

Pray for Burma

Global Day of Prayer for Burma



March 14, 2004

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." - John 1:5



Karenni medic praying in Shan IDP site in 2003

Dear Friends,

We again invite you to join in prayer with the people of Burma and others around the world on March 14, 2004, this year's Global Day of Prayer for Burma. The country of Burma has been engulfed in civil war for the past 54 years. We encourage you to stand with the people of Burma by praying for their physical and spiritual freedom, informing others about the situation, and asking God to lead you to do something more.

Please use this booklet, poster, fact sheet, and response card in part or in whole. Feel free to reproduce and distribute them as needed. This year we have also included a "litany of prayer" bulletin insert for your use. There will be additional resources available on the website which can be used for church and prayer meetings.

Let us know if you would like this booklet sent to you via email as a PDF file. It is also available on our website www.prayforburma.org to view or download.

Thank you for working with us to show God's love to our neighbors who are suffering. We all need God's help and guidance. Thank you for your support and prayers in this effort.

God Bless You,
Christians Concerned for Burma

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord." - Zechariah 4:6

Cover photo: Karen IDPs fleeing

DAY 1 Oppression



Karen villager stands in the remains of her burned home in 2003

The fighting in Burma has continued for 54 years. In 2003, the Burma Army carried out offensives against the Karen and Shan people. In ceasefire areas the regime tolerates no opposition to their power. During the dry season (October-May), attacks in ethnic areas normally increase.

One strategy of control by the military regime has been road construction. They have put major effort into building roads that dissect ethnic areas, giving the Burma Army more access and power in those places. The roads are built with forced labor and lined with landmines, creating great suffering for many villagers.

From July until October 2003 the Burma Army and the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) carried out a military operation code-named "Power Over the Land" in order to occupy and control the Paan area of Karen State, Burma and to destroy the No. 7 Brigade headquarters. The operation began in the last week of July and continued until late October 2003. As a result of this offensive over 1,500 people were displaced and more than 40 families fled to Thailand in September. When fleeing they had to abandon their homes, farms, cattle and belongings. Although most of the IDPs were able to escape, one 19-year-old pregnant woman was shot and killed by the Burma Army, and one man stepped on a landmine.

Aung San Suu Kyi

In 2003, the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act was passed in the USA. The Act imposed import sanctions against Burma in hopes of pressuring the dictatorship and spurring on major change.

Aung San Suu Kyi is under house arrest after being effectively held in prison for four months in 2003. She is allowed to have very few visitors. Approximately 1,500 political prisoners languish in Burma's jails. If anyone protests or speaks out against the regime, they are arrested or killed.

Please pray for all nations to call for a stop to the human rights abuses in Burma and a democratic political process to begin.

*"For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity."
- Isaiah 61:8*



DAY 2 Torture



Porter (forced laborer) injured while being used as a human landmine sweeper for the Burma Army in October 2003

"We are already dead, so we must try to run" - a porter who escaped the Burma Army

In Burma, a six-month jail sentence can become a death sentence. The Burma Army continues to use prisoners as porters during their attacks on ethnic groups. In 2003 during the attacks in Paan District, Karen State, over 1,000 prisoners were used as porters to carry heavy loads, as human shields, and as human landmine sweepers. Many porters were injured and at least three died. Others escaped at any opportunity to avoid what they felt was inevitable suffering and death at the hands of the Burma Army. The use of prisoners as porters for the Burma Army is also a common practice in Karenni State and other parts of Burma.

"You will know the truth and the truth will set you free." - John 8:32

Porter killed while being used as a human landmine sweeper for the Burma Army in October 2003



DAY 3 A Bright Light



Treating IDPs

In response to the suffering of people inside Burma, relief teams regularly travel to war zones to help internally displaced people (IDPs). The relief teams include one medic, one human rights documentation person, one pastor or counselor, and a team leader. During 2003, Arakan, Lahu, Karen, Karenni, and Shan relief teams went on more than 30 missions to serve the IDPs.

These teams bring hope and practical assistance to their own people. Through their actions, more people know that God loves them and that the world has not forgotten their struggle. New IDP relief teams will be trained. Please pray for the teams who are currently inside war zones.

We are grateful to report that the Burma Army offensive against the Karen people in the Paan District of Karen State has now stopped. We thank God for your prayers and for this stop of the attacks. Relief teams are now trying to help over 1,500 IDPs who were displaced during this offensive by the Burma Army. Some fled to refugee camps, but

Relief team distributing medicine during Paan offensive



the majority are still in hiding. The Karen people want to thank all who prayed, telling us, "It is a miracle, many people must be praying for us... please thank them and tell them that God has answered our prayers."

We also want to thank God that in the face of many attacks believers all over the world prayed and fasted. From Australia, where many prayed and some fasted for days, to the USA, to countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa, our brothers and sisters in faith prayed. We thank God and all of you for that.

"Learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless; plead for the widow." - Isaiah 1:17

Day 4 Overcomers



Sa Skee Wah, healthy and happy after her surgery

Sa Skee Wah is an eight-year-old girl from Karen State, Burma. An IDP relief team met her family while they were assisting IDPs in northern Karen State. She has lived with a serious medical condition her entire life, having had lower bowel complications and draining fistula. This condition has caused many infections and difficulties for Sa Skee Wah. After meeting the relief team, they made arrangements for her to travel to a hospital where she could have surgery. The surgery was a success and she is a healthy and energetic girl who is a light to all who meet her.

IDPs have little or no access to medical care. Common health problems in IDP populations include malaria, malnutrition and acute respiratory infections. Pray that others who need medical attention, like Sa Skee Wah, will receive help and healing.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- Matthew 5: 3-10

DAY 5 Abundant Life



Children receive Good Life Club Packs

"Hello, How are you? I'm fine. Thank you for your present. I'm so happy when I get your present. I have not parents like you and I'm suffering. Goodbye." - Yeng Kham Lon, Student at a Shan IDP school.

Thank you for sending gifts for the children of Burma! The Good Life Club Kid Packs, Mom & Baby Packs, hats, and t-shirts have been given to hundreds of children since 2001. Your generous and thoughtful gifts have blessed so many IDP children in Burma. The IDP situation is still dire and relief teams continue to travel throughout the war-torn areas of Burma. Your gifts for the children prove that people around the world care about them and have not forgotten them. The kind messages, prayers, and Bible verses bring hope that God will be with them daily and meet their needs. The children of Burma may one day see the end to this 54-year conflict. Thank you again for keeping alive the belief that they are valuable and can live each day in hope of an abundant life.

"I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly... The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." - John 10:10-11

Contents of the Packs (Please place all items in a heavy-duty Ziplock freezer bag before sending, and write, "gift - no commercial value" on the customs form when mailing).

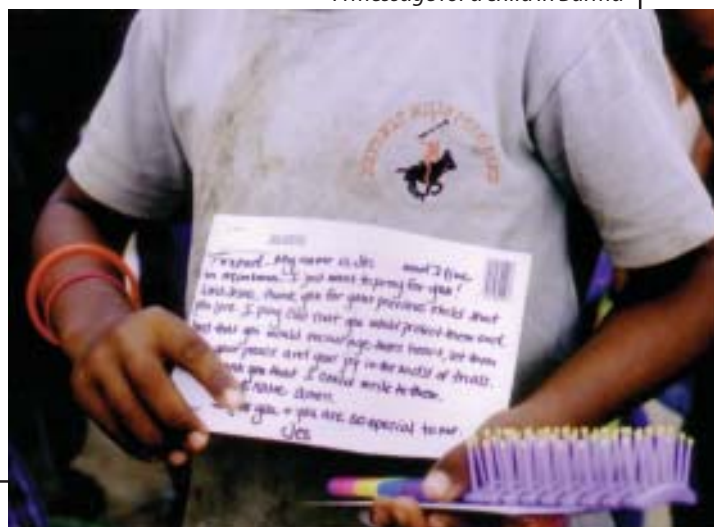
Kids Packs

- small comb & mirror
- a box of children's chewable vitamins
- 2 children's toothbrushes with caps
- fingernail clippers
- a small toy
- a drawing or photo of you and your group
- a postcard from your city or state with a Bible verse

Mom & Baby Packs

- small fingernail clippers
- multi-vitamins for Mom
- pediatric vitamins (e.g. Gerber Vitamin Drops)
- 2 sets of clothes for baby including cap, handmitts, shirt (not a onsie) and socks
- a teether
- a drawing or photo of you and your group
- a postcard from your city or state with a Bible verse

A message for a child in Burma



DAY 6 Radiant Lives



IDP relief team treating patients in Shan State

God works through prayer, and He answers the prayers of His people. We invite you to continue to pray that:

- the hearts of the military regime in Burma will be changed, and they will begin to take steps towards justice and peace;
- the churches inside Burma will continue to trust in God, rely on His promises for salvation, and take interest in the lives of IDPs and refugees;
- the relief teams will be unfailing instruments of God's love and kindness to those who are sick, hurting and hopeless.

"Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you." - Deuteronomy 31:6

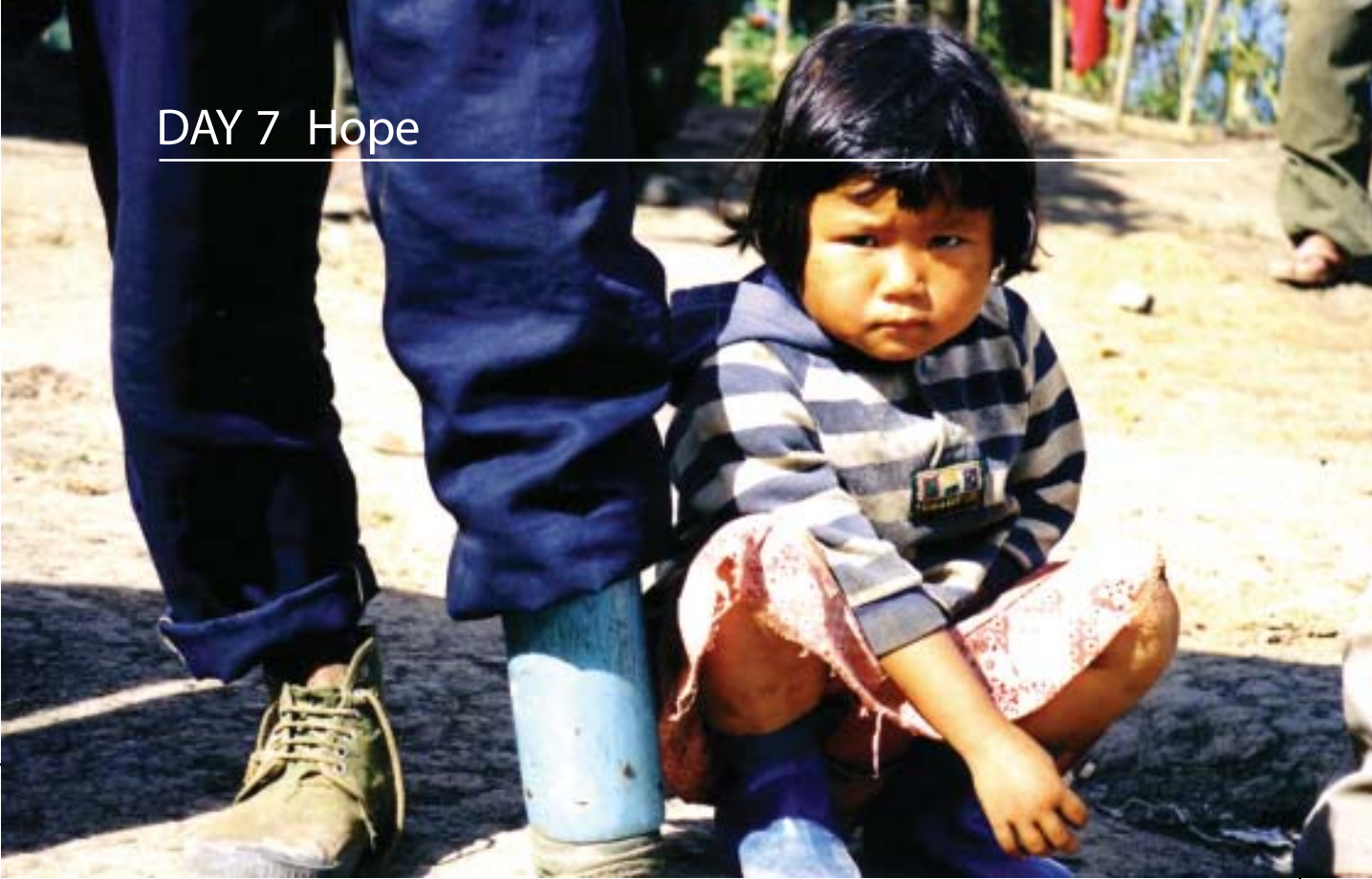
Arakan IDPs being helped by relief teams



Karen relief team singing



DAY 7 Hope



A Shan landmine victim with his daughter

Please lift up in prayer...

- the landmine victims and their families;
- the IDPs who are continually harrassed and often without hope;
- the drug problem which affects all the people of Burma, neighboring countries, and the world;
- and the leaders of the different people groups of Burma—that they may find unity and reconciliation.

An IDP in Arakan State (western Burma)



An opium field under Burma Army control



Karen man beaten by the Burma Army



Beyond the Global Day of Prayer for Burma

"They call us a displaced people, but praise God; we are not misplaced.

They say they see no hope for our future, but praise God; our future is as bright as the promises of God.

They say they see the life of our people as a misery, but praise God; our life is a mystery.

For what they say is what they see, and what they see is temporal, but ours is the eternal.

All because we put ourselves, in the hands of God we trust."

- Principal of the Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Bible School College, Mae La Refugee Camp

Message from a relief team leader...

The situation in Burma has become worse but the light of love and truth will not be put out. People all over the world pray for Burma and relief teams go into the fighting areas to bring help, hope, and love to the displaced. We want to be witnesses of God's love to all people in deed and word. The imperative of witness calls us to stand with people in their time of need and witness back to the world that these people count. They too need love, justice, and mercy. Everyone in Burma counts, the pro-democracy groups, the ethnic groups, the dictators and their army - all the people count.

While the dictatorship has caused the greatest destruction, no one or no group is innocent. As Alexander Solzhenitsyn learned from his time in prison under a dictatorship, "Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not between states nor between classes nor between political parties, but right through every human heart, through all human hearts." We pray and act for these human hearts and for human decency.

When under pressure most of us ask the question, "What will become of me?" The real question is, "What should I do?" We find that answer in love and are compelled to go by that love.

- We love the people of Burma and we want to help them; this is our heart.
- We believe that oppression is morally wrong; this is our mind.
- We go because the people of Burma are God's children and it is right to try to help them, and to be with them; this is our soul.

Thank you for your prayers and acts of love that help us go. God bless you.

- A Free Burma Ranger

How you can get involved...

- Commit to pray each day/week/month for Burma
- Start a prayer group for Burma and other countries where oppression takes place
- Be the Global Day of Prayer for Burma coordinator for your church
- Pray that companies which do business in Burma will care more about the people of Burma than their material profits.
- Copy the CCB newsletter and give it to friends
- Keep up-to-date on information about Burma
- Make your own newsletter
- Support those struggling for peace and justice
- Support missions and organizations that help refugees and the internally displaced
- Write your congressperson to remind them about the Global Day of Prayer for Burma

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." - Proverbs 3:5-6

Resource Page

Websites

Amnesty International	www.amnesty.org
AP News	www.apnews.com
Bangkok Post	www.bangkokpost.com
British Broadcasting Company World Service	www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice (radio/Burmese)
Burma Campaign	www.burmacampaign.org.uk
Burma Forum of Los Angeles	www.burmaforumla.org
Burma Issues	www.burmaissues.org
Burma Relief Center (BRC)	brccm@loxinfo.co.th
BurmaNet (news service)	www.burmanet.org
Christians Concerned for Burma	www.prayforburma.org
Christian Solidarity Australasia	www.cs.org.au
Christian Solidarity Worldwide	www.csw.org.uk
Democratic Voice of Burma (radio)	www.dvb.no
Free Burma Coalition	www.freeburmacoalition.org
Global IDP Project	www.idpproject.org
Human Rights Watch	www.hrw.org
Jubilee Campaign	www.jubileecampaign.org
Karen Action Group	www.kagint.org
Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG)	www.khrg.org
Karen National League (USA)	www.karen.org
The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma	www.ncgub.net
Open Society Institute Burma Project	www.soros.org/burma
Partners Relief & Development	www.partnersworld.org
Radio Free Asia	www.rfa.org
Shan Herald Agency for News (SHAN)	www.shanland.org
The Nation (newspaper)	www.nationmultimedia.com
US Campaign for Burma	www.uscampaignforburma.org
Walk For Burma	www.geocities.com/walkforburma

Books/Reports

- Licence to Rape: The Burmese military regime's use of sexual violence in the ongoing war in Shan State.*
- Fink, Christina. *Living Silence; Burma Under Military Rule*. Zed Books 2001.
- Lintner, Bertil. *Burma in Revolt*. Silkworm Books. Revised Edition 2000.
- Lintner, Bertil. *Outrage: Burma's Struggle for Democracy*. White Lotus Co.
- Rogers, Benedict. *Land Without Evil: Stopping the Genocide of Burma's Karen People*. Monarch Books 2004.
- Smith, Martin. *Burma: Insurgency and the Politics of Ethnicity*. Zed Books Ltd.

Videos

- Love in Action*. 12-minute video about the war in Burma and relief teams in action.
- Beyond Rangoon*. 1995 Castle Rock Entertainment. Stars Patricia Arquette.
- Good Life Club*. A video showing practical ways to take action for IDP women and children.
- No Peace, No Mercy*. 14-minute video on the Internally Displaced People of Burma.
- Forgotten Allies*. 1994 BBC Timewatch.
- (Please contact CCB for a free copy of "Love in Action" or "Good Life Club" videos).

This booklet has been produced by:
Christians Concerned for Burma (CCB)
PO Box 14, Mae Jo Post Office
Chiang Mai, 50290
THAILAND
ccb@pobox.com
www.prayforburma.org

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Scripture portions quoted in this booklet are taken from the NIV and NKJV.



Relief team medic treats IDPs



An estimated 1,000,000 people have been displaced in the Burma-Thailand border area since 1996 (see shaded areas on the map, near left).

200,000 people have fled to Thailand as refugees.

At least 268,000 internally displaced people are currently living in hiding.

At least 365,000 people are currently resident in more than 176 forced relocation sites.

Map (near left) and figures courtesy of the Burmese Border Consortium, September 2002.

Figures based on 1996-2002 estimates.

Please join with us next year for the Global Day of Prayer for Burma
MARCH 13, 2005