

Action Proposal for Burma (Internal Communication)

Date: February 14, 1994.

From: Dr. U Ne Oo, Adelaide, Australia.

To Individuals:

& Groups : CRDB(Australia), T.R.W.(WA), Australia Burma Council,
H.R.W.(New York), Burma Action(SA)

Note: Due to difficulties-financial and technical- to organize public letters, I have made an informal communication to groups and individuals who are already in contact with me. This communication is in essence my appeal to the groups and individuals. The groups can redistribute this document or take actions upon making your own political judgement. I appreciate very much for the individuals taking actions regarding this.

Call for Action: To write letter to Professor Y. Yokota, The Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Myanmar, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Fax: 41-22-9170123.

The Special Rapporteur will present the 1994 Human Rights report for Myanmar at the 50th Session of Commission on Human Rights early March. Please write to the Special Rapporteur:

- 1) To raise the issue of the internally displaced people in Karen State, eastern Burma.
- 2) To urge the authorities in Myanmar to compensate to the villagers who were forcefully relocated.
- 3) To recommend the International Committee of the Red Cross(ICRC) to assess the humanitarian needs of these villagers (The members of Amnesty Internal, please consult with the recommendations in AI Index:ASA 16/03/94.).

Since 1991, the Burmese military has been relocating villages in the areas where the ethnic insurgency is active. During 1992-93, an intensive relocation campaign was carried out in the districts of Thaton, Pa'pun and Pa'an within Karen State (see List of villages in Document 3). All the villagers are ordered to leave at short notice for concentration camps near the military outposts. The houses, livestocks and food left behind at the villages are destroyed for the army's strategic reason. Anyone who refuse to leave village or simply left behind was considered rebel and shot onsite.

The humanitarian situation for the villagers in the camps is egregious. There was no adequate food and medical attention (see Document 1). Last June-August, there were mass exodus of refugees to Thailand as the humanitarian situation in those camps worsen.

The forced relocation and confinement of villagers in Karen State will continue this year (U.S. State Department Human Rights Report, February 1994.). Since normal farming activities for the villagers in these camps were restricted, the crop production has been low and the situation for these people is more serious this year (compare it with the situation described in December 1991 Report, Tennasserim Division, Document 1.).

The situation will continue to deteriorate as the Burmese military usually do not give attention to the humanitarian needs of people in these camps. This will generate another exodus of refugees into Thailand in

the next rainy season(May-October).

These conditions can be improved by urging the the Burmese military to compensate all the villagers. It must also call for the ICRC to assess the humanitarian needs of people in the camps and urge SLORC to arrange adequate food and medical attention.

Documents

- 1) Burma Issue, Special Report December 1991.
 - 2) Asiaweek, January 20, 1993.
 - 3) List of Villages, The New Era Journal, No. 9, May 16, 1993.
 - 4) The Economist, 5-11 February, 1994.
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Forthcoming Issues: CPA for Burmese Refugees in Thailand

Although the Royal Thai Government is not a signatory to the international conventions regarding to the Status of Refugees, the RTG can enact a special legislation to protect refugees. The Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian refugees, for example, have the United Nations' protection under this special legislation known as 'the Comprehensive Plan of Action(CPA) for IndoChinese refugees' and get their repatriation organized by UNHCR.

According to Thai Internal Security Operation Command, there are as many as 350,000 Burmese have registered with authorities for their illegal entry to Thailand. Up until now, there is no legislation for Burmese to have protection from the United Nations. These refugees have to negotiate with the local authorities for their own safety. While NGOs can look after only a limited number of refugees' welfare, the Thai local communities are bearing the burden of Burmese refugees.

The RTG seems rather reluctant to make CPA for Burmese refugees since SLORC do not want the internal conflicts in Burma exposed to the international community. Such attitude is seen as Thais making favour for SLORC in the name of non-interference on Burma's internal affairs. Ofcourse, this make little or no comfort to the Burmese refugees, who are struggling for day to day survival in Thailand. Some refugees are working for 40 Bahts a day (Thailand's National minimum wage is 125 Bahts/day; a daily newspaper cost 14 Bahts).

The Thailand's non-interference policy towards Burma and its handlings of Burmese refugees should be judged in comparison with that of Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh also have a strictly non-interference policy, but not tarnished by the elements of insincerity. The problem of Burmese Muslim refugees was handled by UNHCR from the outset. The result is a peaceful and early end to the refugee problem: a Memorandum of Understanding was signed last October for the safe repatriation of Burmese Muslim refugees.

The two Governments(the RTG and SLORC) are none the less realizing the Burmese refugee problem invite the international attention and criticisms. Recently, the Royal Thai Government pressures the ethnic rebels along Thai-Burma border to enter cease-fire negotiations with the SLORC. The Burmese prodemocracy groups in Thai-Burma border are also immobilized. By noting the attitude of the Thais, there is growing fear that the Burma's ethnic refugees may be pushed across the border once the cease-fire strucks between the rebels and SLORC.

It may be far easier for the Thais to solve Burmese refugee problem by forcing the ethnic rebels to make cese-fire. However, such move will not serve long term political interests of Burma. The cease-fire condition offered by SLORC encourages warlord-feudalism and will not lead to lasting political solution for Burma.

For all the good reasons, the Thais should consider handing over the Burmese refugee problem to the United Nations. The Non-Governmental Organizations should call for CPA for Burmese refugees in Thailand.

Burmese Women in Thailand

An estimated 20,000 Burmese prostitute are in the brothels in Thailand. These Burmese women are lured into prostitution and held against their will in brothels. There are reports of widespread abuses on women, including forced miscarriage, beating and forced to sex with clients. It constitutes to a new form of slavery, as Asia Watch have reported.

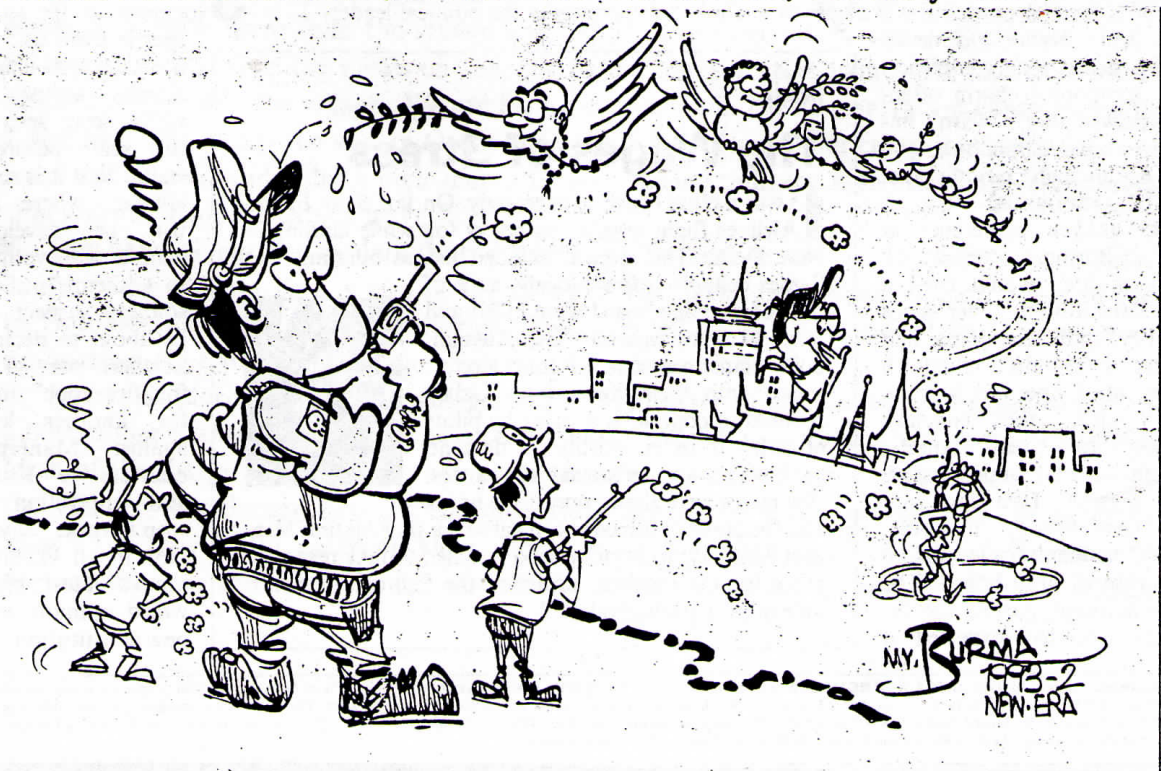
The Burmese Government may probably respond about these women as 'Drug addicts & of Bad Characters' or no such problem exists. The truth is the continuing decline of economy that forced Burmese women into these brothels.

These women are more vulnerable than other Burmese illegal entrants. Since prostitution is illegal in Thailand, those women are unable to seek help from police and NGOs if they were abused. If an abused Burmese woman go to police, she will be fined for illegal entry and deported to Burma.

Desperate as the situation may, the NGOs and international community must not ignore the problem. Burmese women problem is a problem that ignore by both Governments. The cross-border trafficking of sex-slaves should be brought to the international attention. The NGOs and Expatriate groups should consider to take action on this problem. An international inquiry should be call for these incidences.

HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IS BORDERLESS IN ASIA

A Burmese artist's perspective of Nobel Peace Laureate's visit to Thailand last year. The SLORC's bad behaviour is actually inviting criticism for Southeast Asian Nations (source: New Era Journal, February 1993.)



THE NATIONS



Karen guerilla with dead government soldiers: A new offensive?

Ter Hornbak

BURMA

SLORC's Two-Pronged Ploy



It has been condemned worldwide ever since it massacred civilians in 1988 and refused to transfer power to the winners of a general election two years later. But recently Burma's ruling State

Law & Order Restoration Council (SLORC) has made great efforts to improve its image abroad. Few believe that the junta headed by military intelligence chief Khin Nyunt has developed a democratic conscience. Still, Rangoon's charm offensive showed that it wasn't immune to outside opinion.

About eight months ago, SLORC announced that it would hold a conference at which Burmese "from all walks of life" would draft a new constitution. Ever since the 1990 poll, the junta had insisted it couldn't relinquish power until one was written. Last week the conclave opened to great fanfare, though no real oppositionists were present. Two days into the conference, however, SLORC suddenly called for an adjournment until Feb. 1. The announcement startled the delegates, who had expected at

least a month of deliberations. The regime, observed an Asian diplomat, clearly was "in no hurry."

Many expected the conference to be a sham anyway. The European Community refused to send representatives because it reckoned that would only help legitimise the junta's hold on power. Indeed, SLORC had taken pains to set the agenda. One of the conference's six stated objectives was to ensure that the army "participates in the political leader-

ship role of the future state." Some see the staging of constitutional talks as a ploy to divert attention from darker goings-on in a country that has been ruled by generals for three decades.

As SLORC officials busied themselves with the public-relations campaign in Rangoon, the military was quietly going about its business in Karen state. Refugees arriving in the jungle stronghold of Manerplaw say the Burmese army is rounding up most of the civilians in the state's northern half and putting them in camps. The fugitives have the SLORC orders to back up their claims. "All undermentioned villages in Papun Township must move between Dec. 12 and Dec. 31, 1992," said one. "After this date anyone found hiding in the villages by the military will be shot and any possessions remaining in the villages will be confiscated."

Saw Ler Wah, a 42-year-old father of three, says he was among those asked to relocate to fenced enclosures at local army camps. "The soldiers have made it like a prison camp," he says of the one he was supposed to go to. "We fled because we know they'll use everyone as slaves and porters. Two-thirds of the people in that camp don't have enough food to survive until the next harvest. But the army won't give them anything. Even now, the soldiers eat the villagers' food." From information now available it seems the army has relocated at least 20,000 people from three townships. The figure is expected to grow.

SLORC has always used forced relocation to try to distance the people from us," says Dr. Em Marta, spokesman for the Karen National Union. "But we've never seen anything on this scale before." Rangoon claims that it is setting up "key villages, where infrastructure will be developed. Local people will voluntarily move to [them]." Some Karen soldiers suspect SLORC may be about to declare the entire northern part of the state "a free-fire zone" in preparation for another big offensive against Manerplaw, headquarters of Karen guerillas and opposition leaders. "It won't work," says Em Marta. Nor in all likelihood will the junta's latest bid to placate world opinion with talk of a new constitution.

INDIA

The Wages of Stress

It was a close brush with tragedy. On Jan. 9, an Indian Airlines flight crashed in heavy fog while landing in New Delhi. The aircraft skidded before bursting into flames belly-up. Miraculously, none of the 165 people aboard were killed and only 34 were injured. The Russian-built plane was one of four aircraft leased with their crews from Uzbek Airlines to cope with a strike by pilots of state-run Indian Airlines to demand back wages and enhanced allowances. The crews were flying punishing hours and the crash occurred shortly after 4 a.m. Aviation Minister Madhavrao Scindia, who resigned to take responsibility for the incident, criticised the "unfortunate attitude of the [striking] pilots."



Burma Issues

SPECIAL REPORT Forced Relocation in the Tenninsarin Division December 21, 1991
BURMA ISSUES

As part of the Slorc's present dry season offensive, from the middle of September through November about 22,000 civilians from 17 villages in Thayetchaung Township of the Tennasserin Division (Southeastern Burma) have been forced by the Burmese army into concentration camps which are located on the Ye-Tavoy motor roads, in order to cut food supplies, information, new recruits and transportation from the rebels of the Karen National Union (KNU) and the Democratic People's Army (DPA). The concentration camps are located about 12 miles south of Tavoy. The majority of the people in the area are indigenous Karens and some Burmese of the "Tavoy group" which speak a different dialect from ethnic Burmans. In many areas, all villages are totally deserted and no people can be seen, only abandoned unharvested rice fields and empty houses.

In November Slorc showed on the state TV that the army occupied the headquarters of terrorists in the Tenninsarin Division and burnt it down. On 16 October 1991, Slorc's controlled state newspaper "The Working People's Daily" (see copy of the newspaper attached) stated that in the offensive from 1 to 4 October, twenty one terrorist were killed, one captured alive and three others surrendered (totally 25 people were captured). In fact, of those killed and captured, 22 are civilians and only two people were guerrillas from the DPA. (See enclosed list of people killed by the Burmese military as guerrillas) Also the "headquarters" which was burnt down was in reality only innocent civilians' homes.

One captured civilian, Saw Thet Lar who is an ethnic Karen, was shot dead on October 11 by Capt. Moe Thu in the detention cell of Military Intelligent Regiment No. 19 in Tavoy.

The army's troops in the area are companies from Infantry regiment No.101 led by Capt. Soe Tint, No. 25 led by Maj. Sein Win and No. 104 Capt. Win Myint and Tun Than. All of those regiments are under the command of Tactical Commander Col. Tha Win, and the Chairman of the Township Lorc is Maj. San Lin.

Saw Shwe Nyein, a 45-year-old farmer who was able to flee from the concentration camp also gave this testimony. "I am a farmer, and live in Ye Pya village in Thayetchaug township. On 29 August 1991, about 90 soldiers led by Lt. Zaw Nyunt came into the village and stayed one night. They patrolled the area for five days near our village. On 3 September 1991, about 10:00 pm, Lt. Zaw Nyunt came back into our village and suddenly order the villagers to pack their belongings, but only as much as can be carried on the shoulders. Most of the villagers carried their clothes and some preserved foods. Early the next morning, the soldiers shouted at us to leave from the village and enter the concentration camp. We walked for 10 hours without having any meals on the way to the concentration camp. We had to leave our farms and cattle in the village. We are facing starvation in the concentration camp currently. I fled from the camp the end of October to the KNU's area. The camp is situated along a road and is surrounded by a high fence. Heavily armed military men guard the camp at all times so the people can not leave."

Saw Shwe Nyein also explain that, even if the villagers are released from the concentration camp, there will not be any rice in the farms at the next rainy season (from middle of May to October) as at the present, the rice plants are left totally unattended on the farms and are rotting. The people will have no new rice seeds to plant.

Since the Slorc relocated 17 villages, about 400 acres of rice fields, about 500 cattle and 5,000 rubber plantations (one plantation is equal to about 350 rubber trees) were abandoned. Most of the cattle were killed for the meat of the soldiers in the area. When the army forced the villagers to relocate into the concentration camps, the army only allowed the people to take what they could carry on their shoulders to the concentration camps. November is harvest time for the people in the mountains. Even though the people are facing starvation

in the concentration camps, the army did not allow them to go back to their farms to harvest the rice until the middle of November. After the death of some old people and children from malnutrition, the army allowed some people to go back to their farms for harvest but to be sure they would return, their families have to remain in the concentration camps. Though the farmers have a chance to carry back some small amount of rice after harvesting, the farmers are forced to pay one-third of the rice as a tax for the soldiers' rations. At the present time the rice plants are heavy for harvest and so are falling to the ground where they will quickly rot. Moreover, the army ordered the people to burn the rice but the people refused to burn their rice fields because of their spiritual beliefs.

One of the Karen villagers, Saw Tar Le Khwar an organizer of the KNU, said that during October more than 30 people have died already from malnutrition, malaria and cholera. Currently, about six people are dying daily from malaria and malnutrition, and two of them are old people and another four are children in the concentration camps. No aid such as food, medicine, and clothes are coming from any United Nation agencies or Slorc. Even the tiny huts in the concentration camp were built by the people themselves. About thirty women were raped by the troops but only two women revealed their terrible experience during interview.

Saw Tar Le Khwar explained also that by the end of November at least 200 people in the area had been arrested by Military Intelligence (MI) Regiment No.19 under the accusation of being in contact with insurgents. MI No. 19 also asked the ransom of at least 5,000 Ks to 100,000 Ks to release the prisoners who are innocent and only were accused by the MI who want to get bribe money from the villagers. Currently, about 140 people were released after paying ransoms to MI 19. The other 60 people are still detained in the detention cells of the MI 19 in Tavoy.

Saw Tar Le Khwar also said that when the soldiers entered the village they demanded that the villagers turn over all the guns which the insurgents had hidden there. The people said they had no guns as they were not insurgents, only farmers. However, the soldiers demanded guns and arrested all the men from At At village and threatened to make more arrests. Finally the people collected money and went out to buy guns from some source in order to get the release of their fellow villagers. The Working People's Daily of 16 October showed a photo of the guns captured from the "insurgents". In reality, almost all of the guns shown were those bought by the villagers in order to secure the release of those arrested. (See enclosed copy of the Working People's Daily for photo of "captured" arms.)

Ko Thein Aung, 24 years old, also testified about the situation in the area. Ko Thein Aung said, "I have been for one month in the concentration camp. I am married and I have two children in Me Ke village of Thayetchaung township. My father was killed by soldiers from Infantry Regiment No. 25 in 1969. My two brothers and my mother were arrested and accused of being in contact with insurgents. Our family has a small grocery shop in the village, and sometimes the guerrillas from KNU and DPA buy some groceries from this shop. Therefore my mother, Daw Sein Kyi who is 68 years old, was arrested on 2 April 1991, and my two elder brother, Ko Soe Thein and Ko Aung Lin were also arrested on 19 April and 20 October 1991 by MI-No.19. Later the MI asked 30,000 Ks as ransoms for each. Finally, we paid the ransom for the release of my two brothers but my mother is still detained because she owns the grocery shop. I heard from some released people that my old mother is being badly tortured in the detention cell. After that, the MI also suspected me because I also took part in the demonstrations in 1988. Therefore the other people in the concentration camp suggested that I flee from the concentration camp. Finally I was convinced to flee from the concentration camp on the first week of November. I do not know now what is happening to my wife and two children in the concentration camp."

Burma Issues PO Box 1076, Silom Post Office Bangkok 10504 Thailand

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE INSIDE BURMA.

Following is a list of villages in Pa-an District, Karen State, which were relocated. One reliable source states that, "The campaign is spread through Papun District in the north, through central Thaton District, to Pa-an District in the south. It is a large region about 200km north to south, forming a large crescent behind SLORC line west of Manerplaw." Some reckon that SLORC is preparing the final launch of its offensive on Manerplaw, the last stronghold of the Karen National Union and home of NCGUB - the government in exile.

This list contains only a fraction of the hundreds of villages in Karen State that were relocated. People from these villages were forcefully relocated by No. 84 Light Infantry Division. The villagers have to leave their firms, livestocks, food and possessions. The villages then are relocated near military outpost, as have been reported. These relocations occurred in February 1993 and SLORC give no compensation to the villagers.

"Every morning, the scene is the same: the villagers holding brooms, sweeping the road, followed by a pack of villagers walk in front of military trucks (to clear the land mines for the army convoy)", as stated in the report.

No.	Village	No.of Houses	Population
1.	Naw-tha-ray	36	289
2.	Kyaw-kei-hkee	22	120
3.	Ka-mot-ka-sai	15	75
4.	Tar-thu-kee	30	160
5.	Htee-khu	28	158
6.	No-hka-day	21	114
7.	Htee-pha-do-hkee	25	131
8.	Mai-the-hkee	20	100
9.	Htee-kyaw-hkee	29	151
10.	Mai-tha-na	45	233
11.	Mai-tha-no-ywa-lei	32	168
12.	Kyone-sein-ywa-lei	30	150
13.	Hut-ta-light	20	100
14.	Kaw-ta-ya	15	75
15.	Ka-yi-kyai	28	140
16.	No-ta-lei	50	201
17.	Ka-lar-gon	15	65

Source: The New Era Journal, No. 9, 16 May 1993.

EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS IN KAREN STATE

Following is a list of villagers who were executed without trials in the SLORC *four-cuts* operation in the Karen State, eastern part of Burma.

No.	Name	Age	Father's Name	Village
1.	Saw Pa Raw	30	U Ki Kie	Kyone-sein
2.	Ko Hla Thein	34	U Toe To	Phalan-taung
3.	Mg Tin Win	20	U Ko Kin	Phalan-taung
4.	Saw Ko Htun	22	U Aung Dwe	Phalan-taung
5.	Mg San Aye	17	U Pu Pu	Kyaw-kei-khee
6.	Du Boe	26	Bo Da Kee	Baw-tha-byu
7.	Hpa Kay	26	U Than Pe	Baw-tha-byu
8.	Ba Htun	27	U Htoe Lon	Baw-tha-byu
9.	Ko Myat San	29	U Shwe Khaing	Baw-tha-byu
10.	Pha Ko	23	U Htun Aye	No-hkaw-tei
11.	Cha kei Ta Lo	18	U Kaw Lar	No-au-la
12.	Mg Kyaw	31	U Ohn Shwe	Ka-Mei
13.	Po Saw Kei	41	U Hmei Kei	Htee-bo-net
14.	Po Hpu Pwa	N/A	N/A	Yay-aye
15.	Ngwe Thein	N/A	N/A	Yay-aye
16.	U Pha Lu	N/A	N/A	Yay-aye
17.	Mg Hla Htwe	22	U Chit Tin	Htee-kyu

Table 0.1: The villagers killed by No. 84 Light Infantry Division ~~of the~~ ⁸⁴ 99th ~~Brigade~~ within the dates 19/11/92 to 19/2/93.

Source: *New Era Journal*, No. 10, June 1, 1993

The Economist, Feb. 5th-11th, 1994

The slaves from Myanmar

THE Thai government hates its country being labelled the sex paradise of Asia, when, as everyone knows, visitors only want to admire the temples and lie on the beaches. This week it received an especially nasty blow to its self-esteem when Asia Watch, an American-based human-rights group, said the government was turning a blind eye to the traffic in women and girls brought from Myanmar (Burma) to Thailand for forced prostitution.

According to the group's report, "A Modern Form of Slavery", village girls are lured to Thailand by the promise of jobs as maids, cooks, waitresses and laundresses, often with a cash payment to their parents. Myanmar, as well as being a dictatorship, is poor, and the prospect of working in relatively rich Thailand sounds great. Once inside Thailand, the women are put into brothels and beaten if they refuse to serve clients. Many have contracted AIDS.

The strict border controls that, in theory, exist between Thailand and Myanmar are evaded by corrupt police on both sides, according to Asia Watch. Despite "clear evidence of direct official involvement in every stage of the trafficking process", Asia Watch says that, to its knowledge, no Thai officer has been prosecuted, except in one highly publicised case of murder.

It is reckoned that some 20,000 women from Myanmar are at present in Thai brothels, with 10,000 new recruits each year. The total number of prostitutes in Thailand is put at between 800,000 and 2m. In 1992 the prime min-

ister, Chuan Leekpai, said the government was cracking down on forced and child prostitution, but not on prostitution in general. "I won't talk about what is impossible," he said. Many Thai men, as well as foreigners, patronise the brothels. According to one survey, 75% of Thai men have had sex with a prostitute.

Replying to the criticisms, the government said the "restructuring" of the police force now taking place would help to reduce prostitution. But Asia Watch wants thorough reforms to Thailand's prostitution and trafficking laws. That might not have much effect. Prostitution is illegal in Thailand.



Eyes on home, not on him

A Modern Form of Slavery

Trafficking of Burmese Women and Girls into Brothels in Thailand



Pamela Blotner

A new report from

Asia Watch

The Women's Rights Project

DIVISIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Thousands of Burmese women and girls are trafficked into Thai brothels every year where they work under conditions tantamount to slavery. Subject to debt bondage, illegal confinement, various forms of sexual and physical abuse, and exposure to HIV in the brothels, they then face wrongful arrest as illegal immigrants if they try to escape or if the brothels are raided by Thai police. Once arrested, the women and girls may be subjected to further sexual abuse in Thai detention centers. They are then taken for deportation to the Thai-Burmese border where they are often lured back into prostitution by brothel agents who play on their fear of arrest on return to Burma. Thai police and border patrol officials are involved in both the trafficking and the brothel operations, but they routinely escape punishment as, for the most part, do brothel agents, owners, pimps and clients.

A Modern Form of Slavery, based on in-depth interviews with Burmese trafficking victims, documents the violations of internationally-recognized human rights committed against those victims. It also presents detailed recommendations to the Thai and Burmese governments and the international community for improving the protection of the women and girls and ensuring the prosecution of their abusers.

(107X) 12/93, 160 pp., ISBN 1-56432-107-X, \$15.00

To order the 160-page *A Modern Form of Slavery*, please make your check payable to Human Rights Watch and return this order form to:



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