

peacemail

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POSTAGE PAID
OFF PEAK
AUSTRALIA

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reduce poverty | protect refugees
prevent conflicts | empower communities



Burma's military and non-state armed groups have used antipersonnel mines consistently throughout the long-running civil war. These landmines are concentrated in border areas from decades-old struggles for autonomy by ethnic minorities. Karen State, Karenni State, Shan State and Tenasserim Division contain the most heavily mine-affected areas. According to the estimates of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), Burma/Myanmar has one of the highest accident rates involving landmines. In 2008 alone, 721 new accidents were reported to the ICBL, a sharp increase over previous years.

Ethnic minority communities near the border with Thailand report that the military continue to use landmines as part of an offensive against minority anti-government armies. Human rights organisations allege that the army and allied armed groups laid large numbers of mines to separate them from their civilian populations as part of a concerted policy denying people their livelihoods and food. Military wings of ethnic groups and ordinary villagers also laid mines to hinder the movement of government troops.

Act for Peace supports a Prosthetic Workshop in Karen State, Burma, where mine-survivors have constructed the building and run the clinic on a volunteer basis. Last year, 8,513 people in villages were educated about the risks of landmines.

\$400 can train a Mine Risk Education Facilitator.

\$325 can provide a prosthetic limb.

\$60 can educate ten people about risks of landmines.

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

actalliance



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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 Sarah on **1800 025 101** or email 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! *All gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible.*

Giving Landmine Victims a Future in Burma

Dear Act for Peace Partner,

My name is The Nerkaw¹ and I'm proud of my work with the prosthetic workshop at Kho Kay in Karen State, Burma. Mine-survivors like me built this clinic and others now run it on a volunteer basis. We built this clinic to provide prosthetic limbs to victims of landmines as well as a training place for those who educate villagers about the risks of landmines.

Some of the mine victims come to the clinic by long-tail boats on the river, as there are no roads. Victims live at a boarding house in Kho Kay during the prosthetic production. I lead one of five outreach teams who meet victims that are too far away to be able travel to the clinic. Many people cannot come to the clinic due to their loss of limb, inclement weather, difficult terrain and the ongoing civil war. I take a cast for the prosthesis, get it produced at the workshop and then adjust it for the victim when we meet again on following missions into the districts.

My team also provides Mine Risk Education to villages and camps for internally displaced people to help avoid accidents when people are looking for food or fleeing from danger. I interview new mine victims and map previously unknown mined areas, all thanks to funding from Act for Peace.

Recently, I travelled for weeks through mountains, mud and rivers (sleeping in hammocks in the open forest despite the rainy season) to deliver a new prosthesis to Mu'Kpaw, a farmer who stepped on a mine back in January 1986.



Prosthetic leg under construction

"It is very good for me," Mu'Kpaw said upon receiving his new prosthetic leg. "If I had to get it from a hospital in Burma, it will cost a lot of money, and on top of that, there will be a lot of questions about the incident, which are best avoided in Burma today."

Mu'Kpaw's prosthesis looks different from most other prosthetic legs. Rather than a replica of a normal foot, he has been fitted with a so-called "farmer-foot." It is a specially constructed prosthesis, which is more stable and thus more suitable for cultivating muddy rice fields, climbing steep inclines or even for fleeing the violence of the protracted civil war.

On my way back to the prosthetic clinic, I continue to observe and make notes of any unmet prostheses needs. There are at least ten more mine victims that we can reach in this small district who have asked us for prosthetic legs. Hopefully we can help them if the prosthetic program receives funding for it.

Even though I only get paid \$50 a month, I do the work because there is such a great need and also because my girlfriend is a landmine victim.



Kyaw Noh tries on his leg.

Partner's Prayer Points:

Pray for these mine-survivors and those working to assist them.

'I weep, but not for myself. I am but one of thousands who have suffered so.

One day our pain will end.

***No. I weep not for myself, but for those who do not yet know
That the pain they create does not destroy humanity and dignity.'***

~ A prayer from World Council of Churches Burma Staff

The Nerkaw

¹ All names have been changed for security reasons.