

WHOLESALE DESTRUCTION

The SLORC/SPDC Campaign to Obliterate All Hill Villages in Papun and Eastern Nyaunglebin Districts

An Independent Report by the Karen Human Rights Group
April 1998

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**COVER PHOTO: A group of villagers from several destroyed villages living in hiding
in leaf lean-to's well-hidden in the forest, with only rice and jungle leaves for food. As
this photo was taken, they received word that a 300-strong SLORC column was passing
nearby. (KHRG, June 1997)**

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Abbreviations

SPDC	State Peace & Development Council, military junta ruling Burma
SLORC	State Law & Order Restoration Council, former name of the SPDC until Nov. 1997
KNU	Karen National Union, main Karen opposition group
KNLA	Karen National Liberation Army, army of the KNU
KNDO	Karen National Defence Organisation, militia/police wing of the KNU
DKBA	Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, Karen group allied with SLORC/SPDC
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
Kaw Thoo Lei	The Karen name for their homeland, also often used to mean KNU/KNLA/KNDO people
Nga pway	“Ringworm”; derogatory SLORC/SPDC name for Karen soldiers
Ko Per Baw	“Yellow Headbands”, common name for the DKBA
Kyat	Burmese currency; US\$1=6 Kyat at official rate, 300 Kyat at current market rate
viss	Unit of weight measure equivalent to 1.6 kilograms / 3.5 pounds

Preface

This report is an abridged and illustrated version of the previously released “*Wholesale Destruction: The SLORC/SPDC Campaign to Obliterate All Hill Villages in Papun and Eastern Nyaunglebin Districts*” (Karen Human Rights Group, February 15, 1998, KHRG #98-01). It consists of a detailed breakdown of the campaign to wipe out the villages, supported by excerpts from KHRG interviews with villagers in the area and newly arrived refugees in Thailand which were conducted in June and December 1997.

The information for this report was gathered by KHRG through over 60 interviews with villagers in hiding and refugees, visits to approximately 30 of the destroyed villages and many hiding-places of villagers. An index of the interviews as well as the full texts of most are available on approved request as an annex to the original version of “Wholesale Destruction.” Interview numbers are noted in the captions following quotations. The names of all those interviewed have been changed. False names appear in quotation marks. All other names, such as those of the dead, are real. The notation ‘F’ or ‘M’ indicates gender. Village names listed in the captions are the interviewees’ home villages. All are in Papun District, unless listed as ‘Shwegyin township’ which is in Nyaunglebin District. Some other details and names have also been omitted or changed for security reasons. For example, in some cases village names are given as X--- or replaced with xxxx and yyyy.

Additional information used in this report was provided by several independent human rights monitors working in the area. KHRG would especially like to thank Saw D. M. and Saw N. N. for the information they provided, and Saw T.G.H. for photographs. Photographs are all by KHRG except where noted otherwise. KNU field reports radioed in by frontline units were occasionally used to fill in gaps in the information. In the report we have tried to keep our descriptive analysis minimal; most of the story is told by the words of the villagers.

KHRG would also like to thank the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, the Merck Foundation, the Norwegian Burma Council, and the Jesuit Refugee Service Asia-Pacific for their support of the production and publication of this report. Thanks also to Images Asia for editing and layout on this version of the report.

Karen Human Rights Group
April 1998

Introduction: The Destruction of Villages

“They were going to burn our houses... and they didn’t give us any chance to take our possessions. We all ran away. The Burmese took all my things and destroyed whatever they didn’t want. I had nothing. I fled and stayed in the forest. All the villagers stayed in the forest. We had to run all the time, every month. We had no chance to build a hut all through hot season. Sometimes we made a roof out of grass or a plastic sheet, but we had to sleep on the ground. We ate rice with some salt and forest vegetables. We lived like that from March until July. There were 40 families with us. A lot of people were ill: diarrhoea, malaria, beriberi, abscesses, stomach pains and so on. We had no medicine there, we just had to use the roots of trees. People died of illness, especially the children... I saw over 50 people die of illness...

“Then we made a hut in our farmfield. We planted our paddy, and we were eating some that we had grown [the first rice can be harvested as early as October]. But on November 5th, they [SPDC troops] came and destroyed all of it before we could finish the harvest. They burned all the paddy we had already gathered in the rice barn, and they destroyed all that we hadn’t yet harvested by walking through our fields like this [imitating soldiers knocking down the rice stalks; once knocked down, the rice is very quickly destroyed by insects and parasites]. We ran away. After they destroyed our field we couldn’t get any more rice, we couldn’t do anything, so we lived on rice soup until the rice we had with us was gone, and then we came here. If we didn’t come here, they would shoot us if they saw us.” - “Naw Muh Eh”, Female, 53, Nya Mu Kwee village, Shwegyin township; fled to Thailand in Dec/97 after 8 months in hiding (Interview #52, 12/97)

Since the beginning of 1996, the State Law & Order Restoration Council (SLORC) military junta ruling Burma, renamed in November 1997 as the State Peace & Development Council (SPDC), has launched campaigns in many parts of Burma to forcibly move or wipe out all rural villages which are not under the direct physical control of an Army camp. In February/March 1997, SLORC began a campaign to forcibly relocate or obliterate all villages in the hills of Papun District, northern Karen State, and eastern Nyaunglebin District, straddling the border of Karen State and Pegu (Bago) Division. These remote hilly areas, dotted with small Karen villages averaging 10-20 families each, have always been difficult or impossible for the Burmese military to control because the villagers always flee before the soldiers arrive. As a result, SLORC and subsequently SPDC have been carrying out a campaign to forcibly relocate those villages already close to their bases, where they can easily round up the population, and to obliterate all other villages without warning, hunting and killing on sight any villagers they see there.

The initial wave of village destruction was carried out through March and April 1997. In June, new waves of patrols were sent out to burn all remaining signs of habitation and food supplies, to hunt villagers hiding in the forest, burn them out and shoot them. Since November 1997, after the end of the rainy season, the newly-named SPDC regime sent out new patrols to burn out the hiding villagers again, to drive them off the meagre rice crops many of them had managed to plant and to destroy those crops. The shelters where villagers are hiding have also been burned whenever they are found.

Through visiting destroyed villages, interviewing villagers, information compiled by independent monitors with other organisations, and some KNU field reports, KHRG has compiled a list of 105 villages ordered to relocate, 180 villages completely burned and 10 others partially burned. The population of these villages averages about 100. These lists are by no means complete, and right now SPDC patrols continue to burn villages and shoot villagers in the area. A list of 62 confirmed killings of villagers by SLORC/SPDC troops is also included in this report, though the true number is almost certainly at least double that. Many more have also died of disease and hunger while in hiding.

The main areas targetted are the Bilin (Bu Loh Kloh) and Yunzalin (Bway Loh Kloh) river valleys and adjacent areas west, north, and northeast of the town of Papun, as well as eastern Shwegyin township in Pegu Division. In the beginning approximately six SLORC Battalions were involved in the operation, and under SPDC the number has now increased to at least 10 Battalions; the Battalions are regularly rotated in and out, so that altogether since the beginning at least 23 different Battalions have been involved at one time or another.

Army columns of 50 to 300 men move from village to village. On arrival near a village, the troops first shell it with mortars from the adjacent hills, then enter the village firing at anything that moves and proceed to burn every house, farmfield hut, and shelter they find in the area. Paddy storage barns [small



The ruins of Kaw Mu Bwa Der village near the Bilin River. All 27 houses were completely destroyed.

sheds raised on posts for storing paddy, which is unhusked rice; in this report generally referred to as 'rice barns'] are especially sought out and burned in order to destroy the villagers' food supply. Any villagers seen in the villages, forests, or fields are shot on sight with no questions asked. The troops bring porters with them from Shwegyin, Meh Way, Papun and other places to carry their munitions, supplies, and the food and valuables they loot from the villages, but if they need more porters they take any villagers they catch, and they have already taken many women and men, some aged over 65, for this. However, the objective is not to catch villagers, as in several cases they have surrounded villagers in field huts and then simply opened fire instead of trying to catch them. The patrols seem to have no interest in interrogating the villagers, only in eliminating them.

Villages very close to Papun, Meh Way and Shwegyin have been ordered to move to Army-controlled sites such as Meh Way and the Shwegyin - Kyauk Kyi motor road, but the vast

majority of villages have been given no orders whatsoever, they have simply been destroyed. Most of the villagers in the area say they do not even understand why this is being done, and that they think SLORC/SPDC is just trying to wipe out the Karen population. KNLA [*Karen National Liberation Army*] troops are not based in any of these villages, and have never yet been in a village when it was attacked.

The villagers generally hear up to a day in advance that a SLORC/SPDC column is coming, so they flee further into the hills and very few of them are sighted by the troops. Once the troops have destroyed their village and passed on, they survive in leaf shelters or small huts which they build in the forest and try to continue taking care of their fields. Those whose paddy storage barns have not been destroyed generally share out their rice with those who have no more food. Most are living on plain rice with some jungle leaf soup, and salt if they are lucky enough to have any. Almost all livestock has been left behind and slaughtered by SLORC/SPDC troops, who simply shoot it, eat a small part and leave the rest to rot. SPDC patrols are now returning to areas which they previously burned out in order to seek out and destroy the forest huts where the villagers are hiding, destroy any remaining rice supplies and shoot any people they can find.

Every new patrol that comes around forces the villagers to flee yet again and build new shelters elsewhere. Malaria and other fevers, diarrhoea, dysentery, and other diseases are widespread and the villagers have no medicine whatsoever. Many children and the elderly have already died. The villagers have very few belongings left and little food. Many of them managed to plant a limited rice crop in intervals between SLORC/SPDC patrols and tended it through rainy season. Some of them have managed to get a partial harvest, but in many areas Army patrols drove them off their crop at harvest and other crucial times, so the crop was lost. In some areas, particularly Shwegyin Township, troops went through the hill fields burning or knocking down the crop at harvest time. Most villagers in hiding are now sharing their rice and living on rice soup, knowing their food cannot last more than one or two more months.



Villagers from several destroyed villages living in hiding in the forest.

At least 1,500 villagers from the area have managed to escape to refugee camps in Thailand thus far, but this is difficult and dangerous because of SPDC camps and patrols along the way and the landmines placed along many of the paths by the Karen National

Liberation Army (KNLA). Many of them have also heard of the abuses against refugees by Thai authorities. However, if this campaign does not stop immediately it is certain that many more will attempt to flee to Thailand.

Just to the north of Papun District, there has also been a steady increase in troop numbers in eastern Toungoo District. These troops have just completed construction of a military access road into the Bu Sah Kee area, which was formerly very difficult to access, and they have been increasingly clamping down on the civilian population there. At the same time, SPDC troops are pushing a military supply road straight across the affected areas of Shwegyin Township and Papun District, from Kyauk Kyi in Pegu Division (in the Sittang River valley of central Burma) directly eastward to Saw Hta on the Salween River, which forms the border with Thailand. This road is expected to be used as a springboard for an offensive to secure the Salween River and the entire region, to block off KNLA supply lines and the escape routes of refugees, and to allow the establishment of new military camps and further sweeps through the area to wipe out the Karen civilian population. The troops have burned and destroyed all villages along the route and have been constructing the road with bulldozers under heavy military guard. This road was heavily damaged in rainy season, but is expected to be completed by mid-1998. The troops cannot capture enough villagers in the area to use them for forced labour on this road, but the fact that they are using bulldozers instead of bringing in forced labour from elsewhere makes it apparent that they are in a hurry to complete it. It seems quite clear that the SPDC are ready to stop at nothing to achieve the complete domination of the area.

Extent of the Campaign

“They came from Shwegyin. They burned down 20 or 30 villages. They burned down Yan Aung village and Htee Blah village. They burned down our good houses, and later they also burned down the shelters that we built in the forest, the simple shelters we built with no floors.” - “Naw Htoo K’Paw”, F, 36, Yan Aung village, Shwegyin township (Interview #54, 12/97)

The main region affected extends approximately 50 km (30 miles) to both the north and the south of the town of Papun in northern Karen State, and from the Salween River 40 km (25 miles) east of Papun to Shwegyin township, 50-60 km (30-35 miles) west of Papun in Nyaunglebin District of Pegu Division; making the total area of the region close to 10,000 square kilometres. A map is provided at the end of this report for further details.

In the areas south and east of Papun, most of the villages have been ordered to move; for example, all villages in the Ka Dtaing Dtee area south of Papun have reportedly been ordered to move to Ka Dtaing Dtee, and villages east of Papun have been ordered to move to SPDC Army camps at Pah Heh (Par Haik) and Toh Thay Pu.

The worst hit areas are those which lie north, northwest and west of Papun, comprising the Yunzalin and Bilin river watersheds as well as the hills of eastern Shwegyin township, which lie further west and northwest of Papun, particularly in the upper Bilin River area. In these areas, many villages which are easily reached by SPDC troops have been ordered to move to SPDC-controlled villages such as Meh Way or to the Shwegyin - Kyauk Kyi motor road. However, the majority of the villages in these areas have simply been shelled and burned



Karen woman and her son standing where their house used to be in the hills west of the Yunzalin River.

without warning. By visiting villages, interviewing villagers and augmenting this with information provided by independent monitors and some KNU field reports, KHRG has compiled a list of 180 villages in Papun District and Shwegyin Township which have been completely burned, 10 other villages which

have been partially burned, and several sets of shelters where the displaced villagers were hiding which have also been burned. This list is included on page 60, followed by a list on page 62 of over 100 villages which have been given orders to relocate to a SLORC/SPDC-specified site; most of these were subsequently burned and destroyed. Even these lists are not complete, and SPDC patrols continue to roam the area burning villages, shelters and food supplies.

"In the area of Dta Meh Der how many villages did they burn?"

"They burned all of them. Dta Paw Der, Thay Ko Mu Der, Wah Kee Der, Kaw Lay Der, Tay Mu Der, Ler Shu Ko, Maw Law Der, Yah Kyaw Der, Doh Daw Kee, Ku Theh Kee, Kheh Der - all!" - "Say Say Mo", F, 44, Dta Meh Der village (Interview #29, 6/97)

"They have many soldiers. They've also burned Kheh Pa Hta and Baw Thu - there are three villages in our area, and they've burned them all. Right now we dare not go back." - "Pu Lah Neh", M, 74, Maw Lay Kaw village (Interview #45, 6/97)

"We ran away in March, when the situation became worse..... They burned down my village on 12 March 1997. They burned down every house in Hsaw Tee [Shwegyin] township. There were 40 houses in my village, and there were over 300 houses in our area that were burned down. They burned down Nya Mu Kwee, Htee Muh Hta, K'Saw Wah Kwih, Meh Law Lah, Poh Loh, Kyi Zone Gone, Du Baw, Ler Hta Kwih, Tee Sgheh Hta, Ler Wah, Tee Law Klay Kee, Saw Theh Kee, Po Kha Law, Maw Hta Mee Hser, Saw Theh Hta, Hsaw Oh Kee, Hsaw Oh Hta, Der Wih Ko, Tee Blah Kee, Tee Blah Hta, Bpray Maw Kee, B'Ta Hta, Wah Ko Law Dteh, Ko Pler Hta, Ko Pler Kee, Maw Kee, Dta Thay Der, Yan Aung... I can think of those [28] villages just now. They burned down every village, every rice barn, every field, every thing..." - "Naw Muh Eh", F, 53, Nya Mu Kwee village, Shwegyin township (Interview #52, 6/97)

"Ten villages [in my area] have been destroyed: Mi Hta, Maw Ghu, Meh Gha Law, Khaw Klah, Dta Kaw Hta, Meh Si Hta, Maw Thay Tha, Dta Baw Kee, K'Wah Ler, Mu Ko Law, I know of those ten." - "Saw Kaw Muh", M, 40, Maw Thay Tha village (Interview #4, 5/97)

"They burned 4 villages near here: Kaw Weh Der, Toh Hta, Saw Ner Kee, and Bo Kywe." - "Htoo Htoo Pa", M, 43, Kaw Weh Der village (Interview #16, 6/97)

"They've burned many villages - Toh Kee, Bo Kywe, Doh Heh Der, Kwih Toh Kee, Kyaw Law, ... Bpeh Deh was burned completely." - "Saw Tha Htoo", M, 49, Toh Hta village (Interview #17, 6/97)

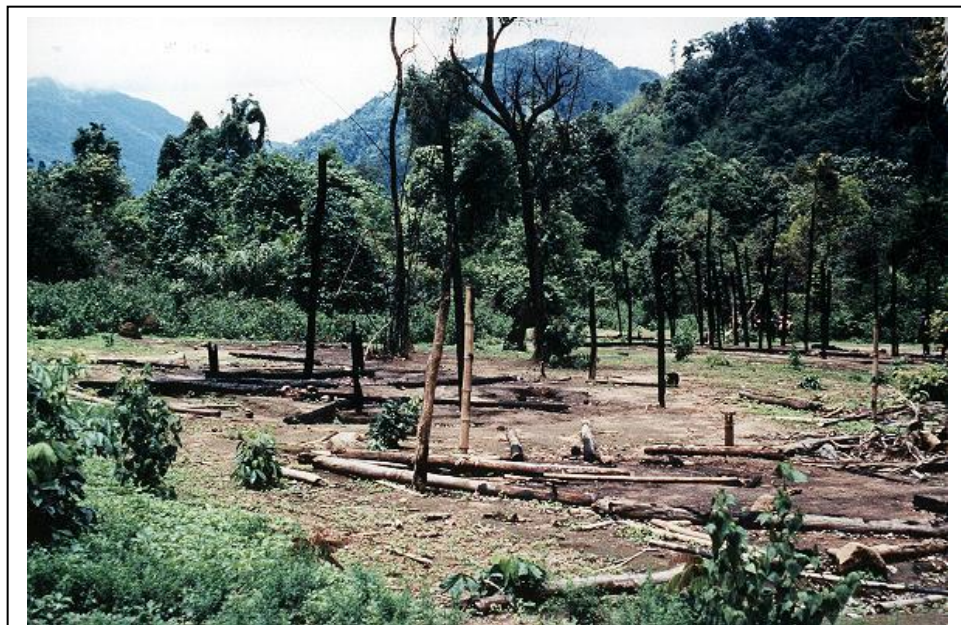
"They burned Kheh Pa Hta, Htoo Ta Lu, Lay Po Kaw Tee, Baw Thu and Maw Lay Kaw." - "Saw Eh Tee Kaw", M, 43, Kheh Pa Hta village (Interview #43, 6/97)

Since the operation began at least 23 different SLORC/SPDC battalions have been involved at various times, with units of various battalions and divisions being regularly rotated into and out of these areas. A full SLORC/SPDC battalion usually has a fighting strength of about 500 troops, though these are often split between different locations and as a result some of these Battalions have had only part of their troop strength involved. The same is true of the two Light Infantry Divisions involved (#44 and 77); each Light Infantry Division has 10

battalions, though not all of these have been employed in the operation. Following is an incomplete list of the troops which have been involved: Light Infantry Divisions (LID) #44 and 77; Infantry Battalions (IB) #19, 39, 57, and 59; and Light Infantry Battalions (LIB) #20, 36, 106, 107, 340, 341, 349, 350, 356, 391, 434, 546, 547, 548, 701, 703, 704, 706, and 710. These battalions enter the area from Shwegyin and Papun, and some also operate out of camps at Meh Way, Pwa Ghaw, Toh Thay Pu, Pah Heh, Kyauk Nyat, Maw Pu, Kler Kyo, Baw Kwaw, Ler Mu Plaw and other locations. At least two Battalions specially designated as part of the Army's "Anti-Insurgent Group" (known as "*say ko ker*" or by its abbreviation "*sa ka ka*") have also been active in the operation.

The overall operation has been under the control of the Southeastern Regional Command led by Major General Ket Sein, who was made Burma's Minister of Health upon creation of the SPDC, and who sits on the SPDC ruling council. At the beginning of the operation approximately 6 battalions were involved at a time, but since November under the SPDC regime this number has increased to at least 10 battalions at a time. In just one short 15-20 kilometre stretch of the Yunzalin River between Maw Pu and Kay Pu, there are now 3 battalions on the western side of the river and 3 more on the eastern side. Some of the most active battalions in Papun District right now are LIB #701, 703, 704, 706 and 710. #44 Light Infantry Division has begun taking part in the operation in Shwegyin Township. After the first wave of village burning in March and April 1997, Light Infantry Battalions #106, 107 and 391 were rotated out of the area and replaced by Infantry Battalions #39, 57, and 59. The number of troops present continues to increase in both Shwegyin Township to the west and in Toungoo District to the north, and it appears that these numbers will still increase further.

Lay Po Kaw Tee, a beautiful and well-off village on the bank of the Bilin River which was completely destroyed. The villagers are now in lean-to's hidden high in the hills.



The DKBA (Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, a Karen group allied with SLORC/SPDC) continues to exist in Papun District, but in small numbers. It is no longer a political force in the area. According to villagers who live there, the DKBA camps in the area are always attached to SLORC/SPDC camps. The DKBA's main function is to send a few of its armed members along with each SLORC/SPDC column in order to act as guides, to locate villagers' food caches so they can be destroyed, to capture livestock for SLORC/SPDC troops to eat and, in villages close to SLORC/SPDC camps where villagers do not flee, to point out KNU

sympathisers and their relatives to SLORC/SPDC for subsequent arrest.

“Pi Blu Paw”: *The Ko Per Baw [DKBA] came together [with the Burmese]. I don’t know how many Ko Per Baw came with the Burmese. We heard them coming, we ran and they shot at us.*

“Pu Dta Muh”: *The Burmese stay in Kyauk Nyat, Say Mu Hta, 1½ hours’ walk from here. The Ko Per Baw stay together with them.* - “Pi Blu Paw”, F, 50, & “Pu Dta Muh”, M, >50, Paleh Der village (Interview #13, 6/97)

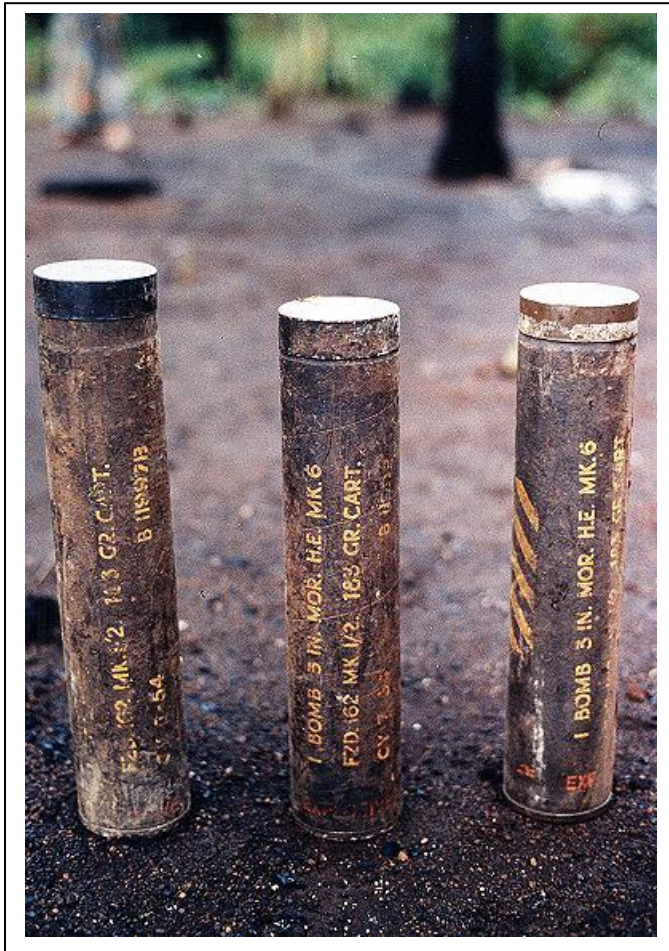
“The Ko Per Baw are in Pah Heh, they come along with the Burmese. Usually about 10 of them come along.” - “Saw Muh Heh”, M, 23, Lay Thaw Ko village (Interview #11, 5/97)

“Are you afraid of Ko Per Baw [DKBA]?”

“Yes, I am afraid of them. They stay and work together with the SLORC. Each SLORC group has only 1 or 2 of them. They show them the way and help them to find people’s rice barns and to take the people’s fowl. If people hide themselves, they try to find the people for the SLORC. Some villagers become Ko Per Baw, but not a lot. We can’t understand why they want to oppress their sisters and brothers.” - “Saw Kaw Muh”, M, 40, Maw Thay Tha village (Interview #4, 5/97)

SLORC/SPDC Methods

“ ... they came to the hill just over there, very near. Then they fired it [their 81 mm. mortar] at the streams where they know people usually run and hide. They fired at every stream, and at the hills where people usually hide they kept firing until the people had to get out of there.... I was in the jungle, and 3 or 4 of the shells fell near me. Then we got out as fast as we could, because we dared not stay... We ran and ran without light because we dared not light a fire. The children kept falling down but we picked them up and pulled them because they couldn't walk. Then we went to the cave. Even when we'd already got out of the place they were still shooting their gun. When we came back to look later we could see a lot of shell pieces.... Then they entered our village. All of us were staying at the source of the stream by then. They slept in our village for 3 nights, and they fired their big gun every day. They fired it all around.... When I came back to the village I could see the whole place was burned, they had burned everything everywhere.” - “Pa Weh Mu”, M, 48, Kyaw Law village (Interview #33, 6/97)



3-inch mortar shell cases found by villagers after SLORC troops shelled and burned their village without warning. The other side of one case reads “CONT NO. 216 MK. 1”, next line “SV 78 A”, third line “MONO 2/53”; the second case reads the same except for the final line, which is “MONO 5/51”.

There have been three main waves of village destruction, the first in March/April 1997, the second in June/July 1997, and the third which began in November 1997 and is still ongoing. Columns of 50 to 300 troops set out from Shwegyin, Papun, or one of the various Army camps in the area and go through the hills from village to village, shooting on sight any villagers they see. Upon nearing a village, one group generally takes up a position on an adjacent hilltop and begins shelling the village with mortars without warning. After shelling the village, they then fire mortar shells along the streams flowing into and out of the village and at the low hilltops near the village, on the assumption that these are the routes the villagers will flee along and the places they will hide. The main column then enters the village, usually leaving a mortar team on the hill for support if necessary. In one village between the Yunzalin and Bilin Rivers the villagers subsequently found three 3-inch mortar shell carrying cases left behind by the SLORC unit who burned their village. KHRG is still investigating the origin

of these markings, but a first opinion by a military source indicates that they are of British Commonwealth origin and probably at least 20-30 years old. The markings are all in English, labelling the shells as “3-inch mortar, High Explosive”.

On entering the village the troops fire their automatic rifles into the air and into the forests surrounding the village, then usually pass through to the other side and clear the entire outskirts of the village as though they were in a combat situation. Once the village is secured, they begin chasing and shooting the villagers’ livestock and looting all the houses for valuables such as money, jewellery and clothing. In the houses they often also take the plates, pots and utensils, and any rice they find which they may need. When they find these things they load them into baskets on the backs of their porters, most of whom are townspeople and villagers they have rounded up in Shwegyin, Papun or Meh Way and are using for forced labour. Anything in the houses which they don’t want is destroyed, either by smashing it (for example, by poking holes in the pots and plates), or by the ensuing fire. Rice and paddy which the soldiers do not want is either dumped out on the ground and mixed with the dirt or burned together with the houses.

After the looting the houses are set on fire. The policy is to burn *every* house and building, including livestock sheds. In many cases, elderly or handicapped people found left behind inside their houses have been deliberately burned to death inside the house. Village schools and churches are particularly targetted for burning. By the time the burning is done, most villages are nothing but a flat plain of black ash. Soldiers search through the forest and scrub around the village looking for the villagers’ hidden rice barns, and these are systematically burned in order to destroy all food supplies so that the villagers will not be able to live in hiding near their villages. All livestock seen in the village is killed and eaten or killed and left to rot, and larger livestock such as cattle and buffaloes seen in the fields are shot on sight and usually just left to rot there.

“There were many, so many that the hill was all black with soldiers. They came shooting at us with a lot of guns, small guns and one big gun, and with RPG [rocket-propelled grenades]. At first we fled and stayed beside the Bu Lo Kloh [Bilin River], but then they fired the big gun at us so we didn’t dare stay there anymore. We ran to Dta Paw Der, and they shot the big gun again and wounded one man. He was wounded in his foot by the big gun’s shell. He was an old man, 70 or 80 years old.” - “Naw Ghi Lah”, F, 23, Dta Meh Der village (Interview #15, 6/97)

“All the villagers were in the forest. We saw the soldiers coming, we left the village and looked back down..... (W)e saw the Burmese enter the village. First they fired their big gun [mortar] at the village from that big mountain over there. That was about 3 o’clock in the afternoon. They came after they had shot the big gun, the next morning by noon. About 100 soldiers entered the village...(W)hen they didn’t see any people they passed through and out of the village [probably to check the surroundings for people]. Then they came back again at about 3 o’clock, burned the houses and shot the chickens. They shot the pigs, shot the buffaloes for their curry, then they went back up the mountain because their friends were up there [their mortar position] and they settled down there for 2 nights.” - “Pati Htoo Kuh”, M, 50, H--- village (Interview #35, 6/97)

“A lot of them came. They came 3 times - the first time they came they burned houses, but not all of them. Eleven houses were still left. Then they came later and burned them all. They came from Papun and from Pwa Ghaw, from Ler Doh [Kyauk Kyi] and Meh Way. They came from many places. People who went to watch saw our whole village full of Burmese. They were trying to catch our chickens, and the village was full of noise. First they fired their big gun [i.e. they shelled the village], then they entered the village and shot the chickens and pigs to eat. We were just 5 minutes away. Some people tried to stay in the village, but the Burmese started shooting at them so they all ran away.” - “Naw Kuh”, F, 30, Maw Law village (Interview #19, 6/97)

“They fired more than one hundred big shells, maybe 120 or 130 - that’s only from their big gun. They fired it several times, every day for one month. Some shells fell in the village, some outside the village.” - “Pati Kweh Say”, M, 40+, Dta Paw Der village (Interview #30, 6/97)

“When they entered the villages there were no people there, so they went into all the houses to look for things, and if they saw anything they took it. They took all the good clothes, like



A village headman in the hills between the Yunzalin and Bilin Rivers stands among the burned ruins of his village, displaying the SLORC unit scarf accidentally left behind by one of the soldiers who burned it. The scarf is marked '391/4', for SLORC #391 Light Infantry Battalion, Company #4.

our Karen [handwoven traditional] clothes and shirts. If they saw the black blouses for women, they took those also. They took Karen women’s sarongs. They took both men’s and women’s clothing. Then the porters had to carry it all for them. They did that in every village they entered.” - “Pu Lay Htoo”, M, 65, Paw Say village, who was captured and used as a porter for over a week (Interview #47, 6/97)

“First they shot their big gun, then they burned the village, then they took our livestock to eat. They burned all the houses and the rice that they saw on their way. They looked for rice and other things they could burn. When they saw our boxes filled with clothes and money they took it all, then they saw people and captured them. They did terrible things. They destroyed everything we had. Now we don’t even have clothes to wear, we don’t even have salt or chillies. They burned all our rice and paddy. In Kyaw Law village there were 15 houses, they burned them all.... They burn everything they see.” - “Pa Weh Mu”, M, 48, Kyaw Law village (Interview #33, 6/97)

"They burned our houses, our paddy and rice and our farm huts, and then they killed our farm animals. They destroyed everything. We weren't here when they arrived, we had all run away already.... there were 27 houses. They burned all, there are none left. They burned 2, 3, ... no, 4 rice barns, and 2 sheds. We don't have much rice left. They killed our livestock - 3 buffaloes, and 12 pigs. ... They burned everything. - "Pu Tha Ghay", M, 77, Kaw Mu Bwa Der village (Interview #28, 6/97)

"They burned 15 rice barns, 13 houses and they took all the people's boxes [wooden boxes where people keep their good clothing and valuables]. They took pots, plates, clothing and all our belongings. They destroyed all the rice and cut down our paddy. They destroyed all the tobacco and they made holes in our plates, the stepped on our



Elderly Karen villager who was badly burned when his house was burned by SPDC troops in late 1997. He managed to escape the village but fell and died alone in the bush. By the time he was found part of his body had been devoured by animals. [Photo: Saw TGH]

pots until they broke into pieces and they destroyed all the thread we had for weaving. They ate all the fowl, the chickens, the pigs, our cattle and buffalos." - "Saw Thay Tha", M, 25, Toh Thay Der village (Interview #12, 5/97)

"We didn't know that they were coming... They came into the village and they immediately shot at the villagers so we couldn't run away anymore. The children were playing volleyball, they saw that and shot at them. People ran away and they ran after them. They arrested us and tied us all up, and they made us carry things. ... When I was a porter we reached Day Pu Noh [on the Yunzalin River north of Papun]. In the villages they took everything: pots, plates, clothing, sarongs. ...They went into people's houses, took clothes and many things like jewellery and money. They took all the pots, ordered us to make big baskets like this, put the pots inside and made us carry them. They did this many times [in many villages]. It was very heavy, 2 or 3 mer [32-48 kg./70-100 lb.] They made us carry the same weight that bullocks have to pull. They just carried their guns and their food. When we were walking and carrying things they never followed the road, they always went through the bush or over the mountains, and when we fell down they beat us and kicked us. We never got to rest... If the villagers had rice hidden in the forest and the soldiers saw it, they ordered us to carry it. We couldn't carry any more because our baskets were full. If we weren't able to carry everything, they just burned whatever was left.... They didn't give us any of their food, they

took the food that they saw in the villages.... When they saw paddy that was not husked yet and they didn't have time to husk it, they just took it and threw it away on the ground. They rationed out rice to us, about 3 spoonfuls and nothing else. Not enough, but they ate more than enough. ... I saw one person that they killed. They shot him near my village because he couldn't walk anymore. The man said, 'I can't walk anymore,' so the soldier said, 'If you can't I will kill you' And then he shot him." - "Saw Htoo Klih", M, 46, Ler Htoo Po village; he and others from his village were captured when SLORC came to burn their houses, and they were used as porters for over a month (Interview #8, 5/97)

"They came and burned our houses and our rice barns. It was more than 2 months ago, on 15 March '97. They've burned all the houses and everything near Bu Loh Kloh [Bilin River].... They have carried off the rice and burned all the rice barns. When they couldn't carry all the rice they mixed it with sand and destroyed it.... When we went to get it we saw all the sand in our rice and we dared not eat it. I'm sure they were laughing." - "Naw Thay Paw", F, 40, Baw Kwaw village, Shwegyin township (Interview #10, 5/97)

"My new house was right here, it had only been finished for one month and they burned it. When they came we weren't in the village, we were over there on that hill. We knew that they had gone out and that they would have to come back this way, so that we should go away and let them come. If we didn't go away it would not be easy for us. ... We heard them come when they started shooting their guns - their big gun [mortar], and G2 and G3 [assault rifles]. I think they were shooting at our pigs and other livestock. The Burmese ate 3 of our pigs. They burned 5 or 6 houses, and they left as soon as they were finished burning them" - "Pu Lah Kuh", M, 63, N--- village (Interview #37, 6/97)



The remains of the church bell of Kheh Pa Hta church, which fell when SLORC troops burned the building. The church had just been built at a cost of 200,000 Kyats by the villagers, who had to carry the bell and all other building materials across the hills.

Some SLORC/SPDC columns pass through the area in transit to other camps or are in a hurry. If these columns observe a village or hiding place which has not been burned and if they have no time to burn it or if heavy rains prevent a good fire, they generally report it to the troops at their destination and a search and destroy patrol is

sent to burn the site. In most parts of the area, columns pass through at least once a month to destroy any remaining food supplies, crops or signs of habitation and to hunt villagers.

Hidden rice barns and shelters where villagers have been hiding in the forest are systematically burned, forcing the villagers to flee again and again further into the hills. In the Bilin River valley and eastern Shwegyin township, this happens as often as two or three times per month. The current dry season will last until June 1998, and it is likely that with the increased troop concentrations in the area these patrols will occur very frequently at least until then, making it very difficult for the villagers to remain in hiding or to prepare fields for the upcoming crop season.

"The SLORC keep coming again and again, so we have to live in the forest. This year they've come into our village 4 times, and they've come near our village many more times than that. We have to run very often. At least once a month they come near our village so we can't stay there. Now they've burned our houses, our rice barns and everything we had, so we have nothing. Every time they come they burn something. The first time they burned the houses and left 2 or 3 unburned, but they came and burned those the next time... After their fourth visit we'd lost everything, we didn't even have any paddy left.... [We had] 26 houses. They burned every house, field hut, and buffalo shed, and also our church and our school. We had a middle school in Kheh Pa Hta, up to 7th Standard." - "Saw Eh Tee Kaw", M, 43, Kheh Pa Hta village, met while he was fleeing a SLORC patrol; the church in the village had just been built with timber, decorative glass windows, metal roofing and a metal bell in the steeple, all of the materials hauled across the mountains at a total cost of 200,000 Kyat. It was completely destroyed (Interview #43, 6/97)

"Then we built shelters above the village because we didn't dare live in the village. We thought we could plant a crop, so we had already cleared the weeds. Then they came a second time, 2 weeks ago. They came to the place where we were staying, so we had to run to this side [of the river]. Then when we were staying on this side they came back a third time, one week ago. They came right here. So we ran further that time, and we've just come back 3 days ago. We can never stay in one place, we have to keep running like this. We're very afraid that they'll see us. If they come again we'll run further than before." - "Saw Muh Lah", M, 43, Lay Po Kaw Tee village (Interview #38, 6/97)

"Lay Po Kaw Tee had over 20 houses, and including Lo Plah [another village which is considered part of Lay Po Kaw Tee] there were 30 houses. The Burmese burned them all. The first time they burned 2 rice barns too, and the last time they burned 5 more rice barns. We had to run twice. The first time we ran and stayed here for one week, then we went back to the other side of the river, to Tee Mu Hta, and we built one shelter for each family. Then on their second trip the Burmese burned those houses too. There were many soldiers. Some villagers told us that they'd seen the footprints of the Burmese, so we ran away from that place before they arrived there. When they came they fired their big gun 4 times. Some of the shells fell short of the villagers, and the others went over our heads. We were very afraid." - "Po Aye", M, 50, Lay Po Kaw Tee village; he had been living in a tiny leaf lean-to hidden among the hills since SLORC troops burned the first hidden shelters he and other villagers had built near the Bilin River (Interview #42, 6/97)

"The first time they didn't burn the school. The second time they burned it but they couldn't burn it all, only one side of it burned [because of the rain, only the front of the school burned]. The first time they came was the 13th of March, but they just passed by without burning the village. Then on their way back they burned the village, on March 22nd. The

third time was on June 6th or 7th, that's when they burned the school." - "Pu Lah Neh", M, 74, Maw Lay Kaw village (Interview #45, 6/97)



A village school which a SLORC patrol tried to burn in mid-1997, but the fire was extinguished by monsoon rains after the troops had left.

"What did the Burmese do if they saw villagers in the forest?"

"They shot at them. They've always shot people dead in our area. If we count for the whole time since we started running [22 years ago], they've shot dead a great many people. They don't capture us, they just shoot us if they see us." - "Saw Pah Thu", M, 30, Day Oo Koh village, Shwegyin township; his village was destroyed at the start of the 4 Cuts in 1975, he's been living from place to place in the forest for 22 years, but in 1997 he couldn't survive anymore so he fled in December to Thailand (Interview #55, 12/97)

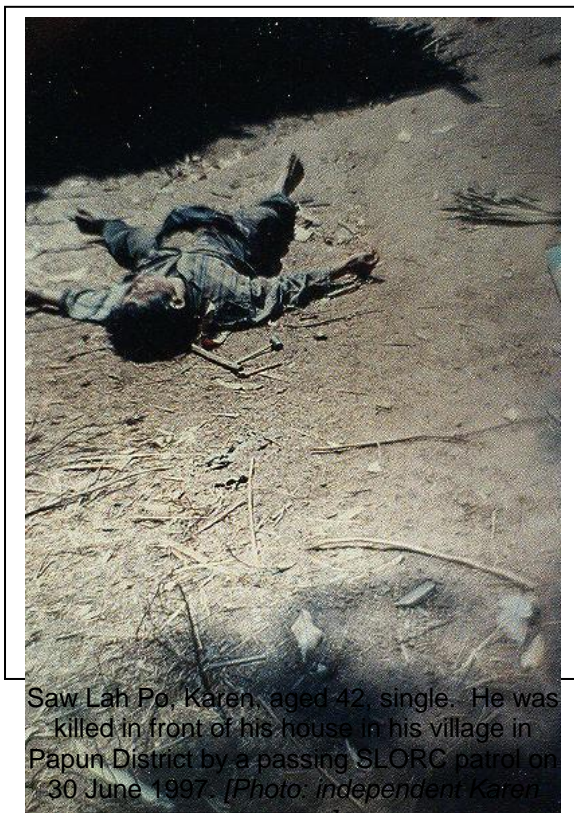
Summary Executions And Shootings

“They shot my husband and one of my cousins to death. Another one was wounded. My husband’s name was Maung Aye. He was 37 years old, not so different in age with me. They shot him on August 4th at Lay K’Tee. The people gave him the duty to be the village headman..... He was going to sell betel leaves and buy rice for us. When they were going to do this, the Burmese soldiers shot them. Seven or eight of his friends went with them. They escaped. As for him and my cousin, they couldn’t run swiftly enough, so they were shot and killed. A third man was shot in his hand. The people who went with him came back and told me. They told me the Burmese shot my husband in the leg and it was broken, but he was not dead. After that they tortured him badly. Then they stabbed him to death with a knife. When I thought about that, I didn’t want to live at all.... It is best never to meet the soldiers. If they see people, they kill them all.... Now he has left me with my five little children. Two of my younger relatives went and buried my husband. ... I can never forget him. While I was climbing up the mountains with my children, I felt very tired, I couldn’t go on anymore and we fell behind, and still I remembered him. I can’t forget him, but there is nothing I can do.”
- “Naw Htoo K’Paw”, F, 36, Yan Aung village, Shwegyin township; lived in hiding in the forest from March-December 1997 before fleeing to Thailand, and a SLORC patrol shot her husband dead in August (Interview #54, 12/97)

Villagers found in their villages or sighted in the fields are shot on sight with no questions asked. The only exceptions occur if the column happens to need more porters, and in that case a captured villager will be used as a porter; but if no porters are needed the captured villager is executed, and if he tries to run he is shot. A list of 62 such confirmed killings is included on page 64 of this report, though the real number is probably at least double that. In several cases SLORC/SPDC patrols have surrounded farmfield huts knowing there are villagers inside and simply opened fire into the hut, after which they burn it with the villagers’ bodies still inside. This was how the 53-year-old wife of the Yeh Mu Plaw village tract headman was executed by Infantry Battalion #57 on 1 June 1997, and on 8 June a man over 65 was killed in the exact same way in Kyah Po Der, near Papun.

“[It happened] on the 1st of June ‘97. They shot her dead at Htee Mu Deh, they shot her in our farmfield hut.... They came across the Bu Loh Kloh [Bilin River] from Dta Meh Der. They were from #57 Battalion, about 50 soldiers. They saw some people who had gone to fetch their cattle and followed them back along the path. I was told that at the time she was sitting in our hut, putting water in the hollow bamboos [bamboo is used to carry and store water in the villages]. The Burmese came quietly and shot her. She never saw them, she was inside the hut and they came out of the forest. They saw her in the hut. I don’t know why they shot her dead, but then they burned the hut until nothing was left but ashes.... One of the men saw it, my daughter’s husband P---. The Burmese saw him and shot at him, a bullet just missed him and he ran away.... We went but we didn’t see her body, only her bones in the ashes, so I took the bones and buried them beside the hut. My wife’s name was Naw Lah Kweh, she was 53. We’d been married for 32 years.” - “Pu Tha Muh Heh”, M, 55, Yeh Mu Plaw village, describing the murder of his wife one week earlier by IB #57 (Interview #22, 6/97)

"They shoot at villagers, and they killed my son. They shot him here, the bullet hit him in the back of his head and then came out here [his forehead]. They shot him in the arms, once here, once here [in both upper arms], and both of his legs also, here [both upper legs]. Two bullets in the head, in both sides of the back of his head. He was only 18 years old. ... His name is Saw Eh K'Lu. He was a single boy, he was still in school. He had 4 sisters and one brother, he was the eldest. I am his father, here is his mother and this is his house. He was still studying at the school in xxxx, he was in 9th Standard. He just came back to visit and sleep here for two nights. He was going to go back when school re-opened, but the SLORC shot him dead. When they shot him he was running back to our house to save us. We heard the Burmese coming and shooting, so we ran out of the village. But he didn't know, he came running back to the village to see us and warn us, the SLORC saw him and shot him on the path.... Later we came back. We didn't see my son, so we thought that he'd run away in fear of the Burmese.... [W]e waited for our son to come back for 2 days without knowing he was dead. Then we were coming back to our house, and on the hill we saw him. We saw that they'd shot him here, here, and here [pointing again to two bullets in the back of the head, as well as bullets in both arms and legs]. ... When they come to our village they see us and shoot us. They don't think of us as human. They know that we are just villagers but they want to persecute us. Man or woman, they shoot everyone. But they couldn't shoot everyone, so they just shot my son." - "Saw Thee Way", M, 49, Paleh Der village (Interview #48, 6/97)



Saw Lah Po, Karen, aged 42, single. He was killed in front of his house in his village in Papun District by a passing SLORC patrol on 30 June 1997. [Photo: independent Karen source]

"In October some people went again to get rice and the Burmese shot them again. One was killed and another was wounded in his leg. Maung Kyay Ray was killed. He was 20 years old and single, from Ko Reh Kee village. Saw Lay Day from Saw Theh Kee village was wounded, he is 35 and married with 6 children. We had to leave him back there in the forest because his leg isn't healed yet. We wanted to bring him here, but there was no one to carry him. Four of his children came with us, their mother is still back there in the forest with her husband and 2 of her children.... They also shot dead one child. Saw Maw Ko, he was 12 years old. His village was Tee Blah. They shot and killed him in November while he was harvesting paddy. The other people ran away when the Burmese started shooting at them, but he couldn't run quickly because he was too young."

"Didn't the Burmese call out to the people or tell them anything?"

"No, they never say anything. They just fired guns, both big and small guns. Later the villagers went to find Saw Maw Ko's body, but they couldn't bury him because it had already decomposed too much. The Burmese had shot him in the leg and broken it, and then killed him with a knife." - "Naw Muh Eh", F, 53, Nya Mu Kwee village, Shwegyin township (Interview #52, 12/97)

“They’ve shot dead two people in my village tract, one in Lay Po Kaw Tee [at Maw Day] and another in Wah Kah Der. At Lay Po Kaw Tee they killed Po Lah, I think he was about 45. He had a wife and 2 children. He went to burn off the weeds in his field, and on his way back he met the Burmese. They shot him and he died. In Wah Kah Der they killed Saw Ghu. He was 32, with a wife and 2 children.... His family already left for xxxx [a refugee camp in Thailand]. They killed him on March 27th, and they killed Po Lah on March 28th.” - “Saw Hsah Htoo”, M, 43, Kheh Pa Hta village (Interview #46, 6/97)

“The Burmese also shot dead three people. One was Saw Pay Heh and another was Pa Klay. Pa Klay was already 40, Saw Pay Heh hadn’t turned 35 yet. The third man was just over 20 years old, but I forget his name. Two of them were from Thay Ko Mu Der, and the other was from Lay Po Der. Pa Klay was from Thay Ko Mu Der. They all had wives and children, their children are still very small. Now their wives and children are in xxxx and yyyy. ... [They killed the 3 men] in March, before they captured me. They shot them in their fields when they were running at Klo Tho Hta.” - “Pu Lay Htoo”, M, 65, Paw Say village (Interview #47, 6/97)

“They shot dead one person in our village..... They shot Kay Kyay on the 22nd of May. He was 40 years old, with a wife and 6 children. He was just a villager. They shot him in the stream, in Htee Daw Loh Kloh stream. They shot him because he had some clothes and things, and they wanted to take them.” - “Pati Kywe”, M, 50, Thay Ko Mu Der village (Interview #23, 6/97)

“Two weeks ago some people went to get some rice, and the Burmese met with them and shot at them. They shot at a child, both of his legs were broken and then they killed the child. They smashed his head. His mother was shot in the chest and died too. Now the villagers don’t dare stay in our village anymore, they’ve gone to stay all over the place. Two households have come here.” - “Saw Wah Lay”, M, 34, Plah Ko village, just south of the Kyauk Kyi - Saw Hta car road. The village was burned, some villagers were killed and everyone fled (Interview #18, 6/97)

Many villagers are still alive after being shot on sight. Some have fled only to bleed to death later, like Saw Mu Pa Heh, a teenage boy from Ku Day village who was shot on sight when going home after weeding his family’s ricefield. In other cases the troops have approached the wounded villagers and killed them with knives. They have even done this to young children (see Interviews #18 and #52 above and Interview #4 below). The troops seem to have no interest in interrogating the villagers; their goal is simply to eliminate them.

“... They killed one person. His name was Mu Pa Heh. He was a teenage boy. He went to his farm and was burning the weeds, then the Burmese shot him and he was dead. It happened one month ago, I think. They shot him in his field but he didn’t die there, he died trying to come back. The villagers found him on the path a week later, and they dug a hole and put in the dead boy, and they buried him. The Burmese also shot dead two other people who were doing their weeding, and their daughter was wounded as well but not too badly... (If you can run and escape you’re okay, but if you can’t run you must die without knowing what you’ve done wrong..” - “Naw Muh Paw”, F, 49, Ku Day village; her burned village is beside the new military road (Interview #25, 6/97)

"... if they see someone in the forest they kill him. They killed 2 children in Ko Reh Hta, close to my village. I don't know their names, but one of them was 5 years old and the other was 8 years old. They were children. The Burmese saw the children in the forest so they killed them. They hacked them and killed them with a knife." - "Saw Kaw Muh", M, 40, Maw Thay Tha village (Interview #4, 5/97)

"I was in the forest near Lay Kaw Der... They saw us and shot us. They fired one time, with a small gun [rifle]. Then we ran and they didn't shoot again.... I ran straight away. I knew I was hurt. I ran to Day Law Po. My mother was staying in a field near Day Law Po, and we ran to her there. We put on some herbs and made a bandage from our clothes. I didn't see a doctor [medic] for a week... Then we ran to T--- and we saw a medic there, while we were still fleeing [they encountered a Karen Army unit with a medic and received treatment]. It was very painful, but I wasn't unconscious. I could walk by myself. Then we arrived here, about a month ago.... [Now I'm doing] nothing. I'm staying with my parents. I can't cut bamboo. I can't work in the fields. I can lift my arm but I can't do any work. I think it will be one year before I can work. But if the Burmese come I can run." - "Saw Tee Doh", M, 17, Lay Kaw Der village; in May 1997 he was shot on sight by a SLORC patrol he didn't even see. When interviewed he still had open wounds and was living in a tiny leaf lean-to in hiding in the hills with his parents (Interview #41, 6/97)



17-year-old boy who was shot on sight by a SLORC patrol while looking for vegetables in the forest a month after his village was destroyed. The G3 assault rifle bullet passed through his arm and lodged in the muscle of his back.

"When the Burmese came last time they saw the villagers and shot at them, but no one was hurt. Then they went into the fields of Thay Ko Mu Der, and in the fields they shot 3 villagers. Their names were Po Taw Ku, Saw Pay Heh and Pa Klay. They were all about 30, though I don't know their exact ages. They all had wives and children. One of them was from Thay Ko Mu Der, one from Lay Po Der and one from Tha Thwee Der. The Burmese saw them when they were walking and called them, but they tried to run away so the Burmese shot them and they died. That was 2 months ago. Then the Burmese went on to Day Pu Noh and found the things the villagers had hidden in the forest along the way [rice and belongings], and they took all those things." - "Thra Tha Yu Heh", M, 49, Thay Ko Mu Der village (Interview #31, 6/97)

"They saw my daughter and shot at her, and afterward there were bullet holes all over her dress but she was safe, she was not killed. My nephew

was shot dead. His name was Pa Hai Nyaw. He had passed 7th Standard. He was 20 years old but he was still a schoolboy. They shot him outside the village, when he was trying to come back to his house. They shot him all over his body - his arm was broken and his legs as well. They shot him up until his whole body was in pieces, here, here, here... [she pointed to her chin, forehead, nose, right arm, and leg]” - “Pi Blu Paw”, F, 50, Paleh Der village (Interview #13, 6/97)

“We knew that the Burmese were coming so we ran away. Then they ... saw us at the place where we were hiding, and they shot at us there. They shot with G4’s [automatic assault rifles]. They shot at one girl but she was running and the bullets ripped through her dress and tore part of it away. They shot at me and didn’t hit me, but the bullets went right through my sarong - they hit my sarong here, you can see the two holes. I was running. Three of us got holes in our sarongs like these, and they shot at two young ‘say mu wah’ girls [unmarried young girls who wear the traditional white dress], the bullets tore part of their dresses away. But no one was wounded, and we ran.” - “Saw Thee Way”, M, 49, Paleh Der village (Interview #48, 6/97)

“They captured one woman, my sister-in-law. She stays with me in Kyaw Law village. She is not normal [mentally handicapped], and when we ran to the forest we called her to run with us but she didn’t, she ran off alone. When the Burmese were firing the big gun she went back, and they saw her and captured her. I don’t know what happened to her. We heard that they tied up her hands and pulled her along with them to Baw Kwaw, at the Bu Loh Kloh [Bilin River; they heard this from other villagers who thought they’d seen her]. We haven’t heard that they’ve killed her. We’ve never seen her again. ... Her name is Naw Reh Lee... I think they have killed her by now.” - “Pa Weh Mu”, M, 48, Kyaw Law village (Interview #33, 6/97)



“They came and shot dead 10 people: 3 were from Tee Po Hta , 1 from Paleh Der, 1 from Toh Wih Der, 1 from Lay Nya Der, 1 from Krah Wah Der, 1 from Toh Thay Der, 1 from Saw Kee and 1 from K’Per Der. Those people had fled and were living in the forest like us, the Burmese saw them and shot them dead.” - “Saw Kyaw”, M, Toh Thay Der village; interviewed while in hiding in the forest (Interview #12, 5/97)

‘Uncle’ Pah Dah, Karen Christian, aged 45. He was shot dead on sight in the forest by a SLORC patrol on 26 June 1997. His body was left where he was shot.

The grave in the photo was dug by the villagers.

[Photo: independent Karen source]

“If they can capture us they beat us, hurt us, beat our heads, poke our heads with knives until the blood flows out, so we dare not wait until they come. We will run, and if they shoot us and we die while we run, that is better. If we are hit we’ll die, but if we aren’t hit we can run and escape.” - “Saw Thee Way”, M, 49, Paleh Der village (Interview #48, 6/97)

“Every one of us has come close to being killed by the Burmese. If they see us we must die.”
- “Saw Muh Lah”, M, 43, Lay Po Kaw Tee village (Interview #38, 6/97)

Forced Relocations

“We all were supposed to move to Meh Way - about 6,000 households [from all the villages]. They said that they fight the Nga Pway [“Ringworms”, SLORC/SPDC name for Karen forces] but that they never succeed because of us, the villagers. They told us that if we all die, they will only have to fight for a short time. Four households [from his village] went to Meh Way. I don’t know how they will live, but I think it will be very hard for them, always carrying things. They have to stay close to the the soldiers. They’ve made three camps to surround the villagers. They keep the villagers in the middle. They have a Byu Ha [Strategic Command] there, and the Battalion is #546. The name of the major is Thura Bo Ni, and the Column Commander is Hla Htun.” - “Saw Htoo Klih”, M, 46, Ler Htoo Po village just above Meh Way (Interview #8, 5/97)

In areas where villagers do not flee SLORC/SPDC troops or where many of them are caught in their villages, they are all ordered to move to relocation sites. Many villages in the south of Papun District and those near Papun and Meh Way have had so many SLORC patrols pass through their villages in the past 3 years that living in hiding has not been possible, and they have grown used to leaving at least some people, such as the elderly, in their villages to face the patrols when they come. In these areas, SLORC has issued forced relocation orders which generally tell the villagers that they must move to a SLORC/SPDC-controlled site within a few days or be shot on sight, and that their village has been marked for destruction. Some villages included in the written orders, and many which are not, never received anything in writing but only learned that they were ordered to move when captured by patrols, or by talking to people from other villages who had been told of the order by SLORC/SPDC troops. A list of 105 villages which have either received a written order or some indication of a spoken order to move is included later in this report (page 60), though this list is far from complete.



A village near the Salween River which now lies abandoned because the SPDC troops based 1½ hours' walk away regularly stormed the village to loot it and capture porters.

The following two pages give the direct translation of one written

relocation order which was issued in April 1997. A photocopy of the original order in Burmese is included on pages 66-67. This order identifies 64 villages which are supposed to move, though many of these villages never received a copy of it.

Township Law & Order Restoration Council
Papun Town

No. 59 / 1-26 / TLORC (PP-1) 370

Date: 1997 April 23

To: Village Headman
 _____ village
 _____ village tract

Subject: The matter of moving and consolidating the villages

Reference: Strategic Command #1 (Base), Date/Hour '97 April 6th, 17:10; Telegram #3 U 1.

Secret, level 2. [*La Wa 2*]

1) Regarding the telegram referenced above, in order to obliterate the insurgents, the small villages mentioned below must move and consolidate within one month, between 6-4-97 and 6-5-97.

- a) Pan Thon [*a.k.a. Baw Thay Hta*] village to Section 4 [*of Papun town*].
- b) Meh Wah Deh, B'Naw Kleh, Dweh Lo, Kler Oo Deh, and Po Mu Deh, must move to May Ner Nweh village.
- c) Meh Yeh Kee village to B'Lu Kee village.
- d) Maw Hta, Kay Hta, lower Baw T'Keh Kee, Baw T'Keh Kee, Pway Hta, lower Oo Tu Kloh, and upper Oo Tu Kloh to Kaw Boke village.
- e) Meh Taw Kee, Kyo Ko Deh, Lay Ain Zu, Baw Th'Kee, and Kyaw Bweh Deh to S'Tah Lay village.
- f) Kyaw Mu Bpu, Pa Moh Hta, Kyaw Mo Lay Ko, Kyaw Nyo Hta, Hteh Hta, Baw Kee, and Du Wah Po Kaw to Paw Hta village.
- g) T'Law Doh, Paw Dee Deh, Law P'Lah Lay, Thay Ko Mu Deh, and Kyaw Law Deh to Toh Nyo village.
- h) Bpa Tha, T'Nya Kee, and Kaneh Lay to Meh Paw Mu Hta village.
- i) Kaneh Koh to Ma Mu Deh village.
- j) Pa Ee Kaun, Hsain Ta Mot, Weh Tho K'La [*sic: Wah Tho Klah*], Pyi Ma, Myay Ta Pyay, Tha Mu Kyu Law, and Tha Ko Law to M'Taw village.
- k) Noh Pa Doh to Tha Ku Law village.
- l) Noh Law Su, Bo Baw Ko, and T'Ree Bpeh Ko to Ku Sit village middle school.
- m) Ka Leh Hta, Maw Lu, and Tee Baw Ka Hta to Nga Ain Zu.
- n) Tee Gaw Hta, Oo R'Kee, Ka Wah Kee, Meh Kee, and Ner Ku Kee to Ner Ku Hta.
- o) T'Kaw Kyo and T'Pa Ko to Kyun Bpin village.
- p) Deh Kee, Cheh Ree Kyo, Theh Hta, Tee Baw Law, and Naw Wih Hta to Kyauk Taung village.
- q) Bo Leh, Bo Leh Hta, and Pah Kyat to Kyaun Ywa village.

The abovementioned villages must move and consolidate.

[continued on next page]

2) Small villages, even those not included in the above list, must move and consolidate to nearby consolidation villages before May 6th. Villages which fail to move will be destroyed.

3) Village heads are hereby informed that they should explain and organise the families of their villages to strictly follow these instructions.

[Sd.]
(for) Chairman

Copies to - Commander, Strategic Command Group
Strategic Command #1 (Base)
Southeastern Command Headquarters
Papun Town, Karen State
- office receipt
- internal circulation

Aung / - 59400197

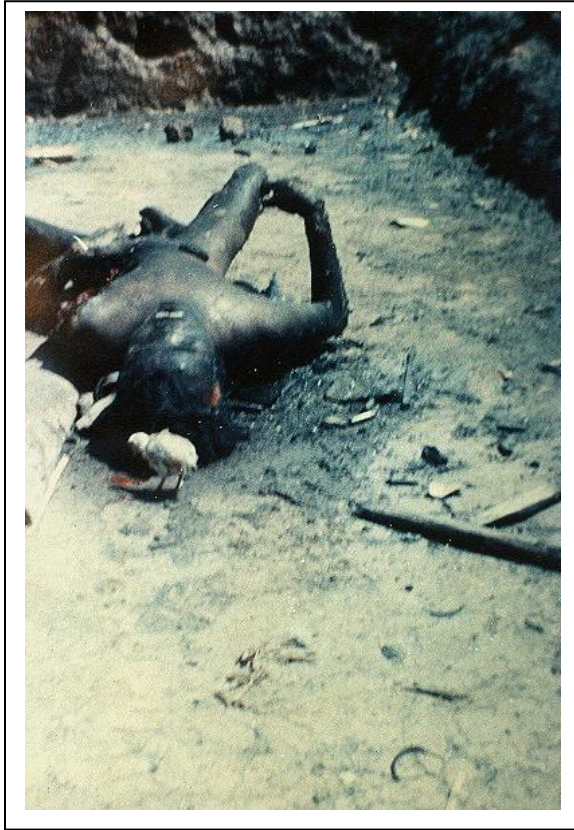
[A photocopy of the original order in Burmese is included on pages 66-67 of this report. The Reference information at the top means that this order is issued because of an order from higher levels, received by radio at 17:10 on 6/4/97; the 'Telegram Number' starting with '3' indicates that it is a message concerning Army operations with respect to civilians (Level 4 is combat operations), and 'la wa 2' identifies it as a 'Secret, Class 2' message. The Burmese often cannot properly spell or pronounce Karen village names, and in the above translation we have transliterated the names as they have been (mis)spelled. The main difference is that village names ending in "Deh" should end in "Der", which is how they are spelt elsewhere in this report. For example, "Meh Wah Deh" should read "Meh Wah Der". Some of the relocation sites, such as Kaw Boke (see item 'd') have existing SPDC military camps.]

Villages were ordered to move to SLORC/SPDC-controlled garrison villages, military camps, or SLORC/SPDC-controlled sites along car roads. Villages throughout the Ka Dtaing Dtee area south of Papun were not burned but were ordered to move to Ka Dtaing Dtee, the major village in the area. Many villages east and northeast of Papun were ordered to move to the perimeter of SLORC/SPDC Army camps at Pah Heh and Toh Thay Pu. Many villages along the Bilin River valley were ordered to move to the major village of Meh Way where there was a SLORC/SPDC military camp. Villages in Shwegyin Township of Nyaunglebin District were generally ordered to move westward into the plains to sites along the Shwegyin - Kyauk Kyi motor road, where they will almost certainly be used as forced labour on road maintenance work. At least five villages (Wah May Kyo, Htee Muh Hta, Deh Oo Po, Saw Theh Kee, and Bweh Si Kee) were ordered to move to one such site known as Than Seit Min Lang.

“They said to us, ‘People who won’t come to our place must run away. People who don’t want to run away must come to us. People who neither run away nor come to us must die.’ As for us, we didn’t want to go to their place so we ran away and they burned all our houses. The soldiers were from Shwegyin. There were many of them from three battalions: 57, 349, and 350. They forced all the villages below ours to go with them to Meh Way, but not ours. They just burned down our village. Ours and the other villages had to go to the motor road at a place called Than Seit Min Lang, along the road from Shwegyin to Ler Doh [Kyauk Kyi]. Those villages were Wah May Kyo, Htee Muh Hta, Deh Oo Po Kyaw Ther Kee, and Bweh Si Kee. Five villages. They burned down all those villages too.” - “Saw Pah Htoo”, M, 27, Htee Muh Hta village, Shwegyin township (Interview #51, 12/97)

Meh Way, a village of an estimated 200 households in the Bilin River valley, has been one of the major relocation sites because it is just at the southern edge of one of the regions hardest hit by this campaign. At least 36 villages have been explicitly ordered to move there, and our list is by no means complete. In addition, according to villagers who have been ordered to move it appears that many other villages would also be ordered to move there if SLORC/SPDC had a chance to issue the movement orders, but the villagers keep fleeing. This explains the reference in the written relocation order above to “Small villages, even those not included in the above list”, all of which are to be destroyed even though they are not named in the order and did not receive a copy of it.

“The Burmese stayed in Meh Way. They built 3 camps for themselves there with 3 rings of fences around each camp, and 2 battalions came to stay. Each battalion has over 200 soldiers. There are Battalions #356, 546, 77 [77 is actually a Light Infantry Division].... They haven’t burned Meh Way because they have their camps there. There are still 30 or 40 families living there. There were about 70 households, but some have fled this way and some have fled to the towns. The Burmese ordered us to do things for them, like dig holes, build barracks, and make fences to protect them from their enemies.... The Burmese forced all the Meh Way villagers living outside the village to come and stay right in the village, they said if they didn’t come they would shoot them dead on sight. Over 400 households from other villages came. They had to build their own huts all in a line, like this. Then they had to work for the Burmese just like the Meh Way villagers. We have to work for them for five days, then we get a rest to work for ourselves for 2 or 3 days, then we have to do their work again -



Saw Lah Htoo, Karen Animist farmer, aged 24. SLORC troops burned him to death in his house on 2 July 1997. [Photo: independent Karen source]

everyone has to do that.” - “Saw Toh Wah”, M, 45, Meh Way village; interviewed as he was fleeing Meh Way with his family. Meh Way is being used by SPDC as an army base and relocation site (Interview #49, 6/97)

In early 1997 SLORC LIB #546 established 3 military camps surrounding the people of Meh Way, which originally had about 200 households. After several thousand people had been forced to move there and build huts between all these camps, they were constantly used for forced labour along with the Meh Way villagers, building and maintaining these camps and going as porters and human minesweepers with the search and destroy columns which were going out to burn the villages and hunt villagers. The troops withdrew from the village, apparently rotated out of the area. The Battalions continuing the operation came from other camps. KNLA forces then entered Meh Way, burned and destroyed the SLORC camps. Many of the villagers who had been relocated there asked the KNLA soldiers to burn their huts as well, in hopes that if they were caught after leaving the relocation site they could tell SLORC

forces that they'd left because the KNLA had burned their houses. As a result, the villagers and the KNLA burned many of the relocation huts and there was a steady flow of villagers leaving Meh Way until very few forcibly relocated villagers remained there.

However, after rainy season ended in October, troops from LIB #350 and IB #57 came to Meh Way and based themselves there again. In November they had still not built a camp, but were staying in the houses of all the villagers. They began forcing villagers from surrounding villages to move to Meh Way again, often driving them at gunpoint if they found them. According to KNU reports the commander of this column, Myo Myint Thein, told the villagers that they must provide food for the 50 porters brought from Shwegyin by the troops, and that Meh Way villagers would be taken in place of any porters who escaped. He confiscated 1,024 tins of rice from a local trader for his soldiers' rations, then began confiscating rice from the villagers. In December the troops said that each family would have to give 2 tins (about 33 kg/72 lb) of rice per month, claiming that this is because they plan to build 30 pagodas in the area. The troops bring no rations with them. Meh Way villagers and those forced to move there are still being used as forced labour, both as porters and to build things for the troops.

“When they came in May they were ordering everyone to move to Meh Way, which is where they stay. So at first many villagers went and stayed at Meh Way, but little by little they all left there and went back around their villages again until there was no one left staying at

Meh Way. When the Burmese came again, whenever they saw families heading back toward their villages they took them and forced them back to Meh Way again. At that time they'd already burned down all the villages. Only the villages on the other [western] side of the [Bilin] river ever went to Meh Way, like Meh Si Hta, Baw Law Kee, Toh Baw Saw Kee, Ker Kaw Law, and Meh Gha Law. But on this [eastern] side of the river, people never went even though the SLORC tried to drive them there.... They don't have a camp there now, they stay in the houses of all the villagers. They are from Infantry Battalion #57. The villagers there have to be porters and go wherever the SLORC goes, they always have to carry heavy loads for the SLORC. They are all complaining of all the work they have to do for SLORC. They are all hoping to escape.” - “Pu Ler Mu”, M, 60, Maw Thay Tha village, just north of Meh Way; his village was burned in May, he lived in hiding until end of November, then had to flee to Thailand because he had no more rice (Interview #50, 12/97)

“When they first came, they did not burn down the village. They ordered all of the villagers to come out of our houses and then commanded us to bring all of our rice and paddy which we kept in the forest into the village [many people keep their paddy in rice barns well outside the village to prevent it being looted by SPDC troops]. They said that they would kill the people who are living outside of the village. After that they went back. When they came the next time, we had already brought all of our rice and paddy back to the village. They ordered all of us to come out of our houses, and they told us that they would force us to go to Meh Way. Then they burned down everything in our village, but they didn't force us to go to Meh Way, they just went away without a word. We couldn't understand what was going on, so we all ran away into the forest.” - “Saw Pah Htoo”, M, 27, Htee Muh Hta village, Shwegyin township (Interview #51, 12/97)

“We've heard they want that [the villagers to move to a SLORC-controlled site] but we wouldn't dare go. Even when they don't see us they try to shoot us, so if we go among them it will be even more terrible.” - “Po Aye”, M, 50, Lay Po Kaw Tee village; interviewed while in hiding in a tiny leaf lean-to hidden among the hills. SLORC troops burned the first hidden shelters he and other villagers had built near the Bilin River (Interview #42, 6/97)

Forced Labour

“We carried their things but they didn’t call us porters, they called us “Nga Pway ration officers”. Usually two of them would lift our loads up onto our backs, then if we were unable to stand up they would shout at us, “Nga lo ma tha, Nga Pway ration officer!” [“Fuck your mother, you Ringworm ration officer!”]. Then they stomped on us, and if we were on the ground we had to get back on our feet very quickly or they would keep stomping on us.... A lot got sick but they didn’t give them any medicine. They just made them go on like that, and they lost porters one by one. I don’t know if they released or killed them. I know they killed 3 people, one from Ker Kaw Law, one from Kwa Hta, and one from Law Pu Der. I saw that with my own eyes. One was very old and couldn’t walk anymore, so a 3rd-rank soldier came and kicked him and he fell on the path. Then a 3-stripe soldier [Sergeant] came and said, “Uncle, don’t you feel well?” The man answered, “I am not well, I can’t even talk anymore”, then another 2nd-rank soldier [probably a Corporal or Lance Corporal] came with a big stone, threw it down on the man’s head and he died. They often kill people like that. Another one was carrying things under the sun and got diarrhoea because they didn’t give us fresh rice. We had to eat rice that we already cooked the day before, so the rice was not good and we got diarrhoea. When we climbed Dweh Lo mountain he had no more strength and he died.” - “Saw Htoo Klih”, M, 46, Ler Htoo Po village; he and others from his village were captured when SLORC came to burn their houses, and they were used as porters for over a month (Interview #8, 5/97)

Unlike some other campaigns involving forced relocations, the purpose of this operation is not to obtain forced labour for any project, but simply to wipe out the population. In doing so, however, SLORC/SPDC troops have still used villagers and townspeople as forced labour. Even prior to the beginning of the operation, Meh Way villagers were used for labour on a road to Shwegyin, and villagers in Shwegyin township who did not flee SLORC troops were always used as forced labour maintaining the Shwegyin - Kyauk Kyi road. Since March 1997, both Meh Way villagers and those forced to move there have been used to build, maintain and rebuild Army camps and to do servant work for soldiers based in the village. Because of the army’s constant demands for forced labour, the Meh Way villagers and those relocated to Meh Way have had no time to prepare and plant their own fields. At the same time, though we have no direct information from Shwegyin township villagers who were forced to move to sites along the Shwegyin - Kyauk Kyi motor road, it is very likely that they are being used as forced labour maintaining that road.

“... they order the villagers from other villages to move to Meh Way and then they order them to work for them as they like. ... The Burmese ordered us to do things for them, like dig holes, build barracks, and make fences to protect them from their enemies. We had to dig holes near their Major’s place and they covered them with logs as big as this [about 18 inches in diameter], then we had to dig 3 steps down into the hole. They made us lay the big logs like that to stop bullets. Every morning we had to go out to cut 10 bamboos each and come back to build for them, then in the evening we had to go cut another 10 bamboos to build shelters for them. Each person had to do 5 days at a time, then rotate to another group. Each day twenty people had to go to each camp, altogether 60 people because there are 3

camps. They didn't give us anything for that, and no food.... We have to work for them for five days, then we get a rest to work for ourselves for 2 or 3 days, then we have to do their work again - everyone has to do that." - "Saw Toh Wah", M, 45, Meh Way village; interviewed as he was fleeing Meh Way with his family (Interview #49, 6/97)

"...they came with porters. They capture their porters in Shwegyin town and other places in the plains. Some [of their porters] are Karen, some are Burman. Sometimes the escaped porters come to the villagers for help, and the villagers help send them back home." - "Naw Muh Eh", F, 53, Nya Mu Kwee village, Shwegyin township (Interview #52, 12/97)

The most notable use of forced labour in this offensive has been forced portering. The search and destroy columns entering the area always bring porters with them, townspeople they have rounded up in Shwegyin or Papun, or villagers they have brought from Meh Way. Most of the villagers they find in the area are simply shot on sight, though if they have lost some porters or feel they need more to carry their loot, they occasionally capture people along the way. Usually these people are the elderly, because younger people attempt to run and are shot. One 63 year old man who was captured in this way told part of his story as follows.

"I was in the village, because others told me that being old I wouldn't face any trouble [the other villagers fled]. But then they [soldiers] came into the village and called me. I had to go with them, and I didn't even have time to take a bag. They captured all the old men, 4 of us. Later one of us was shot to death because he wasn't able to carry things anymore.... When I was unable to walk anymore they beat me. It was very painful. They beat me on my head and my legs, and it's still painful now. I was forced to be a porter for 2 months.... We had to climb mountains. We had to carry many things, like shells for the big guns. I had to carry six shells, rice, pots and plates. There was one porter for each group of soldiers. There were more than a hundred porters.... A lot of them got sick, and when they couldn't walk the soldiers kicked them and stomped on them. They beat some people until they died of it. They beat one of my friends from the village and he died. He came from my village. He was the same age as me. His name was Saw Wih Kyay. They threw stones at him until he died.... I saw 2 men die. The other man wasn't beaten to death, he just died because he had no more strength. He was from Saw Hta and his name was Pa Kya Po. His children were twins, and when the Burmese called their father to be a porter the children got hungry and died. Their grandmother had to look after them, and when they had to run away they didn't have enough food, so the twins died. ... I saw women too. There were 5 women. They were from Saw Hta and Tee Po Kee. They carried food, ammunition, and many other things. The women were young. The soldiers beat one of them seriously.... They released me because I couldn't walk any more. They released me at Papun.... I couldn't go back to my village because there was no village left. After 2 months I came home, and I saw that my village had become ashes. I saw no one there. They had burned everything. There was no food and there were no houses, so the situation was impossible. I came straight here through the forest." - "Pu Kyaw Ni", M, 63, Ker Kaw Law village (Interview #7, 5/97)

"When I was climbing up the mountain they met me and captured me and told me to go with them. I went with them for 7 days. While I was with them and we arrived at Pah Heh they were about to kill me, but there was an elder there from Kler Pu Der and he told them not to kill me. So the Burmese didn't kill me, instead they ordered me to show the way for them. I showed them the way for a few more days and then I ran away and escaped. I came back to

my house. It took me 10 days on the way to reach my house. I came back and I saw my house and my paddy all burned, so we had to leave, and to stay like this. Now I have no house, I must live in this shelter.” - “Pu Lay Htoo”, M, 65, Paw Say village (Interview #47, 6/97)



The corpse of Saw Baw Wah, Karen Animist farmer, aged 32, burned to death when SLORC troops burned his house on 27 June 1997. He had two children who managed to escape together with their uncle. [Photo: independent Karen source]

The porters used in the operation have ranged in age from the mid-teens to at least 65, and have included many women. They have been used to carry the soldiers' supplies and ammunition as well as the food and valuables they loot from the villages they burn, and they have also been used as human minesweepers in front of the column because the KNLA has laid many landmines in this area. The porters in this operation have been treated brutally; deprived of food and medicines, tied to trees while they sleep in the dirt at night under guard, beaten and abused if they cannot keep up while climbing up and down the steep hills of the area. Many have died of illness or exhaustion, and many have been shot or beaten to death by the troops when they can no longer continue. Added to this is the trauma of having to watch the troops burn every village and shoot every villager along

their way, in what for many of these porters is their home area. Some have finally managed to escape and head home, only to find their village completely burned, their food supply destroyed and their family nowhere in sight, in hiding in the forest or at a relocation site.

“... no one goes near them so they can't capture us. If they could capture us they would force us to carry heavy loads until we couldn't even lift up our heads, and then they would kill us, because they never keep people alive once they've captured them.” - “Naw Muh Paw”, F, 49, Ku Day village (Interview #25, 6/97)

“They captured me around April, before they burned our village. They captured me on my way to Meh Way, and they used me to carry heavy things. It was very hard. I had to carry rice and other food for over one month. They captured 3 porters from my village, and they also had some porters from Meh Way and from the towns. We had to carry between Meh Way and B'Go [Pegu, a major town northeast of Rangoon and over 120 km./70 miles in a

straight line from Meh Way]. It takes 3 days each way. They gave us only a little rice with yellow beans, not enough for us, and they never gave us any medicine. At night they slept all around us and we had to sleep in the middle. We couldn't escape. There were over 10 porters with our group, including the porters from town. Some were sick but couldn't get any medicine. The soldiers shouted at us a lot, and they beat and kicked us a lot. They beat me 3 times. We had to walk a long way and climb up high mountains, so we felt very tired and I didn't have enough strength to continue. So I took a rest, and they beat me. I fell down twice, and they hurt me on the back. After over a month they set us free at B'Go and sent us back to Meh Way. I was nearly dead when I finally arrived home because I was ill. When I arrived back at my village I saw all my things were destroyed. The cooking pots, clothes, and blankets were all lost because I was not at home when they burned down my village. My machete, my axe, and everything in my house was lost." - "Saw Say Lweh", M, 45, Du Baw village (Interview #53, 12/97)

"At midnight they put a rope around our necks and tied the other end to a tree, like we were cattle, and they made us sleep like that because they were worried that we could escape. They tied three of us together on each rope. There were more than 100 porters, because along the way they captured everyone they could. The porters did not know each other, but from our village there were 10 porters. There were porters as old as 60. The youngest was 16 years old. They captured 4 women and the Ko Per Baw [DKBA soldier with the column as a guide] said that one of them was the wife of a KNU soldier. They kicked and beat her, but she was pregnant and one of the Burmese officers came and said, "If you beat her don't beat her on the abdomen, beat her on the head". She lost 2 teeth. They kept treating her like that all along the way. She was from Plah Hta village. Her husband used to be a KNU soldier, but not any longer.... They used the 4 women as porters for more than one month, then when they arrived in Papun people who knew the women came and asked for their release, so they released 3 of the women but they said the other was a KNU member's wife so she would have to follow them. She was with her son, about 8 years old. They kicked her to kill her, then she couldn't walk any more so they knocked her down on the road and stomped on her neck. After she stopped breathing they took off her sarong and other clothes, and they took her son away with them. I saw all of this with my own eyes. It was the 548th Battalion, and I was with them as a porter." - "Saw Htoo Klih", M, 46, Ler Htoo Po village; he and others from his village were captured when SLORC came to burn their houses, and they were used as porters for over a month (Interview #8, 5/97)

"They took me to Bu Tho, then to their camp at Pah Heh. I had to carry rice, pots, plates, spoons and many dishes [all looted from the villages they'd burned]. It was very heavy, over 10 viss, maybe 15 viss [24 kg./52 lb.]. I got a boil on my back but they didn't give me anything, no injection or even a tablet of medicine. If we were hurt they didn't treat us at all. They didn't even give us enough rice to eat. Twice a day, morning and evening. Each time just a little bit. There was one day we didn't get anything to eat. For one day and one night we had to go hungry. We had to sleep on the dusty ground, and they stood sentry over us all night. There were about 300 soldiers. There were about 20 porters in my group, and 6 of them were women. The women had a lot of pain in their arms and legs. The porters were from Kler Oh Der, Kaneh Khaw Hta, the women were from Kaneh Khaw Hta and B'Nweh Bo, those are the 3 villages I know of.... One was an older woman, and the other five were muh k'naw [maidens, unmarried teenage girls]. At night they ordered the women and girls to sleep off to one side and we didn't see, so we couldn't tell whether the soldiers went to sleep with them or not.... The girls were over 10 years old, up to about 20 years old. The

older woman was about 40. The oldest men were myself and a man from Kler Oh Der, 65 years old. The youngest was about 20, and some were about 30.” - “Pu Lay Htoo”, M, 65, Paw Say village (Interview #47, 6/97)

“They forced us to go on without taking any rest along the way. When we were climbing up mountains they kicked us... both the men and the women, they kicked everybody! ... some porters were ill. One was coughing up blood, and the women had malaria and pain in the legs, because we were carrying in the rain. But the Burmese didn’t let them rest, they still had to keep carrying.” - “Pu Lay Htoo”, M, 65, Paw Say village (Interview #47, 6/97)

“Last time they caught us and tied us together with rope, and then they forced us to march in front of them, two or three villagers at a time. They never walk in front of us. [The villagers were being used as human minesweepers and shields.] We always have to carry things for them and do whatever they order us to do. Whenever they go somewhere we have to go with them, sometimes 10 villagers, sometimes 20 or 30, they call for as many of us as they need. Last time they captured me while I was cutting the weeds in my field, and they forced me to carry one basket of rice and 2 shells. There’s no limit on the number of days, we must go with them until they finish their journey. They never set us free, we must escape if we can. One old man from my village had to die because he couldn’t run to escape. They captured him like me, he had to carry a heavy load until he had no strength left and then he fell down along the path. Then the Burmese beat him to death. That was in April. His name was Naw Kweh Pa [literally, “Naw Kweh’s father”; in Karen culture parents are often referred to this way]. He was 60 years old, with a wife and 4 children. Those who were porters with him and escaped came and told us about it.” - “Saw Toh Wah”, M, 45, Meh Way village; interviewed while fleeing Meh Way with his family. Meh Way is being used by SPDC as an army base and relocation site (Interview #49, 6/97)

The New Military Road

“The road they’re building passes right between Plah Ko and our village - if we climb up a bit from our houses we can see it. They’ve built it right through the farmfields of many people. The road is going to Maw Pu. All the villagers have run away so they’re building it themselves.They just started to build the road this dry season, a few months ago.... They are building new [Army] camps alongside the car road as it progresses, step by step. They’ve made a new camp at Kler Ko, very close to our village. They’ve burned Ku Day, Thay Baw and Toh Kee villages - the road passes these villages, so they’ve burned them.” - “Naw Muh Paw”, F, 49, Ku Day village (Interview #25, 6/97)

At the same time as they have been wiping out all villages in the area, SLORC/SPDC troops have also been trying to push an access road eastward from the town of Kyauk Kyi, in the Sittang River plains north of Nyaunglebin, westward across the hills to Saw Hta, an Army post on the Thai border which is on the western bank of the Salween River just south of the Kayah State border. SLORC captured Saw Hta from the KNU in an October 1992 offensive. The distance from Kyauk Kyi (Ler Doh in Karen) to Saw Hta is about 80 kilometres (50 miles) in a straight line, though the road is considerably longer because it must wind through steep hills for its whole length. From Kyauk Kyi, the road heads east into the hills, goes slightly to the south to pass through Pwa Ghaw, Ku Day and Maw Pu, then east northeast to Maw Kyo and Leh Klay Kyo, where it begins following the Saw Kloh stream down to the Salween River at Saw Hta.

All villages along the route, such as Plah Ko, Saw Ee Der, Ku Day, Toh Kee, Lay Ghaw, Thay Baw, and Toh Loh Kee, have been burned and destroyed, and Army camps have been established at Pwa Ghaw, Plah Ko, Kler Kyo, Maw Pu, Maw Kyo and Leh Klay Kyo (in addition to the existing base at Saw Hta) to protect the route. Unlike their usual practice, SLORC/SPDC has used little or no forced labour in building the main portion of this road. This may partly be because they have been unable to capture significant numbers of villagers in the area, all of whom have fled into the forest; but the fact that they have not brought in forced labour from Kyauk Kyi and other places seems to indicate that they are in a hurry to finish this road and finish it properly, because its only possible use is to support further military control of the area. It has been pushed through very rapidly, using bulldozers under heavy military guard. It is to be a simple dirt road. Prior to the mid-1997 rainy season most of it had been bulldozed except a segment of about 10 kilometres between Maw Kyo and Leh Klay Kyo, but in June 1997 the KNLA destroyed the bulldozers at either end of this segment with rocket-propelled grenades. Rainy season then washed out much of the road, but SPDC troops are now working on it again and it is expected to be complete or almost complete before the 1998 rainy season starts in June.

“Do you have to build it [the new Kyauk Kyi - Saw Hta road, which passes near his village]?”

“No, because they shoot people so we run away. We don’t dare face them. ... If they didn’t kill us, we would dare to face them. But they shoot at everybody, the men and the women. If they were not doing that we could stay in our village.” - “Saw Wah Lay”, M, 34, Plah Ko

village, just south of the car road. The village was burned, some villagers were killed and everyone fled (Interview #18, 6/97)

“The first time the Burmese came they didn’t burn the village, but this time they burned it and they ate everything in the village. The Burmese were from Pwa Ghaw, they’ve come to build the car road. They started building it 5 or 6 months ago. They didn’t ask the villagers to build it, they’re just building it themselves.” - “Naw Blu Paw”, F, 38, Toh Kee village; interviewed while in hiding in a shelter in the forest (Interview #20, 6/97)

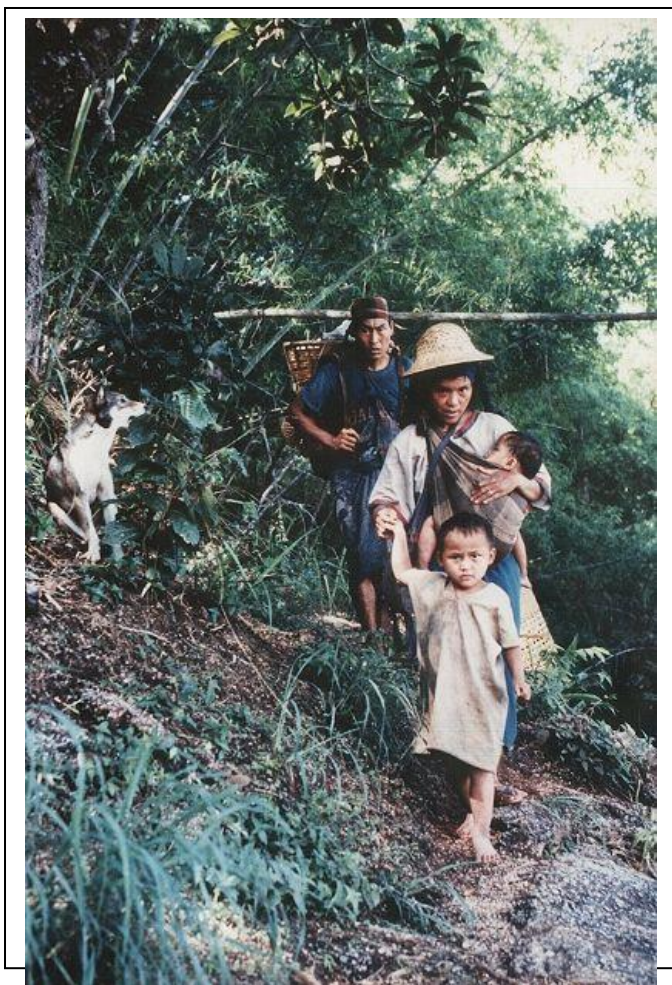
The KNLA expects this road to be used as a springboard for an offensive to secure the Salween River and the entire region, to block off KNLA supply lines and the escape routes of refugees and to allow the establishment of new military camps and further sweeps through the area to wipe out the Karen civilian population. It is hard to see any purpose for this road other than to increase military control. There are no connecting roads out of Saw Hta except a military supply road northward to Kayah State, and there are no roads on the Thai side of the border opposite Saw Hta, only 50 kilometres of uninterrupted forest in every direction. Due to the heavy military presence along the route, villagers from the destroyed villages in the area have had to flee further away than they normally would. Many of them are scattered, staying in hiding with the people of other destroyed villages one or two days’ walk from their homes. This prevents them from being able to reach their fields to even try to plant a crop, making conditions much more difficult for them.

How Villagers are Surviving

“Some [villagers] have come here, others are running to other places, and some are still staying near our village but only very few. The Burmese ate some of our livestock, like chickens and pigs, and some they just shot, like our buffaloes. We had to leave most of our things behind in the village. Some things we could carry with us, and the rest were burned. Most of our rice was burned and our pots were burned, because we couldn’t carry them with us. There were 30 houses in our village, and all of them were burned down. They burned some of our rice barns, and the rest of our rice they took to eat... All the villages are burned, no one can stay any longer. We’ve been here for 3 months. We can’t clear a field, we can’t plant our rice any more. It’s very difficult to get food. If they see us going back they will kill us. I think we must stay here, though I think we can’t stay here for a long time. We dare not go back to stay - if we stay there and they shoot the big gun at us we can’t escape.... Five families are here, further upstream there are 3 families and there are also some further downstream. Some others are scattered elsewhere. They are in many places.” - “Pati Kweh Say”, M, 40+, Dta Paw Der village (Interview #30, 6/97)

Villagers in the area spend a lot of time going back and forth to their fields, which are often quite a distance from their village, and they interact a lot with people from other villages. As a result, they usually know up to a day in advance when SLORC/SPDC troops are in their area and have a chance to flee the village before the troops arrive, though they can take very little with them except some rice. Many of them keep some paddy in hidden rice barns in the forest for these occasions. Most villagers in the affected areas fled into the surrounding forests when their village was being shelled and burned for the first time; in most villages this was March/April 1997, while for others it was June/July. They fled up the streams, higher into the hills, where most of them built simple shelters out of bamboo and leaves in small groups of a few families. People from some villages in the hills which are not on the soldiers’ normal routes were later able to return and build shelters near the ruins of their village, though they must always be prepared to run. To the villagers, the key consideration is to be close enough to their fields that they can try to plant a rice crop so that they do not starve.

“We ran farther away, all over the place. We stayed far away in the forest for 15 days, sleeping on the dusty ground. We had nothing because the Burmese had destroyed it all. All our poultry they ate, and everything in our houses was destroyed because we didn’t have a chance to carry it away. Each of us only carried some food, two pots and one basket of rice. Some had to carry their children so they couldn’t take much else. Most of our pots, machetes, big jars and baskets were all burned. They burned all the rice barns near the village, 4 rice barns here, 9 rice barns altogether including the ones at Bpeh Deh. Now the people who still have some rice give some to the people who have none. We share with each other whatever we have. We must take care of each other. We built these huts, and everyone is working their fields. We can plant, but there won’t be enough.” - “Pati Htoo Kuh”, M, 50, H--- village (Interview #35, 6/97)



A family fleeing further into the hills because a SLORC patrol was approaching near their hidden shelter, which they had built after their village was destroyed.

"...we were just eating the rice we'd hidden in the forest and brought with us. When that was gone we had to move to other places... until after rainy season was over [a total of six months]. We just lived in the forest. Some villagers from Dta Baw Kee were there. The Burmese had burned down their village, but they still had some paddy. We borrowed paddy from them, and they took care of us. The Burmese had camps at Lay Kaw Tee and Ko Sghaw, and we were in between them. They came to our place twice. We saw their footprints beside the Meh Way Kloh river, so we sent word to all the villagers and we ran away together, up the mountains and into the deep valleys. They came and destroyed whatever they saw, then they went back again. The last time they came we got word they were coming so we ran away, but there was one very old woman with us and we had to carry her. Finally we couldn't carry her up the mountain anymore because we were too tired and we had to run, so we set her down on the path on the mountainside. The Burmese came up that mountain and saw her there, and they kicked her down the mountainside

and killed her. I don't know her name, but she was about 80 years old." - "Saw Pah Htoo", M, 27, Htee Muh Hta village, Shwegyin township (Interview #51, 12/97)

The forests throughout the region are dotted with small clusters of shelters, often hidden on hillsides among thick bush or up narrow gullies. Some groups of families have built small bamboo huts with raised floors, while others have been living for months on the ground in lean-to's made of leaves. In many parts of the district, particularly in those villages high in the hills, nightly temperatures may drop below freezing in cold season (December-February), and below 10° C/50° F even during warmer times of year. The people hiding out in the forest have no change of clothing, only a few cookpots between them, and little or no rice. They make containers and plates of bamboo and hunt for roots and leaves in the forest. Most of them have no salt or chillies. If they have any livestock it is only a few chickens; the rest were left behind in the village and killed by the SLORC/SPDC troops. Those who still have some rice share with those who have none, and when rice is very low they survive on boiled rice soup.

"I couldn't bring anything with me when we ran, just the blankets and pots we needed. We only have rice left for one day. I don't know what to do about food. There is no food." - "Naw Blu Paw", F, 38, Toh Kee village; living in hiding in a shelter in the forest (Interview #20, 6/97)

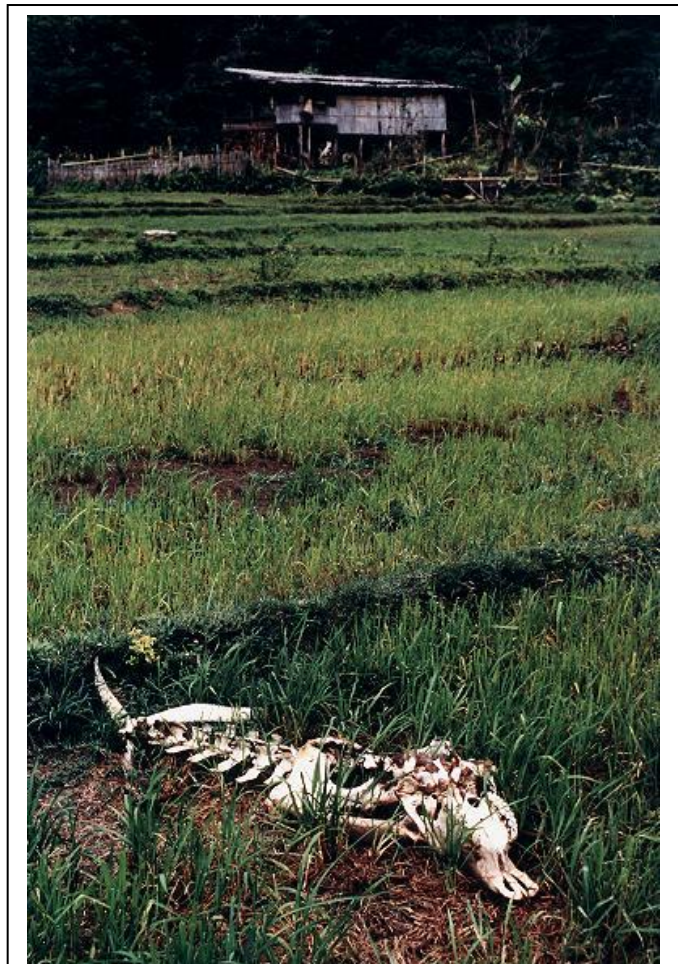
"All the people who have food must share it with others, because most people can't find any food. Most of the paddy fields have been destroyed. They don't have enough rice even for one month. When that is gone, we will have to eat rice soup or rice broth and bananas, only that! I don't know what we'll do. If the Burmese weren't there we could stay there, but if they are there we can't make our fields and we can't get any food. My wife and children are out in the forest right now. In Sho Per Ko it's very cold at night, even at this time of year." - "Thra Tee Doh", M, 33, Sho Per Ko village (Interview #14, 6/97)

"We have some [clothes] but very few. Some of the clothes that we managed to keep have been eaten and destroyed by termites. We have only the one set of clothing that we're wearing. The Burmese also destroyed and burned much of our clothing." - "Saw Muh Lah", M, 43, Lay Po Kaw Tee village; interviewed among the remains of villagers' hidden shelters near the Bilin River which were found and burned by a SLORC patrol the week before (Interview #38, 6/97)

"Do you have any rice and paddy?"

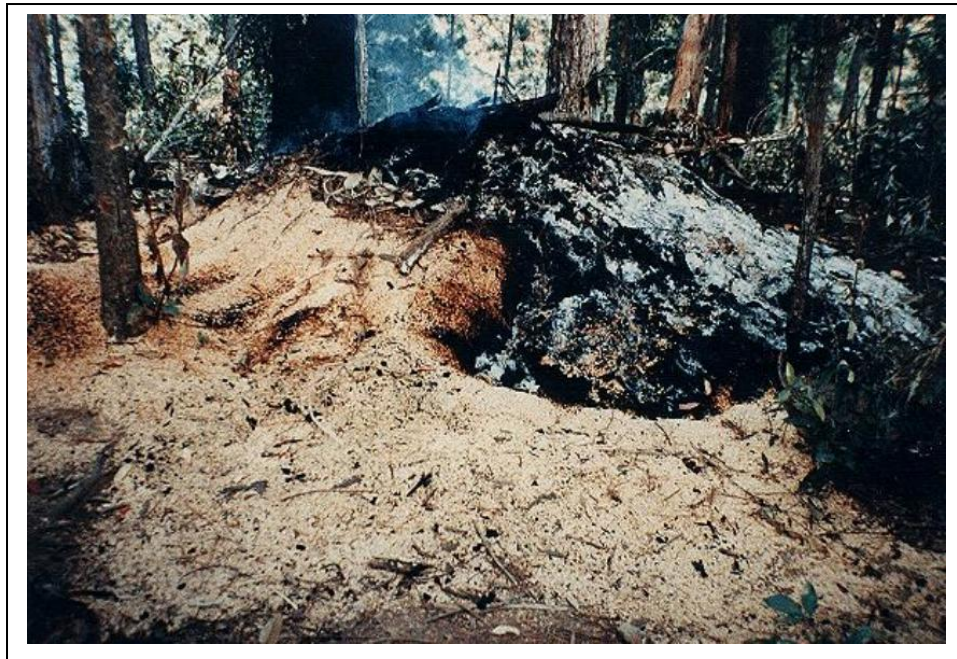
"Yes, but the rats and birds have eaten a lot of it. This year we couldn't burn off our field, so we haven't planted. I don't have any rice right now. I have some paddy, but I have no salt. I have some paddy hidden back at our village but we can't go back because the river is flooded." - "Pi Bay Bay", F, 60, Lay Kaw Der village; when interviewed she had already been living for over one month in a tiny leaf lean-to in a forested gully high in the hills (Interview #38, 6/97)

"I have the pots which we had hidden but they took all the others. They burned my rice barn so we don't have much rice now. They ate our chickens too. All the chickens in the village are gone. We have already sown our paddy, but I don't dare go back there now. I don't know how we will get food." - "Saw Eh Tee Kaw", M, 43, Kheh Pa Hta village; interviewed while he was fleeing a SLORC patrol (Interview #43, 6/97)



The remains of a domestic buffalo shot dead and left to rot by a passing SLORC patrol near Yeh Mu Plaw. Many such skeletons litter the fields throughout the area.

In the village, people kept their paddy (unhusked rice) in paddy storage barns, small sheds built on stilts which often have metal sheaths to help keep rodents out. Some of these were in the villages, while others were hidden out in the forest in case of SLORC attack. People would bring a basket or more of paddy to their house at a time, then pound some of it each day to husk it and cook their meals. When the villages were burned, people fled carrying some of the rice they had in their houses, while the rest was either taken or burned by the troops. All paddy barns in the villages were looted, burned or otherwise destroyed, as were all paddy barns which the troops could find in the forest. The villagers in hiding in the forest have to survive on whatever rice they brought with them, along with whatever rice they can salvage in trips back to the paddy barns which were not found by the troops. However, patrols continue to be sent out to seek and destroy these paddy barns, and every time the villagers have to flee their shelters, some rice and belongings get left behind.



Paddy (unhusked rice) which villagers had stored in their village. An SPDC patrol found it, piled it in the forest and set it alight to destroy it. [Photo: Saw TGH]

“They burned 7 rice barns. We ran to the forest, then we stayed at Tee Kalaw, where we built little shelters. Then they came again and burned those. We ran again, and now we stay like this. Some have gone that way, some have come this way. Some live further up in the hills. They are all spread out, not together.” - “Pu Lay Doh Htoo”, M, 63, Lay Po Kaw Tee village (Interview #39, 6/97)

“I saw them coming but we didn’t show ourselves. They always came, tried to find us and ran after us. I ran away and hid in a cave, up the stream, places like that. We slept on the ground for 3 months, always hiding around. We didn’t build any houses. I ate rice with salt.” - “Saw Kaw Muh”, M, 40, Maw Thay Tha village (Interview #4, 5/97)

“They didn’t see any villagers in the forest, they just saw many of the places where the villagers had been hiding. The villagers had run away. If they saw any shelters in the forest they burned them, and they told us, ‘You are “nga pway” nationality, not villagers!’” - “Saw Htoo Klih”, M, 46, Ler Htoo Po village; describing what he saw while a SLORC porter for over a month. ‘Nga pway’, meaning ‘ringworm’, is SLORC/SPDC slang for Karen soldiers (Interview #8, 5/97)

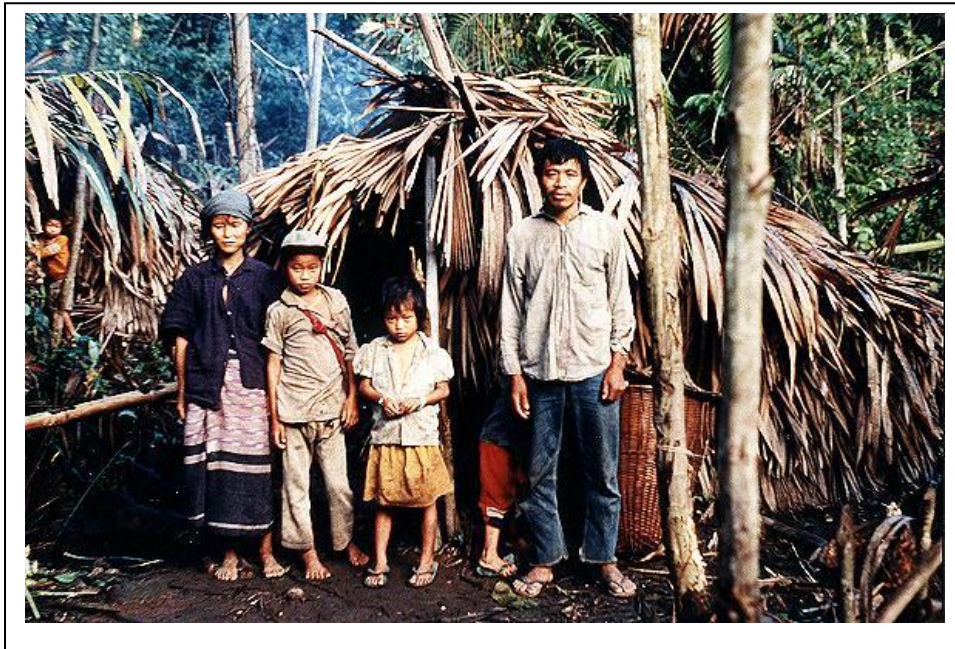
The villagers in hiding have tried to prolong their survival by planting a crop, either in their old fields or by clearing a small area in the forest if they cannot dare go to their old fields. This is very difficult, because hillside rice cultivation follows a rigid schedule which cannot be interrupted. In February/March the scrub has to be cut in the hill fields and left to dry, then in April/May it is burned off. The seedlings are planted when the rains come in June, then transplanted in the larger fields in June/July. Weeding then has to occur throughout the growing season, up to the harvest. Some of the early rice can be harvested as early as October, but most is harvested in November/December. After their villages were burned in March/April, many villagers managed to prepare their fields for a limited crop during the lull in SLORC activity until June. Some had managed to plant just before more patrols came at that time, but others had to flee their fields just at the crucial planting time. Some villagers had managed to start an early harvest in October, but SLORC/SPDC activity greatly increased in November and many villagers had to flee armed patrols just at harvest time, causing most of their crop to be lost to insects and animals. In some areas, particularly Shwegyin township, SPDC patrols went through the rice fields at harvest time, burning the crop or knocking down the stalks with machetes and rifles to destroy it. Many villagers were shot on sight in their fields while trying to weed their crop or to harvest. In the area near the new military road, whenever troops saw the smoke of fields being burned clear of scrub they fired mortar shells at the smoke.

“Between us we still have some paddy and we have already planted some paddy, but we dare not go back to cut the weeds yet. If the Burmese are gone we’ll dare to go back and cut them. If we are lucky we can harvest in November. As long as we have paddy we can live. We run in the gullies, we run into the mountains and we live in the jungle like this. We must move often, we can’t stay anywhere for very long.” - “Po Aye”, M, 50, Lay Po Kaw Tee village; interviewed while in hiding in a tiny leaf lean-to hidden among the hills. SLORC troops burned the first hidden shelters he and other villagers had built near the Bilin River (Interview #42, 6/97)

“We asked people and they said they’re still at the village. They stay at the top of Tee Klay Lu hill above the village and they look down everywhere. If they see smoke come up where people are cook-ing [in hiding in the forest] they fire their big gun. When we went to burn off our farm and they heard



Shelters built in the forest by villagers in hiding. Each small shelter houses up to 8 or 10 people in an extended family. If too many families or shelters occupy the same location, they risk detection by SPDC patrols.



A family stands in front of the leaf shelter where they had been sleeping on the ground for the past month.

the sound [of the burning scrub], they fired at us with the big gun and their shells were dropping everywhere, so we ran and slept in the middle of the path that night.” - “Pi Say Paw”, F, 50, Dta Meh Der village; SLORC/SPDC troops set up a base outside her village after burning it (Interview #15, 6/97)

“We couldn’t sow any paddy. We had to run away after we’d finished clearing our fields because the Burmese came. After they went back people tried to sow a little bit of paddy, but they couldn’t finish burning off all the weeds in their fields because the Burmese came again. Then after the Burmese went back the people tried to sow some paddy again. But in the end, the people could only harvest very little, because while they were harvesting the Burmese came again.

People can’t do anything when the Burmese come.” - “Pu Ler Mu”, M, 60, Maw Thay Tha village; his village on the Bilin River just north of Meh Way was burned in May, he lived in hiding until the end of November, then had to flee to Thailand because he had no more rice (Interview #50, 12/97)



Villagers living in lean-to’s in the forest upstream from their burned village, trying to stay close to their fields so that they can plant a crop.

“My brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, each of them gives me a little (rice) so that I can get my daily food. I have a little field and we are working in it now, but we don’t know if we can we work until we can harvest because the Burmese can see us there. Just 2 or 3 days ago we went to the field and did some weeding, then we burned the weeds, and when the Burmese saw the smoke they fired their big gun [mortar] from their camp at our farm. Soon after that they arrived at the edge of our field, so we ran away.” - “Naw Muh Paw”, F, 49, Ku Day village; interviewed while living in hiding. Her village is near the new Army road. (Interview #25, 6/97)

“... Now I go to villages where they still have some paddy and ask a little from one and a little from another. Some people kept their paddy in places where the Burmese didn’t find it, so they have some and I go and beg for some. Now we can work our field because the Burmese aren’t around. But we had no seed paddy, so just now I’ve gone and carried seed from a place far from here.” - “Naw Mu Dah”, F, 41, Bpeh Deh village, found wandering through the ashes of the village (Interview #34, 6/97)

“They first came to Ler Mu Plaw in May, they stayed and they burned everything. All 40 or 50 houses. Then they left, and one week later they returned again. The villagers from Ler Mu Plaw came and stayed in Sho Per Ko. They were in Sho Per Ko for about a month, they prepared some fields to plant paddy but the Burmese came and they had to run. Then the Burmese left so they came back and planted. But now the Burmese have come back again, so they must run away again. They haven’t been able to plant this year.” - “Thra Tee Doh”, M, 33, Sho Per Ko village (Interview #14, 6/97)

As a result, most villagers lost either part or all of their harvest, while others never even had a chance to plant. At planting time in June, most of them only had enough rice left to last them for one or two months even though it would be 5 months until the harvest. Now, even with the villagers sharing whatever harvest they could get, most people only have enough rice for the next month or two at most. They are stretching it as far as they can by living on rice soup, but there have already been many cases of people starving to death, particularly the elderly living in hiding alone.

The villagers in hiding have also lost many people to disease. In every group of families there are people suffering from malaria and other fevers, diarrhoea, dysentery, oedema, respiratory and stomach ailments. Many more have died this way, particularly children and the elderly, than have been shot by the troops. None of the villagers have any medicines, they only have whatever herbal remedies they can find in the forest. Before this operation began they could walk to towns to buy medicine or medicine sellers would occasionally come through their areas, but no longer. Even in parts of eastern Shwegyin township which should be an easy walk to Shwegyin town, SLORC/SPDC forces have blocked off all the paths since late 1997 in order to prevent these villagers from having any access to outside food or medicines. In this context, it is ironic to note that Southeastern Region commander Major General Ket Sein, who has been the commander of this village destruction campaign, was named Burma’s Minister of Health when the SPDC was formed in November 1997.

“Among us there is one woman who is very seriously ill. She can’t walk, she has no muscle left here [on her legs] and she can’t speak anymore. Her children and her husband have to

carry her piggyback when we run in the forest. The others have malaria. When we are in the village we can buy medicine from the medicine merchant who comes sometimes, but now we can't get medicine because we are in the forest." - "Saw Muh Lah", M, 43, Lay Po Kaw Tee village; living in a shelter in hiding with other families (Interview #38, 6/97)



A woman in hiding in a forest shelter who had been down with serious dysentery for several days. She had no medicine, and could die from this illness.

"Some have sick stomachs, diarrhoea, dysentery, some have malaria, or diarrhoea with malaria. There is no medicine. If we have diarrhoea, we drink the tea of 'thay nya oo' bark. For malaria we must eat 'thaw kah doh', and 'nya paw kyaw' [various bitter-tasting plants]. But we have no medicine. From Lay Po Kaw Tee, two or three children have died." - "Pu Lay Doh Htoo", M, 63, Lay Po Kaw Tee village; living in hiding in a hut (Interview #39, 6/97)

"Do the people here get sick?"
"Yes, but we have no medicine, we just eat the roots of trees and plants. We don't dare go to get medicine. Since we had to run no children have died, but two elderly people have died." - "Saw Tee Muh", M, 36, Haw Kee village; living in hiding in a hut (Interview #36, 6/97)

daughter is not well, her fever is up, she is coughing and has stomach pain. I don't know why. We can't get any medicine. How could we get medicine here? She's nearly 3 years old. I can't give her any medicine." - "Pa Weh Mu", M, 48, Kyaw Law village; living in hiding in a hut in the forest (Interview #33, 6/97)

"Some have malaria, some have fevers and many of the children have colds. One of the Pastors died of illness. I think he was about 70 years old. He had a wife and 6 children. We had no medicine." - "Saw Eh Tee Kaw", M, 43, Kheh Pa Hta village; interviewed while he was fleeing a SLORC patrol (Interview #43, 6/97)

As of December 1997 the situation of the villagers in hiding was desperate, and there is no indication that it may improve. Instead, it appears that it will only get worse as SPDC troop concentrations increase both to the west and to the north, and new roads are pushed through to support increased military activity in the area. Since November 1997 the number of

Battalions in the region has increased and so has the frequency of patrols sent out to hunt villagers and destroy food supplies. Most villagers in hiding in the forest only have enough food for a month or two at most, and many of them are sick and weak. Soon many of them may find they have no choice but to die where they are or flee the area.

“What will you do when the Burmese soldiers arrive here?”

“When they arrive here they will shoot people - they even shoot livestock. They shot my dog when they came to my house. The other times when we ran from the Burmese, we ran into the bushes or went to live under the trees.... We run in different directions so that the Burmese won't find us all at once. Sometimes groups of people disappear for a whole week... But if we run to a faraway place we'll have no food, so we must stay nearby, around the edges like this. If they come this way we will run that way, if they come here we will go there, if we are lucky we will be safe, but if we are unlucky we must die.” - “Naw Muh Paw”, F, 49, Ku Day village; interviewed while living in hiding (Interview #25, 6/97)

“Now they've built their camp near our village. There are many soldiers - two valleys are filled with them. They came down from Baw Kwaw... The Burmese burned all that we had there. So we can't do anything now, it looks very terrible for this year and I know that next year will be even worse. The people from xxxx [a village nearby their shelter which was also destroyed] can prepare their fields, but in Dta Meh Der no one can do that, all our farms are lost.... Some [people from her village] are here, some are back behind this place, some are at Y---, some are at B--- and the others are at M---. We must stay as only 2 or 3 families at each place. We don't know for how long. Maybe we'll stay here for one year. If the Burmese leave we can go back, but if they stay there then we can't stay there.” - “Say Say Mo”, F, 44, Dta Meh Der village (Interview #29, 6/97)



A child tries to play outside a shelter. The children of the area now have no chance of a school education, and many have already died due to lack of food and medicine.

“The Burmese try to run after us like a hunter tries to catch animals in the forest. Even after we had left [the area to flee to Thailand] they were still looking for us. We couldn't even think of building a house - if we heard a gunshot we had to flee.” - “Pi Paw Wah”, F, 60, Meh Gha Law village, on what it was like living in hiding in the forest (Interview #3, 5/97)

“They’ve come and burned Dta Meh Der village 7 times altogether! After they burn it they leave, we start to rebuild our houses and they come back and burn them - and so on like that, many times. But this time we didn’t dare try to build our houses again.” - “Pi Say Paw”, F, 50, Dta Meh Der village (Interview #15, 6/97)

“My rice barn was burned and I lost everything in my house. All that, the belongings and the house, were worth 30,000 Kyats. Now I’ve built a hut [at xxxx]. I cook with the pots that we carried when we ran. I just sleep on the floor, without a mat. I have a blanket, but I have only the clothes on my body. I saw the Burmese when they burned the houses. I ran far away and just watched the smoke blowing in the wind. We couldn’t dare stay - if they saw us they would kill us.... If they burn it [his house] again everything is finished. We are afraid. As for me, I don’t want to settle here. If I do, they will burn it again.” - “Pa Kya”, M, 50, Kaw Weh Der village (Interview #16, 6/97)



Villagers from Lo Plah, Dta Leh Gaw Der and Lay Po Kaw Tee villages built shelters here after their villages were destroyed by SLORC. On 6 June 1997 a SLORC patrol found the site and immediately burned it, ripping down whatever would not burn because of the rain.

“There is no one whose belongings weren’t burned, everyone has lost their belongings. No one has anything.. If anyone has anything they must share it. It will be very difficult for us this year. This Auntie here had harvested a crop and hadn’t even eaten any of it but the Burmese burned it all. They made holes in

the bottoms of our cookpots, they shat in our cookpots, in our water containers and on our clothes, then they threw them away along the mountain path. What would you do with the Burmese? We haven’t done anything to them and they treat us like that. They shoot us, they kill us if they see us. If they see they shoot. How can we deal with the Burmese? Can we dare to stay? We have no choice but to run because they treat us like that.” - “Saw Tee Muh”, M, 36, Haw Kee village (Interview #36, 6/97)

“Those who have some rice must share a bit of it, because we can’t go on any other way. We couldn’t prepare our fields this year, so we can only grow 1 or 2 bowls [equivalent to 1 or 2 pyi, or about 3-4 kilograms; sufficient for a few days] of rice. We might have enough rice to last us for this season, but not next season.” - “Pu Lah Kuh”, M, 63, N--- village (Interview #37, 6/97)

“The Burmese burned all the pens of my pigs and chickens. We still have the paddy we had stored in the forest, but all the paddy and rice that was in our house was burned. I don’t have anything except one or two sets of clothing which I had hidden in the forest. We haven’t sown our paddy yet. I’m trying to make a small field. I don’t have a buffalo [for ploughing], I’ll have to borrow one from others. If the rain falls and we can plough, and if the Burmese don’t come, then we can plant, but otherwise we won’t be able to. I have enough rice for about 3 months. We must wait 5 months before we can harvest. If our rice runs out I don’t know what we will do!” - “Pu Lay Htoo”, M, 65, Paw Say village (Interview #47, 6/97)

“[Three people] died because they couldn’t get food to eat. They died at Dta Ku Der, 2 months ago. One was an old person and the other 2 were younger. No one was there to help them, because no one dared go back. One of them was sick with oedema [“dta k’bu”; caused by a serious vitamin deficiency, the main symptom is swelling all over



This elderly Karen woman was found like this after struggling to live alone in this field hut. She apparently starved to the point where she collapsed into the fire she had lit for warmth, and died there. [Photo: Saw TGH]

the body]. His name was Pa Ther Mu. He was 40. His wife is dead, and his children are in a refugee camp. Another was Theh Bay, 60 years old. He had children - one of his children was with him and hanged herself because she was dying of hunger. The third was Naw Aye Wah. She was 50. She had a husband but he’s already dead, and they had no children. ... Now no one stays in our village. There is no rice. We had no food. Our government [KNU] gave us some food, someone gave us a plate to eat and one pot to cook. The food we eat, people give us. If I still can’t do anything about it I will die soon. But I will stay here.” - “Pati Kywe”, M, 50, Thay Ko Mu Der village (Interview #23, 6/97)

The Flight to Thailand

"We were living in the forest. The Burmese came to burn us out, so we couldn't stay there anymore and we came here. We just arrived here the other day. We couldn't stay there anymore, because the Burmese abused us until we had no more food. They destroyed all our rice and paddy, they burned all our food. They looked for our shelters and burned them. Last year we sowed rice in a little field, but they burned it. We couldn't sow any rice this year. My wife died, only 8 months after we were married. When we ran in the forest she caught cold, then she got a fever and died. We came as only one family, myself and my mother. Our village used to have 10 households. One or two of the families are still left there in the forest. They told us they'll try to stay there and watch the situation. They said if the situation doesn't improve soon, they'll come here. I think they'll have to come here." - "Saw Pah Thu", M, 30, Day Oo Koh village, Shwegyin township; his village was destroyed at the start of the 4 Cuts Program in 1975, so the villagers moved from place to place in the forest for 22 years, but in 1997 he couldn't survive anymore so he fled in December to Thailand (Interview #55, 12/97)

The people in Papun District and eastern Nyaunglebin District are hill villagers, the vast majority of whom have had little or no contact with the world outside their hills. They are passionately attached to their land, and the majority of them are Animists who worship the spirits of that land and of their ancestors. Many would rather die than leave, and that is why most of them are desperately clinging to life in the hills near their villages rather than attempt flight. However, many families have finally reached a point where they see no choice but to flee, usually because they have completely run out of food and the SLORC/SPDC troops have destroyed any possibility for them of obtaining more food to survive. Over 1,500 of these people have already arrived in Thailand, and more are still trying to get there.



"[My parents] both died this year. There was about one month between their deaths. My mother hanged herself and died because she didn't

Part of a family of 9 orphans who were taken to the Thai border by Karen soldiers after their mother hanged herself, their village was destroyed and their father died of illness in the forest. The two girls on the right are 15-year-old twins.

want to live anymore, and my father was sick and when we ran away to the forest he

died. It was at the beginning of this month. The Burmese came and shot at us so we ran away. They burned all 15 houses. We had nothing left. They had burned everything.” - “Naw Paw Si”, F, 21, Thay Ko Mu Der village; after they were orphaned, she and her 9 younger brothers and sisters were helped to the Thai border by a KNLA unit in May 1997 (Interview #5, 5/97)

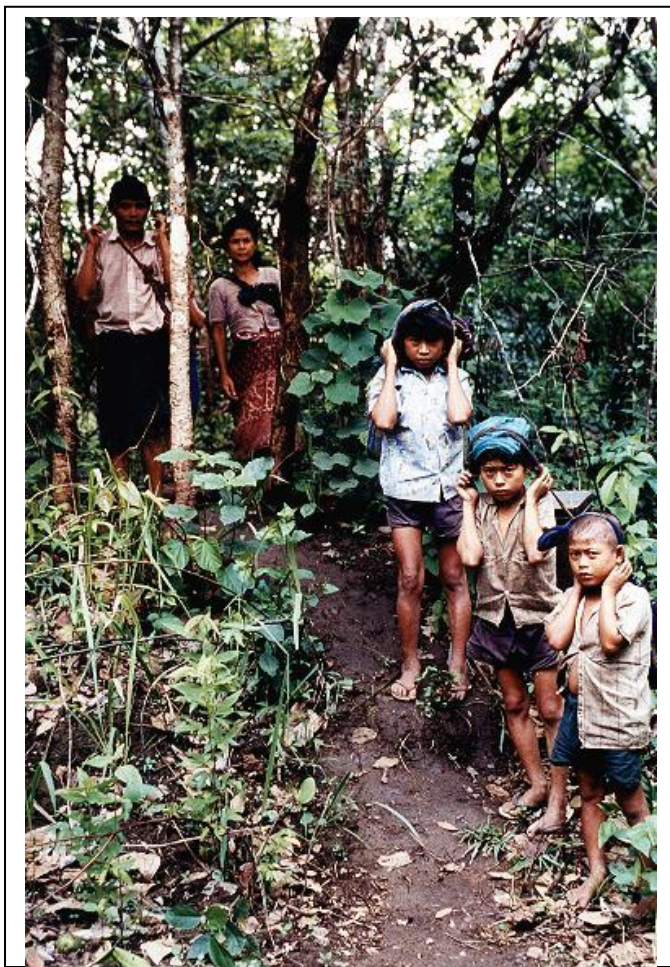
“In the forest we just lived on what rice we had together with some vegetables. I’d already cleared my field and burned off the weeds for this year, but I couldn’t dare continue working my field. We stayed in the forest for 7 months before we fled and came here. Sometimes the Burmese came, but they didn’t find us. If they saw us they would have shot us. We couldn’t stay there anymore, because they came so often that we couldn’t grow a crop.” - “Saw Say Lweh”, M, 45, Du Baw village; he and his family arrived in a refugee camp on 24/12/97 (Interview #53, 12/97)

“We had no food left to eat, and we didn’t dare go to find any food anymore because the Burmese would shoot us in the forest if they saw us. When we went to try to find some paddy in some people’s abandoned fields they saw us one or two times and shot at us, so we couldn’t dare go any more and we had to flee and come here.” - “Saw Pah Htoo”, M, 27, Htee Muh Hta village, Shwegyin township; just after arriving in Thailand (Interview #51, 12/97)

“[We’ve been in hiding] since nine months ago [March 1997], because the Burmese persecuted us until we dared not stay in our village.... [M]y husband was shot to death when he went to find rice for us, because we couldn’t farm. We could sow only one basket of paddy. That was not enough for us for the year [the paddy produced by one basket of seed would feed a family for about one month]. Not only us, many people like us didn’t have enough rice because they couldn’t sow enough paddy. So we had to come here.... As for me, my children were too young to work so my friends gave me some of their rice. If they didn’t give me any rice we would have died, because I couldn’t find any food by myself.... We couldn’t stay there anymore. Twenty-two families came, seven families from Yan Aung. It took us about 10 or 12 days. We travelled by night because we were afraid of the Burmese.” - “Naw Htoo K’Paw”, F, 36, Yan Aung village, Shwegyin township; lived in hiding in the forest with her 5 children from March-December 1997 before fleeing to Thailand, and a SLORC patrol shot her husband dead in August (Interview #54, 12/97)

“If we hadn’t run away we would have been forced to be porters. We knew that we wouldn’t be able to carry all their things, so we ran away. In the village the Burmese shot at the villagers. They went to one woman’s house and shot her down as if her house was a battlefield.” - “Saw Thay Tha”, M, 25, Toh Thay Der village; just after arriving in Thailand (Interview #12, 5/97)

The journey to Thailand is very difficult and dangerous, and this in itself has stopped many people from going. For most who have made it, the journey took 12-15 days, carrying their children and whatever belongings they still had over the mountains. Along the way they must constantly face the danger of KNLA landmines which dot the paths, passing SLORC/SPDC columns, and SLORC/SPDC and DKBA military camps which exist along the route and particularly along the Salween River. The Salween is the border with Thailand; the villagers



A family from Men Way fleeing for Thailand. Their village is being used as a relocation site, and they said the burden of forced labour there has become unbearable.

must reach it at a point between SLORC/SPDC camps, then find a way to cross its 50-100 metre wide fast-flowing current. In some cases, groups of KNLA soldiers have guided large groups of villagers along the way, but most of them have had to find their own way, asking advice of the villagers they find in the forest along their way.

"We came as a group of 3 families. It took us 11 days to get here because we came slowly and we had to rest. My wife is 7 months pregnant. She had to climb up the mountains. Now she is in the hospital here with malaria. We arrived here on December 8th. Along the way we saw a few people, but I don't know where they're staying. In Day Pu Noh there was no one in the houses, they've all run to live in the forest. They'd already harvested whatever they could grow, but I think no one there has enough food. Even if they have any it is only enough for one or two months.... Some families are still there. If the situation doesn't

change they'll have to come. If more Burmese soldiers move into that area they'll have to come. As for me, I hope I only have to stay here a short time. I hope the situation will change so I can go back and live in my own village. I can't understand anything about how to live here. I'm only here because I can't stay in my own village." - "Saw Pah Htoo", M, 27, Htee Muh Hta village, Shwegyin township; just after arrival in Thailand (Interview #51, 12/97)

"We travelled for 11 days. We came with a lot of people. I don't even want to talk about the mountains we climbed. I had to climb, and I fell down and hurt myself. I'll show you the wound [on her leg]." - "Pi Paw Wah", F, 60, Meh Gha Law village (Interview #3, 5/97)

"We were on the way for 12 days. The villagers [along the way] are all living in the forest. I didn't see anyone working in the fields. Seven families from my village came, and other families from other villages. We had to climb Loh Kee mountain and Paw Lu mountain, then we crossed the Bu Loh Kloh [Bilin River] and we had to climb Kheh Pa mountain, Bu Tho mountain, Saw Bweh Der and other mountains I don't know the names of. My children got sick with fever, diarrhoea, and coughs. Right now they are in the [refugee camp] hospital. We brought nothing. We had only 2 rice pots for 8 people, and the lids were already broken. We had no rice, we had to look for rice along the way." - "Naw Muh Eh", F, 53, Nya Mu Kwee village, Shwegyin township; fled her home area to Thailand in December 1997 after living in the forest for 8 months (Interview #52, 12/97)

“The villagers stay in the forest. No one is in the village. We ran and came here because we couldn’t sow our paddy and we didn’t have any rice left to eat. At first 12 of us were coming, but then over 80 other people followed along with us. It took 10 days to get here.” - “Pu Ler Mu”, M, 60, Maw Thay Tha village; describing the situation of Maw Thay Tha villagers in December 1997. His village was burned in May, he lived in hiding until the end of November, then had to flee to Thailand because he had no more rice (Interview #50, 12/97)

Even before fleeing for Thailand, many of them say they have heard of the abuse of Karen refugees by Thai authorities and the Thai Army, but they feel they have no choice except to face it. On arrival in Thailand they have faced a very uncertain situation. When they arrive in one of the Karen refugee camps of Mae Hong Son province, camp leaders have to apply for permission from the Thai authorities for them to stay, and this permission was generally granted up until the end of the 1997 rainy season. However, in recent months Thai policy toward refugees has changed; the policy is now to deny asylum to all new refugees except those “temporarily fleeing fighting.” The Thai Government and the Thai Army do not consider what is happening in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts to be “fighting”, and therefore these people are now being denied asylum. Since the beginning of December 1997, over 300 new arrivals from Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts in Ban Sala refugee camp have been refused permission to stay there by the Nai Amphur (District Chief) of Mae Sariang. They have been given two options: to move to Mae Ra Mo (a.k.a. Mae Ra Ma Luang) refugee camp further south, or to go back to Burma (by force if necessary). Fortunately they have at least been given the option of remaining in Thailand, but the situation for any further arrivals remains very unclear.

Making the situation more complex, the four refugee camps where the newcomers would naturally arrive, Mae Yeh Hta, Kloh Pa, U Da, and Meh S’Ker, are all being moved to Mae Ra Mo refugee camp during February and March 1998. This large camp is at least 50 kilometres south of places where the refugees would cross the border, making it very hard for them to go there on arrival. Once there are no more refugee camps in the sparsely inhabited forests where new refugees will arrive, no one will be in the area to witness their arrival except the Thai Army and Border Patrol Police, which will make it very easy for them to forcibly repatriate the new arrivals without the outside world knowing of it. There is also concern over the treatment of refugees once moved to Mae Ra Mo camp, whether they will be allowed to build proper housing or whether they will be treated like new refugees further south on the border, who have been confined, restricted, forbidden to build schools or churches, and forced to live in the open under plastic sheeting in an attempt to coerce them to go back to Burma.

“Now if they [Thai authorities] tell you that you have to go back, can you go?”

“No, I dare not go back. If we can stay here we will stay. Back there the Burmese come to frighten us and abuse us so often that we can’t sow the paddy in our fields and we can’t get rice to eat. We must always live in fear and hunger.”

“Is there any fighting in Shwegyin township?”

“There are a few Karen soldiers who serve as KNDO [Karen National Defence Organisation, village defence militia]. If the Burmese shoot at them they shoot back, but that’s all.”

“The Thai authorities say that you must go back because there is no fighting in your township.”

“Please tell them that it’s not possible for us to go back, that we can’t go back because we dare not go back.” - “Naw Muh Eh”, F, 53, Nya Mu Kwee village, Shwegyin township; fled her home area to Thailand in December 1997 after living in the forest for 8 months (Interview #52, 12/97)

“If the Thai soldiers say you must go back what are you going to do?”

“I can’t even think about that. We will just have to die. Our life is very difficult.” - “Saw Kaw Muh”, M, 40, Maw Thay Tha village; just after arriving in Thailand (Interview #4, 5/97)

“If the Thai soldiers tell you, ‘There’s no battle in Hsaw Tee [Shwegyin] township, so you must go back’, what will you do?”

“But there is a battle in Hsaw Tee township! We couldn’t stay there, so we had to come here.”

“What if the Thai soldiers point guns at you and drive you back?”

“We lived there in fear, we live here in fear. So what can we do? We must stay here.” - “Saw Pah Thu”, M, 30, Day Oo Koh village, Shwegyin township; fled in December 1997 to Thailand (Interview #55, 12/97)

Reasoning Behind the Village Destruction Campaign

“Why do the Burmese come and do all of this?”

“I’m not sure. I think that the Burmese are fighting to rule over people. But if they keep killing people like this, they will rule over nothing but mud. If they want to rule over people they should not kill them like this.... I dare not go back to build a house because if they see us they will kill us. If they could look at us without killing us we would go back and build our houses. But for now I don’t know, I stay in one place today and tomorrow in another place.”

- “Pu Lay Doh Htoo”, M, 63, Lay Po Kaw Tee village (Interview #39, 6/97)

The policy of the SPDC, and before it the SLORC, in the case of any form of armed resistance has amounted to “drain the ocean and the fish cannot swim”; in other words, to undermine the opposition, attack the civilian population until they can no longer support any opposition. This is the fundamental idea behind the Four Cuts policy (cutting supplies of food, funds, recruits and intelligence to the resistance) which General Ne Win initiated in the 1970’s. Many villages in the area covered by this report were first burned in 1975 when Four Cuts was first implemented, and several villagers interviewed spoke of having been on the run from Burmese troops since 1975. The direct attacks on the civilian population, characterised by mass forced relocations, destruction of villages and the village economy, and completely unsustainable levels of forced labour, have become even more prevalent in SLORC/SPDC policy in the last 2-3 years.

The current SPDC plan for consolidating control over areas where there is resistance appears to consist of the following steps: 1) mount a military offensive against the area; 2) forcibly relocate all

villages to sites under direct Army control; 3) use the relocated villagers and others as forced labour, portering and building military access roads into their home areas; 4) move more Army units in and use the villagers as forced labour to build bases along the access roads; 5) allow the villagers back to their villages,



Villagers hiding in a farmfield hut discuss their future. Most villagers say they have no food, little chance of a crop, and no idea how they will be surviving 2 months from now.

where they are now under complete military control and can be used as a rotating source of extortion money and forced labour, further consolidating control through “development” projects, forced labour farming for the Army, etc.

If resistance attacks still persist at this last stage, retaliation is carried out against villages by executing village elders, burning houses and other means. The first 2 steps of this strategy can be combined or reversed in order in some cases. Throughout Burma we can see examples where this process is at various stages: in central Shan State and eastern Tenasserim Division, SPDC is working on stages 1 and 2; in Dooplaya District of central Karen State, which they just occupied in early 1997, they are implementing stages 2 and 3; in the free-fire zones of southern Tenasserim Division (see *“Free-Fire Zones in Southern Tenasserim”*, KHRG #97-09, 20/8/97) they are between stages 3 and 4; while in the western plains of Nyaunglebin District, Thaton District and many other areas they have already reached stage 5.

Papun and eastern Nyaunglebin Districts have always been areas of strong KNU/KNLA resistance, and SLORC has never been able to fully control them. The hills are too rugged and inaccessible, supply lines are difficult to maintain through the rainy season, and the villagers always disappear before they can be caught. SLORC and SPDC have clearly decided to consolidate their control over this region through whatever means necessary, both to eliminate Karen resistance and to control the Thai border, particularly the Salween River, where agreements have already been signed between SLORC and the Thai Government to build several major dams.

“They say that this is an enemy area, so they will destroy it. Here they don’t tell the villagers anything, they just burn everything and shoot everyone they meet.” - “Pu Tha Mu Heh”, M, 55, Yeh Mu Plaw village (Interview #22, 6/97)

“I heard that they said that if they burned everything in our village then the Kaw Thoo Lei would have nothing to eat, so we would have to go back to them [the SLORC].” - “Saw Po Ghay”, M, 37, Meh Way Kee village (Interview #1, 5/97)

“I can’t understand why they burned our houses. I think they hate the Karen people so they burn our houses. When we arrived we had no rice at all, so the government [KNU] gave us 6 tins and now we are sharing it. We have only salt and chillies to eat with it, nothing else! Now we have no farm, so we don’t know how we will get food this year.” - “Naw Kuh”, F, 30, Maw Law village (Interview #19, 6/97)

“They said they want to end the Karen nationality. They want us to have no food and no houses so that if we don’t do something for our future we will all die.” - “Naw Thay Paw”, F, 40, Baw Kwaw village, Shwegyin township (Interview #10, 5/97)

In order to begin controlling the area, SLORC/SPDC would normally mount a major military offensive, but the KNLA does not hold any fixed territory there and is even more elusive than the villagers. It therefore appears that the regime has decided to go after the villagers first, clearing them out so that the KNLA will have nowhere to hide and no food to eat. Whatever villages could be ordered to move were ordered to move, but in most of the villages the troops could never catch anyone to give them the order, so a decision was made to simply

annihilate these villages without warning, destroy all food supplies, and kill as many villagers as possible, simply to wipe them out or drive them out of the region. This decision is reflected in the SLORC written order included in this report (see above under “Forced Relocations”), which lists 64 villages which are supposed to move but ends simply by adding, *“Small villages, even those not included in the above list, must move and consolidate to nearby consolidation villages before May 6th. Villages which fail to move will be destroyed.”* The “small villages not included in the list”, which number in the hundreds, never even received a copy of that order. They were simply destroyed.

“We don’t see them face to face so we don’t know [what they want]. Maybe they would tell us to move if they saw us face to face. But we dare not face them. If they come closer we go further, because if they see us they shoot us without telling us anything. If they want us to move we will wait to hear it from them, but they don’t speak to us, they only shoot at us.” - “Saw Muh Lah”, M, 43, Lay Po Kaw Tee village (Interview #38, 6/97)

“They [SLORC] didn’t come to our village first, their gun shells came first, so how can we dare make peace? If they come by themselves we will talk, exchange one or two words with them. But only their shells came and we couldn’t talk, they just destroyed us.” - “Naw Thay Paw”, F, 40, Baw Kwaw village, Shwegyin township (Interview #10, 5/97)

“The Burmese can never make peace. They always shoot us when they come, they only come to shoot us. So how can they bring peace?” - “Saw Pah Htoo”, M, 27, Htee Muh Hta village, Shwegyin township (Interview #51, 12/97)

“The Burmese say that if the Karen give them all the guns they will make peace, is this true?”
“I can’t say, but for us they do nothing but make problems. If they say that I don’t understand them.” - “Pati Kywe”, M, 50, Thay Ko Mu Der village (Interview #23, 6/97)

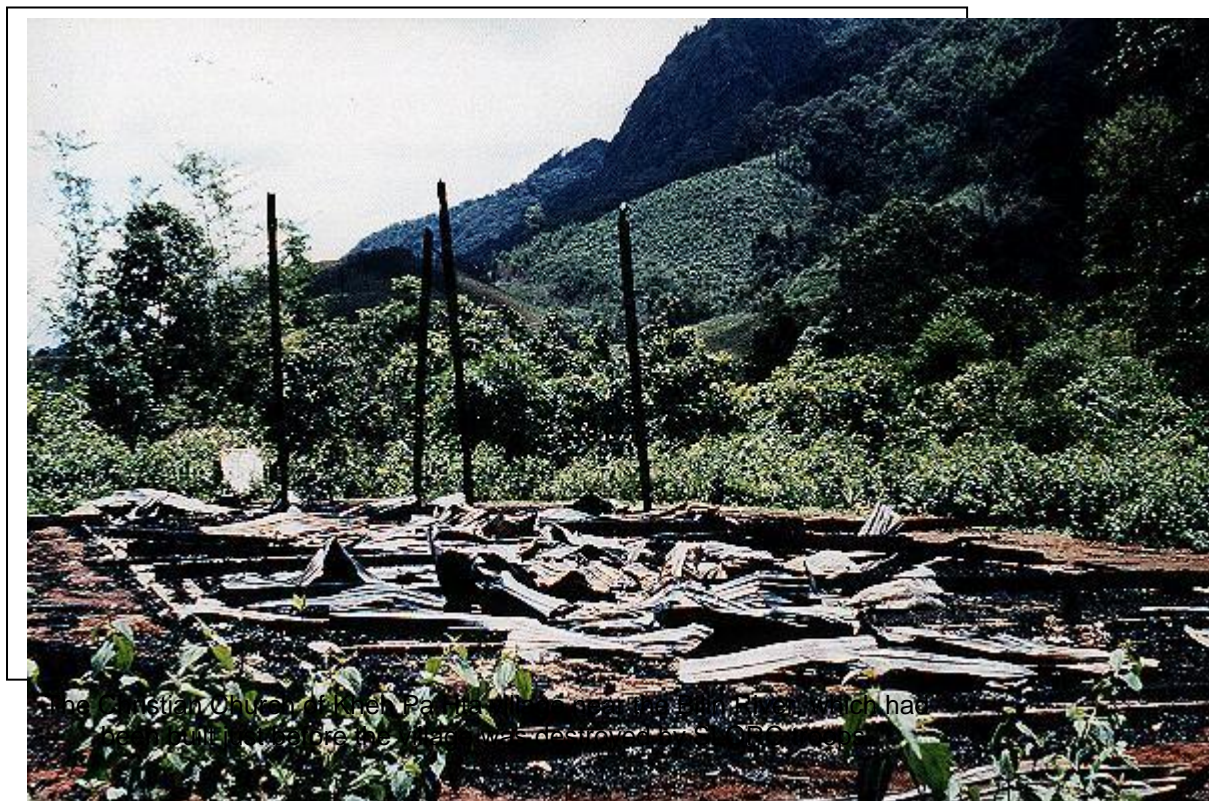
“The SPDC says that all the problems in your township are caused by the KNU, that the SPDC Army has come to bring peace and help. Do you agree?”

“No, I can’t believe that. They just say that, but they never do as they say. They never come to make peace. They come to shoot us without saying or asking anything. Whatever they say I never believe, because I’ve been living there for a long time and I’ve seen that they’re always the same.” - “Naw Muh Eh”, F, 53, Nya Mu Kwee village, Shwegyin township (Interview #52, 12/97)

Future of the Area

“I’m not sure if I can stay here for a long time. Even though I don’t know where to go, if I can choose I will stay here [near her home]. Maybe we just have to run in the jungle and the mountains like this until we die by a Burmese bullet. Until we die we feel afraid and we run; some days we don’t know if we will die under the trees or under the bamboo. But right now we must stay here, because we can’t see any way to go to any other place. If we see a way to go to a safer place you can be sure that we will go, because we dare not stay here any more. But for now we don’t see any way to go to a safe place so we must stay here like this, work like this, eat like this until we die, and then one’s story is finished. Like the old proverb says, ‘Buffaloes die and leave their yoke, people die and leave their work.’ So until we die we must work and do whatever we can, but when we die we finish and leave our work.” - “Naw Muh Paw”, F, 49, Ku Day village; interviewed while living in hiding (Interview #25, 6/97)

The future for the people of the area and their villages looks very grim. Right now they are all completely running out of food and facing increasing numbers of SPDC patrols coming into the area to hunt them down, burn their food and shelters and shoot them on sight. If they go to a designated relocation site such as Meh Way, it is very unlikely they can survive there because not only will the troops not give them any food, but they will immediately have to start giving two tins of rice per family per month to the Army, and they will also have to do regular forced labour building camps and going as porters. Should they decide to flee to Thailand, the route is becoming more difficult and dangerous all the time, and Thai policy is leaning more and more toward the forced repatriation of Karen refugees. It is very hard to see what the villagers in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts can do other than try to hang on in the jungle and see if they can plant some rice in the coming rainy season.



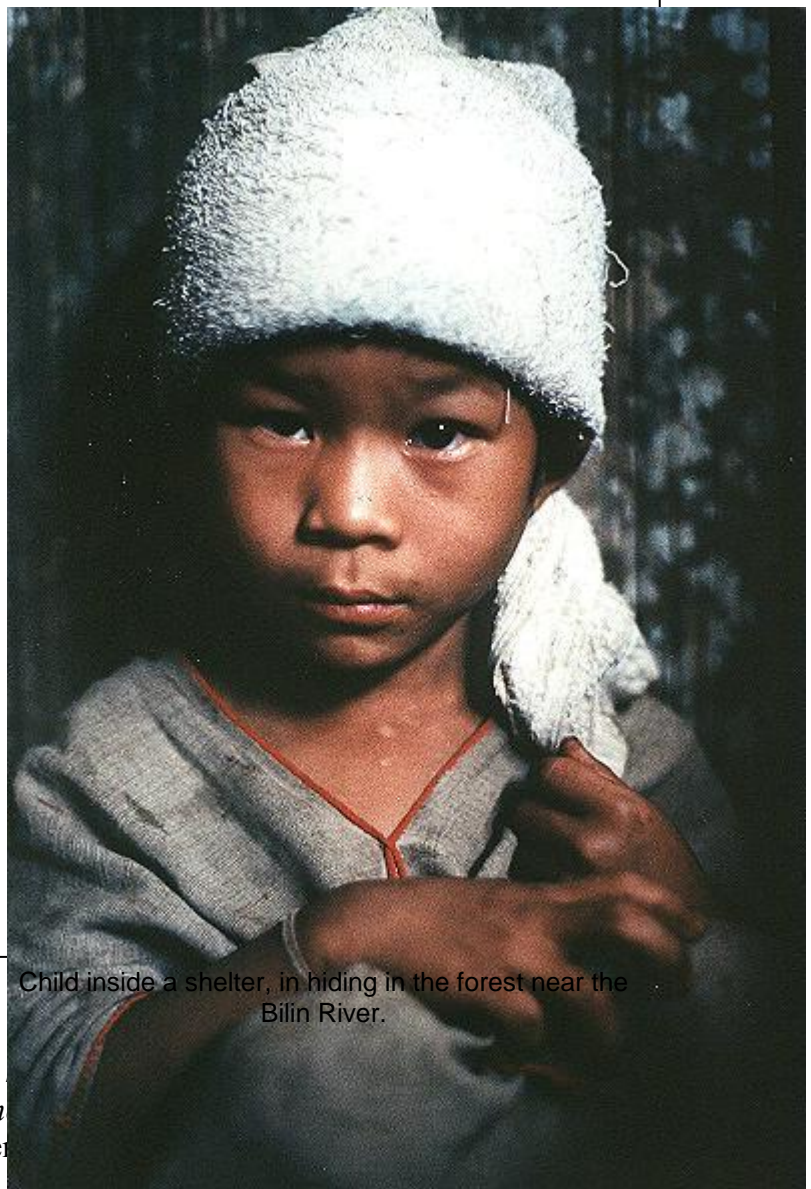
to find a safer place, but if the situation gets better they'll try to go back to their villages.” - “Saw Lah Say”, M, 42, Yeh Mu Plaw village; many villagers from several areas were hiding in the area of his village (Interview #24, 6/97)

“Do you think that you can go and stay back in your village?”

“No, I dare not because the Burmese said that if they meet any villagers in the villages they will kill all of them. The Burmese said: ‘If I see your footprint anywhere I will shoot at it.’ And even if they don’t kill us, they will force us to work until we have no hairs left on our heads and become bald. They will do that to the villagers from Toh Thay Der. That is why we don’t dare to stay there.” - “Saw Thay Tha”, M, 25, Toh Thay Der village (Interview #12, 5/97)

“How long are you going to stay here?”

“We don’t know how long. If the Burmese leave we will go back, but we have asked for that many times and the Burmese never leave. So I will stay here and eat with our relatives and hopefully we won’t go hungry. If we stay with the Burmese we will die soon - no clothes to wear and no food to eat, we’d have to buy everything but we don’t to the place they’re in hiding]. If they come Say Paw”, F, 50, Dta Meh Der village (Inter



Child inside a shelter, in hiding in the forest near the Bilin River.

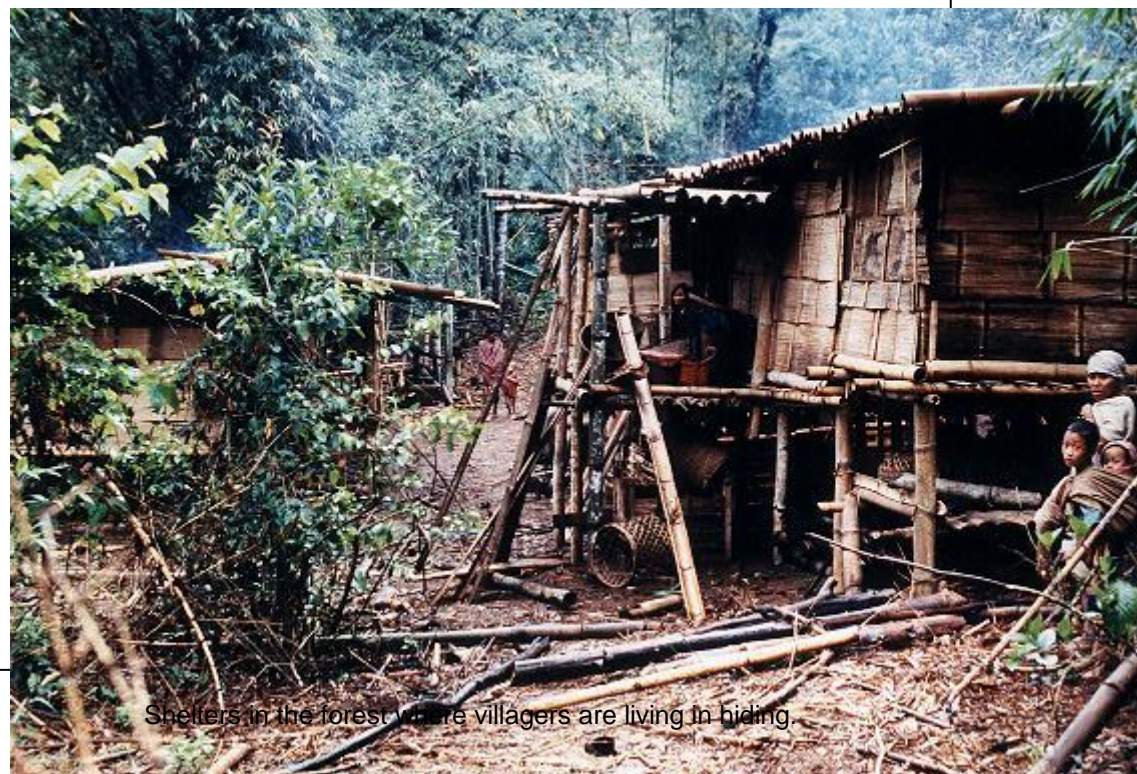
Troop concentrations in Papun District are increasing; at the beginning of this operation in March 1997 about 6 battalions at a time were involved, but now at least 10 Battalions are involved, with 6 battalions focussing just on the northern stretch of the Yunzalin River. Troops have re-occupied Meh Way, which they abandoned for a time in mid-1997, and they have established several new bases. One of these is at Ler Mu Plaw, a village of 50 households which they completely burned and occupied in June 1997. It is now an important military base, and the flat open rice paddies beside the village are being used as a landing pad for supply helicopters. The SPDC is also rapidly expanding its troop concentrations both in Nyaunglebin District to the west and in Toungoo District to the north.

military access road has now been completed from Toungoo all the way to Bu Sah Kee, just ½ hour's walk north of the Papun District boundary, and the KNLA reports that SPDC troops are now trying to push this road southward into northern Papun District. At the same time, the road from Kyauk Kyi to Saw Hta, cutting straight across the affected areas, is nearing completion. It may be finished by rainy season, but it will be unusable in the rains and will need repairs in October/November after the rains end. All these developments appear to indicate an impending military sweep through the region, followed by the establishment of more military camps.

"Do you think that the Burmese will come again?"

"I think about that a little and I am afraid a little. If they come we can't dare to plant. I hope they will not come. If they come I must live in the jungle again, but I'm worried that the jungle isn't a safe place." - "Pi Ler Wah", F, 60+, Kwih Toh Kee village (Interview #32, 6/97)

"We've already sown the paddy seeds in our field, now we must cut the weeds, but we are very worried that they will come again. If they come we can't do it. My wife and some of our children have gone to xxxx, and our other children here with me have gone to our field to cut the weeds. They said, 'We must



Shelters in the forest where villagers are living in hiding.

do it, if we don't we'll have nothing to eat. If the Burmese come we'll run." - "Saw Muh Lah", M, 43, Lay Po Kaw Tee village (Interview #38, 6/97)

"Do you still have rice and paddy?"

"No. We must go back and get some from Lay Kaw Der. Our rice barn is there. We couldn't plant any paddy this year. We have enough left for one or two weeks, no more." - "Saw Tee Doh", M, 17, Lay Kaw Der village; while living in a tiny leaf lean-to in the hills with his parents. A month earlier he was shot in the arm by a SLORC patrol. (Interview #41, 6/97)

"If they come we will have no food to eat. If they come again we'll have to face the calamity of not being able to grow food, and we will start dying of hunger. It will be dreadful." - "Saw Muh Lah", M, 43, Lay Po Kaw Tee village (Interview #38, 6/97)

The SPDC regime clearly wants complete control of this area, as with every other area near the border with Thailand, to wipe out any possibility of resistance, to cut off escape routes for refugees, to gain control of another population which can be used for forced labour, and to begin construction on the huge megadam projects on the Salween River which have been planned in conjunction with the Thai Government. The villagers stand in the way of these aims, so they are to be wiped out with their villages. Whether or not the SPDC can accomplish this goal remains to be seen; the villagers of these hills have faced great difficulties all their lives, and they are extremely tough and adaptable when they are threatened. Their survival for almost a year already, in desperate conditions and in the face of a large Army under orders to eradicate them, shows their remarkable ability to survive. But they are human, and unless something can put a stop to this campaign against them their time to run is quickly running out.

"We will have to stay like this. I'm not sure how long, but probably forever. We'll probably have to stay like this all the days for the rest of our lives." - "Pa Weh Mu", M, 48, Kyaw Law village; living in hiding in huts in the forest (Interview #33, 6/97)

"I don't think there will be peace in our village. In our village the main things we have to know are how to run into the forest, where to run, and to be afraid." - "Pu Dta Muh", M, over 50, Paleh Der village (Interview #13, 6/97)

"We need our country, they need their country, if there is peace it will be good." - "Pu Tha Mu Heh", M, 55, Yeh Mu Plaw village (Interview #22, 6/97)

"I have never known peace in my life. There have only been worries and fear in my life." - "Htoo Htoo Pa", M, 43, Kaw Weh Der village (Interview #16, 6/97)

"Pi Blu Paw": *[asking the interviewer] Nephew, we stay in Kaw Thoo Lei and we always have to run like this. Do you think that there will be peace one day and that we'll be able to stay or will we have to run again? Can we get our country? Can you tell me that?*

Interviewer: *I can't answer you this.*

"Pi Blu Paw": *The Burmese try to force us to move to the town but we don't want to go there. They force us to leave and to go to stay with them, and they surround us and hold us there. I don't want to go. What do we have to do? Can you tell me?*

Interviewer: *I can't tell you.*

"Pi Blu Paw": *We don't want to run to Thailand. The Thai soldiers give us problems there, and the DKBA as well - but if we stay here SLORC gives us problems and oppresses us.* - "Pi Blu Paw", F, 50, Paleh Der village (Interview #13, 6/97)

"Even though their name has changed to Na Ah Pa [SPDC], they still do the same work as the Na Wa Ta [SLORC]. Their name has changed but their system has not changed. They capture people to be porters and forced labourers, they oppress all the people not only here but in the towns as well. The people who live in the towns also suffer under this system, but they can't run away, so they must face big problems which they can't bear to face. Everyone would like to escape." - "Pu Ler Mu", M, 60, Maw Thay Tha village (Interview #50, 12/97)

"If they can't control us, they will kill all of us. They order us to go and live with them. How can we live together with them there? We must stay here. Our ancestors stayed here. But

they tell us to go and live there, to make peace with them there. We can't live like them. People who make peace with them must carry heavy loads as porters. Then if they can't walk anymore the Burmese hack at their legs with their knives, kick them, kill them, so we dare not go to live with them.... Now we stay at Haw Kee, we dare not go to Papun. If we go they will capture us. They put us in jail and kill us after they capture us. Terrible! We dare not go." - "Saw Tee Muh", M, 36, Haw Kee village (Interview #36, 6/97)

"They said they will make peace with Karen people. They ask the Karen to go to their place, and when the Karen reach their place they force the Karen to do many things for them, to carry their heavy loads, they beat them and force them to carry things up here into the mountains. ... The Burmese come again to look for us, so we dare not stay and we run into the forest. This 3 or 4 months we have lived in the forest and we've run from place to place in the rain until now. So now we can't do anything anymore, our food is gone, we are tired of living in the wet of the rain. We don't know what to do. ... We've just come up here because they're coming for us again." - "Saw Eh Tee Kaw", M, 43, Kheh Pa Hta village; interviewed while he was fleeing a SLORC patrol (Interview #43, 6/97)

"I think that now they [SLORC] will stay in the village. We are afraid that we will never be able to stay in our village again. Even though we didn't want to come here we had to come. Now they have burned everything, so maybe we can never go back." - "Pi Paw Wah", F, 60, Meh Gha Law village; interviewed just after arrival in Thailand (Interview #3, 5/97)

List of Burned Villages

This is a partial list of villages confirmed as completely or partially burned by SLORC/SPDC troops during the operation between February 1997 and the present. Villages 1 through 146 are listed from KHRG information sources, i.e. visits to villages and interviews with villagers. Numbers 147 through 186 are additional villages listed by independent monitors in the area, and numbers 187 through 192 are from KNU Field Reports. (*) indicates villages which were partially burned; all other villages have been completely burned. This list is not complete, and additional villages are still being burned by SPDC patrols.

KHRG Information

Northern

- 1 Ler Mu Plaw
- 2 Saw Mu Plaw
- 3 Naw Yo Hta (*)
- 4 Kay Pu (*)
- 5 Sho Per Ko
- 6 Lah Eh Der
- 7 Yah Plo Der
- 8 Ka Leh Der
- 9 Baw Peh
- 10 Bena Ay Per Ko (*)
- 11 Hser Hta (*)
- 12 Ker Ko Mu Der (>100 houses)
- 13 Kaw Say Der
- 14 Thu Kler
- 15 Lway Der
- 16 Naw Ku
- 17 Tee T'Kay Hta

Car road

- 18 Plah Ko
- 19 Saw Ee Der
- 20 Ku Day
- 21 Toh Kee
- 22 Lay Ghaw
- 23 Thay Baw
- 24 Toh Loh Kee

Between Yunzalin and

Bilin Rivers

- 25 Kaw Weh Der
- 26 Bwo Mu Hta
- 27 Yeh Mu Plaw (*)
- 28 Thay Tho Der
- 29 Bo Kywe (Bo Dweh)
- 30 Kaw Mu Bwa Der
- 31 Dta Paw Der
- 32 Thay Ko Mu Der
- 33 Moh Kee
- 34 Ber Khaw
- 35 Tee Lay Hta
- 36 upper Bwa Heh Der
- 37 Kwih Toh Kee
- 38 Kyaw Law
- 39 Kywe Day

- 40 Doh Heh Der (*)
- 41 Maw T'Kyaw
- 42 Haw Kee (upper and lower)
- 43 Bpeh Deh
- 44 Nyaw Mu Der
- 45 Ler Lah
- 46 Maw Lay Kaw
- 47 Tee Ler Ghaw Kee
- 48 Maw Thay Der
- 49 Toh Hta
- 50 Saw Ner Kee
- 51 Bwa Oo Bwa Der
- 52 Tee Thu Der
- 53 Bu Kyu Kee
- 54 B'Na Kwih Duh
- 55 Mu Kee Der
- 56 Ber Baw
- 57 K'Maw Kyaw
- 58 Haw Ko Theh (one part of two)
- 59 Paw Say (*)
- 60 Lay Nah Der (*)

Bilin River area

- 61 Dta Meh Der
- 62 Wah Kah Der
- 63 Lo Plah
- 64 Dta Leh Ghaw Der
- 65 Lay Po Kaw Tee
- 66 Lay Kaw Der
- 67 Htoo Ta Lu
- 68 Kheh Pa Hta
- 69 Baw Thu
- 70 Theh Hta
- 71 Kaneh Der (*)
- 72 Thwa Hta
- 73 Noh Lay
- 74 Kay Mu Der
- 75 Wah Kee Der
- 76 Ker Kaw Law
- 77 Tee Ku Hta
- 78 Thalay Wah Der
- 79 Ner Kee
- 80 Ler Htoo Po
- 81 Meh Gha Law
- 82 Meh Kaw Law

- 83 Dta Kaw Hta
- 84 Bo Wah Der
- 85 Dta Baw Kee
- 86 Toh Kaw Saw Kee
- 87 Maw Day
- 88 Dta Kaw Der
- 89 Kaw Lay Der
- 90 Tay Mu Der
- 91 Ler Shu Ko
- 92 Maw Law Der
- 93 Yah Kyaw Der
- 94 Doh Daw Kee
- 95 Ku Theh Kee
- 96 Kheh Der
- 97 Mi Hta
- 98 Maw Ghu
- 99 Khaw Klah
- 100 Meh Si Hta
- 101 Maw Thay Tha
- 102 K'Wah Ler
- 103 Mu Ko Law
- 104 Ko Reh Kee
- 105 Ko Reh Hta
- 106 Lay Hta
- 107 Lay Kee
- 108 Baw Kwaw
- 109 shelters in hiding in various places, including Tee Kalaw near Lo Plah.

Eastern Papun District

- 110 Toh Thay Der
- 111 Kyaw Kee

Shwegyin township

- 112 Wah May Kyo
- 113 Htee Muh Hta
- 114 Deh Oo Po
- 115 Saw Theh Kee
- 116 Bweh Si Kee
- 117 Nya Mu Kwee
- 118 K'Saw Wah Kwih
- 119 Meh Law Lah
- 120 Poh Loh
- 121 Kyi Zone Gone
- 122 Du Baw

- 123 Ler Hta Kwih
- 124 Tee Sgheh Hta
- 125 Ler Wah
- 126 Tee Law Klay Kee
- 127 Po Kha Law
- 128 Maw Hta Mee Hser
- 129 Saw Theh Hta
- 130 Hsaw Oh Kee
- 131 Hsaw Oh Hta
- 132 Der Wih Ko
- 133 Tee Blah Kee
- 134 Tee Blah Hta
- 135 Bpray Maw Kee
- 136 B'Ta Hta
- 137 Wah Ko Law Dteh
- 138 Ko Pler Hta
- 139 Ko Pler Kee
- 140 Maw Kee
- 141 Dta Thay Der
- 142 Yan Aung
- 143 Meh Way Kee
- 144 Saw Roh Ko
- 145 Kaw Mu Der
- 146 Day Oo Koh

Independent Monitor (Papun District)

- 147 Si Day (lower)
- 148 Baw Lay Der
- 149 Kleh Mu
- 150 Yo Po Loh
- 151 Leh Kee
- 152 Tee Meh Hta
- 153 Tee T'Blu Hta
- 154 Dta Thu Der
- 155 Khaw Kee
- 156 Pah Ko
- 157 Kweh Htoo Hta
- 158 Thay Pa Kee Der
- 159 Noh Lay
- 160 Oo Thaw Kee
- 161 Oo Thaw Hta
- 162 Nya Mu Hta
- 163 Meh Nyu Hta
- 164 Tee Ber Ka Hta
- 165 Day Law Pu
- 166 Klaw Loh Kloh Hta

167 Noh Law Hsu
168 Ta Hu Loh
169 Thay Ko Loh
170 Ko Kaw Der
171 Ko Tha Loh Der
172 Tee Ler Kee
173 Meh Ka Hta
174 Du Pa Leh
175 Thay Ko Pu

176 Wah Peh Kwee
177 Po Khay
178 Ta Koh Hta
179 Paw Wah Der
180 Maw Pu
181 Hser Ree Kyo
182 Tu Moh Hta
183 Poh Lah
184 Maw Ler Loh

185 Meh Ku Kee
186 Ler Klaw

KNU Field Reports
(Papun District)

187 Bler Ghaw (*)
188 Bo Plaw

189 Kaw Say
190 hidden shelters near
Kaw Say
191 Mi Hsah Po Der
192 Paw Mu

Villages Ordered to Move

This is a partial list of villages which were ordered to move to relocation sites, according to villagers in the area and a written SLORC order document. Many of the villages listed were never formally notified of any order to move, and many included in the written order never even received a copy of it. Many of these villages also appear in the list of burned villages because they were subsequently burned and destroyed. This list is not complete. Sources are listed as: “**Order**” = SLORC written order included in this report; “**Int**” = Interviews included in this report; “**IS**” = Independent source apart from KHRG; “**FR**” = KNU Field Report.

<u>No.</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Source</u>
<u>Papun District</u>							
1	Baw Thay Hta	Papun	Order	42	Tha Ko Law	M'Taw	Order
2	Meh Wah Der	May Ner Nweh	Order	43	Noh Pa Doh	Tha Ku Law	Order
3	B'Naw Kleh	May Ner Nweh	Order	44	Noh Law Su	Ku Sit middle school	Order
4	Dweh Lo	May Ner Nweh	Order	45	Bo Baw Ko	Ku Sit middle school	Order
5	Kler Oo Der	May Ner Nweh	Order	46	T'Ree Bpeh Ko	Ku Sit middle school	Order
6	Paw Muh Der	May Ner Nweh	Order	47	Ka Leh Hta	Nga Ain Zu	Order
7	Meh Yeh Kee	B'Lu Kee	Order	48	Maw Lu	Nga Ain Zu	Order
8	Maw Hta	Kaw Boke	Order	49	Tee Baw Ka Hta	Nga Ain Zu	Order
9	Kay Hta	Kaw Boke	Order	50	Tee Gaw Hta	Ner Ku Hta	Order
10,11	Baw T'Keh Kee			51	Oo Reh Kee	Ner Ku Hta	Order
	- lower	Kaw Boke	Order	52	Ka Wah Kee	Ner Ku Hta	Order
	- upper	Kaw Boke	Order	53	Meh Kee	Ner Ku Hta	Order
12	Pway Hta	Kaw Boke	Order	54	Ner Ku Kee	Ner Ku Hta	Order
13	lower Oo Tu Kloh	Kaw Boke	Order	55	T'Kaw Kyo	Kyun Bpin	Order
14	upper Oo Tu Kloh	Kaw Boke	Order	56	T'Pa Ko	Kyun Bpin	Order
15	Meh Taw Kee	S'Tah Lay	Order	57	Der Kee	Kyauk Taung	Order
16	Kyo Ko Deh	S'Tah Lay	Order	58	Kyeh Ree Kyo	Kyauk Taung	Order
17	Lay Ain Zu	S'Tah Lay	Order	59	Theh Hta	Kyauk Taung	Order
18	Baw Th'Kee	S'Tah Lay	Order	60	Tee Baw Law	Kyauk Taung	Order
19	Saw Bweh Der	S'Tah Lay	Order	61	Naw Wih Hta	Kyauk Taung	Order
20	Kyaw Mu Pu	Paw Hta	Order	62	Bo Leh	Kyaun Ywa	Order
21	Pa Moh Hta	Paw Hta	Order	63	Bo Leh Hta	Kyaun Ywa	Order
22	Kyaw Mo Lay Ko	Paw Hta	Order	64	Pah Kyat	Kyaun Ywa	Order
23	Kyaw Nyo Hta	Paw Hta	Order	<u>Bilin River area</u>			
24	Hteh Hta	Paw Hta	Order	65	Meh Thu Kee	Meh Way	Int, IS
25	Baw Kee	Paw Hta	Order	66	Leh Wah Ko	Meh Way	Int, IS
26	Du Wah Po Kaw	Paw Hta	Order	67	A'Meh Po Kee	Meh Way	Int, IS
27	T'Law Doh	Toh Nyo	Order	68	Kway Day	Meh Way	Int, IS
28	Paw Dee Der	Toh Nyo	Order	69	Htoo Lay Ko	Meh Way	Int, IS
29	Law P'Lah Lay	Toh Nyo	Order	70	Wah Law	Meh Way	Int, IS
30	Thay Ko Mu Der	Toh Nyo	Order	71	Noh Po Law	Meh Way	Int, IS
31	Kyaw Law	Toh Nyo	Order	72	Wah Tho Law	Meh Way	Int, IS
32	Bpa Tha	Meh Paw Mu Hta	Order	73	Lah Kyaw Pa	Meh Way	Int, IS
33	T'Nya Kee	Meh Paw Mu Hta	Order	74	Kloh Kee	Meh Way	Int, IS
34	Kaneh Lay	Meh Paw Mu Hta	Order	75	Doh Meh Kee	Meh Way	Int, IS
35	Kaneh Khoh	Ma Mu Der	Order	76	Du Baw	Meh Way	Int, IS
36	Pa Ee Kaun	M'Taw	Order	77	Shwe Tee	Meh Way	Int, IS
37	Hsain Ta Mot	M'Taw	Order	78	Meh T'Koh	Meh Way	Int, IS
38	Wah Tho Klah	M'Taw	Order	79	Meh Si Hta	Meh Way	Int, IS
39	Pyi Ma	M'Taw	Order	80	Meh Kaw Law	Meh Way	Int, IS
40	Myay Ta Pyay	M'Taw	Order	81	Meh Gha Law	Meh Way	Int, IS
41	Tha Mu Kyu Law	M'Taw	Order	82	Ker Kaw Law	Meh Way	Int, IS

<u>No.</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Source</u>
83	Ler Htoo Po	Meh Way	Int, IS	97	Noh Lay	Meh Way	IS
84	Lay Hta	Meh Way*	Int	98	Wah Ka Der	Meh Way	IS
85	Naw Po	Meh Way*	Int	99	Kay Mu Der	Meh Way	IS
86	Baw Wah Der	Meh Way*	Int	100	Ner Kee	Meh Way	IS
87	T’Kaw Hta	Meh Way*	Int	<u>Shwegyin township</u>			
88	Maw Thay Tha	Meh Way*	Int				
89	Dta Baw Kee	Meh Way*	Int				
90	Ko Reh Kee	Meh Way*	Int				
91	Nya Mu Kee	Meh Way	Int	101	Wah May Kyo	Than Seit Min Lang**	Int
92	Po Kwa Saw Kee	Meh Way	Int	102	Htee Muh Hta	Than Seit Min Lang**	Int
93	Toh Ber Kee	Meh Way	Int	103	Deh Oo Po	Than Seit Min Lang**	Int
94	Baw Law Kee	Meh Way	Int	104	Saw Theh Kee	Than Seit Min Lang**	Int
95	Toh Baw Saw Kee	Meh Way	Int	105	Bweh Si Kee	Than Seit Min Lang**	Int
96	Kaneh Der	Meh Way	IS				

* first forced to move to a temporary Army post at Dta Baw Kee, then on to Meh Way

** a site along the Shwegyin - Kyauk Kyi motor road

Additionally:

All villages in Baw Thay Hta area were ordered to move to Papun (Independent source).

All villages in Kalaw Hta area were ordered to move to Kalaw Hta and Toh Thay Pu (just west of Papun; there is an SPDC Army base at Toh Thay Pu) (Independent source).

All villages in Ka Dtaing Dtee area of southern Papun District (Ka Dtaing Dtee is on the Yunzalin River south of Papun) were ordered to move to Ka Dtaing Dtee (Independent source).

According to KNU Field Reports, all villages in the Meh Way river valley area are supposed to be forced to Meh Way village; other villages in the Bilin River valley area are to be forced to relocation sites at Nah Ko Hta, Lay Kaw Tee, Ko Thwee Hta, Meh Kyo, Mah Lay Ler, Kwih T’Ma, and Wah Mu; all villages in the Baw Kyo valley to relocation sites at Baler Per, Baw Tho Hta, Te Law Thu Hta, Noh Paw Tee, and Baw Kyo Leh; all villages in the Yunzalin River valley to relocation sites at Way Mo, Way Sah, Ku Seik, Mat Taw, Meh Ku Hta, and Meh Mway Hta; and all villages in the Thee Roh valley to relocation sites at Paw Hta, Meh Paw Mu Hta, and Meh Bpa.

Killings by SLORC/SPDC Troops

This is a partial list of villagers confirmed as killed directly at the hands of SLORC/SPDC troops as part of the current operation in Papun and Nyaunglebin Districts. This list contains details on 62 killings, but it is far from complete and the true number of those killed at the hands of SLORC/SPDC troops is probably well over 100. Little information on killings has been available since November 1997, though it is likely there have been at least as many killed per month since that time as before, particularly given the increased concentration of SPDC troops in the area. This list does not include villagers shot at, wounded without being killed, or the hundreds who have died of starvation, disease and accident from having to flee their villages. The cases listed are taken from KHRG interviews with witnesses and relatives (source listed as 'Ix', where x is the Interview Number in this report), from information provided by independent human rights monitors in the area (source listed as 'IS'), and from KNU field reports (source listed as 'FR').

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Home Village</u>	<u>Remarks</u>	<u>Source</u>
13/3/97	Pu Kaw Hay Mu	M	70	Dta Baw Ko Der	Shot on sight by IB 59	IS,FR
13/3/97	Saw Ber Kaw	M	39	Dta Baw Ko Der	Pu Kaw Hay Mu's son, both shot together	FR
15/3/97	Pa Klay	M	40	Thay Ko Mu Der	Shot on sight	I31,47
15/3/97	Saw Pay Heh	M	48	Thay Ko Mu Der	Shot on sight	I31,47
15/3/97	Saw Bo Lweh	M	42	Thay Ko Mu Der	Shot on sight	FR
15/3/97	Po Taw Ku	M	30	Lay Po Der	Shot on sight	I31,47
17/3/97	Saw Sah Lweh	M	?	Ter Paw	Killed by IB 26/35/60 column	IS
18/3/97	Maung Ray Heh	M	50	Naw Yo Hta	Killed by IB 57/59 column	IS
18/3/97	Naw Lah Say	F	26	Naw Yo Hta	Maung Ray Heh's daughter; by IB 57/59	IS
18/3/97	Saw Yo Tha	M	22	Naw Yo Hta	Maung Ray Heh's son, killed by IB 57/59	IS
18/3/97	Naw Paw Eh	F	10	Naw Yo Hta	Maung Ray Heh's daughter; by IB 57/59	IS
18/3/97	Meh Nay Say	M	32	Naw Yo Hta	Maung Ray Heh's nephew; by IB 57/59	IS
21/3/97	Pa Tray	M	?	Wa Pah Kwee	Killed by Division 77	IS
21/3/97	Ah Kay	M	?	Wa Pah Kwee	Killed by Division 77	IS
21/3/97	Maw Kay	M	?	Wa Pah Kwee	Killed by Division 77	IS
23/3/97	Saw Sein Maung	M	?	Noh K'Waw	Killed by IB 24	IS
27/3/97	Saw Ghu	M	32	Wah Kah Der	Shot on sight	I46
28/3/97	Po Lah	M	35-45	Lay Po Kaw Tee	Captured in ricefield and executed (shot)	I38,43,46
3/97	Unknown	M	5	Ko Reh Kee	Found in forest by SLORC and stabbed	I4
3/97	Unknown	M	8	Ko Reh Kee	Found in forest by SLORC and stabbed	I4
3/97	Unknown	F	?	Kwa Hta	Pregnant, taken as porter & accused as wife of former Karen soldier, kicked to death, soldiers took away 8-year-old son	I8
3/97	Pu Ler Ku's son	M	40	Law Pu Der	Porter, shot because could no longer carry	I8
14/4/97	Bo Paw Mo	F	75	Dta Baw Ko Der	Killed by IB 57/59 column	IS
14/4/97	Mer Ler Ker	M	51	Dta Baw Ko Der	Killed by IB 57/59 column	IS
18/4/97	Pa Noh Day	M	38	Meh Wah Der	Killed by LIB 547	IS
28/4/97	Pa Si Tha	M	25	Noh Law Plaw	Killed by DKBA	IS
29/4/97	Saw Nyi Nyi	M	?	Unknown	Killed by LIB 52	IS
4/97	Tay Htoo	M	50+	Thay Ko Mu Der	Shot on sight getting food	I5
4/97	Saw Wih Kyay	M	63	Ker Kaw Law	Stoned to death while a porter for LIB 548 because he could no longer carry	I6,8
4/97	Pa Kya Po	M	?	Saw Hta	Died from exhaustion while portering, twin children died later in the forest of hunger	I6
4/97	Ma Ree Pa	M	60	Plah Ko	Shot on sight in fields	I18
4/97	Naw Reh Lee	F	30	Kyaw Law	Mentally handicapped, caught by SLORC when they burned village, disappeared, presumed dead	I33

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Home Village</u>	<u>Remarks</u>	<u>Source</u>
5/5/97	Saw Naw Neh	M	45	Ka Htoo Kee	Killed by IB 24	IS
5/5/97	Saw Kee Aye	M	37	Ka Htoo Kee	Killed by IB 24	IS
21/5/97	Naw Bu Heh	F	65	Plah Ko	Shot dead by LIB 440	IS,FR
21/5/97	Saw Bay Htoo	M	32	Thay Baw	Shot dead with his mother Naw Bu Heh	IS,FR
22/5/97	Kay Kyay	M	40	Thay Ko Mu Der	Shot on sight	I23
30/5/97	Naw Mu Lu	F	20	Wah Law Mu Der	Killed by LIB 710	IS
30/5/97	Naw Paw Ra	F	20	Wah Law Mu Der	Killed by LIB 710	IS
30/5/97	Saw Thay Myo	M	60	Meh Per Hta	Killed by LIB 710	IS
5/97	Mu Pa Heh	M	teen	Ku Day	Shot on sight after weeding field	I25
5/97	Saw Eh K'Lu a.k.a. Pa Hai Nyaw	M	18	Paleh Der	Schoolboy home to visit his parents, shot on sight during SLORC raid of village	I13,48
5/97	Bo Kee	M	60	Ku Day	Killed by IB 6	IS
1/6/97	Naw Lah Kweh	F	53	Yeh Mu Plaw	IB 57 surrounded her field hut and opened fire, killed her, then burned her in the hut	I22
3/6/97	Naw Way	F	70	Maw Law	Killed by IB 59	IS
3/6/97	Saw Pleh Wah	M	21	Maw Law	Killed by IB 59	IS
8/6/97	Unknown	M	65+	Kyah Po Der	Shot dead on sight in his field hut	I35
8/6/97	Saw Kyi Po	M	40	Meh Hsa Po Der	Killed by IB 59	IS
9/6/97	Pa Kaw Hsah	M	21	Ko Lay	Killed by LIB 710	IS
9/6/97	Heh Kay Htoo	M	31	Ko Lay	Killed by LIB 710	IS
13/6/97	Maung Aye	M	?	Meh Gha Law	Killed by IB 57	IS
6/97	Unknown	F	80	Dta Baw Kee	Village burned, hiding in forest shelters, couldn't walk and had to be left on path when SLORC patrol came, kicked off the mountainside	I51
4/8/97	Maung Aye	M	37	Yan Aung	Shot on sight going to get food	I52,54
4/8/97	Pa Dee	M	25	Khaw Kee	Shot on sight going to get food	I52,54
10/97	Maung Kyay Ray	M	20	Ko Reh Kee	Shot on sight	I52
21/11/97	Saw Pa Aye	M	47	Meh Ku Kee	Shot on sight	FR
21/11/97	Naw Mu Ha	F	38	Oo Thaw Hta	Shot on sight	FR
27/11/97	Bo Mlaw	M	70	Bler Ghaw	Burned to death inside his house	FR
11/97	Saw Maw Ko	M	12	Tee Blah	Shot on sight while harvesting rice	I52
8/1/98	Saw Lu Lu	M	22	Kaw Thay Der	Captured in village and executed by IB 39	FR
8/1/98	Saw Ka Neh	M	?	Kaw Thay Der	Captured, tortured and executed by IB 39	FR
8/1/98	Saw Per Per	M	?	Kaw Thay Der	Captured, tortured and executed by IB 39	FR

This is the Burmese original of the order translated on pages 24-25 .