

GLOBAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR BURMA

14 March 2010 /// Praising God in northern Karen State, Burma.



Dear friends,

Thank you for praying with us. We believe in the power of God through prayer. Let us pray together for freedom, justice, reconciliation in Burma, and that all would know God's love.

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty." Zechariah 4:6.

GOOD NEWS IN BURMA

In the midst of suffering and oppression by the dictators of Burma, there is also good news. In many areas that before had been emptied of people by the attacking Burma Army, there are now re-established villages with rebuilt schools, clinics and churches.

This is due to the tenacity and resilience of the people and the effectiveness of the resistance.

The resistance and villagers work together to slow down and in some cases even stop Burma Army attacks. The ability of the people in the areas under attack to continue to survive and thrive is amazing. With very little or no outside support they hide their food supplies, prepare hiding places, find food where they can, raise and educate their children and rebuild their homes and villages when the Burma Army finishes its operations. When the Burma Army troops have passed by and are out of the immediate area (although they still may be only a few hours away on foot), the people go back to their fields, barns and houses to gather any food supplies or belongings they can. They also go to hiding places where they have stored food for such an emergency. The people are prepared year-round to flee, hide and survive.

The ethnic people continue one of the most positive acts of civil disobedience in Burma.

They are building up their people, culture, land and freedom.

The following story about two young mothers who choose to live with their families in an area



under direct Burma Army threat, illustrates the determination, faith and ability of the people.

Two sisters, Naw Moo Eh and Naw Rosemary tell their story

"We had no food and no security. We went back on faith alone."

"The teams helped us, but eventually because of the attacks we had to leave to another district. We always were yearning to come back home. We didn't want to go to a refugee camp. Everyone was suffering, and some could share

TOP Naw Moo Eh and Naw Rosemary with their children. January '09 (FBR)

BOTTOM Relief teams and supplies moving to areas recently under attack. January '09 (FBR)

their food with us and some could not. The Burma Army continued to attack and shell the villages and fields in our district, and we kept praying. Some friends were killed and some were wounded. We were tired, hungry, and afraid. Sometimes the Burma Army shelled every day.

We continued to pray, and we cried out to God to help: 'please let us stay in our home'. Finally after praying, we all felt we should try to go home. We heard the attacks had subsided, and even though there were new Burma Army camps in the area, we wanted to try. So we prayed.

We had no food and no security. We went back on faith alone. We trusted God would provide something for us. We felt very sure He was helping us to come back. We met the resistance who told us the Burma Army had moved back a little. As we climbed over a ridge and down into the valley, to our amazement we came to a field full of rice that had not yet been harvested. We were told that the owners of the field had fled before they could harvest, and would not be coming back. We began to harvest the rice and thanked God that we could now eat. Since then we have been back here, and we thank God and we thank you all. We have rebuilt our village. This is our home. Thank you so much for coming and for your help."

A new school for a new generation

In an area once empty now stands a school. It shows the dedication of the local people to give their best for the future of their children even at the risk of loss to the Burma Army.

"Before I would only die for Kachin blood, now I will die for anyone in Burma."

On relief missions we have teams from different ethnic groups working together- Chin, Arakan, Pa'O, Kachin, Karenni, Mon, Lahu, Kayan, Shan and Karen. Their cooperation was another example of the unity of effort for freedom that crosses ethnic and religious lines in Burma.

As one Kachin team leader told us; "Before I would only die for Kachin blood, now I will die for anyone in Burma."



TOP Karen resistance providing security and moving relief supplies during road crossing. January '09 (FBR)

MIDDLE Villagers reading about the Global Day of Prayer for Burma. December '08 (FBR)

BOTTOM Students from New Generation School gather close to their school. December '08 (FBR)

ENEMY ON THE ROAD

In ethnic areas the Burma Army builds roads to project their power more rapidly through the area. The roads serve the army camps from which attacks are launched and serve as formidable barriers to people trying to cross them. The roads cut through farms and villages, displacing all people along their axis, and separating communities from each other. The roads are patrolled and mined by the Burma Army and are barriers to travel, trade and the sending of relief. In northern Karen State, the Burma Army continues to shoot and kill people, to rape and to destroy, to dominate and to hold on to other people's land. The following story illustrates the enemy on the road.

"From the side of a ridge we looked out over the now empty valley with charred remains of houses dotted across abandoned rice fields. One end of the valley was guarded by a Burma Army camp on a hill, and a new road ran from the camp both ways. The southern extension ran south to connect to another road and camp network, and on to the east. To the north, the road runs through the mountains. As we watched, a Burma Army column of about 100 troops marched north from a camp that dominates the valley. At the northern end of the valley, and also on the road, was another column waiting to meet them. We realized we were documenting the dictator's army incriminating themselves by their presence in the ruins of a thriving community they had destroyed. The Burma Army troops moved in a long column and marched up the road though the valley cleared of all Karen villages. It was an empty valley, except for them.

This was the same road that we would have to cross later and, unbeknownst to us, at this time

families were trying to cross this very road eight miles to the north. Two Karen soldiers helping the families were shot, one killed and the other wounded- the families fled back.

The wounded soldier was treated by one of our medics and the local staff of the mobile clinic in this area."

Burma Army troops on operations in Karen communities. December '08 (FBR)



"Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" DANIEL 3:16,17,18



TOP LEFT Burma Army troops on a patrol. '09 (FBR)

TOP MIDDLE Burma Army column moves on a new road through Ler Mu Plaw Valley. January '09 (FBR)

TOP RIGHT Burma Army on road near burned house in Ler Mu Plaw. January '09 (PRAD)

MIDDLE Families run across the road during a car road crossing, Karen State. January '09 (FBR)

RIGHT Karen soldier helping villagers to cross the road, shot by the Burma Army being treated by a medic. January '09 (FBR)

“We tried our best to help them, now we are in difficulty, we wonder if they will help us”

“In World War II, the Japanese invaded here and drove the British out. They killed and tortured us a lot. If they wanted to kill one of us Karen, they just did it. We worked with the British to help them fight the Japanese. They asked us to help them and we did. 160 of us joined the British: 80 of us as local militia or home guard, and 80 as a mobile unit to fight alongside the British on their operations.

We tried our best to help them (the British and allies), now we are in difficulty, we wonder if they will help us.”

We gave him a blanket, shirt and some money. We told him that we and many around the world were grateful for his service. We made a presentation and honored him as best we could. He was smiling all the time and thanked us profusely. Then, with a twinkle in his eye and a broad smile, he said, “I must be getting back home, thank you so much again and may God bless you all.”

FAR RIGHT TOP WWII veteran, Saw Nya They Mu, 80 years old. Muthraw District, Northern Karen State, Burma. December '08

TOP Daung Nyo, former member of a Karen FBR team was shot and killed by the Burma Army on 26 September 2009. His three month old son had just died 10 days before he was killed. Photo taken November '05 (FBR)

ROW 2 Child and Woman shot by Dictator's forces. The Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), a proxy force of the Burma Army, together with the Burma Army shot five villagers in Bray Day (also known as Paw Ler Loh) village, eastern Karen State, killing one of them. '09 (FBR)

ROW 3 LEFT Ma Kin Kyi, a 34-year-old nursing mother, shot by the DKBA and Burma Army forces in Karen State, Burma. August '09 (FBR)

ROW 3 RIGHT Woman raped by Burma Army Commander Khin Maung Hsit, northern Karen State. August '09 (FBR)

BOTTOM Women check their belongings after fleeing a Burma Army attack, Karen State, Burma. December '08 (FBR)

FAR RIGHT BOTTOM Sister of 14 year old boy, Nah Eh Moo, “My brother was too young and ran the wrong way and they killed him.” December '08 (FBR)







TOP THREE Families fleeing Ler Per Her. June '09 (PRAD)

ABOVE Annual Global Day of Prayer for Burma before attacks. (FBR)

"My whole being will exclaim, "Who is like you Lord? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them." Psalm 35:10

LER PER HER A COMMUNITY SCATTERED

Burma Army forces and their proxies attacked Ler Per Her IDP site in June 2009, driving over 1,000 people from their homes and across the border into Thailand. Homes were burned down and the school destroyed.

Our family was there earlier this year for the Global Day of Prayer for Burma and now the site has been burned. With the destruction of their homes, schools, and churches, our friends are now homeless.

The first time we were in Ler Per Her was in 1997 before it was an IDP site. We were on a relief mission to give assistance to IDPs further west in the Dawna Range. At that time Ler Per Her was a cluster of huts by the Moei River where all was calm and beautiful. I remember looking over my shoulder at the mountains we had just come down and thinking, 'this place could go anytime'.

This recent loss of Ler Per Her is another in the progression of attack on and destruction of Karen communities.

Ler Per Her was important as a place of Karen freedom in the midst of an oppressive country. It was also a place where others could share in their lives and taste some of that freedom that is so rare in Burma. Where boats plied the river, men fished, mothers washed clothes and children ran through the shallows. Most of all it was home for the families who lived there. The enemy came and they shot and they burned.

The families who fled need prayer, help and hope.

Message from a relief team leader

A CHRISTMAS STORY

"There were 17 families hiding here in a small ravine in a bamboo thicket. The people here had been fleeing since the Burma Army first started their attacks in this area of Karen State in 1972. Since then, they have fled attacks many times. One 62-year-old man told us he thought he had fled over 100 times in his lifetime.

They live in small shacks made of bamboo and grass, some covered in tarps given earlier by our teams. There are two small water points where pieces of bamboo channel the small flow of a little stream. As we walked into the site, there was a plastic tarp spread on the ground, with children sitting on it, as one of the Good Life Club teams led them in songs and games.

Mothers and fathers stood behind, holding babies, smiling and laughing with their small huts right behind them. As we got closer, the team handed out presents for the children, and then the whole team sang a blessing song. I felt very sad that the people had to live like this, but at the same time, I felt the more powerful emotion of love, hope and joy, as the team and the families bonded together. I thought, 'This is wonderful and the Burma Army probably wouldn't believe it if they saw it'. Here are people that they are chasing who have lost so much, who are still smiling and singing and who haven't given up."

I looked around the cluster of small huts, and smiling and happy people. I looked as the medics began to prepare for treatment and I thought, 'This is a wonderful thing'. I felt satisfied. Not satisfied with the situation and the people in hiding, but satisfied that all of us at this site were happy together and that on this day, we would all eat well and sleep well. Later that same night other Karen from different displaced villages



came to sing carols at the hide site. They went to every family's house and sang. As we looked up at the stars and listened to the singing, I thought, "This really is Christmas." Thank all of you who pray for, love, and help these people.

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God bless you and Merry Christmas

A RELIEF TEAM LEADER
Western Karen State, Burma

TOP Carolers at hiding place.
December '08 (FBR)

BOTTOM Shan, Chin and Karen medics
treat patients. December '08 (FBR)

"And if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your night will become like noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail." Isaiah 58:10-11

WHO WILL STOP THE DICTATORS?

We are putting together this Global Day of Prayer for Burma from inside an ethnic area of Burma that is under attack by the Burma Army. We are training multi-ethnic relief teams and going with them to bring help, hope and love to the displaced. The children of Burma live in terror and are attacked, raped and killed by their own government. Who will come to their aid? Who will help them? As talks are held, who is defending those under attack? In Burma, no one protects except the pro-democracy resistance. In spite of this, there is no large scale support for the resistance groups and thus no way to provide adequate protection to the people under attack.

All relief in the IDP areas is only possible because of the pro-democracy ethnic resistance forces. Humanitarian relief is crucial and lifesaving and it is our mission, but it treats symptoms not the main problem. The problem is the dictators of Burma and their army that attacks, displaces, uses torture, rapes and kills its own people with impunity.

As we prepared to go on this mission, we felt that Jesus was saying, "follow me". To us this means Jesus is going ahead and we need to follow and obey. We have a small but precious mission to share God's love, give help and stand with these people. When we are out of supplies, we can still love and be with these people. If the people cannot run we do not run. This year, while on a relief mission in a village south of us the Burma Army raped and then killed a 7 year old girl. No one there could protect her. No one was held accountable.

As we help the families under attack, we ask ourselves, and we ask God, "Would we do more if these were our own children?" If we continued our work as it is and did not try to stop the Burma Army; meeting God in heaven, maybe God would say, "If your own children were killed, your wife raped, your home burned, would you not try to stop the attackers? Would you not try to stop them from hurting others? Would you just sit by and watch? You hypocrite! All you care about is your reputation, your funding and keeping yourself safe". But if we decided to attack the Burma Army to prevent them from attacking these people, maybe God would say, "Who told you to attack the dictators? It may be the right thing, but it is not what I called you to do. You were not serving me."

We seek God's will for us and put all at His feet—our lives, fortunes and honor. In answer to our prayers we still hear, "feed my sheep" not "march on Rangoon". For us it is right to stop the Burma Army, but it is not our role. Our role is to serve those in need, to comfort them, to stand with them, and to bear witness to what is happening to them. When they cannot run we stand with them and face the attack together. Some of our team members have died. We pray for the dictators but we cannot stop the Burma Army. Who then will stop them, who will bring justice?

This is a call to pray and to ask God what He wants each of us to do about the oppression of His children in Burma. God's love and justice is worked out through people. God uses us to bring about justice, to defend the cause of the



fatherless, the widow, and the oppressed. **The dictators have committed their lives, fortune, and honor to keeping power. If we want to be a part of freedom in Burma, we can do no less.**

When under pressure most of us ask the question, "What will become of me?" The real question is "What should I do?" We find the answer in love. We go compelled by that love in heart, mind, and soul. We love the people of Burma and we are helping them. This is our heart. We believe that oppression is morally wrong. This is our mind. We go because the people of Burma are God's children and it is right to help them and to be with them. This is our soul. If you also feel led, then please join us in the cause of freedom, justice and reconciliation for Burma.

Grandfather Maw La, a Karen elder praying for his congregation and all the people of Burma, Karen State. December '09 (FBR)

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?" Isaiah 58:6

LOSS OF A RANGER

A Ranger died in September 2009. This is a great loss for us, the Karen people, and the people of Burma. Di Gay Htoo was a humble, brave, dedicated and selfless young Karen leader. He died of a sudden fever while on a mission with the Karen resistance. After serving as a Free Burma Ranger relief team leader, Di Gay Htoo was called by the pro-democracy resistance to serve as an officer in the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA).

His honesty, rapport with villagers, compassion, and sense of duty made him the outstanding young officer of the KNLA. On his last mission he was safeguarding families in the line of a threatened Burma Army attack.

Di Gay Htoo was the first Free Burma Ranger team leader from northern Karen State. He was the honor graduate of the first FBR training in 2001, and his team was the best team of that class. He set a standard of excellence both in training and on relief missions that has not been surpassed.

I first met Di Gay Htoo in 1996 at a leadership training for emergent leaders in central Karen State. I met him next in 1998 on a relief mission to northern Karen State at the end of the 1997-1998 offensive. Arriving in Karen State, a Karen soldier told me, "The way you will go tomorrow is very dangerous and the enemy is close." Then a young Karen man approached me and said, "Hello, my name is Di Gay Htoo. You and your wife taught me in 1996 and now I am your guide and will be with you on this mission. Tomorrow is very dangerous and anything can happen in one minute. Maybe tomorrow we will be dead, but if so, we will die together- I will be with you."

I was blessed to realize that this man with me was



the grandson of the Di Gay who led the Karen resistance against Japan alongside a British officer named Hugh Seagrim (called 'Grandfather Longlegs' by the Karen). These two men organized the Karen who fought with the Allies and helped to defeat the Japanese in Burma. Di Gay and Grandfather Longlegs have always been heroes to me. To have Di Gay's grandson as my guide was an honor and blessing. As we climbed the mountains between Burma Army lines the next day, he told me words I will never forget. **"Thank you for coming here to help us and to tell our story. But when you tell the story of my people, please do not just talk about all the bad things that happen to us and our suffering by the Burma Army. Please tell the world about the good things, about my people, their faith in God and their love. Of course we need help. We are too weak to make the change in Burma by ourselves. But do tell about what my people do, how they are strong, still free and working together to make our nation better."**

In September 2009 Di Gay Htoo died as he helped to prepare his people for the threat of renewed attacks. He died doing his duty and inspires all of us to do ours.

“Greater love
hath no man than
this, that a man
lay down his life
for his friends.”

JOHN 15:13 (AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION)

To Di Gay Htoo I say, “Thank you Di Gay Htoo, for your love, example, humility and singleness of purpose. The God you served loves you and we are sorry for ourselves for our loss but happy for you that you lived well and that you are now in a new life. We will join you one day. Until that day, we will cherish your memory, and love and comfort your family. We will be strong like you and tell the world about how wonderful your people are.”

Our family and all the FBR loves you, misses you and thanks God for you.

With love & gratitude,

A RELIEF TEAM LEADER &
THE FREE BURMA RANGERS



TOP Chin medic provides care for a villager. '09 (FBR)

MIDDLE Arakan relief team provides medical care. August '09 (FBR)

BOTTOM A group of internally displaced children in Arakan State, Burma. August '09 (FBR)



“We also cannot manage to survive on our own. We need the international community’s support and cooperation. That is very important.” ARAKAN

FAMILY IN HIDING.

In western Burma the Burma Army is forcing people to leave their villages and build a gas pipeline to China and a border fence with Bangladesh. They are blocking relief to Chin and Arakan people suffering from a shortage of rice due to an infestation of rats. In the face of this, people and the organizations that try to help them have not given up.

More than 5,000 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) are living a life on the run in the jungles along the border of Arakan State and in southern Chin State in western Burma, according to a recent report by FBR teams on the ground there.

In addition to these 5,000 IDPs, more than 100,000 villagers are suffering from the ongoing famine that stretches through both northern Arakan State and into Chin State.

ABUNDANT LIFE IN BURMA

The sound of mortars is normal and the threat of attack is constant for the people in this part of eastern Burma. Civil war has torn normal life apart for over 60 years in northern Karen State, Burma.

But now, on this day, in this village, the war seems far away. The sun shines down out of a cloudless blue sky. Five hundred children are gathered, not in fear and not to run away again: today they are laughing, singing, dancing and the heat hasn't slowed them down at all. About ten Free Burma Rangers including people from most of the major ethnic groups of Burma, are leading the Good Life Club (GLC) and medical program that began that morning at nine o'clock. There is joy and fun on their faces and this is soon reflected in not only the children's faces, but in the shouts and laughter coming from the on-looking parents.

Thinking of John 10:10, I find myself asking about this “abundant life” that Jesus says is for everyone, that GLC tries to bring to these struggling people: where is it, why does it seem so hard to find - what is our part in it?

I go back to the Bible passage in John 10 and find a picture of a sheep pen, full of terrified animals milling around in muck, afraid of wolves and thieves and murderers. Then the good shepherd comes, he opens the gate and leads his sheep out, to good pasture, to green grass and cool streams and fresh air and freedom.

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly!”

JOHN 10:10 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

Out of the pen there are still wolves, there are still thieves - it is not safe. But He is there and He has promised to lay down his life to save us. I see that safety and security, then, are not part of the promise. But if we trust the good shepherd, we can take and enjoy the good things of life, in the presence of the enemy, knowing that He has already laid his life down for us. And so the smiles and joy and laughter and songs of the past month take on eternal significance. They are the fulfillment of God's promise, and the promise of things to come.

FROM A RELIEF TEAM MEMBER

Karen State, Burma

A team member performing a GLC program to IDPs. December '08 (FBR)





KIDS PACKS

- Small Comb and a mirror
- 1 box of children's chewable vitamins
- 2 children's toothbrushes
- 1 fingernail clipper
- 1 small toy
- 1 picture of you
- 1 postcard from your city or state with a Bible verse

MOM AND BABY PACKS

- Small fingernail clippers
- Multi-vitamins for mom
- Pediatric vitamins (not needing refrigeration)
- 2 outfits for baby, including cap, hand mittens, shirt (not a onesie) and socks
- 1 teether
- 1 picture of you
- 1 postcard from your city or state with a Bible verse



The Good Life Club program is based on the words of Jesus in John 10:10, "The thief comes to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly!" The word abundant is so big and full...only Jesus can truly meet all of our needs in an abundant way. In whatever ways we are able, we hope to bring love and faith, along with tools for a good life, body and soul. These include teaching Bible lessons and health care, songs and games, and giving a school pack for the teachers.

SHIPPING INFORMATION

Thank you for your help in sending the packs to us. At this time, it is still not possible to send charitable bulk shipments to us. Please send standard household/ gift size boxes with the description "household/ personal goods, no commercial value" on customs form.

Send packs airmail (USA: not to exceed 79 inches length/width/girth) to **Christians Concerned for Burma (CCB), PO Box 14 Mae Jo, Chiang Mai 50290, THAILAND. Mark the package: GLC**

TOP: Health and anatomy class for displaced children at new village.
December '08 (FBR)

BOTTOM: Good Life Club for Karen IDPs.
March '09 (FBR)



MONKEY

K'PAW SAY

We all call him Monkey although his real name is K'Paw Say. He is a Karenni refugee, is co-leader of the Free Burma Rangers and is the headquarters group pastor and video man. Monkey is responsible for the training of all FBR video and camera team members and for the spiritual life of all the teams. He is a devout follower of Jesus and is close to all the team members; Christian, Animist and Buddhist.

Monkey's wife and children live in a refugee camp. In addition to their own children, he and his wife have adopted three orphans who lost their parents in the war zones of Burma.

Before Monkey joined FBR, he was not sure God existed and challenged God, saying, "God, if you are real you need to prove it or I will not believe in or follow you." Not long after that prayer, he began to experience what he said was God's presence and decided to follow God.

He was afraid before his first relief mission and wanted to back out- but after he prayed, he said, "Ok, I can go because even though I am afraid, God is going with me."

Monkey is the person I turn to when I am in need of spiritual council. I trust him for his steady commitment to following Jesus no matter the cost. His calm demeanor, humility, perseverance and high standards influence all of us to do and be better. His judgment is good, and we count on it.

RIGHT Monkey training new team members on video techniques. (FBR)

TOP TO BOTTOM Monkey. (FBR)

Monkey praying with woman whose mother and brother were killed by the Burma Army. (FBR)

Monkey documenting a Burma Army camp. (FBR)

Monkey coordinating relief during attacks while sick. (FBR)





One time when we were surrounded by the Burma Army, it looked like there was no way out. We were leading people out of Burma and the Burma Army was hunting us. As they closed in we stopped to consider the best way to break out of the encirclement. There were old men and women who could hardly walk, an anemic mother with a three-week-old baby and many sick children. There was no way we could outrun or outfight the over 800 pursuers.

As the families huddled against trees I instinctively walked over to Monkey and said, "Monkey, let us pray together." He looked at me intently and said, "Yes, and we don't have to worry, God will lead us." With multiple changes of course, confusion on the part of the Burma Army and long, hard movements, all the time aware of God's presence, we escaped the troops and made it safely to the border.

When chased by the Burma Army on a different mission, we were pinned up against a large river. When some thought we could escape the trap by abandoning the mission and fleeing, Monkey said, "I am afraid too. But then I remember the passion of Jesus and how He did God's will even when he was to die. So, we should do that and follow His example. The people still need our help, we have to try."

After our latest mission he reminded us that, "God has given us a precious mission to be with people under attack, to help them, love them and stand with them." Monkey recently had back surgery and is now recovering but needs prayer so that he can continue to serve his people. His warm smile brings light and love to whoever he meets. We thank God for his leadership, sacrifice, bravery and faithfulness. We love you Monkey.

Message from a relief team leader

SITUATION UPDATE

Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy, was placed under house arrest for a further 18 months in August. She has spent 14 of the last 20 years under house arrest.

Under President Obama, the US has declared its intention of pursuing dialogue with the military regime to aid transition to democracy as well as maintaining sanctions.

In November, 2008, Burma signed an agreement with North Korea cementing closer military and industrial ties. Burma has reportedly purchased missiles as well as radar technology and tunnelling expertise from North Korea.

Elections in Burma are due to be held later this year. Many condemn these elections as undemocratic as they guarantee the military will have 25 percent of the seats in both electoral chambers and in each state assembly. Aung San Suu Kyi is banned from taking part because she was married to a foreigner. More than 2,000 political prisoners are still behind bars.

In April, 2009, those ethnic groups which had signed ceasefires with the regime were given an ultimatum by the SPDC. They were told that all ceasefire groups wishing to participate in elections had to become a Border Guard Force (BGF) under the control of the Burma Army in line with the 2008 referendum. This would mean the ethnic armies would be under the control of the SPDC and would mean large reductions in territory, influence, and protection. In August 2009 Burma Army soldiers attacked the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (Kokang), in northern Shan State which had refused the BGF proposal. More than 30,000



Aung San Suu Kyi (FBR)

ethnic Chinese Kokang refugees fled into Yunnan Province in China.

The United Wa State Army (UWSA), the largest ceasefire group, has so far refused to become a Border Guard Force (BGF). The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) has so far also rejected these proposals as they felt there had been no political progress. The New Mon State Party (NMSP), the Shan State Army North, Shan State Army South and the National Democratic Alliance Army-Eastern Shan State have also refused this offer. The Democratic Karen Buddhist Army, (DKBA) the Pa'O National Army, the National Democratic Army-Kachin and the Karenni Nationalities Peoples' Liberation Front have all accepted the BGF proposals.

Arakan and Chin political organizations have not been involved in these negotiations. However, both areas have been suffering from the 50 year cycle of the flowering of the bamboo plants which in turn leads to a boom in the rat population. The rats feast on the bamboo fruit, but when this runs out they turn on rice and other food supplies forcing many villagers to the brink of starvation.

Ceasefire and Non-Ceasefire Ethnic Areas of Burma



A consortium of Korean and Indian companies together with the SPDC is planning to construct a pipeline over 1,100 km long from the Shwe natural gas fields in the Bay of Bengal near Sittwe in Arakan State to Kunming in China. There are widespread fears this will lead not only to vast amounts of money going into the regime's funds, but also widespread human rights abuses as people are displaced from the pipeline's route. There are also plans to dam the Salween River at several points in Karen State, again displacing thousands of villagers who will receive no benefit from the projects. Deforestation is also of serious concern, as is the mining of minerals such as jade in Kachin State with widespread environmental damage. Burma remains the second largest exporter of Opium and the world's largest producer of methamphetamines.

In the areas where the pro-democracy ethnic groups still resist the dictators, over 1,000,000 people have been displaced since 1997 and attacks against the ethnic civilian population continue.



TOP Shan relief teams provide medical treatment. '09 (FBR)

MIDDLE Companies working in cooperation with the Burma Army, dumping silt into the river. '09 (FBR)

BOTTOM Mining in Kachin State allowed by the Burma Army. '09 (FBR)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-20

LEFT This man lost his leg to a Burma Army landmine while trying to help his family. They have had to flee over twelve times and he is here now worshipping God in church at a new village he and other families built together. January '09 (FBR)

TOP RIGHT Karen young people and a Shan relief team leader prepare to be baptized. April '09 (FBR)

BOTTOM RIGHT Karenni Relief team trains to give IV and injections. (FBR)



HUMAN MINESWEEPERS & FORCED LABOUR

THESE PHOTOS WERE
TAKEN AT HIGH RISK BY
RELIEF TEAM MEMBERS

The Burma Army continues to force villagers in Burma to work for them on road projects, carrying supplies, and building Burma Army camps. The Burma Army also forces villagers to act as human minesweepers to clear the roads ahead of them. The continual build-up of forces by the Burma Army and the infrastructure to support these forces is a burden on the villagers and results in increased oppression for all the people of Burma.



TOP Burma Army soldiers stand guard on logging project, Karen State, Burma. April '09 (FBR)

MIDDLE Noh Beah Baw villagers being forced to do labor, Karen State Burma. April '09 (FBR)

BOTTOM Burma Army soldier watches as villager is forced to carry water to his camp, Karen State, January '09. (FBR)



"Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering."
Hebrews 13:3



“MY HUSBAND DIED FOR HIS PEOPLE, I WILL TAKE HIS PLACE ON THE FBR TEAM”

**P’Saw Paw (Dew Flower), age 26,
widow and mother of a 4 year
old daughter.**

October 24, 2009. Free Burma Ranger training camp, Karen State, Burma.

While on a relief mission in Toungoo District, northern Karen State, Mya Win, FBR team video man and reporter, died of malaria as he helped his people flee the attacking Burma Army. He stayed behind with the people even as he was sick. At the height of the rainy season, with no good shelter, little food and giving his all to care for the displaced families, Mya Win lost his life on May 27, 2006.

I was walking through a village in Papun District further south but heard the news from the radio right away. I was shocked. Mya Win was a very tough, active and sharp young man. With a dry sense of humor and quick wit, he was a favorite among all the Rangers. I stood under a cattle shed in the driving rain and wrote a letter to his wife. I told her how sorry we were, how wonderful her husband was, what he meant to us and how we felt for her. I wrote that we would help take care of her and her new baby and sent her some money. The letter was carried by runner two weeks to her home in a different part of the district. The next month I got a reply and when I saw who the letter was from I thought, “This is from Mya Win’s wife, she will be very unhappy.” Instead, when I opened the letter, this is what she wrote,



“Dear Free Burma Rangers,

First, I want to thank all of you because you let me know about my husband’s passing away. Until now, I did not know where my husband died or the disease that he died from. I was very sad, but when I saw and got your letter and your encouragement, I was happy. Please do not find a replacement for him, I will replace him on the FBR team. My husband has died, but I won’t give up, just as my husband tried for his people while he was alive. So, I will try and do something for my people, too. Please do not replace him. I will replace him. Please excuse me for one year and I will prepare, right now I am quite busy, I have a baby but for the coming years I will find a way to do something for my people.”

P’Saw Paw and her daughter, Moon Moon.
December ’07 (FBR)

TOP RIGHT Mya Win on a mission.
March ’06 (FBR)

MIDDLE RIGHT Mya Win with his daughter
before he died on May 27, 2006. (FBR)

BOTTOM RIGHT P’Saw Paw at training
camp. November ’09 (FBR)



Human value, law, faith and intervention: Is it ever right to break a law?

The dictators of Burma attack their own people and do not allow others to help their people. The dictators have made it illegal to help the people they are attacking.

We prayed and sought an answer. The following is the answer that came to us and the rationale we use to do this work. It is clear we should follow human laws and live as peaceably as we can under authority.

But what if human laws violate God's laws? What if a government misrules its people and kills them and prohibits all help for them?

We choose to follow human laws until they violate God's laws, and then there is no choice but to follow God's laws. God's laws tell us we are to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are to respect the rights of our neighbors. By moral, legal, or religious code no one has the right to enter their neighbor's property unless you are invited.

But what if our neighbor is systematically killing his own children? Some die in the house, some die outside in the yard. Some are still alive and hiding in the yard and some have managed to crawl over the fence into your property. You see all of this and you hear their cries for help. What do you do? What moral, legal or religious obligations do you begin to incur?

Once the neighbor begins to break the law and is killing his own family, he then loses the right to stop others from intervening. The moral imperative is that you must help because there is a need and it is right. The religious imperative is that these are God's children, they have value and for the sake of love, justice and mercy you must act to help. So this is our position. We must help and so we do. When we are afraid, we pray for love, and it is in that love that we stand with the people of Burma. That love helped us to assist the family pictured above cross a Burma Army controlled road.

While we help we are constantly trying to keep our hearts, minds and souls open to God's voice and to the counsel of others. We want to be open to new ways of helping. We also pray for our enemies and we know that even though the dictatorship has caused the greatest destruction, none of us and no group is innocent. As Alexander Solzhenitsyn learned from his time in prison under a dictatorship, "Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not between states nor between classes nor between political parties, but right through every human heart, through all human hearts."

We follow Jesus into Burma for the sake of human hearts, human decency and to be part of God's answer in love.

Family waiting to cross a Burma Army mined and patrolled road, northern Karen State, January '09. (FBR)

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