

Dr U Ne Oo
48/2 Ayliffes Road
St Marys SA 5042
AUSTRALIA

May 23, 1996.

Chief of the Mission
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
14, Jor Bagh
New Delhi - 110 003
INDIA

Dear Sir/Madam,

It was informed by the concerned organizations that some of the Burmese refugees, to whom their status were eligible to enjoy the UNHCR's protection, have been denied of their Subsistence Allowance for their stay in India.

Many of us are aware that there have been considerable number of displaced people from Chin State in Burma who presently residing in Indian border states such as Mizoram and Manipur. We are also quite aware that the UNHCR might not have the logistics to reach out to the displaced Chin people in these border states.

However, in view of the recent difficulties that had experienced by above mentioned individuals who do not wish to return to the border states and wishing to stay temporarily in New Delhi, I should make my personal appeal that the UNHCR in New Delhi consider providing the Subsistence Allowance to those refugees.

In closing, I should like to thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Yours respectfully,

U Ne Oo
23/5/96

(U Ne Oo)

cc:

1. Ms Sadako Ogata, UNHCR, Case Postale 2500, CH-1211 Geneva 2 Depot, Switzerland.
2. Dr Pierre-Michel Fontaine, Representative for UNHCR, 9 Terrigal Crescent, O'Mally, ACT 2606, Australia.



Date: 21 May 1996 09:35:57, From: tom!shar@unv.ernet.in(ABSL in India), To: Recipients of burmanet-1

Dear Friends,

Here are some of the recent news about the Burmese refugees who have been sitting-in-strike in front of UNHCR Office in New Delhi. We would like to call upon once again the Burma-support groups, NGOs and individuals to send letters or words to the UNHCR Office in New Delhi and UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva to provide monthlt financial assistance which these refugees desperately need.

UNHCR Office's address

Chief of Mission, UNHCR, 14, Jor Bagh, New Delhi - 110 003
Ph : + 91 11 46 99 302, Fax : + 91 11 46 20 137

PRESS RELEASE

We are the Burmese nationalities who are recognized as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Office in New Delhi. Although UNHCR Office in New Delhi granted refugee status after months of consideration, we are deprived of financial assistance i.e. Rs. 1,200 per month per person which UNHCR provides to all other refugees.

Due to repression of the ruling military regime in Burma, we left the country for Mizoram State of India. However, the situation in Mizoram State has been deteriorating in recent years and the local police threaten to arrest us with the charge of illegal entry into India. Most of us were arrested and sent to police lock-up or jail at one time or another in Mizoram State.

At last, we decided to come to New Delhi to seek protection from the UNHCR Office in Delhi. After long and endless efforts, we are granted refugee status by the UNHCR. But, unfortunately, UNHCR refuses to provide financial assistance to us although it has been giving Rs. 1,200 per month per person to more than 10,000 refugees who are under the mandate of UNHCR.

Exposing our grievances and requesting UNHCR to provide financial assistance to us, we have been holding sit-in-strike in front of UNHCR Office in New Delhi. There are about 30 Burmese refugees participating at the demonstration, all have been camping for the fourth consecutive day at the demonstration site. The demonstrators include families with young children and old parents.

Yesterday, on 16th May, UNHCR officials called on us individually and told that they received an order from UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva saying not to provide any financial assistance to new Burmese refugees (there are about 30 new refugees who were recently recognized by UNHCR). The officials urged us to go back to Mizoram State where we came from and promised to give travelling expenses for going back.

But we are not thinking of going back to the border area where the safety of our lives is not guaranteed. We will not be able to survive in Mizoram State because of no job available for our livelihood. Anti-foreigner sentiment is growing in Mizoram State.

Our sit-in-demonstration will be continuing in front of UNHCR Office till our demands are met by UNHCR. We will hold hunger-strikes in the near future if UNHCR doesn't respond our demands positively.

Our demands for UNHCR are :

- 1) To provide monthly financial assistance to all of us who are recognized as refugees by UNHCR and
- 2) To reconsider the cases of those Burmese nationalities whose appeal for refugee status are rejected and to grant them refugee status and financial allowance.

Till now, UNHCR officials in New Delhi are tight lipped to the media about the demonstration and its handling on the refugees' appeal.

Date : 17th May 1996
Place : In front of UNHCR Office 14, Jor Bagh New Delhi - 11 0003

Demonstration under the banner of IGNORED REFUGEES

Indian Police beat Burmese refugee demonstrators

18th May 1996

The Burmese refugees, who have been holding their sit-in-strike in front of the UNHCR Office in New Delhi, were picked up by the Indian police at 3:30 am yesterday and dropped at the place outside downtown. The demonstrators were on the process beaten by the police. One was severely hurt in his chest and hands. Some of their belongings including placards, banners and a film role taken the pictures of the demonstration were destroyed by the police. The police also threatened the Burmese refugees to put in the prison for one year. One police threatened even to shoot them to death if they continue their demonstration. The 30 Burmese refugees have been holding demonstration in front of the UNHCR Office in New Delhi to expose their grievances and request the UNHCR to provide monthly financial assistance to them.

Although more than 10,000 refugees under the mandate of UNHCR are being provided monthly financial allowance of Rs. 1,200 per month per person, about 30 Burmese refugees are being denied this financial assistance. UNHCR Officials cited the reason that they received an order from the Headquarters from Geneva that any Burmese refugee who are recently granted refugee status will not be entitled to the financial assistance.

The demonstrators are determined to continue their sit-in-strike till their demands are met. After they were dropped at the place which is about 5 Km away, they walked back to the UNHCR Office and continued their strike, more vigorously with hunger strike.

Date: 16 May 1996 05:20:22,

From: aungsan@giasdl01.vsnl.net.in(FTUB in India), To: Recipients of burmanet-l

Subject: Burmese refugees protest in front of UNHCR office in New Delhi.

In front of UNHCR office, No. 14, Jor Bagh, Delhi, 23 Burmese and Chin refugees including 4 women and 8 children are holding demonstration against the Bureaucracy system of UNHCR.

Subject: Request for Subsistence Allowance

Dear Madam/Sir,

1. After waiting for a long time, our applications for refugee status are approved by your office and granted us refugee status. However, No S.A is provided to us starting from BU No.239 onwards and we know nothing about why social services is deny to us. We have explained to you earlier about the hardship in Delhi many times. There is no alternate to survive without S.A in Delhi.
2. During the interviews, we have stated that we have security problem in Mizoram, under differences. But we are forced by your office to return to Mizoram where our lives are in danger.
3. As far as our knowledge is concerned, the UNHCR has a policy to provide S.A to refugee for at least 6 months. After that the office have to decide as per the progress of refugees skill and knowledge to survive on his own. And then Lump Sum grant for self reliance, etc. would be provided.
4. During orientation of refugees, we were asked about our future plan and how to achieve self reliance etc. and we have explained everything but no reply is made so far in this regard.
5. As we mentioned above, we have no alternative way to survive ourselves in Delhi and therefore we came to your office and make hunger strike.
6. If there is no positive response from your office our hunger strike will continue till our demands are meet.
7. There are 267 Burmese refugees only and other national refugees are more than 10,000 residing under the protection of UNHCR in New Delhi. They are receiving subsistence allowance regularly and why shouldnt we in small number be provided and treated us the same.

Sincerely Yours,

K.C.Ruala On Behalf of Ignored Refugees