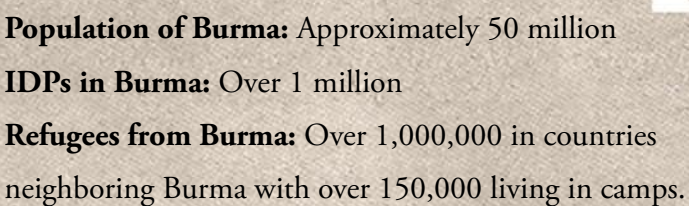


Global Day of Prayer for Burma



March 12, 2006



In February 2005 I had the opportunity to spend a morning at the Mae Tao clinic on the Thai/Burma border. I was with two doctors from the United States who had come over to volunteer for a week at the clinic. Both of these doctors are specialists, an OB/GYN and a surgeon. They are both incredibly gifted and committed.

That morning, I joined the OB/GYN in the reproductive health unit of the clinic as she did her rounds with the medics based at the clinic and a medical student. I also hoped to observe an operation the surgeon was performing later. Grabbing a camera, I decided I could at least take some pictures of the doctors working on the patients and be useful at documenting the work if nothing else.

The medics and OB/GYN as well as the medical student stopped to examine a 29-year-old woman who was 32 weeks pregnant and dying from HIV/AIDS. They discussed her case and listened to the heartbeat of the baby inside. I thought I should quickly take some pictures and move on to see the surgery next door. But then I looked at her and saw she was so small and weak. The camera was set on telephoto and as I focused the lens on the scene I saw this woman's face for the first time.

She was beautiful, but her eyes seemed so full of pain. As the medical team moved to the next patient, I walked over to the dying woman and asked her in her own language if she would like prayer (I do not know very much of the Karen Language but am grateful that I had at least remembered how to say this). I was not prepared for the emotions that hit us.

She looked up at me with intensity, even as her body lay weakened and still, grasped my hand tightly, and then she closed her eyes and nodded. I began to pray for her in English. Tears flowed down her face and mine and I asked forgiveness for my pride and lack of compassion. I was ashamed of my arrogance and hurried activity. I could not move and just sat there with her, holding her hand, as she rested her head against my hip. Many thoughts entered my mind.

"Where did she come from? What had happened to her and how does a doctor or medic handle this every day here? What should I do? I don't even know her name. She may die any time now and her baby as well, with no one here to be with her in a close way." I was struck deeply by her suffering and her courage. Leaving her was the hardest thing for me to do, but I prayed that she would find peace and comfort. She reminded me how much God cares for each individual no matter what his or her condition, and that in the moments we are given to walk side by side someone in Love, we learn Truth. She has deeply touched my heart -- I will never forget her. After I returned to the United States I emailed Paw Htoo (nurse and medic who helps the Free Burma Rangers relief efforts) and asked her if she could check on this woman for me. She did, and told me that her name was Thu Zar Aung and she was dying and the baby had been taken by cesarean section. Paw Htoo said that the baby weighed only 1.8 kilos. My heart sank as I thought that both mother and baby would die.

Six months later when I returned to that town, Paw Htoo said to me, "The baby is alive, I know where he is, do you want to see him?" She proceeded to tell me that the mother had died not long after he was born and she only discovered recently that the baby was alive and doing well and living with a medic and his family near the clinic. We drove to the clinic and found the boy nearby. He is beautiful, 6 months old, and healthy. They said he had one HIV test that had come back negative, but was scheduled for another one on 10 September.

To see and hold this boy, little Aung Aung, whom I thought had died, filled me with tremendous joy and hope. For this miracle encourages my heart to remember what it means to love and pray, and that even through great suffering there is new life and new depths and new joys to be discovered. Sometimes we may feel unable to help or make a difference but with God's help we can always love and pray.

Thank you all and God bless you,
A Free Burma Housewife, August 2005



From an interview with Hsa Kae, a Karen female medic from the Southern Karen area of Burma, who describes what happened to her when she was 16 years old...

"It was Christmas time. Everyone was supposed to be happy. I had gone to our village, Talayko, which is a three-hour walk, for some Christmas shopping. My younger brother came with me as far as the village but returned home that evening. While I was there, some Burma Army soldiers arrived. When they saw me, they asked a villager, "Is she the one... the daughter of the one we killed?" The people lied to them, "No she's not." So they kept going.

I didn't know what they were talking about. The following day as I was going to the shopping area, a farmer came by and asked me, "Are you from the family that was killed?" I asked him, 'How many did they kill?' He said, 'Two women died and one old man and a boy. And they captured one man and a woman.' I said, 'I don't know... in my family we only have two women... My mom and my older sister.' I still wasn't worried. Meanwhile, my brother had returned home, saw what had happened and went to my aunt and uncle's house. They then came to the village to get me. On the way back, I asked everyone I met about what happened, but no one knew any details because their huts were not close to ours."

The following account is what she now knows happened to her family.

At that time, KNLA soldiers would come back for Christmas. One medic was on his way home and stayed in our hut. A village woman who had gone to the medic for treatment was with him. They were supposed to have left in the morning. What we didn't know was that the Burma Army soldiers were patrolling in the area. They heard children crying and in

the moonlight found our hut. At that time my older sister had gone to take a bath wearing only a sarong. The soldiers stopped her. They asked a question, but my older sister doesn't understand Burmese. She answered, "I don't understand Burmese." As she tried to run away, a Burma Army soldier grabbed her long hair and hit her head once. Then they encircled our hut which is in an open area. They started to shoot at everybody from the bushes. Because they shot at our hut, my mom and my dad and my 3-year-old brother were all wounded. My youngest brother was still breast feeding. My 8-year-old brother escaped. The soldiers had already captured my older sister and my 14-year old-brother who had been outside. The medic who was staying in our hut escaped. But he returned for a backpack that he forgot and was shot and killed. They raped, tortured and killed the woman villager just outside our hut. They did not torture my mom and dad because my mom was wounded and unconscious. She revived and breast fed my youngest brother. Later that same night, there was no one to take care of my mom and she died. My dad died just outside the hut. My brother (who had escaped) came back... nothing happened to him. Since the Burma Army soldiers took my older sister and brother, we have never seen them again."

The Burma Army eventually "adopted" the rest of her brothers. Hsa Kae heard rumors that they were coming back to take her as well. A pastor's wife hid her until she could move into the household of a Karen Army Officer, where she stayed for a year. The following December she went back to visit her village and held a memorial service for her parents. In and out of refugee camps, one day she met a woman medic and a woman pastor who were going out to work with the resistance. Hsa Kae decided to join them and eventually went on to become a medic herself. Last year, she completed Free Burma Ranger training, joined an FBR team and participated in two relief missions. She came back this year for a second Free Burma Ranger training in order to learn more. When asked why she became a medic, she replied, "I think about my life... about my mom and dad before they died... we didn't have any medic to treat them. And so I wanted to know about medicine and how to help my people in the future. Also, if I see my brothers and sister again, I could help."

Hsa Kae's final comments:

For me I don't need anything. I only want to see my brothers and sister. If we see each other, we will walk on our own corner (we will each do our own work) for our people. And we will concentrate on our duty. And we will know that our enemies treat us very badly and that we are against them courageously. We will try our best, that there will be no more hardship for our people in our future. We want freedom. Thank you.



Medic Hsa Kae at relief team training, November 2005.

Thank you for praying for the children of Burma! The Good Life Club is a program based on the words of Jesus in John 10:10, “The thief comes to kill and destroy, but I have come that they may have life and have it **abundantly!**” The word **abundant** is so big and full... only Jesus can truly meet their needs—any of our needs—in an abundant way. But in whatever way we are able, we hope to bring love and faith, along with tools for a good life, body and soul. These include teaching, primarily bible lessons and healthcare, songs and games, and a school pack for the teachers.

Reflections of a Partners and Free Burma Ranger Team Member

“I have seen the children of war close up. My heart yearns to see their misery lessened, their emotional scars healed, and their hungry bodies fed, warm and clothed. It is one thing to see their lives through print. They are then mostly numbers, statistics, and emotive headlines for newsletters and news items. But to actually sit on the packed dirt floor of a children’s home, one where the caregivers for this recently orphaned seven-year-old are soldiers, and see in their eyes the pain of displacement, the fear of flight, and the terror of weaponry, blood, and violation; the feeling that we must act and act decisively on behalf of this child is irresistible.

After meeting the children of Burma, kids who have lived through a literal hell on earth, I can never again excuse myself from their pain or hide in my material wealth from their sorrow. I can no longer say I’m a Christian and not act on their behalf. These children are my children and they are the future.”



Village children learn basic health principles.



“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

John 10:10-11

Kid Packs

- small comb and mirror
- a box of children’s chewable vitamins
- 2 children’s toothbrushes
- fingernail clippers
- a small toy
- a drawing or photograph of you or your group
- a postcard from your city or state with a verse of scripture

Mom & Baby Packs

- small fingernail clippers
- multi-vitamins for mom
- pediatric vitamins (not needing refrigeration)
- 2 sets for baby including cap, hand mitts, shirt (not a onesie)
- a teether
- a drawing or photograph of you or your group
- a postcard from your city or state with a verse of scripture

Thank you for your help in sending the packs to us. At this time, it is still not possible to send charitable bulk shipments to us. Please send standard household/gift size boxes with the description “household/personal goods” on the customs form. Send packs standard airmail (USA: not to exceed 79 inches/length/girth) to the address on the back of this booklet, with the name, “GLC.”

The Burma Army and its allies use landmines to terrorize villagers. Villagers are forced to be human minesweepers and clean roads where the Burma Army has planted landmines.

These landmines were discovered on a trail used by IDPs in Southern Karenni State in 2005 (photo right). They were placed by the Burma Army in order to terrorize Karenni IDPs and block their return home. These mines are anti-personnel mines and are copies of the US M-14 anti-personnel mine. They are the same size as the US-made M-14 landmine and are now being used extensively by the Burma Army.



Thee Bo, victim of a Burma Army landmine, received treatment from a relief team, Karenni State, 15 January 2005 (far left).

Saw Ker Paw, 24 years old, receives treatment at a clinic after stepping on a Burma Army landmine, western Karen State, 31 August 2005 (near left).

Mules



Responding to the needs of IDPs: In a place where everything has to be carried on your back, we are grateful for all of you who support the new mule program for transporting medical and other relief supplies. This is one of the many good things that people are doing to help each other.

Mules working in northern Karen State, April 2005.

*“Give thanks to the Lord because he is good.
His love is endures forever.”*

Psalm 136:1-3 (NIV)



SHAN State: Eastern Burma

The situation in Southern Shan State has deteriorated, with a total of 20,000 people displaced in the Mong Pan area. In this area the Burma Army continues its brutal suppression of the Shan and other ethnic peoples.

A relief team documented the rape of an 8-year-old girl and a 13-year-old girl by Burma Army troops. They also reported attacks against civilians including; murder, torture, forced labor, forced relocation, destruction of villages and land confiscation. All of these human rights violations are ongoing. The team was able to provide medical care for over 2,000 people in hiding.

The Burma Army rape of an 8-year-old girl was described this way to a relief team. On 18 October 2004, the 8-year-old girl named "Mo" was raped by three soldiers from Burma Army Infantry Battalion IB 132, who were stationed near Ho Mong. At about 10:40 a.m. neighbors noticed three soldiers going from their base toward the victim's house. Mo was at home with her younger brother while her parents were away working. In the evening when the parents returned, they found their daughter crying, with fresh blood staining the floor of the house. Only then did Mo and her brother tell their parents that she had been raped by a Burma Army soldier in her own home. After three days they took Mo to be treated at the hospital. Here the local Burma Army-backed militia tried to bribe her parents with 5,000 Kyat (US\$5) to keep quiet about the attack.



Shan FBR team giving Good Life Club gifts to IDP children. Mar-May 2005.



Shan relief team treating IDPs. Mar-May 2005.



LAHU: Shan State, Eastern Burma

Lahu Relief team provides dental treatment, Feb-May 2005.

ARAKAN State: Western Burma

On the western border of Burma in Arakan IDP area, Arakan IDPs are hiding from the Burma Army. Most of the IDP areas are deep inside the forest, isolating them from external assistance and making farming difficult. Ongoing violations of human rights include the destruction of homes and hiding places of villagers, looting, killing and forced labor. Relief teams and others are doing humanitarian work among the IDPs, including health care, the distribution of medical and educational supplies, prayer and counseling.

Arakan IDPs searching for safety in the jungle (top right).

Arakan relief team giving medical treatment (bottom right).





AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, celebrated her 60th birthday during 2005. She has now spent over 10 years under house arrest and her detention was extended for at least 6 months in late November 2005. She is the leader of the National League for Democracy, the party which won over 80% of the vote in the 1990 elections in Burma. The military dictatorship responded by ignoring the results of the elections and jailing members of the opposition. In an historic development, the UN Security Council was planning to hold discussions about Burma in mid December 2005.

FORCED LABOR

The Burma Army continues to force villagers in many areas of Burma to work for them on road projects, carrying supplies, and building Burma Army camps, among other things. The continual build-up of forces by the Burma Army and the infrastructure to support those forces is a burden on the villagers. The forced labor is a violation of their basic human rights.

Forced labor on car road in Ma Taw Village Tract, Dwe Lo Township, Muthraw (Papun) District, northern Karen State, 2005 (top right).

Porter carries load for the Burma Army, 2005 (bottom right).



VILLAGERS FOUND DEAD

Bodies of villagers captured and presumably used as porters were found in May 2005. Two villagers from Toungoo District, northwestern Karen State, disappeared December 26, 2004. They were captured by Burma Army troops and not heard from again. The two villagers were found in May 2005 by villagers in the area of the Burma Army camp housing the troops who captured the villagers.

BURMA ARMY PATROLS and EXPANSION

The military dictatorship in Burma, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), moved their headquarters north to the city of Pyinmana during late 2005.



Bulldozer used by Burma Army in road building operations, 2005.



Burma Army patrol, 2005.



Gold mining in western Karen State.

GOLD MINING in Western Karen State

Burma Army offensives in this area have enabled them to expand mining operations into lands traditionally held by the Karen people. Not only does the Burma Army profit from these mines and rob the Karen people of their own resources, the mines also cause significant environmental damage.

For example, gold mining along the Shwegyyn River and its tributaries has increased since 2003, when Burma Army offensives gave the SPDC more control of the Shwegyyn River area of Karen State. Private companies operating under license of the SPDC have now placed 20-30 hydraulic gold mining machines on the Shwegyyn River, north of the town of Shwegyyn. Each mining operation recovers an average of 1.5 kilograms of gold per month. Each operation must pay 500,000 kyat (approx. US\$450) per month per machine. Karen people in mining areas believe that one of the motivations behind continuing Burma Army operations is to secure and expand gold mining in these areas.

IDPs

“The Lord is my life and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?” Psalm 27:1

The Burma Army systematically destroys villagers’ means of food production and storage as shown in picture on lower right. Winnowing baskets and storage tins have been stabbed with knives or bayonets by the attacking Burma Army in Nyaunglebin District, western Karen State. Four hundred villagers from Kwee Lah and Ler Wah village areas were displaced during Burma Army attacks from September to November 2005. In March 2005, 1,300 IDPs fled patrols of the Burma Army in the area east of Shwegyyn in Nyaunglebin District, western Karen State. The IDPs did not feel it was safe to stay in their homes and are now in hiding. They are some of the 4,781 IDPs whose homes and rice barns were destroyed by the Burma Army during attacks in November and December 2004. In all, over 20,000 baskets of rice were burned.



Home destroyed by the Burma Army during attacks from September to November 2005.



Women inside Karen State weave blankets for Karen and Karenni IDPs, February 2005.

Survival Strategies and Resistance by the IDPs

In every area under Burma Army oppression, the IDPs and villagers do an amazing job of surviving and resisting attempts of complete control. The people work together to escape the Burma Army and care for each other, sharing food and shelter. They try to continue the schooling of their children using rocks and blackboards and the jungle as a classroom. They are not passive victims but return to their land as soon as the attacking troops depart. They refuse to give up. They restart their schools, rebuild their homes and do so with smiles and laughter; it is truly amazing to witness. They demonstrate that force cannot crush the human spirit.



Relief team nurses on relief mission to IDPs in Toungoo District, northwestern Karen State, January 2005.



Wa Christian celebration, 2005.



IDPs in Toungoo District, northwestern Karen State, January 2005.



Karenni medic team provides IDPs with dental care, western Karen State, April 2005.

“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Please pray for Burma:

When asked what their country needed prayer for, young ethnic leaders at a relief team training in November 2005 responded with many prayer requests, including prayer for the following:

- That God’s love would light fires of faith and service all over Burma
- Freedom and peace in Burma
- The dictators and their army to start caring for their country and people
- Political and other prisoners wrongly jailed to be freed
- Unity among and between all ethnic groups and people in Burma
- Genuine dialogue which leads to reconciliation and forgiveness
- Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Burma
- Refugees from Burma (in Thailand, Bangladesh, India and other countries)
- Farmers – they are barely surviving due to attacks by the Burma Army, bad weather and insects that destroy crops
- Countries neighboring Burma
- Migrant workers from Burma
- Relief teams, human rights documentation reporters, health workers, pastors, teachers, evangelists and others taking risks to serve their communities in war zones.

Ways to take action for Burma:

- Pray for Burma
- Go see the situation with your own eyes
- Encourage your government to take positive action for Burma
- Help provide relief for IDPs such as educational supplies, medical supplies, and mother, children and baby packs.

FROM CCB

March 2006

Dear Friends,

Thank you for praying for Burma. We will continue, with your help, to pray, think and act for Burma as we hope to light small fires of love and service all over Burma.

May God bless you,
 Christians Concerned for Burma (CCB)

“Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?” Isaiah 58:6-7

Web and Email

Amnesty International
Associated Press
Burma Campaign UK
Burma Forum of Los Angeles
Burma Issues
Burmanet News
Burma Relief Centre
Christians Concerned for Burma
Christian Solidarity Australia
Christian Solidarity Worldwide
Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB)
Free Burma Coalition
Free Burma Rangers
Human Rights Watch
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
Irrawaddy Magazine
Jubilee Campaign UK
Karen Human Rights Group
Karen Cultural Website
National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB)
Open Society Institute Burma Project
Partners Relief and Development
Radio Free Asia
Shan Herald Agency for News (SHAN)
Tears of the Oppressed
US Campaign for Burma

www.amnesty.org
www.ap.org
www.burmacampaign.org.uk
www.burmaforumla.org
www.burmaissues.org
www.burmanet.org
brccm@loxinfo.co.th
www.prayforburma.org
www.cswoz.org
www.csw.org.uk
www.dvb.no
www.freeburmacoalition.org
www.freeburmarangers.org
www.hrw.org
www.internal-displacement.org
www.irrawaddy.org
www.jubileecampaign.co.uk
www.khrg.org
www.karen.org
www.ncgub.net
www.soros.org/initiatives/bpsai
www.partnersworld.org
www.rfa.org
www.shanland.org
www.tearsoftheoppressed.org
www.uscampaignforburma.org

In Print

“Licence to Rape” The Burmese military regime’s use of sexual violence in the ongoing war in Shan State.
“Shattering Silences” The Burmese military regime’s use of sexual violence in the ongoing war in Karen State.
Fink, Christina. *Living in Silence: Burma Under Military Rule*. Zed Books 2001.
Lintner, Bertil. *Burma in Revolt*. Silksworm 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

In Hiding. 12 min. A detailed account of human rights abuses in Burma from 2004-2005.
Steps to Freedom. 18 min. Training relief teams and emergency relief to displaced people in Burma’s war zones.
Fear and Hope. 6 min. A brief overview of the situation in Burma and the work of the Free Burma Rangers.
Love in Action. 12-minute video about war in Burma and relief teams in action.
Good Life Club. A video showing the practical ways to take action for IDP women and children.
Beyond Rangoon. 1995 Castle Rock Entertainment. Stars Patricia Arquette.
Forgotten Allies. 1994 BBC Timewatch.
(Please contact CCB for a free copy of *In Hiding*, *Steps to Freedom*, *Fear and Hope*, *Love in Action* or *Good Life Club* videos)

For more suggested resources please see www.prayforburma.org.

“He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

- Micah 6:8



Burma Army soldier threatens villagers. This photo was taken at great risk by a relief team, 2005.

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