

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture / Fear for safety

22 July 1994

**MYANMAR** 16 men from Plat Hon Pai section, Kwan Saya village, Halockhani refugee camp

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Amnesty International fears for the safety of 16 men taken from a refugee camp on the Thai border by members of the Myanmar army on 21 July 1994.

At 8am on 21 July, 360 soldiers from the 62nd Infantry Battalion of the Myanmar Army (the *tatmadaw*) entered Plat Hon Pai section, Kwan Saya village, part of Halockhani refugee camp. The troops called a meeting of the 500 residents, and later in the day attempted to enter the main section of the camp some 40 minutes walk to the east. They were driven back by soldiers from the armed wing of the New Mon State Party who had arrived in the area on hearing of the army presence in the camp (the New Mon State Party is fighting for independence from the central government of Myanmar).

The *tatmadaw* soldiers returned to Plat Hon Pai village where they torched half the 120 houses. They then left, taking with them 16 men, eight of whom were handcuffed. Amnesty International has learned that some of these men are the leaders of the refugee camp.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The *tatmadaw* often take villagers in Myanmar from ethnic minority areas to work as porters. Amnesty International knows of many cases where such people have been tortured by the *tatmadaw*, and sometimes killed.

Halockhani refugee camp is situated on the border of Thailand and Myanmar, and there is some dispute as to which country the camp is in. Civilian refugees from the Mon ethnic minority live in the camp, many of whom were moved there in 1993 from Lah Lo refugee camp in Thailand by the Thai authorities. The area around the camp, known as Three Pagodas Pass, has been the centre of several confrontations between the *tatmadaw* and the Mon armed forces. Most of the refugees fled from fighting in the Mon state in Myanmar, and to escape being taken to work as porters or labourers by the *tatmadaw*.

The government in Myanmar, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) took power in 1988, following the crushing of a country-wide popular uprising. Despite the holding of democratic elections in 1988, the SLORC has refused to hand over power.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the 16 men who have been taken from Halockhani refugee camp by members of the 62nd Battalion of the Myanmar army (the *tatmadaw*);
- urging that the 16 men are released immediately and unconditionally;
- calling upon the government to ensure that civilian refugees are not subjected to any further attacks by the *tatmadaw*, and that those responsible for the attack on Halockhani camp be brought to justice.

#### **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**  
**Salutation: Dear Lieutenant General**

General Maung Aye  
Vice Chairman  
State Law and Order Restoration Council  
c/o Ministry of Defence  
Signal Pagoda Road  
Yangon, Union of Myanmar  
**Telegrams: General Maung Aye, Yangon, Myanmar**  
**Salutation: Dear General**

**COPIES TO:** and 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 1 September 1994.