

# MYANMAR

## EXODUS FROM THE SHAN STATE

*“For your own good, don’t destroy others.”*

Traditional Shan song

### INTRODUCTION

Civilians in the central Shan State are suffering the enormous consequences of internal armed conflict, as fighting between the *tatmadaw*, or Myanmar army, and the Shan State Army-South (SSA-South) continues. The vast majority of affected people are rice farmers who have been deprived of their lands and their livelihoods as a result of the State Peace and Development Council’s (SPDC, Myanmar’s military government) counter-insurgency tactics. In the last four years over 300,000 civilians have been displaced by the *tatmadaw*, hundreds have been killed when they attempted to return to their farms, and thousands have been seized by the army to work without pay on roads and other projects. Over 100,000 civilians have fled to neighbouring Thailand, where they work as day labourers, risking arrest for “illegal immigration” by the Thai authorities.

In February 2000 Amnesty International interviewed Shan refugees from Laikha, Murngpan, Kunhing, and Namsan townships, central Shan State. All except one stated that they had been forcibly relocated by the *tatmadaw*. The refugees consistently stated that they had fled from the Shan State because of forced labour and relocations, and because they were afraid of the Myanmar army. They reported instances of the army killing their friends and relatives if they were found trying to forage for food or harvest crops outside of relocation sites. Every refugee interviewed by Amnesty International said that they were forced to build roads, military buildings and carry equipment for the *tatmadaw*, and many reported that they worked alongside children as young as 10. Unpaid forced labour of civilians by the army is endemic in Myanmar and has occurred over the past several decades.

For the last three years Amnesty International has documented this pattern of forced relocation and other attendant human rights violations in the Shan State.<sup>1</sup> Other non-governmental organizations have also extensively reported on these incidents, and the UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar and a number of governments have repeatedly raised the issue. However it is regrettable that despite widespread calls from the international community, no improvement in this pattern of violations has occurred in the

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<sup>1</sup>Please see *Myanmar: Atrocities in the Shan State*, Amnesty International Index ASA 16/05/98, 15 April 1998 and *Myanmar: Update on the Shan State*, Amnesty International Index ASA 16/13/99, 30 June 1999.

Shan State or in any other area of Myanmar. During the first five months of 2000, over 5,300 Shan civilians fled to one area of Thailand alone to escape forced labour, extrajudicial killings, and ill-treatment at the hands of the Myanmar military. The Thai authorities do not permit Shan refugees to live in camps, so they seek employment in agriculture and other low paying jobs.

### **Forcible relocations and associated human rights violations**

In March 1996 forcible relocations on a massive scale began in the Shan State as the army evicted civilians from their villages in an apparent effort to break up any alleged links with the SSA-South. To date over 1,400 villages have been forced to relocate. Although the pace of forced relocations has slackened, the consequences of displacement are still acutely felt by villagers who have lost their land and most of their possessions. In addition, the army has not provided them with compensation, including land, food, or employment. Moreover, once the army has cleared villages of any inhabitants, it forbids villagers from returning to harvest their crops or to collect their belongings. Deserted villages are usually considered as “free-fire” zones by the Burmese military; as a result, hundreds of Shan civilians have been shot dead when they tried to return to their homes.

A relatively recent example of forced displacement was provided by a 31-year-old refugee whose village was relocated in May 1999 after SSA-South troops were seen in the area. The man fled to Thailand in November 1999 and is working in an orange orchard there. He was originally a rice farmer from Wan Pung Ke, a village of some 70 households in Murngpan township. On 4 May 1999 the *tatmadaw* evicted all the villagers from their homes and forced them into another village. The army provided no food or shelter to the homeless villagers, and also stole 100 head of cattle and other foodstuffs. They looted houses and monasteries in the area and carried off property in bullock carts.

This pattern of eviction and looting typifies the *tatmadaw*'s behaviour when they forcibly relocate members of ethnic minorities during counter-insurgency activities. The pattern is repeated in the Kayin (Karen) and Karenni States, where there are also armed opposition groups who are fighting the Myanmar army. In those two states tens of thousands of ethnic minority civilians have been internally displaced by the army since 1996.

There are other severe consequences for Shan civilians in areas where the army has forcibly relocated villages. People found in the forest or in deserted villages risk being seized and tortured, and in some cases killed by troops on patrol. Amnesty International interviewed a 60-year-old man from Nong Harn village, Murngpan township, who was caught foraging for food in the forest in April 1999 near the deserted

village of Na Sing. He and two friends were tied up and interrogated about Shan soldiers. Their heads were covered with plastic sheets and they were beaten around the waist and face. The interviewee said that he was beaten on the mouth with a rifle muzzle until it bled. He was also forced to squat for 30 minutes at a time and beaten with a rifle butt. This treatment went on for five days until the three men's village headman attested to their innocence and they were released.

## **BACKGROUND**

Myanmar, formerly Burma, has been in a state of civil war since it gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1948. For more than 50 years armed opposition groups representing various ethnic minorities have engaged in insurgency activities against the Burman-dominated central government in an effort to gain greater autonomy or complete independence. According to the government, there are 135 "national races" in Myanmar, including the majority ethnic Burman group. Ethnic minority groups comprise approximately one third of the population, and live mostly in the seven ethnic minority states surrounding the central Myanmar plain.

Ethnic minorities in Myanmar run a greater risk of being subjected to a wide variety of human rights violations simply because they are a member of a particular group. Ethnic minority civilians have borne the brunt of the army's counter-insurgency tactics, including extrajudicial executions; torture and ill-treatment; forcible relocation solely on the grounds of ethnicity; and forced labour. Members of ethnic minorities in areas unaffected by armed opposition activity are also frequently taken for forced labour duties when the Myanmar army initiates "national development projects". These initiatives are typically infrastructure projects such as roads, which are largely constructed by unpaid forced civilian labour.

The population of the Shan State, the largest of the seven ethnic minority states in Myanmar, is approximately eight million people. Of these, some four million are ethnic Shan. Other groups in the state include the majority Burmans, and the Pa'O, Akha, Lahu, Palaung, and Wa ethnic minorities. The Shan people are ethnically related to the Thai, have a similar language, and live in southern China and northern Thailand as well as in Myanmar. Most of them are Theravada Buddhist rice farmers. In pre-colonial times, the area that is now the Shan State was ruled by Shan princes who sometimes owed allegiance to Burman or Thai overlords and were sometimes independent. Under British colonial rule, the Shan areas were administered separately from the rest of Burma.

During negotiations between Britain and Burma about independence, Shan and other ethnic minority leaders demanded guarantees of minority rights in return for an

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agreement to join in a Union of Burma. These were conceded in an agreement between the Burmese Government and the Shan, Kachin, and Chin representatives in 1947 in Panglong, a Shan town. After Burmese independence in 1948, however, disputes arose between some Shan political figures and the central administration in Rangoon over the handling of Shan affairs. In 1958 the first Shan armed opposition group was organized, and since then various other groups took up arms. Since 1989 some of these groups have agreed cease-fires with the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC, the ruling military government), but the Shan States Army-South, numbering some 3,500 troops, has continued in its armed struggle against the *tatmadaw* in central and southern Shan State.

When the military reasserted power in September 1988 after suppressing a nation-wide pro-democracy movement, they adopted a policy of negotiating cease-fires individually with ethnic minority armed opposition groups rather than engaging with umbrella organizations which grouped them together. Since 1989 the SPDC report that they have agreed 17 cease-fires with various ethnic minority armed opposition groups, including the Mong Tai Army (MTA, led by Khun Sa) in January 1996. Although Khun Sa has surrendered to the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC, Myanmar's military authorities<sup>2</sup>), thousands of Shan troops have continued to fight for greater autonomy against the central Burman authorities. After Khun Sa's surrender, troops formerly under his command who formed the Shan State Army-South<sup>3</sup> began to move north from former MTA areas along the Thai-Myanmar border to the central Shan State.

While this report focuses solely on human rights violations committed by the *tatmadaw*, Amnesty International is also concerned with abuses committed by armed opposition groups in the Shan State. According to reports, in early November 1999 SSA-South troops crossed the border into Thailand and abducted nine people, taking them back to the Shan State. The SSA-South later allegedly killed one of the group, Maung Thu (m), whom they claimed became a drugs trafficker after having defected from the SSA-South. Amnesty International condemns such killings and calls on all armed political groups to respect minimum standards of international humanitarian law and to put an end to abuses such as deliberate and arbitrary killings, torture and hostage-taking. Campaigning against these abuses implies neither recognition nor condemnation of the organizations as such.

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<sup>2</sup>On 15 November 1997 the SLORC changed its name to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and reshuffled the cabinet. Several SLORC members who were alleged to be involved in large-scale corruption were sidelined but otherwise the SLORC's policies have remained unchanged.

<sup>3</sup>SSA-South was originally called the Shan United Revolutionary Army (SURA).

## **FORCED LABOUR**

For the last 12 years Amnesty International has documented the widespread use of forced labour of ethnic minorities by the Myanmar military. Prior to the early 1990s, forced labour primarily took the form of portering for the army, which entailed carrying heavy loads of ammunition and supplies for days or weeks at a time. The army used porters in their counter-insurgency activities as they patrolled the countryside and villages or engaged in battles with armed opposition groups. In spite of cease-fires between the SPDC and some armed opposition groups, the practice of forced portering still occurs, primarily in areas of continuing internal armed struggle, including the central Shan State.

Beginning in the early 1990s the military authorities embarked on the construction of infrastructure projects throughout the country, including roads, dams, railway lines, and military barracks. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have reportedly been forced to work on these projects without pay. According to reports, in 1997 the central authorities began a program of self-sufficiency, issuing orders to local military commands which instructed troops to feed themselves. Subsequently troops began confiscating land farmed for generations by members of ethnic minorities, and forcing these farmers to cultivate their confiscated land to provide food for the military. In addition troops have continued or increased their practice of stealing food which villagers had grown for themselves. One man from Murngpan township told Amnesty International that half his rice crop had been taken by the military in 1999.

Unpaid forced labour is in contravention of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Convention No 29, which the government of Myanmar ratified in 1955. The ILO has repeatedly raised the issue with the government and in March 1997 took the rare step of appointing a Commission of Inquiry to conduct research on the practice of forced labour in Myanmar. In July 1998 the Commission published a comprehensive report documenting the practice of forced labour and recommending that the authorities, particularly the military, cease to impose it. At subsequent meetings the ILO concluded that the SPDC was not taking concrete steps to end the practice. In June 1999 the International Labour Conference, the annual assembly of the ILO, adopted a resolution which blocked the Government of Myanmar from receiving any ILO technical assistance or attending ILO meetings, except for the purpose of implementing the recommendations of the ILO Commission of Inquiry.

In May 2000 an ILO technical cooperation mission visited Myanmar, and although the delegation was able to meet with several members of the government and other organizations, the SPDC made no concrete commitment to stop the practice of forced labour. On 14 June 2000 the International Labour Conference took the unprecedented step of adopting a resolution under Article 33 of its constitution which recommended that ILO

members<sup>4</sup> review their relations with the SPDC and ensure that the SPDC cannot take advantage of such relations to continue the practice of forced labour. The resolution also called on international organizations, which would include the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, to review any cooperation they may have with the SPDC and to cease any activity which could directly or indirectly abet the practice of forced labour. In addition the resolution called on the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and on the General Assembly of the UN to make similar recommendations to governments and specialized agencies. These measures will take effect on 30 November 2000 unless the ILO Governing Body is satisfied that the SPDC has put into place concrete and detailed measures which implement the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations to end the practice of forced labour.

On 14 May 1999 the SPDC issued Order No. 1/99 directing local civilian authorities "*not to exercise the powers conferred on them*" under the Village Act (1908) or the Towns Act (1907), colonial legislation whose provisions allow for forced labour. However it does not appear to address the military, who are the perpetrators of forced labour. Evidence gathered in the last six months by Amnesty International and many other non-governmental organizations indicates that the pattern of frequent forced labour continues in Myanmar, including the Shan State. Many members of ethnic minorities have been forced to perform labour duties on a routine basis, which makes it difficult or impossible for them to earn their own living. This inability to provide for themselves and their families is often cited as the reason for fleeing to Thailand.

Every Shan civilian interviewed in February 2000 by Amnesty International was forced to perform labour duties for the military. In addition, many of them had worked with children, who must often work for the military, particularly if their parents are trying to earn a living or are too ill to go. Children were forced to split smaller stones, and to carry rocks and sticks on road-building projects. One man told Amnesty International as he pointed to a young girl in his group who was forced to build roads: "*They don't let anyone stay idle.*" The girl's father had been killed by the army in mid-1999.<sup>5</sup>

### **Forced portering**

Forced portering is generally the most arduous form of labour because it entails carrying heavy loads over rough countryside for prolonged periods as a virtual prisoner of the

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<sup>4</sup>The ILO comprises 175 member states and is the only tripartite UN body which includes representatives from governments, trade unions, and employers of all member states.

<sup>5</sup> In the information which follows, the names of refugees who were interviewed have been deleted for security reasons.

army. Porters' treatment at the hands of the military is generally worse than that received by labourers and often includes severe beatings if they are unable to keep up with the column. One man who had to porter several times said: "*They didn't give us anything and we were treated just like dogs or pigs.*" Although men generally are seized more frequently to porter for the army, women are also taken. One 22-year-old woman and her 32-year-old female cousin said that they had to carry supplies in December 1999 for one week and were kicked and threatened with a knife when they slowed down under their heavy burdens.

In December 1999 a man from Ho Pai, Murngpan township, told Amnesty International that he was seized from his village with a group of seven other men to porter for troops from Military Camp 1, Murngpan town. He was forced to carry 27 kilograms of food for four days until his shoulders were bruised and bleeding. He escaped at night, and was unable to work for one month. He then decided to flee to Thailand.

One man from Nam Khai village, Nong Hi village tract, Laikha township, was seized as he was searching for his cattle and forced to porter for 11 days in November 1999. He said that he had to carry 40 kilograms of ammunition and was beaten and kicked for not moving fast enough. He was beaten on the face until his teeth became loosened, kicked all over his body and hit with a rifle butt on his head. On the 11<sup>th</sup> day he was too weak to go further so he was left by the side of the road. After this experience he sold his cattle and fled to Thailand with his whole family.

A 40-year-old man from Na Poi village, Kaeng Kham village tract, Kunhing township told Amnesty International that he had to carry rations and mortar shells for *tatmadaw* unit 244 for 17 days in December 1999. He was tied up in a long line of about 40 Shan male porters and fed only a little rice each day. At one point when he sat down on the ground from fatigue, soldiers pressed the crossbar of a yoke on his neck until he lost consciousness. He was then dragged to his feet and forced to march all night.

### **Other forms of forced labour**

Men, women, children, and the elderly all have to perform a wide variety of labour duties for the military without pay or any other form of compensation. Some are given the less strenuous task of guarding the road and watching for Shan State Army-South troops. A 25-year-old man from Nam Khai, Nong Hi village tract, Laikha township reported that he was forced to guard the road from Laikha town to Loilem in January 2000. He performed this in rotation twice a month for five or 10 days at a time. A 64 year-old man

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from Loiweg, Na Poi village tract, Laikha township, said that he had to stand watch on the road from Kholam to Wansing for five days and nights in October 1999.

Another elderly man aged 60 originally from Nong Harn village, Murngpan township, said that he lost track of the number of times he had performed forced labour duties. He reported that forced labour started “*a long time ago*”, but had become progressively worse. He had to clear the brush in a military camp and his wife had to harvest rice for the military’s consumption. A girl from Wan Sa Lai village, Laikha township, told Amnesty International that she had to work for the military when she was only 17 years old. She was forced to clear the roadside and a military compound, but never received any payment.

A 32-year-old woman from Wan Sa Lai village, Laikha township, described the kinds of forced labour she had to perform, the last time on 12 February 2000:

*“I had to do many kinds of forced labour, including cutting bamboo, clearing and maintaining military camps...Sometimes we have to clear roadsides, build fences...Some months we have to work the whole time for the army, some months only half. Sometimes soldiers are afraid of rebel soldiers and they won’t leave the barracks and they make us do all the work. We saw Shan soldiers, they asked for food so we had to provide it. We have to pay both sides -- so life becomes very difficult.”*

Another woman from Hue Mark Purng village, Ho Pailong village tract, Murngpan township, had to work on the army’s plots of soybean, onions, and garlic. She also had to weed their sugar cane plantation, make fences, and load bricks on to trucks. A 40-year-old woman from Ho Pai, Murngpan township had to clear an irrigation ditch for an onion and garlic field, and also had to build houses and make bricks for the military, on an average of 10 times per month.

Amnesty International is concerned that in spite of recommendations by the ILO Commission of Inquiry, the military continues to exact forced labour duties from the population, particularly those belonging to ethnic minorities. Amnesty International calls on the SPDC to implement the ILO recommendation to cease the practice of forced labour and to amend those provisions of the Village Act (1908) or the Towns Act (1907) in order to abolish forced labour in law. The organization is further concerned that the army continues to beat or otherwise ill-treat civilians whom they seize for porter duty, and calls on the SPDC to ensure that no member of the armed forces engages in such practices.

## **EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS**



Amnesty International defines extrajudicial executions as unlawful and deliberate killings, carried out by order of a government official or with the government's complicity or acquiescence. Extrajudicial executions are distinguished from justifiable killings by the security forces in self-defence; deaths resulting from the use of reasonable force in law enforcement; and the imposition of the death penalty. Extrajudicial executions often result when security forces use force which is disproportionate to any threat posed, although the authorities may claim that this use of force was legitimate.

Hundreds of Shan civilians have been killed by the *tatmadaw* during and after the massive forcible relocation program which began in March 1996. In most cases troops shot civilians dead after they had returned from relocation sites to their deserted villages in order to gather food which had been left behind. Shan refugees interviewed by Amnesty International in February 2000 reported more recent extrajudicial executions of fellow villagers and relatives by the *tatmadaw*. The pattern of killings has remained the same for the last four years; villagers who return to their fields and former homes for food and other belongings are at risk of being shot on sight.

In the first five months of 2000, a series of massacres reportedly occurred in Kunhing township, where previous massacres had taken place in mid-1997.<sup>6</sup> Over 100 Shan and hill tribe people are believed to have killed in January, February, and May 2000. Amnesty International was able to obtain detailed information about the first massacre, when 19 people were killed by SPDC troops at Kaeng Kham village on 30 January. They had been forcibly relocated to Kunhing town but were told by the commander of Infantry Battalion 246 that if they obtained passes from the military, they could return to Kaeng Kham to clear their land. The group of 19 people from the village obtained passes and returned to their deserted village on 19 January. On 30 January troops from a different battalion, Infantry Battalion 66, were patrolling the area and shot the group of 19 dead. Porters who had witnessed the killings as they were being forced to carry equipment for Infantry Battalion 66 were able to escape and subsequently reported the incident.

A group of 20 men from Kun Pu village tract, Kunhing township, were reportedly shot dead on 12 February after they returned to their ancestral village to pay respect to the local guardian spirit. Five women and children who were hiding in a forest hut nearby were subsequently shot dead by the same military unit. On 23 May a group of 64 Shan and hill tribe villagers were working in fields near Kunhing town when they were reportedly shot dead by troops from Infantry Battalion 246. The killings were thought to

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<sup>6</sup>Please see pp. 6 - 7, *Myanmar: Atrocities in the Shan State*, Amnesty International Index Number ASA 16/05/98, 15 April 1998.

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be related to renewed fighting in April between the *tatmadaw* and the SSA-South, who had reportedly deployed a battalion in Kunhing township.

### Instances of Extrajudicial Execution

In February 2000 Amnesty International interviewed Shan refugees from the central Shan State, many of whom reported the killings of their relatives and friends. What follows below are examples of such extrajudicial executions by the Myanmar military.

On 23 February 2000 when General Khin Nyunt, Secretary 1 of the SPDC, was visiting Murngton township, the local military closed all the roads in the area. **Lun Su**, a 58-year-old farmer from Na Kang Mu village, was returning from his farm and was seized by Unit 519 along with two fellow-villagers. He was reportedly beaten so severely that he died about one hour later; his companions were released after the beatings when their village headman guaranteed that they did not belong to the SSA-South.

A 29 year-old woman who had been forcibly relocated from Laikha township reported the killings of her neighbours in Kholam, Nanzing township. **Lung Ti**, a 40-year-old rice farmer, **Su Nan Ta**, his 11-year-old son, and **Ei Su**, his 18-year-old daughter were killed in January 2000 after they had sneaked back to grow rice in their former village of Nong Hai, about three miles east of Kholam. Troops from Kunhing township shot Lung Ti dead when he was in his farm hut. Villagers later buried his body and also saw the headless bodies of Su Nan Ta and Ei Su, but were too frightened to go near them. Their neighbour reported:

*“They were my friends, I’ve known them for a long time. When I left the wife was still crying, going from house to house. I heard people say that troops suspected Lung Ti of giving rice to the Shan soldiers. I was very frightened after this and dared not go anywhere...This is also one of the reasons I left.”*

The victim’s wife remained in Kholam with her three-year-old child.

Shan civilians are also sometimes killed when they are forced by the military to act as porters, carrying heavy equipment and food for days or weeks at a time. A man who had been relocated to Nam Wan village in 1998 told Amnesty International about the deaths of two fellow-villagers in Murngkern township. **King Sa**, about 30, and **King Ti**, about 31, had been portering for the military for about six weeks. They were so

exhausted that they attempted to escape, but were shot dead in the process. Their neighbour reported that the men's families were reduced to begging after their deaths.

A group of villagers from Hue Mark Pung village, Ho Pailong village tract, Murngpan township told Amnesty International about extrajudicial killings which had occurred in their area during mid 1999. One 28-year-old man reported that his uncle **Lung Pang**, about 56, was shot dead by soldiers after he had gone into the forest to forage for food. He also said that **Lun Wa Lin**, age 30, was looking for food at Nong Han, which is one of many deserted villages cleared by SPDC troops. Lun Wa Lin was shot dead by soldiers and then buried in a shallow grave.

The same interviewee also described the death of his friend **Ai Nya**, aged 28, who was beaten to death after soldiers had cut off his ears and nose. The interviewee was tied up with Ai Nya and a group of other villagers for 24 hours. Ai Nya was a rice trader who owned a small mill and the interviewee speculated that the *tatmadaw* may have suspected him of giving rice to the SSA-South. A 40 year old woman originally from Nam Tarn reported the death of **Pu Sit Ta**, their village headman, in August 1999. Soldiers had given a relocation order to him but he was reluctant to carry it out, so troops took him away and beat him to death. His body was left on the roadside.

A woman from the same group explained to Amnesty International how such killings take place: *"The soldiers won't allow us to farm. They said if we find anyone in the forest we will shoot them on sight because there are only rebels in the forest."* Another group member said: *"In Murngpan they are killing many people, and more and more people from there will be arriving in Thailand."*

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at this pattern of extrajudicial executions of Shan civilians by the *tatmadaw*, including mass executions of villagers who have returned to their homes after having been forcibly relocated. The organization calls on the SPDC to ensure that members of the *tatmadaw* do not kill civilians taking no part in internal armed conflict.

Amnesty International also urges the SPDC to abide by the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, particularly part 1 of Article 7, which states, *inter alia*:

*"...Everyone, without distinction as to race, colour or ethnic origin, has the right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual, group or institution."*

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## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For the past four years the *tatmadaw* has continued to commit massive human rights violations against Shan civilians from the central Shan State in the context of its counter-insurgency operations against the Shan State Army-South (SSA-South). In spite of widespread documentation of these abuses by Amnesty International and other non-governmental organizations, and calls by United Nations bodies and intergovernmental groupings to put an end to such practices, the SPDC still allows the *tatmadaw* to act with impunity. Flows of Shan refugees into Thailand remain at a high level and demonstrate most eloquently the need for an immediate improvement in the human rights situation in Myanmar. To that end, Amnesty International outlines below recommendations to the SPDC, which, if implemented, would help to put a stop to such abuses.

- ◆ In areas of armed conflict, Amnesty International urges the SPDC to abide by the basic principles of international human rights and humanitarian law concerning the treatment of Shan and other civilians. Common Article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions<sup>7</sup>, which applies to all conflicts of a non-international character, occurring within territories of a party to the Convention, sets forth minimum standards of human conduct, applicable to all parties to the conflict, for the treatment of people taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of the armed forces who have laid down their arms and those *hors de combat* for any reason. Among other things, paragraph 1 of this article prohibits “murder of all kinds”.
- ◆ Amnesty International recommends that the SPDC issue clear orders to halt extrajudicial executions, to use force and firearms only when strictly necessary to protect life, and to investigate all extrajudicial executions and bring to justice those found responsible.
- ◆ Amnesty International recommends that the SPDC investigate all reports of torture and ill-treatment, and issue clear orders to the military to stop these practices immediately.
- ◆ Amnesty International urges the SPDC to ratify the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1969.

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<sup>7</sup>Myanmar has ratified the Geneva Conventions.

- ◆ Amnesty International calls on the SPDC to ratify the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- ◆ Amnesty International urges the SPDC to implement the recommendations made by the ILO Commission Of Inquiry regarding the abolition in law and practice of forced labour.