

In January the SLORC captured the headquarters of the Karen nationalist Karen National Union (KNU) at Mannerplaw, which also served as a base for other anti-SLORC groups.

There have been widespread reports of the Tatmadaw forcibly taking porters from towns and villages close to areas where they are fighting ethnic insurgent groups. Porters are made to carry heavy loads for the soldiers, often without adequate food, water or medical attention. They are sometimes beaten or killed by the army and if they collapse from exhaustion they are often left to die. Female porters have also been raped by members of the Tatmadaw.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- calling on the Myanmar authorities to immediately release any person being held as a porter for the Myanmar armed forces and to end the practice of forcing civilians to act as porters for the Tatmadaw;

- urging the Myanmar authorities to allow the refugees remaining in Tachilek to return without fear of coming to any physical harm;

- urging the Myanmar authorities to release the four women and six men detained in Tachilek on 20 March or charge them with a recognisable offense. Ensure that they are not ill-treated in any way during their detention.

APPEALS TO

General Than Shwe, Chairman
State Law and Order Restoration Council
c/o Ministry of Defence
Signal Pagoda Road
Yangon
Union of Myanmar

Telegrams : General Than Shwe, Yangon Myanmar

Telexes: 21316

Salutation: Dear General

Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Secretary 1
State Law and Order Restoration Council
c/o Ministry of Defence
Signal Pagoda Road
Yangon
Union of Myanmar

Telegrams: Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Yangon, Myanmar

Fax: +95 12 29 50

Salutation: Dear General

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS 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 3 May 1995.