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**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**MYANMAR: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST ETHNIC MINORITIES**

The Burmese Army has been deliberately killing, torturing and arbitrarily detaining members of ethnic minorities in the Shan and Mon States of Myanmar, according to a report released today by Amnesty International.

The report is based on interviews conducted with refugees from the Shan, Akha, Lahu, Karen and Mon ethnic minorities who have fled to Thailand.

Since March 1996, tens of thousands of people in the Shan and Karenni States have been forcibly relocated by the military, and threatened with being shot on sight if they return to their homes.

Many civilians have been forced to work as porters for the *tatmadaw* (army), sometimes for periods of a month or more, and tortured or killed if they have not been able to carry their loads of supplies and ammunition. Young girls working as porters have been repeatedly raped and some have died as a result. People who have tried to escape have been shot.

Ethnic minority members, as well as ethnic Burmans, are also arbitrarily detained by the army and forced to work on infrastructure projects such as railway lines, airports, dams, roads and quarries. Some of these facilities supply Myanmar's tourist industry.

Among the cases highlighted in the report are:

- Mi Aul and Mi She, Akha girls aged 15 and 16, who were taken by the army and held for six nights and continually raped. The two were so traumatised that they were unable to eat or sleep and eventually died.
- Ana, a 25-year-old Akha man, who was kicked to death by soldiers when he was unable to carry his load of two mortars. Ana was unable to carry them because he was ill with malaria.
- Members of the Karen and Mon communities from the ages 12-70 who have been forced to work on the Ye-Dawei railway, and have been beaten if they are too ill or weak to carry out the work.

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**To obtain a copy of the report, for further information on Amnesty International's concerns in Myanmar or to arrange an interview, please call:**

**Mark Ogle, Press Office, International Secretariat:**

**Tel. (+44) 171 413 5729**

**Fax. (+44) 413 5815/5835**