

# NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

An examination of sexual trafficking  
and related human rights abuses  
in Southern Burma





## **NOWHERE ELSE TO GO:**

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human rights abuses in Southern Burma**



**By**  
**Woman and Child Rights Project (WCRP)**  
**Human Rights Foundation of Monland**  
**August 2009**

## INFORMATION ON WOMAN AND CHILD RIGHTS PROJECT (SOUTHERN BURMA)

The **Woman and Child Rights Project (WCRP)**, Southern Burma, was founded in 2000 by **Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM)** in order to monitor and protect the rights of women and children and focus international attention on Burma in order to pressure Burma's military regime – State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) – to uphold the rights of women and children.

WCRP's **main aim** is to promote and protect the rights of women and children accordingly to CEDAW and CRC. WCRP is implementing various activities to expose how the regime and its Burmese Army are widely involved in violations of women's rights. It also seeks to educate and empower women and children to know their rights. It also seeks to educate and empower women and children to know their rights, so that they can become involved in the protection of these rights.

WCRP's **Objectives** are:

- § To educate women and children about the rights of women and children
- § To inform international organizations about violations of the rights of women and children in order to focus international attention on Burma

**Activities of WCRP** are:

- § Publicize quarterly publication of *The Plight*, with news and reports on the rights of women and children (in English)
- § Reports on specific issues related to the rights of women and children (such as education or health)
- § Women's Journal (in Mon and Burmese)
- § Women's Empowerment Workshop
- § Women Internship Program
- § Advocacy and participation in the communities

## Acronyms and abbreviations

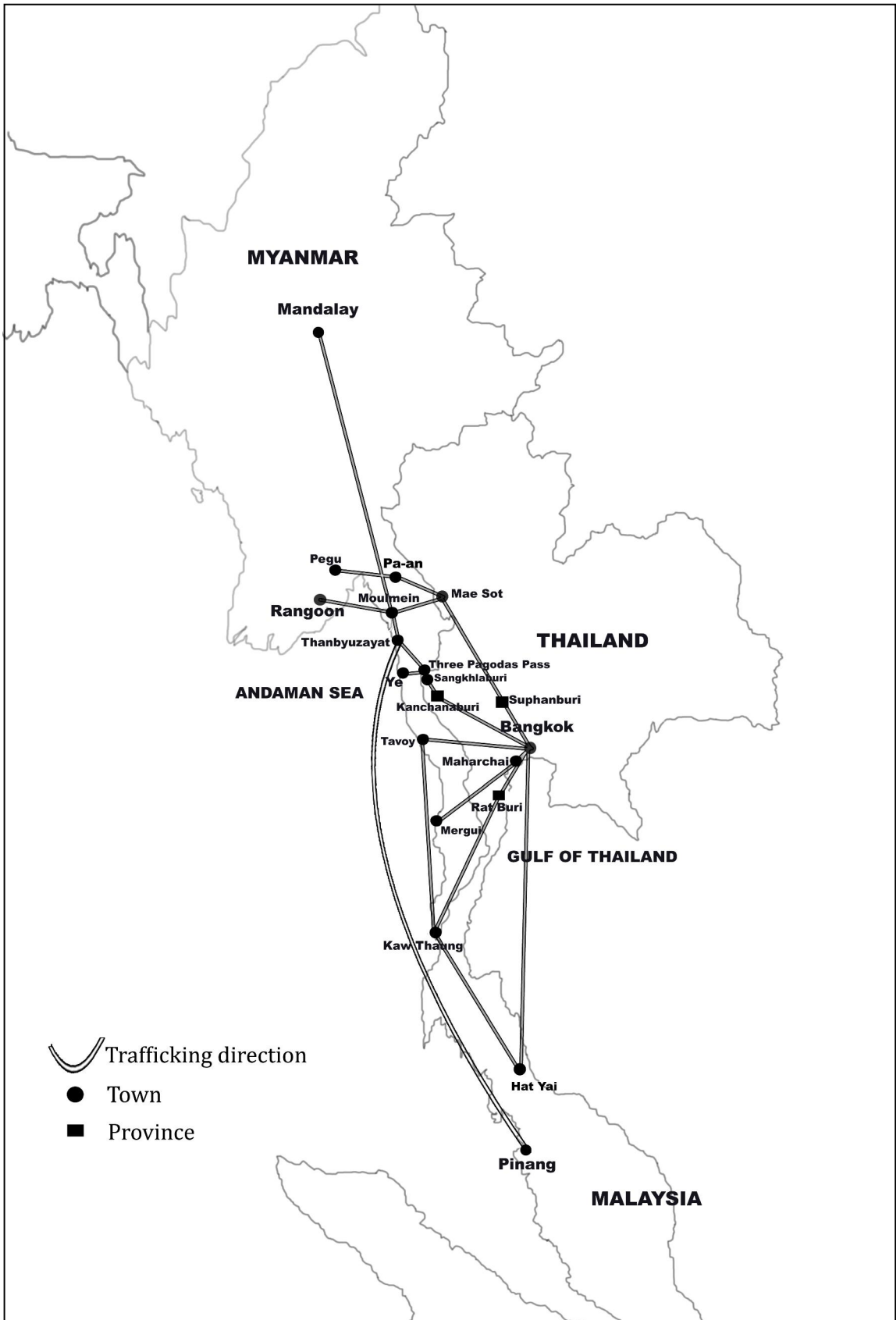
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
COMMIT	Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking
EAT	Emergency Assistance Team
GONGOS	Government Organized Non-Governmental Organizations
HURFOM	Human Rights Foundation of Monland
IMNA	Independent Mon News Agency
JHU CPHHR	Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Human Rights
KWAT	Kachin Women's Association of Thailand
KWO	Karen Women's Organization
MMCWA	Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association
MWAF	Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation
NLD	National League for Democracy
NMSP	New Mon State Party
NGOs	Non- governmental Organizations
SHRF	Shan Human Rights Foundation
SWAN	Shan Women's Action Network
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
TPP	Three Pagodas Pass
TPDC	Township Peace and Development Councils
TVPA	Trafficking Victims Protection Act
UN	United Nation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USDA	Union Solidarity and Development Association
USDOS	United States Department of State
WCRP	Woman and Child Rights Project
WLB	Women's League of Burma

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report documents sexual trafficking and human rights abuses committed against Burmese women and children from 19 Townships in Mon State, Karen State, Tenasserim Division, Pegu Division, Rangoon Division and Mandalay Division.

From 2004 to July 2009 the (Mon) Woman and Child Rights Project (WCRP)—Southern Burma documentation program compiled 40 separate incidents totaling 71 victims. This number represents only a small percentage of the instances of sexual trafficking from Burma to Thailand and other bordering nations, though the case studies of this report provide an important lens through which to view the present-day situation.

Sexual trafficking and related human rights abuses are pervasive and arguably growing problems systematized by a harsh economic reality under the military rule of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

Whereas the illegitimate junta has become a signatory of anti-trafficking protocols from the United Nations and founded internal regulatory committees to deal with such issues, the last decade has seen flagrant corruption along the border of Burma and Thailand.

Government-organized NGOs dedicated to defending the 'rights' of its people serve more as roadblocks than as catalysts for social advancement and equitable access to state resources.

Facing a broken educational system most likely to betray them, women and girls inside Burma are left with few employable skills and must seek money in any way they can. A reeling marketplace stunted by the government's economic mismanagement, increased militarization in rural and especially border areas, and the ear-ringing echoes of Cyclone Nargis and price fluctuations from a global economic downturn leave the women of the mainly-agrarian regions of Southern Burma with a glaring ultimatum: migrate or starve.

The draw of being able to send money back to their home country in the form of remittances often cannot be tempered even by stories of corrupt traffickers, arrests, or dangerous and abusive living conditions upon arrival.

Most of the incidents detailed in this report point to violent sexual abuses that took place during the trafficking process or upon arrival in Thailand, Malaysia, and other destinations. The interview subjects often narrate the types of factory and domestic jobs they were promised to contrast the illegal sex work and other exploitive labor they were forced to perform.



## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The (Mon) Woman and Child Rights Project—Southern Burma in collaboration with the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) make the following recommendations:

### **To the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC):**

1. To immediately stop its militarization program throughout Burma, implement a nationwide ceasefire and withdraw all Burma Army troops from the ethnic areas;
2. To fully implement the resolutions on Burma adopted by the UNHCR since 1992.

### **To the Royal Thai Government:**

1. To provide protection and allow humanitarian assistance to civilians who have fled from human rights abuses in Burma, and allow the UNHCR to operate freely and extend its activities for the protection of the refugees from Burma who suffer from systematic persecution;
2. Recognize the indebtedness of the Thai economy to migrant labor and thus broaden the opportunities for legal migration both for humanitarian and economic reasons;
3. Use your role as an important member of ASEAN to demand that the SPDC hold genuine political dialogue with the pro-democracy opposition, including the National League for Democracy (NLD) and non-Burman ethnic minorities.

### **To members of ASEAN:**

1. To raise the issue of state-sponsored sexual violence in Burma with the SPDC, based on its obligations under the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN region which was signed by the SPDC on June 30, 2004;
2. In order to end state-sponsored sexual violence, to use economic and diplomatic means to pressure the SPDC to begin a process of meaningful political reform, and to actively support the efforts of the UN and other key stakeholders to achieve peace, human rights and democracy in Burma.

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### To the international community:

1. To call for UN bodies to authorize comprehensive sanctions against the regime including an arms embargo until genuine democratic reform takes place in Burma;
2. To continue providing cross-border humanitarian relief alongside civilian protection;
3. To provide economic assistance to the civilians of Burma without the pretext of awaiting political regime change;
4. To coordinate with Burma's regional neighbors, particularly ASEAN members, to pressure the SPDC to begin a process of meaningful political reform, which will lead to a restoration of democracy and the rule of law for all residents of Burma, with the meaningful inclusion of ethnic minorities.



**Women trafficked awaits at a Thai immigration office**

### 3. INTRODUCTION

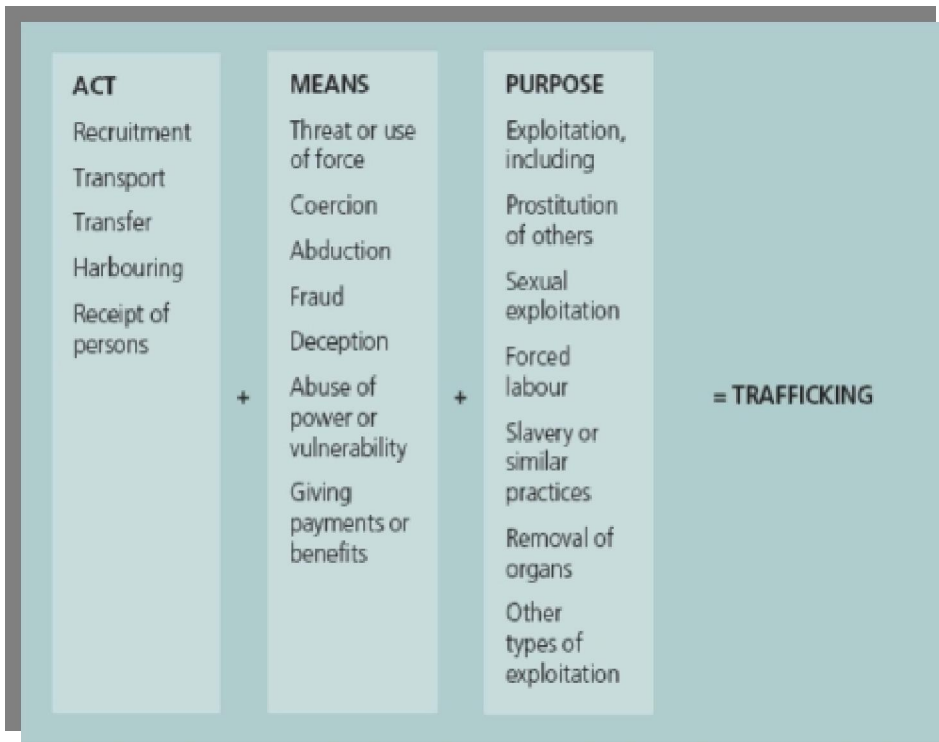
This report was compiled by the (Mon) Woman and Child Rights Project (WCRP)—Southern Burma documentation program. Since the WCRP was set up in 2002, it has constantly monitored the rights of women and children in the Southern part of Burma (Mon State, Karen State and Tenasserim Division), with the objective of exposing continuing violations of their rights by the current military regime in Rangoon (Yangon), the first city and former capital of Burma (Myanmar), even after it ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), both of the United Nations.

Burma has been under the control of a military junta since the Ne Win 1962 coup d’etat. After the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) was reconstituted as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) in 1997, the systematic human rights abuses by the Burmese regime continued uninterrupted in both rural and urban settings.

This report will focus on human trafficking in and around Southern Burma and Rangoon, especially on persons trafficked across the border into Thailand and Malaysia. Many international opinions on human

rights conditions inside Burma have been strongly critical, especially in regards to human trafficking.

The United States Department of State (USDOS) again gave Burma a Tier 3 placement, the lowest grade, in their 2006 “Trafficking in Persons Report.”<sup>1</sup> This report states in unequivocal terms: “the Government of Burma does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so.”<sup>2</sup>



Source from USDOS

The United Nations

<sup>1</sup> *Trafficking in Person Report*, Office of The Under Secretary for Global Affairs, US Department of State (USDOS), June 2006.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

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Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) denotes three fundamental elements of Human Trafficking, or Trafficking in Persons.<sup>3</sup> These elements effectively corroborate many of the findings of this report and form the structure of the *Victim Narratives and Explanation of Abuses* section of this report:

**ACT:** Recruitment, transport, transfer, harboring, receipt of persons

**MEANS:** Threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, giving payment or benefits

**PURPOSE:** Exploitation, including prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery or similar practices, removal of organs, other types of exploitation

Further, the USDOS Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (TVPA) defines “severe forms of trafficking”<sup>4</sup> as:

- a. sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- b. the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Both of these categories of trafficking and abuse are frequently seen in the case studies of this report as well as in reports by other human rights documentation groups. The growth of local human rights groups and civil society organizations along the Thailand-Burma border after the 1988 pro-democracy uprising in Burma has led to increased documentation of human rights violations, including rape and sexual trafficking. Examples are given below:

- In 2002, the Shan Human Rights Foundation and Shan Women’s Action Network (SWAN) produced “License to Rape” which compiled information and instances of rape committed by the Burmese army troops between 1996-2001.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2004, the Karen Women’s Organization published “Shattering Silences” documenting incidents of rape by the Burmese army in Karen areas.<sup>6</sup>
- WCRP published a report in July 2005—“Catwalk to the Barracks”—that documented sexual slavery and violence in Mon areas.<sup>7</sup> The same year the Kachin Women’s Association Thailand published “Driven Away,” which details trafficking on the Sino-Burmese border.<sup>8</sup>

WCRP and the Independent Mon News Agency (IMNA) conducted 40 interviews for this report with the use of stringers from the Independent Mon News Agency (IMNA)

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<sup>3</sup> *What is Human Trafficking?* United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, accessed at: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/what-is-human-trafficking.html>, 6 July 2009.

<sup>4</sup> *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000*, USDOS, 28 October 2000.

<sup>5</sup> *License to Rape: The Burmese military regime’s use of sexual violence in the ongoing war in Shan State*, Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF) & The Shan Women’s Action Network (SWAN), May 2002.

<sup>6</sup> *Shattering Silences*, Karen Women’s Organization (KWO), April 2004.

<sup>7</sup> *Catwalk to the Barracks*, Women and Children’s Rights Project (WCRP), July 2005.

<sup>8</sup> *Driven Away: Trafficking of Kachin Women on the China-Burma Border*, Kachin Women’s Association of Thailand (KWAT), 2004.

between 2003-2009. Survivors and witnesses of trafficking and sexual violations were interviewed, written records from local SPDC authorities and sources close to the New Mon State Party (NMSP) were utilized. WCRP and IMNA have verified all the cases of trafficking and sexual violations included in this report.

Field reporters faced the possibility of arrest by SPDC and Township Peace and Development Councils (TPDC), and difficulties when attempting to conduct interviews with sex workers; some interview subjects had to covertly depart from brothels or, in other cases, give their interviews inside brothels under the auspice of taking the reporters as clients. Interviewees feared the recourse of brothel owners and expressed shame and fear of censure if their families and villages discovered their activities as sex workers. Therefore, WCRP has not included the real names of women and other victims in the detailed cases of human trafficking and sexual violations.

Though the case studies of this report represent only a small sample of abuses in Mon State and in larger Burma by, and with the consent of the military government, they do point to more pervasive abuses throughout the region. It is the goal of this report to continue the documentation and narration of the plight of women inside Burma as well as in the countries and communities that surround it.



#### 4. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

**Background Information:** To understand the context of the case studies of Nowhere Else To Go, this report subsequently discusses a number of subjects germane to Burma's political history. The instances of sexual and human trafficking directly reflect the current situation 'inside' Burma—a tradition of militarization and ongoing human rights abuses exacerbated by recent trigger points and push factors for migration.

**Victim Narratives and Explanation of Abuses:** The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) enumerates three main elements of human trafficking: the Act, the Means, and the Purpose. The case studies of this report both reinforce the analogous abuses documented internationally by the UNODC and represent their own distinct narrative accounts.

**Conclusion:** This section reintroduces some of the main arguments of Nowhere Else To Go and comments on current conditions 'inside' Burma. Burmese women continue to feel the brunt of the worst daily experiences amidst the engendered effects of military rule, economic hardship, insufficient educational opportunity, and an overall lack of health and human services.

**Recommendations:** The recommendations presented at the beginning of this report are reiterated to the Burmese military government, the Royal Thai Government, the members of ASEAN, and the International Community. While WCRP recognizes the invaluable documentation of human rights abuses, it cannot be done in isolation. Structural political change and immediate relief for the people of Burma must remain unwavering priorities at all times.



## 5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### I. History of Political Oppression 'Inside' Burma:

Amongst the various factors that will be discussed in the background section of this report, the most overarching and widely influential is the failure of the Burmese military junta to develop a free and democratic state. The government has incrementally solidified its grip on power, broadening the control

it exerts over the daily lives of the people living 'inside' Burma. Throughout the country the government treats the population as an internal enemy. Years of tension living under military junta control came to a head during democracy protests on August 8, 1988 that resulted in soldiers opening fire and killing at least 3,000 of the hundreds of thousands of unarmed protestors.



**Military regime increases army's presence in Mon State**

The junta again pushed to solidify its control in 1990 when it hosted a democratic election, and then promptly annulled the results after it suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Daw Aung San Suu Kyi-led National League for Democracy (NLD). The international community has attempted to put pressure on the Burmese government in various ways,

including economic sanctions, though these have yet to show real results.

Starting on August 15, 2007, a series of anti-government protests occurred, partly in response to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) removing fuel subsidies, which caused the price of diesel and petrol to suddenly rise as much as 100% in a week. The "Saffron Revolution," as it was named after Monks throughout the country joined the protest, was brutally put down, again focusing international attention on the expansive human rights abuses the junta commits against its people. After outcries over the events of 1988, the 1990 election and the 2007 protests, little has changed structurally for the people of Burma.

### II. Militarization:

Since the 1962 Ne Win coup, life in Burma has become increasingly militarized. As women are not allowed to enter the Burmese army, it has been a highly gendered group from the outset and constitutes anywhere from 400-500,000 members. Rape and sexual violence are some of the many power-building

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tactics employed by the army and related abuses disproportionately target women, especially in ethnic regions where battalions and individual soldiers often have the least accountability.

The SPDC's continuous focus on increased militarization, and complete control over Burmese society has produced a major deficit in civilian quality of life. Little of what could be considered civilian life is in the hands of non-military personnel. The SPDC controls the executive, judicial, and legislative powers, while both active and retired military officers hold most of the top government positions. The continued costs of supporting Burma's internal conflicts and standing military are reflected in 50-plus percent of its GDP. In comparison, the government health ministry receives just 0.8% of the national budget and the educational ministry approximately 1.9%.<sup>9</sup> While Burma's trade surplus for 2007 was \$3.2 billion (largely from the sales of natural resources), a disproportionate amount of this money has gone to weapons, a nuclear reactor, and the surprising relocation of the capitol from Rangoon to the distant, fabricated Naypyidaw, which itself is estimated to have cost \$4 billion.<sup>10</sup>

### III. Military Abuse of Women:

Women have especially suffered at the hands of the government's systemic militarization. The military dominates public and political life, which immediately excludes women from the primary spheres of power in Burma. Additionally, acts of rape and sexual abuse overwhelmingly target the country's women as weapons of political intimidation and cultural destruction.<sup>11</sup> The act of intentional 'blood mixing' is carried out by SPDC forces, in which women are intentionally married and/or impregnated to further the military's Burman ethnic majority 'bloodline'.<sup>12</sup> Because of this lack of support spending for basic elements of civilian life, as well as the direct assault of a heavily militarized state, women are often in the position of having no options but to travel abroad for work, and subsequently become victims of human and sexual trafficking.

### IV. Migration and Land Seizure:

The pervasive seizure of land by the SPDC has had a dramatic effect on Burma's agrarian economy, becoming a *push factor* for the migration of families and especially women. Two recent reports released by the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) document such seizures of land:

- The widely circulated report, "Laid Waste", documents the wide-reaching abuses carried out by SPDC forces during the construction of the Kanbauk to Myaing Kalay gas pipeline, including Land Seizures, Forced or Coerced Labor and Portering, and Arbitrary and Excessive Taxation.
- HURFOM's June report, "A Road Runs Through It", focused on the abuses surrounding the construction of a 13-mile scenic road to Mon State's Setse Beach that cuts through villagers' rubber plantations. This report continues to document the crippling abuse of land

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<sup>9</sup> *Burma Country Report on Human Rights Practices-2006*, Bureau of Human Rights, Democracy and Labor, USDOS, 6 March 2007.

<sup>10</sup> <sup>10</sup> *After the Storm: Voices from the Delta*, Emergency Assistance Team (EAT) & Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Human Rights (JHU CPHHR), March 2009.

<sup>11</sup> *Looking Through Gender Lenses*, Women's League of Burma (WLB), September 2006.

<sup>12</sup> The article reports, 'A few weeks after the military takeover in 1988, a policy of "blood mixing" and Burmanisation of ethnic minorities was initiated which offers monetary bonuses to soldiers who "occupy" Shan women.' "ETHNIC CLEANSING: Rape as weapon of war in Burma," *The Nation*, 31 May 1998.



seizure and ensuing destitution for families unless they have access to remittances sent from abroad, typically Thailand.

## V. Education:

The failure to educate women in Burma increases the likelihood that girls and women will enter into



State school students in Mon State

trafficking scenarios and will be coerced/forced to work in the sex industry. Corroborating the earlier-cited budgetary numbers, World Bank data shows that the regime spends under 1.3% of GDP on education.<sup>13</sup>

Completing their 10<sup>th</sup> grade level and exams is an impossibility for many Burmese women; men are much more likely to receive the modicum

of an education provided by the Burmese governmental system, with lower enrollment and graduation rates in rural settings for both sexes.

Recent UNICEF statistics state that the SPDC claims enrollment of Burmese children at 80%, though the graduation rate of grade 4 is shown to be around 55%,<sup>14</sup> and this already-low rate is even lower for girls. In regards to higher education, female Burmese students are twice as likely to drop out as male students.<sup>15</sup>

Rural families often must make tough decisions regarding their children's schooling based on economic feasibility and who is more likely in Burmese society to be able to irk out a living. Girls are more likely to be pulled from school to help at home on farms, plantations, or in shops.<sup>16</sup>

## VI. Cyclone Nargis:

Both destruction caused by Cyclone Nargis, and the collapse of the local Burmese economy after the worldwide economic crises have become two significant trigger points causing women to migrate.

On May 2, 2008, Cyclone Nargis made landfall in the Irrawaddy Delta in Burma, causing widespread destruction. Nargis killed an estimated 140,000 people and directly affected the lives of some 3.4

<sup>13</sup> *In the Shadow of the Junta*, Women's League of Burma, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> *At A Glance: Myanmar*, UNICEF, accessed at: <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/myanmar.html> on 13 July 2009.

<sup>15</sup> "Growing up under the Burmese dictatorship," International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, August 2003)

<sup>16</sup> *Breaking the Silence*, Women's League of Burma, February 2002.

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others. A joint assessment report released in July 2008 by the UN, Burmese government, and the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN), estimated the damage to be close to \$4 billion, though other groups estimate the cost to be \$10 billion<sup>17</sup> and counting.

Beyond the monetary costs, the region's farms and economic structure were ravaged. The UN food agency says more than 100,000 fishermen have been affected. Fields and rice paddies were flooded with salt water, and filled with fallen trees and debris. To repair their farms and attempt to plant a profitable crop, many farmers have gone heavily into debt to buy much-needed equipment and fuel, often at double the former prices. Having once had lucrative, productive fishing and farming industries, the Irrawaddy Delta economy was (and remains) crippled.



**A family stranded in the Irrawaddy Delta region of Cyclone Nargis affected area.**

The SPDC, suspicious of foreign influence, initially kept foreign aid out of Burma at a crux moment for disaster relief. Though assistance has since been allowed at an inconsistent and insufficient rate, according to one source, "The future remains bleak for many people affected by the cyclone, putting pressure on villagers to find other work, or, in many cases, to move to other locations to restart their lives."<sup>18</sup>

## VII. Recent Economic Collapse:

The Burmese economy was hit hard by ripple effects from the United States' credit and bank crisis, which spread far and wide to international markets. The collapse of the Burmese economy has had drastic secondary and tertiary effects, forcing many women to migrate for work and thus be targeted by traffickers. Rubber dropped to a fraction of its original price. Rice, beans, and fishery products dropped 30% - 40% since 2008, making it more difficult for families in Burma to earn income, and in the case of cyclone victims, to re-establish their lives.

With no disposable income, fewer people are eating at restaurants or purchasing products<sup>19</sup>; many fruits and vegetables remain un-purchased and go to waste. Access to credit has shrunk, especially as farmers

<sup>17</sup> "Asian bloc to handle Burma aid," *Toronto Star*, 19 May 2008.

<sup>18</sup> "Delta Blues," *Irrawaddy News*, Aug 2008.

<sup>19</sup> "Rubber prices continue to plummet; workers face dire economic circumstances as others feel the knock-on effects," *Independent Mon News Agency (IMNA)*, December 2008.

and fishermen, who took out loans for last season's crops in anticipation of pre-slump profits, cannot repay these loans given current prices for their products.<sup>20</sup>

In particular, the freefall of rubber prices over the last year has devastated thousands of rubber farmers. They saw the prices drop to one-third or one-fourth of former prices<sup>21</sup>, with a correlative drop in customers. Farmers and day laborers are forced to turn to alternative sources of income, such as taking children out of school to work or migrating members of their family to countries less devastated—in many cases Thailand.

### **VIII. Women in Burma:**

This report includes case studies discussing women of many different ethnicities and a brief examination is provided here of Mon women's societal role. The experiences of Mon women (a main focus group for this report) serve as microcosms of pervasive discriminatory treatment in other states and divisions, which contribute to migration and trafficking numbers. Even though certain women have fundamentally shaped Burmese politics, and specifically the pro-democracy movement with the figure of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, women still won only 15 out of 485 seats in the 1990 elections. This 3% figure of course represents a result yet to be recognized by the military government, as the systematic and structural discrimination and under-representation of women continues to this day.

### **IX. Role of Women in Mon Society:**

Traditionally, Mon society is male-dominated, like other communities in Burma. This is partly due to the influence of Buddhism, as only men can become monks, who play a leading role in communities in the maintenance of the religion and also of Mon literature and culture.

At the same time, men were usually the main family breadwinners, working in farms and plantations, etc. Since all family members mainly relied on the income from crop production in farms, the heads of the families – men – had the main role in the decision-making process in families.

It was felt that women's main responsibilities were in the kitchen and with their families. Women were expected to respect their husbands and spend most of their time at home. These centuries-long cultural norms meant that women themselves tended to accept that they should not play any role in decision-making processes in the community.

However, owing to the deterioration of the economy under military rule, the role of women has been changing. Nearly all Mon families have their own paddy-growing farms and plantations, taking responsibility to produce crops and seek income. After the start of military rule in Burma in 1962, government authorities collected heavy taxes on crops, causing the majority of Mon people, who are traditional farmers, to face economic hardship, like many other farmers in the whole country.

Both married and unmarried women in Mon communities have therefore increasingly been seeking various forms of employment outside their homes in order to earn income and help their parents and families. Many Mon women who cannot find work in their homes or villages or towns have been forced to migrate to neighboring countries for work. Many of them are working for Thailand's fishing

<sup>20</sup> *Burma: Capitalizing on the Gains*, Refugees International, 18 March 2009.

<sup>21</sup> "Rubber prices continue to plummet; workers face dire economic circumstances as others feel the knock-on effects," *Independent Mon News Agency (IMNA)*, December 2008.

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industries, construction firms, and agriculture industries, where the Thai employers need manual laborers.

Even though more women have been working outside their homes and communities, their increased economic role has not yet been reflected in greater access to decision-making processes in their communities. Women continue to shun the public sphere, and are reluctant to raise issues such as sexual violence publicly.

### **X. Difficulty/Infrequency of Legal Action for Women:**

Many Burmese women report difficulties in reporting sexual abuse and sexual trafficking for a number of reasons, and this negatively impacts the already unlikely chance of legal action addressing these widespread human rights abuses.

*Inside Burma*, many accessible Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and support networks are deeply connected to, if not inseparable from, the military government. For this reason, women know that if they are to report the illegal behavior of any member of the police or army, they are essentially asking their interlocutor to condemn other members of their cohort, or someone oftentimes with deep connections, rather than to punish the girl for her accusation or even arrest her for taking part in the illegal sexual activities or in the act of trafficking.

*Inside Thailand, Malaysia, or other countries*, the Burmese women who have been trafficked (to whatever end) frequently face difficult situations. When they have no legal status as evidenced through work IDs or passports, when they are often paid under-the-table with officially-untaxed wages (though employers often enforce their own 'taxes'), when they frequently speak little or no Thai or other foreign languages, when they have limited access to phones and computers, their resources are scant and contacting the authorities in a foreign country is seen as a risk to their own safety; oftentimes the victims of sexual trafficking are ignorant to the resources of legitimate NGOs who might be willing to help them.

**Multiple IDs:** Traffickers often carry multiple IDs so that any single identity can be hard to track and persecute—this is oftentimes known by the sexual trafficking victims, thus dissuading them from pursuing legal services.

**Shame:** Shame within their villages and fear of their family finding out the kind of work they have been forced to do leads to fewer attempts at communication back to victims' villages and families, and corresponding support networks.

**Unhelpful Village/City Authorities and Bad Reputations for Victims:** Many victims reported members of their own communities, whether village headmen or other authority figures, or even just old friends, unwilling to help or support them. Women told WCRP also that men will not want to marry a girl who has worked as a sex worker, and others will not associate with the victims afterwards.

In response to some of these points mentioned, as well as psychological reasons (that are beyond the scope of this report to analyze), victims of sexual trafficking find it difficult and oftentimes unhelpful to contact figures of authority to help them and to bring to justice the traffickers. In addition, this section reaffirms the belief that sexual trafficking in and around Burma is more pervasive than just the cases of this report, as many others cases have gone, and continue to go, unreported and unaddressed.



## XI. *GONGOs* and Burma's "Adoption" of International Anti-trafficking Laws:

The Burmese military government utilizes a variety of self-run community organizations meant to address some of the population's sustained concerns and heavily-felt deficiencies in domestic social services. They are largely viewed by the international community as puppet organizations, or Government Organized Non-Governmental Organizations (GONGOs), not representing any true concern other than establishing and expanding the legitimacy of the junta Generals with an unwavering focus toward the 2010 elections.

Through the proliferation, required membership and village/town support of Burma's GONGOs, the SPDC also seeks to improve its image and gain credibility as a sympathetic government. The fact that these organizations administer and administrate a large percentage of aid and social welfare programs to the people of Burma ensures the continuance and even exacerbation of their pervasive suffering of human rights abuses.

Some of the organizations include: the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA), the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (MWAFF), the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association (MMCWA), and the Myanmar Red Cross. The state has applied heavy pressure for membership and, in a 2007 order, the SPDC demanded that more than 90% of the people be involved in one of these organizations.<sup>22</sup>

Though the MWAFF theoretically deals with cases of trafficking for women and children and has created committees at every community level, from cities to some of the smallest villages, the Kachin Women's Association-Thailand (KWA) mentioned in a 2005 report that these committees "are usually led by wives of SPDC personnel."<sup>23</sup> The report also mentioned how oftentimes the MWAFF takes no action after they have received a complaint.

Similarly, a National Plan of Action for Trafficking Women and Children and a national taskforce was created in Burma in 1998, though few examples of unbiased help have come in over the years.

Hypocritically, in 2004, Burma became a signatory for an anti-trafficking UN protocol<sup>24</sup>, even as trafficking and related abuses flagrantly continued. The KWA added in their report, "the regime has gained support from various UN agencies, foreign governments and NGOs for its anti-trafficking programs, and in October 2004, the regime hosted the meeting of the six-nation Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) in Rangoon."<sup>25</sup>

WCRP sources have actually indicated the level of border corruption going up inside Burma, as anti-trafficking laws, though technically on the books, are frequently ignored. Oftentimes border officials are bribed to get around these laws, thus reinforcing bribery and extortion, and decreasing the possibility for other types of migration or travel *other* than through trafficking.

With the predominance of Burmese GONGOs, it remains difficult for other NGOs to maintain autonomy and access, and the perceived conformity of the SPDC to international laws and protocols remains a dangerous misconception that simmers the pot of cross-border trafficking, allowing it to boil with the slightest change of internal or external pressure.

<sup>22</sup> *Village Agency*, Karen Human Rights Group (KHRG), November 2008.

<sup>23</sup> *Driven Away: Trafficking of Kachin Women on the China-Burma Border*, KWAT, 2004.

<sup>24</sup> *United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transitional Organized Crime*, UN, 2000.

<sup>25</sup> *Driven Away: Trafficking of Kachin Women on the China-Burma Border*, KWAT, 2004.

## 6. VICTIM NARRATIVES AND EXPLANATION OF ABUSES

Having discussed some of the background information of the political history, the push factors, and the trigger points for migration (especially amongst women), this report now focuses on the enumeration of the different parts of the trafficking process, with special attention paid to women.<sup>26</sup>

Our case studies revealed narratives relevant in structure and content to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's three elements of Human Trafficking: Act, Means, and Purpose. Applicable subsections are included to further detail and categorize excerpts from WCRP interviews with victims.

In many case studies the victims' own voices are used alone and, in others, a mixture of reporters' narration and victims' voices.

**Structure of case study presentation is as follows:**

*Case Number, Age, Hometown, Township, State or Division*

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<sup>26</sup> It is important, of course, to acknowledge that men are also illegally trafficked alongside women, as evidenced through many other reports and news stories, though the elements leading to sexual trafficking (predominantly of women) remains the focus of this report.

**A. The Act:**

*“Recruitment, transport, transfer, harboring, receipt of persons”*

**Overview:** Women in Southern Burma frequently find themselves in situations lacking agency and economic opportunity. They have little or no formal education, few employable skills, and encounter a functionally non-existent job market. Still, when they are faced with the burdens of providing for themselves, their families, and helping to pay off debts incurred from low market prices for goods or else money owed for rebuilding farms, plantations, and shops post-Cyclone Nargis, they must look for opportunities wherever they exist.

The rumors of work abroad in Thailand and other neighboring countries whisper the possibility of stable jobs and remittances sent back to family members inside Burma. For these reasons and many others, women seek out a way to travel. Without any legal means of doing so (including the lack of necessary SPDC-issued travel documents), they are introduced to, approached by, or seek out a trafficker. What ensue are human rights abuses ranging from the rape of children to forced sex work to egregious physical violence.

**I. Promise of Good Jobs and High Living Standard**

When Burmese women and children encounter a trafficker, many narrate the promises made about good jobs and higher living standards in other cities or countries.

Case 10, 35-years-old, Pegu Town, Pegu Division:

*Before we came here, my husband and I worked in Myawaddy Town as day-workers. One day, we met with a broker in Myawaddy and he persuaded us to work in Bangkok. So we appreciated the opportunity to work there...when we arrived in Bangkok, the broker transferred us to another broker, whose name is Ko Win, from Ye Phyu Township, Tenasserim Division. Ko Win promised us that we could work as a couple and that he could provide us with a job at an agricultural site in Damnoen Saduak District Ratchaburi Province.*

Case 11, 20-45-years-old, Pegu Town, Pegu Division:

*In December 2007, a woman from Hneepadaw village, Mudon Township, Mon State suggested that I could work in Maharchai and promised that she would be able to provide a job at a sewing machine shop and that we would all be able to stay together. There was a group of ten female migrant workers including me from the same town that were going to go.*

Case 21, 16-years-old, Thirimyine quarter, Moulmein City, Mon State:

*She said that I was not gaining anything by staying there, and that I had better come with her to work in Three Pagodas Pass (TPP). There are many factories in TPP on the Thai side of the border, such as sewing and shoes factories. The factories often need employees and I could get*

## NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

*a job at one of them. One of my aunts is also living in TPP on the Burmese side, so I decided to come with the broker and left my elder sister there. I figured that if I could find a better job and earn a good income, I would ask my elder sister to work with me.*

## II. Paid Transportation and Promise of Safe Passage

In many cases women reported being confronted with a high cost of travel to arrive at their future worksites as a consistent, fundamental element in the trafficking process. Oftentimes, the trafficker offered to cover these costs, and then be paid back after they began working. As most of the women seeking employment in another city or village had little money, they were forced to enter into debt with traffickers on the perceived legitimacy of credit. The traffickers also promised safe travel conditions.

Case 2, 15-49-years-old, Tanawkjun and Ywalaykwethit village, Theinzayat Town, Kyaikhtow Township, Mon State:

*A trafficker said to them that the transportation cost is 25,000 baht for each person and that after they get the job in six months they can pay back the transportation cost, and if they get a good job they can pay back the transportation cost in only three months.*

Case 20, 20-years-old, Yankin Township, Rangoon Division:

*We are very poor and didn't have any money to pay for the travel costs. The broker said that it would cost 7 million kyat, and an additional 50,000 kyat to pay for getting by all the checkpoints. She said she would cover our transportation costs, and that she would just take money from our salary once we were working. The broker also gave our family 1 million kyat before we departed.*

Case 3, 17 & 23-years-old, Nyaunglaypin village, Pegu Town, Pegu Division:

*He [the trafficker] said that in Bangkok there were many good jobs and if we both wanted to go he would send for us 6,000 baht for our transport fees.*

Case 12, 19-years-old, Ye Town, Mon State:

*The broker said that it cost 9,000 baht to cover traveling expenses, but I didn't have to pay immediately. She said I could pay after I got a job, and that after one or two months I could pay my entire loan.*

Case 13, (17, 22-years-old & 2 of unknown ages), Thaketa Township, Rangoon Division:

*She [the trafficker] told me that TPP has many factories and I would be able to earn 50,000 kyat a month. I would first have to give her 50,000 kyat for covering the costs of travel, or she would be willing to take it from my salary when I was paid.*

Case 19, unknown age, Moulmein City, Mon State:

*My wife and I agreed to pay 8,000 baht each to a 40-year-old broker from Hnikayin village, Ye township, for transportation from Kawthaung town to Maharchai, Thailand.*



Case 21, 16-years-old, Thirimyine quarter, Moulmein City, Mon State:

*The broker Ma Htay Htay Oo paid for my transportation and food costs to get there, saying after I got a job I could pay her back.*

## B. The Means

*“Threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, giving payment or benefits”*

**OVERVIEW:** Having entered into the trafficking process, whether by choice, force or circumstance, women confront a variety of abuses and threats that are illegal and inhumane. This section focuses on five different categories and strategies of abuse and control inherent in the means of Burmese human trafficking. It especially examines detailed WCRP case studies of women sold into sex work and sexual slavery.

### I. Owing Money

#### IA. Working Off Debt:

After undergoing the trafficking process, many of the victims reported instances of powerlessness and forced repayment for the transportation costs and trafficking fees. Sometimes this led to a type of employment they did not anticipate or desire.

Case 5, 18-years-old, Kawkareik Township, Karen State:

*The Thai boss whose house I worked at would not allow me to leave until my debt was totally paid.*

Case 7, 17-years-old, Naungkharshay village, Waw Township, Pegu Division:

*When I arrived in Thailand, Ko Lay, the trafficker, didn't find a job for me as he had promised. Instead Ko Lay transferred me to another trafficker, Ma Khin Hla, his sister in law, and also paid 25,000 baht to her. Ma Khin Hla found a job for me at the Kawsamut Seafood factory in Maharchai. I had to work there until I repaid my entire loan.*

Case 12, 19-years-old, Annawar quarter, Ye Town, Mon State:

*She [the trafficker] and a man came to me and told me to work as a sex worker. I did not want to do this, but the trafficker asked, if I didn't do this work how could I pay her back for my traveling cost?*

Case 15, 22-years-old, Shwe Pyi Thar Township, Rangoon Division:

*I hate this job and I would much prefer any work like normal people. But I am still stuck in this debt, and I have to still work off 2,000 baht. My husband comes every day and requests the money from me, and if I do not pay him he beats and threatens me.*

Case 21, 16-years-old, Thirimyine quarter, Moulmein City, Mon State:

*The next morning she [her aunt] asked me again to prostitute myself, and if I didn't agree she said that "You are not allowed to stay with me and I will no longer pay for your food and you have to find the 10,000 baht to pay me back." I said nothing and just kept crying.*

Case 25, 16-years-old, Mee Khaut market, Rangoon City, Rangoon Division:

*The broker Daw San Aye told me that she would send me to Rangoon unless I paid her the money back. I asked her to please wait a little while longer, for me to find a job where I would be able to pay her, she refused my request and she forced me to work as a prostitute.*

## IB. Unfair Wages and Labor Practices:

While attempting to pay off their debts for transport, food, lodging, or anything else, many of the case studies reveal predatory wage deflation, the demand for long hours; overall, they experienced illegal labor practices and asset management.

Case 2, 15-40-years-old, Tanawjkun village and Ywalaykwethit village, Theinzayat Town, Kyaikhtow Township, Mon State:

*The eight victims had been forced to work 7-day workweeks of 19-hours per day, for the last 3 months. Though they had agreed to work off a 25,000 baht debt to the trafficker who transported them to Thailand, they were being given only a fraction of the legal and fair working wage.*

Case 5, 18-years-old, Kawkareik Township, Karen State:



**A woman works long hours and receives low pay.**

*She [the trafficker] sent me to a wealthy Thai individual's house to be employed as a domestic worker. The house owner agreed to pay 3,000 baht for my monthly salary. Ma Dut took 2,000 baht per month for two years and she left me there.*

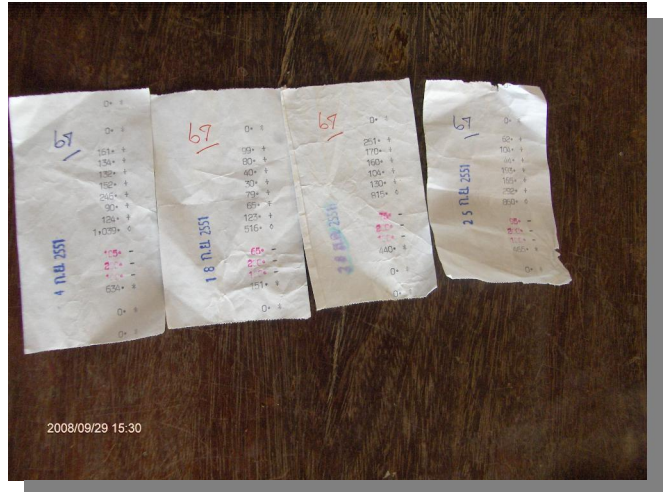
Case 7, 17-years-old, Naungkharshay village, Waw Township, Pegu Division:

*Ma Khin Hla kept all my salary except for 400 baht, which she paid me once per month. It was uncomfortable to live there and I often didn't have enough food.*

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Case 19, unknown age, Moulmein City, Mon State:

*We got a job as he [the trafficker] promised, but we had to work day and night without being told how much we were earning. The broker would only give us 50 baht per week to each of us. Getting this little money in payment, we knew the broker was taking advantage of us...*



## II. Lack of Language/ID Cards

### IIA. Not Speaking Thai Language:

**A worker's salaries clips for a month**

Many of the WCRP case studies indicate language problems for the victims of sexual trafficking, thus reinforcing a culture of powerlessness and a lack of social capital.

Case 3, 17 & 23-years-old, Nyaunglaypin village, Pegu Town, Pegu Division:

*I couldn't speak Thai. Only the boss and his wife lived there.*

Case 5, 18-years-old, Kawkareik Township, Karen State:

*I could not speak Thai and I could not communicate with any people. The Thai boss didn't allow me to use the phone or to communicate with my sister.*

Case 29, 18-years-old, Karen State:

*Mi L—O— was too afraid to tell anyone about her sister's rape and possible murder. She could not leave, as she was unable to speak Thai and had no friends in the area at the time.*

### IIB. No ID cards:

Case 18, 25-years-old, Inn Wa Town, Mandalay Division:

*I was in the hospital for three or four days before I was in good enough condition for the people from the NGO to come get me and take me to their safe house. When I am completely healed they will send me back to Burma because I didn't have a work permit card to work here legally.*

Case 27, 19-years-old, hometown unknown:

*At first, I traveled with a truck from Three Pagodas Pass to Thailand as a migrant worker, but I did not have an ID. I was arrested and spent 48 days in Thong Phaphum Town Jail.... I do not have any ID or legal documents so I cannot go out.*

Case 30, 12-years-old, Ye Township, Mon State:

*...the Burmese workers were also worried about being arrested, as some of them did not possess a work permit card.*

### III. Use/Threat of Violence, Rape

While traveling alone and removed from friends, family and any other resources, nearly all the victims in our case studies reported experiencing violence, rape, or both. Some reported agreeing to become sex workers only after being physically assaulted or threatened with violence.

Case 12, 19-years-old, Ye Town, Mon State:

*She threatened me saying she would tell the police to arrest me and put me in jail. I was so afraid, so I had to agree to this job. I now work in the sex industry at TPP on the Thai side of the border.*

Case 13, (17. 22-years-old & 2 of unknown ages), Thaketa Township, Rangoon Division:

*Four days ago we were gang raped by a group that came in while Ko Sai was away from home. Seven people came to our house with a car and caught us. After that they gagged us, tied our hands, and violently raped me and my friend. I think they raped me almost 6 times.*

Case 15, 22-years-old, Shwe Pyi Thar Township, Rangoon Division:

*Despite my choice to move with him, he sold me for 7,500 baht to the Thai prostitute owner Mr. Nam in TPP on Thai soil. I didn't expect this and didn't realize until I was already sold to the brothel. I was upset with this and told him I would not go. But he beat me and tortured me every day until I gave in. Because of this, I have to work as a prostitute, until I repay the 7,500 baht that my husband sold me to the owner for.*

Case 29, 18-years-old, Karen State:

*Mi L—O—, from Karen state, had been working illegally in Surat Thani Province, Thailand as a domestic worker along with her older sister, 23-year-old Mi M—. The sisters had left Burma to avoid Mi M—'s forced marriage. Then, in 2008, Mi M— was raped by their boss, Mr. Suu Ree, and became pregnant but the young women were too frightened of him to take any action.*

Case 18, 25-years-old, Inn Wa Town, Mandalay Division:

*He then tried to rape me and I tried to escape, but unfortunately he caught me and he beat my head though I kept fighting and struggling to run away. At one point I got free and I tried to escape via the balcony, since the room was on the second floor. As I was going to get down, he grabbed my hair and I scratched his leg, the pain of which caused him to let go of me. However I fell off the balcony and broke my backbone.*

Case 1, 24-years-old, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State:

*In May 2008, a Burman man persuaded a 24-year-old single woman from Thanbyuzayat Township to migrate to Malaysia to work in his store. Upon arrival in Malaysia, she was told that he could no longer afford to employ her. Instead, everyday, she was held down with robes and raped by the man. "After three months of this horrendous abuse, she became pregnant*

## NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

*from the rapist's assaults," said her uncle. The man then forced her to abort her pregnancy using a medical treatment that caused her a great deal of physical pain.*

Case 6, 17 & 22-years-old, Thaton Township, Mon State:

*The Thai broker sent a taxi driver to pick us up, whereupon he drove us to a building in an isolated area. The Thai brokers and taxi drivers had formed a collaborative group. When we arrived, it was very silent and they were the only ones there. The group then gang raped us.*

Case 8, 18 & 19-years-old, Moulmein City, Mon State:

*We had walked for about an hour when he stopped me and made me wait in the forest. He went away, but then when he came back he was drunk. He was rude to me, and then forced me to have sex with him. I refused at first, but he pointed his knife at me as a threat. There was nothing I could do. I had to do whatever he liked me to do for him. Of course I tried to escape from him, but I couldn't, and he raped me three times.*

## IV. Control of Possessions and Forced Silence

The sex traffickers use many different tactics aimed at reinforcing their own power and maintaining the powerlessness of the victims. These range from taking money, phones and other possessions, to keeping the victims under lock and key, and preventing communication between victims and between victims and outsiders.

### IVA. Preventing communication:

Case 25, 16-years-old, Mee Khaut market, Rangoon City, Rangoon Division:

*During the trip, they would not allow us to speak with each other [they said] due to security concerns.*

Case 20, 20-years-old, Yankin Township, Rangoon Division:

*At first they kept us cut off, and did not allow us to contact our families, but after two months we were allowed to call them. However when we made calls to our families, they put someone else on the line and they would listen in to make sure we did not give them the details of what was going on. If I went outside two people were assigned to follow me. My family doesn't know I am working as a prostitute. I just told them I am working a regular job.*

### IVB. Controlling possessions and/or living situation:

Case 18, 25-years-old, Inn Wa Town, Mandalay Division:

*When I arrived, he said he would hold onto my mobile phone, which immediately made me suspicious.*

Case 10, 35-years-old, Pegu Town, Pegu Division:

*They didn't allow us to go shopping and forced us to buy everything from them at double cost of what it should have been. If we didn't follow what they said they would punish and intimidate us. They sent my husband to work in the fishing industry and took his salary directly from the boss, leaving my husband there against his will.*

Case 11, (group of 10 women 20-45 years-old), Pegu Town, Pegu Division:

*The boss was worried we would run away and when they were out they locked the house from the outside.*

Case 19, unknown age, Moulmein City, Mon State:

*The employer didn't allow employees to go outside of the factory. Even when one of us became sick, the employer didn't let us see a doctor. In dire cases where a person needed a medical check in order to go to the hospital, the employer said he would cut 200 baht off the person's salary for missing a day off work, despite us not being paid directly.*

*I realized that many of the employees had been essentially sold to the employer – they would be brought in a group, and the broker would come and collect their wages, so they would not have enough to leave, and then the employer would then abuse them.*

#### **IVC. Threats of spreading rumors:**

Case 24, 19-years-old, Thanbyuzayat Town, Mon State

*The broker said she would spread rumors in my hometown about us working as prostitutes in Thailand.*

#### **V. Corruption and Sexual Violence by Authorities, Men Posing as Authorities**

Contributing to an arguably impossible situation for many victims of sexual trafficking is the corrupt, violent behavior of authorities such as police and army personnel. Others pose as authorities so they will be 'trusted' and then feel able to act with anonymity and impunity.

Case 19, unknown age, Moulmein City, Mon State:

*On March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Maharchai police raided that factory. The polices didn't want to raid the factory even though they knew the employer abused and took advantage of the workers, because the employer had connections with corrupt members of the police force, however the NGOs put pressure on them and they had to follow up on the husband's tip.*

Case 27, 19-years-old, hometown unknown:



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*After being arrested for two weeks, they called me out with another two girls and promised that they would free us from jail and also provide us with jobs cleaning dishes at a restaurant. They sent us to a houseboat hotel and three policemen came and picked up us by motorbike. We didn't understand Thai and we didn't know what they said to us...*

*One policeman forced me to have sex with him although I refused; he was so strong and I couldn't do anything to keep him off of me. He forced me to have sex in different ways and I was in a lot of pain. I was afraid and cried.*

Case 28, 27-years-old, hometown unknown:

*A group of police arrested 3 women, from whom they seized 4,000 to 5,000 baht and they molested the women. According to one of the victims, the group all had work permits. "Even though we held the legal documents, we were arrested and also sexually abused by them. They said that they were police, but they didn't wear police uniforms," said the victim, 30-years-old. "We are mothers and have children, but the police touched our breasts and our bodies. I think not only us but also young ladies face sexual abuses like that."*

Case 30, 12-years-old, Ye Township, Mon State:

*A 12-year-old Burmese migrant child was gang raped by five Thai men posing as police in Minburi Sub-district, Bangkok.*

*"During the rape she nearly lost conscious because of pain. After they raped her, they left both children on the roadside with 100 baht to get a ride back home. The girl was so terrified she couldn't speak," said the victim's aunt.*

Case 27, 19-years-old, hometown unknown:

*Victims had been imprisoned for not having Thai ID cards. "In jail, they did not serve enough food and we often had to eat food that was expired. When the jailers won at gambling and were in a good mood, we would eat good food, but if they lost we would only get to eat expired food."*



## C. The Purpose

*"Exploitation, including prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery or similar practices, removal of organs, other types of exploitation"*

**Overview:** This section further explains some of the different types of work the women of this report were coerced into doing. Already mentioned were some the tactics used to keep the women scared and willing to perform the illegal and profitable services while typically receiving very little or no money in return.

### I. Forced to become Sex Workers

Many of the WCRP case studies provide narratives of women sold as commercial sex workers. There were 9 cases describing women and children forced to become sex workers in Three Pagodas Pass alone, a black-market hotspot on the border of Thailand and Mon State (Burma). In these instances, the traffickers typically guaranteed that they were going to provide jobs at restaurants and factories.

Case 13, (17. 22-years-old & 2 of unknown ages), Thaketa Township, Rangoon Division:



*At first, I did not realize that I had been sold to work at brothel because a broker woman said we would get a job at a factory. However, after a few days the owner U San Yuu forced us to work for him as a sex worker and he told us to work until we paid off that debt.*

Case 17, 23-years-old, South Okkalapa Township, Rangoon Division:

*I got a job at TPP working in a restaurant on the Thai side of the border, and the owner gave me an advance of 4,000 baht. The restaurant owner provided me everything including accommodation, food, and other additional materials. We had 6 people working in the shop, and we mostly worked as waitresses. However, after*

**A group of women forced to work as sex workers.**

*starting out, the owner told me to sleep with man and I refused. However, she forced me to work every day; in the end there was nothing I could do because I had no money, I didn't know anyone, and had nowhere to go—but my life has taken a turn for the worse because I now work as a sex worker.*

## II. Virginity Sold

Case 12, 19-years-old, Ye Town, Mon State:

*I was extremely fearful and very shy about sleeping with a man. In order to keep me from being so shy, the owner forced me to drink beer so I'd be drunk. For the first time ever I had to sleep with a man, I had to sleep with an old Thai man. That is how I lost my virginity that night.*

Case 21, 16-years-old, Moulmein City, Mon State:

*After sunset she and her husband went outside and left me alone. About 10 p.m. I heard someone open the door and I thought that it was them, so I just kept sleeping. But it was not them. It was a 50-year-old man who told me that [the broker] had sold me to him for sex, in exchange for 20,000 baht. I was so afraid I forgot how to shout, and couldn't do anything. I cannot tell you how much suffering I felt. On that night I lost my virginity.*

Case 24, 19-years-old, Thanbyuzayat Town, Mon State

*If I "gave up my virginity" I would get 12,000 baht since it was my first time. I refused to do that... However, we all refused her arrangements, and demanded that they send us home... the next evening she [the broker] lied to us saying that she arranged for a vehicle to take us across the border to Thailand, and divided us four girls into two vehicles. Our driver was Thai and we thought that we were going to Thailand, but instead he drove us to a house and raped us. We could not sleep all night, and the next day he sent us to Ma Win's brothel.*

Case 25, 16-years-old, Mee Khaut market, Rangoon City, Rangoon Division:

*She refused my request and she forced me to work as a prostitute. At first, I was shocked and refused it but she said, "If you lose your virginity to a customer, you could make 15,000 baht, and it will help to get some money for your family as well." Therefore, I decided to risk everything and I told her I would only do it [work as a prostitute] one time. Along with me, the other three girls agreed to do it only once...*

*Well, we found out that they sold us for 30,000 baht per person to Ma Win, who we have to reimburse if we want to leave. I can't go back to my home and I have to work here until my debt is done. I don't want to work here and want to escape, but sadly, I have nobody here who can help me or anyone who I can rely on. I feel like I am living in hell.*

## III. Forced Marriage

Case 8, 18 & 19-years-old, Moulmein City, Mon State:

*[My 18-year-old friend was sold] to a retired Thai policeman as a wife. Daw Than was paid 20,000 baht and gold weighing 45.5 g by the Thai policeman for selling him Ma Cho...He rented a house for her to live in with him and later she gave birth to a daughter. After the birth of their daughter, he abandoned Ma Cho and the child because he had wanted a son. With no money or other possessions she had to work outside to earn a living: she had to work as a hard laborer to pay rent for the house and for enough food to survive.*

#### IV. Forced to Bear a Child

Case 3, 17 & 23-years-old, Nyaunglaypin village, Pegu Town, Pegu Division:

*The wife couldn't have a baby and after I had worked there for five months, I asked her when my debt would be paid, and she said that if I wanted to pay it all off I could have a baby for them. I didn't agree to do this, but the woman got her husband to rape me. I got pregnant and when I was due to have my baby they wouldn't take me to hospital; instead they took me to a small clinic so the birth would be more secret. I gave birth to twin baby boys on February 19<sup>th</sup>, but the boss and his wife only allowed my babies to stay with me for 10 days. After 10 days, the two babies were taken from me and I wasn't allowed to see them anymore.*



**A woman forced to bear a child.**

#### V. Sold to Factories in Thailand

Case 2, (15-49-years-old), from Tanawkjun and Ywalaykwethit village, Theinzayat Town, Kyaikhtow Township, Mon State:

*The eight victims had been forced to work 7-day workweeks of 19-hours per day, for the last 3 months. Though they had agreed to work off a 25,000 baht debt to the trafficker who transported them to Thailand, they were being given only a fraction of the legal and fair working wage.*

Case 7, 17-years-old, Naungkharshay village, Waw Township, Pegu Division:

*I had to work there until I repaid my entire loan. I lived with Ma Khin Saw's sister Ma Khin Hla. Ma Khin Hla kept all my salary except for 400 baht, which she paid me once per month. It was uncomfortable to live there and often we didn't have enough food.*

Case 9, (16-32-years-old), Aungkoung village, Kawa Township, Pegu Division.

*We were placed at a prawn pearling factory and immediately had to work 20-hour days. However hard we worked, we were unable to learn how much money we had earned to pay back the debt because the broker would not allow us to check the balance of our account with the manager. He is not only pushing us to work very hard but also feeding us very terrible food; sometimes it is even expired and smells rotten. With not enough food or rest, we get sick easily but are not allowed to rest and accept medical treatment.*

Case 19, unknown age, Moulmein City, Mon State:

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*At the factory, the employer forced the workers to work from 2 a.m. till 8 p.m. without any days off. The work force was made up of 34 children, 80 men and 103 women.*

### VI. Sold to Restaurants in Burma

In Case 26, a female trafficker sold five male children from Mandalay to a restaurant in Moulmein City, Mon State. In the beginning, the children didn't know that they were sold to the restaurant, though they soon learned this disparaging reality.

Case 26, (10-14-years-old), Mandalay Division:

*"We earn a very small salary of just 6,000 kyat per month and we have very little time to sleep. The employer provides the food but they don't allow us to go to the festivals. We are always busy."*

*After they worked for a month, they asked for their salary from the employer and the employer said that, because they were sold by the trafficker for 100,000 kyat each, they would have to work for one year until their debt was paid off.*

### VII. Unpaid Domestic Work in Thailand

Case 5, 18-years-old, Kawkareik Township, Karen State:

*At that time, she agreed to send me to my older sister, who was working in Thailand. However, she didn't send me to my sister; she sent me to a wealthy Thai individual's house to be employed as a domestic worker. The house owner agreed to pay 3,000 baht for my monthly salary. Ma Dut took 2,000 baht per month for two years and she left me there. I could not speak Thai and I could not communicate with any people.*

Case 11, (20-45-years-old), Pegu Town, Pegu Division:

*My mother and I were trafficked at another Thai boss's house in Maharchai. There were a total of 50 people at that house, and I had to cook and wash the clothes for all the people. In my job I also cleaned mirrors at the office. We would get up early to work and only get to sleep at 11pm...we had to do a lot and we earned very little. Our salary was 100 baht a day between the two of us, from which the broker took 50 baht a day. The boss was worried we would run away and when they were out they locked the house from the outside.*

## 7. CONCLUSION:

Even as international organizations and concerned individuals critically view the humanitarian crises in Burma, illegal trafficking through forced migration, especially leading to sex work, perpetuates with unacceptable frequency.

The lip service paid by Burma's government to address trafficking and sex work provides no reprieve for its people from the exacerbating increase of militarized conditions, especially in rural and border areas.

The flagrant, systematic human rights abuses are sure to continue with a flailing economy and a military junta that refuses to transition toward democratic rule and substantively improve the lives of the Burmese people.

Women have the fewest opportunities for education and work within the structurally oppressive state of Burma, and so any moves toward meaningful aid and eventual regime change must bear in mind this lack of equality.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The (Mon) Woman and Child Rights Project—Southern Burma in collaboration with the Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM) make the following recommendations:

### **To the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC):**

1. To immediately stop its militarization program throughout Burma, implement a nationwide ceasefire and withdraw all Burma Army troops from the ethnic areas;
2. To fully implement the resolutions on Burma adopted by the UNHCR since 1992.

### **To the Royal Thai Government:**

1. To provide protection and allow humanitarian assistance to civilians who have fled from human rights abuses in Burma, and allow the UNHCR to operate freely and extend its activities for the protection of the refugees from Burma who suffer from systematic persecution;
2. Recognize the indebtedness of the Thai economy to migrant labor and thus broaden the opportunities for legal migration both for humanitarian and economic reasons;
3. Use your role as an important member of ASEAN to demand that the SPDC hold genuine political dialogue with the pro-democracy opposition, including the National League for Democracy (NLD) and non-Burman ethnic minorities.

### **To members of ASEAN:**

1. To raise the issue of state-sponsored sexual violence in Burma with the SPDC, based on its obligations under the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN region which was signed by the SPDC on June 30, 2004;
2. In order to end state-sponsored sexual violence, to use economic and diplomatic means to pressure the SPDC to begin a process of meaningful political reform, and to actively support the efforts of the UN and other key stakeholders to achieve peace, human rights and democracy in Burma.

### **To the international community:**

1. To call for UN bodies to authorize comprehensive sanctions against the regime including an arms embargo until genuine democratic reform takes place in Burma;
2. To continue providing cross-border humanitarian relief alongside civilian protection;

3. To provide economic assistance to the civilians of Burma without the pretext of awaiting political regime change
4. To coordinate with Burma's regional neighbors, particularly ASEAN members, to pressure the SPDC to begin a process of meaningful political reform, which will lead to a restoration of democracy and the rule of law for all residents of Burma, with the meaningful inclusion of ethnic minorities.

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APPENDIX 1

No	Date of Trafficking	Age, Gender (M or F), Ethnicity	Perpetrator	Reason to Migrant/ travel	Trafficking destination	Details	Source
		Township of origin					
1	May 2008	24-years-old, F, Mon	Burman man	Migrate to Malaysia to work	Pinang Island, Malaysia	She was raped by a Burman man and she became pregnant.	Her Uncle
		Htinyu village, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon state					
2	January 12, 2009	15& 15& 16& 17&17& 17& 46 & 49 -years-old, 7F, 1M, Burman	Trafficker from Mon State	She would like to work to give money to her daughter and son	Maharchai, Thailand	The eight victims had been forced to work 7-days work weeks of 19 hours per days.	Victims
		Tanawkjun village, Ywalaykwethit village, Theinzayat Town, Kyaikhtow Township, Mon State					
3	March, 2009	17& 23-years-old, 2F, Mon-Burman	Ko Tout, who worked in Mae Sot for many years	Her family is poor and did not have enough income to survive	Bangkok, Thailand	The trafficker sent her to the house of a Thai man and then stole 20,000 baht from the employer without her knowing	Anonym ous
		Nyaunglaypin village, Pegu Town, Pegu Division					
4	June 23, 2008	Both 17-years-old, 2F, Burman	Unknown	For work	Thailand	The trafficker sold her to a brothel in TPP and sold her friend in Mae Sot, and has not been heard from since.	A woman from Three Pagodas Pass who talked to the victim
		Unknown					



No	Date of Trafficking	Age, Gender (M or F), Ethnicity	Perpetrator	Reason to Migrant/ travel	Trafficking destination	Details	Source
		Township of origin					
5	2004	18-years-old, F, Pa.O	Ma Dut, from Khayar village, Pa- an Township, Karen State	To find a good job	Thailand	The trafficker didn't send her to her sister who was working in Thailand: she sent her to a wealthy Thai individual's house to be employed as a domestic worker.	Anonym ous
		Kawkareik Township, Karen State					
6	November 2006	17 & 22-years- old, 2F, Karen	U Shwe Mi, from Karen State	To change jobs	Bangkok, Thailand	The Thai broker sent a taxi driver to pick them up, whereupon drove to a building in an isolated area. The Thai brokers and taxi drivers then gang raped them.	Anonym ous
		Beelin Town, Thaton Township, Mon State					

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No	Date of Trafficking	Age, Gender (M or F), Ethnicity	Perpetrator	Reason to Migrant/ travel	Trafficking destination	Details	Source
		Township of origin					
7	January 2007	17-years-old, F, Burman	Ko Lay, from Mon State	To find a job	Maharchai, Thailand	Ko lay transferred her to another trafficker, Ma Khin Hla, his sister in law, and sold her for 25,000 baht.	Nai Aung Min
		Naungkharshay village, Waw Township, Pegu Division					
8	May 18, 2007	18 & 19-years-old, 2F, Burman	U Soe Thein, from TPP	Her family had a small income, she decided to leave school and migrate to Thailand to work and support her family.	Bangkok, Thailand	The broker let her stay in a hut in the forest. Later he forced her to have sex with him and he raped her three times.	Victim
		Thirimiyine quarter, Moulmein City, Mon State					
9	March 2007	16 & 16 & 17 & 17 & 18 & 32-years-old, 5F, 1M, Burman	Ko Win, from Shwekarnta a village, Kawa Township, Pegu division	To find a job	Maharchai, Thailand	They face a very difficult trip to get to Thailand and immediately had to work 20 hours days.	Victim, 32-years-old
		Aungkoung village, Kawa Township, Pegu Division					

No	Date of Trafficking	Age, Gender (M or F), Ethnicity	Perpetrator	Reason to Migrant/ travel	Trafficking destination	Details	Source
		Township of origin					
10	December 2007	35-years-old, F, Burman  Pegu Town, Pegu Division	Ko Win, from Ye Phyu Township, Tenasserim Division	Wanted to find a good job	Bangkok, Thailand	They had to pay 7,000 baht each to get to Bangkok but the broker transferred them to another broker and he broke his promise.	Victim
11	December 2007	20 & 20& 25& 27& 30& 30& 35& 35& 45 & 45-years-old, 10F, Mon & Burma  Pegu Town, Pegu Division	A woman from Hneepadaw village, Mudon Township, Mon State	They didn't have money and wanted to work as a group	Maharchai & Bangkok, Thailand	When they arrived to Bangkok, he brought them to a Thai house and the employer tried to rape her.	Victim, 25-years-old
12	October 2008	19-years-old, F, Mon-Burman  Ye Town, Mon State	Daw Shin, from Thanbyuzay at Township, Mon State	Find a job to get money for school fees	Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand	She had to give 9,000 baht to the broker for cover traveling expenses; after arriving in Sangkhlaburi, the broker told her to become a sex worker.	Victim

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No	Date of Trafficking	Age, Gender (M or F), Ethnicity	Perpetrator	Reason to Migrant/ travel	Trafficking destination	Details	Source
		Township of origin					
13	February 2008	17 & 22-years-old & 2 of unknown ages, 4F,	Two brokers: One from Moulmein and Ma Aye, from Thanbyuzay at Township	Because of economic problems	Three Pagodas Pass, Thailand	She had to give 50,000 kyat for covering the cost of travel and the broker sold her for 5,000 baht to U San.	Victim, 22-years-old
		Thaketa Township, Rangoon Division					
14	December 2008	21-years-old,F,	A woman from Moulmein	Lack of work and their family food insecurity	Three Pagodas Pass, Thailand	She was sold into the sex industry by the broker for 7,000 baht.	Victim
		Tamwe Township, Rangoon					
15	2008	22-years-old, F, Burman	Ko Kyi Win, from Thanbyuzay at Township	Not enough money to support her family	Three Pagodas Pass, Thailand	Her husband sold her for 7,500 baht to the Thai prostitute owner.	Victim
		Shwe Pyi Thar Township, Rangoon					
16	December 2008	19-years-old, F, Mon-Burman	A woman from Moulmein	Wanted to make more money to help her family	Moulmein, Burma	The broker asked her to work as a prostitute.	Victim
		Pinle Village, Beelin Town, Kyaikhtow Township, Mon State					
17	2008	23-years-old	A woman from Three Pagodas Pass	Her wages were not enough to cover her family's daily expenses	Three Pagodas Pass, Thailand	The broker forced her to work as a prostitute.	Victim
		South Okkalapa Township, Rangoon					

No	Date of Trafficking	Age, Gender (M or F), Ethnicity	Perpetrator	Reason to Migrant/ travel	Trafficking destination	Details	Source
		Township of origin					
18	March 28, 2008	25-years-old, F Burman	Ko Win, from Rangoon	To find a good job	Suphanburi, Thailand	He kept her in a room, grabbed her and beat her.	Victim
		Inn Wa Town, Mandalay Division					
19	2008	Unknown age, F, Burman	#- years-old broker from Ye Township	To find a job	Maharchai, Thailand	They had to pay 8,000 baht each and had to work 2 a.m. until 8 p.m. without any days off.	Ko Win
		Moulmein City, Mon State					
20	2009	20-years-old, F, Burman	Unknown woman	She was very poor and sought work	Three Pagodas Pass, Thailand	She had to work as a prostitute because she was afraid of the broker.	Victim
		Yankin Township, Rangoon Division					
21	January 2009	16-years-old, F, Burman	Ma Htay Htay Oo, from Moulmein City, Mon State	Their family didn't have money to send them to school nor cover the cost of their living expenses	Three Pagodas Pass, Thailand	The broker asked her to work as a prostitute.	Victim
		Thirimyine quarter, Moulmein City, Mon State					
22	March 2009	13-years-old, F, Burman-Muslim	Ma P-P, from Thanbyuzay at Township Mon State	Economic problems	Three Pagodas Pass, Thailand	The broker sold her to a brothel that was owned by U Sein Maung in quarter 4 in Three Pagodas Pass.	Victim
		Thingangyun Township, Rangoon Division					

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No	Date of Trafficking	Age, Gender (M or F), Ethnicity	Perpetrator	Reason to Migrant/ travel	Trafficking destination	Details	Source
		Township of origin					
23	December 2008	21-years-old, F, Burman	Ma Wah, from Dagon Township, Rangoon Division	Economic problems	Three Pagodas Pass, Thailand	The broker sent her to a Thai brothel near bus station (99) Three Pagodas Pass, Thailand	Victim
		Tamwe Township, Rangoon Division					
24	April 2008	19-years-old, F, Mon	Ko Maung, from Aungchanta r quarter, Thanbyuzay at Town, Mon State	Economic problems	Three Pagodas Pass, Thailand	She had to work as a prostitute.	Victim
		Aungchantar quarter, Thanby uzayat Town, Mon State					
25	December 19, 2008	16-years-old, F, Burman	Daw San Aye and Daw Thandar Win, from Rangoon Division	Economic problems	Mae Sot, Thailand	Daw San Aye refused her protests and forced her to work as a prostitute.	Victim
		Rangoon City, Rangoon Division					
26	February 2006	10& 12& 12 & 13& 14-years-old, 5M, Burman	Ma Mi Nge	Unknown	Unknown	They forced to work at the Every Shine restaurant	A woman who talked to the children
		Mandalay Division					

No	Date of Trafficking	Age, Gender (M or F), Ethnicity	Perpetrator	Reason to Migrant/ travel	Trafficking destination	Details	Source
		Township of origin					
27	February 2006	19-years-old, F, Burman	Thai police	To earn a good income and help pay back her mother's debt	Thailand	The policeman forced her to have sex with them.	Naw Baby Tun
		Unknown					
28	November 2008	27-years-old, F, Burman	Thai police	To find a good job and get more income	Thailand	Arrest by fake police and molested.	Mehm Aie Wi Mon
		Unknown					
29	March 9, 2009	18-years-old, F, Karen	Thai employer	To earn a good income to pay back her mother's debt.	Thailand	Ma L—O— sister was raped and she was too afraid to tell anyone about it.	Her friends
		Karen State					
30	May 2, 2009	12-years-old, F, Burman	5 Thai men posing as police	Because of poverty	Thailand	She was gang raped by five Thai men posing as police.	Her aunt
		Taungbon village, Ye Township, Mon State					
31	April 2009	1-year and 3-month, F, Burman	The child's mother	Economic problems	Pa-an Township, Karen State, Burma	Mother forced to sell her daughter.	Source who spoke with the child's mother
		Kyaikhtow Township, Mon State					



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No	Date of Trafficking	Age, Gender (M or F), Ethnicity	Perpetrator	Reason to Migrant/ travel	Trafficking destination	Details	Source
		Township of origin					
32	2006	15-years-old, M, Mon	His uncle	Wanted to go to Thailand for work.	Thailand	His uncle sold him for 20,000 baht to a Thai family. The uncle needed the money to purchase a Thai identity card. His uncle promised the Thai family he would return after one year to pick him up.	Ma Ni
		Kyaukthaung village, Mergui Township, Tenasserim Division					
33	November 2008	19-years-old, F, Tavoy	Mee Mee, from Palauk village, Kalaw Township, Tenasserim Division	Unknown	Thailand	The broker kept the girl with 10 other girls in a room in Maharchai, Thailand. The broker put the girl to work... she was forced to work very long days and she was constantly abused.	Ko Win Zaw
		Palauk village, Kalaw Township, Tenasserim Division					

No	Date of Trafficking	Age, Gender (M or F), Ethnicity	Perpetrator	Reason to Migrant/ travel	Trafficking destination	Details	Source
		Township of origin					
34	December 8, 2008	19-years-old, F, Burman	Ma Dar, from Pa-an Town, Karen State	Unknown	Bangkok, Thailand	The couple who employed her forced her to watch sex movies and then the male employer raped her.	Victim
		Waw Township, Pegu Division					
35	May 5, 2009	27-years-old, F, Burman	Nai Chit Soe, from Kawkhalein village, Kyaikmaya w Township, Mon State	She wanted to go to Thailand to work with her uncle because her family was very poor.	Ratburi, Thailand	A trafficker lied to her about a call from her Uncle; he drove her far from TPP, stopped the bike and tried to rape her.	Mi Khing Thit
		Kwaitkyi village, Tantabin Township, Pegu Division					
36	May 2009	20-years-old, F, Mon	5 Bangkok men posed as Thai police	Unknown	Thailand	They came into her room to find money, took her money (7,000 baht), and one mobile phone. And then they kidnapped the girl and abandoned her.	Mehm Lin
		Kawgo village, Karen State					

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No	Date of Trafficking	Age, Gender (M or F), Ethnicity	Perpetrator	Reason to Migrant/ travel	Trafficking destination	Details	Source
		Township of origin					
37	January 16, 2009	18-years-old, F, Burman	Ko Mon Lay, Aung Aung and Ma Mee Mee from Kawkareik Town	Her family was so poor and she wanted a good job with more income	Thailand	She was raped by a 20-year-old named Aung Ko in her room.	Mehm Lin
		Kawkareik Town, Karen State					
38	June 17, 2009	Both 20-years-old, 2F, Burman	Li Li, Thai woman	She wanted to get more money to support her family	Hat Yai, Thailand	Li Li sold them to a Karaoke shop in Hat Yai City.	Mehm Lin
		Pegu Town, Pegu Division					
39	June 22, 2009	25-years-old, F, Mon	Thai man	Unknown	Thailand	A Thai man knocked on her door and asked for drinking water. She didn't want neighbors to hear his voice, so she closed the door and window and offered him a cupful of water. The man tried to rape her.	Victim
		Settwe village, Mudon Township, Mon State					

No	Date of Trafficking	Age, Gender (M or F), Ethnicity	Perpetrator	Reason to Migrant/ travel	Trafficking destination	Details	Source
		Township of origin					
40	July 2, 2009	15-years-old, F, Mon	Thai driver	She wanted to work in Thailand to make money for her family; her father has advanced cancer and they owe 2 million kyat in medical fees.	Thailand	After the car passed the border checkpoint, the driver tried to abuse her and may have attempted to rape her.	Her friend who crossed the border with her to enter Thailand
		Kawta village, Kawkareik Township, Karen State					

## APPENDIX 2

### 40 Detailed Cases of Trafficking and Related Abuses

#### Case 1

A woman from Mon State was repeatedly raped by a Burman man who had promised her a job at his guesthouse and clothes store on Pinang Island, Malaysia. The woman became pregnant from the man's assaults, and was then forced to abort the child.

Case 1	
Name:	Mi S—A—
Age:	24-years-old
Ethnicity:	Mon
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital Status:	Single
Address:	Htinyu village, Thanbyuzayat Township, Mon State
Location:	Pinang Island, Malaysia
Date:	May 2008

In May 2008, a Burman man persuaded a 24-year-old single woman from Thanbyuzayat Township to migrate to Malaysia to work in his store. Upon arrival in Malaysia, she was told that he could no longer afford to employ her. Instead, everyday, she was held down with robes and raped by the man. "After three months of this horrendous abuse, she became pregnant from the rapist's assaults," said her uncle. The man then forced her to abort her pregnancy using a medical treatment that caused her a great deal of

physical pain.

The perpetrator, a 46-year-old man, is married to the victim's cousin. He is from Rangoon and has two children. "He both rents out rooms and sells clothes on Penan Island," said the victim's uncle.

In the face of this abuse, the victim made repeated attempts to contact her family in Mon State and eventually made contact with them. When her family learned of the full spectrum of abuse she suffered, they approached the wife of the perpetrator, ordering her to release their daughter and threatened to "take the case to the New Mon State Party Township authority if she was not released."

Only after extensive pressure from the victim's family did the perpetrator and his wife release the victim and send her to join relatives living in Maharchai, Samut Sakhon Province, Thailand. When she arrived in Thailand her relatives found she was both mentally and physically distraught. According to her uncle, "She received 20 days of medical treatment in the Maharchai hospital for injuries sustained throughout her forced sexual intercourse, severe torture and the forced abortion."

After receiving medical treatment and recovering some of her strength, the victim found a job at a shrimp company in Maharchai where she earned enough money to pay for her transportation to return home to Mon State.

In December 2008, her uncle confirmed that his niece had arrived home safely and that her family is considering taking legal action against the Burman man.

## Case 2

Eight Burmese human trafficking victims were freed during a raid by Thai immigration authorities in Maharchai, Thailand January 12, 2009. The victims include 2 women and 6 children, ages 15 to 17.

The eight victims had been forced to work 7-day workweeks of 19-hours per day, for the last 3 months. Though they had agreed to work off a 25,000 baht debt to the trafficker who transported them to Thailand, they were being given only a fraction of the legal and fair working wage.

“A trafficker said to them that the transportation cost is 25,000 baht for each person and that after they get the job in six months they can pay back the transportation cost, and if they get a good job they can pay back the transportation cost in only three months. The trafficker also promised that they would be able to work in the shrimp industry,” said a WCRP field reporter who spoke to the victims.

According to the victims, they were receiving only 1,000 baht per week, far below the requisite salary for the long days they had been working. Thai law sets the minimum wage at 203 baht per day for a working day of 8 hours. Additionally, as time passes the wage is supposed to increase to an extra 38 baht per hour.

The victims are now in a safe house in Kretakun, Pak Kret, Nonthaburi that is controlled by the Thai government. None of the victims possess work permits, said the field reporter, and they are likely to be deported when the investigation into their trafficking case closes.

The victims could give little information about the trafficker, whose name they said they did not know. The trafficker is around 30-years-old, they described, and from their native village in Theinzayat Town, Kyaikhtow Township, Mon State.

The trafficker carried them by bus from their home to Mae Sot where they were then picked up by a second trafficker with whom they would travel the rest of the way. The victims arrived in Thailand via

### Case 2

Name:	Ma K— H— & Ma H— Y—Y—S— & Ma W— W—N & Ma Y—L— & Ma S—S— & Ma—T— & Ma W—K—O— & Maung T—L—T—
Age:	49 & 15 & 17 & 46 & 15 & 16 & 17 & 17
Marital Status:	Married & Single & Single & Married & Single & Single & Single & Single
Ethnicity:	Burman
Religion:	Buddhist
Address:	Tanawakjun village and Ywalaykwethit village, Theinzayat Town, Kyaikhtow Township, Mon State,
Location:	Maharchai
Date:	January 12, 2009

## NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

bus to the border near Mae Sot, and then were supposed to walk for 5 or 6 days to Maharchai, on the outskirts of Bangkok. On the way they were arrested by the Thai police and sent back to Burma. They didn't know where they had been sent to, but the trafficker arranged for a new way to walk to Maharchai. It took about one month to get from their homes to Maharchai.

"I didn't want to come to Thailand to work, but I was worried about my daughter and son. So I followed them to Thailand," said one of the victims.

### Case 3

#### Case 3

Name: Mi M—T— & Mi M—T—  
Z—  
Age: 17 & 23-years-old  
Ethnicity: Mon- Burman  
Religion: Buddhist  
Marital Status: Single  
Address: Nyaunglaypin village, Pegu  
Town, Pegu Division  
Location: Maharchai  
Date: March 2009

In March 2009, a woman named Mi M—T— Z— arrived at an anonymous safe house in Maharchai, Thailand as a victim of trafficking, and who had also been raped and forced to have a baby in order to pay debts to her Thai boss. She has not seen her sister Mi M—T—, 17, with whom she was supposed to travel, since they were sent as migrant workers to make money in Thailand for their family.

Mi M—T—Z— is from Nyaunglaypin village, Pegu town, Pegu Division and is single. Her

family is poor and did not have enough income to survive, so Mi M—T—Z— and her 17-year-old sister, Mi M—T— were sent to Thailand as migrant workers.

"First, we worked in the garment industry in Mae Sot for months but we were not satisfied with our salary and didn't think we could send any money back to our family. For that reason we wanted to move to Bangkok to get better jobs and earn more money. So we met with an agent, Ko Tout, who had been working in Mae Sot for many years. He said that in Bangkok there were many good jobs and if we both wanted to go he would send us for 6,000 baht for our transport fees." Her family pawned their house to pay for the traveling costs.

"We agreed to pay the money and followed him to Bangkok. However he didn't let me and my sister travel together. He sent me to the house of a Thai boss and then took 20,000 baht from the boss without me knowing. So I had to work there to pay off the debt.

"While I was there they always locked the house and wouldn't allow me outside. I didn't go outside the whole time. Also, I couldn't speak Thai. Only the boss and his wife lived there. The wife couldn't have a baby and after I had worked there for five months, I asked her when my debt would be paid, and she said that if I wanted to pay it all off I could have a baby for them. I didn't agree to do this, but the woman got her husband to rape me. I got pregnant and when I was due to have my baby they wouldn't take me to hospital; instead they took me to a small clinic so the birth would be more secret. I gave birth to twin baby boys on February 19<sup>th</sup>, but the boss and his wife only allowed my babies to stay with me for 10 days. After 10 days, the two babies were taken from me and I wasn't allowed to see them anymore.



“When I heard my babies crying I couldn’t get them out of my mind and I wanted to see them very badly. I didn’t even get a chance to breast feed them and my breasts felt very painful, but the boss wouldn’t allow it.”

Mi M—T—Z—’s voice became tearful as she recounted this painful episode.

“Two months after I gave birth the wife forced me to leave the house. I was crying to the boss and pleading that I didn’t mind about the low salary, and that it would be ok if they only gave me a chance to stay with my babies. The wife didn’t care what I said, and at about 2 p.m. in the afternoon she phoned a taxi driver to pick me up. Before I left she checked to make sure I hadn’t taken anything from her home. She talked with the taxi driver and I didn’t understand what they were talking about. After he drove for about two hours he stopped and tried to rape me but I grabbed something from in car and hit him with it and then I ran away, leaving my shoes behind. While I was walking another taxi driver saw me, who was very sympathetic, and took me to a market.

“I was very hungry and thirsty and had nowhere to go. I had no hope, but just kept walking. Then I saw a monastery and went in to ask for some food. There were one or two Mon people there working on construction and I asked them to let me stay there for a while. Two days later I became very weak and had to see a doctor. The doctor asked me what had happened and then he phoned a safe house in Maharchai, which looks after victims of trafficking. Now I am in safe place, but I haven’t heard anything from my sister since we left Mae Sot and whether or not she is having problems.”

Mi M—T—Z— does not know the location of the house where she was held in Bangkok and the case will be difficult to investigate, according to a source working for a labor rights organization who prefers to remain anonymous.

#### Case 4

##### Case 4

Name: Unknown  
Age: Both 17-years-old  
Ethnicity: Burman  
Location: Three Pagodas Pass  
Interview Date: June 23, 2008

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 two 17-year-old girls were the victims of human trafficking, according to a 40-year-old woman from Three Pagodas Pass (TPP), on the Thai-Burma border.

The woman saw one of the girls crying on the street corner and reported learning that “The trafficker sold her to a brothel in TPP, but she escaped. She didn’t have any money and didn’t know where to go.” The girl said that a trafficker

brought her and a friend from Thanbyuzayat, and promised them good jobs in Thailand.

“The trafficker promised the girls would easily make enough money to pay back the transportation costs. They said they were very happy because they believed what he said, and wanted to earn money to send home to their families.” The woman added, “Now they are victims of human trafficking. The friend of the girl was sold in Mae Sot and has not been heard from since. The girl did not know the name of the trafficker, or where he was from. TPP is a border town and often a base for traffickers and smugglers. I have seen many victims of trafficking in the past, and it is a problem that is increasing day by day.”

## NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

### Case 5

"I was going to be trafficked by the trafficker Ma Dut who is approximately 30-years-old, from Khayar village, Pa-an township, Karen State when I was 15-years-old. Now I am 18-years - old. At that time, she agreed to send me to my older sister, who was working in Thailand. However, she didn't send me to my sister; she sent me to a wealthy Thai individual's house to be employed as a domestic worker. The house owner agreed to pay 3,000 baht for my monthly salary. Ma Dut took 2,000 baht per month for two years and she left me there. I could not speak Thai and I could not communicate with any people. The Thai boss didn't allow me to use the phone or to communicate with my sister. Later, when I could speak Thai a little and the Thai boss allowed me to buy the household's food I got the chance to go to the market. I went to the market many times and one day I met a member of an NGO [which has requested to remain anonymous]. I explained everything about my situation and they helped me go to my sister's work place. However, they could not help me repay my debt, and the Thai boss whose house I worked at would not allow me to leave until my debt was totally paid."

#### Case 5

Name: Mi S—T—  
Age: 18-years-old  
Ethnicity: Pa.O  
Religion: Buddhist  
Marital Status: Single  
Address: Kawkareik  
Township, Karen  
State  
Location: Makmai village, Kit  
Minburi Sub-district,  
Bangkok  
Date: 2004  
Interview date: September 8, 2007

### Case 6

"We worked at the seafood factory in Maharchai and we wanted to change jobs to work as domestic workers in Bangkok. Consequently we got in touch with a Karen broker, U Shwe Mi, who was in Tak Province and we asked for his help in finding jobs for us. Instead he asked his friend, a Thai broker, to find jobs for us. The Thai broker sent a taxi driver to pick us up, whereupon he drove us to a building in an isolated area. The Thai brokers and taxi drivers had formed a collaborative group. When we arrived, it was very silent and they were the only ones there. The group then gang raped us. I (Naw H—) tried to escape from them, but I could not and they began to beat me. After they raped us, we said to the broker

that we had relatives in Bangkok and wanted to contact to them. Although he allowed us to contact our relatives, the broker told us that if we wanted to be set free we must pay 5,000 baht each.

"Naw H—'s relatives made an appointment with a Thai broker at marker (known as Talat Thai) in Bangkok and had to exchange 5,000 baht to get Naw H— back. Naw H— could not talk about her experience because she was so afraid. Additionally, she was in intense pain and was covered in many bruises, particularly on her neck. Meanwhile, no one would pay to get

#### Case 6

Name: Naw A— & Naw H—  
Age: 17 & 22-years-old  
Ethnicity: Karen  
Religion: Buddhist  
Marital Status: Married & Single  
Address: Beelin Town, Thaton  
Township, Mon State  
Location: Maharchai  
Date: November 2006

Naw A— back, not even her husband. After Naw H— was released, one of Naw H—’s relatives informed an NGO (which wishes to remain unnamed) that is working in Maharchai for labor rights, of what had occurred. The organization contacted the broker to get Naw A— back by pretending that they were relatives of Naw A—. That organization contacted the Thai police to arrest the broker. However, when the broker was away from the building where they kept Naw A—, Naw A— ran away and returned home. Naw A—’s husband disowned her because she was raped. As a result, the NGO kept her in a safe house where she received treatment (counseling, support, medical checks, etc). After Naw A— received treatment at the safe house, and recovered, she asked to leave so she could work to pay back her debts; after her release she did not want speak to anyone.”

### Case 7

“In January 2007, I was recruited by Ko Lay, who is from No.5 Yuzana Street, Bokong quarter, Moulmein City, Mon State, to work in Thailand. I agreed to pay 13,000 baht to get there, and that I would pay back the money when I had got a job. However when I arrived in Thailand, Ko Lay didn’t find a job for me as he had promised. Instead Ko Lay sold me to me to another trafficker, Ma Khin Hla (his sister in law) for

25,000 baht. Ma Khin Hla found a job for me at the Kawsamut Seafood factory in Maharchai. I had to work there until I repaid my entire loan. I lived with [Ma Khin Hla]. Ma Khin Hla kept all of my salary except for 400 baht, which she paid me once per month. It was an uncomfortable to live there and often didn’t have enough food.

#### Case 7

Name:	Ma N—N—T—
Age:	17-years-old
Ethnicity:	Burman
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital Status:	Single
Address:	Naungkharshay village, Waw Township, Pegu Division
Location:	Maharchai
Date:	January 2007

“On August 16, 2007 Thai immigration officers came to check the seafood factory where I worked. I didn’t have any work documents so the Thai police arrested me. When I was in prison, one of my friends paid money to the police and they released me. However, after I was released, Ma Khin Hla still asked me to repay the loan to her. My friend agreed to pay half of the loan to her, but she insisted that she wanted me to pay the entire loan now because it was urgent.

She said if I didn’t pay it back immediately she and her relatives would make problems for me.”

### Case 8

“I was recruited by a broker, U Soe Thein from Three Pagodas Pass (TPP) to travel to Bangkok on May 18, 2007. I agreed to pay 15,000 baht for transportation costs from TPP to Bangkok. The broker told me that he had three women to travel together with me. In the early morning at about 4am, the broker came to pick me up at U Htaw Aung and Daw Cho’s house, where I had been staying for a short time while in Three Pagodas Pass. It turned out the group who was going to travel with me was all men. We traveled for two days on the bus but still did not arrive in Bangkok. Two days later, the broker said the situation wasn’t good and made us wait in the forest to see whether the situation would improve. The broker let us stay in a hut in the forest on the way to Kanchanaburi.”While waiting there, he told me he would send me to join the migrant women’s group who were also traveling to Bangkok. Although, I was afraid I

Case 8

Name: Ma T— T— & Ma C—  
Age: 18 & 19-years-old  
Marital status: Unknown  
Ethnicity: Burman  
Address: Thirimyine quarter,  
Moulmein City, Mon  
State  
Location: Thong Phaphum  
district, Kanchanaburi  
Province  
Date: May 18, 2007  
Interview Date: June 23, 2008

had to follow what he said, and we started to walk to the women’s group. We had walked for about an hour when he stopped me and made me wait in the forest. He went away, but then when he came back he was drunk. He was rude to me and forced me to have sex with him. I refused at first, but he pointed his knife at me as a threat. There was nothing I could do. I had to do whatever he liked me to do for him. Of course I tried to escape from him, but I couldn’t, and he raped me three times. After he raped me, at about 5pm, one of his friends came with a motorbike to pick me up and take me to Thong Phaphum Town, Thong Phaphum district, Kanchanaburi Province.

“After the rape I was very upset and wanted to die on the spot. But, I was worried about my family; my father has a protracted illness and my mother is a day-worker, she washes cloth to earn a small income. In our family we are struggling to get by, so I decided to leave school and migrate to Thailand to work and support my family. I’m from Thirimyine quarter, Moulmein (Mawlamyine) Town (the capital of Mon State) and I have two younger brothers and one younger sister. The trafficker, U Soe Thein, is married and he lives in Three Pagodas Pass. He is about 35- years-old.

“One of my friends, Ma C— (18-year-old female), from Hlae-Tan quarter, Moulmein City was also trafficked by Daw Than’s husband, Ko Tin Win, who is about 50-years-old. He sold Ma C— to a retired Thai policeman as a wife. The Thai police paid Daw Than 20,000 baht and gold weighing 45.5 g for Ma C—.He rented a house for her to live in with him and later she gave birth to a daughter. After the birth of their daughter, he abandoned Ma C— and the child because he had wanted a son. With no money or other possessions she had to work outside to earn a living. She had to work as a hard laborer to pay rent for the house and for enough food to survive.”

Case 9

“We were persuaded by trafficker Ko Win, 25-years-old, from Shwekantha village, Ka-Wa Township, to migrate to Thailand for employment. He told to us that his boss sent him back to find more workers from Burma and that he has good contacts and a network of people who will help us travel there without difficulty.

“There are so many job opportunities and a good standard of living in Thailand. If we go work there for a few years we will be able to save enough to invest in our home. However the traveling cost from Myawaddy to the workplace in Thailand was 450,000 kyat that we had to pay in full, or pay two times that [900 000 kyat] once we arrived, and work it off over five months. While we decided which loan option to choose, he guaranteed that we would be able to start sending money back home after five months.

## Case 9

Name: Ma N—N—Y—& Ma M—  
M—K—& Ma M—M—K—  
& Ma M—M—W—& Ma  
K—K—K—& Maung S—

Age: 16& 16& 17& 17& 18 & 32-  
years-old

Marital Status: Married, Single, Married,  
Single, Single, & Single

Ethnicity: Burman

Religion: Buddhist

Address: Aungkoung village, Kawa  
Township, Pegu Division

Location: Maharchai

Date: March 2007

“He told us not to worry about being in a strange new place and to just work. He told us he would look after all of us, and we believed him as he is from the same town as we were. However, the situation we actually had was a complete contrast to what we had been told to expect. We faced a very difficult trip, having to walk in treacherous mountain forests for nine nights in a row, and being trafficked and put in prison for two weeks. After we were released from detention center, we wanted to return home but the broker would not allow us to do that, and we had to stay in Thailand. We accepted it the entire time because we knew what we were doing was illegal.

“But, there are worse problems now. We were placed at a prawn pearling factory and immediately had to work 20 hour

days. However hard we worked, we were unable to learn how much money we had earned (to pay back the debt) because the broker would not allow us to check the balance of our accounts with the manager.

“The broker was very harsh and abusive towards us. He used vulgar words that are not only abusive to us but to our traditions as well. He is not only pushing us to work very hard but also feeding us very terrible food; sometimes it is even expired and smells rotten. With not enough food or rest, we got sick easily but were not allowed to (rest or) accept medical treatment. He threatened and abused us like his slaves. He also would scare us by saying it was our choice, but if we ever finished paying our debt, and tried to leave, he would separate us or kill us. He had complete control over us and there is nothing we could do against him.

“He always scared us by telling us he would call the police with the connections he has from a friend who is a broker from Thailand named Ko Phoe Thein (about 40-years-old). We, having just arrived, were discriminated against by the other workers who had been there longer, and often punished and fined by the manager, Ko Naing, a 30-year-old from Toungsone village, Mon State. After two of us (my husband and I) had worked for over three and half months, we finally managed to escape from the factory, but five of our relatives are still there. Really all we want is for the broker to recognize us as human beings and to calmly negotiate about our jobs, revise our debt, and not abuse us or take all our profits.”

**Case 10**

“Before we came here, my husband and I worked in Myawaddy Town as day-workers. One day, we met with a broker in Myawaddy and he persuaded us to work in Bangkok. We appreciated the opportunity to work there and agreed to pay 7,000 baht for each person to go to Bangkok. When we arrived in Bangkok the broker transferred us to another broker, whose name is Ko Win, from Ye Phyu Township, Tenasserim Division. Ko Win promised us that we could work as a couple and that he could provide us with a job at an agricultural site in Damnoen Saduak District, Ratchaburi Province.

Case 10	
Name:	Ma K—
Age:	35-years-old
Ethnicity:	Burman
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital Status:	Married
Address:	Pegu Town, Pegu Division
Location:	Damnoen Saduak district, Ratchaburi Province
Date:	December 2007

“But when we arrived at the agricultural center he broke his promise. Ko Win and his wife didn’t allow us to live together as a couple; nor did they allow us to meet up with each other or do any sort of work where we would be together. They didn’t allow us to go shopping and forced us to buy everything from them at double cost of what it should have been. If we didn’t follow what they said they would punish and intimidate us. They sent my husband to work in the fishing industry and took his salary directly from the boss, leaving my husband there against his will.

“After two month working at the fishing industry, my husband found out he had been sold by the agent, and found a way to escape from where he worked. When my husband ran away the boss informed the agent, Ko Win, about it and his wife hit my face. They also shackled my legs with chains and locked me in a room after work. Having escaped my husband got in contact with Aie Wi Mon, who works for a labor rights organization [that wished to remain anonymous for this article]. The labor rights organization accompanied by the police, returned with my husband to the agricultural center to help free the migrant workers who had been left there. Many workers who had work permits were freed, while police arrested Ko Win’s wife and some illegal migrant workers, including me. The workers and I, who had been victims of trafficking, were held in a safe house before being sent back to Burma. There were 12 female illegal migrant workers working at the agricultural site and five male workers who were waiting for jobs. When the police arrived, Ko Win was out finding work for the five male workers. Ko Win didn’t allow male workers to work at the agricultural center.”

**Case 11**

“In December 2007, a woman from Hneepadaw village, Mudon Township, Mon State suggested that I could work in Maharchai and promised that she would be able to provide a job at a sewing machine shop and that we would all be able to stay together. There was a group of ten female migrant workers including me from the same town that were going to go. She said that the transportation cost was 1.2 million kyat, we didn’t have to pay right now and that she would accept payment after we got a job. She also didn’t find work for men, only for female workers.



**Case 11**

**Name:** Mi A—C—& Unknown & Mi W—  
K— & Mi H—Y— & Mi M— &  
Unknown & Mi C— & Unknown &  
Mi S— & Unknown

**Age:** 20 & 20 & 25& 27 & 30& 30& 35  
& 35& 45& 45-years-old

**Ethnicity:** Burman/Mon

**Religion:** Buddhist

**Marital Status:** Single & Single & Married &  
Married & Married & Married &  
Married & Married & Married &  
Married

**Address:** Pegu Town, Pegu Division

**Location:** Bangkok & Maharchai, Thailand

**Date:** December 2007

“We left from home and stayed at her village for a while. We arrived at Three Pagodas Pass (TPP) with her son in about eight days. When we arrived at TPP, he took all our phone numbers and said he will keep them for us but instead burnt them.

“When we arrived to Bangkok he brought us to a Thai boss’ house. One day, the boss tried to rape me but luckily his wife arrived home just in time. I was so afraid because of this and that night I ran away.

“I have been working there for a month. After I escaped from that house I contacted my husband,

who was in Burma, and told him to pick me up in TPP. In order to pick me up, my husband didn’t have enough money and so [he] had to take out a mortgage on our house.”

Another trafficking victim reported, “My mother and I were trafficked at another Thai boss’ house in Maharchai. There were a total of 50 people at that house, and I had to cook and wash the clothes for all the people. In my job I also cleaned mirrors at the office. We would get up early to work and only get to sleep at 11pm...we had to do a lot and we earned very little. Our salary was 100 baht a day between the two of us, from which the broker took 50 baht a day. The boss was worried we would run away and when they were out they locked the house from the outside.

“After having worked there for a month we realized we had been sold by the trafficker, and we tried to escape from the house. So one of the Burman women, who had been working there before us, knew the way to get out of the house and the three of us left together.

“We didn’t hear about the other seven women until now. Their families still can’t get in contact with them. They have disappeared since we arrived in Thailand and we didn’t know where the trafficker sent them to.”

**Case 12**

“I arrived to Three Pagodas Pass in October 2008. I came with the broker, Daw Shin, from Thanbyuzayat Town, Mon State.

“Our family faced a big problem because my father had passed away and my mother is working selling things to earn some income for our family. However we have five family members and we can’t rely on



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my mother's income because she earns very little from what she sells. Our family couldn't support the school fees for me and my younger sisters and brother, so I dropped out to help my family.

"At that time, a broker came to our home town and tried to persuade us to work in Thailand. The broker said that she could provide a job in Kanchanaburi Province as a shopkeeper. In my home town, most people were already working in Thailand and so I too was interested in finding work there, though my mother did not want me to go.

"The broker said that it cost 9,000 baht to cover traveling expenses, but I didn't have to pay immediately. She said I could pay after I got a job and that after one or two months I could pay my entire loan [back].

"It took us three days to arrive at Three Pagodas Pass. The next day, after our arrival in Three Pagodas Pass, the broker sent me to the Pagodas market in Sangkhlaburi. Three days later, she and a man came to me and told me to work as a sex worker. I did not want to do this, but the broker asked if I didn't do this work how could I pay her back for my traveling cost? She threatened me saying she would tell the police to arrest me and put me in jail. I was so afraid, so I had to agree to this job. I now work in the sex industry at Three Pagodas Pass on the Thai side of the border.

"I was extremely fearful and very shy about sleeping with a man. In order to keep me from being so shy, the owner forced me to drink beer so I'd be drunk. For the first time ever I had to sleep with a man - I had to sleep with an old Thai man. That is how I lost my virginity that night.

"Because of this continued poverty, I will have to spend my life as a sex worker; I felt so disappointed and crushed when I realized this. Since that day, my life has had no meaning, so I've decided to keep working as a sex worker.

"I don't want my mother knowing about what I am doing now, so I do not think I will ever go back home."

### Case 12

Name: Ma K—P—  
Age: 19-years-old  
Ethnicity: Mon-Burman  
Religion: Buddhist  
Marital Status: Single  
Education: 9<sup>th</sup> grade  
Address: Shwe-Lee No.3  
Street, Annawar  
quarter, Ye Town,  
Mon State  
Location: Three Pagodas Pass  
Date: October 2008  
Interviewed Date: March 2009

## Case 13

Name: Ma S—M— & Ma Z—  
Z— & Ma H— H— &  
Ma W—Y—

Age: 17 & 22-years-old,  
unknown, unknown

Marital Status: Unknown

Address: Thaketa Township,  
Rangoon Division

Date of Arrival at TPP: February 2008

## Case 13

“My name is Ma S—M— and I lived in Rangoon with my family. I have only one sibling, an elder brother. My parents are divorced and my father and brother are day laborers. Before I came to Thailand I worked in a sewing factory making 10,000 kyat per month. We are very poor and with all our money combined our income is still very small, which means sometimes we face food shortages. At that time I met a 40-year-old woman who is a broker from Moulmein and said she could bring me to Three Pagodas Pass.

“She told me that Three Pagodas Pass has many factories and I would be able to earn 50,000 kyat a month. I would first have to give her 50,000 kyat for covering the costs of travel, or she would be willing to take it from my salary when I was paid. I personally preferred to travel so that I could earn a good income and help support my family. However, my family did not want me to go and so finally I had to sneak from home with a broker.

“Before we arrived at Three Pagodas Pass we stayed in Thanbyuzayat Town for a while, and then left from there with motorbikes. Our group consisted of three people – the broker, a Thanbyuzayat villager named Ma Aye, and myself. We slept one night at Chaungzon Township, Karen State and the broker provided us everything during the trip. The next day, we arrived at Three Pagodas Pass and after crossing to the Thai side, the broker brought us to a brothel. The broker sold us for 5,000 baht to U San, the owner of the brothel, where we would have to work until we paid off that debt.

“At first, I did not realize that I had been sold to work at brothel because, a broker woman said we would get a job at a factory. However, after a few days the owner U San Yuu forced us to work for him as a sex worker and he told us to work until our debt was paid. You know, I was really afraid when I found out I was going to have to work as a prostitute. Even though I have had a boyfriend, I didn’t have any experience with sex. However, I had to work until my obligation ended, which lasted for about a month, and now I am free now.

“More recently, I have been working with another owner whose name is Ko Sai. He is different from the previous owner in that he doesn’t force us to work. He is good-natured and treats us like we are his family. For example, when we are unhealthy he brings us to hospital and to get checkups and receive treatment. Ko Sai is a very flexible person and different in this way from my previous owner who was always making us work for him.

“Unfortunately, four days ago we were gang raped by a group that came in while Ko Sai was away from home. Seven people came to our house with a car and caught us. After that they gagged us, tied our hands, and violently raped me and my friend. I think they raped me almost six times. After that I did not feeling well, and suddenly had to go to the hospital. I am still currently receiving medical treatment;

## NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

however, I am afraid whether I will be able to deal with working under those conditions again. Therefore, I recently decide to quit this type of work and try to get an ordinary job so that I'll be able to build a better future for myself.

"If I have a chance to get a job, I would be very glad to do ordinary work, and help my family by sending some amount of money home. But I dare not contact them, or go back to my home; for fear that my parents will worry about me or know about what I have been doing for a living.

"Finally, I sincerely want to remind other young woman to please be very careful about the dangers of being sold illegally and to not get involved in working as a prostitute for the rest of your lives."

### Case 14

"I went to Three Pagodas Pass in December 2008. Before I came here I worked at Shwe Phyi Nann Tha Nut Kha and Bean Powder Company. My monthly salary was 10,000 kyat, but it was not enough to provide for my family's daily expenses. My parents are unemployed because they are seasonal workers, a job which brings in a small amount of money. The reason it has been so little is because there was no regular work after the economy slumped. After I was divorced from my husband, I worked in a bar as a waitress to earn some money. But this job also did not work for me, and I again tried to find another job, which would be able to give me more money.

#### Case 14

Name:	Ma N—W—K—
Age:	21-years-old
Marital Status:	Married
Address:	Athaw Ka Road, Tamwe Township, Rangoon
Parents Occupation:	Hard labor
Original Occupation:	Shwe Phyi Nann Tha Nut Kha and Bean Powder Production
Date	March 2009
Date of Arrival at TPP:	December 2008

"Unfortunately Cyclone Nargis struck Burma and I was not able to find another job. There was no work and we had nothing to eat, among the many problems we faced surviving. At that time I met a woman from Moulmein who is a broker, and told me to come with her to Three Pagodas Pass. I don't know the woman's name but she said [she was] from Moulmein and she was probably around 30 years old. Honestly, I know I will have to work as a prostitute, but I can't find any conventional jobs in Rangoon. It is very difficult to get a good job there, especially for a woman like me. I must work in order to help pay for my family's daily expenses. On the bright side, the broker will cover my traveling cost and I can pay her back when I get the job. So for these reasons I finally accepted her invitation and left with her to Three Pagodas Pass.

"Sadly, when I arrived I was sold into the sex industry by the broker for 7,000 baht. Actually, I only had to pay 300 baht for transportation, but the broker made 7,000 baht by selling me. I know it is not fair but I have no choice, so I have to work until my commitment is complete.

"I have been working here over one month and I have been taking care of approximately 30 guests. I normally get 300 baht per customer and 1,000 baht for a special order. I get to keep half, and the rest goes to the house owner. I have to be patient and do as customers like. We use condoms in our work and customers are not allowed visit if they do not use a condom. Our owner is not bad and he takes good care of us, making sure we are both healthy and safe.

"Currently, I already transferred 100,000 kyat to my home and have told them about what I do for a living. My family feels bad about my situation but there was nothing I could do, and while I have to do it, I have the ambition to move beyond this. I have already decided to quit this job after my commitment is finished.

### Case 15

"My name is Ma S—S— and I live in Shwe Pyi Tha quarter in Rangoon. I have one brother and two younger sisters who live with my parents. My father works as a trader and my mother is a house wife. Before I came here I worked in a factory and was paid 10,000 kyat per month. However, that small amount of money is not enough to provide the financial support my family needs to survive. Therefore, I decided to quit my job and work as a waitress in the club.

Case 15	
Name:	Ma S—S—
Age:	22-years-old
Ethnicity:	Burman
Education:	7 <sup>th</sup> grade
Parents Name:	U M—N—& Daw T—T— N—
Address:	Shwe Pyi Thar Township, Rangoon Division
Date:	2008
Parents Occupation:	Trader
Family:	6 members
Previous Occupation:	Waitress in a Club
Date:	2008
Date of interview:	March 2009

"While I was working in the Club, I met with Ko Myo Gyi (or) Ko Kyi Win from Waitonchaing village, Thanbyuzayat Township and I ended up marrying him. When I married him I did not know that he was working for a group involved in the sex industry. But I found out when I arrived at Thanbyuzayat Town, and was extremely shocked and tried to divorce him. But I had no one to turn to, and he had told me to open a small restaurant at Three

Pagodas Pass. Therefore, I came to Three Pagodas Pass with him. Moreover, my husband also selected five women from Thanbyuzayat and brought them to work with us.

"Despite my choice to move with him, he sold me for 7,500 baht to the Thai prostitute owner Mr. Nam in Three Pagodas Pass on Thai soil. I didn't expect this and didn't realize until I was already sold to the brothel. I was upset with this and told him I would not go. But he beat me and tortured me every day until I gave in. Because of this, I have to work as a prostitute, until I repay the 7,500 baht that my husband sold me to the owner for.

## NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

"I hate this job and I would much prefer any work like normal people. But I am still stuck in this debt, and I have to still work off 2,000 baht. My husband comes every day and requests the money from me, and if I do not pay him he beats and threatens me.

"A few days ago I ran from where I worked to live with Ko Sai who is the owner of the brothel in an area on the Burmese side of Three Pagodas Pass. I hid to avoid my husband, but he found out about me and came to make problems. I contacted the Township Peace and Development Council so that they might protect me from my husband's threats; however when the police arrested him and sent [him] to the jail he was only behind bars one night before he was released. The police also ordered him to leave from Three Pagodas Pass, but he hasn't, and he still comes and frightens me.

"I have been in Three Pagodas Pass since last December 2008 and am now working for Ko Sai. I wish I could quit this job and do normal work like other people. Finally, I would like to remind other girls to please be careful around brokers, and do not trust or believe strangers."

### Case 16

"My name is Ma A— and I am from Beelin town, Kyaikhtow Township. I came to Three Pagodas Pass with my friend Ma T—Z— and now we both work for Ko Sai Sai who owns the brothel here. Before I arrived here I was a fishmonger living with my stepmother in my village. My only brother is a fisherman. We work hard and yet earn very little a day, which is why I tried to find a way to make more money to help my family.

"One day, a woman I did not know came to my home and invited me to come back with her to Moulmein. She

said I could find work as a housekeeper, and would be paid a good salary. At that point I had no experience with the world outside my village, and had never been to Moulmein

"I worked in Moulmein for one month before I quit the job. I decided to go back home but I met a taxi driver in a bus station before I left, and he said he knew of a job where I could make a huge amount of money. It seemed like it could lead to a good opportunity, so I followed him, but rather than offering me a job he transferred me to another broker at Thanbyuzayat town. There I met with my friend Ma T—Z— and the broker sent both of us to Three Pagodas Pass, where, unbeknownst to us, were being sold as prostitutes to a brothel.

"I am not happy working here and I want to go back to my home. I am disappointed working as a prostitute, and I want to quit this job. I would quit this job if I could, and go get a new job and try to

#### Case 16

Name:	Ma A—
Age:	19-years-old
Ethnicity:	Mon-Burman
Parent Name:	N-a (Live with Step- Mother)
Education:	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade
Address:	Pinle Village, Beelin Town, Kyaikhtow Township, Mon State
Parents Occupation:	Fisherman
Previous Occupation:	Fishmonger
Date of Arrival at TPP:	December 2008
Date of interview:	March 2009

build some sort of happy life for myself. I hope other woman do not have to face the kinds of problems I have had to deal with, and are able to build a better future for themselves.”

### Case 17

“I first came to Three Pagodas Pass last 2008 during the rainy season in July. Rather than coming with a broker, I came with my friends from Rangoon. My idea was that I would work in Three Pagodas Pass for a while, and then go on to Bangkok. Traveling by boat, it took us five days to get from home to Three Pagodas Pass.

#### Case 17

Name: Ma N—N—  
 Age: 23-years-old  
 Marital Status: Married  
 Parent Name: Unknown  
 Education: Middle School  
 Address: (57) Road, South  
 Okkalapa Township,  
 Rangoon  
 Previous Occupation: Factory Worker  
 Date: 2008  
 Date of interview: March 2009

“I got a job at Three Pagodas Pass working in a restaurant on the Thai side of the border, and I the owner gave me an advance of 4,000 baht. The restaurant owner provided me everything including accommodation, food, and other additional material. We had six people working in the shop, and we mostly work as waitresses. However after starting out the owner told me to sleep with a man and I refused. However, she forced me to work every day; in the end there was nothing I could do because I had no money, I didn’t know anyone, and had nowhere to go—but my life has taken a turn for the worse because I now work as a sex worker.

“Before I came here I lived in Rangoon with my family who are all unemployed. I have been married before but I am divorced. In Rangoon I worked in a sewing factory, where I earned very little money. What I made was not enough to cover my family’s daily expenses, so I headed to Thailand hoping to find a better job that would provide more money and opportunities...

“While I was working in the restaurant I met Ko Aung Thu who is from the same town as me and I told him the detail of what had happened to me. He helped by lending me 4,000 baht to payback my debt to the owner. After a short while we got married and moved back to the Burmese side of the border in Three Pagodas Pass. But after we were married, a little more than two weeks, he brought two men to sleep with me. I refused to sleep [with the men] but he beats and threatens saying that I must.

“This experience was incredibly painful and traumatic for me, and I will never be able to forget this because the person that I loved and believe is not faithful even though I’d promised to spend my life loving him. Even though I hate my husband I dare not tell the Township Peace and Development Council and Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation because they are corrupt and my husband has connections to both those groups. I also think they wouldn’t even consider my case because I have had to work as a sex worker.

## NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

"Finally, I want to remind other woman to please know who someone is, and think carefully before you consider getting married to them. I hope other woman will not have to face the kinds of problems I have in their lives."

### Case 18

"I am Ma T—M— and I live in Inn Wa town, Mandalay Division. I am 25-years-old. I came to Suphanburi, [Samut Sakhon Province] Thailand, for work. I was unable to find work in the town were I am from. So, I made a phone call to a Burman broker name Ko Win, a 34-year-old from Rangoon, to help me find a good job in Samut Sakhon Province. I agree to pay 1,500 baht if he found me a job. I came to Samut Sakhon, and he said that I have to stay at the room he has, with six other men, while I wait until he can find a job for me. He was asking this of me - a single woman!

"On March 28, 2008, when I arrived, he said he would hold onto my mobile phone, which immediately made me suspicious, so I left his room to find a public phone to contact a friend of mine who lived in Suphanburi. Ko Win had seen me leave, and he followed me. I was afraid, and I asked a Taxi driver to help me and take me to the Suphanburi bus station. Just at that moment Ko Win arrived and telling the taxi driver that this was, 'none of your (his) business', hauled me back to his room. He allowed me to contact to my friend but Ko Win said that he would not release me unless I paid 2,000 baht for my release. My friend agreed to pay but Ko Win called him back and said, 'If you not too afraid of me, you can come to pick of your friend. However, I will call the police to come arrest you.'

"He then tried to rape me and I tried to escape, but unfortunately he caught me and he beat my head though I kept fighting and struggling to run away. At one point I got free and I tried to escape via the balcony, since the room was on the second floor. As I was going to get down, he grabbed my hair and I scratch his leg, the pain of which caused him to let go of me. However I fell off the balcony and broke my backbone. Even though I was in pain, I still tried to get away, and I yelled to some Thai people for help, who had rented out the room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor just below his. The only people home were some Thai children, who helped me inside and hid me.

"About two hours later, Ko Win came by and asked the children, 'Have you seen a woman around here?' The 13-year-old girl said she had not, and he left. After that one of the children contacted my friend, and my friend was able to get a hold of an NGO that does work with migrant workers. People from the organization came and picked me up and brought me to the hospital so I could get the treatment I needed for my back. I was in the hospital for three or four days before I was in good enough condition for the people from the NGO to come get me and take me to their safe house. When I am completely healed they will send me back to Burma because I don't have a work permit card to work here legally."

### Case 18

Name: Ma T—M—  
Age: 25-years-old  
Ethnicity: Burman  
Marital status: Single  
Address: Inn Wa Town,  
Mandalay Division  
Date: March 28, 2008



## Case 19

Name:	Unknown
Age:	Unknown
Ethnicity:	Burman
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital status:	Married
Address:	Moulmein City, Mon State
Date:	2008

## Case 19

My wife and I agreed to pay 8,000 baht each to a 40-year-old broker, from Hnikayin village, Ye township, for transportation from Kawthaung town to Maharchai, Thailand. We were supposed to work at a shrimp factory in Anomar Meingthoung quarter, Maharchai. And the broker said he would take us and that we could pay the money after we got the job.

We got a job as he promised, but we had to work day and night without being told how much we were earning. The broker would only give us 50 baht per week to each of us. Getting this little money in

payment, we knew the broker was taking advantage of us, but we kept working for another three months. At that time I found a way to get out of the factory, unfortunately I had to leave my wife there. When I was out, I heard from my friend that there was an organization working to protect migrant workers' rights, so I phoned the organization so they could help to get my wife out of the factory.

At the factory, the employer forced the workers to work from 2 a.m. till 8 p.m. without any days off. The work force was made up of 34 children, 80 men and 103 women. The employer didn't allow employees to go outside of the factory. Even when one of us became sick, the employer didn't let us see a doctor. In dire cases where a person needed a medical check in order to go to the hospital, the employer said he would cut 200 baht off the person's salary for missing a day of work, despite us not being paid directly.

If, at the end of the day, we had leftover product that had not been sold, that is what we had to eat for dinner, even if it smelled bad and was rotten. On other days when everything had been sold, we would go hungry. And all the time, the only thing we had to eat off was trays.

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Maharchai polices raided that factory. The police didn't want to raid the factory even though they knew the employer abused and took advantage of the workers, because the employer had connections with corrupt members of the police force. However, the NGOs pressured them and they had to follow up on the husband's tip, said an anonymous source.

"My wife had to work there for seven months. The workers are finally free, but some people had been working there almost 2 years. I realized that many of the employees had been essentially sold to the employer – they would be brought in a group, and the broker would come and collect their wages, so they would not have enough to leave, and then the employer would abuse them."

The employer intimidated us as a group. So that if one person escaped from the factory, the employer beat the rest of the people in the group with his shoe, or slammed their heads against the hood of a car, or against the brick walls of the factory.

There were several employees who were beat by a group of men, lead by the employer's nephew, till they were bloody and lost consciousness. These men were assigned by the employer to keep guard over them.



Case 20

Name: Ma A—M—S—  
 Age: 20-years-old  
 Ethnicity: Burman  
 Religion: Buddhist  
 Marital Status: Single  
 Education: 10<sup>th</sup> grade  
 Address: Yankin Township,  
 Rangoon Division  
 Location: TPP  
 Date: 2009  
 Interview Date: March 2009

Case 20

The broker said that if we work in Three Pagodas Pass (TPP) we would make more money, and that we could have a higher standard of living. My friend was interested in going but didn't have anyone to go with her, so I decided to accompany her to look for work in TPP.

When we were in our town before starting out, the broker told us she would be able to get us jobs as waitresses and singers at a restaurant in TPP. We are very poor and didn't have any money to pay for the travel costs. The broker said that it would cost 7 million kyat, and an

additional 50,000 to pay for getting by all checkpoints. She said she would cover our transportation costs, and that she would just take money from our salary once we were working. The broker also gave to our family 1 million Kyat before we departed.

After taking two or three days to arrive at TPP, we learned we were going to be made to work as prostitutes. We were so angry and shocked at what the broker told us. We tried from where we were staying, but we didn't have any money, no relatives to turn to, and we didn't know where we could go. The broker threatened us by saying that she would get an armed group to come beat us up. We were afraid that if we didn't agree to work as prostitutes we would be killed. The broker's employer, who owned and managed the brothel, told us that this is the only job we would be able to get, and if we didn't agree to work for him there'd be no way we could repay our debts, or even eat since they would not feed us.

At first they kept us cut off, and did not allow us to contact our families, but after two months we were allowed to call them. However, when we made the calls to our families, they put someone else on the line and we would listen in to make sure we did not give them the details of what was going on. If I went outside two people were assigned to follow me. My family doesn't know I am working as a prostitute. I just told them I am working a regular job.

Case 21

My parents passed away when I was young, and had since lived with my elder sister and my aunt. My aunt earned very little, and didn't have enough money to send us to school and cover the cost of our living expenses.

Case 21

Name: Ma H—S—N—  
 Age: 16-years-old  
 Ethnicity: Burman  
 Religion: Buddhist  
 Marital Status: Single  
 Address: Thirimyine quarter,  
 Moulmein City, Mon State  
 Location: Three Pagodas Pass  
 Date: January 2009  
 Date of interview: May 12<sup>th</sup> 2009

Therefore, I met with a broker, Ma Htay Htay Oo who was from the same quarter as me. She said that I was not gaining anything by staying there, and that I had better come with her to work in Three Pagodas Pass (TPP). There are many factories in TPP on the Thai side of the border, such as sewing and shoes factories. The factories often need employees and I could get a job at one of them. One of my aunts is also living in TPP on the Burmese side, so I decided to come with the broker and left my elder sister there. I figured that if I could find a better job and earn a good income, I would ask my elder sister to work with me.

The broker Ma Htay Htay Oo paid for my transportation and food costs to get there, saying after I got a job I could pay her back. After I arrived in TPP I stayed with my aunt, but she was also struggling to provide for her family. My uncle was unemployed and wasn't making any money.

I tried to apply for a job at the shoe factory on the Thai side every week, and they couldn't give me any work. At this point the broker wanted to be repaid very urgently, but I didn't have the money to pay her back. My aunt told me that I had to move to Ma Htay Htay Oo house since she could not care for me and her family. Ma Htay Htay Oo allowed me to live with her. The room she rents out is in quarter 2 in TPP.

I noticed that her living standards were quite good, but I didn't know what kind of work she and her husband had did before. But once I started living there, I realized that she was working as a prostitute with the assistance of her husband.

After I had moved into one of her rooms, she asked that I also work as a prostitute. When I heard her demand I was so shocked and sad all I could do was cry. But she said, "Don't cry - if you don't do this work how will you pay me back my money?" I said nothing to her. The next morning she asked me again to prostitute myself, and if I didn't agree she said that "You are not allowed to stay with me and I will no longer pay for your food and you have to find the 10,000 baht to pay me back." I said nothing and just kept crying.

After sunset she and her husband went outside and left me alone. About 10 p.m. I heard someone open the door and I thought that it was them, so I just kept sleeping. But it was not them. It was a 50-year-old man who told me that Ma Htay Htay Oo had sold me to him for sex, in exchange for 20,000 baht. I was so afraid I forgot how to shout, and couldn't do anything. I cannot tell you how much suffering I felt. On that night I lost my virginity.

The next morning I ran to my aunt to tell about what had happened to me last night, but she didn't reply and seemed very cold. The broker told me that my payment was finished and later I knew that it was my aunt and Ma Htay Htay Oo's arrangement. Since that day my hope is gone and I just keep working on this job and I will continue working on this job in the future.

**Case 22**

Name: Ma N—D—  
 Age: 13-years-old  
 Ethnicity: Burman-Muslim  
 Religion: Muslim  
 Marital Status: Single  
 Address: Thingangyun Township,  
 Rangoon Division  
 Location: Three Pagodas Pass  
 Date: March 2009

**Case 22**

This woman is from Thingangyun Township, Rangoon Division. After her father passed away, her mother found work in Myawaddy as a shopkeeper at a store. Her elder sister is working as a prostitute in Sangkhlaburi town, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand. Ma N—D— lived with her relatives, but they couldn't take any responsibility for her living expense, so her elder sister sent a broker back, Ma P—P— from Thanbyuzayat town, to Rangoon to bring

Ma N—D—to her.

The older sister sent Ma P—P—to pick up Ma N—D— and take her to Three Pagodas Pass (TPP). However, the broker sold her to a brothel that was owned by U Sein Maung in quarter 4 in TPP. U Sein Maung sold her virginity to a Thai man on the Thai side of the border, for 30,000 thousand baht. But Ma N—D— didn't want to do this and argued with Ma—P—P—. Luckily at that time she met a Taxi driver, Ko S—M—, who took her to the quarter #2 council office to make her case. U Myo Kyi, a chairman of TPP Township Peace and Development Council (TPDC), Daw Khin Pjoun Yee a chairwoman of Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (MWAFF), the Myanmar Police Force (MPF) and the Village Peace and Development Council (VPDC) oversaw the proceedings in this case. TPP's police contacted the police in Myawaddy to inform the girl's mother to come take custody of her child. The TPDC gave 150,000 kyat to the child's mother to cover transportation costs back home.

According to the headman of quarter 2, that in order to take legal action, township authorities including TPDC, VPDC, MPF and MWAFF, are still working to charge the broker Ma P—P—, the brothel owner, U S—M— and the girl's elder sister. He also said, "it is difficult to take legal action because they were unsure who Ma P—P— is. Even though we heard that she is from Thanbyuzayat, we only know her name. The girl's elder sister is living in Sangkhlaburi, Thailand so we can't go and arrest her. The brothel owner also insisted that he was not involved in the incident and so we didn't know who is right and who is wrong. If we were able to arrest her sister, we would be more likely to take legal action. "

But, according to local sources, at this point it seems unlikely that any legal action will take place as the case has carried on since the first week of March, and as of now the TPDC has yet to hear the case in court.

**Case 23**

Name: Ma L—M—  
 Age: 21-years-old  
 Religion: Buddhist  
 Address: Tamwe Township, Rangoon  
 Division  
 Education: 8th grade  
 Ethnicity: Burman  
 Martial Status: Married  
 Date: December 2008

**Case 23**

I came with a broker, Ma Wah, who is 26-years-old, from Dagon Township to work in Three Pagodas Pass. She said that she would temporarily pay for my transportation costs, and that after I found a job I could repay her.

She also told me there were several opportunities for jobs at the shoe factory and sewing factory and that she would find me work at one of these factories.

She was a very convincing speaker and I became enthusiastic about the idea of working in Three Pagodas Pass, and left my 4-year-old daughter with my parents. After I arrived in TPP, I went to the factories to apply for work but unfortunately they didn't need any employees. Therefore, after four or five days, the broker agreed it was difficult to find a job for me and told me that I would need to find a good job to earn some money quickly. I asked her what sort of job I could get where I could do that, and she told me I'd have to work as a sex worker. At first I did not agree to do this work, but she asked me how I could repay her, or where I would live if I didn't do what she said. I had no response.

I couldn't sleep or eat, and just kept thinking about the future of my family back home facing the economic crisis, and how much they needed my money to help them. Three days later, I made the weighty decision to work in prostitution.

Then the broker sent me to a Thai brothel near Bus station (99) at the Thai side of the border, where I was sold for 9,000 baht. She took all money I made from work for three months before my debt was repaid, though we hadn't agreed on any amount of what I would need to pay for transportation costs. After we arrived here the broker said that it cost 9,000 baht overall.

Since I have been working here, I have only been able to send 100,000 kyat to my family. I will keep doing this work because I feel like my life is over, and because I will do whatever it takes to earn money for my daughter.

Because of my poverty, I have had no choice but to work as a prostitute, and I don't want my daughter to face a problem like this as well. Therefore, I will try my best for my daughter and my family.

At the end I would like to say I don't want my family know what I now have to do to make money.

**Case 24**

My three friends and I came to Thailand in 2008 to find work in Three Pagodas Pass (TPP). Before I came here, I lived with my family in Thanbyuzayat Town, Mon State. My father owned and operated a car workshop, and my mother sold snacks at the school. While I have several brothers, I am my parent's only daughter.

## NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

Two years ago my father passed away and my family faced serious problems, since my mother was just a shopkeeper and earned very little money to support our family's cost of living. My brothers are alcoholics and do not help my mother. Later, my brothers all got married and moved to their new homes. That left only three of us at the house – myself, my mother, and my brother, who is suffering from tuberculosis. My mother took responsibility for trying to solve our family's expenses as well as the cost of my brother's treatment.

Since I was little I've never been anywhere other than at home keeping house for the family. I did not receive much education and so I couldn't find a good job where I would be able to make more money. I used to work at a store when I was younger, but the owner harassed me. I was sympathetic to my mom's difficulties and sorry for her since I couldn't find any money to help her out. Therefore, I decided to go find work in Thailand so that I might be able to help my mother. I didn't tell her about my plan to go work in Thailand, and I snuck away from home with my three friends.

We came to TPP with a broker, Ko Maung, who lived near to our house. He said that we could pay him back after we got jobs, and so we followed him to Thailand. Before leaving we did give him half the cost of traveling expenses up front, and wrote it into the guarantee letter, which we signed before we came here.

He took us to TPP and looked after us until we went to Thailand. But the situation had worsened in Thailand and we wasted one-and-a-half months of our time at TPP. Then, Ko Maung's wife became ill, and he had to go back to his home. He transferred us to a Thanbyuzayat broker Daw Thayoke Ma, and instructed her to help us find jobs. The broker told me to look for work at the shoe company, but I wasn't able to find work there.

I had nothing left, and nobody who could help me. Sometimes, our broker Daw Thayoke Ma, disappeared for almost two or three days, and sometimes didn't come back home. Occasionally we faced a problem of paying for rent because the house owner would come ask for rent and we would have no money to pay, and she [the trafficker] wasn't at home. Sometime she told us to lie if she didn't have money to pay the monthly rent, saying that she was not home, or that she was busy.

Once day she came back home and the first thing she told me was that if I "gave up my virginity" I would get 12,000 baht since it was my first time. I refused to do that, but two days later she moved us to another house, which happened to be Ma Win's brothel. Then she approached me again about selling my virginity, and ordered Ma Win to start trying to arrange a sale.

However, we all refused her arrangements, and demanded that they send us home. But the broker said she would spread rumors in my hometown about us working as prostitutes in Thailand. Moreover she

### Case 24

Name: Mi N—N—L—  
Age: 19-years-old  
Parents Name: Nai K— S— & Mi  
K— T—T— A—  
Address: Aungchantar  
quarter,  
Thanbyuzayat  
Town, Mon State  
Ethnicity: Mon  
Marital Status: Single  
Date: April 2008  
Date of interview: May 2009

threatened us with the agreement letter and amount of money that we still had to pay her and Ko Maung back for. At that point we argued with her and she slapped my face two times. She continued to make threats too, insisting that we have to do this, until we would finally consent.

But we still didn't agree to do this work and didn't accept what she was trying to make us do. So the next evening she lied to us by saying that she arranged for a vehicle to take us across the border to Thailand, and divided us four girls into two vehicles. Our driver was Thai and we thought that we were going to Thailand, but instead he drove us to a house and raped us. We could not sleep all night, and the next day he sent us to Ma Win's brothel. We asked Ma Win about Daw Thayoke Ma and she said Daw Thayoke Ma had sold us to her brothel for 25,000 baht and that we would have to work until our debt ended. I didn't know where they sent our other two friends. We heard that two of them ran away to escape the trafficker, but we are still not sure.

I have been working here as a prostitute since at that day. I have no choice and nowhere to go until I am able to find a new job. I hope that I will be able to return home when I save enough money.

#### Case 25

Name: Ma S—Y—O—  
 Age: 16-years-old  
 Education: 9<sup>th</sup> grade  
 Marital Status: Single  
 Address: Mee Khaut market,  
 Rangoon City,  
 Rangoon Division  
 Ethnicity: Burman  
 Date: December 19<sup>th</sup>,  
 2008  
 Date of interview: May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009

#### Case 25

My name is – Ma S—Y—O— and I am currently 16-years-old. I lived in Rangoon with my parents, my sister, and my younger brother. My father worked as a guard at the bus station and my mother worked as a ticket seller. My sister worked in J Donut shop, and my brother sold Jasmine flowers during his school holiday.

I had been attending school and had reached 9<sup>th</sup> grade. During my vacation I would work in a clothing factory at Bao Choke market (Scott market) in Rangoon. My family earned a pretty good income and had enough money to survive—that is until my brother was in a car accident.

Our economic situation has since deteriorated after we had to pay a huge amount of money for his medical treatment.

One day I got into a fight with my family about my boyfriend. My family scolded me every day for almost a month, which I did not want to pay attention to and felt bad about. While I was depressed I met my aunty Daw San Aye (who called me to come) and Daw Thandar Win in Rangoon, and they told me that I would be able to get a good job at Thailand, in Mae Sot...Daw Thandar Win gave me the money, saying they would cover the transportation cost, as long as I paid it back with interest. They had helped send my friends to Thailand previously and most of them were doing okay and able to transfer money to their families. They promised me that I could get a job where my friends work and that I wouldn't need to worry about anything. Therefore I decided to go with them and quietly snuck away from home.

## NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

We traveled with 6 people, including myself, 2 brokers, and 3 other girls. Everything was fine during the trip except I had never traveled, and didn't know I was headed towards Three Pagodas Pass (TPP) instead of Myawaddy and Mae Sot. According to the two brokers, we would be traveling via the Myawaddy route and enter Thailand. But then they said that there had been many arrests along the Myawaddy route, and would not currently be able to take us that way. Therefore they would take us to TPP, and send for us later. During the trip, they would not allow us to speak with each other [they said] due to security concerns.

When we arrived in TPP, they placed us in a house in quarter #4. As for me, I did not know where to go or how I could get the money to pay them back because I had been in TPP for a long time and I still wasn't able to find a job. I had taken out a loan of 800,000 kyat from the brokers, and would have to pay them back approximately 900,000 kyat with interest. The broker Daw San Aye told me that she would send me to Rangoon unless I paid her the money back. I asked her to please wait a little while longer, for me to find a job where I would be able to pay her. She refused my request and she forced me to work as a prostitute.

At first, I was shocked and refused it but she said, "If you lose your virginity to a customer, you could make 15,000 baht, and it will help to get some money for your family as well." Therefore, I decided to risk everything and I told her I would only do it [work as a prostitute] one time. Along with me, the other three girls agreed to do it only once. On 19 December 2008 they took us to Ma Win's house [a brothel]. They [Daw San Aye and Daw Thandar Win] said they would come and get us the next day, but they have never returned.

Well, we found out that they sold us for 30,000 baht per person to Ma Win, who we have to reimburse if we want to leave. I can't go back to my home and I have to work here until my debt is done. I don't want to work here and want to escape, but sadly, I have nobody here who can help me or anyone who I can rely on. I feel like I am living in hell.

### Case 26

Five male children were trafficked and forced to work at the Every Shine restaurant at Zaycho quarter in Moulmein, Mon State, said a 28-year-old woman who spoke with the victims.

In January 2008, the 5 children from upper Burma were sold by a female Burmese trafficker named Ma Mi Nge for 100,000 kyat each to the restaurant. They just know the name of the trafficker and don't know where she was from. They now are forced to work from 4 a.m. to 11 p.m. without holidays.

#### Case 26

Name: Mg T—N— & Mg N-a & Mg N-a & Mg N-a & Mg N-a  
Age: 12, 10, 12, 13 & 14- years-old  
Ethnicity: Burman  
Address: Mandalay Division  
Date: February 2006

According to trafficking victim Mg T—N—, "we earn a very small salary of just 6,000 kyat per month. We have very little time to sleep. The employer provides the food but they don't allow us to go to the festivals. We are always busy."



After they work for a month, they asked for their salary from the employer and the employer said that, because they were sold by the trafficker for 100,000 kyat each, they would have to work for one year until their debt was paid off.

There are approximately 20 children working at the Every Shine restaurant, mostly between 8 and 10-years-old.

### Case 27

“My name is Ma O—M— and I am Burman. I am 19 years old now. In February 2006, I was arrested though I do not know what date exactly. At first, I traveled with a truck from Three Pagodas Pass to Thailand as a migrant worker, but I did not have an ID. I was arrested and spent 48 days in Thong Phaphum Town Jail. In jail, they did not serve enough food and we often had to eat food that was expired. When the jailers won at gambling and were in a good mood, we would eat good food, but if they lost we would only get to eat expired food.

After being arrested for two weeks, they called me out with another two girls and promised that they would free us from jail and also provide us with jobs cleaning dishes at a restaurant. They sent us to a houseboat hotel and three policemen came and picked up us by motorbike. We didn't understand Thai and we didn't know what they said to us.

Case 27	
Name:	Ma O—M—
Age:	19-years-old
Ethnicity:	Burman
Parents:	U P— S— & Ma M—
Address:	Unknown
Date:	February 2006

When we arrived at our room, they used hand signals to let us know we could take a shower. About 11 p.m. they came and took us to their room and let us drink beer, but I didn't drink.

Then one policeman forced me to have sex with him although I refused; he was so strong and I couldn't do anything to keep him off of me. He forced me to have sex in different ways and I was in a lot of pain. I was afraid and cried. During my 48 days in jail they called me out two times, and after that I would not go with them again.

I also explained to the women in jail everything about what I had to face, and reminded them not to go with the police.

My aim in coming to Thailand was to earn a good income and to help pay back my mother's debt, because she took a loan that has interest.

After my jail term was over they sent me back to Three Pagodas Pass. When I arrived at Three Pagodas Pass I didn't know where I should go and live. I only had one place to go and live—Dama Hay Won Temple. Luckily, one broker felt pity for me and brought 16 people and me to Thailand in a vehicle. During the trip we also had to travel by bus and by foot.

Recently I've been living in Phoe Thein village in Thong Phaphum town. When I arrived in Thong Phaphum, I met Mi Kyin who is from my village and I moved to her house to work as a day laborer. I

saved some money and gave it to the broker to cover the travel cost of my trip. I do not have any ID or legal documents so I cannot go out. Therefore I just work at Mi Kyin's house and save money.

**Case 28**

Thai police or men posing as Thai police are harassing migrant workers from Burma, say workers in Maharchai, Samut Sakhon Province, Thailand. Workers are arrested, sexually assaulted and made to pay bribes for their release regardless of whether they have visas or work permits.

In November, Thai police arrested Mi S—, 27, as she walked to work at 4 a.m. According to Mehn Aie Wi Mon, from the Labor Rights Promotion Network, the victim possessed a work permit but, unluckily, forgot it that morning.

"They took Mi S— to another location and ordered her to make a friend bring her work permit document. They told the friend to bring the document to one place and hid Mi S— in another place," said Mehn Aie Wi Mon. "They searched Mi S— for money, but they didn't find any so they took only her phone. If they found money they surely would have seized it."

Case 28	
Name:	Mi S—
Age:	27-years-old
Ethnicity:	Burman
Address:	Unknown
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital Status:	Single
Location:	Maharchi, Samut Sakhon Province, Thailand.
Date:	November 2008

Also in November, a group of police arrested 3 women, from whom they seized 4,000 to 5,000 baht as well as molested the women. According to one of the victims, the group all had work permits. "Even though we held the legal documents, we were arrested and also sexually abused by them. They said that they were police, but they didn't wear police uniforms," said the victim, 30-years-old. "We are mothers and have children, but the police touched our breasts and our bodies. I think not only us but also young ladies face sexual

abuses like that."

**Case 29**

An 18-year-old Burmese woman and her Thai boss' 9-year-old daughter died shortly after being hit by a pickup truck in what friends say was a deliberate act of suicide and revenge against her boss.

**Case 29**

Name: Mi L— O—  
 Age: 18-years-old  
 Ethnicity: Karen  
 Address: Karen State  
 Religion: Buddhist  
 Marital Status: Single  
 Location: Surat Thani Province,  
 Thailand.  
 Date: March 9, 2009  
 Marital Status: Single  
 Location: Surat Thani Province,  
 Thailand.  
 Date: March 9, 2009

Mi L— O—, from Karen state, had been working illegally in Surat Thani Province, Thailand as a domestic worker along with her older sister, 23-year-old Mi M—. The sister had left Burma to avoid Mi M—'s forced marriage. Then, in 2008, Mi M— was raped by their boss, Mr. Suu Ree and became pregnant but the young women were too frightened of him to take any action.

Three months later, Mi L— O— went to the market one day and left her sister alone in the house. When she returned her sister was gone and Mr. Ree was cleaning their room. He had never done that before and she became afraid that he had killed

her sister. She never saw her sister again and believed her to be dead.

Mi L— O— was too afraid to tell anyone about her sister's rape and possible murder. She could not leave, as she was unable to speak Thai and had no friends in the area at the time. However, around two or three months before the fatal traffic accident she made some friends and told them everything. But they were also too afraid of Mr. Ree to speak out.

"Although we knew about it we didn't dare say anything because the boss threatened to kill us if we did and so we stayed silent," said the friends.

Soon afterwards, on March 9th, 2009 Mi L— O— left the house and took Mr. Ree's youngest daughter out with her, saying she was going shopping. Together with the child, she stepped out onto a busy road where both were hit by a pickup truck. Friends believe that this was a deliberate suicide attempt and, by including her boss' daughter, also an act of revenge for her sister.

One friend who was close to her said, "Mi L— O— lied to the 9-year-old and said she was taking her to the market. Instead she went to the middle of a highway called Haywoo Road to commit suicide. They were both taken to the hospital but died the next day. She wanted to get revenge on her boss, Mr. Suu Ree, for what he did to her sister."

**Case 30**

A 12-year-old Burmese migrant child was gang raped by five Thai men posing as police in Minburi Sub-district, Bangkok.

Early in the morning, at around 2 a.m. on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, a group of five men came to the apartment where a Burmese migrant worker family was living. Pretending they were Thai policemen coming to check their work permit cards, they ordered the workers to open the door. Upon entering, they half-heartedly checked work permit cards, ignoring some of the residents, and proceeded to search each room.

## NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

According to the aunt who is living with the child, “They captured the two children by showing us their gun and also stole a mobile phone which cost around 5,000 baht as well as another 25,000 baht in cash.” The girl, who is from Ye township, works with her aunt at a construction site in Minburi, while her mother works farther away in Bangkok.

The men then drove away with the two children and after a few minutes stopped their car near a banana farm. One man held the 18-year-old boy at gunpoint while the others took the girl out beside the road. According to the 18-year-old boy, each of the men then raped the young girl.

“During the rape she nearly lost conscious because of pain. After they raped her, they left both children on the roadside with 100 baht to get a ride back home. The girl was so terrified she couldn’t speak,” said the victim’s aunt.

Lost and unable to get back home, the children proceeded to just walk along the road. Back home, the aunt had prepared a search party to sweep the neighborhood, and luckily found the two children at about 6 a.m.

The 5 men were not immediately followed for fear an encounter would bring additional violence. The Burmese workers were also worried about being arrested, as some of them did not possess a work permit card.

Additionally the victim’s mother didn’t want to contact the police about the case because, as a migrant worker, if the police needed to question her about the incident, she would have to go to the police station. Leaving work and missing that time could result in the loss of her job.

The migrant family did inform their employer about the incident, but he took no action other than to send the child to the hospital for a medical check. The employer never contacted the police for fear the 5 might have actually been police officers. He was concerned that if they were real police the men would make problems for him and his business, as well as the potential loss of face over the incident.

However, the doctor who performed the medical examination informed the employer that in fact the rape of the 12-year-old was not a small issue, and because of its significance the police should be contacted.

### Case 31

In April 2009, Ma N—E—K—, who had been struggling economically after a series of family tragedies, had to sell her daughter to another family for 30,000 kyat (approx. 28 USD) in, Pa-an Township, Karen State.

Case 30	
Name:	Unknown
Age:	12-years-old
Ethnicity:	Burman
Address:	Taungbon village, Ye Township, Mon State.
Religion:	Buddhist
Marital Status:	Single
Location:	Minburi Sub- district.
Date:	May 2, 2009

Case 31  
 Name: Unknown  
 Age: 1-year-and 3-months-old  
 Ethnicity: Burman  
 Address: Kyaikhtow Township, Mon State  
 Location: Pa-an Township, Karen State  
 Date: April 2009

According to a source who spoke with Ma N—E—K—, 21-years-old, “My husband was killed by strangers and my mother was in the hospital. My family is very poor and we couldn’t afford to pay her medical bills. So I had no options until I sold my 1-year-old and 3-month-old daughters for what I hoped would be 50,000 kyat.”

Ma N—E—K—, from Kyaikhtow Township, Mon State lost her husband when strangers killed him during the 2009 water festival for an unknown reason.

“It was very long journey to get to Pa-an Township and I walked the whole day and night to get there” a source quoted her as saying. “I would be very happy if someone could adopt my daughter in exchange for 50,000 kyat, and take care of her as if she were their own since I do not have any money to feed her.” Ma N—E—K—, came to Pa-an because it would be too painful to see the girl every day with another family in her own village.

Upon hearing Ma N—E—K—,’s story, a family from Pa-an Township felt sorry for her and adopted the girl, however only for the price of 30,000 kyat. Additionally, they required her to sign an agreement stating that in exchange for that money she would relinquish all her rights and familial connections to the child.

While being forced to sell her daughter has brought a great deal of sympathy to Ma N—E—K—,’s plight, some villagers suspect that if she were to sell her own child, she could conceivably steal another person’s child and try to sell that too, to make additional money.

This instance of selling a child because of financial hardship is not singular. Over the past several years instances of families trying to sell their children so they can survive has been on the rise. Recently it’s been reported that several women from Kyaikhtow Township have been coming to another near by village to sell their children in this year alone. However no witness could confirm that they were in fact from Kyaikhtow Township, or that the children being sold were their real children.

Some villagers in the area suspect these sales come from a group of women working together to sell children that are not their own. While there have been no reports of missing or kidnapped children, sales have been on rise.

According to a villager from Pa-an Township, Mi Khaing Khaing, “My father has been trying to adopted a 3-year-old child, but he’s been rethinking this plan after he became afraid that the children who are being sold might have been kidnapped from their legitimate families.”

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### Case 32

In 2006, a 15-year-old boy traveled to Thailand with his uncle. When they arrived in Bangkok his uncle sold him for 20,000 baht to a Thai family. The uncle needed the money to purchase a Thai identity card. His uncle promised the Thai employer he would return after one year when the boy's commitment was fulfilled.

Through rumors his mother was informed that her son had been sold to a Thai family. She immediately contacted her brother and asked for more information. Her brother said, "I put him in a good work place. If he can speak the Thai language I will move him to a better job." His mother persisted and was finally given the number to the Thai house.

When she contacted him he said, "I've been working here for a long time—why they didn't give me money? I thought they gave my uncle money, but I don't know. They give me pocket money, about 500 baht per month. I have to make small sharp bamboo sticks. I thought did they sell me?"

After speaking to him, his mother called her relatives in Bangkok and asked them to find him. The relative called the Thai employer and offered 1 million kyat (20,000 baht at the time) in exchange for his freedom. After the money was paid he was released and found an appropriately-compensating job somewhere else in Thailand.

### Case 33

The broker took her from her village, kept her in a room in Maharchai, Thailand and mistreated her, according to the girl who was held captive.

The girl followed the broker, Mee Mee, from her village and went to work in Thailand on the 10th of November 2008. The broker paid for her travel costs of 12,500 baht and later took it out from her salary. She took the girl indirectly from Tavoy to Kawthaung. She kept the girl with 10 other girls in a room in Maharchai, Thailand. The broker put the girl to work in a baking factory which was also located in Maharchai. She forced the girl to work very long days and constantly abused her physically as she pleased.

"Occasionally, men would give the broker 6,000 baht and they would be allowed to pick one girl

#### Case 32

Name: Unknown  
Age: 15-years-old  
Ethnicity: Mon  
Religion: Buddhist  
Marital Status: Single  
Address: Kyauktaung village, Mergui Township, Tenasserim Division  
Location: Bangkok, Thailand  
Date: 2006

#### Case 33

Name: Ma M—M—  
Age: 19-years-old  
Ethnicity: Tavoy  
Religion: Buddhist  
Marital Status: Single  
Address: Palauk village, Kalaw Township, Tenasserim Division  
Location: Maharchai, Thailand  
Date: November 2008

out of the ten girls to have their way with. Luckily, I was never picked,” said the girl.

On June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the girl ran away from the room and reached Maharchai Hospital. At the hospital, she met a 26-year-old man, Ko Win Zaw. He took her to his house to help her. Then, the next day, he took the girl to the Labor Rights [NGO] office to help her file a report about her ordeal.

The girl lived in Palauk village, Kalaw Township in the Tenasserim Division. She was 19-years-old and had not passed 10th grade when she went to go to work in Thailand.

### Case 34

“When I was 17-years-old I left from home with my friends and migrated to Thailand without telling my parents. Now I am over 19-years-old. I worked in Mae Sot at Sewing Factory for two years but quit because the pay was very little, so I decided to move to Bangkok.

“I met a Karen woman broker, Ma Dar from Mae Sot, who said that she had come to find an employee to do domestic work at her boss’ house. Her boss had sent her back to find an employee, so I asked if I could take the job. To travel I had to pay her 18,000 baht to travel to Bangkok, but didn’t have to pay her immediately. She was willing to cover the travel costs, and then when I began work she would ask my employer for the transportation fee that she had paid. She said that I would have to work for six months to pay off my debt.

#### Case 34

Name: Ma M—T—  
 Age: 19-years-old  
 Ethnicity: Burman  
 Religion: Buddhist  
 Marital Status: Single  
 Address: Waw Township,  
 Pegu Division  
 Date: 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008

“When I arrived, the broker said that my new employer didn’t allow employees to use phones, and for that reason confiscated my mobile phone.

“I first went to the employer’s house about 8 p.m. on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008. As soon as I arrived the female employer said to me that I need to be clean and let me take a shower. She forced me to take off all my clothes and take a shower with her, even with the male employer standing there and watching. I was very outraged but afraid to say anything. She also treated me inappropriately, such as touching my breasts, etc. I have to take a shower with her everyday.

“The couple who employed me didn’t let me work much, and just forced me to watch sex movies and then the male employer raped me. I am forced to sleep in their bed, and before I get up, he rapes me everyday. They wouldn’t allow me to contact anybody or go outside, or even talk with a friend who is employed in the same house at me.

“Before I arrived here, one female worker was working here and we share the same room and we were very familiar. But if she is with me, the boss couple couldn’t do whatever they liked. Therefore, they moved that woman to another place. But they recruited a new female worker again. She worked for three days at that house and needed to do a lot of work. She was not able to do the entire job and she decided to leave. For me I had been there over a month. Even though I want to run away from that



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home I have no friends and so I have to be patient. But later a new worker came and she was not able to do this job and so she decided to leave from the boss' house...when the boss couple wasn't at home and we left from that house.

"Before she came to work with me she had worked at another place in Bangkok and she has friends there. So we both rented a taxi and headed to her friend's. But when we arrived there, her friends already left to another place. So we had nowhere to go. The taxi driver got angry to us because we didn't have any money to pay for the taxi fees and he just keep driving. Luckily, we found a Tavoy ethnicity male migrant worker and asked some help from him and he gave the taxi fee and he let us live in his room. After a month, I was worried about my Burmese ID card (left with the broker) and also I hadn't paid for the transportation fee yet and the broker might make a problem for my mom. So I used another male worker's phone and I contacted to the broker and explained about my experience at the boss' house. Later the broker phoned back and the phone owner didn't know what had happened and he gave the address of where we lived. So the broker said that she would come to see us and we were so afraid. So we heard about our friends (a couple) working at a factory and we contacted them to pick us up. So they came to pick us up and we lived at their home.

"However, her husband didn't earn enough income to help us survive, so we had no food to eat and no money to get back home with, and I would cry often. Unexpectedly, when I had lost all hope my brother got U Kyaw Toung's mobile number and gave it to me. My brother said that U kyaw Toung was working at an NGO. So I contacted him and he told me to live at the Burmese Association in a Thai safe house. I didn't contact my family because I afraid that when they heard about me they would feel upset."

According to Daw That That Oo, in charge of Burmese Association in Thailand, "I think they used that woman as a tool to fulfill their needs, and it was very inhuman and abusive forcing her to watch sex movies and raping her. The wife was very clever, because if her husband went to buy someone from a brothel, they would have to spend a lot of money, and worry about possible STD's. In order to solve this problem, she just used a single woman who hadn't any sexual experience and, at a lower cost, used her as tool to solve their relationship problem."

### Case 35

"A Burmese woman, 27-years-old fled from rape while she was living in Three Pagodas Pass (Thai-Burma border area) while waiting to enter Thailand" said Mi Khing Thit from Gu Bowl village, a secretary of Three Pagodas Pass Township administrated by New Mon State Party.

On May 5<sup>th</sup> 2009 around 7 pm while she was at home where she was parked, a broker Nai Chit Soe from Kawkhalein village, Kyaikmayaw Township, Mon State, came and lied to her and said that she got a call from her Uncle in Ratburi Province. He then took

#### Case 35

Name: Ma C—C—  
Age: 27-years-old  
Ethnicity: Burman  
Marital Status: Married  
Address: Kwaitkyi village,  
Tantabin Township,  
Pegu Division  
Location: Gu Bowl village, Three  
Pagodas Pass, Thai-  
Burma border  
Date: May 5, 2009

her on a motorbike and drove her towards xxx village, which is pretty far from Three Pagodas Pass. When they were half way there, he pretended the gasoline tank was empty and he stopped the motorbike. With intentions to rape, he pulled her hand, hugged her body and tried to rape her. She was scared and begged him not to violate her.

“After a while, he pretended to be checking his motorbike situation and invited me to climb up on the motorbike again. I already known that he might rape me in the way of darkness night, therefore I pretended to climb on the motorbike and [but instead] ran into the forest.

“I hide myself in the dark forest under the heavy rain. I was frightened and dare not to go outside until he had gone back. He found [searched for] me approximately two or three more hours until he gave up. In early morning around 2am, I heard the sound of a Burman couple who discovered the frogs were talking in the forest. Therefore, I asked their help and they took me to the place where I parked.” said the victim.

According to Mi Khing Thit, “she came to the Gu Bowl head villager’s house in early morning and reported her cause. At that time I was also in there and she told me the story that she was being trouble. She preferred to send him to the court and passed me Nai Chit Soe’s contact number. I phoned him and he said that he was not in Gu Bowl village; he was in the way of Kanchanaburi. However, I already sent my people to find him and finally he was arrested.”

Nai Chit Soe admitted that he was wrong and requested to be let him free. However, he had committed crime tand the head villager sentenced him to the Palaing-japan village’ lock-up. According to the court decision, he would be in Jail as a hard worker for three years. However, he paid a fine instead of entering Jail. He paid 5,000 baht to the court and 10,000 baht to Ma C— C— including her two brother’s transportation cost from U Thein Lwin’s village to xxx village.

Her family is poor and it is difficult for them to survive. That is why she wanted to go to Thailand and work with her Uncle in Ratburi Province. Unfortunately, she was sexual abused and almost raped by a broker Nai Chit Soe after she was transfered by U Thein Lwin who was not available to pick her to Thailand.

### Case 36

Five men from Bangkok posed as Thai police before kidnapping and robbing a 20-year-old girl. She had only been married for 20 days.

Case 36	
Name:	Unknown
Age:	20-years-old
Ethnicity:	Mon
Martial Status:	Married
Address:	Kawgo village, Karen State
Location:	Bangkok, Thailand
Date:	May 2009

One night in May, at around 3 a.m., the group of five men came to the apartment where a Burmese migrant worker family was living. They broke down the door and searched for money in the rooms.

According to one neighbor, “they came into her room to find money. They took her money, 7,000 baht, and one mobile phone. And then they kidnapped the girl for two

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days. After that, they left her near her apartment alone and she went back on foot. Nobody could fight them, because they had guns and knives. If we fought they would have killed us.”

The girl is from Kawgo village, Karen State and works with her husband at a construction site in Bangkok.

“When we talked to the boss, he said he would not contact the Thai police because he is also afraid of the group of Thai men,” said one man who work with the victims.

He added “Now many people face problems like this in Thailand. Because Thai people oppress the Burma migrant workers in Thailand,”

A similar case occurred with a twelve-year-old Burmese migrant child in Minburi Sub-district, Bangkok. Sources told WCRP that she was gang-raped by five other Thai men posing as police.

### Case 37

#### Case 37

Name:	Ma M—K—
Age:	18-years-old
Ethnicity:	Burman
Marital Status:	Single
Address:	Kawkareik Town, Karen State
Location:	Mueang City, Satun Province, Thailand
Date:	January 16, 2009
Entry Point:	Myawaddy

An 18-year-old girl from Kawkareik town in Karen State was lied to by traffickers and raped by a man in Satun city, Satun Province, Thailand.

Her name is Ma M—K— and she works at a shrimp farm. In January 2009, after she had been working for about ten days, she was raped in her room by a 20-year-old named Win Ko. After the rape, she was forced to marry him, the marriage lasted for six months and then she ran away from him. As she traveled she ran into another man who stole her mobile phone and left her alone on the road. Fortunately, Ma M—K— met a Thai woman who she sent her to the Satun

Child and Family Center in Satun city, Satun Province.

When Ma M—K— was 16-years-old, she migrated to Thailand. In July 2008, she followed Ko Mon Lay, a 32-year-old trafficker who lived in her village. They worked together in Chai Nat City, Thailand at an orange farm for eight months. Ko Mon Lay took her entire salary, saying it would pay for the trafficking transportation costs. Then she moved to another job with the help of another trafficker named Aung Aung. She worked in a flower garden as a day worker in Nakomchaisie town, Nakompathun Province for six months. Again, Aung Aung took her entire salary. After that she changed jobs again, this time with the help of a woman named Mee Mee, who was a relative of Aung Aung and also a trafficker. She worked in another orange farm for two months. Mee Mee took her salary and moved her to a new place, working for a shrimp farm in Satun city. It was while she was working there that she was raped by a migrant worker, Win Ko.

**Case 38**

Name: Ma W— W— A— & Ma S—  
S—W—  
Age: Both 20-years-old  
Ethnicity: Burman  
Religion: Buddhist  
Marital Status: Single & Married  
Address: Pegu Town, Pegu Division  
Location: Dan Naug Precinct, Hat Yai  
City, Songkhla Province  
Date: June 17, 2009

“I worked in Thailand about one year and four months but I never saw any money. Also, I couldn’t speak the Thai language,” said Ma M—K—. Mee Mee was arrested by the Thai police for trafficking. The Thai police are searching for Aung Aung to make an arrest, but he is still on the run.

**Case 38**

Two 20-year-old girls from Pegu Town were sold by a trafficker who promised them a job at a factory in Hat Yai, Thailand. Previously, the two girls were

working as shopkeepers in Ranong.

On June 17, the girls met Li Li, a 50-year-old Thai woman. Li Li promised that “In Hat Yai, I can find for you good jobs.” The two girls trusted Li Li and paid 4,000 baht each for travelling costs. “I am grade eight and I want to get more money. Also I want to support my family in my village. So my friend and I came to Thailand together” said one of the victims.

The woman sold them to a Karaoke shop in Songkhla Province, Hat Yai City. “We follow with a trafficker and they take us in Karaoke shop. The girls said to her ‘we can’t work in this shop’ but the trafficker keep us this shop and go away. We work in here three day as a waiter and we ran away,” said the victims.

The victims ran to the bus station and were arrested by Thai police for three days. While in jail an education group came to do medical checks and discuss trafficking. The victims told the group about their experience with Li Li. The education group reported the victims’ incident to the Thai police and they were released. The education group took the victims to a safe house, where they will remain till they can return to Burma.

**Case 39**

On the morning of June 22, Mi E—H—told WCRP that she was at home cooking, waiting for her husband to return from tapping rubber trees. Around 9 a.m. a Thai man arrived and asked for some drinking water.

She didn’t want neighbors to hear his voice, so she closed the door and windows and offered him a cupful of water. Mi E—H—said that the man did

**Case 39**

Name: Mi E—H—  
Age: 25-years-old  
Ethnicity: Mon  
Religion: Buddhist  
Marital Status: Married  
Address: Settwe village, Mudon  
Township, Mon State  
Location: Phang Nga, Thailand  
Date: June 22, 2009

## NOWHERE ELSE TO GO

not drink the water; instead, he tried to rape her.

"I was afraid of him, he grabbed me, and I ran away to my husband's work place," she added. Her husband was a migrant Mon worker at a nearby mountain in Phang Nga, Thailand, about 300 meters from their home.

Mi E—H—identified the 50-year-old Thai man as one of the many small-time bosses in the area. He and his co-worker bought timber and would come to Phang Nga everyday.

Many different ethnicities of Burmese migrant workers live there. Mi E—H—is from Settwe village, Mudon Township, Mon State. Though she now feels compelled to leave, without ever having found work for herself.

"Now we can't stay here because we are afraid of the Thai men and also work is not going well, so we [my husband and I] have to go back [to Burma] soon. We have no ID cards to stay here," she added.

### Case 40

Name: Ma S—  
Age: 15-years-old  
Ethnicity: Mon  
Religion: Buddhist  
Marital Status: Single  
Address: Kawta village,  
Kawkareik  
Township, Karen  
State  
Location: Mae Sot, Thailand  
Date: June 2, 2009

### Case 40

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July, 15 year-old, Mi S— went to Thailand with a trafficker and a travel group of about 10 people. When they arrived at the Myawaddy-Mae Sot border, they rode two people and a driver per heavily-loaded truck, to pass the checkpoint.

"The driver told her [the victim] she would ride alone with him because she was overweight and two people could not fit" said a family friend, who was also crossing the border.

After the car passed the border checkpoint, the driver tried to abuse her and may have

attempted to rape her.

She was afraid and ran away when the driver stopped to pay a road toll. At that time, the police saw her and detained her for questioning.

In Thai, they asked where she was going. She was quiet and said nothing. The police asked again in Burmese, and she told them she came to Thailand to see her uncle in Bangkok. They knew she was Burmese and they sent her back to the Myawaddy-Mae Sot border.

She wanted to work in Thailand to make money for her family; her father has advanced cancer and they owe 2 million kyat in medical fees.

"Now that migrant workers can get migrant IDs, it is good and you will work [as a domestic worker] in a Thai family home," her uncle told her.

The same family friend spoke to the victim's mother and recalled her saying: "the trafficker told me about my daughter missing on the road. I went right away and found my daughter at the border. I had to pay 3,000 baht for my daughter. My daughter was missing...for about four days."

Though WCRP received differing accounts on the nature of the abuse (one alleging abuse and one also attempted rape), the victim felt violated enough to run away from the car.

She is a Mon girl and was from Kaw-Tar village, Kawkareik Township, Karen State. Her parents are farmers and also have a younger daughter. Before her father worked in a foreign country, now he can't work. After the incident she returned to her native village with her mother. Her sister has also worked as a domestic worker in Thailand.

The trafficker's name is Htaw Rot and he was also from Kaw-Tar village. The victim's parents were friendly with him and her uncle had contacted him to take her to Thailand (using his home in Myawaddy as a jumping-off point).









After taking two or three days to arrive at TPP, we learned we were going to be made to work as prostitutes. We were so angry and shocked at what the broker told us. We tried from where we were staying, but we didn't have any money, no relatives to turn to, and we didn't know where we could go. The broker threatened us by saying that she would get an armed group to come beat us up. We were afraid that if we didn't agree to work as prostitutes we would be killed.



A REPORT BY WOMAN AND CHILD RIGHTS PROJECT  
SOUTHERN BURMA, AUGUST 2009