

A STRUGGLE JUST TO SURVIVE

Update on the Current Situation in Karenni

An Independent Report by the Karen Human Rights Group
June 12, 1998 / KHRG #98-06

Since mid-1996 the State Law & Order Restoration Council (SLORC) military junta, now renamed as the State Peace & Development Council (SPDC), has forcibly relocated and destroyed over 200 villages covering at least half the geographic area of Karenni (Kayah) State in eastern Burma. At least 20,000-30,000 people have been displaced, forced to move into military-controlled camps where many of them have been starving and dying of disease, or to flee into hiding in the forest where they face similar suffering as well as the possibility of being shot on sight by SLORC/SPDC patrols. Some have escaped to Thailand but the vast majority are still struggling to survive in the relocation sites or in hiding in the forests near their destroyed villages. There is no sign that their situation will improve anytime soon, as the SPDC continues its campaign aiming at the complete military control of Karenni State and the obliteration of all possibilities of resistance.

*This report provides an update on the current situation in Karenni, which has been previously described in **“Forced Relocation in Karenni”** (KHRG #96-24, 15/7/96) and **“Update on Karenni Forced Relocations”** (KHRG #97-01, 5/3/97). This report is based on interviews conducted by KHRG in April and May 1998, as well as interviews (#2, 4, 6, 7, and 11) conducted and contributed by Maung Too, a human rights monitor for the All-Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF). KHRG would also like to thank the Karenni National Progressive Party and the Karenni National Women's Organisation for their cooperation and help.*

This report consists of a summary of the current situation supported by quotes from interviews, followed by the full text of the interviews. All names of those interviewed have been changed and some details omitted where necessary to protect people. False names are shown in quotes; all other names are real. At the end of the report is a list of villages that had been relocated as of 1997 and the relocation sites at that time. The number assigned to each village corresponds to the numbered dots on the map at the end of the report.

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Abbreviations

SPDC	State Peace & Development Council, military junta ruling Burma
PDC	Peace & Development Council, SPDC administration at the local level
SLORC	State Law & Order Restoration Council, former name of the SPDC until Nov. 1997
KNPP	Karenni National Progressive Party, Karenni resistance force fighting SPDC
KNPLF	Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front, Karenni resistance group which made a ceasefire deal with SLORC in 1994
KNLP	Kayan New Land Party, Karenni resistance group which has a ceasefire with SPDC
KNDA	Karenni National Democratic Army, armed group formed in 1996, reportedly by SLORC, which acts as a SLORC/SPDC militia and proxy army
KNDP	Karenni National Democratic Party, political wing of the KNDA
IB	Infantry Battalion (SLORC/SPDC), usually about 500 soldiers fighting strength
LIB	Light Infantry Battalion (SLORC/SPDC), usually about 500 soldiers fighting strength
LID	Light Infantry Division (SLORC/SPDC); one Division consists of 10 LIB battalions
Kyat	Burmese currency; US\$1=6 Kyat at official rate, 200+ Kyat at current market rate
Baht	Thai currency; US\$1 = approximately 36 Baht at time of printing
Viss	Unit of weight measurement; 1 viss = 1.6 kg / 3.5 lb
Pyi	8 small milktins of rice, weighing about 2 kg / 4.4 lb

Summary of the Current Situation

“...most of the people living in those areas are unwilling to move down to the relocation sites at Mawchi, Pah Saung and Baw La Keh. They don’t go because they can stay hidden in the jungle along the Karen State - Karenni border, so they just move around there and avoid the SPDC troops. They’re living in the jungle, they stay together with the Karenni Army there. But they’ve been doing that for almost 2 years now, so they have to face the problem of lack of food. I’m not sure about the next year, how long they can keep staying in that area by themselves without any support. They have no chance to cultivate crops, because SPDC troops are moving around in the area. All the villages are burned down now, including the churches, the schools, the entire villages. ... If they see anyone in the area, whether soldier or civilian, they shoot him dead with no questions asked. If they find people’s rice, first they take whatever they can for themselves and then they burn whatever is left. Especially in the area between the Pon and Salween rivers. There are still around five hundred people hiding in that area, staying together with the Karenni troops there. They move around and try to find some food. All they can find is some of the food that families have left behind there, but there is no more food. They have no way to keep on surviving there. Some try to flee to the [Thai] border but at the moment it is hard to travel because there are no boats to cross the rivers. Also, east of the Salween river all the way to the border there are so many SPDC troops, so the villagers are scared that they will be caught.” - “Koo Nga Reh” (M, 40+), a KNPP official describing the situation of villagers in hiding (Interview #9)

Between April and July 1996, the SLORC issued orders to at least 182 villages in Karenni (Kayah) State to relocate to military-controlled sites within 5 to 7 days. The primary intention was to bring the civilians under tighter military control and cut off any possibility of civilian support for the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP). The other resistance groups in Karenni, the Karenni Nationalities People’s Liberation Front (KNPLF), the Kayan New Land Party (KNLP), and the Shan Nationalities People’s Liberation Organisation (SNPLO), have already made ceasefire deals with the SLORC. However, the KNPP is a significantly larger and older resistance force than the others. The KNPP made a ceasefire deal with the SLORC in March 1995, but the SLORC simply used the ceasefire as cover to move its troops into offensive positions and then broke the ceasefire by launching an offensive against the KNPP in June 1996. The bulk of the forced relocations were implemented at the same time. Fighting has been ongoing ever since, despite the false SLORC/SPDC claim that the KNPP surrendered in 1996 and that there has been no fighting in Karenni since then. Currently the bulk of the fighting is in the southern part of the State, in both in the southeast and the southwest.

The villages affected by the forced relocations cover at least half the geographic area of the State and are home to at least 20,000-30,000 people. They were given no more than a week to move to the Army-specified sites, and the written orders issued to their villages stated that after that week they would be considered as enemy troops and shot on sight if seen in their villages by SLORC/SPDC patrols. After receiving the relocation orders many people fled into the forest, while others went to the specified relocation sites, unable to take anything more than their children and whatever load they could carry on their backs for the often long walk through the hills. Some of the sick and elderly had no choice but to remain behind in their villages because they were not physically capable of either fleeing or making the long walk to the relocation sites. However, the SLORC was true to its word, and shortly thereafter patrols started sweeping the

villages area by area, taking anything of value that was left and then burning all signs of habitation. Villagers caught in these areas were either forced to relocation sites or shot on sight.

At this point some people still tried to remain hidden in the forest, but most gave in to the order and moved to the relocation sites, which were scattered through the state at Shadaw, Ywathit, Mawchi, Pah Saung, Baw La Keh, and other smaller locations. As more villages were relocated, more sites were created. All were under complete control of the Army, usually located adjacent to new or existing Army bases.

In the relocation sites the Army provided nothing at first; villagers had to find materials to build their own shelters and were reliant on whatever food they had brought along with them. Within weeks many started going hungry and getting sick from lack of food and good water. In response, the SLORC officers controlling most of the sites gave permission for villagers to return to their villages for one week, as their last chance to bring food, belongings, livestock and supplies. For most villagers one week only allowed them time for one trip on foot, so it was impossible to bring back anything that would support them for very long. However, many took the opportunity to bring back whatever they could, while at least as many others used it to escape into hiding in the forest or to attempt escape to the Karenni refugee camps already existing in Thailand. They had seen what life held for them in the relocation sites, and they were determined not to go back.

In the relocation sites the situation started off badly and has only deteriorated over time. In the beginning the troops in many of the sites forced the villagers to hand over whatever rice they had brought, then rationed it all back out to everyone. This rice only lasted a short time, then most of the villagers received nothing. When more began to starve, the troops began issuing rations consisting of rice and sometimes salt. At first each person received one *pyi* [about 2 kg] of rice each 3 days, but this was soon cut back to one *pyi* per week, less than half what a person needs to survive. Currently, villagers in the relocation sites only receive this, or even less. Aid organisations and the Catholic Church [many Karenni villagers are Catholic] have attempted to provide food and other aid for the people in the relocation sites, but the SPDC will not allow them in the sites and usually insists that any aid must be given to the Army, which can then distribute it; generally when this is done in Burma the Army simply keeps the aid. It is not clear where the rice currently being issued to the villagers is coming from; it may be from the Church, or it may be from the rice which the SPDC is now forcing all farmers in Karenni to hand over for nothing. Farmers in areas which have not been forced to relocate now have to hand over at least one third of their crop to the Army, while others have been ordered to grow a second crop in dry season (which requires irrigation, is harmful to the land and threatens the main wet season crop because it prolongs the life of insects and parasites). All of this dry season crop has to be given to the Army. It is almost certain that the SPDC is either being given or stealing the rice from somewhere, because it goes against their normal practice to ever give anything to villagers in relocation sites.

“They didn’t give us enough rice. There was not enough water for all of us at Mawchi. Especially in the hot season we had to go very far to fetch water. Some people got diarrhoea due to the unclean water. We received no health care. The Burmese who called us there ought to have given us health care, but they never do that. There was a pharmacy but the villagers could not buy the medicines because they were very expensive. Some seriously ill people died because the cars [public transport on small trucks] only ran sometimes. ... If you look at the shelters [in the relocation site] you can see that they are very small and not

properly built, because it was not easy for the people to go and cut trees and bamboo. The Burmese who called us there ought to supply us with water, food and health care, but they never take care of us.” - “Paw Lweh” (F), a village headwoman who had just escaped Mawchi relocation site (Interview #4)

“Mawchi is so poor that people have nothing to eat. ... you can’t store enough rice in your home for one month, just for three days. You must keep the rest in the church and go to get some of it every three days. This is your own rice. They don’t allow the villagers to keep all their belongings in their own homes, because they accuse the villagers of supporting the Karenni army and giving food to the Karenni Army. Even in Mawchi. ... If you are in Loikaw, the capital, you can buy rice and you can eat it there, but you can’t bring rice from Rangoon to Mawchi [the SPDC won’t allow it], you can’t bring rice from Loikaw to Mawchi or to or from the areas to the east.” - “Saw Kler” (M, 20+), Mawchi town (Interview #3)

Villagers at some sites try to find paying labour just outside the camps, but the surrounding villages have already been made destitute by SPDC looting, extortion and crop confiscation so there is very little paying work to be found. Even though the villagers have little or no food to eat, the SPDC in most relocation sites refuse to allow them to cultivate any land. One exception is Nwa La Bo relocation site north of Loikaw, where permission was given for villagers to farm outside the camp; however, they had to pay 50 Kyats each time they wanted to leave the camp and permission is often suspended for various reasons, so many of the crops have failed from neglect. In Nwa La Bo the Army forces villagers to go and work in a nearby Army vegetable plantation several times a month; the soldiers tell them the vegetables are for the people in the relocation site, but the people there never see them.

“They gave only rice and salt. But they gave us a chance to find some more rice - they would let us farm outside the camp, but we had to pay for a ticket to get out. Each ticket costs 50 Kyats. Then if they heard any strange news, for example news that the rebels were close by, they wouldn’t allow us out. So we couldn’t go out to the fields and the paddy crop was destroyed. ... Sometimes they forced us to do forced labour in the Army plantation between Nwa La Bo village and Chet Kae village over one hour’s walk away. ... They forced us to carry things, dig the earth and do other things. They forced us to do that three or four times a month. The soldiers said that they were planting vegetables for the refugees [the people in the relocation sites] but we never got any of them.” - “Nyi Reh” (M, 26), Daw Leh Da village, describing Nwa La Bo relocation site north of Loikaw (Interview #2)

Most of the relocation sites have insufficient water for the people living there, and people often have to walk long distances to get water or use unclean water. Disease is a very serious problem in the relocation sites; the KNPP believes that at least 300 people have died of treatable illnesses in the sites since 1996, and the testimony of villagers who have lived in the sites appears to bear this out. Villagers who have escaped from the sites regularly state that every member of their family was sick, that at least one person in each family was sick, or that they knew of several people dying of disease every month. The major killers appear to be malaria, diarrhoea, and dysentery, though respiratory ailments, skin diseases, and almost every infection and parasite which exists in the region are also widespread. There are medical clinics in some of the relocation sites and pharmacies in some of the adjacent villages, but the clinics will only treat villagers if they can pay a cash bribe on top of having to buy their own medicines from the

pharmacies, and the medicines are extremely expensive. Most villagers in the relocation sites have no money to pay either the bribe or the price of the medicines, and many have died as a direct result of this.

“They had a hospital but if you didn’t give them money they wouldn’t treat you. Some people died because they wouldn’t treat them. In two years I saw three patients die, one old man and two children.” - “Nyi Reh” (M, 26), Daw Leh Da village, describing Nwa La Bo relocation site north of Loikaw (Interview #2)

“[At the clinic in Shadaw relocation site] they didn’t treat us very well. I saw a woman there who died when her baby was only 6 days old. They would inject one ampoule of medicine into two or three people. ... but if we paid money we could go to the medic’s house and be properly healed.” - “Klaw Reh” (M, 50), Daw Kraw Aw village (Interview #1)

Some of the relocation sites have basic schools and Buddhist monasteries, but there appears to be a policy of forbidding the construction of Christian churches. Villagers have repeatedly been denied permission to build churches in the sites, even though a large proportion of the Karenni population is Christian, primarily Roman Catholic followed by Baptist. When the forced relocations first happened, some of the Catholic priests and lay preachers from the villages were told to go to Loikaw and stay among the church representatives there rather than to the relocation sites with the other villagers.

“They built a Buddhist monastery but they didn’t give permission to build a Christian church so we couldn’t build one, and the Christians had no chance to worship.” - “Nyi Reh” (M, 26), Daw Leh Da village, describing Nwa La Bo relocation site north of Loikaw (Interview #2)

Even though the villagers are going hungry and struggling to survive, SPDC troops controlling the camps still make them do forced labour on a daily or weekly basis. The villagers are forced to build and maintain Army camps in the area, to build fences, dig bunkers, cultivate land for the Army, cut firewood, haul water to hilltop Army camps, do other general servant’s work, haul Army rations to the hilltops when they are delivered, and sometimes to go as porters with SPDC patrols, although currently the troops take many of their porters from among the prisoners in Loikaw jail. The villagers are not given any money or any extra food for this forced labour. Relocated villagers are also being used as forced labour to build at least two roads: the 96-mile road from Mawchi westward across Karen State to Toungoo, and a short road near Loikaw from the base of Infantry Battalion #269 to the village of Ye Yaw. Families in Mawchi relocation site and in the town itself have to send one person each day to work on the Mawchi - Toungoo road; families are each given an assignment and must stay at the road, eating their own food, until it is finished. This road is supposed to facilitate the transport of minerals from the Mawchi mine into central Burma. However, the road was already rebuilt once in the 1970’s, and that time it only lasted 2 months before it was destroyed by the rains. The same is likely to happen this time.

“The road from Mawchi to Toungoo is 600 feet wide [not the road itself, but the villagers must clear a wide ‘killing ground’ along both sides of the road to prevent ambush or sabotage by KNPP troops]. It is nearly finished. They started it in November 1997. Many soldiers came for this road but they don’t work on the road. There are also no machines working on the

road. One person from every house has to go every day to do it, so women and children are also going. People have to take along their own food and sleep beside the road. Every family is assigned a length of road to finish, and they must stay along the road until it is finished.” - a Karenni National Women’s Organisation representative (Interview #10)

“They forced me to become a porter. ... First we went to Shadaw by car. At first I had to carry big shells. ... I also had to carry rice and bullets. It was very heavy. The soldiers didn’t even carry their own [personal] bags, we had to carry them. They carried only guns and equipment. ... I saw older people, three or four people who were 40 or 45 years old. I also saw young people, fifteen or sixteen years old. ... they beat Aik Htun. He was 25 years old and he was a prisoner. He was beaten by a three-star Captain from Battalion #250 ... the soldiers followed him and beat him from behind because he could not carry quickly enough. They beat him on the back and on the head with a bamboo stick. He was wounded and bleeding a lot. I tried to heal him for one day [before he ran away himself]. They forced him to carry again but he could not carry anymore, and when he couldn’t carry the soldiers beat him again. ... They also beat another man, Saw Ee. They beat him on his back because he couldn’t carry anymore, because he didn’t get enough food and he was sick.” - “Sai Long” (M, 30), a Shan convict in Loikaw prison who was used as a porter by SPDC troops patrolling Karenni in early 1998 (Interview #5)

At most of the relocation sites the troops no longer guard the perimeter very tightly because the villagers have no choice but to scavenge for food outside the camp. Many villagers have taken advantage of this opportunity and fled into the forests, usually to go and live in hiding back around their old villages. They join the others still there, many of whom have already been living in hiding for close to two years now. Most of the villagers in hiding are staying in the forests somewhere near their old village. Almost all of the relocated villages have now been burned and completely destroyed by SLORC/SPDC patrols, but most villagers had some food supplies and belongings hidden in caves or small storage barns in the forest and have been able to live off of this for some time. Those who have been in hiding for any length of time have already exhausted their supplies, and are trying to live by growing small crops in parts of their long-overgrown fields, or by finding the hidden food supplies of other villagers who have long been gone in the relocation sites or in Thailand. Those in hiding have long ago exhausted whatever stable food supply they may have had, and most of them are living off the forest and going hungry. They have no access to medicines, and many have already died of disease.

“Did the people get sick while they were hiding?”

“How wouldn’t they get sick? And we couldn’t go anywhere to find medicine. But only my wife died. She died of diarrhoea. Her name was Pru Meh. When we lived in Shadaw it was worse - at least one person in each family died of disease there.” - “Klaw Reh” (M, 50), Daw Kraw Aw village (Interview #1)

The SPDC still sends patrols into the abandoned villages, area by area, seeking out Karenni forces or villagers in hiding. Many villagers stay together with groups of Karenni soldiers for some form of protection. The soldiers sometimes have limited supplies of medicine and some rations, both of which they share when possible with villagers who are particularly desperate. Villagers can only stay in small groups of two or three families to minimise the chance of detection. Those who are not staying with Karenni troops stay in small shelters in the forest, often taking turns as sentries to watch for any SPDC troops coming their way. Once in a while the patrols find their shelters and they must flee to another place, and once in a while they are seen and shot by SPDC patrols. Even if they are only wounded they are likely to end up dead, because the troops will either finish them off with a knife or leave them to die in the forest because of the impossibility of getting treatment or medicines. Despite all these difficulties, more and more villagers are choosing this way of life over the slow death of life in the relocation sites.

“I decided that if I died everything would be over and that would be better than going back, because life is very bad in the relocation site. ... The Burmese called the people who escaped to come back to the relocation site, but after we escaped we didn’t want to go back. When we were hiding there, if the Burmese ever saw some smoke [from a cookfire] they fired mortar shells at it. I was afraid because I saw many people killed by the Burmese, and we were afraid we would also be killed. ... SLORC soldiers came and when they found villagers they shot at them. We posted people as sentries, so when the SLORC were coming we always ran out of the village. We saw people shot at by the Burmese, but they didn’t die because we knew they were coming. They look on the villagers as Karenni soldiers so they just kill them. They killed many people. We were really lucky to survive this long. I’m very, very lucky.” - “Klaw Reh” (M, 50), Daw Kraw Aw village (Interview #1)

“When they found out where we were hiding we had to move, then when they found out our new place we had to move again. We had to move at least four or five times. But they didn’t find us, because if they had found us they would have killed us.” - “Klaw Reh” (M, 50), Daw Kraw Aw village (Interview #1)

In some areas, such as in the west and in the north of the state, villages were not forced to relocate because they were in areas allocated to groups which have made ceasefire deals with the SLORC/SPDC, and some villagers fled to take refuge in these areas. In particular, people from several villages fled Shadaw relocation site in 1996-1997 and took refuge in KNPLF areas near the Shan border. However, since then there have been disagreements between the SLORC/SPDC and the KNPLF, the ceasefire areas have shrunk and most of those villages have been forced to relocate. Since the beginning of 1998, villages throughout the northern tip of Karenni have been forced to relocate to sites at Nwa La Bo and other small newly-created sites in the area. The ceasefire areas no longer offer a chance of refuge.

“[T]hey started to relocate most people around the beginning of this year. They didn’t do it in the past, only this year, because this year there has been a little more KNPP troop activity in this area. So they want to relocate the people down to the main road closer to their base, where they can supervise all the villagers more closely. Their base is at Nwa La Bo. They’ve deployed their troops to control the people, watch the people and see what they are doing. They have moved people to small relocation sites at Tee Say Ka, Nwa La Bo, Myeh Nee Kaw, Tee Plaw Ku and Pao Mai. There are 3, 4, or 5 villages together at these places. ... There are

five big relocation sites and about six or seven small ones, but the small ones are difficult to count because they're always creating more of them to concentrate the villages more and more. But there are five big relocation sites: Mawchi, Pah Saung, Baw La Keh, Ywathit, and Shadaw. - "Koo Nga Reh" (M, 40+), a KNPP official, explaining the recent relocations of villages which had previously been told they could stay where they were (Interview #9)

Immediately following the biggest wave of forced relocations in June/July 1996, about 3,000 people arrived at existing Karenni refugee camps in Thailand. A few months later after the rainy season another 1,300 arrived. Since that time there has only been a slow trickle of people crossing the border into Thailand. Groups of 60 or 70 reached the refugee camps in January 1998 and then again in March. Most of these people have finally fled to Thailand because they found that there was no way they could survive any longer in the relocation sites or in hiding. They say that they didn't make the trip previously for several reasons: that they were determined to stay near their land if there was any way to survive there, that many of the sick, weak and elderly were unable to make the long trip over the hills through abandoned areas of burned and destroyed villages, that there are no boats crossing the big rivers anymore, and primarily that the SPDC has sent so many troops into the area between the Salween River and the Thai border that it is almost impossible to get through without getting caught, especially if travelling with children and the elderly. Access to the Thai border is almost completely blocked for these people.

"I didn't want to go back to Nwa La Bo and I didn't want to go to the Thai border either, so I stayed in the jungle near my village. Infantry Battalion #54 had burned down the village ... We ate wild vegetables and fruit and boiled rice for two years in the jungle. If we were sick we had no medicine to treat ourselves so we had to treat ourselves with natural medicines. Now the SPDC soldiers are trying to find us, they started coming to shoot at us very often and they also arrested some other villagers, so we fled to this refugee camp." - "Ni Reh" (M, 60), Saw So Leh village, who fled Nwa La Bo relocation site after SLORC accused him of being a KNPP member (Interview #6)

"It is very difficult to come here because Burmese soldiers block the border, but we had to try to pass. I came with a lot of people - one family from Daw Kraw Aw and two families from Daw Lay Da. If someone is lucky he can pass, if he is not he will die. I was afraid, very afraid that we would be killed. While I was coming here my mind was right outside of my body [an expression for extreme fear]." - "Klaw Reh" (M, 50), Daw Kraw Aw village, describing his flight to Thailand (Interview #1)

The current SPDC strategy for strengthening control over Karenni State includes more than the forced relocation of villagers. The regime is now attempting to divide the Karenni population against itself through the artificial creation of a new Karenni Army, the Karenni National Democratic Army (KNDA) and its political wing, the Karenni National Democratic Party (KNDP). This 'splinter' organisation was formed on November 5th 1996 and allied itself with the SLORC to fight against the KNPP. Its first significant act was to attack Karenni refugees at Camp 2 in Thailand, killing 3 refugees and wounding 9 more. The KNDA/KNDP claims to be independent, but most observers believe it has been created and completely controlled by the SLORC/SPDC from the beginning; unlike the case of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) in Karen State, there appears to have been no movement among Karenni people to

create such an army, but there is a definite SPDC strategy of using ‘proxy armies’ to do its work in any part of Burma where the opposition is not sufficiently divided. Many of the KNDA recruits have been former KNPP soldiers who left the KNPP for various reasons. They are then identified in their villages by SLORC/SPDC, approached and told that they can either join the KNDA or be arrested. The KNDA is now also demanding quotas of recruits from villages, whether they are in the relocation sites or not. Villagers who refuse to go as quota recruits after they have been selected face arrest and imprisonment. At the moment the KNDA is much smaller than it claims to be, reportedly consisting of only one or two hundred soldiers, maybe only 50 of these under arms. However, it gives the SPDC a front which can be used to attack refugee camps in Thailand and to claim that the Karenni people support the junta in Rangoon.

“They forced them [the ex-KNPP soldiers] as well as villagers to become KNDA. If the villagers obeyed and became KNDA they didn’t arrest them, but if they wouldn’t become KNDA they arrested them and sent them to prison. ... I joined the KNDA because they came and forced me to become KNDA. ... They gave me an AK [AK47 assault rifle], and I had to carry that. Before I went there I’d heard that there were four hundred soldiers in the KNDA, but when I arrived there I saw only a hundred. The Burmese control them completely. Wherever they go the Burmese follow them.” - “Nyi Reh” (M, 26), Daw Leh Da village, who was forced into the KNDA under a recruitment quota while in Nwa La Bo relocation site (Interview #2)

“The KNDA is together with them because their group was created by the SLORC. Many of them used to be KNPP soldiers, then they freely resigned from KNPP and returned to their homes, but the SLORC forced them to form a new group to attack the KNPP. That is the new strategy of the SLORC, just as they did in Karen areas [by creating the DKBA]. The KNDA is not so big, just 40 or 50 armed men. They also conscript villagers to be their troops. They always have to move together with SPDC troops because they have to be supervised by the SPDC, they cannot do anything without an order coming from the SPDC.” - “Koo Nga Reh” (M, 40+), a KNPP official (Interview #9)

The SPDC is also conducting a drive to force all villages in Karenni which have not been relocated to form SPDC-run ‘People’s Army’ [*Pyitthu Sit*] militia units. Similar units exist throughout Burma. Villages are ordered to put forward a certain number of recruits based on village size. These are then given a basic militia training, given a few weapons and ordered to guard the village against opposition groups. In other parts of Burma the villagers are usually forced by the SPDC to give rice and money to the militia members. In Karen State, village militia groups are sometimes used as cannon-fodder in SPDC attacks on the Karen National Liberation Army. In Karenni, it is still unclear whether the militia members receive any benefits or not, but most of them do it against their will. Currently the SPDC Battalions use them to obtain food, money, and forced labourers from the villagers; the local SPDC Battalion can then claim that it is not they who are making demands on the villagers, it is the villagers’ own militia.

“All the young men of the village have to join the [SPDC] militia, or else they have to join the KNDP. If you don’t do either then you’ll be sent away as a porter. So there are only three ways you can choose from: would you like to join the militia forces, would you like to join the KNDP, or would you like to be a porter for the military? Which one would you like to choose?” - “Koo Nga Reh” (M, 40+), a KNPP official (Interview #9)

There are no indications that the situation in Karenni is going to improve in any way in the near future. The SPDC has made it clear that they are unwilling to accept anything but unconditional surrender by the KNPP, and the fighting continues. It will be almost impossible for the SPDC to gain the kind of control it wants in Karenni, the kind of control it demands before it will loosen restrictions on the villagers. The only thing that can be predicted with near certainty is that the death toll among villagers will continue to rise, probably at a more rapid rate as food supplies become completely unavailable. What will happen to the people struggling to survive in the relocation sites is difficult to predict, except that many of them will probably flee into the forests while many others will die. With starvation becoming more prevalent among villagers hiding in the forest and the route to Thailand almost completely blocked by the SPDC, the situation is desperate. Even if the relocation sites cease to exist and no more villages are forced to move, it is difficult to see how the people of Karenni could start to rebuild anything in the current political situation. All the villages are destroyed, boats are prohibited from moving on the main rivers, even people in the southern town of Mawchi say they are going hungry because the SPDC prohibits the transport of food to Mawchi from Loikaw or anywhere else, other than rations for the soldiers, mine workers and civil servants. People can barely move anywhere in Karenni without the risk of being arrested or simply shot on sight. Fundamental political change in Burma appears to hold the only hope, albeit remote, for these people.

“In Mawchi it is difficult to eat because no trucks carrying dried foods are allowed to travel between Loikaw and Mawchi. People are not allowed to grow food in the [relocation] camp, and the available food is reserved for the people who work in the mine and for the civil servants, not for the villagers. No permission is given to bring in food [from other areas]. Some people have paddy rice hidden in the forest but if the SPDC troops see them going into the forest they shoot them. In March this year one woman tried to go. She was captured by the Army and tied to a tree. She stayed there for three days and had already died when the Karenni soldiers found her and untied her.” - a Karenni National Women’s Organisation representative (Interview #10)

“Some are starving to death. Many people die of sickness, especially in the rainy season from malaria and diarrhoea. They are also forced to work for the military doing things like carrying water, cutting bamboo, making fences and collecting firewood for the Army. Especially in the Second District, the Army goes to fight almost every week so the people are forced to carry their supplies and ammunition, and many people die as porters at the frontline. Now a lot of people who stay in the relocation sites are forced to be militia too, but not only people in the relocation sites have to do that. People from other villages are forced to do that too.” - “Saw Kler” (M, 20+), Mawchi town, describing conditions in Mawchi relocation site (Interview #3)

Index of Interviews

Note: All names of those interviewed have been changed.

FR = Forced Relocation, RS = Relocation Site, FL = Forced Labour.

#	Pg.	Name	Sex	Age	Village	Subject
1	13	"Klaw Reh"	M	33	Daw Kraw Aw	Destruction of his village in 1996, life at Shadaw RS, sickness at RS, Shadaw clinic, returning to village to get food, staying in hiding, hunted by SLORC/SPDC, death of his wife from disease, caring for his 8 month old baby, dangerous flight to Thailand
2	15	"Nyi Reh"	M	26	Daw Leh Da	FR to Nwa La Bo, 2 years in Nwa La Bo RS, food shortages, medical clinic, no permission to build a church, FL at Army plantation, forced recruitment to KNDA, control of KNDA by SLORC/SPDC, escape from Nwa La Bo, flight to Thailand
3	16	"Saw Kler"	M	20+	Mawchi town	Poverty in Mawchi, SPDC forbidding villagers from keeping food under suspicion they will give it to KNPP, prohibition on transporting food to Mawchi, starvation, disease, and FL in Mawchi RS, FL on Mawchi-Toungoo road
4	17	"Paw Lweh"	F		Mawchi RS	Fear of rape while in Mawchi RS, lack of food and water, sickness, SPDC refusal to provide health care, poor quality of shelters in RS
5	18	"Sai Long"	M	30	Loikaw township	Shan arrested for carrying opium without paying SLORC opium tax in 1994, sentenced to 10 years in Loikaw jail, living conditions in Loikaw jail, illness and deaths, women and children prisoners, taken to be a porter in early 1998, carrying shells through Karenni area, beatings of porters, escape to Karenni Army
6	20	"Naw Wah"	F	40	Saw So Leh	FR to Nwa La Bo, lack of food and medicines, "Ni
		"Ni Reh"	M	60	Saw So Leh	Reh" accused of being KNPP, flight to jungle, village already burned, hid in jungle for 2 years, children suffering hunger and no school, SPDC troops hunting villagers more so had to flee to Thailand
7	21	"Mi Su"	F	25	Su Leh	FR to Nwa La Bo, no food so fled, mother and sister arrested, village already burned, hid in forest for 2 years and got tuberculosis, fled to Thailand
8	21	"Baw Reh"	M	47	Daw Kraw Aw	FR to Shadaw, returning to village to get belongings, villagers shot at by SLORC troops, wife and children all sick in Shadaw RS, flight into hiding in his village, deaths of disease, flight to Thailand, encounter with SLORC troops and 2 villagers killed on the way
9	23	"Koo Nga Reh"	M	40+		KNPP official describing life in relocation sites, lack of food and deaths of disease, new FR in northern Karenni, difficulties of villagers in hiding, SPDC/Thai logging, FL on roads, KNDA, forced recruitment to SPDC militias, convict labour
10	26	KNWO				Karenni National Women's Organisation member describes food shortages and killings in Mawchi, Mawchi mine, FL on Mawchi-Toungoo road, FL at Army camps; also KNWO report on arrests, FL and demands for building materials for new Army camps
11	29	Monitors				Field reports collected by human rights monitors; FR and village burning in March 1998, rapes and killings

including rape and murder of children

Interviews and Field Reports

#1.

NAME: "Klaw Reh"

SEX: M

AGE: 50

Kayah Animist farmer

FAMILY: Widower, 9 children but 6 of them already died, 3 surviving children aged 1-15

ADDRESS: Daw Kraw Aw village (#72), Shadaw township
29/4/98

INTERVIEWED:

["Klaw Reh" was interviewed in a refugee camp in Thailand.]

Q: When did you arrive here?

A: I don't know the date, but since then we've been given rice two times *[meaning he's been there one or two months]*. We came because the SLORC burned all our houses and our barns and they killed all our animals. We didn't have any house so we couldn't stay anywhere. We had no food and we didn't want to die. I am too old, I can't resist the SLORC.

Q: When and how was your village ordered to move?

A: June 1996 - they sent a letter. When we arrived there *[at Shadaw relocation site]* they just gave us very little food and the rice was not good. We had to work for them two or three times a week, for the whole day each time. We couldn't enjoy our food *[i.e. they did not have enough and they were too tired and depressed to enjoy the bad food they had]*. We saw a lot of people dying when we stayed in the relocation place. We couldn't bear it, that is why we escaped from there; but not all of us, only some. Some still stay in the relocation site.

Q: Was there a clinic in Shadaw?

A: Yes, but they didn't treat us very well. I saw a woman there who died when her baby was only 6 days old. They would inject one ampoule of medicine into two or three people. We didn't need to pay money for the injection, but if we paid money we could go to the medic's house and be properly healed.

Q: How long did you stay in Shadaw?

A: Two months. I stayed there but we didn't have enough food, and then the Burmese told us to go back to our village to bring back some food. When we went back to our old village we never tried to go back to the relocation place, we just tried to hide in the forest. The Burmese called the people who escaped to come back to the relocation site, but after we escaped we didn't want to go back. When we were hiding there, if the Burmese ever saw some smoke *[from a cookfire]* they fired mortar shells at it. I was afraid because I saw many people killed by the Burmese, and we were afraid we would also be killed. We didn't have enough food to resist them.

I decided that if I died everything would be over and that would be better than going back, because life is very bad in the relocation site. We didn't have any chance to work for ourselves, we just worked for the Burmese. Then the Burmese sent a letter again to the people who had escaped, calling us back to the relocation site.

When we stayed *[in hiding]* in our village, SLORC soldiers came and when they found villagers they shot at them. We posted people as sentries, so when the SLORC were coming we always ran out of the village. We saw people shot at by the Burmese, but they didn't die because we knew they were coming. They look on the villagers as Karenni soldiers so they just kill them.

They killed many people. We were really lucky to survive this long. I'm very, very lucky. If I was not lucky I would have been killed.

Q: How did you survive in the forest?

A: The village was already burned down [*by the time they returned from Shadaw*]; the trees, the bamboo and the grass had already grown in the village. We had some food because we had hidden it in the forest or in caves, but it took one or two hours to go and find the food. They had burned all our houses and our barns, so if we hadn't hidden our food it would have been very difficult. Just then my wife died, leaving me with our small 8-month-old baby. I didn't have any milk to give to my baby. I just gave him water. If I had stayed there longer we would have died, so we fled from there.

Q: Did the people get sick while they were hiding?

A: How wouldn't they get sick? And we couldn't go anywhere to find medicine. But only my wife died. She died of diarrhoea. Her name was Pru Meh. When we lived in Shadaw it was worse - at least one person in each family died of disease there.

Q: How many people were hiding with you?

A: People from Daw Ei Po, Daw Leh Da, and Daw Ei She, those three villages, but divided into groups of three families in three different places. There were about 15 or 16 people. There were also a blind single woman and a very old woman who were left behind there [*when they fled to Thailand*]. There were also four families near D--- village and two families near A---. In D--- one family had seven people but one of them died. He didn't have any sickness, but when we arrived from Shadaw he just died.

Q: Did you see soldiers when you were hiding?

A: Yes, we saw them but only from a distance. We came out from the places where we were hiding and watched them. We always watched when they were around because if we saw them coming our way then we'd have to run away from the place where we were hiding. When they found out where we were hiding we had to move, then when they found out our new place we had to move again. We had to move at least four or five times. But they didn't find us, because if they had found us they would have killed us. The Burmese patrolled around Daw Tama and Daw Bo Loh. They never made camps, they just came for a while and left. They came patrolling once a week, every week. I think they were Battalions 72 and 54, but I'm not sure. They were the soldiers who guard the Lawpita Dam [*near Loikaw*]. #72 is based in Lawpita and #54 in Loikaw.

Q: How long did it take you to come here [*to the refugee camp*]?

A: Six days because we had to avoid the Army, but if we could have come directly it would have been 4 days. It is very difficult to come here because Burmese soldiers block the border, but we had to try to pass. I came with a lot of people - one family from Daw Kraw Aw and two families from Daw Leh Da. If someone is lucky he can pass, if he is not he will die. I was afraid, very afraid that we would be killed. While I was coming here my mind was right outside of my body [*an expression for extreme fear*]. But we were lucky and we didn't die.

Q: Do you think one day you will be able to go back?

A: Yes, of course we would like to go back. Now we get rice from others, but we only receive it once a month so if they stop giving it what will we do? If we stayed in our own land we could plant and grow enough food for ourselves for the whole year.

Q: After you left Shadaw relocation site did you hear anything about the situation there?

A: At the beginning they were given rice there, but later they didn't get enough rice so they had to work. For one day's work they can get 8 milktins of rice [*about 2 kg/3 lb*] and 14 Kyats. If a family has more than five people this is not enough to eat for a day, so the people who still live in that place have to steal whatever they can find to eat, and this is a problem.

#2.

NAME: "Nyi Reh"

Kayah Christian farmer

SEX: M

AGE: 26

FAMILY: Married, 2 children aged 1 and 3

ADDRESS: Daw Leh Da village (#73), Loikaw township
6/5/98

INTERVIEWED:

[“Nyi Reh” lived in Nwa La Bo relocation site north of Loikaw for almost 2 years before fleeing to the Thai border, where he arrived at the beginning of April 1998.]

Q: Why did you come here?

A: The SLORC Army ordered my village to relocate so I left my village two years ago. I stayed for two years in Nwa La Bo consolidation village [*relocation site*], Loikaw township. Then I fled from there together with a friend.

Q: How many houses are there at Nwa La Bo?

A: There are about 130 houses in Nwa La Bo. Ten villages were relocated there: Thirida, Daw Mu Leh, Daw Leh Da, Daw Sar Si, Daw Klay, Ku Lay and Daw Lar Leh villages. [*Villages in this area were not forced to relocate in the initial relocations because they were spared by a SLORC agreement with the KNPLF ceasefire group; however, SLORC subsequently cancelled the agreement and relocated them anyway.*] They didn't give enough food for the villagers. Before they gave one *pyi* [*about 2 kg of rice*] each and we could eat for three days with that. Then they gave one *pyi* a week for one person. They gave a bit of salt but they didn't give oil, beans or soap. They gave only rice and salt. But they gave us a chance to find some more rice - they would let us farm outside the camp, but we had to pay for a ticket to get out. Each ticket costs 50 Kyats. Then if they heard any strange news, for example news that the rebels were close by, they wouldn't allow us out. So we couldn't go out to the fields and the paddy crop was destroyed. We could also buy rice but it was very expensive: 100 Kyats for one *pyi*. At first they had checkpoints but not any longer, and they never built a fence around the camp, so it was actually easy to go out and come in.

Q: Was there a hospital there?

A: They had a hospital but if you didn't give them money they wouldn't treat you. Some people died because they wouldn't treat them. In two years I saw three patients die, one old man and two children. They got sick and they died.

Q: Did you have a chance to worship in Nwa La Bo?

A: They built a Buddhist monastery but they didn't give permission to build a Christian church so we couldn't build one, and the Christians had no chance to worship [*many Karenni are Roman Catholic*]. The Army also destroyed the Christian church in my village because of the [*local SLORC*] chairman Hla Win. Now is not a chairman anymore, he joined the Military Intelligence. But they do have a school in Nwa La Bo.

Q: Did you have to do any work for the SPDC?

A: Sometimes they forced us to do forced labour in the Army plantation between Nwa La Bo village and Chet Kae village over one hour's walk away. Infantry Battalion #54 came and took us on trucks. They forced us to carry things, dig the earth and do other things. They forced us to do that three or four times a month. The soldiers said that they were planting vegetables for the refugees *[the people in the relocation sites]* but we never got any of them.

Q: Did they arrest *[SLORC]* soldiers who ran away?

A: Yes, they arrested their soldiers who escaped, but they didn't arrest those who left the KNPP as long as they joined the KNDA, the ones with the dragon badges. They forced them *[the ex-KNPP soldiers]* as well as villagers to become KNDA. If the villagers obeyed and became KNDA they didn't arrest them, but if they wouldn't become KNDA they arrested them and sent them to prison. *[SLORC/SPDC demands some kind of quota of KNDA recruits from among the villagers.]* I joined the KNDA because they came and forced me to become KNDA. If my father had been staying with us I wouldn't have gone *[one man from their house had to go, so his father would have gone]*. But only my mother and my sister were staying in our house, so I had to go because I was afraid for them. When I stayed with the KNDA I didn't do anything for them. I just stayed in the Army camp beside Daw Leh Ku village, between Tee Ku Leh and Daw Leh Ku. They gave me an AK *[AK47 assault rifle]*, and I had to carry that. Before I went there I'd heard that there were four hundred soldiers in the KNDA, but when I arrived there I saw only a hundred. The Burmese control them completely. Wherever they go the Burmese follow them.

Q: How did you flee from Nwa La Bo?

A: I fled Nwa La Bo at night, I don't know what time it was. I fled suddenly, and my wife and children didn't come with me. I fled with one friend. I fled to D---, then to K--- and then across to this place. It took me less than one month to come here, sixteen or seventeen days. I saw them *[SPDC soldiers]* but I ran away when I saw them. They didn't catch us and they didn't shoot at me.

Q: What is the difference between Nwa La Bo camp and the refugee camp?

A: In Loikaw, at Nwa La Bo, they didn't give enough rice, but in the refugee camp we get rice, oil, salt, chillies, beans, blankets, mosquito nets, mats, and treatment for sick people. So now I will stay here and work. My wife and my two children will arrive soon. They will arrive here with other people from Nwa La Bo. I will build a house and stay with my family. I don't want to go back to Loikaw, I will stay here.

#3.

NAME: "Saw Kler"
Karenni
SEX: M **AGE:** 20+
ADDRESS: Mawchi town, southern Karenni
INTERVIEWED: 27/4/98

Q: What is the situation in Mawchi?

A: Mawchi is so poor that people have nothing to eat. Some villagers there may have money, but even if you have money you can't buy anything and you can't buy as much as you want. You can't get as much rice as you want to keep in your home. For example, you can't store enough rice in your home for one month, just for three days. You must keep the rest in the church and go to get some of it every three days. This is your own rice. They don't allow the villagers to keep all their belongings in their own homes, because they accuse the villagers of supporting the Karenni army and giving food to the Karenni Army. Even in Mawchi. Mawchi is

very big you know; I'm from Mawchi. There are many churches in Mawchi, and there is also a mine. If you are in Loikaw, the capital, you can buy rice and you can eat it there, but you can't bring rice from Rangoon to Mawchi [*the SPDC won't allow it*], you can't bring rice from Loikaw to Mawchi or to or from the areas to the east.

Q: Are the relocation sites still there, or have they been closed and moved to other places?

A: No, nothing like that. Shadaw and Ywathit [*relocation sites*] are still running but Ywathit is very small compared to Shadaw. Mawchi also stays. Right now there is no road construction right in Mawchi [*town*] but the people who live in the relocation sites like Shadaw or Mawchi are forced to work for the military every day. The situation of the people in the relocation sites is going from bad to worse because they said they have no food in the camp. They receive very little food from the SPDC and it is not enough for everybody. Some are starving to death. Many people die of sickness, especially in the rainy season from malaria and diarrhoea. They are also forced to work for the military doing things like carrying water, cutting bamboo, making fences and collecting firewood for the Army. Especially in the Second District, the Army goes to fight almost every week so the people are forced to carry their supplies and ammunition, and many people die as porters at the frontline. Now a lot of people who stay in the relocation sites are forced to be militia too, but not only people in the relocation sites have to do that. People from other villages are forced to do that too.

The road from Mawchi to Toungoo is 96 miles long. There was an old road there but they haven't used this road for many years now. So far they have done 12 miles from Mawchi. Villagers were forced to work there from 6 in the morning to 5 in the evening with only a one hour break. About 3 months ago 11 women and 90 men were doing forced labour carrying things on the road 12 miles from Mawchi. They spent the night there and were attacked by the KNPP, and then they stopped work on the road [*temporarily*].

#4.

["Paw Lweh", a village headwoman who had just escaped from Mawchi relocation site, stated the following in an interview on 15/5/98.]

We refugees from Mawchi [*those staying in the relocation site*], especially the women, we had to be afraid whenever we went to find vegetables in the forest that we might be threatened and raped by Burmese soldiers. We were sad and had pity on our friends who had to face that. The villagers at Mawchi have to carry things for them as porters, both men and women, old and young. They beat the porters and threaten them. I felt very sorry for all of my villagers when I saw their situation like that.

They didn't give us enough rice. There was not enough water for all of us at Mawchi. Especially in the hot season we had to go very far to fetch water. Some people got diarrhoea due to the unclean water. We received no health care. The Burmese who called us there ought to have given us health care, but they never do that. There was a pharmacy but the villagers could not buy the medicines because they were very expensive. Some seriously ill people died because the cars [*public transport on small trucks*] only ran sometimes. If we saw a car we tried to send the seriously ill people to the hospital in town.

If you look at the shelters [*in the relocation site*] you can see that they are very small and not properly built, because it was not easy for the people to go and cut trees and bamboo. The Burmese who called us there ought to supply us with water, food and health care, but they never

take care of us. I hope the behaviour of the Burmese will change soon. I hope they will give the people a chance to live freely and in peace.

#5.

NAME: "Sai Long"
Shan Buddhist
FAMILY: Married, 3 children aged 5-9
ADDRESS: xxxx village, Loikaw township
INTERVIEWED: 1/5/98
SEX: M **AGE:** 30

[“Sai Long” was arrested in 1994 for carrying opium and sentenced to 10 years. While serving his sentence in Loikaw jail, he was taken as a porter early this year for SPDC troops patrolling Karenni areas and eventually escaped.]

Q: When did you arrive here *[a refugee camp]*?

A: I arrived here on the 5th of April. I came here because the SPDC forced me to be a porter. First I was a prisoner in Loikaw jail, then they took me out of jail and forced me to be a porter.

Q: Why were you in jail?

A: I went to prison because of drugs. I didn't want to carry opium and I never used it, but I had to think of how I could earn a living. They gave me money to carry opium. A Chinese paid me 500 Kyats for each piece, and I carried eight pieces. I have no idea where it came from. I carried it from Lwae Neh to Mae Aw, then from Mae Aw to Ho Murng. They didn't sell it in Karenni State, they were selling it to Khun Sa and they transported it there *[Ho Murng was Khun Sa's headquarters]*. I was arrested on April 9th 1994 by LIB #530 because I hadn't paid them the money. If you pay them money they don't arrest you. *[The SLORC/SPDC charges a tax on those who independently produce or transport opium and heroin, and if you don't pay it you are arrested.]* I think you have to pay at least a hundred thousand Kyats, but the amount depends on how many pieces you have. The more you carry, the more you have to pay them. They arrested four people. I had a trial. I got a ten-year sentence and I stayed for four years of it. At first I had to stay in shackles for one and a half years. My serial number there was xxxx.

Q: How was the life in jail?

A: They gave us one messtin lid of rice to eat twice a day. We had enough water to drink but we could only take a bath once every five or six days. The rooms we stayed in, some were big and some were small. Sixty or seventy people were staying in each small room. A room for sixty was the same size as this room *[about 3x6 metres or yards]* so we had to sleep on our side *[all pressed together side by side]*. We went outside every day for one or two hours. We had to go to the fields to grow vegetables for the jailers. We didn't get to eat those vegetables though, and they beat some prisoners for trying to steal vegetables. U Mya Thein was in charge of the prison.

Q: What about diseases?

A: There were many kinds of disease. Some had fever, some had skin disease, some dysentery and some diarrhoea. Some prisoners had money and when they were sick they bought themselves medicine and took it. If people had no money they stayed sick, they couldn't get medicine. I saw people die. I don't remember how many people died, but it was more than twenty during these four years. They died because they had fever, diarrhoea and dysentery. I don't remember their names, most of them were old men. One of them was in for stealing a bicycle.

Q: When you stayed in prison were there any women prisoners?

A: Yes, there were 30 women. The men had enough problems *[in jail]*, and the women had even more problems. There were also children in jail. Many, many children were in the women's jail. Some were born in jail and some were brought as prisoners. Two children were born in the jail, even though there is no hospital in Loikaw jail.

Q: How did you become a porter?

A: They forced me to become a porter. I had to be a porter for eight days. First we went to Shadaw by car. At first I had to carry big shells. The length was like this and the diameter was like that *[he indicated 81mm shells, which weigh 3 to 4 kilograms / 7 to 10 pounds each]*. I also had to carry rice and bullets. It was very heavy. The soldiers didn't even carry their own *[personal]* bags, we had to carry them. They carried only guns and equipment. There were thirty people carrying but no villagers *[all were prisoners]*. In my group there were no women but I saw older people, three or four people who were 40 or 45 years old. I also saw young people, fifteen or sixteen years old. The soldiers were from #250 *[Battalion, based in Loikaw]* and #421 *[Light Infantry Battalion, based in Shan State]*. There were over one hundred soldiers from each Battalion. Our group had thirty porters for over one hundred soldiers, but I don't know how many porters the other group had. They didn't give us even one coin for that. We didn't even get enough food. We got just a few handfuls of rice, the same as in prison. We didn't have enough water, we had to find whatever water we could and we couldn't ever take a bath.

Q: Did the soldiers beat anybody?

A: Yes, but they didn't beat me, they beat Aik Htun. He was 25 years old and he was a prisoner. He was beaten by a three-star Captain from Battalion #250 because he couldn't climb the mountain. Actually he could climb the mountain, but the soldiers followed him and beat him from behind because he could not carry quickly enough. They beat him on the back and on the head with a bamboo stick. He was wounded and bleeding a lot. I tried to heal him for one day *[before he ran away himself]*. They forced him to carry again but he could not carry anymore, and when he couldn't carry the soldiers beat him again. When we fled he wasn't dead yet but maybe he died after that. They also beat another man, Saw Ee. They beat him on his back because he couldn't carry anymore, because he didn't get enough food and he was sick.

Q: When you were carrying for the Army did you see any villagers?

A: No, there were no villages left and I didn't see any fighting.

Q: How did you escape?

A: We fled down the hillside when they *[the soldiers]* were a little bit far from me. Two of us fled together, but the other didn't come here with me. It took me over one month to come here. We stayed on the hillsides with the Karenni *[soldiers]*. They treated us with medicines because I got malaria the day that we fled, that night when we were sleeping *[on the bare ground with no blanket]*.

Q: What do you hope for now?

A: I will do work, any kind of work. But I want to go back and see my children. I have 3 children; the eldest was five in 1994, and the youngest wasn't even one year old at that time *[he hasn't seen them since his arrest]*.

#6.

1) NAME: “Naw Wah”
Kayah Christian farmer

SEX: F **AGE:** 40

2) NAME: “Ni Reh”
Kayah Christian farmer

SEX: M **AGE:** 60

FAMILY: Married, 4 children aged 19 months and above

ADDRESS: Saw So Leh village, Shadaw township

INTERVIEWED: 1/3/98

[“Naw Wah” is married to “Ni Reh”. They were interviewed just after arriving in Thailand on March 1st 1998.]

“Naw Wah”: I lived in Saw So Leh village for 30 years. Two years ago the soldiers ordered the villagers to relocate so we went and stayed in Loikaw township, at Nwa La Bo consolidation village [*relocation site*] for three months. In Nwa La Bo consolidation village they didn’t give us any food, and they accused my husband of supporting the KNPP. The [*Military*] Intelligence called him and asked him questions very often, so we fled from Nwa La Bo consolidation village.

“Ni Reh”: We moved to Nwa La Bo consolidation village because the soldiers promised the villagers that they would provide rice, other rations and medicines. But then they only accused me of joining the Karenni rebels [*KNPP*], so after 3 months at Nwa La Bo I fled back to my village.

“Naw Wah”: When we reached our village again we saw only a burnt place. The Burmese had burned down the village, so all the houses and rice barns had disappeared. But we had some paddy in the jungle that we had hidden before they burned down the village, so we stayed and hid in the jungle where our food was hidden. We stayed in the jungle for two years.

“Ni Reh”: I didn’t want to go back to Nwa La Bo and I didn’t want to go to the Thai border either, so I stayed in the jungle near my village. Infantry Battalion #54 had burned down the village and they took three buffaloes, one pig, 20 chickens and 500 tins of paddy. In our village over 1,000 tins of paddy and more than a hundred buffaloes, pigs, cows and chickens were lost. We ate wild vegetables and fruit and boiled rice for two years in the jungle. If we were sick we had no medicine to treat ourselves so we had to treat ourselves with natural medicines. Now the SPDC soldiers are trying to find us, they started coming to shoot at us very often and they also arrested some other villagers, so we fled to this refugee camp.

“Naw Wah”: The SPDC troops came to the jungle very often, so we had to hide all the time and we were worried that the SPDC soldiers would find us. So we couldn’t make a fire to cook and we were hungry very often. As adults we could bear it, but the children cried when they were hungry so we had to cover their mouths and spank them very often. They couldn’t go to school for two years. We heard that there was a school on the border [*in the refugee camps*] and we felt pity for our children, so we left our own village and fled to the refugee camp.

#7.

NAME: “Mi Su” **SEX:** F **AGE:** 25
Kayah Christian farmer
FAMILY: Single
ADDRESS: Su Leh village, Shadaw township
INTERVIEWED: 3/3/98

[“Mi Su” was interviewed just after arriving in Thailand at the beginning of March. On arrival she had to be sent to hospital with tuberculosis.]

In 1996 the SLORC forced the villagers to leave our village, so we moved to Nwa La Bo village in Loikaw township. In Nwa La Bo consolidation village [*relocation site*] the SLORC didn't give us any rations or any medicine, so we fled back to our own village. When I fled back the SLORC arrested my mother and my elder sister, so I kept going back to my village with another sister. When we reached our own village we saw only ashes, so we hid and stayed in the jungle near our village for two years. While we were hiding in the jungle we had no medicine so it was very difficult, but I didn't know how to come to the border so I stayed in the jungle and got tuberculosis.

Q: Why did you flee and come here in the end?

A: Now the SPDC soldiers are looking for the villagers and arresting them, so it is very difficult to stay there and we had to flee here. Now I stay at the refugee camp hospital to get treatment for tuberculosis.

#8.

NAME: “Baw Reh” **SEX:** M **AGE:** 47
Karenni Animist farmer
FAMILY: Married, 7 children but 3 of them already died, eldest surviving is age 13
ADDRESS: Daw Kraw Aw village (#72), Shadaw township **INTERVIEWED:**
29/4/98

[“Baw Reh” was interviewed in a refugee camp in Thailand. He used to be headman of his village.]

Q: Why did you come here?

A: The Burmese forced us to move to Shadaw at the same time as the others [*in mid-1996*]. The Burmese soldiers sent a letter saying that we had just seven days to move to the relocation place. First they sent the letter, then they sent a man to the village to order us to go to Shadaw within four or five days. He said, “You must go to the relocation site in time, you can't stay in your village after that date. If you stay after the date the soldiers will come to shoot you and kill you.” We were very afraid so we went there, but some old people still remained in the village.

Q: How many people from your village moved to Shadaw?

A: There were 105 households in my village. At first 60 households moved to Shadaw and some moved to Thailand. Some of our old people couldn't move, and some families were split because the people who could travel came here [*to a refugee camp*] and those who couldn't travel so well went to the relocation place.

Q: How long did you stay in Shadaw?

A: At first I stayed just over two weeks, I couldn't stay any longer because I couldn't get anything to live. I'd just brought two baskets of rice, and that was for my whole family. Then the man said, "You have to bring your belongings". So we went back again and again [*to the village*] to fetch our things. They allowed only seven days for that; they said that if we took more than 7 days they would shoot us, but we couldn't bring everything in seven days. I called my family, and my whole family came and lived in Shadaw for more than a month. When we stayed in the relocation site many people got sick. I stayed with my family for about 20 days, and after that I escaped without permission and went back to our village to search for some food I could take to my family. I escaped alone; almost all the men left before their families. My family was still staying in Shadaw. I was in our village for 4 or 5 days, and if I'd stayed much longer than that they would have killed me. The Burmese soldiers said if you stay away more than a week they'll shoot you. Then they really did come and shoot at people in Daw Hi So and Doi Saw villages [*while they were still getting things in the village*]. Some people could escape but others couldn't, and we couldn't escape so we just hid around there. We ran from our village and hid in the forest. We ran and lived in our farmfield hut.

Then I went back to Shadaw and found that all my children and my wife were sick. Life was very hard there, especially for the small children, so we left. By then it was more and more dangerous to go back to our old village, so I took them all with me and we hid under the trees with five or six other families. We hid in the forest for four months.

Q: Did you have to work for the Army in Shadaw?

A: I did not live in Shadaw for a long time so I wasn't forced to work, but the others were forced to work a lot. I just went back to my village so I didn't work for them. My family didn't have enough food because we had left most of it behind. I didn't find any food in Shadaw, I just tried to get some from where we had hidden it before. Even my house materials and belongings were left behind in the village. In my village I left a lot of livestock and other things as well. When I escaped it was without permission. The Burmese soldiers didn't stop us from going out because they could not feed the people anymore, so we went in and out. I went to my village but there were no people there anymore, and then I just lived in hiding outside the village. I don't have any education, so it was difficult for me to know what to do for our future.

Q: How did you come here?

A: We hid in the forest for a long time. The old men said that we would die of mosquito bites and disease. There were no medicines, and some died. Some could walk but some could not, they just hid in the forest. It is difficult to live hidden in the forest. Then we left; the people who could walk went first and waited in front while the people who could not walk tried to follow. I tried to find some soldiers to guide us, and eventually along the way we found some Karenni soldiers in a farmfield. When we met them we asked them to guide us along the way.

That was during the tenth month [*October 1996*], and the Burmese soldiers shot at us while we were escaping. That was when Si Reh and Ei Reh [*both men*] were shot dead. We were escaping together with them. I think four people died at that time, two villagers and two Karenni soldiers. They died because they went on ahead. Another villager was wounded and we carried him. Those who were killed were Si Reh, he was from Daw Kraw Aw, and Ei Reh from Daw Bo Loh. One of the soldiers killed was Mi Reh from Daw Kraw Aw. I don't know the name of the other one. He was from Brigade 2, Column 1. The man who was wounded was Pleh Law, from Daw So Kyar.

NAME: "Koo Nga Reh" **#9.** **SEX:** M **AGE:** 40+
Karenni

INTERVIEWED: 28/4/98

["Koo Nga Reh" is a KNPP official. The interview is included here because it presents a fairly broad picture of the current situation in Karenni.]

Q: Do you have any information about relocation sites?

A: I don't have much information from relocation sites such as Mawchi, Baw La Keh, Pah Saung, Ywathit, and Shadaw because now very few of the people there can contact us. All the relocation sites are controlled by the SPDC, so nobody can get into those places without their permission. The SPDC do not allow any NGO people [*Non-governmental organisations, i.e. aid organisations*] or even the church to provide any assistance to the people who are in the relocation sites. Since 1996, and especially since 1997, there have been very many people suffering from shortage of food. They also suffer from malaria, diarrhoea and other diseases. Since 1996, according to our annual report, about 300 people have died of various diseases in the relocation sites at Shadaw, Mawchi, and Ywathit.

At the moment there are five big relocation sites and five or six other relocation sites. In addition, since the beginning of this year they have been trying to relocate some villages down to the area they control around Loikaw. In many areas of the southern and eastern parts of the state there are no more people, because the SPDC has made a big offensive in that area so anyone they see in those areas is suspected and shot on sight with no questions asked.

Q: So are people also fleeing from fighting?

A: Yes, there is still fighting now, especially in those areas [*the east and the south*] because most of the people living in those areas are unwilling to move down to the relocation sites at Mawchi, Pah Saung and Baw La Keh. They don't go because they can stay hidden in the jungle along the Karen State - Karenni border, so they just move around there and avoid the SPDC troops. They're living in the jungle, they stay together with the Karenni Army there. But they've been doing that for almost 2 years now, so they have to face the problem of lack of food. I'm not sure about the next year, how long they can keep staying in that area by themselves without any support. They have no chance to cultivate crops, because SPDC troops are moving around in the area. All the villages are burned down now, including the churches, the schools, the entire villages.

Q: Do they try to find the people who are hiding in the jungle?

A: Yes, they try but they can't do it throughout the whole area, only in some parts of the area. Even so, some people who are hiding in the jungle will be found and killed by the SPDC troops. They call it a scorched earth operation. If they see anyone in the area, whether soldier or civilian, they shoot him dead with no questions asked. If they find people's rice, first they take whatever they can for themselves and then they burn whatever is left. Especially in the area between the Pon and Salween rivers. There are still around five hundred people hiding in that area, staying together with the Karenni troops there. They move around and try to find some food. All they can find is some of the food that families have left behind there, but there is no more food. They have no way to keep on surviving there. Some try to flee to the [*Thai*] border but at the moment it is hard to travel because there are no boats to cross the rivers. Also, east of the Salween river all the way to the border there are so many SPDC troops, so the villagers are

scared that they will be caught. Now the SPDC Army and the Thai businessmen are making logging deals, so their troops travel to search for the logs in the forest, to know how many they have cut down already and how many are ready to sell.

They are trying to rebuild the old road from Mawchi to Toungoo, and onward into Burma. This old road was once used to transport the minerals from Mawchi, so they are trying to build it again now. They've ordered the people who are living in the relocation sites at Mawchi, Pah Saung, and Baw La Keh to go as volunteers to rebuild the road. There are also two other projects. One is building a new road from Baw La Keh to Daw Tama Gyi. That is a new road. Now all the people who live in that area have to be volunteers to build this new road. It is about 10 miles long. The other new project is near Loikaw; Ye Yaw village is 1½ miles from the base of SPDC Battalion #269, so they are building a new road there. We just got this news a few days ago. Before there was only a path there so you had to walk, but now they are ordering all the local people around that area to build a main road for cars. There are many villagers in that area, so they will probably have about 1,000 people working on that road every day. It is just for the military to transport things; weapons, ammunition and rations. These kind of roads just link villages to Army bases, so the people have no use for them. No villagers use them.

Q: Have any of the villages in the northeast that weren't relocated previously now been moved?

A: In this area they started to relocate most people around the beginning of this year. They didn't do it in the past, only this year, because this year there has been a little more KNPP troop activity in this area. So they want to relocate the people down to the main road closer to their base, where they can supervise all the villagers more closely. Their base is at Nwa La Bo. They've deployed their troops to control the people, watch the people and see what they are doing. They have moved people to small relocation sites at Tee Say Ka, Nwa La Bo, Myeh Nee Kaw, Tee Plaw Ku and Pao Mai. There are 3, 4, or 5 villages together at these places. There were already villages there, but other villages have to move down *[out of the hills]* and stay there because these villages are close to the main road.

Q: How many relocation sites did you say there are in the whole state?

A: There are five big relocation sites and about six or seven small ones, but the small ones are difficult to count because they're always creating more of them to concentrate the villages more and more. But there are five big relocation sites: Mawchi, Pah Saung, Baw La Keh, Ywathit, and Shadaw. I think there are fewer people in Shadaw than there were at the beginning, because many people have tried to get permission to get out of the camp and have then managed to flee to the border. It is very hard to get information from inside the relocation sites. Most of the information we receive is from people who have escaped. Not many are escaping now. If people from outside try to go into the relocation camps they can if they are real villagers, but they must face many questions: "Where are you from? Have you been here before? What are you doing, why have you come here? Do you know where the KNPP soldiers are, have you seen them?"

Q: Are the SPDC soldiers working alone or is the KNDA involved?

A: I think there is cooperation. The KNDA is together with them because their group was created by the SLORC. Many of them used to be KNPP soldiers, then they freely resigned from KNPP and returned to their homes, but the SLORC forced them to form a new group to attack the KNPP. That is the new strategy of the SLORC, just as they did in Karen areas *[by creating the DKBA]*. The KNDA is not so big, just 40 or 50 armed men. They also conscript villagers to be their troops. They always have to move together with SPDC troops because they have to be supervised by the SPDC, they cannot do anything without an order coming from the SPDC.

Even if they want to do something themselves, they have to get permission from the SPDC Commander before they can do it.

Q: What about the “people’s army” [*the SPDC militia force*]?

A: This is different. All the villages have to form a militia and are forced to defend their village. Now the SPDC has a new strategy: whenever they want anything from the villagers they just force the militia to get it. If the SPDC commander comes to the village and gives orders to the headman then all the villagers know that the SPDC is demanding things; but this way, they form a militia and order it to do things for them so the villagers have to get it themselves, and then when the SPDC commander comes he says, “No, I’m not coming to your village to do that, that’s your own people demanding it”. This is their new strategy.

Q: Do they also use these militias to fight against the KNPP?

A: If necessary they may do that. They give them some kind of militia training course. Then in each village they only provide three to five guns, not so many, so the militia members have to take turns guarding their village. But if they think that the area is dangerous and that there are too many enemies around, they will provide more weapons and they will force the militia to be involved in fighting.

Q: Do the militia members get benefits like exemption from forced labour?

A: No, they have to do it, even they have to do forced labour. I think only the commander [*the militia commander for the village*] has to pay less or do less than the other villagers. Those village militias have to be formed with all the young men of the village. All the young men of the village have to join the militia, or else they have to join the KNDP. If you don’t do either then you’ll be sent away as a porter. So there are only three ways you can choose from: would you like to join the militia forces, would you like to join the KNDP, or would you like to be a porter for the military? Which one would you like to choose?

Q: Is there still any area controlled by the KNPLF?

A: They just control a small area near Dee Maw So. Villagers living in this KNPLF area are safer than most others because now the KNPLF and the SPDC have a ceasefire agreement, so they don’t do anything to those villagers. But others can’t really flee to that area because most of the people there are Padaung [*Kayan*], and others can’t really live among them because the language and the culture is very different. They also may not allow other people to come and live there among them.

Q: Is it still possible for new refugees to get into the refugee camps in Thailand?

A: At the end of last year the local authorities said that they would not allow any new arrivals, but just at the beginning of this year some new arrivals reached Camp 2. There were about 60 or 70 people. The Thais said nothing because those people can’t stay anymore in their home areas so they must allow them to come; if not, those people would starve to death. They came from the area between the Pon and Salween rivers. Some had been living in hiding and some had escaped from Shadaw relocation site. The first group arrived in January and the second group arrived last month [*in March*]. They said that now it is quiet in Shadaw because fewer people are living there, but that they still have to work for the military every day and the military doesn’t provide them with anything. The food situation there is very bad, the soldiers just provide a little rice for each family but never enough, so the families try to get some paying work outside the camp so they can get some food to survive. But there’s no business in those areas, it’s only small villages, so they don’t have a chance to make money and the local people can’t help them. So it’s very hard to get food.

Q: You said before that they [SPDC] are using convicts for forced labour; convicts from where?

A: Mostly from Loikaw prison because there are so many prisoners in Loikaw; some from central Burma, some from Shan State... They brought some prisoners from other prisons to Loikaw because they thought they might need to use them for military operations in Karenni area. They use them for anything and everything. For everything they do they use the forced labour of everyone without payment, civilians as well as convicts. Even if they have reserved a budget for a project they never use that budget for the project, they just use the local people. They never pay money for the work, you even have to bring your own food with you. They don't provide anything.

I don't know if things can change or not. Mainly the military are just trying to get more and more power and keep it for longer, because they may be afraid that if they hand over power to the people then the people will send them to an international court. That would be dangerous for them, so that is why they are afraid to lose power, and that is why they keep trying to increase their power more and more.

#10.

[The following information is translated from an interview with a member of the Karenni National Women's Organisation.]

In District 2 *[in the southwest, where most of the fighting between SPDC and KNPP is going on]* the SPDC is ordering people to go to relocation sites. In Mawchi it is difficult to eat because no trucks carrying dried foods are allowed to travel between Loikaw and Mawchi. People are not allowed to grow food in the *[relocation]* camp, and the available food is reserved for the people who work in the mine and for the civil servants, not for the villagers. No permission is given to bring in food *[from other areas]*. Some people have paddy rice hidden in the forest but if the SPDC troops see them going into the forest they shoot them. In March this year one woman tried to go. She was captured by the Army and tied to a tree. She stayed there for three days and had already died when the Karenni soldiers found her and untied her. She was single and 26 years old. Her name was Naw Kreh, she was from Shaw Daw Ko village.

Some village headmen have been killed in Mawchi *[relocation site]*, like Tablu Daw from Law Tee village and Ko Nu from Daw Leh Ko village, both in 1997. So now many of the village heads are women *[even in relocation sites, villages stay together and village heads retain their positions, representing their villagers in front of the SPDC]*. Mawchi relocation site is divided into four sections. There are about 40 or 50 families in each of them. There is enough water in one part of Mawchi *[relocation site]*, but not enough in most of the camp. In the first week that most people got there the soldiers gave them food. Then for the next 2 weeks they gave them food only once a week. Now people have ration cards, but the ration they get is not enough and the price of the rice is very high: 2,500 Kyats for one big tin. There is almost no work to do in Mawchi to find money.

Before, women could get work in the mine, but now they have to pay for a pass to go. Then they must sell whatever they get to the government. There is sometimes forced labour in the mine but not often. Usually the people who work in the mines are government workers. They use dynamite, so a lot of the people who work there get lung diseases *[from the dust of the exploding rock]*. Now there are not a lot of minerals left in the mine so it is getting harder and harder to find anything.

In Mawchi there is one hospital but it is for the government workers. People can go there but they have to be able to buy their own medicines. They have a church in Mawchi that the villagers built themselves. Until they built that church they could only worship in their houses.

The road from Mawchi to Toungoo is 600 feet wide *[not the road itself, but the villagers must clear a wide 'killing ground' along both sides of the road to prevent ambush or sabotage by KNPP troops]*. It is nearly finished. They started it in November 1997. Many soldiers came for this road but they don't work on the road. There are also no machines working on the road. One person from every house has to go every day to do it, so women and children are also going. People have to take along their own food and sleep beside the road. Every family is assigned a length of road to finish, and they must stay along the road until it is finished. This road was first built by the British in 1937. After that it was destroyed, and they already tried to rebuild it two or three times. One time was in 1972-73. Then cars could get to Mawchi, but that only lasted for two months before it was destroyed by the first rains.

Apart from the work on the road, people also have to build SPDC camp fences. The *[relocation]* site is surrounded by hills, there are military posts on top of these hills, and the people from Mawchi have to climb the hills to bring water and food to those posts. The food rations for the soldiers come from Loikaw by Army truck.

[The information below is translated from an information report produced by the Karenni National Women's Organisation.]

In the last week of December 1997, 26 villagers were arrested and jailed under Article 17(1) *[prohibiting contact with illegal organisations]*, accused of having contact with the KNPP:

- a) U Pah Yay Yeh, 26 years old, village headman, Tee Lon village
- b) U Aung San, 40 years old, village headman, Nam Sonkuay village
- c) U Aung Myat, 30 years old, Tee Lon village tract secretary, Nam Sonkuay village
- d) U Bee Hla, 49 years old, villager from Nam Sonkuay village; the Tee Lon Village Tract PDC *[local-level SPDC administration]* Chairman's name was U Bee Hla but when the soldiers came to arrest him he had already run away, so the soldiers arrested and imprisoned this ordinary villager whose name also happens to be U Bee Hla. *[Local administrators are often arrested for failing to provide forced labourers or to obey forced relocation orders.]*
- e) U Ee Reh, 30 years old, village headman, Daw Seh village
- f) U Pa Reh, 28 years old, area leader, Daw Seh village
- g) U Boe Reh, 50 years old, Daw Seh village
- h) U Lu Reh, 40 years old, village headman, Wa Ngaw village
- i) U Ku Reh, 35 years old, teacher, Wa Ngaw village
- j) U Day Reh, 35 years old, villager, Wa Ngaw village
- k) U Thoe Reh, 35 years old, villager, Wa Ngaw village
- l) U Lee Reh, 35 years old, villager, Wa Ngaw village

There are still eight other people *[of the 26 arrested]* from Daw Tah Hay village whose names we have not obtained and six other people from other villages about whom we are still investigating.

Starting on the 22nd of April 1998, the soldiers started to build three camps on the hills just south of Daw Tah Hay and P'yah Pyu villages in Tee Thay Ka village tract, Loikaw township. To build the camps, one person from each house in the 25 villages of Tee Thay Ka village tract and Tee Lon village tract has to go on rotation, with their own rice and without getting any payment. The officer in charge of constructing the camps is Captain San Hlaing. The soldiers are from IB #102, IB #250, LIB #421, LIB #426, and #4 training troops. Two hundred soldiers who were not in the front line are doing the camp construction together with the villagers. On April 27th the regional commander, Brigadier General Kyaw Win, came to check on the construction of the camps. For the camp construction the villagers have to do forced labour and they also had to give money and the following things to Captain San Hlaing:

- a) Thick bamboos ten cubits [*15 feet*] long and twenty inches in diameter; small villages had to give five of these and the big villages had to give ten;
- b) Ordinary bamboos ten cubits long, one hundred from each small village and five hundred from each big village;
- c) Leaf shingles on bamboo sticks [*for roofing*], two hundred from each small village and five hundred from each big village;
- d) Bamboo strips [*shaved bamboo strips used as ties*], 2 viss [*3.2 kg / 7.2 lb*] from each small village and 5 viss [*8 kg / 18 lb*] from each big village;
- e) Three-inch nails, ½ viss from each small village and 1 viss [*1.6 kg / 3.6 lb*] from each big village;
- f) 35 Kyats in cash from each family to feed the soldiers working on construction of the camps [*the villagers working on the camps had to bring their own food, and also pay this money to feed the soldiers*].

The villagers who live near these camps are only allowed to go out of their villages from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. After 9 p.m. they are not even allowed to go outside their houses, and they are never allowed to go anywhere in groups of more than 5 people. If they need to sleep out in their fields, they must ask permission from the camp commander. When they finish harvesting their paddy, they must give one third of it to the Army for free.

On May 7th 1998 in Tee Lon and Meh Pya village tracts of Loikaw township, they had a celebration with fireworks. When the fireworks exploded they made noise. Then Captain San Hlaing called in the headmen of the two village tracts and shouted at them. He punished them by ordering them to bring five thousand bamboos each ten cubits long because they had not asked for permission before using fireworks. Then the chairmen and the village headmen asked for his pity, so in the end they only had to bring three thousand bamboos to the camp within three days.

#11.

[The following information was provided by human rights monitors who note down information from villagers and field reports.]

On March 9th 1998, Ta Wah village near Loikaw was forced to relocate to Wa Lu Hu, where there is an SPDC base. The villagers were forced to move by LIB #337. The village had 70-100 houses. After the villagers moved, it was burned down by SPDC troops.

On March 20th 1998, Pata and Beh Kee villages were also relocated to Wa Lu Hu, this time by LIB #427. Each village had about 50 households. After the move they were burned. They had received the order to move on March 1st, telling them that they had until March 7th to move. Ta Wah, Pata, and Beh Kee villages are in Wa Lu Hu village tract.

On April 8th 1998 at 1 p.m. in Ku Baw Deh village in Mae Se township *[southeastern Karenni]*, Naw Mu Kreh, age 28, was found in the forest by troops from LIB #423, who raped and then killed her. On April 11th 1998 at 3:30 p.m., the same troops found and raped Ywa Hay Mu, age 23, in the same village. They also raped and killed Pweh Ko Tah Mu, age 9. Naw Tah Lu, age 24, was raped and killed by Colonel Min Din, commander of LIB #423. All four women were from Ku Baw Deh village, Mae Se township.

On February 6th 1998 in Tee Saw Ku village of Shadaw township, two sisters named Na Meh, age 15, and Su Meh, age 14, were going to their field in the forest together with their younger brother. Their father's name is Po Reh. They met troops from SPDC Infantry Battalion #54 based in Loikaw. The soldiers tied up the small boy, then raped the two girls throughout one day and one night but did not kill them.

On October 28th 1997, SLORC soldiers from IB #250 Sergeant Hee Day Maw, Gaw Zaw and Saw Leh raped Tee Mo, age 50, Htoo Meh, age 30, and Oo Meh. The three women were staying at Nwa La Bo relocation site and were going to the forest to collect firewood when they met the three soldiers.

In October 1997, two SLORC soldiers from IB #54 raped Nu Meh, age 35, who was living in Shadaw relocation site. She is a widow with one small child.

At noon on August 23rd 1997 in Leh Bu village of Pah Saung township, Saw Klo and his wife Naw Bu were in the forest and encountered SLORC soldiers from Company #5 of IB #102. The company commander is Captain Sein Lai. The soldiers arrested them, then killed Saw Klo and raped Naw Bu.

In the second week of April 1997 in Aung Shein Da quarter of Shadaw town, the 12-year-old daughter *[name unknown]* of Daw Reh *[father]* and Daw Than Shwe *[mother]* went to watch a movie. On her way back home she was arrested and raped by SLORC troops. She was with 2 friends but her friends ran and managed to escape. She was raped by a soldier named Ko San from LIB #429.

List of Villages Affected

The following villages are known to have been forcibly relocated in 1996, some in 1997 and early 1998. This list has been provided courtesy of the Karenni Information Ministry. It is not complete. Numbers in the lists correspond to the numbered dots on the map on Page 33 showing village locations. Some village names are common and repeat themselves, such as Daw Kraw Aw, Daw Tama and Daw Mu Say.

Between Pon River and Salween River

The following 98 villages were all sent a written order on 1 June 1996 ordering them to move to Shadaw or Ywathit relocation site by 7 June. Most of them were forced to move to Shadaw. The area measures about 120 km. from north to south by 15 km. from east to west.

<u>No.</u> <u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>			<u>No.</u> <u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>
1	Daw	22	Daw Noh	34	Daw Law
Kadweet		Ku		Bu	
2	Daw Taku	23	Daw Klaw	35	Nam Loi
3	Daw Eida	24	Daw Klo	Yin	
4	Daw Naw	25	Daw	36	Daw Ei
Klu		Mumar		Taw	
5	Tee Taraku	26	Daw The	37	Shadaw
6	Tee Leh	27	Daw So	(North)	
7	Naw Plu	28	Daw Soe	38	(name not
8	Daw Tanaw	29	Daw Kraw	given)	
9	Leh Dukaw	Aw		39	Tee Ku Leh
10	Daw Mu	30	Pana Leh	40	Shadaw
Say		31	Tee Tho Ku	(West)	
11	Leh Du	32	Tin Loi	41	Shadaw
12	Thaw	33	Daw Leh	(South)	
Thwee Leh		Ku		42	Pa Lai Lai
13	Daw Mu			43	Daw So Sah
Leh				44	Daw Pu Ei
14	Nam Aw			45	Bu Law Ku
Lay				46	Si Ko Leh
15	Klaw Leh			47	Daw Ta Ma
16	Tee Ka Bo			48	Daw Ta
Leh				Maw	
17	Su Leh			49	Daw Klaw
18	Daw Wai			Leh Du	
Raw				50	Daw Thaw
19	Thirida			Bu	
(East)				51	Daw Ei Lah
20	Thirida			52	Daw The
(West)				53	Nga Ma
21	Daw The			Loh Soe	
Phu				54	Daw Klaw
				Leh Phu	

55	Daw Mi Ku	<u>No.</u>	<u>Village</u>
56	Daw Ei Sa	<u>Name</u>	
57	Daw Klo		
Ku		67	Daw Thaw
58	Daw Ta	Ku	
Tho		68	Daw Tama
59	Daw Klai	69	Daw Tamwi
The		70	Daw Bo
60	Daw Klo	Loh	
Ku		71	Daw Mu
61	Daw So	Say	
Kyar		72	Daw Kraw
62	Tee Kay	Aw	
Leh		73	Daw Leh
63	Daw Klaw	Da	
Duh		74	Su Leh
64	Dee Leh	75	Daw Sar Si
65	Daw Soh	76	Daw Lar
Doh		Leh	
66	Daw Klo	77	Daw He So
Ku		78	Nam Phe
		Ku	
		79	Manai Ku
		80	Daw Leh
		Ku	
		81	Tee Tho Ku
		82	Daw Kulee
		83	Wan Loi
		84	Pa Ku Dah
		85	Wan Pi Lu
		86	Nam Lin
		87	Leh Way
		88	Mine Lam
		89	Wan Pha
		Gyi	
		90	Wan Pla
		91	Wan Chai
		92	Nan Noh
		93	Ji Kwe
		94	Sa Laung
		95	Wan Aw 1
		96	Wan Aw 2
		97	Saw Lon
		98	Tee Ke Leh

Pah Saung and Mawchi area

The following 52 villages, possibly more, are known to have been ordered to relocation sites with a deadline of 20 June 1996. Villages in Pah Saung township have been forced to move to a site near Pah Saung, villages north, south and even 30 km. northwest of Mawchi to relocation

sites near Mawchi. Bu Ko and Kwa Chi, initially reported by KHRG in July 1996 as a relocation site, was burned by SLORC and the villagers there ordered to move to Mawchi relocation site. The entire area covers an 80-km long swath going northwest from the Karen State border in the south up to the southern tip of Shan State.

<u>No.</u> <u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>No.</u> <u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>No.</u> <u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>
99	Peh Ko Kee	117	Sho Ka Seh (1)	135	Lar Wa
100	Ko Baw Doh	118	Sho Ka Seh (2)	136	Thaw Thi Lu
101	Ku Tru	119	Geh Lo (lower)	137	Par Put
102	Lay Law Tee	120	Ka Bweh Doh	138	Tu Ka Thu
103	Tu Doh Lay Ko	121	Plah Kee	139	Thaw Thi Po
104	Baw Tar	122	Bwa Doh	140	La Par Ti
105	Bu Law Po	123	La Bweh Po	141	Doh Po
106	Har Thedo	124	Ho Sak	142	Pain Chit
107	Kaw Tu Doh	125	Ka Baw Nga	143	Kaw Kee
108	Sho Daw Ko	126	Bu Ko	144	Doh Mo Kaw
109	Plo Ti	127	Kwa Chi	145	Sonlel
110	Ma Tu Peh	128	Sho Lo	146	Yu Lay Ko
111	Yeh Mu Peh	129	Lel Po	147	Ko Leh
112	Pan Put	130	Ka Tho Kee	148	Bweh Do Tha
113	Nam Kut	131	Pweh Li Ko	149	Keh Kaw
114	Pa Haw Ko	132	Thi Bo	150	Par Weh
115	Yaw Di Ka	133	Hu Mu Kla		
116	Po Bu Ku	134	Ra Raw Bo		

Dee Maw So, Pruso and Baw La Keh area

The following 25 villages east of the Baw La Keh-Pruso-Dee Maw So road were forced to move to relocation sites at Tee Po Kloh , Kay Lia, Daw Tama Gyi, Baw La Keh and Mar Kraw She by 25 June 1996. The region is 40 km. north-south and 15 km. east-west.

<u>No.</u> <u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>No.</u> <u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>No.</u> <u>Name</u>	<u>Village</u>
151	Daw Ku Li	160	Daw Ta Kleh	169	Daw Mo Sheh
152	Daw Lyah Ku	161	Daw Law Ku	170	Bu Ku
153	La Li Leh	162	Kay Bi Soe	171	Daw Kaw
154	Daw Law Ku	163	Daw Pet	172	Daw Par
155	Bu Lyar	164	Daw Preh Tu	173	Daw Tama Gyi (*)
156	Ta Po	165	Daw So Ku	174	Daw Klet
157	Daw Tanaw	166	Tee The Ku	175	Daw So Pya
158	Daw Put	167	Daw Takya	176	Daw Nyeh Ku
159	Daw Bya Ku	168	Daw Kyli		

Daw Tama area

The following 7 villages in Daw Tama area, east of the Salween River near the Thai border, were forced to move to a relocation site near Daw Tama by the deadline of 25 June 1996.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Village</u>
<u>Name</u>		<u>Name</u>		<u>Name</u>	
177	Thaw Thwi Leh	180	Daw Tama	183	Daw Ta Tho
178	Tee Kaw Leh	181	Myeh Leh		
179	Daw Plaw Du	182	Daw Peh		

Loikaw area

Elders of the following 29 villages northeast of Loikaw were forced to sign papers guaranteeing that they would be forced to relocate if any shots were fired in the region. The area is between the Loikaw-Taunggyi road and the Pon River, from Loikaw northward to the Shan border - a 25 km. square area. These villages were subsequently forced to relocate to Nwa La Bo and other smaller sites in the area in late 1997 and early 1998.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Village</u>
<u>Name</u>		<u>Name</u>		<u>Name</u>	
184	Pa Da Nyeh	194	Nam Ma Hu	204	Wan Kar
185	Pa Kyeh Thit	195	Daw The	205	Kon Mako
186	Pa Temah	196	Daw Par Pa	206	Koy Ton
187	Daw Mu Kla	197	Mai Mya	207	Nam Koy
188	Lar Boi (lower)	198	Tha Wa	208	Mae Huso
189	Lar Boi (upper)	199	Wah	209	Tee Lon
190	Sam Pya	200	Paya Pyu	210	Nam Sonkuay
191	Daw Kraw Ku	201	Ye Kan	211	Wa Ngaw (west)
192	Daw The	202	Kon Nah (lower)	212	Wa Ngaw (east)
193	Lay Aim Su	203	Kone Paw		

