

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 50/95 (ASA 16/01/95, 28 February 1995) - Fear for safety

MYANMAR Myanmar refugees in Thailand

new names: San Tun
"Uncle Jolly"

The abduction of two Karen leaders by the Democratic Karen Buddhist Organization (DKBO), an armed group supported by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC, Myanmar's ruling military authorities), have further heightened fears for the safety of Myanmar refugees in Thailand.

On 1 March 1995, San Tun, a Karen Buddhist leader, was abducted at gunpoint by some 30 members of the DKBO who had crossed the Thai border and entered Mae Ta Wa refugee camp. The armed group opened fire on two Thai nationals who happened to be in the camp, seriously wounding them. The DKBO forces reportedly told refugees that they would return in a few days and burn the camp down. The second attack occurred on the following night, 2 March, also in Mae Ta Wa camp, when "Uncle Jolly", a Karen leader, was abducted by several armed men believed to be members of the DKBO.

In the last week, at nearby Mae La Camp, unknown men deliberately started a fire and at least one house was destroyed. In February also at Mae La camp several Karen leaders were reportedly abducted by forces of the DKBO and forced back to Myanmar.

These attacks and other incidents of intimidation by the DKBO are part of a pattern of attacks against unarmed civilians seeking refuge in Thailand. Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the security of some 70,000 Myanmar refugees and urges the Royal Thai Government to immediately provide protection for them.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes and airmail letters:

- urging the Myanmar military authorities to release San Tun and "Uncle Jolly" immediately;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that the DKBO and the Myanmar armed forces do not target civilians for attack, whether in Myanmar or across the border in Thailand.

APPEALS TO

1) General Than Shwe, Chairman
State Law and Order Restoration Council
c/o Ministry of Defence
Signal Pagoda Road
Yangon (Rangoon)
Union of Myanmar (Burma)
Telegrams: General Than Shwe, Yangon, Myanmar
Telexes: 21316
Salutation: Dear General

2) Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Secretary 1

State Law and Order Restoration Council
c/o Ministry of Defence
Signal Pagoda Road
Yangon (Rangoon)
Union of Myanmar (Burma)

Telegrams: Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Yangon, Myanmar

Faxes: +95 1 229 50

Salutation: Dear General

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Myanmar accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your Section office, if sending appeals after 20 April 1995.