

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 16/25/95

26 September 1995

Further information on UA 50/95 (ASA 16/01/95, 28 February 1995) and follow-ups (ASA 16/02/95, 3 March and ASA 16/03/95, 13 March) - Fear for safety

MYANMAR Myanmar refugees in Thailand

new names: Win Kyi
Win Myint

At about 11pm on 23 September 1995, some 10 armed soldiers of the Democratic Kayin Buddhist Organization (DKBO) entered Section 5 of Sho Clo Camp, home to thousands of Karen displaced people. Win Kyi and Win Myint, two brothers and Karen community leaders, were abducted and probably taken to Paw Pa Hta, Myanmar. There has been no news from the brothers since their abduction.

Sho Clo Camp is 105 kilometres north of Mae Sot town, Tak Province, in Western Thailand, and is very near the Thai-Burmese border. The DKBO have a base directly across the border from Sho Clo Camp in Paw Pa Hta. It is not clear why Win Kyi and Win Myint were taken, although in the past the DKBO have seized Karen community leaders, apparently in an attempt to force them to join the DKBO in some leadership capacity.

Amnesty International fears that the most recent attack will be repeated with the onset of the dry season in late October. The DKBO raided camps dozens of times earlier in 1995, burning them down, abducting Karen displaced people, and killing others. In early May the DKBO promised to stop their incursions into Thailand, and until recently have kept their promise. However during the last few weeks the DKBO entered Mae U Su village, 90 kilometres north of Mae Sot and abducted three people, one of them a Thai Karen. All three of them were subsequently released. The DKBO were apparently pursuing some of their members who had defected to Thailand.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The DKBO was formed in December 1994 by a group of Buddhist Karens who broke away from the armed ethnic minority group, the Karen National Union (KNU). The KNU leadership is predominantly Christian, and the DKBO is led by Buddhists. The DKBO began to attack displaced Karens in Thailand in February 1995. Although the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC, Myanmar's military authorities) has not agreed a ceasefire with the DKBO, they support them by giving them supplies and land. The SLORC gave them military support in their attacks against Manerplaw and Kawmoora, two KNU bases which fell to the DKBO in early 1995.

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

- urging the Myanmar military authorities to ensure that the DKBO release Win Kyi and Win Myint immediately;
- renewing calls on the Myanmar military authorities to ensure that the DKBO do not arbitrarily seize civilians, whether in Myanmar or across the border in Thailand;
- expressing deep concern for the safety of all Burmese refugees, including those who have been seized by the DKBO.

APPEALS TO:

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: Lt. Gen Khin Nyunt, Yangon, Myanmar
Salutation: Your Excellency

Senior 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, Myanar
Telexes: 21316
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 17 November 1995.