

# THE VOICE 21P

THE NEWSLETTER FOCUSING ON CURRENT ISSUES OF EMPOWERMENT, COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, AND ADVOCACY FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM SOUTHERN MYANMAR.

PUBLISHED BY THE WOMAN AND CHILD RIGHTS PROJECT, HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION OF MONLAND.

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## MON LANGUAGE PRE-SCHOOL OPENS IN MAWLAMYINE



June 20, 2016

On June 16, 2016, a new pre-school called "Mi" opened in Myine Thar Yar quarter, Mawlamyine, Mon State. This school is a pre-school which will be using Mon language instead of Burmese, making it very special. In the past, in Mawlamyine, there was no Mon language pre-school. Most school are taught in Burmese or English. Additionally, the school will also be teaching Burmese and English classes as well but the main language will be Mon. [Read more on page 8 >>](#)

## KINDERGARTEN BOY SEVERELY BEATEN BY TEACHER



October 31, 2016

WCRP: On September 6, 2016, a Kindergarten student from Thiri Myine Ward, Mawlamyine, was severely beaten by his teacher as she accused him of stealing a pencil from his classmate.

According to the student's grand mother, who held a press conference

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# Publisher's Message

Under the new government led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, a new National Women's Committee chaired by the Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement has been formed in accordance with Notification No. 81/2016 of the Burma President's Office. This committee is responsible for conducting research and documentation on the prevention and prohibition of violence against women.



Photo from facebook Mi Moe Moe

Burma ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on July 22, 1997. The former Thein Sein government approved the Race and Religion Protection Laws, including the Buddhist Women's Special Marriage Law and Monogamy Law.

In addition to the above enacted legislation, the Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Dr. Win Myat Aye, has been quoted as saying his department is drafting new legislation to be submitted to parliament focusing on the prevention of violence against both women and children in order to protect and promote the rights of these vulnerable members of the community.

Are women in Burma safe under these laws? Will the new laws increase women's access to justice for violent crimes committed against them? Are women's organizations in Burma strong enough to protect and promote the rights of women in Burma? These questions are challenging for everyone to answer.

"We don't want to push [the government] to approve the [new] laws quickly. Just approving laws is not enough. We must think about the rules and regulations [for enacting and enforcing this legislation]. Moreover, the lawyers and the jury must have knowledge about violence against women and we must be able to provide proper services to victims of sexual abuse," said one lawyer in Burma.

In November and December of 2016, approximately seven protests were organized throughout Burma and thousands of protesters demanded an end to violence against women and for stronger punishments for those who sexually abuse children.

Furthermore, the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Major-General Aung Soe, also acknowledged the increase in reported cases of sexual violence against children during the 2016 House of Representatives Meeting, noting that there were currently 517 cases currently in the courts concerning the sexual abuse of minors and 200 perpetrators who have already been sentenced from anywhere between 1 to 20 years in prison.

While the drafting of new laws to protect women and children is a step in the right direction, it is not enough to ensure women and children victims of violence will receive justice. According to a report by the chairman of the Public Complaints Committee of the House of Representatives, U San Myint, two-thirds of the 4,000 complaint letters received by the committee under the new government are related to problems with the judicial system.

Furthermore, the Secretary for the Justice and Legal Affairs Committee of Burma's Lower House, U Aung Tin Linn, also mentioned that the committee had received around 900 complaint letters regarding the conduct of police, judges, lawyers, and legal officers.

Therefore, Burma must overcome many challenges ahead in order to provide full protection and effective promotion of the rights of women and children. It is clear that just approving new laws is insufficient and there must be concrete rules and regulations and institutional reform.

Moreover, the WCRP strongly demands the reform of government departments, the judicial system and the police forces, as well as an increase in the momentum of CBOs in order to eliminate discrimination against women.

The WCRP will continue to contribute to the actualization of women and child rights and remain committed to monitoring and reporting human rights abuses against Burma's women and children.



# KINDERGARTEN BOY SEVERELY BEATEN BY TEACHER

after the incident, she found the child's eyes bleeding, found bruises, and other marks on his skin. The grandmother believes her grandson was brutally beaten. When she asked him what had happened, the child responded that he was beaten by his teacher. The grandmother immediately went to the school to investigate what happened with her grandson. When asked, the teacher denied the allegations; however, when the child started crying, she admitted that she beat the child because he stole his classmate's pencil. The child specified, "I didn't steal the pencil. I found a pencil under my desk and just picked it up."

At 4 pm on September 6, the grandmother went to the Township Education Administration Office and reported the case to the Deputy Chief Education Administrator; however, the administrator stated that the grandmother should understand why the teacher beat the child and the grandmother should be careful for the sake of the child's future.

"The teacher had inhumanely beaten the child and accused him of stealing,

the authority told us to understand the reasons from the teacher's perspective. I have too much hope in the education authority and therefore we discussed the case with them. I'm very disappointed with their response. A month after the incident the teacher had still not been punished for what she did," said the grandmother.

The Mawlamyine Chief Education Administrator Daw Kyi Win said that the teacher has rights to correct the behavior of students; however, it is unacceptable to seriously beat a child.

"Other teachers went to the grandmother's house three times to apologize for their co-workers' manners. They also treated the injuries on the child, but the teacher who beat the child did not come by. The teacher gave an oral statement to the Township Chief Education Administrator and apologized for her actions and promised that she will not severely beat another child in the future," said Daw Kyi Win.

"My grandson has been suffering from both physical and mental problems

now. When seeing his classmates, he wants to go to school but when seeing the teacher who beat him, he quickly runs back into the house and hides. He keeps crying in fear, worried that the teacher will beat him," said the grandmother.

The grandmother wants the teacher to transfer to another school; however, she is the only teacher who teaches Kindergarten. She is a special trained teacher for Kindergarten students, therefore, the education authorities are unable to fulfill the request of the grandmother.

The article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offenses committed by persons below eighteen years of age." It is clear that the teacher violated the Convention on the Rights of the Child and should be punished for her actions.

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## News

# NMSP'S DECISION ON FORCED MARRIAGE NOT ACCEPTED BY PERPETRATOR

October 25, 2016

On April 21, 2016, Mg Ko Lay, a young man from Ka Lot Thot Village, Mudon Township, Mon State, had forcefully pressured his girlfriend to marry him without her consent. The case was brought to the New Mon State Party (NMSP) representatives; however, the 24-year-old man said in a press conference in early October 2016 that he was not satisfied with the NMSP's decision on the case.

At 4 pm on April 21, Mg Ko Lay, together with 9 friends, forcefully took and engaged in a sexual act without his 17-year-old girlfriends' consent at a rubber plantation in Mae Ta Ro Village. After this incident, Mg Ko Lay took the young girl to his aunt's house in Shwe La Inn Village, Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township, Karen State.

On April 22, the parents of Mi Ma Lay, the victim, visited the Ka Lot Thot Village Headman and said that they would agree to the marriage off their daughter; however, if their daughter does not agree to the marriage, they want their daughter back. They also said that they will not report the case to authorities. After a short discussion, the village headman signed a mutual consent contract with them.

"On April 4, the village headman, the parents of Mg Ko Lay and Mi Ma Lay and their relatives went to where Mg Ko Lay and Mi Ma Lay live. But, on the way, the village headman changed his mind and turned back without giving any reason. The relatives and parents continued their trip to Shwe La Inn Village," said U Tun Nyo, the uncle of Mg Ko Lay.

"After the girl left the house with his parents, four Mon soldiers from Inn Gua (NMSP) Military Base suddenly appeared and came into the house. After, they arrested Mg Ko Lay," continued U Tun Nyo.

Mg Ko Lay's parents went to Inn Gua Base and had a discussion with Nai Mya Mon, the District Chairman of the NMSP. The parents explained that they had had an agreement with the village headman on the marriage; however, Nai Mya Mon did not accept the reason and intimidated them by saying that they would be arrested if they reported the case to any department of the Myanmar Government.

"Both parties had an agreement, which was made in the presence of the village headman. So the problem must be solved. If the village headman's decision is not acknowledged, then who can we rely on? We're treated like an orphanage," said U Aung Khine, a Ka Lot Thot villager.

Daw Ngwe Taung, the mother of Mg Ko Lay, said that she is a widow and had no money to pay the compensation to the NMSP as they requested for her to see her son. Therefore, she has had to return to work without having a chance to see her son.

"Whenever I went to Inn Gua Base to meet with my son, he was hand and foot cuffed. He has been in handcuffs since his arrest. If my son is found guilty, he must be punished in accordance with the laws," said Daw Ngwe Taung. Daw Ngwe Taung requested the NMSP to release her son from being handcuffed; however, the party replied that her son would be relieved of the cuffs after the family has paid a compensation of 20 million Kyat.

"According to the NMSP, Mg Ko Lay will be relieved from his cuffs only after paying the insurance premium fee of 20 million Kyat to Inn Gua Base. But the defendant's family doesn't have any plantations in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi in order to pay the fee. They have plantations in Mudon Township but Inn Gua Base doesn't acknowledge the property in Mudon," said U Tun Nyo.

On August 28, the Special District Office of the NMSP came to a decision that Mg Ko Lay is guilty of the charges as he forcefully married an under-aged girl; his friends are also found guilty as they were involved in the event. Mg Ko Lay will be imprisoned for 5 years and has to pay fee of 4 million Kyat to Mi Ma Lay. His friends will be imprisoned for 1 year.

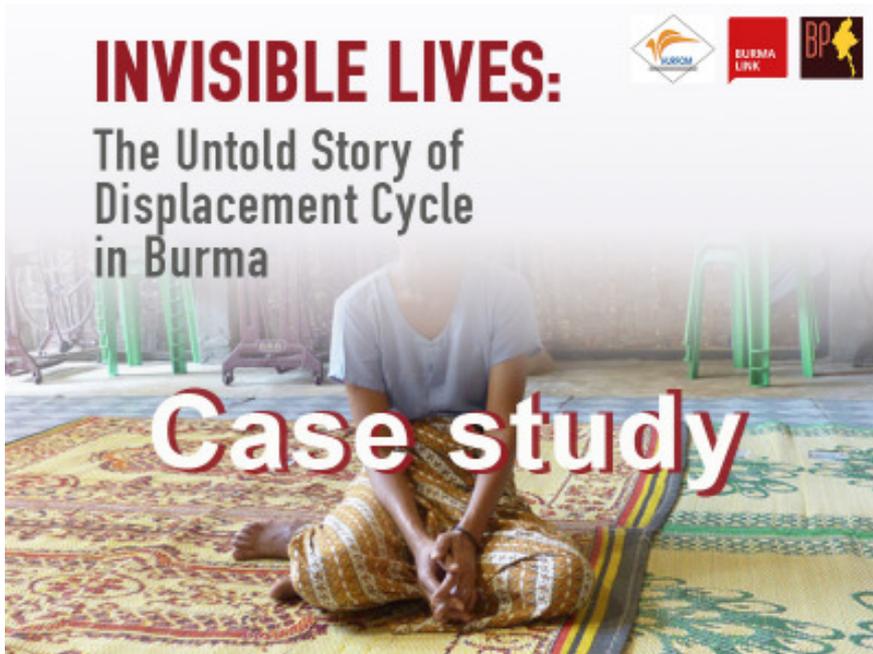
"If the case was reported to the Myanmar government, the young boy would not receive such a long sentence," said a Ka Lot Thot resident, U Aung Khine.

Mg Ko Lay's parents have not been satisfied with the decision made by the NMSP and reported the case to the Mon State Government on July 31, claiming that Ka Lot Thot Village is a place under the authority of the (Mon State) Government and the case should be decided and judged by the (Mon State) Government.

On April 4, the village headman, the parents of Mg Ko Lay and Mi Ma Lay and their relatives went to where Mg Ko Lay and Mi Ma Lay live. But, on the way, the village headman changed his mind and turned back without giving any reason. The relatives and parents continued their trip to Shwe La Inn Village,

## News

# FLEEING SEXUAL VIOLENCE FROM YEBYU TOWNSHIP TO THE THAILAND-BURMA BORDER: MON IDP REPORT CASE STUDY #1



September 7, 2016

The following case study is from the joint report “Invisible Lives: The Untold Story of Displacement Cycle in Burma” by Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), Burma Link, and Burma Partnership, which was launched in a press conference in Rangoon on August 12th and in Moulmein on August 15th. The 65-page report focuses on the continuing concerns of the displaced ethnic nationality communities, particularly the ethnic Mon, living along Burma’s southeast border and finds that the recent reforms have not yet addressed the causes of their displacement.

## Fleeing Sexual Violence from Yebyu Township to the Thailand-Burma Border<sup>1</sup>: Case Study 1

Mi Sanda Si Aye’s<sup>2</sup> mother passed away when she was 18 years old. As the eldest sibling, she took on the role of a mother for her younger siblings. Their father was a fisherman who was often away at sea, and Mi Sanda Si Aye struggled to put food on the table while trying to protect herself and the family from the harassment they often received from the Burma Army.

“I remembered what my aunt had told me; to carry my youngest brother, so they would think I’m a mother with a baby,” Mi Sanda Si Aye says as she recalls one of the times that the Burma Army soldiers came to her house. Her aunt had always reminded her to carry her youngest brother as the soldiers were less likely to take her away to rape her if she was carrying a baby. The houses were far away from each other, and a cry for help would not have been heard between the living quarters. Any time the Burma Army soldiers arrived to her village, men would run and hide to escape forced portering duties that would sometimes last for months. When the men were away, women stayed in the village, becoming easy prey for the soldiers. To protect themselves, the village women slept under the same roof in groups; “If something happened to one of us, the rest of us could scream for

help,” Mi Sanda Si Aye explained. The soldiers often returned for information regarding Mon soldiers, leading to threats and interrogation of the villagers. Mi Sanda Si Aye’s cousin once visited a friend in a neighboring village, and upon his arrival, was interrogated, tortured, and finally beaten to death.

When Mi Sanda Si Aye was 19-years-old, she decided to leave the village and take her younger siblings to a safer place. They followed their aunts and walked across the jungle to the Thailand-Burma border. Mi Sanda Si Aye and her family stayed in a refugee camp in Thailand until they were forced to move back to Burma in 1995. Along with thousands of others, Mi Sanda Si Aye moved to Halockhani IDP site where she has lived for over 20 years. Due to difficulties in making ends meet, her husband is now working in Thailand and sending money to her and their three children. Although she hasn’t faced abuse for decades, Mi Sanda Si Aye says she is still afraid of the Burma Army soldiers because of her experience from the past.

*The soldiers tried to take a girl and a mother would pull and grab her daughter tight. By the mother’s scream asking for help, the soldiers didn’t get her daughter. When I saw and heard this kind of story several times, I didn’t dare to live in the village anymore.*  
(Mi Sanda Si Aye)

“I remembered what my aunt had told me; to carry my youngest brother, so they would think I’m a mother with a baby,

## News

# MISSING KYAIKMAYAW TOWNSHIP TEEN FOUND TRAFFICKED AND RAPED

October 19, 2016

On September 14, 2016, a girl between the age of 16 or 17 from Kyun Kone village in Kyaikmayaw Township disappeared at 4 am in the morning.

According to reports, the girl usually goes to the Karina village market to sell flowers at 4 am but on the morning of September 14, a strange car stopped on the road and the driver started conversation with her by asking where the nearest petrol station is. After she showed him the petrol station, he did not go there, instead he told her that he would like to bring her to the market. When she refused, he forced her into the car. The child reported that on the drive, the man raped her.

Mi Jalon Htaw, Karina village administrator told HURFOM, “on September 14, 2016, we heard from her parents at 7 pm that their daughter had disappeared and not been heard from since 4 am when she usually goes to the market to sell flowers.”

On October 7, 2016, Mi Jalon Htaw received information about the victim from someone unknown. The young girl was found in a restaurant called Yadana Htet KTV in Mawlamyine. On that day after receiving this information, Mi Jalon Htaw went to Mawlamyine to bring the victim home.

“It was 11 pm when we got her. The next morning, we informed the police in our village and then we met with the anti-trafficking group to open the case in

Kyaikmayaw Township Court.” said Mi Jalon Htaw. After that, the anti-trafficking group, police officers from Karina village, police officer from Zayar Myine quarter and quarter administrator in Mawlamyine, the victim with her parents met with the owners of Yadana Htet restaurant.

“After the anti-trafficking group asked her for details of the incident they opened the case as a human trafficking incident. We would also like to open a rape case as the girl was also raped in the car.” On October 11, the case was officially opened as a human trafficking incident. For the rape case, they said they first want to check the victim.

There have not been any reports about who the perpetrator is yet.

## BROTHER-IN-LAW RAPES 8-YEAR- OLD SISTER IN MAWLAMYINE

November 2, 2016

WCRP: On September 11, 2016, it has been revealed that a 8 year-old-girl has been raped by her brother-in-law in San Mya Thidar Ward, Mawlamyine, Mon State.

According to a neighbor, the young girl was raped at 9 am on September 11, when her mother left the house in order to do her laundry. The neighbor, who was nearby when the incident occurred, retold the story to the victim’s mother and when asking the girl, she also confirmed that she was raped by her brother-in-law.

The girl’s mother reported the case to Zay Yar Thiri Police Station and the police charged the perpetrator with (Pa) 185/2016 under Myanmar Panel Code Section 376 – Punishment for rape and Section 511 – Punishment for attempting to commit offenses

punishable with manual labor or imprisonment.

“The child is continuing her studies now and when she returns home from school, she only plays at home. No one in the ward asked her about the rape. It seems she does not feel any different,” said the victim’s mother. The victim’s mother also mentioned that the girl’s friends and neighbors do not neglect nor discriminate against her.

According to the medical examination results, the penetration was not deep and the girl felt pain on the day of being raped but her pain has been gradually decreasing day by day.

“Frankly, we’re very angry to hear that an under-aged girl was raped. It also destroys our wards’ reputation. The perpetrator must receive a harsh punishment.” said U Aye Han, a prominent person in San Mya Thidar

Ward.

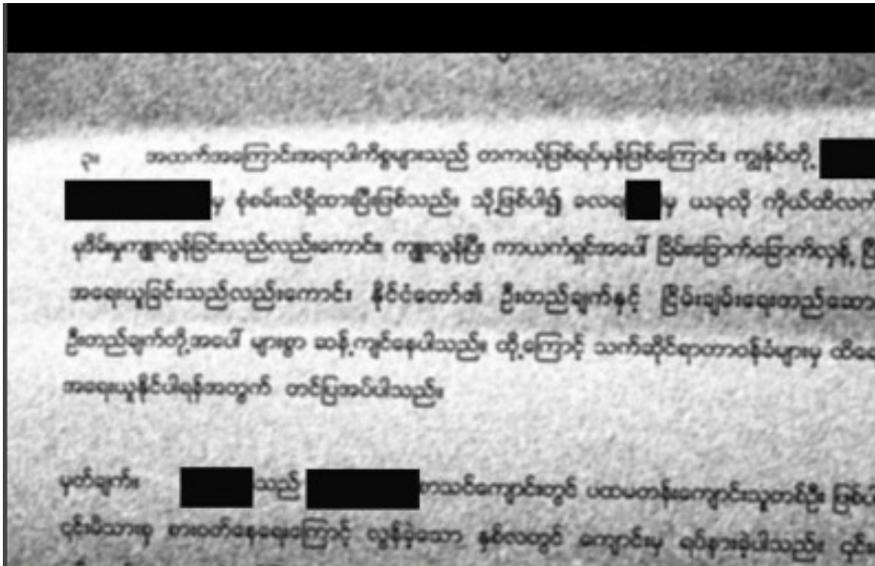
On September 18, 2016, the perpetrator made a full confession to the Police.

The family wants justice for their daughter and wants the perpetrator to be punished in accordance with the existing laws.

Frankly, we’re very angry to hear that an under-aged girl was raped. It also destroys our wards’ reputation. The perpetrator must receive a harsh punishment.

Briefing Papers, ND-Burma

# RAPE: THE BURMA ARMY'S UNPUNISHED WEAPON OF WAR



## RAPE: THE BURMA ARMY'S UNPUNISHED WEAPON OF WAR

BRIEFING PAPER



NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION - BURMA

November 30, 2016

### Briefing Papers, ND-Burma

In October 2016, amid renewed violence in Rakhine state, it was reported that “dozens” of women had been raped by Burma/Myanmar army soldiers. The story shocked international media and the United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict called on the Government to conduct an investigation into the alleged incidents.

However, the Burma/Myanmar army has long used rape as a weapon of war, especially against Burma’s/Myanmar’s ethnic nationalities. Despite the hundreds of rapes that have been recorded by Burma’s/Myanmar’s NGOs

and civil society organizations (CSOs), no member of Burma’s/Myanmar’s government forces has ever been punished for committing rape or sexual violence. This is because under Burma’s/Myanmar’s 2008 Constitution the army gifted itself immunity from the country’s laws, meaning allegations of rape are only investigated internally by the army, if at all.

This has resulted in soldiers being able to rape with impunity. A 2002 report by the Shan Women’s Action Network called it a ‘license to rape’. This immunity is an infringement of international law as the UN explicitly “does not recognize any amnesty for [...] crimes against humanity, war

crimes, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.”

### Documenting sexual violence

Since beginning its documentation of human rights violations in 2004, ND-Burma’s member organizations have recorded the testimonies of 95 women who have been raped or suffered sexual violence at the hands of the Burma/Myanmar army, police force or Border Guard Force (BGF). Each of these cases was recorded in ethnic nationality areas.

However, when examining the data gathered by other NGOs and CSOs in Burma/Myanmar the number of rapes and cases of sexual violence committed by Burma/Myanmar government forces is clearly significantly higher. Indeed, international organizations and NGOs have repeatedly accused the army of a ‘systematic’ campaign of rape to terrorize and subjugate ethnic nationality communities.

In January 2014, the Women’s League of Burma (WLB) published a report documenting 104 cases of sexual abuse in ethnic areas over a period of 4 years. 41 of the cases were accounts of brutal gang rape and some of the victims were as young as 8 years old. 27 of the women were either murdered or died from their injuries. In November 2016, the WLB published an updated report to mark the International Day to End Violence Against Women, which said the organization had documented 92 cases of violence (not specifically sexual violence) against women by government forces between 2010 and 2015, and 18 cases for the period 2015-2016.

The 2014 WLB report included such cases as the 2012 gang rape and prolonged torture by Burmese/Myanmar troops of a grandmother in a church in Luk Pi village near the Kachin-China border. During a Burma/Myanmar army offensive against Kachin rebels in Northern Burma/Myanmar, soldiers found the woman sheltering in a church. About ten troops beat her

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## News from page no.7

## Briefing Papers, ND-Burma

with rifle butts, stabbed her with knives, stripped her naked and gang-raped her over a period of three days. The woman has suffered from severe mental illness since the ordeal. Despite there being a witness to the attack, the Burma/Myanmar army has not opened any investigation into this crime.

Rape has been recognized by the United Nations as a weapon of war used in conflict across the globe. The 2008 UN Security Council Resolution on Women Peace and Security highlights that *"women and girls are particularly targeted by the use of sexual violence, including as a tactic of war to humiliate, dominate, instil fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group."* Rape has also been committed by Ethnic Armed Groups (EAOs), though not on the same scale as by the Burma/Myanmar army.

There is also a reluctance of victims to report due to shame and fear of retribution. The WLB notes that women in Karen, Kachin and Chin states who have been victims of sexual violence are expelled from their villages on the assumption that the village must be 'cleansed' of the victims. The military is also able to close off conflict affected areas of Burma/Myanmar to outside observers such as journalists and aid workers, meaning that reports of individuals or systemic rape cases cannot be verified.

### New government, old system

The beginning of 2016 saw Burma's/Myanmar's first civilian-led government in more than half a century take power under Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) party. Ethnic nationalities had overwhelmingly given the NLD their vote over ethnic parties so as to support the party most associated with resistance to the military dictatorship.

However, the autonomy the army enjoys under the 2008 Constitution and the accompanying institutional separation of powers means that the NLD has no formal command over the military's actions. The Government's silence in the face of repeated reports of systematic rape in ethnic nationality areas jars with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's

frequently repeated claim that the peace process is her Government's priority and that *"we can do nothing without peace in our country."* As human rights expert David Bauk points out in an essay for the Wall Street Journal *"If left unchecked, impunity for grave abuses in Burma's ethnic states will only stifle the country's development."*

On 15 November this year, ND-Burma member organization the Kachin Women's Organization of Thailand (KWAT) released a report examining ongoing Burma/Myanmar army offensives and abuses going on in Northern Burma/Myanmar under the NLD Government, highlighting the fact that the perpetrators of the rape and murder of two Kachin teachers in January 2015 remained at large and that a 73 year-old victim of a military sexual assault attack in April 2015 had passed away in June 2016 without seeing justice. The report went further, noting that in both instances police investigation into the cases had been deliberately obstructed by the military. Burma's/Myanmar's criminal defamation law has also been used to intimidate and prosecute victims and witnesses who have spoken out.

### Fighting for justice for survivors

The Burma/Myanmar army continues to use rape as a weapon of war as soldiers enjoy impunity for their crimes and the NLD leadership is silent in the face of a litany of accusations. This must end. The new government must also commission an independent investigation into systematic sexual violence committed by the army.

The draft National Law on Protection and Prevention of Violence against Women (PoVAW), on which work began over three years ago, must finally be passed.

Burma/Myanmar must begin honoring its commitments under international law. The country has signed the Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict but has not taken any concrete action to follow the guidelines set out therein. At its 64th session in July 2016, the UN's *Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*

(CEDAW) in its concluding remarks on Burma/Myanmar observed that:

*"Continuing sexual violence perpetrated by the military and armed groups against rural women and ethnic minority women, in particular in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin Mon and Rakhine States; widespread impunity enjoyed by perpetrators of such violence as well as threats and revictimization of women who attempt to report such cases; the low rate of prosecution of perpetrators of gender-based violence against women, in particular when such crimes are committed by the military and armed groups; and the conferment of immunity on perpetrators of crimes of sexual violence."*

The most recent WLB report notes that lawyers who try to use CEDAW provisions in court are faced with objections from judges, who order them to use "local criminal law" instead.

However justice for victims does not have to be limited to prosecution of perpetrators, which faces huge resistance from the army and has also not yet been advocated for by the civilian government or Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Aileen Thomson from the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) in a discussion with ND-Burma listed medical care, including psycho social support, as one form of reparations that can greatly benefit survivors. Providing medical support services to victims of sexual violence as part of a larger health package benefitting conflict survivors also prevents rape victims being identified and subsequently stigmatized. *"State sanctioned human rights violations do not just affect the victims, but sow distrust in communities and populations as whole. For trust to be re-established and for the country to be able to move forward a process of recognition and reparations must begin,"* said Ms Thomson.

*we can do nothing without peace in our country.*

## MON LANGUAGE PRE-SCHOOL OPENS IN MAWLAMYINE



Mi Cherry Soe, who is the founder of the school, explained “the purpose of opening this pre-school is to mainly focus on Mon children who can use and keep up their native language. Children don’t need to learn in a second language. They can start to learn their main language at pre-school now.”

“Mi” pre-school is a private school run by an individual committee of Mon individuals and teachers. “There are wealthy Mon people who offer support because they believe this is a good foundation for the Mon people. This school is very new and has just opened, I first want to check the school can run smoothly before accepting support [funding]”, Mi Cherry Soe continued.

Mi Cherry Soe also said that the pre-school will initially be accepting 30 children between the ages of 3 to 5, and the tuition fee will only include the charges for food and the school uniform.

The school is still working on developing a curriculum in the Mon language. It is easier for Burmese and English school because they have access to teaching resources in the languages as teaching materials are already available and published. For the Mon Language, the school still needs to figure it out.

## DIVORCED MIDWIFE EMBARRASSED BY CYBER-BULLY

September 12, 2016

It is reportedly known that a divorced midwife from Northern A-nin Village, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State has been targeted by a cyber-bully. It has been said that the perpetrator is her former husband who lives in Kyat Zu Taw Village, Lat Pan Shay Village Track, Taung Twin Gyi Township, Magway Division. She left her husband on July 20, 2016. The couple does not live near each other and have therefore not been able to end their marriage legally.

According to the victim, he posted a group photo of the woman with her co-workers and spread a rumor that she was charging her patients an extra fee and that she was involved in the drug trade in her village. He also accused the village headman of A-nin Village for allowing and involving himself in the widespread drug trade.

“He is waiting for my response. When I don’t respond, he starts to spread rumors in my workplace. I’m very surprised by his manner,” said the woman being cyber-bullied.

After the break-up of his marriage, the man became emotionally unstable and posted both abusive and apologetic messages online. His ex-wife is very disappointed by his actions because she has had to give explanations to his actions.

“A marriage is official but a divorce needs an approval by a jury. If he continues to post abusive messages, I get into more and more trouble. I hired an attorney from Thanbyuzayat and submitted a divorce petition. The jury requested for him to go to court but he didn’t turn up. The jury said if he fails to come three times, the legal process will continue without his presence,” said the victim.

“Since after his marriage to my daughter, he has never treated my family very well. After they divorced, he defamed my daughter. I’m very sympathetic about my daughter. My daughter is a civil servant so defamation costs her a lot. She just stays in her room after returning from work. We cannot do anything but blame her karma,” said the victim’s mother.

A co-worker of the victim and a member of Shwe Par Ra Mi’s Health Foundation, said he would sue the man if he continues posting abusive messages. He mentioned that he would start legal action to protect her co-workers dignity and that of other women. “We don’t want her to close her pharmacy and quit her job just because of a stupid action. I think her husband is mentally unstable. He has nothing to do but posts abusive status online,” continued the co-worker.

News

# ATTEMPTED RAPE OF A 9-YEAR-OLD GIRL IN THANBYUZAYAT TOWNSHIP

January 17, 2017

**WCRP:** On November 3, 2016, an 18-year-old man attempted to rape a 9-year-old school girl in A— village, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State.

According to the girl’s grandfather who was witness to the event, 18-year-old Mg Seik Chan from A— village attempted to rape her at around 5 am in her home. The girl’s grandfather, [upon hearing the noise], rapidly woke up and saw him with the girl. He thought that a thief had come and was stealing something in their house. When he came to look, the perpetrator was running away.

*“At first, we thought that we would not report about this to the [village] administrator. We didn’t even want other people know about us. [After the incident], our granddaughter was looking unhappy and was quiet, but the*

*perpetrator was looking very happy and singing songs [in the village]. We feel they [the perpetrator and his family] don’t care about us. If they apologized to us early on, we would have felt fine and may have forgiven them. We never thought that he would do this to my granddaughter because his parents were working in our rubber plantation and he always visits our house,”* said the grandfather.

After the incident, the girl did not go to school for 3 days. She is studying at elementary school in A— village. Her teacher told her that, if someone at the school jokes or talks to her about the incident, to just report it.

The grandfather U B— added that, “The administrator [village head] has negotiated the case between the victim’s family and the perpetrator; both sides agreed to 1,000,000 kyat compensation. The perpetrator gave

750,000 kyat to the victim and said that he would pay the remaining money later, but the rest of the money did not arrive.

According to militia leader U Pin [from an unknown Border Guard Force (BGF) battalion stationed in the village], he advised the victim’s family [upon hearing of the incident] that if they agreed to compensation this time, the perpetrator may commit it [a similar crime] again later. After, the victim’s aunt reported the case to the Thanbyuzayat Police Station and the police charged the perpetrator under Article #376 (concerning rape) of the Burma Penal Code.

According to the medical report after the girl was examined on November 6 at the Thanbyuzayat Hospital, the girl was not raped [penetrated] and the police have not yet requested further information from the family about the case yet.

# 15-YEAR-OLD GIRL RAPED BY HER FATHER IN KYAIKMAYAW TOWNSHIP

January 17, 2017

**WCRP:** On November 15, 2016, a 15-year-old girl was raped by her 42-year-old father in Ka Line Ka Naing village tract, Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State.

The perpetrator has two daughters and a son. On the night of the incident, his eldest daughter went to Rangoon/Yangon and his wife and son went to Kyaikmayaw Town and stayed there for one night. The perpetrator and his younger daughter were left at home alone.

In the early morning of November 15, the perpetrator told his daughter that he was feeling sick and asked his

daughter for a massage and then raped her. He also threatened his daughter to not tell her mother and if she did tell, he would kill her.

The girl was afraid of her father and did not dare tell her mother at first. Sixteen days after she was raped, she told her mother about it and her mother reported the case to the police station in Kyaikmayaw Town. Deputy Police Officer U Ti Oo is handling the case.

The police officer said, *“The police charged the perpetrator under Article #376 of Burma’s Penal Code and are still investigating the case. When we asked the girl, she said she was raped and when we asked her father he said he was just playing with his hand.”*

The perpetrator and his family are from Ein Mae Township, Ayeyarwaddy Region; they moved to Ka Line Ka Naing village tract, Kyaikmayaw Township, 6 years ago and were working in the rubber plantations. The young girl is currently in Grade 8, however, due to her [subsequent] medical condition, she has had to drop out of school for awhile.

Similarly, in 2014 a 13-year-old girl was raped by her 28-year-old brother in Thaton Town, Mon State. The Mawlamyine Court sentenced the perpetrator to prison for only 1 year and 2 months as punishment.



# MON WOMEN CONTINUE THEIR FIGHT AT THE MON NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2016



male representatives and there were no women’s rights issues discussed in the conference.

“Nai Hong Sar, the vice-chairman of the NMSP, said he welcomed women’s participation in political affairs. However, he said, after getting married, (most) women have to focus on domestic tasks and have no time to participate in political affairs. Some representatives thought the fight to allow the participation of 30% of woman in political affairs was a joke. So as a female representative, I didn’t feel very well in the conference,” said Mi Ah Mu Chan.

September 7, 2016

The Mon National Conference 2016 was held in Paw Law Kone Village, an area controlled by the New Mon State Party (NMSP), in Kyar Inn Seik Kyi Township, Mon State. The event was held on 3 days from August 22 to 24, 2016.

The purpose of the conference was to adopt federal principles of Mon nationalities that would be presented at the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong and to discuss the unison of Mon political communities.

Daw Ngwe Lay from the Jaytanar Foundation said the female participants urged the conference to allow 30% of woman in every sector and to give support to women who do not have the skills yet. She also emphasized that there was a very limited amount of time to discuss women’s issues in the conference.

The conference was organized by the NMSP and 446 representatives from political parties, civil society organizations and the religious community. According to a statement released on August 24, 16% of participants were women.

The women’s representatives discussed the federal system and the solidarity of the Mon political communities and urged to allow the participation of 30% of woman in political affairs.

However, Mi Ah Mu Chan, a female representative from the Women’s Empowerment Program – WEP, said that the conference had been dominated by

Newspapers have promised to fight for gender equality and the fight against gender discrimination; however, it has not been materialized: women have not stopped fighting for their rights.

“We always appreciate feedback from our readers. Please feel free to contact our mailing or email address.”

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