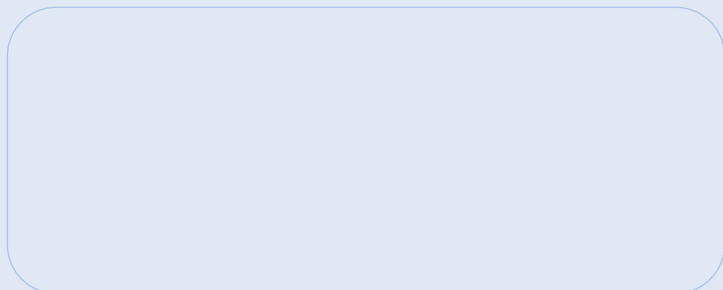


Peace Mail

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OFF PEAK
AUSTRALIA

VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 12



act for peace

reduce poverty | protect refugees
prevent conflicts | empower communities



partners 4 peace
working for a world at peace



Map: BBC News

The Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) is the principal supplier of food, shelter and non-food items to about 139,000 refugees from Burma.

From basic food rations, shelter and household necessities to facilitating education and skills development for refugees to earn an income – your gift will make a difference. TBBC's goal is to provide not only humanitarian aid but also to support long-term self-reliance of the refugees. In 2007/8 Australia resettled the second largest number of refugees from the Thailand Burma Border with nearly 2000 finding new homes here. TBBC find significant challenges in maintaining camp

leadership, as the best educated are frequently selected for resettlement, causing a loss of people who provide leadership within the camp.

Your generous gifts will help sustain the vital work of TBBC. A gift of \$16 can provide rice for one refugee for one month, \$300 can provide a year's worth of food, while a gift of \$576 will feed an average family of five for six months.

act for peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA).



act for peace

National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA)

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THANK YOU for your support which allows us to make a positive difference in the lives of people in great need, such as those refugees in the care of TBBC. Through our partnerships with local agencies, we are able to ensure that the programs you support are high quality, targeted and sustainable. While our projects are growing, the deterioration of political and economic situations around the world, together with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, mean that there are many more people in need of urgent assistance.

To introduce a friend, get more information or give your suggestions and feedback, please e-mail Howard at hgraham@ncca.org.au or free call Howard or Jordan on **1800 025 101**.

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Two Real-life Stories from Refugee Camps on the Thailand-Burma Border

Dear valued supporter



Erik Olsson

The family pictured made the decision to flee to a refugee camp earlier this year. A few days after their arrival at the camp, the father, Niran, said, "I come from a village in Tongoo district in Burma. There used to be around 400 households in the village, and now there are only around 200. From my village we could hear fighting about one hour's walking distance away. I used to work on a farm in a nearby village where I was paid with food. Due to a curfew imposed by the Burmese military, I had to come home every night making it difficult to keep working on the farm.

The Burmese military had camps around our village. Village people were being used for carrying materials and constructing a road. My wife and I were made to work hard in road construction. We worked on roads for three weeks per month for no money. We did this for three years. People who didn't cooperate were punished and beaten. One person in my village was killed just before we left.

Our family stayed as long as possible. But it became very dangerous and each year, survival got more difficult. Therefore we made the decision to leave, but had to leave the children's grandmother behind. My brother is also still there, taking care of her. I don't know anything about the future, but I hope that my children will be able to attend a school in the camp."

*Niran**

Maya's story

"I am 21 years old. I used to live with my uncle and aunty in a village in Karenni state. We were farmers. When I was a child, my father was forced to work as a carrier for the Burmese army. He was shot dead when he tried to flee. My mother got sick and died.

There was not enough food in our village. So we had to grow rice on the mountainside. One day I saw Burmese soldiers walk into the hut where my uncle was. They came to punish us because we were growing rice outside the village. My uncle shouted to me that I should run away and never come back. So I ran off to the jungle. I got help to escape from a Karenni soldier who escorted me to the Thailand border together with a group of other fleeing people. Twice, we were close to check-points. I was very scared.

The people left in my village don't know what happened to me. I am worried for my aunty; I don't know what happened to her. I also weep for my beautiful country with so many of our people driven from our homes and there seems to be no hope of returning.

When I came to the camp, I received a food ration and blankets from TBBC.

Here in the camp, I want to teach in one of the schools. Now that many people are leaving for resettlement, maybe they will need more teachers."

*Maya**



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* Niran and Maya's names have been changed for security reasons.