

# peacemail

VOLUME 7 • ISSUE 4

REFUGEE CAMP LIFE ON THE THAI-BURMA BORDER

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reduce poverty | protect refugees  
prevent conflicts | empower communities

The international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA)

Peel gently to open

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In November 2010, the Burmese government organised the country's first national elections in 20 years. The entire process, however, was not considered free or fair by the United Nations. The previous military junta have a stranglehold on the newly-formed Parliament. Military units in Eastern Burma continue to attack villages, burning crops and dwellings, forcing villagers to flee and inflicting all forms of human rights abuses.

Act for Peace is a member of the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) which supports nine refugee camps on the Thailand border with Burma. The number of new residents fleeing into the camps continues and replaces those who have left. Overcrowding continues to be a problem. The resettlement program which began in 2005 and enabled over 60,000 refugees to resettle in foreign countries is now winding down. Refugees are not allowed to leave the camps and it is not yet safe for them to go home.

The TBBC camps are managed by refugees. This structure recognises the refugees' sense of culture and community and provides employment, essential for the restoration of self esteem. Most supporting agencies are becoming more restricted in their capacity to offer essential services due to funding cuts. Because of the protracted nature of the Burmese conflict, these camps have existed for over 26 years and many of the refugees have lived their whole lives in these camps.



can provide vegetable seeds and tree seedlings for one family



can provide a new arrivals pack for one family



can provide an entire food basket for one family for one year

All gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible.



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**THANK YOU Partners** for your commitment to Act for Peace through your prayers and regular gifts. Through your generosity, we are making a real and lasting difference to the lives of many people affected by conflict or extreme poverty.

If you would like to upgrade your regular gift, simply free call Howard or Emma, **1800 025 101** or email [hgraham@ncca.org.au](mailto:hgraham@ncca.org.au). Also, all feedback and suggestions are welcome, as we love to hear from you and to pass on comments to project partners.

On the other hand, if you are not yet an Act for Peace Partner and would like to be, or would just like to help this project, your call or email will be welcomed!

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## Refugee Camp Life on the Thailand-Burma Border

*Dear Partner,*

I am Aye Reh and I have been living in this refugee camp in Thailand since 1996 when my family and I fled Burma.

I arrived in this camp with my parents, brothers and sisters. We came from our town in Karenni State, because we were forced to relocate. We received an order from the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC - the Burmese military) that we all had to leave. After we received the order, thirty to forty people from my town moved at once. There was no water or food. It was an impossible journey. We were worried about disease outbreaks, so we escaped Burma and came here.

When I first came, I worked in the clinic as an assistant then worked my way up to section leader, after which I came here to work with the ration committee. All the jobs are good but I like to change jobs to get more work experience.

I was recently promoted to the position of distribution manager in one of the warehouses, which we call 'go-downs'. Through your gifts to Act for Peace, the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) provides us with food, shelter and other supplies which are stored in and distributed from these 'go-downs'.

My job is to record rations going in and out of the 'go-down'. The trucks deliver the sacks and I record the details. During distribution, I keep track of amounts issued to refugees. In this go-down, we distribute rice, oil, chilli and charcoal. We now get a different kind of beans because they are cheaper, and we get less rice than we used to. TBBC told us that this is because they are getting less money from donors now than in the past, and they have to prioritise nutrition for the most vulnerable populations like children and those who are sick.

I was on the distribution team staff for two months before becoming manager. I have been trained on how to do the distribution and record keeping. TBBC ran the training and it was helpful.

I am still living with my family in the camp. We all hope to go back to Burma one day and do not want to apply for resettlement to another country. I am now 30. Some day, hopefully we can return, but right now people keep arriving to escape the SPDC.

Thank you for your kind gifts as an Act for Peace Partner to support refugees like me.

*Aye Reh*



Aye Reh with stacks of rations in the 'go-down'.

### Partners Prayer Points:

- *Pray for Burmese refugees like Aye Reh and his family and for those working to assist them.*
- *Pray that the new Burmese government may stop the oppression and forced dislocation of ethnic minority groups.*

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