – (Former) SPDC Soldiers U Soe Aung & Maung Yangon

On September 14, 2004, two former soldiers of the Burmese Army U Soe Aung (54 years old) and Maung Yangon, who had settled in a Mon village, Palaing-Japan, near the border with Thailand, raped a 19-year-old woman, Mi M-- M-- A-- from XX village of Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, while she and her friends were trying to enter into Thailand to seek work.

She and her husband Nai M-- M-- H-- (22 years old) arrived at Pa-laing Japan village in the second week of September and they found shelter at the former soldier’s house, U Soe Aung, who worked as human-trafficker.

At night, U Soe Aung and Maung Yangon let her husband drink a lot of alcohol. When M-- M-- H-- was drunk, they threatened him with a knife and beat him until he lost consciousness.

Then the two men called her out of the house and raped her. “They took me into a hut and raped me,” she said.

The wife of U Soe Aung was against this rape and explained that the men had also raped recently raped some other women who were trying to go to Thailand. Maung Yangon (not his real name, but the name given during his stay at the village) was an assistant to U Soe Aung in human trafficking deals.

After the rape, the victim took the cases to the New Mon State Party officers in the area and the NMSP soldiers also provided them with protection. Then the NMSP officers tried to arrest the two rapists but they managed to escape.

Case 35

Name: Mi C-- O--
Age: 14 years
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (*on parents*)
Location: XX Village, Ye Township, Mon State
Date of incident: 2nd Week of September 2004
Perpetrators: SPDC troops from LIB No. 282 and No. 401

In September 2004, there was a Joint Military Operation held by SPDC battalions from the South-East Command, based in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, and the Coastal Region Command in Tenasserim Division. Under this operation, LIB No. 282 and No. 104 under the command of the Coastal Region Command were allowed to launch military activities in Ye Township.

Troops from the two battalions went into one Mon village after another in order to check the activities of the Mon rebels. In the 2nd week of September 2004, the SPDC troops from LIB No. 282 and 401 arrested and raped Mi C-- O--, a 14-year-old girl, from XX village, in the southern part of Ye township. They accused her father of having contact with the Mon rebels and also accused her of knowing about this contact with the Mon rebel group.

After the arrest, the soldiers gang-raped her. The villagers could not help her because they were afraid of the SPDC soldiers. She was arrested and taken by the soldiers for several days.

Case 36

Name: Mi M--
Age: 14 years
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependent (*on parents*)
Location: XX village, Yebyu Township, Tenasserim Division
Date of incident: September 19, 2004
Perpetrators: Troops from SPDC LIB No.409 led by Captain Nay Lin

On September 19, 2004, Mi M--, a 14-year-old girl from XX village, in the southern part of Ye township, was raped by a commander from LIB No. 409, Captain Nay Lin. The rape happened when his troops were in the village in order to check the activities of a Mon splinter group in the area.

At about 10 pm on September 19, the soldiers from that battalion went into the village and the commander and some of his soldiers arrived at Mi M--'s house and threatened her and her mother with a knife. The commander then raped Mi M--. When she tried to resist, she received knife cuts in her hand.

Case 37

Name: Mi M--, Mi K-- S--, Mi T--, Mi M--
Age: 16 years, 18 years, 18 years and 22 years old respectively
Marital status: Unmarried
Ethnicity: Mon
Religion: Buddhist
Occupation: Dependents (*on parents*)
Location: XX village, Ye township, Mon State
Date of incident: October 23 to November 2, 2004
Perpetrators: SPDC troops from IB No.61

From October 23 to November 2, 2004, SPDC troops from IB No. 61 raped 4 Mon women in XX village, in the southern part of Ye township in Mon State when the troops were based at the village.

The soldiers stayed at the village for over one week. During this time, the officers and the soldiers asked the four girls (who were unmarried) to go and stay at their temporary base. Those women were gang-raped by the soldiers.

Every villager in the village knew that the young women had been raped, but no one dared complain.

However, the commander and the soldiers said to the village headmen and villagers that they suspected those girls of having contacts with the rebel group.

According to one of the victims, Mi M--, ‘All of us were repeatedly raped by the commander and soldiers in the base. They didn’t let us go home.’ The soldiers took them for several days without questioning them about the rebels but just repeatedly gang-raped them.

Appendix 3

Interviews with women who fled from villages where women were forced to take part in SPDC “Beauty and Fashion Shows”

Interview# 1

Name: Ms. Mi H-- W--
Age: 20 years old
Native village: Kyone-kanya village, southern Ye Township, Mon State

My name is Mi H-- W-- and I live in Kyone-kanya village of Ye Township. Because of my appearance (tall with a fair complexion), they (the Burmese Army commander and the soldiers including the headman of the village) ordered me to participate in the “Beauty and Fashion Show”, which was to be held by the Burmese Army in Khaw-za village via our headman.

As soon as I heard that I had been selected to be involved in the show, my parents started to worry about me and they didn’t want me to be involved in that show. So I fled from my village to the current place, here. For my village, the headman selected 2 of my friends, who are aged 18 and 22 years old. Since I had fled here, I didn’t hear about what happened later. I am also not sure whether they were involved in the show or not.

Interview #2

Name: Mi H-- L--
Age: 19 years old
Native village: Yain-dein Village, Ye Township, Mon State

I'm H—L--- from Yin Dein village of southern Ye Township, Mon State. In order to join in the “Fashion and Beauty Show” in Khaw-za village in the evening of Independence day, which was managed by the local Burmese battalion, our village headman selected 4 young Mon ladies who were tall and slim from our village to participate in the Show.

According to the order of the commander of the Burmese Army battalion, the selected girls were Mi S--, Mi T-- C--, Mi A-- T-- and Mi S-- N--. They were asked to stay in the battalion for 3 days and 2 nights. During these days, the ladies were asked to rehearse a “Cat Walk” in front of them (the commander and soldiers in the battalion base) and later the commander released 2 of the 4 selected girls because of their ages. These two girls were between 8th and 10th standard in their high school classes and even though they were pretty, their physical appearance was still young.

The young women were also forced to do work in the army bases, such as cooking, carrying water and finding food for them during these rehearsal days. At night-time, they were forced to entertain the battalion officers such as by massaging them, especially the commander of the battalion. But nobody knows who were raped by the soldiers and officers of the local Burmese Army battalion in the fashion and beauty show.

Interview #3

Name: Mi E-- W--
Age: 19 years old
Native village: Khaw-za Village,
Ye Township, Mon State

My name is Mi E-- W--- from Khaw-za village (southern part of Ye Township). As the local Burmese Army commander saw that I was tall and slim, he ordered our village headmen to include me in the “Fashion & Beauty Show”. The commander ordered all unmarried women, who were over 5 feet and 6 inches tall to be involved in the fashion show.

I did not want to be involved in the fashion show and so I fled from my village. Another two girls from my village were selected to be involved in the fashion show against their will. As the Burmese Army commander requested four girls to be involved in the fashion contest, the village headmen had to find two girls from town (Ye Town) to be involved in the fashion show. The villagers had to pay for these hired women.

It was not only women from our village, but they also asked 10 other villages to send 1 to 4 girls to the fashion show to be involved in the contest. They also told the village headmen to select even schoolgirls, but they had to be in Grades 8 to 10. I heard they selected four girls from Yin-dein village.

If the selected girls were not beautiful and too young (if they looked like children), they rejected them and forced the village headmen to select again.

Those selected girls had to go to the army base (near Khaw-za village) and stay in the base for two days and two nights for rehearsal before the fashion show actually took place.

During these days and nights, we didn't know how the commanders and soldiers treated those girls.

According to the selected girls, they had to do a 'catwalk' in front of the army commanders for hours. If the commanders were not satisfied, they were forced to keep walking. The commanders also came and touched their bodies and pulled at their clothes during the rehearsal.

There were about 30 girls in the whole area who were forced to be in army bases for several days for the rehearsal of the 'catwalk' for the fashion show. Then, (in the second week of December 2003) the commanders held a 'fashion show' contest in Khaw-za village. Girls were asked to do the 'catwalk' and posed in different styles on the stage and the commanders selected the most beautiful girl and gave them small prizes.

Besides this fashion show, the young women in many villages have been constantly forced to do work in the army bases and to entertain the commanders of Burmese Army. They asked at least three women from one village to stay at their bases for 24 hours. Those women had to do cooking, carry water and find food for them.

At night-time, the commanders forced the women to sing 'karaoke' songs together with them to entertain them. The women had to serve liquor and food for them. They also had to do massage them. Many women were raped, but I don't know the details.