

Working Group on Minorities
Geneva
12th session
8th to 10th August 2006
Item (3a) of the agenda

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to take the floor. My name is Seik Chan Oung from Myanmar. I work with the Mon Youth Progressive Organization in Myanmar internally Mon displaced areas.

I would like to present to the United Nations, an overview of the urgent situation facing internally displaced ethnic minorities in parts of Myanmar, and the protection of their rights. I will use to illustrate this situation, the specific case of the ethnic peoples known as the Mon. In particular I will address the causes of the internal displacement; which are the confiscation of land and of violence towards women and other forms of human rights violations, committed by the armed forces of my government, and also the lack of access to basic medicines for those Mon currently living in re-settlement camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's).

There are presently 7000 Mon living in 3 re-settlement camps in Myanmar border areas adjacent to western Thailand. The situation of the Mon IDP's were reported by the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Situation on Myanmar, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, in his report to the Commission on Human Rights on 7 February 2006.

In 1995, a ceasefire was agreed between the government and the principal Mon political force, the New Mon State Party. Yet, despite this ceasefire, my government has deployed 20 more battalions since 1998, in the Mon ethnic areas in Southern Myanmar. It is these government battalions who have arbitrarily confiscated land and property and systematically sexually violated Mon women.

Mr Chairman, these violations are taking place not just in Mon areas, but also in minority ethnic areas across the country. The Special Rapporteur on human rights situation on Myanmar reported this situation in his report. Documentation of these violations in Mon area's, is presently available to me. I am very pleased to give these reports to those who are willing to receive them. These reports were released by the Human Rights Foundation of Mon Land and Mon Women.

Those people who have left their homelands and are living in the re-settlement camps have been violated their right to land, health, and protection from violence. This is a denial of minority rights as set out in articles 2.2 and 4.1 of the UNDM.

For the Mon people living in the re-settlement camps, there is no access to state health care and no access to a pharmacy, so currently there is a crisis of lack of access to medicine. Since 1989, medicine was provided by Doctors Without Borders (known as MSF), however this support came to an end. The Mon National Health Department, the only local health organization dealing with the Mon re-settlement camps, and who were responsible for administering the MSF medicine, were left with only 6 months supply. This medicine has now almost all run out.

Mr Chairman, I would like to make the following recommendations.

My recommendations to my government are:

- To ensure its soldiers stop any form of human rights violation's in the Mon ethnic minority area
- To stop deploying more battalions, in the Mon ethnic minority area.
- To bring its soldiers who committed sexual violation's against the Mon women to court, in order to promote the existing laws of the Myanmar Army Forces which state effective action is to be taken against those who commit rape, and to show its aspiration of implementing CEDAW which it ratified in July 1997.

My recommendations to United Nations are:

- To consider the effectiveness of its aid provided for Myanmar, in order to ensure its aid equally reaches all the people who are seriously in need in internally displaced area's.
- To adopt a more flexible position on providing aid to IDP's in Myanmar. (e.g. open more opportunity for local minority relief organizations to access aid.)
- To urge my government to take practical legal action against those who committed rape against ethnic minority women of Myanmar.
- To address urgently, the situation of the lack of access to medicine in the Mon re-settlement camps

Thank you Mr Chairman.

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The Special Rapporteur's report can be viewed at <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G06/105/96/PDF/G0610596.pdf?OpenElement>
The Special Rapporteur's report can be viewed at <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/459/65/PDF/N0545965.pdf?OpenElement>
The License to Rape report can be viewed at <http://www.shanland.org/resources/bookspub/humanrights/LtoR/>
The Shattering the Silence report can be viewed at http://www.womenofburma.org/Report/Shattering_Silences.pdf
The System of Impunity report can be viewed at http://www.womenofburma.org/Report/SYSTEM_OF_IMPUNITY.pdf
The No Land to Farm report can be viewed at <http://www.rehmonnva.org/landreport.php>
The Catwalk to the Barracks report can be viewed at <http://www.rehmonnva.org/catwalk-to-the-barracks.php>
The MSF's 2005 annual report on international activities (Thailand): <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/publications/ar/2005/thailand.cfm>