

UNSAFE STATE



**State-sanctioned sexual violence against
Chin women in Burma**

Published in March 2007 by the Women's League of Chinland

THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CHINLAND (WLC)

The Women's League of Chinland (WLC) was formed on December 4, 2004. It is an umbrella organization comprising nine different Chin women's organizations, as follows:

Central Chin Women Organization (CCWO)
Zotung Women's Development Network (ZWDN)
Khumi Women Advancement Organization (KWAO)
Zomi Women Union (ZWU)
Mara Women Association (MWA)
All Burma Democratic Lushai Women Organization (ABDLWO)
Chin Women Organization (CWO) Delhi
Matu Women Union (MWU)
Chin Women Union (CWU)

The WLC focuses on three main areas:

- Women's capacity building
- Promotion of women's participation in politics
- Strengthening unity among Chin women and cooperation with other Chin organizations and other women's groups from Burma

www.chinwomen.org

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FOREWORD

A year ago I was asked to meet a 9-year-old girl, a refugee from Burma, who had been severely molested and violated by the Burmese military. The girl hadn't spoken for two years, and her mother constantly requested me not to tell anyone what had happened because people would blame the little girl for being raped. One part of me is all the time with that sweet child whose innocence and childhood have been brutally stolen. Her frozen eyes screamed out a reality of gross oppression.

Violence against women is the most pervasive form of human rights abuse. This report *Unsafe State: State-sanctioned sexual violence against Chin women in Burma* is yet another call for help to the world. In this context, it is high-time the Government of India and the international community acknowledge the immense suffering of Burmese people, and strongly condemn the dreadful systematic violation of women and children.

After reading such shattering testimonies in the report, it is now our duty to carry these life-stories forward to every entity that can make a difference, and bring them to the Government of India or any government which is, through economic and military support of the SPDC regime, directly fuelling militarization in Burma.

It is estimated that over 50,000 refugees from Burma are currently living in India. The continuing lack of sufficient protection mechanisms for these refugees makes it impossible to know their exact numbers. Except for those who are able to approach UNHCR in New Delhi for protection, the majority of Burmese refugees in India are afraid to identify themselves as refugees, although careful scrutiny of their circumstances clearly suggests that they fall within the refugee definition. India has many times forcibly returned Burmese refugees to Burma. India extradited eleven Burmese army defectors in 2006, some of whom were already

recognized as 'persons of concern' by UNHCR. Due to the lack of legal protection for Burmese refugees at the border, they are easily categorized as economic migrants. From being victims in Burma, they are re-victimised in India.

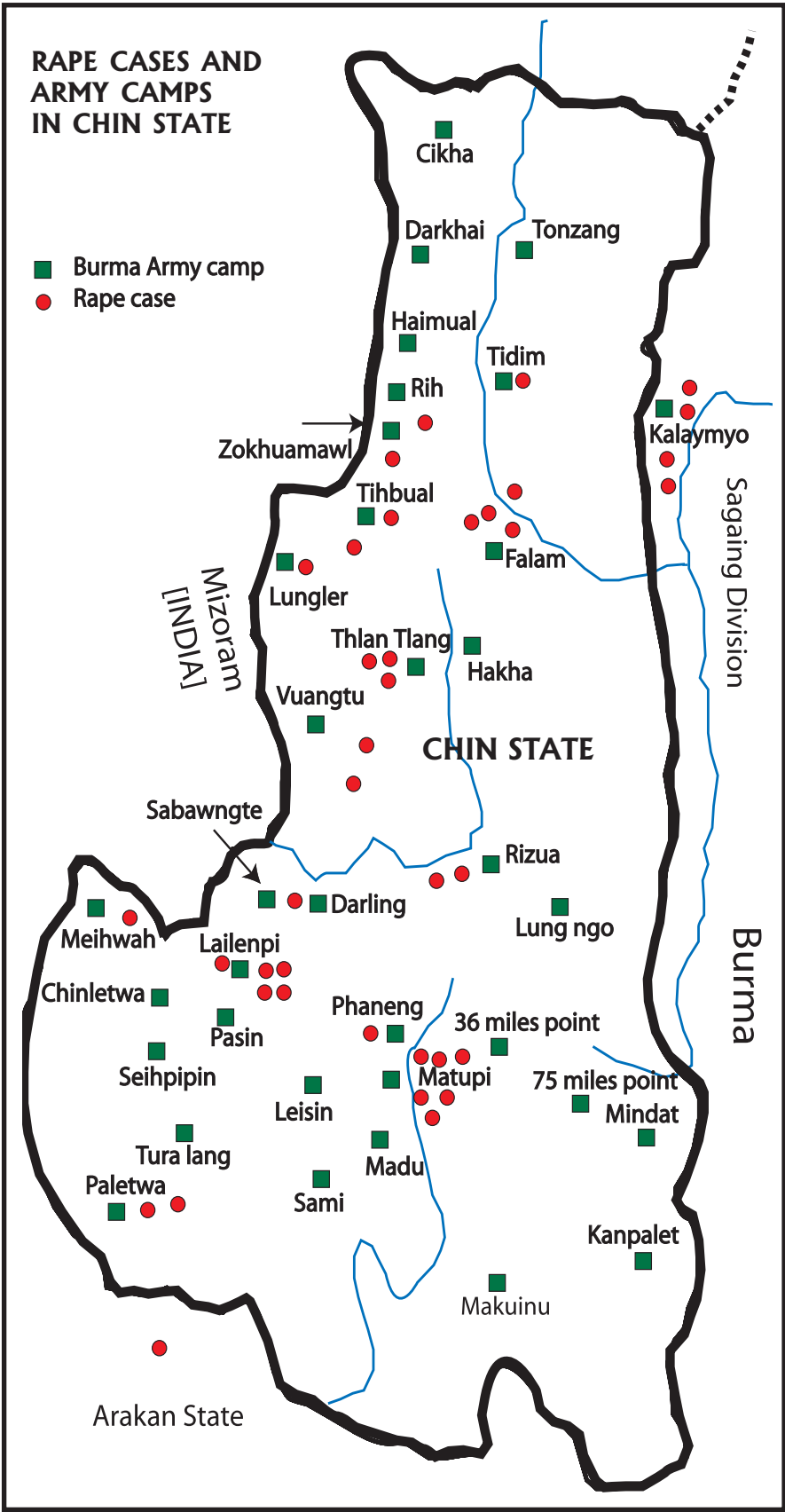
This alarming report describes the horrible track record of the Burmese Army and sexual violence against women. If spread diligently, it can assist the Women's League of Chin Women to accomplish justice for the affected women in Burma, and prevent more such horrendous crimes from taking place in the future. Dear reader, please make sure that you evoke this report every time you speak of Burma or about Women's Rights.

Let us not ignore Burma. Bring out these terrible stories of women of our times still suffering from barbaric attacks and rape violence. Spread out this information and fight this injustice, otherwise several generations will go silent, children will no more smile - just blankly stare and at the most ask us, "is this what you call childhood?"

Parul Sharma

- Former legal advisor for the Human Rights Law Network in India and Human Rights Advisor to the Delegation of the European Commission to India, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka

March 2007



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report by the Women's League of Chinland is the first to provide detailed evidence of the systematic sexual violence being committed by the Burma Army in the isolated mountainous region of Chin State in Western Burma. It documents 38 cases of sexual violence, the majority committed during the past five years, in locations throughout the state. Due to social stigma and fear of further violence, few survivors disclose cases of sexual abuse, so these cases undoubtedly represent only a small proportion of the actual number of incidents taking place.

Cases in this report confirm patterns of state-sanctioned sexual violence detailed in earlier reports by other women's organizations from Burma, showing that under the military regime women and girls are at constant risk of being raped. The regime, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), has been expanding its army throughout the country since 1988. Particularly in the ethnic areas, it has been building up its troop presence to subjugate resistance movements and secure control of natural resources and border trade. Whereas 20 years ago, there were only two Burma Army battalions operating in Chin State, there are now eight battalions based in the state, with army camps scattered in numerous villages and patrols constantly roaming the hills. These troops are using rape as a "weapon" to terrorize local communities. Women and girls as young as 12 are being raped in their homes and farms, while traveling outside their villages and when conscripted as forced labour by the army.

There is a clear pattern of impunity for military sexual violence. In none of the cases in this report were the perpetrators prosecuted. Military authorities mostly ignored reports of sexual crimes, or actively sought to cover them up, and even threatened survivors. About half of the rapes were gang rapes, and at least a third were committed by officers, who were setting a clear example to the troops under their command that rape is acceptable.

The soldiers committing rape displayed extreme brutality, sometimes torturing and murdering victims, irrespective of the presence of local witnesses. One woman was stripped naked and tied to a cross, in a savage act of mockery against the local people's Christian beliefs.

Survivors of rape have been fleeing across the border to Mizoram State in northeast India, but as refugees from Burma are not officially recognized by the Indian government, they receive no protection or aid. They must struggle for daily survival and live in fear of deportation back to Burma.

Survivors of rape face stigma and have no access to support-systems inside Burma. The state-dominated Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, which women throughout Chin State have been forced to join, fails to provide assistance to any women, even rape survivors. Some survivors have been fleeing across the border to Mizoram State in northeast India, but as refugees from Burma are not officially recognized by the Indian government, they receive no protection or aid. They must struggle for daily survival and live in fear of deportation back to Burma.

Economic and military support of the SPDC by neighbours such as India is directly fuelling militarization in Burma. Only genuine political change to democracy, restoration of the rule of law, and a withdrawal of Burma Army troops from ethnic areas will bring an end to the systematic sexual violence in Burma.

The WLC strongly urges the State Peace and Development Council:

- To move forward and begin a process of meaningful political change in Burma
- To stop the National Convention until the National League for Democracy and other opposition groups are allowed to fully participate
- To withdraw its military presence from Chin State so that human rights abuses by

SPDC troops including sexual violence against local populations will cease

- To comply with their obligations under the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which was signed by Burma in 1997
- To stop forcing Chin women to be members of the state-dominated women's organization the "Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation"

We also urge the international community:

- To support a UNSC resolution on Burma
- To maintain political and economic pressure on the SPDC to bring about peaceful political change in Burma
- To provide assistance to empower women from Burma through cross-border programs
- To advocate about the situation of the people of Burma with their respective communities and governments

And the government of India:

- To stop providing arms and any form of military support to the Burmese military regime
- To review its economic engagement with Burma in the interests of a long-term sustainable relationship
- To review its policies on refugees and provide protection and necessary assistance to refugees from Burma
- To allow the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to assess the situation of the refugee community at the India-Burma border

METHODOLOGY

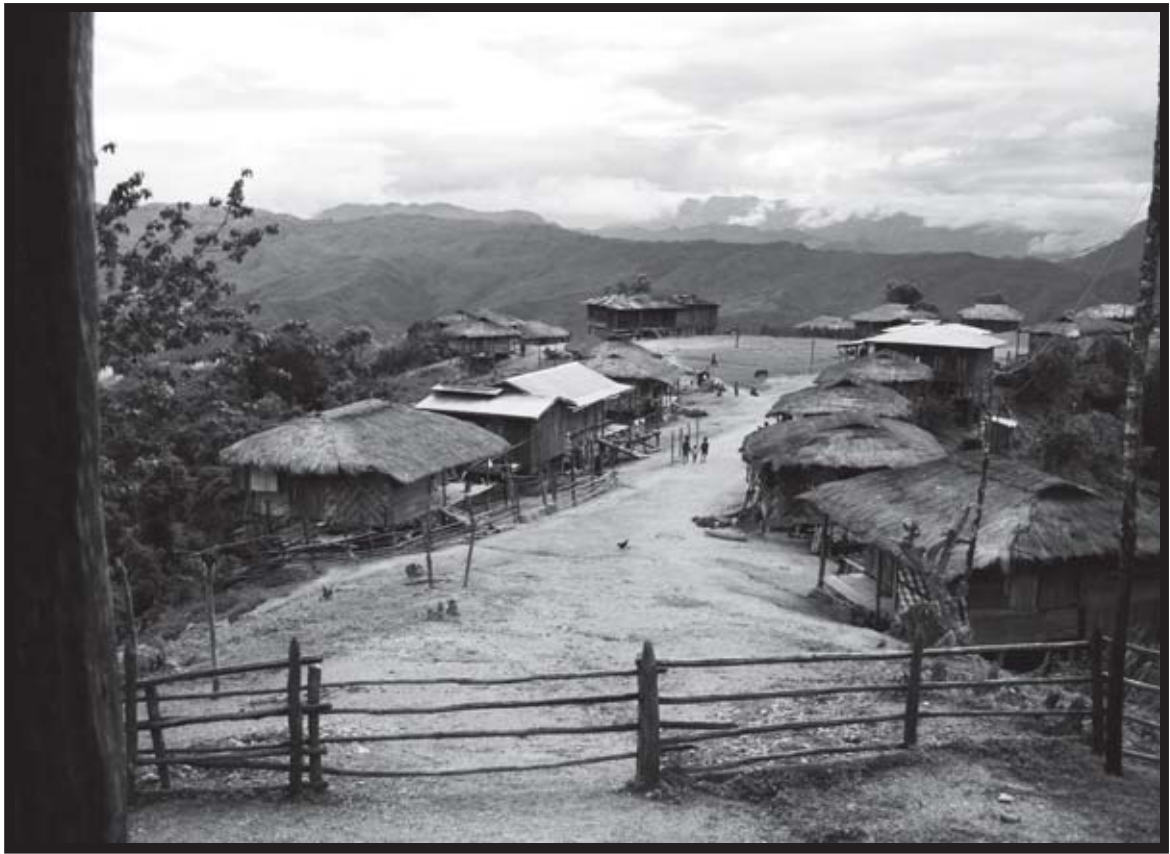
There has been little information about human rights abuses by Burma Army troops against the Chin people, mainly because of the isolated geographical location of Chin State in the mountainous region of western Burma, and the poor communication and transport there. Particularly incidents of sexual violence are rarely reported, because rape survivors and other community members feel it is shameful to talk about sexual abuse, and are afraid of retaliation from military authorities.

Despite these challenges, the Women's League of Chinland has been training women from Chin State to systematically document human rights abuses including sexual violence in Chin State. The WLC is also working with other human rights groups and women's organizations in collecting information on violence against women. WLC members have traveled to villages inside Chin State and at the Chin border areas, risking arrest, torture and rape themselves.

The information in this report was mainly compiled during 2006 using the following methods:

- interviewing survivors
- interviewing witnesses of crimes
- relying on networks of people inside Chin State and along the India-Burma border, particularly community leaders, who collect information about abuses in their communities
- cooperating with other local human rights groups such as the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) to check data

Owing to concerns for the security of the people interviewed and the women who collected the information, detailed names of places and people have been withheld. Some photos in the report have been obscured to protect the identity of interviewees.



BACKGROUND OF THE CHIN

It is estimated that there are 2 million ethnic Chins in Burma, with about 480,000 now living in Chin State. The term “Chin” has been popularly used since 1896, when the Chin Hills Regulation was written under the British administration. The Chin Hills became a part of Union of Burma in 1947 according to the Panglong Agreement, signed under the leadership of General Aung San, father of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi. The agreement led to independence from British rule in 1948.

Chin State is located in the western part of Burma, bordering Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur states of India. In Burma, it adjoins Arakan State to the south, Sagaing Division to the north-east and Magway Division to the south-

east. It is a beautiful mountainous region with orchids, rhododendrons, cherry trees, roses and wild animals. According to the most recent geographical measurement of Chin State by the SPDC, its area is 13,907 sq. miles¹ (slightly larger than Belgium).

There are nine main towns in Chin State and 1,030 villages. These villages are scattered on hilltops throughout the state, with few roads linking them. Transport is mainly on foot. The lack of infrastructure and poor communication have hindered development and make day-to-day life difficult. At the same time, travel to Chin State is restricted for outsiders, contributing to the isolation of local communities.

Most of the populations are farmers practicing rotational cultivation. There has been little gov-

¹ The Chin political parties or organizations are not allowed to conduct population censuses or geographical measurements to challenge the SPDC’s official statistics. As a result WLC has had to rely on the SPDC’s measurements, even though they may not be accurate.

ernment support for agricultural development,² and farmers lack marketing outlets for their home farm products such as fruit, including oranges, apples, grapes, avocados and pineapples, fresh vegetables, soy bean, pulses, tobacco, etc. They are banned from forming labor or farming associations, which prevents them improving their situation. There are no factories or industries set up in Chin State. It does not have a single college or university, and there are not enough schools.

The Chin people have been resisting military rule since General Ne Win seized power in 1962, but it was not until 1988, when the national students' and people's uprising occurred in Burma, that a significant armed Chin resistance was formed. At that time there were only two military battalions operating in Chin State. Since then, the regime has been steadily increasing their military and administrative presence in Chin State, not only with greater numbers of soldiers, but also police, immigration and other government officials from Central Burma. The isolation of Chin State has provided these personnel with increased opportunities to commit human rights abuses against local populations with impunity.

As a result of the increasing militarization and accompanying human rights abuses, Chin people have been forced to leave their homes, farms and schools. There are an estimated 100,000 Chin refugees in India, mostly in the state of Mizoram. Out of this number, about 1,000 refugees have applied to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Delhi for protection. Chins are also fleeing eastwards to Southeast Asia, Japan and Korea, as well as Europe, Canada, the USA, Mexico and Guam. Some Chins have moved to other parts of Burma, including Sagaing, Rangoon and Mandalay divisions, and Kachin, Arakan and Shan States.

INCREASE OF BURMA ARMY BATTALIONS IN CHIN STATE

There are now eight battalions based in Chin State. These battalions have set up military outposts throughout the state, making a total of 33 camps. There are five Light Infantry Battalions (LIB): LIB 266, LIB 268, LIB 269, LIB 140, LIB 274; and three Infantry Battalions (IB): IB 304, IB 309 and IB 34. They are permanently based in the main townships of Chin State, namely Hakha, Falam, Tedim, Matupi, Mindat, Kanpalet, Paletwa, Tawnzang and Thlan Tlang.

In order to facilitate further military expansion, new townships have also recently been established by the regime, including Cikha (2001), Razua (2001) and Rikhawdar (2003). Cikha and Rikhawdar lie at main border crossings into India, where the SPDC seeks to control and collect taxes on border trade, including in illicit drugs. They also want to mobilize against the opposition groups based on the border, such as the Chin National Army (CNA).³ Razua is strategically important as it lies at a central point in Chin State from which troops can be easily deployed to different parts of the state. It is also possible that the planned gas-pipeline (from the Arakan coast to India) may pass through Razua.

Each of the eight battalions based in Chin State has an average of about 400 soldiers, which are constantly mobilizing and patrolling around the countryside. Apart from these battalions, troops from other battalions based in neighbouring areas also conduct patrols in Chin State. For example, there are nine battalions based in Kalaymyo, adjoining northern Chin State. This means that as well as the over 3,000 troops permanently stationed in Chin State, thousands more may be patrolling in the area at any time.

² Southern Initiative for Sustainable Development Journal- 2005 issue

³ The Chin National Army is an armed wing of the Chin National Front, one of the Chin armed groups who fight against the Burmese regime

CONSTANT FEAR FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS OF MILITARY RAPE

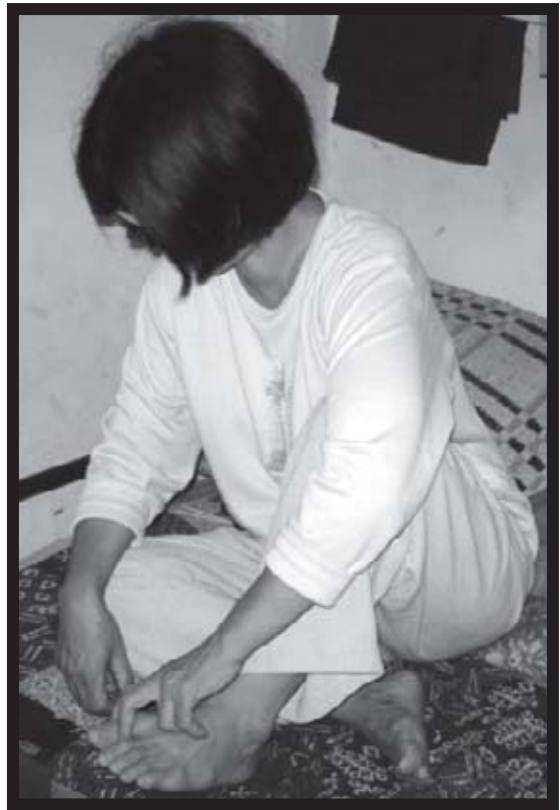
Cases documented by WLC show clearly that women are liable to be raped by Burma Army troops at any time and place in the course of their daily life: in their homes and farms, while going out to collect food or firewood in the forests, or while traveling outside their villages. They are also subject at any time to be called for forced labour or portering by the Burma Army, placing them in custody of troops who may rape them.

RAPE AT OR NEAR HOMES AND FARMS

The increased troop presence in Chin State has caused civilians living near military camps to become more vulnerable to abuses by the soldiers stationed nearby, including sexual violence. Troops living in close proximity are more likely to notice if women are alone, and then commit rape. An 18-year-old schoolgirl was gang-raped in this way (case 12):

“The rented house was close to a military camp. K—’s friend went back to the village to take the necessary food and other supplies, leaving her friend alone at the rented house. One night, two soldiers from LIB 274 came to steal their chickens. When K— heard some people trying to steal their chickens, she spoke out to frighten the thieves. However, when the soldiers realized the girl was home alone, they entered the house and raped her, threatening her with death if she cried for help.”

Soldiers stationed near villages know where the villagers are working and when they come back. They also know where the villagers collect firewood, which is mainly done by women in Chin villages. Some soldiers deliberately stalk women villagers so that they can choose the best opportunity to rape them. A 20-year-old woman who had repeatedly refused the advances of an SPDC soldier was stalked and raped by him (case 35):



“One day while she went to carry firewood in the forest alone, the soldier from LIB 268 came to her house again and asked her parents where she was. After learning that M— had gone to the forest, he told the parents that he would pick her up and he left. He knew where the villagers used to collect firewood. At last he found M— alone at about 3pm to 4pm. As soon as he saw her, he attacked her from the back and held her body tight. M— fought back and tried to escape but she was not strong enough to fight him off. The soldier also threatened that if she kept fighting and shouting, he would kill her. He then raped her. M— was filled with anger and pain. She could not stop crying.”

It is not only villagers living near military camps who are vulnerable to abuses. The SPDC soldiers regularly go out on patrol in remote villages,



particularly where they suspect armed resistance groups are active. As Chin villagers commonly stay out in their farms, growing rice in the rainy season or cash crops in the summer, wives or daughters are often left alone at home in the villages, making them targets for rape by patrolling soldiers. For example, a 40-year-old woman found alone at home by three soldiers was gang-raped by them (case 1):

“Three Burmese soldiers from LIB 304 learned that Mrs. S— was alone at home on the night of 9th April 2006. Armed with a sharpened bamboo stick, the three soldiers forced their way into S-’s home. She was gang-raped by the three soldiers each in turn.”

The soldiers also rape women who are working alone on farms. Women are sometimes required to watch over crops to ensure they are not de-

stroyed by wild animals, or sometimes simply stay on at their farms to finish their daily work. Staying alone, they are vulnerable to sexual violence by patrolling soldiers. A 19-year-old girl was raped in this way (case 30):

“I am the eldest among my siblings and I had much responsibility to work at the farm. Often I would stay at the farm overnight. On one such night, it was rainy and foggy. I started a fire and was cooking a meal when a soldier appeared at my hut. He realized I was alone and threatened me with his knife if I refused him sexually. I explicitly told him, “It is impossible.” He became very violent and cut my clothes off with his knife. He told me that if I even attempted to run or scream for help, he would cut my throat and kill me. Still I shouted for help but we were

surrounded by forest, and I had no means of escape. He raped me.”

However, there have also been cases of women being raped at or near their homes by patrolling soldiers when other family members were present. In one case, a woman was raped by a soldier just outside her home when her parents were in the house (case 7):

“Captain Neing Oo and 15 soldiers from IB 359 went to S—’s village and stayed for a night at her family’s house. That night S— came back from church at about 9 pm, while a soldier (Soe Aung) was on duty outside the house. As soon as he saw her, he raped her at gunpoint. He told her that if she shouted for help, he would kill her. The victim didn’t shout for help because she had a gun pointed at her forehead. Though she knew that her parents would hear her

if she shouted out, she was afraid of being killed. After the perpetrator had done what he wanted, he also threatened that if she told anyone, he would kill her.”

In another case, a woman was raped by a patrolling soldier in her house despite the presence of her elderly father (case 25):

“Army soldiers patrolling the village at night learned that S— was alone with her elderly father. The rest of the family were spending the night in the fields as it was the season for clearing grass. As there was no electricity, the soldier managed to hide inside her house without her knowledge. When S— went to sleep on the floor of their house, the soldier began trying to rape her at gunpoint. Although her father and other villagers heard the screams for help,





none were able to intervene for fear that S— or others would be shot and killed by the soldier.”

RAPE WHILE TRAVELING

The increased number of SPDC troops patrolling around the countryside and the increased number of military checkpoints set up along roads throughout Chin State has meant greater risks for women traveling outside their villages. At checkpoints, the military authorities check for identity cards, and search items the travelers are carrying. They also interrogate travelers about where they are going, and randomly detain them. This makes women traveling alone particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse. For example, in June 2006, two women travelers were gang-raped by five soldiers after being forced to spend the night at a village they were passing through (case 2):

“H— and her friend T— traveled to Mizoram for a few months. On their

way back from Mizoram, they passed through a village where there is an army camp. The soldiers from LIB 268 who are based in that area strictly checked H— and her friend for their identity cards and demanded that they sleep a night at the village without any reason. The two girls dared not refuse because they were very afraid of the soldiers. At night, the five soldiers raped them.”

As there are no high schools or hospitals in villages in Chin State, villagers have to go to larger towns to study or to receive medical treatment. Children studying in the towns often travel home to their villages during their holidays, or simply to collect food or other support from their parents. This usually means walking on foot through the hills, which places girls at risk of sexual abuse by patrolling soldiers. Two girl students, aged 16 and 18, were gang-raped in September 2004 by

seven soldiers on their way home to visit their parents (case 10):

“This girl studied in Thlan Tlang and rented a house with her friend. While they were studying, they used to go home to their villages to get food from home. Their village is far from the town and there was no means of transportation except walking through the forest. On the way, they met seven Burmese soldiers from LIB 274. All of them raped the two girls. The soldiers not only raped them, but also beat them up severely. After the rape, the soldiers just left them.”

Chin women regularly travel to take cash crops

to sell in markets in bigger towns or at the Indian border. Even though villagers make efforts to avoid soldiers patrolling in their area, passing on warnings from one village to another, there is still the risk that patrols may appear unexpectedly. For example, in November 2003, a 29-year-old woman taking vegetables to sell at a nearby town was gang-raped by two soldiers along the way (case 18):

“V— went to Tidim town from her village to sell vegetables. The distance was about 6 km. On the way she met two soldiers: one was a lance-corporal and another was a private. They stopped her and took away her vegetable basket. They covered her mouth with their hands and tied her legs with a rope, then raped her.”





RAPE DURING FORCED LABOUR

The increased numbers of soldiers deployed in Chin State has meant increased forced labour for the villagers. When patrols of soldiers come to villages, they regularly force the village heads to select people to work as porters, carrying supplies and ammunition for the troops. When male villagers are unable to go as porters, either because they are sick or have to work on their farms, women have to go in their place, so that their families do not have to pay fines for their absence. When the women go with troops as porters, they are more vulnerable to rape. This is illustrated in the case of a 38-year-old widow, who was gang-raped while forced to be a porter (case 23):

“P—, a widow with three sons, was ordered to work as a porter carrying the soldiers’ military supplies in 2004. Their journey took them several days. One day, while

carrying a heavy load, a group of soldiers from LIB 268 told her they would help her while the other villagers were done with their duties. She believed that the soldiers would really help her because her load was too heavy to carry by herself. On the way, while the other villagers went ahead, she was raped by two soldiers at gunpoint.”

Another 20-year-old woman was also gang-raped while being a porter (case 24):

“The five soldiers from LIB 50 asked S— and another villager, who was mentally retarded, to porter for them. The retarded man was told to wait by the road, while the five soldiers raped S— in the forest and she was told that they would kill her if she shouted for help.”

RAPE AT ARMY CAMPS

Army personnel stationed near villages have full power to summon civilians, including women, at any time without a reason. Villagers are forced to provide food, water or whatever the army asks for. Women are sometimes deliberately summoned for sexual abuse. For example, in case 17 a woman raped in an army camp was called back a month later so that she could be raped by the same officer.

“My name is L— and I was born on September 1, 1980 at Falam district (village name is withheld). They took my husband to Falam town and put him in prison. He never returned. They told me that they wanted to take me to prison too but my child was only six months old. They told me to sign a piece of paper which said ‘I do not help the CNA people.’ I had to agree to whatever they said. I went to Falam town to sign on 30th January 2003. I left my baby with my mother.

When I got to the military camp, two officers asked me to go inside the room. There was one officer inside the room. As soon as I got there, he threatened me because he knew that I could not speak Burmese very well. I fought back but he pointed a pistol at my forehead. He tore my top and all my underwear. He hit my thighs hard so that my legs could not move anymore. Then, he raped me. He told me that if I told anyone he would kill me. There were guards outside the room but they did not bother to help me. Again at the end of February, I had to go to the army camp at Falam town. I was so afraid that I took one girl along with me hoping this would protect me. But they did not let her go inside the house with me. The same army officer was in the room. As soon as I got inside the room, he raped me again. I decided to flee



because I knew that I would have to go again and again and get raped.”

RAPE OF GIRL CHILDREN

This report documents five cases of rape of girl children. In one case, a 12-year-old girl was raped and beaten while collecting firewood. However, when her parents reported the crime, the authorities made no attempt to take action over the crime (case 26):

“While collecting firewood, D— was accosted by her perpetrator, who beat and raped her. He threatened her with more harm if she disclosed the event to her family. However, her parents realized what had happened when they saw their daughter’s injuries. They filed the case in court, but no legal action was taken. The perpetrator’s whereabouts are unknown. The victim continues to live in the village but suffers from shame.”



IMPACTS OF RAPE

RAPE AND HEALTH PROBLEMS

Testimony from rape survivors shows that many are still suffering deep psychological trauma from their experience. One woman interviewed in 2006 was still traumatized from being raped a year previously, and was constantly crying. Another woman who was gang-raped became mentally disturbed, requiring medical treatment in Rangoon.

Trauma of rape survivors is heightened by the fact they have to worry about sexual disease transmission, particularly as there is suspected to be a high rate of HIV/AIDS infection among SPDC soldiers. In one case, a 17-year-old girl who was raped suffered a vaginal infection which may have led to her death of uterine cancer 5 years later (case 37):

“The girl went to work in the field alone. Two privates saw her alone in the field from the road. One of the soldiers held her and tried to touch

her breast and all over her body. The girl resisted him and fought back in order to run away. The soldier held her until she could not move and warned her he would shoot her with his gun if she still tried to run away. And then he raped her for 1 hour. Afterwards she began having pains in her vagina and could not urinate properly. Her health became worse and worse. She died of womb cancer in 1994. Her parents believe that the rape was the cause of her cancer.”

Survivors have no access to support-systems inside Burma. The state-dominated Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation (MWAFF), which has forced women throughout Chin State to become members, fails to provide assistance to any women, even rape survivors. It is evident that state-sponsored groups such as MWAFF have been set up simply to endorse and implement SPDC policies aimed at prolonging military dictatorship. They are thus powerless to oppose state-sanctioned human rights violations,

including rape against Chin and other ethnic women, and are routinely forced to denounce reports of such violations as false.

RAPE AND UNWANTED PREGNANCY

In at least five of the cases documented in this report, women became pregnant after being raped. In one case, the woman died in childbirth. In two cases (4 and 5), the women were so ashamed of their pregnancy that they left their villages, refusing help from their families. One chose to go and live in a town in Central Burma.

One woman was forced to marry her rapist by her parents and village elders, who regarded this as preferable to having a child out of wedlock. However, her husband was then posted elsewhere and abandoned her before she had even given birth.

RAPE AND SOCIAL STIGMA

In accordance with social norms throughout Burma, Chins believe that sex outside marriage is shameful and brings disgrace on the woman and her family. The Christian beliefs of most Chin reinforce this stigma. Thus, when women are raped, they often prefer to keep silent about the crime than face censure from the community for the “sin” of having had sex outside marriage. As explained by a 19-year-old who was raped:

“I considered telling my parents, but realized I would be the one to receive blame and ultimately might be rejected by my community for having “slept” with a Burmese soldier. I am living with fear and anger until today. I hate soldiers and anyone who is associated with them. My hatred continues to fester and grow.” (case 30)

The social rejection suffered by rape survivors causes increased hardship. For example, after one woman was gang-raped at gunpoint in her home, her fiancé broke off their engagement.

The sense of shame is so strong that many victims choose to go away from their families or

communities to avoid blame and discrimination, and try and start a new life elsewhere.

FORCED TO FLEE AS REFUGEES

It is evident that sexual violence is one of the factors driving women from Chin State to become refugees in India and other countries. Several of the women interviewed for this report had fled to India as a direct result of the sexual abuse they had suffered. This includes a woman who was not only sexually tortured, but whose son was tortured and murdered (case 31):

“She was asked by the Burmese military about her husband. They took her into the jungle, tore off her clothing, hung her onto a cross and beat her one day and one night. She was surrounded and mocked by the soldiers and asked where the CNF had taken her husband. When she returned to her village, she learned the regime had kidnapped her son. Three days later, she asked the military authorities for the return of her son and/or his remains. When his dead body was finally returned, it was full of scars and bruises and had an awful smell.”

As Chin refugees are granted no official protection or humanitarian aid inside India, they are subject to forcible repatriation to Burma. One woman who had been raped fled to Delhi to seek UNHCR status when the Mizoram authorities carried out a mass deportation of refugees:

“I arrived in Aizawl, Mizoram, India on 18th March 2003. I stayed there for a few months but the deportation of Burmese people happened so I had to go to Delhi to be safe. I have not heard anything about my husband. Here, I have got status from UNHCR. In order to eat, we have to collect curry which the local people throw away at the market. That is how we live.” (case 17)

EVIDENCE OF SYSTEMATIC RAPE

Several women's organizations from Burma have published reports documenting the systematic practice of sexual violence by Burma Army troops against ethnic women.⁴ Many of the patterns they have described showing that the military authorities are condoning the use of sexual violence are also evident in the cases documented by WLC.

WIDESPREAD INCIDENCE OF RAPE

As shown in the map (on page 2) of incidents of sexual violence documented in this report, rapes are being committed throughout the state, in close proximity to the SPDC's military camps. WLC has recorded rape being committed by troops from at least eleven battalions operating in Chin State.

TORTURE AND KILLING OF RAPED WOMEN

Other reports have shown how the extreme brutality displayed by Burma Army troops committing rape is evidence that sexual abuse is being used together with other acts of violence, such as torture, as part of a campaign to terrorize and subjugate local ethnic populations. In the cases in this report too, sexual abuse is frequently accompanied by severe brutality, resulting in physical injury and sometimes death. Women are not only raped, but also beaten, tied up and gagged. Rape victims killed have been found with multiple injuries (case 22):

“There is a military camp between S—’s house and school. She had to pass through the camp every day. One day in October 2002, she came home after sunset because she had to do some assignments. On the way home, she met two soldiers; one was a lance-corporal and one was a

private based in Paletwa town. They caught hold of her, covered her mouth with their hands and then brutally raped her in turn. The people who were close to the road could see the incident but they dared not rescue her since the soldiers had guns. She died of the injuries sustained while struggling. When after three days, the girl did not appear, the villagers went looking for her. They found her dead body with broken arms and legs.”

As mentioned earlier in one incident (case 31), a woman was stripped naked and hung on a cross and beaten, when being interrogated about her husband's links to the Chin resistance. There is no doubt that the troops deliberately used a cross as part of the process of torture to mock the woman's Christian religion and intensify her humiliation.

GANG RAPE

Almost half of the cases of sexual abuse documented in this report were gang rapes, showing that there is a collective understanding among the troops that they can commit rape with impunity. This includes the three most recent cases in 2006, committed by groups of three to five soldiers.

In some other cases, even though only a single soldier committed the rape, other soldiers witnessed the rape and did nothing, or else actively encouraged the rape. One woman raped by an officer at her house, heard his soldiers urging on the rapist (case 33):

“Captain Zaw Zaw called me late that night ordering me to give him a massage... After giving him a massage, he suddenly accosted me and tied me up. I was unable to fight

⁴ *Licence to Rape* by the Shan Women's Action Network and the Shan Human Rights Foundation, *Shattering Silences* by the Karen Women's Organisation, *System of Impunity* by the Women's League of Burma, *Catwalk to the Barracks* by the Woman and Child Rights Project (WCRP) and the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) – Burma, *State of Terror* by the Karen Women's Organisation

him. Outside I heard his soldiers yelling, 'You are a man, just do it.'"

RAPE BY MILITARY OFFICERS

At least a third of the rape cases were committed by military officers, sometimes together with one or more of their subordinates. This again indicates that they had no fear of reprisal for their actions, and is a clear example to their troops that rape is acceptable under their command. This is well illustrated in case 17, described earlier, a woman was not only raped in a military camp by an SPDC major, with soldiers guarding outside his door, but one month later was called back to the camp and raped again by the same officer.

NO PROSECUTION OF MILITARY RAPISTS

Under SPDC law, members of the military are liable under military and civil laws for acts of sexual violence. However, in none of the cases in this report were any of the rapists prosecuted, nor any serious actions taken by military authorities to accept responsibility for and seek to prevent further sexual crimes by army personnel.

Survivors were usually unwilling to report sexual violence, due to shame, lack of confidence in the process of law, and fear of repercussions from the authorities. In the cases where survivors and/or their families dared to report assault and rape, usually no action at all was taken, and sometimes they had to endure further threats.

One woman who reported being gang-raped to the military authorities was scolded when she could not identify the rapist, and threatened to be taken to court for "causing a bad reputation for the soldiers."

Sometimes the authorities actively tried to cover up evidence of sexual crimes. In one case, villagers were discouraged from searching for the bodies of a woman and a boatman who had been murdered by Burmese soldiers. "After a few days, the villagers from Paletwa New Town realized the two were missing and reported both

missing to local army officers, *who insisted they should not search for the victims' remains.*" (case 14)

In the few cases where the military authorities took responsibility for the actions of their soldiers, the "punishments" were arbitrary and did not match the crime. Some perpetrators paid the families 3-4,000 kyat (approx US\$3-4), and in one case, 50,000 kyat (US\$50) and an ox – by no means an appropriate compensation or punitive measure. More frequently, the perpetrator was simply transferred to another area.

INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND STATE SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN CHIN STATE

The SPDC has ratified the International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Additionally, as a member of the United Nations Security Council, is answerable to Resolution 1674 "On protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict" and Resolution 1325 "On Women, Peace and Security," as well as numerous UN General Assembly and UN Commission on Human Rights resolutions.

The SPDC has a legal responsibility to protect women from sexual violence, to punish perpetrators, and to act to end the silence surrounding sexual violence. The SPDC is not meeting its obligations under international law. In its most recent report to the CEDAW in March 1999 (its next report was due in August 2002 and is yet to be delivered) the committee commented on the need for "*the Government to prosecute and punish those who violate the human rights of women, including military personnel, and to carry out human rights education and gender-sensitization training for all law enforcement and military personnel.*"⁵ The SPDC reported "*culture and religion strongly*

*influence the mentality and behaviour of men and women alike. The teachings of Lord Buddha that crimes like rape and sexual violence are great sins serve as protection for women and children.”*⁶

Despite repeated resolutions from the UN Special Rapporteur, the UN General Assembly and the UN Commission on Human Rights raising the issue of sexual violence committed by the Burma Army, the regime has continued to use rape as a strategy of war against ethnic nationalities in Burma, and dismissed reports of sexual violence as “fabrications.”

FOREIGN SUPPORT FUELLING BURMA ARMY EXPANSION AND ABUSES

Foreign trade and investment following the introduction of “open door” economic policies in 1988 have directly enabled the military regime to expand their army and consolidate their grip on power. Many of Burma’s regional neighbours in particular have been keen to exploit Burma’s rich natural resources, irrespective of the regime’s ongoing human rights violations. Support has not only taken the form of hard foreign currency but also military hardware.

China has supplied the regime with billions of dollars of weapons since the 1990s. Other countries supplying military equipment include Russia, which sold MIG fighter planes to Burma in 2002, and North Korea.

Although India openly supported the pro-democracy movement after the 1988 uprisings, it has since the mid-1990s sought to mend relations with the military regime. In the past few years, India has sold a range of weapons, ammunition and equipment to the SPDC. This military support appears closely linked to India’s plans to buy natural gas from fields off Burma’s western coast, which China is also competing to exploit.

The economic and military support being provided by these neighbours for the Burmese regime’s military expansion translates into direct support for the human rights violations its troops are committing, including sexual violence. Not only this, but countries directly benefiting from trade with the regime are also actively blocking international attempts to end the civil war and bring democracy to Burma. The veto in early 2007 by China and Russia of the United Nations Security Council Resolution on Burma is a case in point. This political support has bolstered the regime’s obstinacy in resisting pressure to change, while continuing its oppression and systematic violence against the people of Burma.

⁵ Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (17 January-4 February 2000) Consideration of reports of States parties: Myanmar [A/55/38]

⁶ CEDAW (25 Jun 1999) Initial report of States parties: Myanmar [CEDAW/C/MMR/1]

CONCLUSION

It has taken the courage of many women to document the sexual crimes committed by SPDC troops. Although rape has been used by the Burmese military regime to control the population for decades, it was not until the pioneering report *Licence to Rape* by the Shan Women's Action Network in 2002, that the international community focused their attention on the systematic nature of the sexual crimes committed by the regime's troops. Subsequent reports by other women's groups and human rights groups from Burma provided further proof of these crimes and the system of impunity protecting the army.

The 38 cases of sexual violence in this report are corroborative evidence that the regime is using rape as a strategy of war against women and girls in ethnic areas in order to terrorize and demoralize local communities and weaken resistance to military rule.

The regime continues not only to reject all allegations of systematic human rights violations, but also to publicly attack through their media all those who expose these violations and advocate for political change. They hold absolute power and control every sector of society, including the judicial system. They have forced women throughout the country to join their state-controlled Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, or face retaliation. It is thus impossible at this time for women and their communities to seek legal redress by testifying publicly against SPDC perpetrators.

Therefore WLC reiterates the assertion of other women's groups from Burma that only genuine political change to democracy, restoration of the rule of law, and a withdrawal of Burma Army troops from ethnic areas will bring an end to the systematic sexual violence in Burma.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The WLC strongly urges the State Peace and Development Council:

- To move forward and begin a process of meaningful political change in Burma
- To stop the National Convention until the National League for Democracy and other opposition groups are allowed to fully participate
- To withdraw its military presence from Chin State so that human rights abuses by SPDC troops including sexual violence against local populations will cease
- To comply with their obligations under the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which was signed by Burma in 1997
- To stop forcing Chin women to be members of the state-dominated women's organization the "Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation"

We also urge the international community:

- To support a UNSC resolution on Burma
- To maintain political and economic pressure on the SPDC to bring about peaceful political change in Burma
- To provide assistance to empower women from Burma through cross-border programs
- To advocate about the situation of the people of Burma with their respective communities and governments

And the government of India:

- To stop providing arms and any form of military support to the Burmese military regime
- To review its economic engagement with Burma in the interests of a long-term sustainable relationship
- To review its policies on refugees and provide protection and necessary assistance to refugees from Burma
- To allow the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) to assess the situation of the refugee community at the India-Burma border

CASE 1 – GANG RAPE AT HOME

Name of victim: S—
Age of victim: 40
Place of abuse: xx, Matupi Township, Chin State
Date of abuse: 9th April 2006
Perpetrators: three soldiers
Burma Army battalion: LIB-304
Type of abuse: Gang rape

Three Burmese soldiers learned that Mrs. S— was alone at home on the night of 9th April 2006. Armed with a sharpened bamboo stick, the three soldiers forced their way into S—'s home. She was gang-raped by the three soldiers each in turn. The next day, S— reported the incident to the village leaders, who helped her to take the incident to the higher army authorities. After a few days, they made the soldiers line up and asked the rape victim to identify her perpetrators. Because the rape happened at night and because the victim was severely traumatized, she was unable to identify the rapists. One of the officers scolded Mrs. Si Mai, "If you cannot point out who raped you, do not try to bring the case to court or you yourself will be taken to court for giving a bad reputation to the soldiers." There has still been no action on the case.

Note: When these kinds of abuses are reported to the higher authorities in Chin State, the officers in charge often hide the perpetrators during the army line-up so that the victims will not be able to identify them.

CASE 2 – GANG RAPE WHILE TRAVELING

Name of victim: H—
Age of victim: 28
Place of abuse: xx, Kalaymyo, Sagaing Division
Date of abuse: 8th June 2006
Perpetrators: 5 SPDC soldiers
Burma Army battalion: LIB 268
Type of abuse: Gang rape

H— and her friend T— traveled to Mizoram for a few months. On their way back from Mizoram, they passed through xx village, where there is an army camp. The soldiers strictly checked H— and her friend for their identity cards and demanded that they sleep a night at the village without any reason. The two girls dared not refuse because they were very afraid of the soldiers. At night, the five soldiers raped them. They then continued their journey to their village. They dared not tell their stories to their families or friends. As a consequence, the two girls left their village and told their parents that they would stay in Rangoon, but the parents do not know exactly where they have gone.

CASE 3 – GANG RAPE WHILE TRAVELING

Name of victim: T—
Age: 24
Date of abuse: 8th June 2006
Place of abuse: xx village, Kalaymyo, Sagaing Division
Perpetrators: 5 SPDC privates
Burma Army battalion: LIB 268
Type of abuse: Gang rape

Details same as Case 2 above

CASE 4 – RAPE AT HER HOME

Name of victim: N—
Age: 36
Occupation: Teacher
Date of abuse: 2006 (Month and date are unknown)
Name of perpetrator: Private Min Oo
Burma Army battalion: LIB 274
Place of abuse: xx village, Matupi Township, Chin State
Type of abuse: rape

N— stayed in xx village, Matupi Township where she was working as assistant headmistress in a primary school. Since she could speak and write in Burmese, the soldiers often visited her during the day, even sometimes at night. One

night, a soldier called Min Oo from LIB 274 visited N— till late at night. At around midnight the soldier took out his gun, pointed it at her and threatened to kill her if she shouted for help. Then, he brutally raped her. N— did not want to tell anyone about the incident in case the rapist retaliated against her, and also she was afraid that she would lose her reputation if the villagers knew that she was raped. However, the rape resulted in pregnancy. Therefore, she had to move to another village to avoid social discrimination from the community. Even though her family wanted to help and support her, she refused because she felt very bitter about her life. Now, the rapist has moved to another village.

Note: According to Chin traditional practice, boys visit girls at night while the girl is with her family. This practice is common because the boys and girls in the village go and work at farms during the day. Therefore, the young people have free time only at night so that they can see each other. If a girl refuses to have visitors, she is assumed to be rude.

CASE 5 – RAPE IN FOREST WHILE COLLECTING FIREWOOD

Name of victim: S—
Age: 22
Date of abuse: second week of January 2005
Place of abuse: In the jungle near her village, Matupi Township, Chin State
Name of perpetrator: Maung Maung
Rank of perpetrator: An officer at Telecom department
Burma Army battalion: LIB 274
Type of abuse: Rape

S— stays at xx village, Matupi Township. She went to the forest to collect firewood in the second week of January 2005 at 10:00 am. She was stalked by an SPDC officer called Maung Maung, who followed her into the forest where she was collecting the firewood. At that place, the officer raped S—. There was no one to help her. Maung Maung was posted to Min Dat town

in Chin State straight after the incident. The rape resulted in pregnancy. S— followed Maung Maung to Min Dat and begged him to marry her, but in vain. Maung Maung refused to marry her. Therefore S— moved to xx town in Sagaing Division. She doesn't want to come back to the village or even go out of her house now because she is so ashamed of her life. Even though her family wanted to help her, she did not dare accept any support. She is suffering her pain by herself.

CASE 6 – SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Name of victim: S—
Age: 16
Place of abuse: xx village, Matupi Township, Chin State
Date of abuse: 2005 (rainy season)
Name of perpetrator: Captain Than Thet Soe
Burma Army battalion: LIB 304
Type of abuse: Sexual harassment

The perpetrator, Than Thet Soe accosted S— numerous times in an effort to rape her because the girl was one of the most attractive girls in the village. Whenever the soldier was drunk he would go searching for S— all over the village, which made her so afraid that she had to move to another village. In fear of molestation, she was forced to hide in her sister's village by her parents and relatives. Her family made several attempts to report the case to the military authorities posted in that area in order to protect their daughter. However, they never received a response from the authorities. Capt. Than Thet Soe has still not been transferred to another place yet by the authorities. As a result, the girl is unable to stay at her village. The officer and his accomplices are still acting violently, such as shooting domestic animals in the village with their guns, and frightening the villagers.

CASE 7 – RAPE IN HER OWN GARDEN

Name of victim: S—
Age: 30
Place of abuse: xx village, Kyauktaw Township, Arakan State
Date of abuse: 18th September 2005
Name of perpetrator: Soe Aung
Burma Army battalion: IB 359
Type of abuse: Rape

Captain Neing Oo and 15 soldiers from IB 359 went to S—'s village in Kyauhdaw Township and stayed for a night at her family's house. That night S— came back from church at about 9 pm, while a soldier (Soe Aung) was on duty outside the house. As soon as he saw her, he raped her at gunpoint. He told her that if she shouted for help, he would kill her. The victim didn't shout for help because she had a gun pointed at her forehead. Though she knew that her parents would hear her if she shouted out, she was afraid of being killed. After the perpetrator had done what he wanted, he also threatened her that if she told anyone, he would kill her. In spite of this, she told her father the next day. The father reported the case to Captain Neing Oo. Neing Oo gave 3,000 kyat (about US\$3) as hush money and said that the court would take care of the case. In fact, the family did not hear anything further about the case, and the perpetrator was posted elsewhere. S— cried day and night, believing her life had no meaning. She remains several traumatized to this day.

Note: In Chin village, there is no electricity. Therefore, by 9 pm it is very dark and most villagers are already in bed.

CASE 8 – RAPE AT HOME

Name of victim: K—
Age: 25
Place of abuse: xx village Matupi Township, Chin State
Date of abuse: 30th December 2004
Name of perpetrator: Mr. xx (Medical officer)
Burma Army battalion: LIB 134
Type of abuse: Rape

K— was raped by a military officer while she was alone at home. Her parents were working in their fields at the time. The rape resulted in pregnancy. She is now a single mother. The perpetrator has taken neither responsibility for K— nor her child and has transferred to another camp. She dared not report the name of the perpetrator because she feared for her safety.

CASE 9 – ATTEMPTED RAPE

Name of victim: Z—
Age: 30
Place of abuse: xx village, Thlan Tlang town, Chin State
Date of abuse: May 2004
Perpetrator: a soldier
Burma Army Battalion: LIB 274
Type of abuse: Attempted rape

This woman is a wife and mother. Her husband often sleeps on the farm when tending to and harvesting their crops. While she was sleeping alone at home, a soldier broke into her house and attempted to rape her. She took legal action in accordance with Chin tradition and the perpetrator was forced to pay 50,000 kyats (about US\$50) along with a gayal (a kind of ox) by his higher officers.

CASE 10 – GANG RAPE IN FOREST, AND PHYSICAL ASSAULT

Name of victim: X—
Age: 16
Place of abuse: in the jungle, Matupi Township, Chin State
Date of abuse: September 2004
Perpetrators: 7 soldiers.
Burma Army battalion: LIB 274
Type of abuse: Gang rape, physical assault

This girl studied in Thlan Tlang town and rented a house with her friend. While they were studying, they used to go home to their villages to get food from home. Their village is far from the town and there was no means of transportation except walking through the forest. On the way, they met seven Burmese soldiers. All of them raped the two girls. The soldiers not only raped them, but also beat them up severely. After the rape, the soldiers just left them. The two friends were badly wounded, but tried to get to the nearest village. Fortunately, some villagers who were coming back from their farms found them and took them to their village. The villagers realised that the two victims could not be cured in the village because their injuries were too severe, so they took them to Thlan Tlang hospital on that day. Miss X— survived from her brutal attack.

Although the parents tried to find out who the perpetrators were, they could find no clue because they did not know where the perpetrators were heading.

CASE 11 – GANG RAPE, PHYSICAL ASSAULT LEADING TO DEATH

Name of victim: Y—
Age: 18
Place of abuse: in the jungle, Matupi Township, Chin State
Date of crime: September 2004
Perpetrators: 7 soldiers
Burma Army battalion: LIB 274
Type of abuse: Gang rape, murder

Details same as Case 10 above, but Y—died of her injuries in hospital

CASE 12 – GANG RAPE

Name of victim: K—
Age: 18
Place of abuse: Matupi town, Chin State
Date of abuse: February 2004
Perpetrators: 2 soldiers
Burma Army battalion: LIB 274
Type of abuse: Gang rape

K— and a friend rented a house near their high school in Matupi town since they were from a remote village. The rented house was close to a military camp. They took it in turns to go back to their village to take supplies from their village while studying in the town. K—’s friend went back to the village to take the necessary food and other supplies, leaving her friend alone at the rented house. One night, two soldiers came to steal their chickens. When K— heard some people trying to steal their chickens, she spoke out to frighten the thieves. However, when the soldiers realized the girl was home alone, they entered the house and raped her, threatening her with death if she cried for help. Out of shame, K— shared the incident with no one. She quit school and now lives in another village.

CASE 13 – RAPE, PREGNANCY AND DEATH

Name of victim: T—
Date of abuse: 2004
Place of abuse: xx, Thlan Tlang, Chin State
Perpetrator: one soldier
Burma Army Battalion: LIB 269
Type of abuse: Rape

T— was raped by one of the soldiers from LIB 269 in 2005 and the rape resulted in pregnancy. The perpetrator’s name is unknown because T— herself never saw him again. T— died in childbirth; her daughter now lives with her grandparents. The grandparents are distraught since T— was the only person supporting the

family. They have no one to take care of themselves and their young granddaughter.

CASE 14 – GANG RAPE AND MURDER OF BOTH THE VICTIM AND A BOATMAN WHO HELPED HER WHILE TRAVELING

Name of Victim: M—

Age: 21

Place of abuse: Kaladan river between Paletwa New Town and Old Town, Chin State

Date of abuse: May 2003 (Saturday)

Perpetrators: a group of soldiers

Burma Army battalion: LIB 289

Type of abuse: Gang rape and murder

The victim was stalked by Burmese soldiers who were stationed in Paletwa New Town. M— walked to the Old Town to help her sister constructing her house, and then when she returned to New Town with Hla Maung (a boatman) to cross the Kaladan river at around 4:30 pm, the soldiers were waiting for them at the river bank. Some villagers of Old Town who returned from their farms saw M— and the boatman about to cross the river. They did not know what would happen to them so they only greeted them and went back to their own village. The Burmese soldiers then kidnapped them both, the girl and boatman, and took them into the forest. They raped the girl while forcing the boatman to watch and drink alcohol laced with poison. After a few days, the villagers from Paletwa New Town realized the two were missing and reported both missing to local army officers, who insisted that they should not search for the victims' remains. However, the villagers insisted on searching for the two victims themselves. When the villagers discovered the two bodies, they reported that M—'s face seemed contorted. Her panties were stuffed in her mouth, and her skirt covered her face. The boatman appeared to have been poisoned. Her parents tried to file the case but there was no response from the military authorities.

CASE 15 – GANG RAPE AT HOME

Name of victim: M—

Age: 27

Place of abuse: Thlan Tlang town, Chin State

Date of abuse: October 2003

Perpetrators: Information officer and his accomplice

Burma Army battalion: LIB 266

Type of abuse: Gang rape

M— and her elderly parents live in Thlan Tlang town. One night at 9:00 pm, two soldiers came to their house and took the parents out of the bedroom. Then the soldiers raped her in turn while her parents were threatened at gunpoint. They were unable to call for help and were forced to listen to the attack. The soldiers kept saying to the parents that they would kill them if they tried to fight back. When M—'s fiancé heard about the rape, he broke off the engagement. M— now has severe psychological problems. When the case was reported to the higher ranking officers, the military authorities took no legal action, but stated that the soldiers would be punished. The family and other villagers did not hear any further outcome of the case.

CASE 16 – OFFICER RAPE AT ARMY CAMP

Name of victim: M—

Age: 29

Place of abuse: Thlan Tlang town, Chin State

Date of abuse: 2003

Perpetrator: an army officer

Burma Army battalion: LIB 266

Type of abuse: Rape

M— was ordered to go to a military camp by an army officer in Thlan Tlang. She was not told why the army officer had called her, but when she arrived at the camp she was brutally raped at gunpoint. She escaped and fled to Mizoram in fear of being shunned by her community. She now lives in Mizoram with her husband and child. Her parents considered filing the case but decided against it because they believed that the military

would not respond. No action has been taken till today.

Note: Her husband warned her not to tell her story to other people.

CASE 17 – RAPE AT MILITARY CAMP AND MURDER OF HUSBAND

Name of victim: L—

Age of victim: 24

Place of abuse: Military camp in Falam town, Chin State

Date of abuses: 30th January 2003, then again at end of February 2003

Perpetrator: Major

Burma Army battalion: LIB 268

Type of abuse: Rape, torture and murder of the survivor's husband

My name is L— and I was born on September 1, 1980 at Falam district (village name is withheld). My father passed away when I was very young so my mother supported us. I got married on 10 April 2001. My husband was forced to be our village head even though he did not want to take that responsibility.⁷ Many times, the army came to our village and to our house. They asked my husband to provide people for portering. They asked him to look for pigs, chickens and so on. When my husband did not get enough people or food for the army, he often got beaten by the army soldiers.

The army soldiers used to come and stay at our house and behave as they liked. Sometimes, the Chin National Army soldiers also came to our village. On 5th January 2003, the CNA soldiers came to our village and the Burmese army heard about this so they entered our village on 9th January 2003. The Burmese soldiers came to our house again and accused us of supporting and helping the CNA people. They came to me and said “Why do you support CNA and why did you cook for the CNA people?” They beat

me and my husband. They took my husband to Falam town and put him in prison. He never returned. They told me that they wanted to take me to prison too but my child was only six months old. They told me to sign a piece of paper which said “I do not help the CNA people”. I had to agree to whatever they said. I went to Falam town to sign on 30th January 2003. I left my baby with my mother at a village. When I got to the military camp, two officers asked me to go inside the room. There was one officer inside the room. As soon as I got there, he threatened me because he knew that I could not speak Burmese very well. I fought back but he pointed a pistol at my forehead. He tore my top and all my underwear. He hit my thighs hard so that my legs could not move anymore. Then, he brutally raped me. He told me that if I told anyone he would kill me. There were guards outside the room but they did not bother to help me.

Again at the end of February, I had to go to the army camp at Falam town. I was so afraid that I took one girl along with me hoping this would protect me. But they did not let her go inside the house with me. The same army officer was in the room. As soon as I got inside the room, he raped me again. I decided to flee because I knew that I would have to go again and again and get raped. I fled to India on 15th March 2003. I arrived in Aizawl, Mizoram, India on 18th March 2003. I stayed there for a few months but there was deportation of Burmese people happening in Mizoram so I had to go to Delhi so that I could be safe. I have not heard anything about my husband. Here, I live in Delhi and have got status from UNHCR. In order to eat, we need to collect curry which the local people threw away at the market. That is how we live.

I really hate and am afraid of Burmese soldiers because they destroyed me, they destroyed women and our people.

I dare speak out now in front of people so that the world will know that the military regime is doing wrong.

⁷ The military army soldiers often target the village heads whenever they enter a village.

CASE 18 – GANG RAPE WHILE TRAVELING TO ANOTHER VILLAGE

Name of victim: V—
Age of victim: 29 yrs old
Place of abuse: On the way between xx village and Tidim town, Chin State
Date of abuse: November, 2003
Perpetrators: a lance-corporal and a private soldier
Burma Army Battalion: LIB 269
Type of abuse: Gang rape

In 2003 November, V— went to Tidim town from her village to sell vegetables. The distance was about 6 km. On the way to Tidim, in the morning between 8:30 to 9 am, she met two soldiers: one was a lance-corporal and another was a private. They stopped her on the way and took away her vegetable basket. They covered her mouth with their hands and tied her legs with a rope, then raped her. They released her immediately afterwards. She went back to her village, instead of going to Tidim town. On the way, some villagers met her with her torn clothes. As soon as she got home, she told her parents about the rape. The parents inquired who the perpetrators were and found out that one lance-corporal and one private soldier were patrolling around their village when the rape happened. The rape survivor could remember the appearance of the perpetrators. After the parents confirmed the rapists, they reported the case to the village leaders three times. But no legal action was taken. The survivor was deeply upset and finally she became mentally disturbed and would yell at midnight and in the morning. Her parents brought her to one of the hospitals in Rangoon to have medical treatment. Now she is slowly improving.

CASE 19 – RAPE WHILE TRAVELING

Name of victim: L-
Age of victim: 28
Place of abuse: Matupi town, Chin State
Date of abuse: September 2003
Perpetrator: a soldier
Burma Army battalion: IB 140 led by Major Soe Win
Type of abuse: Rape

In September, 2003, L— a 28 year old nurse who works at the Matupi Civil Hospital was raped by a soldier from IB 140, led by Major Soe Win. That evening she was alone in her home, in Matupi town, not far from the hospital, when the soldier forced his way in and raped her.

CASE 20 – RAPE DURING PORTERING

Names of victims: N— and K—
Ages: 21 and 20
Date of abuse: January 2003
Place of abuse: Riverbank between xx and xx villages, Matupi Township, Chin State
Perpetrators: Captain Zaw Latt and seven soldiers
Burma Army Battalion: IB 266

In January, 2003, Captain Zaw Latt of IB 266 made a military operation to Matupi Township. He took nine people, two women and seven men, to porter from xx Village to xx Village. On the way they came to a river. The soldiers ordered the men to cross ahead and told the women to stay with them, and when they did the seven soldiers assaulted the women.

The women, N— 21 years old and K— 20 years old, were raped by the soldiers after the male porters had crossed to the other side of the river.

CASE 21 – GANG RAPE AT FARM

Name of victim: S—
Age of victim: 20
Date of abuse: October 2003
Place of abuse: xx village, Matupi Township, Chin State
Perpetrators: SPDC soldiers
Type of abuse: Gang rape

While S—, a 20-year-old girl, was going to the farm, soldiers followed her and raped her in the jungle. After the soldiers abused her as they liked, she was allowed to go back but with the threat of being killed if she spoke of the incident. So she did not dare to tell anyone though everyone knew about it.

As there is no one that will advocate for them and take punitive action against the SPDC soldiers no one made any attempt to report the incident to the authorities.

CASE 22 – GANG RAPE AND MURDER

Name of victim: S—
Place of abuse: Paletwa town, Chin State
Date of abuse: October 2002
Perpetrators: a lance-corporal and a private
Burma Army Battalion: LIB 309
Type of abuse: Gang rape and murder

The girl lived in Paletwa town and studied at grade nine at the high school in the town. There is a military camp between her house and school. She had to pass through the camp every day. One day in October 2002, she came home after sunset because she had to do some assignments. On the way, she met two soldiers; one was a lance-corporal and one was a private based in Paletwa town. They caught hold of her, covered her mouth with their hands and then brutally raped her in turn. The people who were close to the road could see the incident but they dared not rescue her since the soldiers had guns. She died of the injuries sustained while struggling. When after three days, the girl did not appear, the villagers went looking for her. After three days,

they found her dead body with broken arms and legs. They kept her dead body in the forest nearby the village. Although the villagers knew who the perpetrators were, they were afraid to file a case against the perpetrators. When the incident happened, the Burmese soldiers were very violent and strict in the town. They arrested and tortured people, and killed the domestic animals in the town. They just shot the animals and ate them, no matter whose property they were.

CASE 23 – GANG RAPE DURING FORCED PORTERING

Name of victim: P—
Age: 38
Place of abuse: near xx village, Falam, Chin State
Date of abuse: 2000
Perpetrators: about 5-7 soldiers
Burma Army battalion: LIB 268
Type of abuse: Gang rape

P—, a widow with three sons, was ordered to work as a porter carrying the soldiers' military supplies. Their journey took them several days. One day, while carrying a heavy load, a group of soldiers told her they would help her while the other villagers were done with their duties. She believed that the soldiers would really help her because her load was too heavy to carry by herself. On the way, while the other villagers went ahead, she was raped by two soldiers at gunpoint. They told her she would be killed if she told the other villagers about the incident. She and her sons fled to Mizoram first and then went to Delhi.

CASE 24 – GANG RAPE DURING FORCED PORTERING

Name of victim: S—
Age: 20
Place of abuse: xx village, Matupi town, Chin State
Date of abuse: 2000
Perpetrators: five soldiers
Burma Army battalion: LIB 50 (mobile)
Type of abuse: Gang rape

These five soldiers asked S— and another villager, who was mentally retarded, to porter for them. The retarded man was told to wait by the road, while the five soldiers raped S— in the forest and she was told that they would kill her if she shouted for help. Later they ordered the retarded man to have sex with her while they watched, but he refused. When he returned to the village, the retarded man told the story though both of them were warned not to tell the villagers. The retarded man did not realize the shame and pain this would cause for the victim. The soldiers did not return to the village, and no legal action was taken.

CASE 25 – RAPE AT HOME

Name: S—
Age: 26
Date of abuse: 8th Feb 2000
Place of abuse: xx, Falam, Chin State
Perpetrator: a private soldier
Burma Army Battalion: LIB 268
Type of abuse: Rape

Army soldiers patrolling xx village at night learned that S— was alone with her elderly father. The rest of the family were spending the night in the fields as it was the season for clearing grass. As there was no electricity, the soldier managed to hide inside her house without her knowledge. When S— went to sleep on the floor of their house, the soldier began trying to rape her at gunpoint. Although her father and other villagers heard the screams for help, none were able to intervene for fear that S— or others would be

shot and killed by the soldier.

After an hour of being brutalized, S— managed to run away and hid in the darkness of her backyard. The family, fearing social discrimination, kept silent. Also, they did not believe that reporting the case to the authorities would yield justice; in fact, they feared retaliation by the army. S— later married and had children. She is now widowed and still lives in the same village since she cannot afford to go elsewhere.

CASE 26 – RAPE WHILE COLLECTING FIREWOOD

Name of victim: D—
Age: 12
Place of abuse: xx village, Thlan Tlang, Chin State
Date of abuse: 1999 (summer)
Perpetrator: a soldier
Burma Army battalion: LIB 266
Type of abuse: Rape

While collecting firewood, the victim was accosted by her perpetrator who beat and raped her. He threatened her with more harm if she disclosed the event to her family. However, her parents realized what had happened when they saw their daughter's injuries. They filed the case in court, but no legal action was taken. The perpetrator's whereabouts are unknown. The victim continues to live in the village but suffers from shame.

CASE 27 – ATTEMPTED RAPE

Name of victim: Z—
Age: 18
Place of abuse: xx village, Thlan Tlang Township, Chin State
Date of abuse: 1998
Perpetrator: Tan Hteht Soe
Burma Army battalion: LIB 274
Type of abuse: Attempted rape, and physical assault of the victim's brother

The perpetrator asked the leader of the village

to bring him Z—. Her brother was worried about her safety because he knew his sister was young and attractive. When the sister was taken to his house, her brother followed secretly. As soon as the girl got inside the house, he brother entered into the house. Tan Hteht Soe was so furious to see the brother that he beat him severely.

CASE 28 – GANG RAPE AND MURDER

Name of victim: Y—

Age: 20

Place of abuse: xx village near Paletwa town

Date of abuse: 1998

Perpetrator: Commander and accomplice

Burma Army battalion: LIB 289

Type of abuse: Gang rape and murder

This officer proposed marriage. She refused. When she went to her farm, the officer and his accomplice raped and killed her. A few days later, her dead body was discovered by some villagers. The body was naked and covered with wounds.

CASE 29 – GANG RAPE DURING FORCED PORTERING

Name of victim: K—

Age of victim: 24

Place of abuse: xx, Kalaymyo, Sagaing Division

Date of abuse: November 1998

Perpetrators: 1 officer and two soldiers

Burma Army battalion: n.a.

Type of abuse: Gang rape

Burmese soldiers went to xx to collect crop tax. They did not know how much tax to collect, so they returned to Kalaymyo to get permission and orders from their officers. They chose two of the village girls to accompany them. Three hours into their journey to Kalaymyo, the soldiers raped them, threatening to kill them if they did not cooperate with the soldiers' wishes, and telling them that if they followed their orders, the soldiers would return them home safely. Afraid of death, both girls had to submit to their wishes. They were raped by two soldiers while a third

soldier acted as a look-out. Later, one girl was gang-raped by three soldiers and the other by another one of the soldiers. When the soldiers were finished with the girls, they sent them back to the village. The girls chose to keep their story secret in fear of social rejection and stained reputations. One of the girls went to Rangoon to study at a religious school. The other fled to Mizoram in fear of the possibility of further rape.

CASE 30 – RAPE AT HER FARM

Name of victim: T—

Age of victim: 19

Place of abuse: a forest near xx, Falam Township, Chin State

Date of abuse: June 1997

Perpetrator: Capt. Maung Kyi (aged 30-35)

Burma Army battalion: LIB 268

Type of abuse: Rape

I am the eldest among my siblings and I had to take a lot of responsibility for work at the farm. Often, I would stay at the farm overnight. On one such night, it was rainy and foggy. I started a fire and was cooking a meal when a soldier appeared at my hut. He realized I was alone and threatened me with his knife if I refused him sexually. I explicitly told him, "It is impossible." He became very violent and cut my clothes off with his knife. He told me that if I even attempted to run or scream for help, he would cut my throat and kill me. Still I shouted for help but we were surrounded by forest, and I had no means of escape. He raped me. Afterwards, I took my basket and went home in the pitch dark night. The whole way, I considered telling my parents but realized that I would be the one to receive blame and ultimately might be rejected by my community for having slept with a Burmese soldier. I am living with fear and anger until today. I hate soldiers and anyone who is associated with them. My hatred for the army continues to fester and grow.

Now, I am married and have two daughters. My husband does not know of the rape. I never plan on telling him about it.

Note: T— assumes that the perpetrator did not come alone, but when the perpetrator and other soldiers realized there was just one woman, the others left Maung Kyi alone to commit the rape by himself.

CASE 31 – SEXUAL TORTURE, AND MURDER OF HER SON

Name of victim: P—
Age: 46
Place of abuse: jungle near Thlan Tlang
Date of abuse: winter 1996 (probably December)
Perpetrators: a group of soldiers
Burma Army battalion: LIB 266
Type of abuse: sexual torture and murder of her son

P's husband was kidnapped by the CNF. He was a blacksmith; the CNF needed him to make guns. She was asked by the Burmese military the whereabouts of her husband. They took her into the jungle, tore off her clothing, hung her onto a cross and beat her one day and one night. She was surrounded and mocked by the soldiers and asked where the CNF had taken her husband. When she returned to her village, she learned the regime had kidnapped her son. Three days later, she asked the military authorities for the return of her son and/or his remains. They promised that her son was in good hands. When his dead body was finally returned to her, it was full of scars and bruises from having been beaten and had an awful smell. The whole family now lives in seclusion in Mizoram afraid of the military soldiers.

CASE 32 – ATTEMPTED RAPE

Name of victim: H—
Age: 18
Place of abuse: xx village, Thlan Tlang Township, Chin State
Date of abuse: March, 1996
Perpetrator: a soldier
Burma Army battalion: LIB 266
Type of abuse: Attempted rape and physical

assault of victim's mother

While gathering mustard leaves, the perpetrator attacked H—and attempted to rape her. After a lengthy struggle, H's mother managed to rescue her daughter. The officer, being frustrated, brutally beat the mother. The villagers wanted legal justice but were forced to accept the local officers' verbal apology.

CASE 33 – RAPE AT HOME

Name of victim: T—
Age of victim: 27
Place of abuse: xx, Falam Township, Chin State
Date of abuse: November 1995
Perpetrator: Captain Zaw Zaw Ko (43 years old)
Burma Army battalion: BIT 268
Type of abuse: Rape

The captain and his battalion were traveling when they came across my village. They met with the head of the village and requested to stay in the village upon their return. They also told us that they would rest at my family's house one night. My parents were at Falam town at that time. I stayed with my sister to run a tea-shop in the village. After two days, they came back from Tio village (a border village). They said they would stay at our house. Captain Zaw Zaw called me late that night ordering me to give him a massage. He said he was very tired. I obliged. After giving him a massage, he suddenly accosted me and tied me up. I was unable to fight him. Outside I heard his soldiers yelling, "You are a man, just do it." I could not cry out for help because he gagged me with a piece of cloth; my sister was in the next room, unaware of my being brutalized. He stole my virginity! Before they left the next morning, Captain Zaw Zaw Ko offered me 2,000 kyat (US\$2) which I refused. He gave the money to my sister. He also gave his contact number in Falam and told us to contact him the next time we went to visit Falam. He had no idea how much he had hurt me.

I never spoke of the rape because I am fully aware that I have no options; he is a captain with a lot of power. Any legal or other actions on my part would have been fruitless.

Now, I am married and have one daughter and one son. My husband does not know that I was raped one time.

Note: The victim was very attractive, therefore the perpetrator most likely planned to rape her. Also the perpetrator had a wife and a son when he committed the crime.

CASE 34 – RAPE ON FARM

Name of victim: S—
Age of victim: 21
Place of abuse: Falam town, Chin State
Date of abuse: August 10, 1994
Perpetrator: Corporal Aung Kyaw Hthe- 30 years old
Burma Army battalion: LIB 268
Type of abuse: Rape

S—was staying with her aunt, a nurse, in Falam town in order to study in the 10th grade. Her aunt's place was close to the military camp in Falam. S— passed the military camp every morning on her way to school. The perpetrator befriended the young girl. The soldiers came to know how S— spent her free time. During school holidays she would work on the farm and sometimes she would study while watching the goats. One day, while S—was alone at the farm, one of the soldiers followed her and attempted to rape her. She tried to fight him off, but he bit off one of her nipples, causing her to go into shock. The soldier then raped her. Later, the soldier proposed marriage to S—, who was consumed with resentment towards her perpetrator. Later she learned that he had impregnated her. She had a son; the perpetrator/father's whereabouts are unknown.

CASE 35 – RAPE WHILE COLLECTING FIREWOOD

Name of victim: M—
Age of victim: 20 yrs old
Place of abuse: Forest near Tidim, Chin State
Date of abuse: 13th March 1994
Perpetrator: Private soldier
Burma Army Battalion: LIB 269
Type of abuse: Rape and neglect of baby

A private soldier from LIB 269 began following M— ever since he met her. He used to visit her house, work-place and her paddy field, pretending he wanted to help. M— told her parents and they were worried about their daughter's safety. They told the soldier not to follow their daughter. He did not listen to them, but kept following her. One day, while she went to carry fire wood in the forest alone, the soldier came to her house again and asked her parents where she was. After learning that M— had gone to the forest, he told the parents that he would pick her up and he left. He knew where the villagers used to collect fire wood. At last he found M— alone at about 3pm to 4pm. As soon as he saw her, he attacked her from the back and held her body tight. M— fought back and tried to escape but she was not strong enough to fight him off. The soldier threatened that if she kept fighting and shouting, he would kill her. He then raped her.

M— was filled with anger and pain. She could not stop crying. The soldier told her that he would marry her. She refused his offer and she was afraid of telling her story to other people. However, after five months, she realized that she had become pregnant. Her parents came to know about M—'s pregnancy and consulted with the village leaders. And then they arranged for her marriage with the perpetrator. M— had no choice but to accept the arrangements because she was afraid that having a child out of wedlock would bring her shame and rejection. Before she gave birth, the private got transferred to another place. He left her in that place and promised her he would come back again after 2 months and take her to his post. But he has not come back.

CASE 36 – RAPE DURING FORCED PORTERING

Name of Victim: J—
Age of victim: 34
Place of abuse: xx, Falam township, Chin State
Date of abuse: 5th June, 1993
Age when abuse happened: 21
Perpetrator: one officer
Burma Army battalion: LIB 269
Type of abuse: Rape

The army soldiers came to our village and they demanded porters. They collected the names of 10 people. I was one of them. My parents were so old that they could not do portering, so I had to do it. I carried few clothes and I walked alone. From our village to xx village, we took two days. The soldiers walked very slowly, which made us take longer than usual. I was already sick when we started our journey. I asked for medicines on the advice of my friends. The army officer told me that he would give me some when we arrived at yy village. The soldiers all looked middle-aged, they didn't look young.

When we arrived at yy, the soldiers slept at the village school building. We, the people who were forced to be porters, slept at the village head's house. The army officer sent two soldiers to me and said that I could come and take medicine from the school clinic. They took me to that school building. They took medicine out and gave me a cup of tea. They asked me to take the medicine. Since there was no electricity, we had to light a lamp. When I was about to take medicine, the officer suddenly held a knife against my neck. He took my clothes off and said "If you shout, I will really kill you." He kept saying that he would kill me. He raped me. I was afraid to shout for help because I didn't want to get killed by the soldier. He even told me not tell other people. If I told my friends, he would kill me. He called his two soldiers and sent me back to the house where my friends were sleeping. We continued our journey to xx. I dared not tell anyone in the group because if somebody knew, he would kill

me or I would get the blame for it. I did not see them anymore in the village. I did not get pregnant. I had no idea if he used a condom or not.

Note: This survivor arrived in India after the incident happened. She is afraid to go back to Burma. She didn't report the case to the authorities, but instead fled to India.

CASE 37 – GANG RAPE AT FARM

Name: D—
Age: 17 yrs old
Place of abuse: paddy field, xx, Sagaing Division
Date of abuse: March, 1989
Perpetrators: two soldiers
Burma Army Battalion: Unknown
Type of abuse: Gang rape

D— used to work in the paddy fields like other Chin people. Her paddy field was 4 km from her house. In March 1989, the girl went to work in the field alone. On that day, two privates came to their village from Kalaymyo and saw her alone in the field from the road. Their paddy field was close to the main road. Therefore, anyone could see her easily. When the two soldiers saw her working alone, they came to her and asked her if she was alone. They checked the places nearby for about 10 minutes and found no one. Then they started molesting her. One of the soldiers held her and tried to touch her breast and all over her body. The girl resisted him and fought back in order to run away. The soldier held her until she could not move and warned her he would shoot her with his gun if she still tried to run away. And then he raped her for 1 hour. The other soldier was just watching the incident. The other soldier did not rape her though his accomplice asked him if he wanted to. After that they released her with a warning not to tell her family or friends. They also told her if she told others, then the other people would look down on her. She was afraid of their warning and she told no one. After a while she began having pains in her vagina and could not urinate

properly for 12 days. Then she told her parents about her health problems. Her parent advised her to go to the doctor but she did not want to. Moreover, D— did not want to go to the paddy field alone and her parents did not understand the reason. Her parents persuaded her again and again to tell them her problems. Finally she couldn't keep it secret any longer and told everything to her parents. After hearing their daughter's problems, they could not do anything because they did not know where the soldiers were going. Therefore, they could not report the case to the authorities. After being raped, her health became worse and worse. In 1992 she got married and died of womb cancer in 1994. Till today, her parents believe that the rape was the cause of her cancer.

CASE 38 – RAPE NEAR HER HOME

Name: B—

Age: 16 yrs

Place of abuse: On road, Falam town, Chin State

Date of abuse: October 1989

Perpetrator: Private soldier

Burma Army Battalion: LIB 269

Type of abuse: Rape

B—'s aunty was very sick and was admitted to the hospital in Falam town. B— had to stay at the hospital to take care of her. There was a military camp between the hospital and her aunty's home. It was one evening in October 1989; B— went to hospital carrying food for the patient. After a while, she came back from hospital. On the way, she met a soldier. As soon as the soldier realized that she was alone, he caught her and began trying to rape her at the roadside under the bushes. The girl fought to escape from him and shouted for help. The soldier punched her in the face and other parts of her body three times till the girl could not move anymore. He warned her that he would kill her if she shouted again. He pulled her hair so that the girl could not fight anymore. Then, he brutally raped her. The soldier ran away as soon as he finished.

On her way back home, she was unsure if she should tell the incident to the others or not. At last she decided not to tell others. The next morning, her parents saw her bruised face and asked her if anything had happened to her. She lied to her family by making the excuse that she had accidentally got hit in the face by a branch.

B— was a virgin and did not have menstruation till she got raped. After the rape, she asked her boyfriend to have sex with her. The boyfriend suspected that she had betrayed him and had sex with another man. This caused her to break up with her boyfriend. She then became a prostitute for some years. She did not want to explain to anyone why she became a prostitute. Now, she is married to a man who understood what had happened to her, and can now lead a normal life with her husband.

After reading such shattering testimonies in the report, it is now our duty to carry these life-stories forward to every entity that can make a difference, and bring them to the Government of India or any government which is, through economic and military support of the SPDC regime, directly fuelling militarization in Burma.

- Parul Sharma, from the foreword