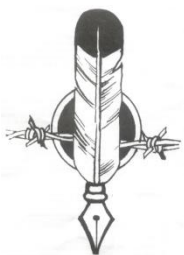




On the Edge of Survival:

The Continuing Rat Infestation and Food Crisis in Chin State, Burma



Chin Human Rights Organization
September 2009

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in Chin State, Burma*



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In Memory of John Tuihing



This report is dedicated to the memory of John Tuihing, a Chin human rights activist and relief worker who drowned on 30 October 2008 in a boating accident while delivering much-needed food aid to communities struggling with food shortages in Paletwa Township, Chin State. John joined as a staff member of CHRO in April 2008 based on the India-Burma border. He had recently assumed the position of acting coordinator for the Chin Famine Emergency Relief Committee (CFERC), a Mizoram-based cross-border relief team. He will be remembered as a dedicated activist, committed to protecting and promoting the rights of the Chin people. Our work continues in his memory.

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I. Executive Summary

Since late 2007, the people of Chin State have been struggling with massive food shortages and hunger after the vast bamboo forests that cover the mountainous landscape of Chin State began to flower and die- a process that occurs twice every century. Already struggling for their survival due to decades of severe economic repression and human rights abuses, this natural disaster has left the Chin people on the edge of survival.

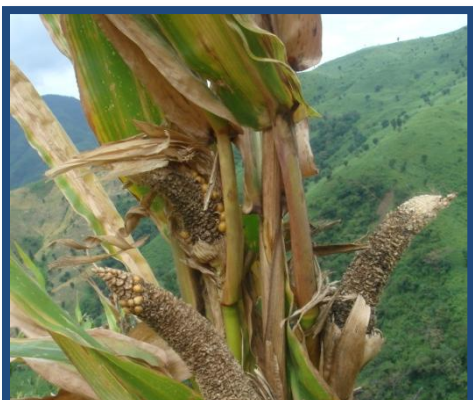
This report is a follow-up to CHRO's July 2008 report, "Critical Point: Food Scarcity and Hunger in Burma's Chin State," which first brought worldwide attention to the dire humanitarian conditions facing the Chin people. This report provides an update on the current conditions in Chin State, the effects of the food crisis, and responses taken to assist people in the affected areas of Chin State.

The bamboo of Chin State began to flower in late 2006. Attracted to the fruit produced by the bamboo, the flowering process triggered an explosion in the rat population. After exhausting the fruit supply, the rats turned on people's crops and food supplies, causing massive food shortages for local villagers dependent on farming for their livelihood and subsistence. In 2008, CHRO estimated that as many as 200 villages were affected by severe food shortages associated with the bamboo flowering, and no less than 100,000 people, or 20 percent of the entire population of Chin State, were in need of immediate food aid. CHRO now believes those figures are much higher.



Villagers are now struggling with hunger and severe malnutrition due to food shortages in Chin State. Children are particularly at risk of malnourishment. (© CHRO, 2007)

Since CHRO first reported on the crisis, food shortages spread to seven townships in Chin State as well as parts of Sagaing Division. Up to 82 percent of the farmland has been destroyed in certain affected regions of Chin State. In several villages, each and every household is in need of immediate food aid.



Up to 82 percent of the farmland has been destroyed in certain affected regions of Chin State. (© CHRO, 2009)

The consequences of the food crisis are also more apparent now. Over 54 people are known to have died due to the effects of extreme malnourishment and famine-related disease; children comprise the majority of recorded deaths. As access to affected regions is limited, this number is likely to be an underestimate. Disease and malnourishment is widespread, particularly among women, children, and the elderly. Children with little ability to concentrate on studies due to hunger have been forced to drop out of school in order to help their families forage for food: school enrollment rates are down 50 to 60 percent from last year. Several thousand Chin have fled their villages to search for food elsewhere. More than 4,000 have already arrived to the India and Thailand border.

The situation has been made more acute by the ruling military regime's utter neglect of the suffering, compounded by policies and practices of abuse and repression against Chin civilians. As thousands struggle with hunger, starvation, and disease, the SPDC continues practices of forced labor, extorting excessive amounts of money from villagers, confiscating people's land and property, in addition to other severe human rights abuses. Such actions have strained the Chin people's ability to cope with the impacts of the natural disaster.

Since the food shortages were first reported by CHRO, efforts have been made to respond to the food crisis. After initially dismissing the situation in Chin State, the WFP conducted a follow-up investigation and eventually acknowledged the existence of food shortages in Chin State. During a recent mission to the area, WFP reported "food consumption [to be]...worse than any other region visited by the Mission." WFP and their coordinating partners initiated relief programs in early 2009 that continue to be implemented in various affected areas of Chin State. Chin community-based groups in India have also organized relief teams to deliver food aid to remote villages in Chin State. These teams are responsible for delivering over 30,000 kilograms of rice to 54 villages in six townships from May to July 2009 alone.

Despite concerted efforts from multiply fronts to assist the affected population, Burma's military government, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), continues to do nothing to respond to the food crisis in Chin State. Rather, the SPDC has exacerbated the crisis through sustained human rights abuses and economic repression, further undermining the livelihoods and food security of the Chin people. Forced labor, extortion, and confiscations of land and property continue unabated within the affected areas. SPDC has denied repeated requests for food aid, even as it reports a rice surplus. Local authorities have banned villagers from receiving foreign aid, threatening reprisals against anyone who accepts foreign aid.

Government neglect and continued abuse; inadequately supported relief efforts; and pervasive hunger and food shortages have the potential for catastrophic humanitarian consequences. The effects of the bamboo flowering and rat infestation are expected to last three to five years. During the last bamboo cycle, half a century ago, 10,000 to 15,000 people reportedly died due to the associated effects of hunger and disease in neighboring Mizoram State. The people of Chin State today struggling with the same natural disaster have the added burden of military repression, abuse, and neglect. They are on the edge of survival now; but their struggle is far from over.



Methodology

This report is based on information provided by relief teams based along the India-Burma border who are providing food aid and assistance to affected areas in Chin State, Burma. The data was collected from more than 80 villages within affected areas in six townships of Chin State over an 18-month period between January 2008 and August 2009. Interviews were conducted in various Chin dialects and translated into English later. As many interviewees may be subject to reprisals in Burma, CHRO has withheld their names and identifying information.



I. Background

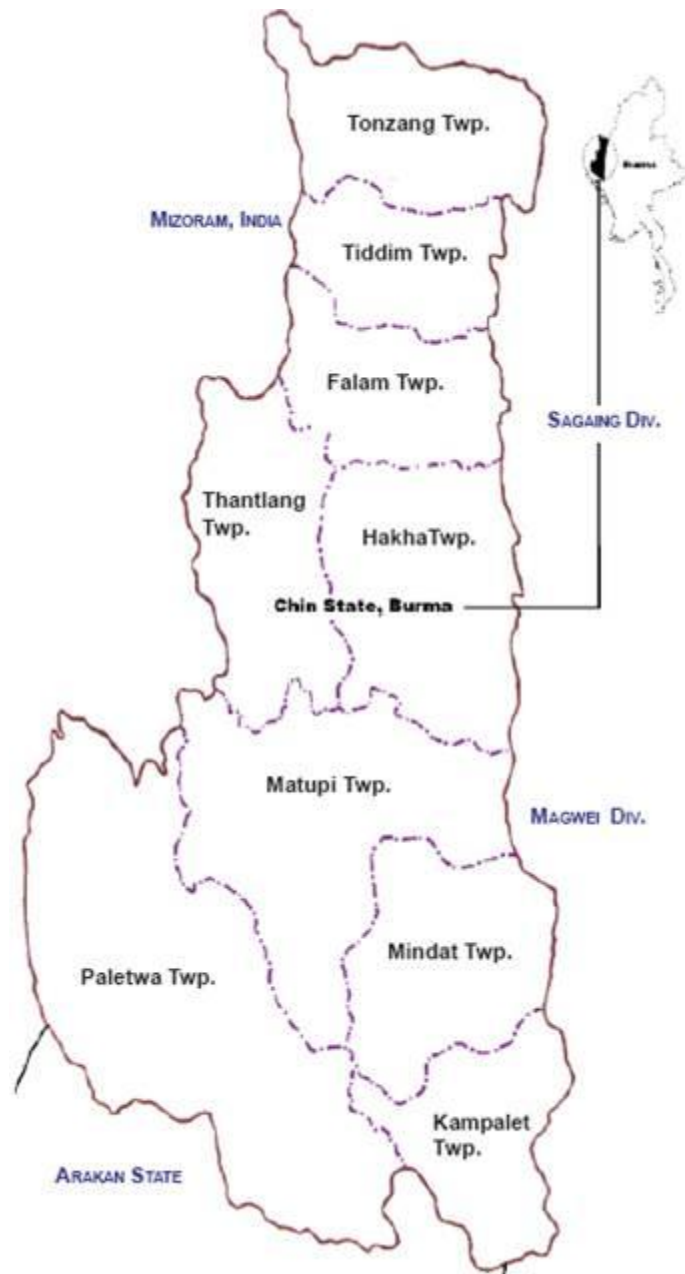
Located in the steep mountain chains of northwestern Burma, Chin State is one of the most underdeveloped and isolated regions in Burma, if not all of Asia. Treacherous terrain and travel restrictions imposed by the military regime largely limit outside access to parts of Chin State. Few international agencies or aid organizations are allowed to operate freely in Chin State, despite the rampant poverty, disease, and hunger that grip and paralyze the population. Even before the bamboo began to flower, studies found that 70 percent of the Chin population live below the poverty line; 40 percent are without adequate food sources; and malnutrition and child mortality rates in Chin State are among the highest in the country.¹

In addition to severe economic and social repression in Chin State, the Chin people struggle for survival in a hostile human rights climate. The ruling military regime of Burma, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), routinely uses tactics of terror and brutality to control and subjugate the people of Burma. The non-Burman ethnic nationalities, including the Chin, are particularly targeted with abuse by the SPDC. CHRO has collected and documented the systematic and widespread persecution of the Chin people by the ruling military regime for over a decade. CHRO's work was recently corroborated by a Human Rights Watch report released in January 2009, which documented extensive evidence of extrajudicial killings; torture and mistreatment; arbitrary arrest and detention; restrictions on movement, expression, and religious freedom; forced labor; as well as widespread extortion and confiscation of property. These abuses were perpetrated at the hands of the SPDC, largely through the Burma Army.²



Landscape of Chin State, Burma. (© CHRO, 2009)

Map of Chin State (© CHRO, 2008)





When the bamboo flowers it produces a large fruit, attracting rats who eat the fruit and multiply in vast numbers. (© CHRO, 2009)

In the context this intense human rights environment, conditions in Chin State reached a critical point when the bamboo began to flower in early 2006. The bamboo that covers approximately one-fifth of Chin State is called *Melocanna baccifera*, and as part of its regeneration process, it flowers and dies every 50 years. When the bamboo flowers it produces a fruit. Rich in nutrients, the fruit attracts forest rats that feed on the fruit and reproduce at a rapid rate. When the fruit supply is exhausted, the rats turn on people's farms and fields-

quickly depleting rural villagers of their primary food supplies. The effects of this process started to be seen by the end of 2007. In areas most severely affected by the bamboo flowering, such as in Southern Chin State, farmers reported losing their entire harvest and results in massive food shortages. In close correlation with the cyclical flowering of bamboo, starvation and famines in this region of the world have been documented in 50 year cycles since 1862. For this reason, the bamboo flowering process is known locally as *mautam*, literally translating as "bamboo" and "starvation."

At the end of the bamboo flowering cycle, the bamboo dies off altogether while the seeds from the fruit are left behind to regenerate the bamboo forest. The flowering, death, and re-seeding of the bamboo takes place over the course of one year. However, the consequences of this process is long-lasting, with people struggle with the influx in the rat population, the destruction of their livelihoods, in addition to increased hunger, malnutrition, disease, and death due to severe food shortages. The impact of the food crisis has been heaviest on the rural communities consisting of hundreds of villages who have no access to basic infrastructures, such as reliable road and communication system, health care facilities, electricity or running water. The remote and isolated nature of such villages hampers relief efforts as aid workers find it difficult to obtain access such areas, let alone provide sustainable food provisions. As a result, hunger in many parts of Chin State remains pervasive.



Rats have invaded fields and food stores, depleting villagers of their livelihoods and primary sustenance. (© CHRO, 2009)

II. Current Conditions in Chin State

A. Food Insecurity



Corn eaten by rats. The rats have stripped bare acres of farmland in Chin State, leaving villagers with little to eat. (© CHRO, 2009)

Since CHRO's first report on the food crisis in July 2008, food insecurity has increased as the effects of the bamboo flowering continue to spread across the State. Severe food shortages have been reported in seven townships of Chin State- Hakha, Falam, Matupi, Paletwa, Thantlang, Tiddim, and Tongzang- as well as parts of Sagaing Division that border Chin State where large numbers of ethnic Chin live.³

Rats plagued vast regions of Chin State throughout 2008 and into 2009 in ever-expanding numbers.⁴ Fifty-five thousand rats were reportedly killed in one village in Thantlang Township in 2008 alone.⁵ Rats have devastated large areas of southern Chin State and are progressing into parts of northern Chin State.⁶ As a result of the continued influx of rats, farmers reported extensive crop loss in 2008 and 2009. A survey conducted by the Chin Public Affairs Committee of Chinland (PAC), a partner group of CHRO based in India, found that rats destroyed 82 percent of the rice fields and 78 percent of the sesame crops in 20 villages in Paletwa Township in 2008.⁷ A similar survey conducted by Chin Famine Emergency Relief Committee (CFERC), another India-based partner group of CHRO, reported the loss of almost 2,000 acres of rice and corn fields in just three villages in Thantlang Township in 2008.⁸ Such extensive losses are corroborated by World Food Program (WFP) findings that 75 percent of the crops in Thantlang Township had been destroyed, and 30 percent of villagers had abandoned their fields.⁹

To stem the continued flow of rats and prevent further destruction of farms, fields, and food stores, villagers have devised a number of methods, with varying effectiveness, to combat the rats. Measures include:

- **Traps:** Villagers rely on a variety of traps- string-triggered traps, tree traps, and bamboo cage- to capture rats attempting to enter their fields.
- **Fences:** Farmers erect protective fencing around their fields to prevent rats from gaining access to the harvests.
- **Poison:** Some villagers try to kill rats by mixing poison with small amounts of rice, leaving the mixture near rat burrows and under trees. This method is infrequently employed due to the high cost of poison (300 Kyat or US\$0.30 for one pack).



Farmer with a number of string-triggered traps. Farmers lay up to 70 traps in and around their farms and fields to catch and prevent rats from entering their fields. (© CHRO, 2009)

In addition to the rats, heavy crop loss was reported in many parts of Chin State due to crop-eating insects, such as locusts or grasshoppers. Locusts are known to swarm as adults and can travel great distances, stripping entire fields along their way. They feed on almost any green plant and can cause extensive damage, devouring entire plants at a time.¹⁰ Crops left behind by the rats are now being destroyed by locusts.¹¹ Farmers in Thantlang and Matupi Townships have reported high numbers of locusts consuming not only paddy fields but also large fruit-bearing trees, such as banana and mango trees.¹² The insects reportedly not only eat the fruit and grain, but all the leaves and stalks, turning entire fields and farms into barren wastelands in a short time.¹³ To combat this new menace, villagers in Thantlang Township requested assistance from the SPDC Township Agricultural Department, but received no response. As a result, their crops have been almost completely destroyed.¹⁴



Farmers typically begin planting paddy seeds as the first rains start, but cultivation in parts of Chin State have been hampered by unusual weather patterns. (© CHRO, 2009)

Poor weather has further hampered cultivation efforts in Chin State. Low rainfall in some areas, such as Thantlang Township, has dried out paddy stalks and forced farmers to re-sow their fields several times during the planting season. Farmers in wet farmlands have had to put plowing on hold until sufficient water reserves are available.¹⁵ While inadequate rainfall was blamed for poor harvests in Thantlang Township, overly abundant rainfall in parts of Matupi Township caused the over-ripening and rotting of rice paddy and maize fields.¹⁶



A single-parent mother with all the food her family has left; between one to two days supply of rice. (© CHRO, 2009)

As a result of the continuing destruction of crops and poor crop harvests, thousands of people across Chin State lack sustainable food sources and are at high risk of severe malnutrition and potential starvation. PAC found that, as of July 2009, 76 percent of people in 20 villages in Paletwa Township are in need of food relief, and in at least eight villages, each household required food assistance.¹⁷ A similar survey conducted by CFERC in Thantlang Township in June 2009 found that 82 percent of people living in three villages are in need of food relief.¹⁸

People's food reserves are severely limited. In Thantlang Township, villages have on average less than a two-month supply of rice before their stores are completely depleted.¹⁹ Some villages have less than five weeks of rice available.²⁰ Compared with figures in



Chin child with roots dug up from the forest. Many villagers have limited rice supplies left and are forced to forage for wild yams and roots. (© CHRO, 2009)

these same villages two years ago when the rice reserves were available for at least six months, villagers are continuing to experience a downward trend.²¹ Families are now cautiously using their remaining rice supply. As described by one Chin woman, *“We are worried about our rice supply, so we eat only a little bit of rice boiled with some sour leaf.”*²² Many households in affected areas are reduced to one meal of rice soup per day.²³

Without rice available to harvest or purchase, villagers are forced to find alternative sources of food. Some families are foraging for food in the jungle, digging up wild yams and roots.²⁴ Others are completely dependent on limited relief aid provided by humanitarian agencies and border-based relief teams. Where food relief is not available, villagers are forced to trek long distances over dangerous jungle paths to reach Mizoram where livestock, domestic animals, and personal possessions can be sold and rice purchased.²⁵ A village committee member from Thantlang Township commented on this situation, *“Of 102 houses, only nine houses have more than a one-week supply of rice. We have no choice but to go to India in search of food and carry it back.”*²⁶

Some villagers have borrowed money from moneylenders at exorbitant interest rates to acquire much-needed food supplies.²⁷ Eighty-five percent of people in Chin State are reportedly in debt to local moneylenders after taking on loans to purchase food.²⁸ Rice traders have similarly set up businesses purchasing large amounts of rice in Mizoram and transporting it to remote villages in affected areas of Chin State to sell to hungry villagers. As most villagers are unable to pay for the rice outright, traders have established predatory lending schemes that require villagers to repay double to triple the cost of the rice received as a penalty for delayed payments.²⁹



Rice traders traveling from Chin State, Burma to Mizoram, India in order to purchase rice to bring back to remote villages to sell for a profit. (© CHRO, 2009)

B. Human Rights Insecurity

Chronic food insecurity in Chin State is made more acute by years of arbitrary and repressive policies meted out against the Chin people by the military regime. Natural disaster aside, the Chin people have been able to sustain themselves for generations on their local food production alone. While crop yields from traditional slash-and-burn, rotational agriculture has declined due to soil depletion in recent years, the yields have been enough to satisfy the food and livelihood requirements of the Chin people. But the last two decades have seen a steady rise in poverty and food insecurity, largely attributable to the Burma Army and its continued expansion into Chin State. Troop deployment in Chin State has increased more than tenfold since 1988.³⁰ Increased militarization of Chin State is highly correlative to increased incidents of human rights violations. Over the past two decades, CHRO has documented widespread and systematic reports of extrajudicial killings, torture and mistreatment, arbitrary arrests and detention, forced labor, restrictions on movement, expression, and religious freedom, as well as extortion and confiscation of land and personal property. Despite the fact that Chin people are now struggling with one of the worst humanitarian crises they have encountered in half a century, abuses by the Burma Army and its agents continue unabated.

Forced Labor

The pervasive use of civilian forced labor by the Burma Army is perhaps the single largest factor contributing to food shortages in Chin State. The scale and frequency of the use of forced labor has not diminished since the beginning of the bamboo flowering in late 2006. Constant demand for laborers has forced people to leave their farms and fields in order to work on SPDC projects without compensation. Projects include road construction, construction of military camps and buildings, digging trenches, cutting wood in the forest, breaking and sorting rocks, and working on government-run tea and jatropa plantations. Villagers are also routinely called to serve as porters for the Army, which requires the carrying of heavy loads over long distances. As the work is typically physically strenuous, households often send their most able family members to serve as laborers for the Army, leaving the family without their primary bread-earner for prolonged periods of time. A Chin villager, whose community was forced to construct and repair the Lungler army camp by Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 89 for 14 consecutive days, described the difficulties facing villagers in Chin State due to forced labor:

Some were compelled to cut woods from the forests, while others worked to dismantle the old fences around the camp...The food crisis is already more than enough for us to deal with, and many of us are contemplating about moving to India's Mizoram to escape this kind of hardship.³¹

Such practices continue, even in areas most affected by the food crisis:

- On April 18, 2009, Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 268 stationed at Vuangtu village of Thantlang Township ordered villagers to repair an army camp damaged by strong winds the previous night.³²
- On April 8, 2009, a patrol unit from LIB 268 conscripted 10 civilian porters from Congthia village of Thantlang Township to transport army rations and supplies to Hriphi village, 12 miles away.³³
- On October 10, 2008, Commanding Officer Kyaw Wa of Infantry Battalion 99 forced nine villagers from Paletwa Township to collect 200 sticks of bamboo per village to fence an army camp.³⁴

- Since September 2008, the Burma Army has forced students in Rih sub-town, Falam Township to work regularly on government projects on their weekends and holidays, interfering with the students' ability to assist their parents on the farm.³⁵
- In September 2008, LIB 269 based in Tuithang and Kaptel village, Tiddim Township forced villagers to fence in their army camps.³⁶

Extortion and Confiscation of Property

Extortion and confiscation of money, personal property, and land by the Burma Army is rampant in Chin State. Even as villagers struggle for their daily food, military personnel and soldiers demand staple food and livestock from them. Army units stationed at locations where households are struggling with food shortages are reportedly living off villagers through such extortive practices. One Chin villager from Matupi Township indicated that LIB 304 stationed at Lashin village in Matupi Township issued orders to villages under its jurisdiction to supply sufficient food for the army unit. He said:

*Each village, no matter how small in size, has to give to [the soldiers] a month-long supply of rice, chickens and other livestock on a rotating basis. If any village is late in providing the demanded rations, they are threatened...for defiance of army order, which carries heavy penalties.*³⁷

A Chin villager from a village severely affected by food shortages in Thangtlang Township described similar problems with the army. He said:

*Burma Army soldiers from LIB 89 stationed at nearby Lungler village regularly extort chicken and rations from our village. The entire village is running out of food, but [the soldiers] are still taking what little is left of our food supplies.*³⁸

Recent reports of such abuse include the following:

- On 2 September 2008, Captain Aung Kyaw Hein from LIB 538 stationed in Shinletwa camp demanded eight chickens or 15,000 Kyat from nine village tracts in Paletwa Township, threatening death to anyone who refused to comply with the order.³⁹
- In September 2008, soldiers from LIB 268 confiscated 20 chickens and two pigs from villagers in three villages Falam Township.⁴⁰
- In August 2008, LIB 89 collected two tins of rice for every acre of farmland from farmer in Natchung village tract as well as Tamu and Khanpat areas in Sagaing Division.⁴¹
- Since May 2008, soldiers from LIB 140 and Infantry Battalion 304 in Matupi Township has been confiscating and killing domestic animals and livestock of villagers, including pigs and cattle.⁴²

Authorities also regularly demand arbitrary taxes, obligatory 'donations,' fees, fines, and bribes from civilians for various reasons and purposes. In all, households tend to pay upwards of 200,000 Kyat (US\$181) per year to the military in fulfillment of their arbitrary demands. Despite the extenuating circumstances facing many families in affected areas of Chin State, such demands continue:

- In November 2008, the Forest Department of the SPDC began collecting 1,000 Kyat in taxes from villagers in Falam Township engaged in farming and firewood collection.⁴³

- In July 2008, Captain Khin Zaw from LIB 538 fined three villages in Paletwa Township 80,000 Kyat each for failing to provide forced laborers as demanded.⁴⁴
- In July 2008, local authorities in Kalay Township, Sagaing Division collected 500 Kyat per household for bridge repairs. Such tax is collected annually although repairs are never made.⁴⁵
- In July 2008, a patrol unit from LIB 304 extorted 30,000 Kyat from a widow in Satu village, Matupi Township.⁴⁶

Travelers and cross-border traders are easy targets for extortion and are often forced to pay thousands of Kyat at security check points and to patrolling army units. One Chin villager from Matupi Township described how he was stopped by Burma Army soldiers while on his way to Mizoram in search of work. He said:

*When they found I was carrying a chicken they demanded the chicken. When I refused, they demanded 2,000 Kyat from me instead. Only after I gave them the money did they allow me to proceed.*⁴⁷

Such practices deplete villagers of what little is left of their remaining food supplies, livestock, cash savings, and other properties, leaving them with very little resources to negotiate their next meal.

Arbitrary Agricultural Policies

Since the early 2000s, the SPDC designated Chin State the “Tea Kettle” of the country and has made great efforts to transform the landscape into tea plantations. Through land confiscations and forced plantings, the SPDC has succeeded in turning 15,000 acres of Chin farms into tea plantations as of July 2009. In January 2008 alone, over 1,000 acres of farmland in Falam Township were confiscated for the SPDC tea projects.⁴⁸

Farmers receive no compensation when their farmland is confiscated for the tea projects. Rather, they are often forced to purchase over-priced seeds from the military and forced to work the land without compensation or profit. For example, the authorities ordered 168 villages in Falam Township to purchase tea seeds, develop nurseries, and plant seedlings for the development of plantations in June 2009.⁴⁹ An additional 5,000 acres of tea plantations are expected to be developed over the next several years.⁵⁰

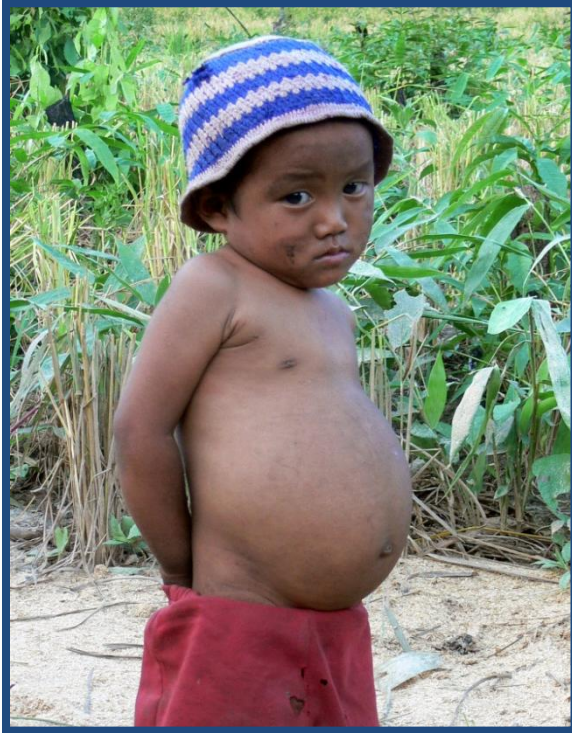
In addition to tea plantations, the SPDC has instituted plans to develop jatropha plantations in Chin State.⁵¹ To this effect, Senior General Than Shwe declared on 15 December 2005:

*...the States and Divisions concerned are to develop 500,000 acres into physic nut [jatropha] plantations within three years, totaling 7,000,000 acres during the period.*⁵²

A memo from the SPDC dated 25 April 2008, a copy of which was obtained by CHRO last year, reveals detailed plans to convert 60,707 acres of farmland in Chin State into jatropha plantations.⁵³ In accordance with this plan, Major Phyu Zaw Aung of LIB 228 issued orders to nine villages in Tiddim Township under his jurisdiction in July 2008, demanding that each household pay 500 Kyat for the procurement of jatropha seeds. Authorities in other areas of Tiddim Township issued similar orders to villagers.⁵⁴

III. Effects of the Food Crisis in Chin State

A. Health



Child suffering from worms and malnutrition, common health problems in Chin State. Children are particularly at risk of malnourishment due to food shortages. (© CHRO, 2009)

Even before the onset of the flowering of bamboo in late 2006, the health situation among the Chin people was very poor; now facing extreme food shortages and hunger due to the *mautam*, the health situation has turned critical. Villagers in affected areas of Chin State are now suffering the effects of severe malnutrition, having been starved of necessary and adequate nutrients for a prolonged period of time. Women, children and the elderly are particularly at risk of serious health complications due to a lack of proper food.

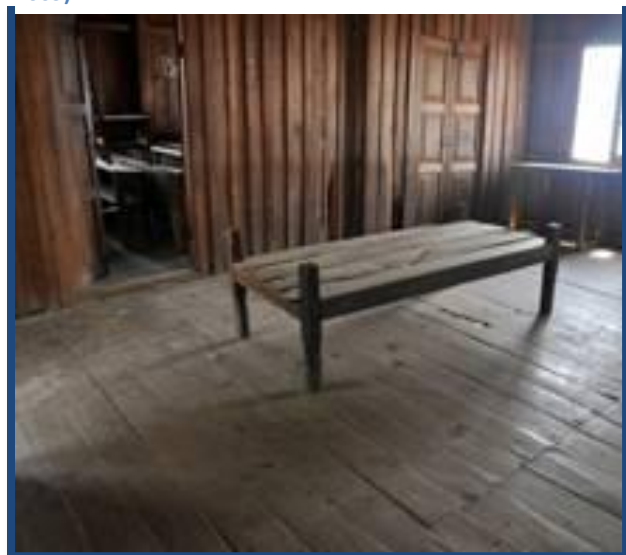
Malnutrition weakens people's immune systems, making them more susceptible to infections and disease.⁵⁵ As a result, an increasing number of Chin villagers are suffering from a range of medical conditions on account of such severe malnutrition. Conditions include diarrhea, gastro-intestinal problems, parasites, typhoid, dysentery, and extreme weight loss.⁵⁶ A survey conducted in two villages in Thantlang Township found that each household had at least one sick family member, and in some cases, every member of the household suffered from some illness.⁵⁷ One health worker from a village in Thantlang Township reported that every

person in his village is suffering from diarrhea.⁵⁸ At the time of writing, more than 54 people have reportedly died due to diseases, illnesses, and complications related to the food crisis.⁵⁹

Since opening in 1990, this health center has remained empty, without medicine or trained medical staff. (© CHRO, 2009)

Access to hospitals and healthcare is extremely limited in Chin State. In all of Chin State, there are only eight permanent clinics to serve a population of 500,000.⁶⁰ Clinics and health centers that do exist often lack medicines and trained medical staff. One local health worker in Thantlang Township, commenting on the inadequacy of the village health center, said:

The needs of the village far outweigh the limited medical supplies. Many villagers get malaria or pneumonia, and we have no medicine to give them.



Medical care in Chin State is also quite costly. As a result, villagers struggling with health problems must resort to walking long distances to larger hospitals or to health clinics established on the India-Burma border. Border clinics reported a shortage of beds to accommodate the number of patients arriving from Burma for treatment and medical assistance.⁶¹ One border-based clinic saw over 300 patients from Chin State in just one month.⁶² Most patients are women between the ages of 10 and 35.⁶³

At the time of writing, more than 54 people have reportedly died due to diseases, illnesses, and complications related to the food crisis.⁶⁴ A majority of the deaths reported are among children. According to detailed data compiled by Mizoram-based Chin Humanitarian Relief Committee (CHRC), a partner group of CHRO, 44 children, mostly under the age of 10, died in the Lautu and Mara areas of Thantlang Township in 2008 alone.⁶⁵ Another five children died in Paletwa Township in February 2008.⁶⁶

B. Education

Children's education has been greatly compromised by the ongoing food crisis. School enrollment rate is at an all time low, with attendance levels averaging 50 percent less than last year's enrollment in towns and less than 40 percent in rural areas. High drop-out rates have been reported in affected areas of Thantlang, Matupi, and Paletwa Townships. In Thantlang Township, schools reported a loss of over 680 students in 2008.⁶⁷ Similarly, a teacher in a school in Matupi Township said that the number of children in attendance in her school is half that of last year. She said:

Parents can simply no longer afford to send their children to school when there is no food left to eat at home.⁶⁸



School enrollment and attendance rates have fallen significantly due to severe food shortages. Some schools have closed and others have limited class time. (© CHRO, 2009)

Some schools in the affected areas have reduced their classes from five days a week to three because of the irregular attendance of students; others have shortened the length of the school day as hungry children lack concentration to continue with their lessons.⁶⁹ One teacher in Thantlang Township described this problem:

Before the morning session finishes [at 12 noon] [the children] can no longer continue to listen or pay attention to the lessons. Their concentration is limited, so I have no choice but to send them back home... This famine has badly affected the entire education system.⁷⁰

Other schools have been forced to close indefinitely due to poor student attendance or failure of families to pay the necessary operating costs of the school.⁷¹ According to one villager:

We cannot afford our children going to school. Instead, they spend most of the time searching for vegetables and fruits in the jungle.⁷²

C. Migration

The food crisis is slowly dividing communities and families with an increasing number of Chin leaving their native lands in search of food and livelihoods in neighboring countries. It is difficult to calculate the exact number of people who have left their homes in Chin State due to the food crisis; however, it is likely that several thousands have abandoned already abandoned their homes and villages in order to find relief abroad.

At least 2,000 Chin from have fled Chin State's Paletwa Township and are now living on the India-Burma border in India's northeastern state of Mizoram since late 2008.⁷³ They are largely surviving by finding work as general laborers in Mizoram's southern districts of Saiha and Lawngtlai.⁷⁴ The exodus from Paletwa Township has continued into 2009, with more than 107 people arriving from 15 affected villages in June and July alone.⁷⁵ Another 2,000 Chin, including several children, from Hakha Township in Chin State and Tamu Township in Sagaing Division have reportedly crossed into Thailand through Burma's eastern border, with more arriving on a daily basis.⁷⁶ Chin arriving into Thailand typically continue onto Malaysia where an established community exists. The population of Chin in Malaysia is approximately 35,000 as of July 2009 and has drastically grown since the start of the food crisis in Chin State.⁷⁷ Some villages in southern Chin State, where food shortages are particularly severe, have been completely abandoned.⁷⁸

Other affected areas of Chin State are likely to have similarly high numbers of people migrating from their homes in search of greater stability beyond Burma's borders. While many households migrate together as a family unit, some are forced to separate. Able-bodied men often leave behind their wives and children in order to find jobs in Mizoram to support their families in Burma. However, work is difficult to find in Mizoram and Chin are often relegated to informal sectors that are physically strenuous, low-paying, and sometimes dangerous, such as road construction, digging toilets, clearing farmland, or cutting forest wood. The money received for this work is nominal, and at times barely enough to survive in India, let alone build a savings to send to Burma. Meanwhile, families and villages left behind in Burma struggle with the loss of family and community



members as they are forced to take on added responsibilities of those who have departed.

Chin villagers journey long distances to reach the India-Burma border in order to acquire rice. (© CHRO, 2009)

IV. Responses

A. State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Response

According to the WFP, the definition of famine is a serious food crisis “made worse by governments’ failure to deal with the situation.”⁷⁹ Based on this definition, Chin State is indeed facing a famine. Despite thousands of people struggling with severe hunger, massive food shortages, extreme malnutrition, and loss of livelihood in Chin State, the military government of Burma has done nothing; worse than such deliberate neglect, they continue to exacerbate the situation through human rights violations, obstruction of foreign relief aid, and denial of preventative resources.

The SPDC has yet to provide any food aid or assistance to villagers in critical need in Chin State, despite boasting by Senior General Than Shwe that Burma “had not only reached self-sufficiency, but also a surplus of food.”⁸⁰ The SPDC claims that the country has tripled its rice production over the past two decades, and has since substantially increased rice exports to Africa and Bangladesh in 2009.⁸¹ The increased exportation of rice has inflated the cost of rice locally, effectively decreasing the purchasing power of hungry Chin villagers and aid groups.⁸²



Chin child holding skewer of rats. The SPDC has yet to provide food aid or assistance to hungry villagers struggling with severe food shortages in Chin State. (© CHRO, 2009)

Far from enjoying self-sufficiency, many affected communities in Chin State are completely dependent on foreign aid for their survival. Ignoring the severity of the food crisis, the SPDC issued orders in the first week of July through the Town Peace and Development Councils prohibiting receipt of foreign assistance or relief in Chin State.⁸³ According to the order, those who receive foreign assistance will be considered opposed to the government and subject to scrutiny.⁸⁴ Scrutiny, as practiced by the SPDC in other instances of suspected government opposition, often comes in the form of severe reprisals, including extrajudicial killings, torture and mistreatment, arrest and prolonged detention, etc. Since the order was issued, local authorities have been monitoring the flow of foreign relief supplies carefully.⁸⁵ The order has created a dilemma for villagers in need of food aid but terrified of potential reprisals by the military. One Chin man from Falam Township said:

*We are totally dependent on foreign aid. We cannot understand the current order. If we do not get aid, we have nothing to eat. If we stop receiving foreign aid, we shall not survive.*⁸⁶

Meanwhile, requests to the SPDC by villagers struggling to stem the influx of rats and combat the new plant-eating insects by implementing preventative techniques have been ignored. Despite claims by the military government of providing one thousand bags of rat poison to affected areas, villagers deny ever receiving any such aid from local authorities. Similarly, requests for insecticide to defend crops against locust swarms have gone unanswered by the SPDC Agriculture Department.⁸⁷

B. World Food Program (WFP) and its Coordinating Partners Response

After initially dismissing the severity of the situation in Chin State based on a preliminary and geographically limited assessment in early 2008, the WFP program returned to Chin State following CHRO's July 2008 report evidencing extreme food shortages and widespread hunger. In their follow-up assessment, WFP acknowledged a food crisis and initiated joint relief efforts in Chin State along with other international humanitarian agencies operating in Burma.

The WFP along with seven other international aid and development agencies met in Rangoon on 6 August 2008 to discuss the situation in Chin State and develop a coordinated response.⁸⁸ The resulting action plan included direct food aid to certain severely affected areas followed by "food-for-work" and "food-for-cash" programs, expansion of existing food-for-work/cash programs, as well as preventative trainings in lower-risk communities.⁸⁹

Chin woman with her young child holding a dead rat. (© CHRO, 2009)



Figure 1

The WFP joint-program was implemented in six townships of Chin State starting in early 2009. For the first three months, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) provided emergency food assistance in four of the hardest hit townships, including Paletwa, Thantlang, Matupi, and Hakha Townships. Monthly rice rations of 7 to 10 kilograms per person were distributed over a three-month period.⁹⁰ In Thantlang and Hakha Townships, this program was followed by food-for-work/cash programs. Similar programs are being implemented in Tonzang and Tiddim Townships. The food-for-work/cash programs are being carried by the WFP, Karuna Myanmar Social Services (KMSS), Groupe d'échange et de recherche technologiques (GRET), and the Rangoon-based Country Agency for Rural Development (CAD).⁹¹

Participants involved in the food-for-work/cash programs work on road construction and farmland development projects in return for rice

and/or Kyat.⁹² According to CAD, participants are paid 100 kilograms of rice for every mile of road constructed.⁹³ Under UNDP, each household is provided 20,000 Kyat (US\$18) per month for their participation in food-for-cash programs.⁹⁴ CARE also initiated pest control trainings in 22 villages in Mindat Township, where the rat infestation is currently minimal.⁹⁵

In support of WFP's projects, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) donated an estimated \$US1 million in support of the WFP's projects.⁹⁶ Since initiating operations in Chin State, WFP has identified a number of additional villages and areas in need of support and has plans to expand its operations accordingly. Donors, including DFID, have agreed to provide additional financial assistance in support of WFP's operations in Chin State.⁹⁷

Analysis of WFP's Programs in Chin State

While the WFP and the work of its coordinating partners is commendable, bringing much comfort and relief to affected communities with little resources or access to alternative means, its programs have not been implemented without obstacles and tribulations. In August 2008, villagers in Thantlang Township alleged that clerks in the Township Peace and Development Council, endowed with the responsibility of preparing lists of eligible recipients for UNDP assistance, had deliberately removed the names of households that failed to perform forced labor for the government or pay certain arbitrary school fees.⁹⁸ Widows, orphans, and religious leaders were among those omitted from the list. The controversy resulted in delayed distributions.⁹⁹



Chin villagers carrying food aid provided by community-based relief teams. Community-based relief teams have been supplying necessary aid to remote villages unreachable by international aid organizations. (© CHRO, 2009)

Meanwhile, the distributions of food aid received by villagers in affected areas of Thantlang and Matupi Township allegedly were not given freely. According to recent reports, UNDP staff members have indicated to villagers receiving aid that the aid is being provided only as an interest-free loan and that families must later pay for the "borrowed" rations. For households already heavily in debt from borrowing money and rice for their subsistence prior to the arrival food aid, the UNDP loans are only adding to their burdens.¹⁰⁰ Villagers in other hard-hit areas, such as the Zotung, Zophei, and Lautu areas of Thantlang Township as well as Paletwa Town, claim that they never received any food aid from UNDP although these areas are within UNDP's distribution plan.¹⁰¹ In other areas, UNDP requires villagers to travel to distribution points to receive aid, setting up operations only in areas of convenience and effectively excluding remote, and often more critical, villages for being able to access aid provisions.¹⁰² Some villagers indicate that it is easier to cross the border into India than reach UNDP distribution points.¹⁰³

The food-for-work/cash program has also received considerable criticism from participants in the program. In many areas where the program is implemented, people are in critical need of assistance and their time, energies, and resources are already spread thin. Malnutrition due to sustained food shortages has stripped villagers of their former strength. Forced labor by the military is rampant throughout Chin State, which demands people's energy and calls villagers away from their farms and livelihoods to work on government projects. Under the food-for-work/cash program, villagers must now also work on WFP sponsored programs in order to receive much-needed daily rations. This program leaves them with little time to develop their own farms and livelihoods.¹⁰⁴ One program participant expressed this common predicament among villagers saying:

*We do not want to leave our agricultural work to participate in this program; but, we have no choice. We must do this for our daily survival. We do not know how we'll survive after this program is finished.*¹⁰⁵

The food-for-work/cash program also requires participation in labor-intensive projects, such as road construction and farmland development. Those who are unable to take part in such activities, such as the elderly, the sick, the very young, or the disabled, are effectively excluded. As many able-bodied men and women have already left Chin State to find alternative sources of income in larger cities in Burma and abroad, a large segment of the population- a segment that is arguable most in need of food aid and assistance- is being overlooked by WFP's programs.¹⁰⁶ Demonstrating the level of desperation for food aid and assistance, project monitors noted the participation of very young children, pregnant women, and the elderly in WFP-sponsored work projects.¹⁰⁷ WFP also failed to provide program participants with proper equipment or machinery to implement its project activities, forcing participants to rely on primitive tools, such as pick-axes and knives, to carry out large construction projects.¹⁰⁸

C. Civil Society Response

Numerous Chin civil society groups based both in exile and inside Burma have developed strategies to provide aid to affected communities in Chin State. Community-based organizations in Mizoram, India quickly organized relief teams to bring relief to affected areas, largely concentrating on remote villages



Community-based relief teams delivering food aid to affected areas of Chin State, Burma. (© CHRO, 2009)

unreached by the large international aid agencies. There was also some effort by Burma-based Chin communities who were unaffected by the food crisis to donate rice to nearby villages in need of assistance.¹⁰⁹ These community-based efforts were supported largely by resettled Chin communities living across the world, church groups, small institutional grants, and private donations.

Sensing the need for

immediate action, civil society groups based in Mizoram began organizing committees to respond to the developing food crisis in Chin State as early as late-2007, with relief teams providing aid to affected areas as early as March 2008. Recognizing the need to develop a coordinated approach and comprehensive strategy to effectively respond to the crisis, four groups came together to form a coalition in October 2008.¹¹⁰ These groups include the Chin Famine Emergency Relief Committee (CFERC), the Chin Humanitarian Relief Committee (CHRC), the



Villagers signing for food aid being delivered by community-based relief teams. (© CHRO, 2009)

Public Affairs Committee of Chinland (PAC), and the Women’s League of Chinland (WLC).^{*} Under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by each member of the coalition, the four groups agreed to work in close cooperation with each other to effectively provide food aid relief to affected areas of Chin State.¹¹¹ Please see *Appendix A: Memorandum of Understanding on Famine-Relief Operations for Chin State, Burma*.



Chin women carrying food aid provided by community-based relief teams back to their villages. (© CHRO, 2009)

Through its different geographically-based relief teams, the coalition has successfully provided more than 30,000 kilograms of rice and 241 bags other food aid to more than 8,000 people living in 54 villages in six townships during May through July 2009. A summary of the coalition’s activities is provided in the table below, *Table 1: Relief Teams Summary Activities, July 2009*. In addition to providing rice, the coalition also provided essential nutrient rich food aid, including dal, pulse, and nutrella. Earlier efforts in March through June

^{*} CHRO has supported the operations of this coalition since its formation and continues to serve as an implementing partner.

2008 provided aid to 76 villages in six townships.¹¹² Please see Appendices B through D for more detailed information about the findings and activities of the coalition members.

Table 1: Relief Teams Summary Activities, July 2009

	CFERC	CHRC	PAC	WLC	TOTAL
Project Duration	June 2009	May – June 2009	June – July 2009	May – June 2009	
Total Aid Distributed	Rice- 150 bags (7500 kg.)	Rice- 232 bags (11,600 kg.)	Rice- 220 bags (11,000 kg.)	Dal- 232 bags Sugar- 6 bags Neutrella- 3 bags	Rice- 602 bags (30,100 kg.) Dal- 232 bags Sugar- 6 bags Neutrella- 3 bags
Number of Beneficiaries	1480	3220	3236		7936 +
Number of Villages	3	10	20	21	54
Townships	Thantlang	Thantlang, Matupi	Paletwa	Hakha, Tiddim, Falam	6 townships
Total Budget		Rs. 221,000	Rs. 163,000	Rs. 75,000	

The coalition has received considerable support to carry out its activities in Chin State from various sources, including resettled Chin communities, church groups and faith-based organizations, institutional donors, as well as private donations. A list of these donor groups is included in *Appendix E: Donors of Community-Based Relief Efforts*. To further raise awareness as well as funds for the relief works inside Chin State, Chin communities have organized benefit concerts all around the world, which have included several well-known singers from Burma and Mizoram, India. At the time of writing, concerts have been held or are scheduled to be held in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, various cities in the U.S., the U.K., Norway, Germany, and Denmark.¹¹³ The proceeds from these concerts support relief teams based in Mizoram. A concert was also held in Thantlang Township in October 2008 to raise funds for a Burma-based civil society group called the Mautam Relief Program (MRP). With the proceeds from the concert, MRP coordinated relief teams to supply aid to affected areas in Falam and Tiddim Township in late 2008.¹¹⁴ MRP has since been working closely with CFERC to deliver aid to areas in Thantlang Township.¹¹⁵



Benefit concert in Australia to support Chin community-based relief workers. Similar concerts have been held around the world to support community-based initiatives. (© CHRO, 2009)

The Mawta Famine Relief Committee (MFRC) is another Mizoram-based community organization that formed in August 2008 to provide aid to affected areas in southern Chin State- primarily Thantlang, Paletwa, and Matupi Townships. Since its formation, MFRC has made two distributions of rice aid worth Rs. 1,200,000 (US\$24,500).¹¹⁶

V. Conclusion

The critical point for action has come, but it has not concluded. The bamboo flowering process is spreading to new areas of Chin State, exposing more of the population to potential food shortages. Rats and new menaces continue to multiply and spread throughout Chin State, leaving in their wake loss and devastation. Thousands of acres of farmland have been lost, with 2009 proving to be worse than previous years. People in affected areas are struggling from prolonged periods without adequate or sustainable food sources, resulting in high rates of malnutrition, disease, and death. Children are forced to leave school to help their families forage for food, and migration has increased as able-bodied adults seek out new sources of income and food supplies to support their families. Meanwhile, the military government has done nothing to respond to the situation. Human rights abuses perpetrated by the Burma Army and agents of the SPDC continue. While international aid organizations have started to take notice of the situation, the response remains limited and problematic in certain aspects. Civil society groups have organized relief teams to reach hard-hit and difficult to access areas, but their continued operation requires sustained support from the international community. Despite the best efforts of relief groups working both inside and along the border, many remote villages severely affected by the food crisis have not yet received any aid or assistance. For now, they are living on the edge of survival.



Chin children in a field. (© CHRO, 2009)

VI. Recommendations

To the State Peace and Development Council

- Prevent any actions, threats, or reprisals taken against recipients of foreign aid assistance.
- Refrain from obstructing relief efforts and allow aid organizations and relief teams to operate without hindrance or interference in Chin State.
- Take immediate action to implement measures to combat and manage the food crisis in Chin State by allocating food provisions, medicines, and other necessary items to affected areas of Chin State.
- Devise and implement feasible preventative measures to protect crops and unaffected areas of Chin State from further destruction by rats and other menaces.
- Desist from actions that adversely affect and exacerbate the effects of the food crisis. In particular, stop practices of forced labor, extortion and confiscation of land and property. End agricultural policies that require farmers and villagers to develop tea and jatropha plantations for government benefit.

To the Governments of India and Mizoram

- Continue to provide temporary shelter for those fleeing the food crisis in Chin State and provide necessary protections.
- Extend humanitarian support and social welfare benefits to Chin refugees and migrants fleeing from political and economic persecution in Burma.

To the World Food Program (WFP) and its Partners

- Expand the direct emergency assistance program in affected areas of Chin State. Replace the food-for-work/cash program in areas affected by severe food shortages with direct emergency assistance.
- Ensure through independent monitoring devices that allocated relief is properly distributed to the targeted communities.
- Devise strategies to ensure remote villages in severely affected areas have access to relief assistance. Establish additional and more conveniently located distribution points.
- Provide all the necessary equipment, machinery, and material to participants involved in the food-for-work/cash programs.
- Ensure those unable or unfit to participate in the food-for-work/cash programs have alternative means to obtain relief assistance.
- Continue to assess and expand operations in areas newly affected by the food crisis.
- Support initiatives and coordinate efforts with local community organizations based in Burma and in India who are also providing relief assistance to affected communities.

To the International Community

- Pressure the military government of Burma to acknowledge the severity of the food crisis in Chin State and call for immediate assistance from the military government.
- Continue to support humanitarian aid agencies and community-based organizations providing relief to affected areas of Chin State.
- Urge the governments of India and Mizoram to protect and assist Chin refugees and migrants living within its borders.
- Encourage the WFP and its partner groups to expand its direct emergency assistance programs in Chin State.

Appendix A: Memorandum of Understanding on Famine-Relief Operations For Chin State, Burma, 17 October 2008

Memorandum of understanding on Famine-Relief Operations For Chin state, Burma Aizawl, Mizoram, INDIA October 17, 2008

Since 2006, the people of Chins state, Burma are currently struggling with food shortages caused by the flowering and dying of bamboo in parts of Chin state. When the bamboo flowers it produces a fruit that attracts rats, which has led to a rapid infestation of rats particularly in the southern areas of Chin state. After exhausting the supplies of bamboo fruit, the rats turn on the food stores and crop harvests that the Chin people depend upon for their daily subsistence. According to a recent report by the Chin Human Rights Organization, an estimated 100,000 people in Chin State are in need of immediate food aid.

Four Chin groups based in Aizawl, Mizoram, India are currently responding to the crisis by providing cross-border food aid to the famine-affected areas of Chin State. These groups are: the Chin Famine Emergency Relief Committee (CFERC), the Chin Humanitarian Relief Committee (CHRC), the Women's League to Chinland (WLC) and the Public Affairs Committee (PAC). As affirmed by this agreement, these groups are working in close cooperation with each other. The Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) is also working as an implementing partner to support the efforts and initiatives of these groups.

Based on previously conducted fact finding missions, seven township of Chin state are currently struggling with food shortages due to the famine. The Mizoram base relief teams are able to provide humanitarian food aid to total of (102) villages within the seven affected township of Chin state within a six months period.

With an interest to providing timely and comprehensive relief to those struggling with food shortages and starvation in the famine-affected areas of Chin state, CFERC, CHRC, WLC, PAC and CHRO came together on October 12, 2008 in Aizawl, Mizoram, India to share information relating to their famine-relief operations, evaluate the current operating structures, and determine future strategies for effective relief operation. During this meeting, CFERC, CHRC, WLC and PAC agreed the following:

1. We agree to work in close cooperation with each other to determine and coordinate future work-plans and strategies in order to effectively provide food aid relief to famine-affected areas of Chin state.
2. We agree to share information and develop a common data-base to organize and manage all information relating to famine-operation in Chin state.
3. We agree to fully monitor the progress and implementation of this project and ensure the proper administration of financial resources and distribution of food aid by relying on mechanism currently in place in each organization.
4. We agree to coordinate our relief operation in Chin state to ensure the most affective coverage of food aid distribution within the affected areas. Distribution operations will be divided geographically among the groups.

- 5. We agree to meet on a monthly basis in Mizoram, India in order to share information, evaluate operations, and determine future work plans in Chin state.
- 6. We agree to work with Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) as a partner responsible for fund-raising, fund-management and campaign activities relating to the famine and relief operations in Chin state. We agree to provide all necessary information relating to famine relief operations to CHRO.

Representative of CFERC:

[Signature], [Date] _____

Representative of CHRC:

[Signature], [Date] _____

Representative of WLC:

[Signature], [Date] _____

Representative of PAC:

[Signature], [Date] _____

Date: October 17, 2008

Appendix B: Chin Famine Emergency Relief Committee (CFERC) Findings and Activities, Thantlang Township, July 2009

Table 1: Rice Harvest and Need for 2007-2008

		Village [A] ⁱⁱ	Village [B]	Village [C]
2008	Rice harvest (in tins)	3000	3470	3026
	Rice Supply Needed (in tins)	8425	35394	25840
	Sustainable period (in months)	3.15	1.8	1.25
2007	Rice harvest (in tins)	4100	4865	8200
	Rice Supply Needed (in tins)	7330	21765	20672
	Sustainable period (in months)	4.3	2.19	3.4
2006	Rice harvest (in tins)	6015	4870	24000
	Rice Supply Needed (in tins)	5407	21756	4860
	Sustainable period (in months)	6.32	2.19	9.98

Table 2: Crop Destruction in 2008

		Village [A]	Village [B]	Village [C]	TOTAL
Rice	Acres Destroyed (in acres)	27	300	407	720
	Expected Harvest (in tins)	1750	-	28840	30590
Maize/Corn	Acres Destroyed (in acres)	10	-	1260	1270
	Expected Harvest (in tins)	700	-	378000	378700

ⁱⁱ Village names withheld for security reasons.

Appendix C: Chin Humanitarian Relief Committee (CHRC) Findings and Activities, Thantlang and Matupi Townships, July 2009

Table 3: Aid Distribution under CHRC

S/No	Village Name	Households Supported	Total Persons Supported	Rice Aid Distributed (in bags)
Thantlang Township				
1	Village [A]	40	210	20
2	Village [B]	50	271	25
3	Village [C]	40	207	20
4	Village [D]	47	285	23
5	Village [E]	118	598	33.25
6	Village [F]	48	296	24
7	Village [G]	63	334	19
Matupi Township				
8	Village [A]	56	292	21
9	Village [B]	63	315	23.7
10	Village [C]	80	412	24
	Total	605	3220	232

Appendix D: Public Affairs Committee of Chinland (PAC) Findings and Activities, Paletwa Township, July 2009

Table 4: Conditions Assessment, Paletwa Township, July 2009

No	Village	Total Paddy Fields (Acres)	Total Destroyed Paddy Fields (Acres)	Total Sesame Fields (Acres)	Total Destroyed Sesame Fields (Acres)
1	Village [A]	110	90	45	31
2	Village [B]	155	133	67	57
3	Village [C]	180	150	60	41
4	Village [D]	90	75	35	28
5	Village [E]	93	75	33	26
6	Village [F]	28	22	10	8
7	Village [G]	90	80	50	41
8	Village [H]	45	37	20	17
9	Village [I]	45	30	23	19
10	Village [J]	203	165	70	53
11	Village [K]	39	32	18	15
12	Village [L]	180	150	100	83
13	Village [M]	150	120	60	50
14	Village [N]	75	60	32	25
15	Village [O]	197	160	75	55
16	Village [P]	50	40	24	20
17	Village [Q]	60	50	30	20
18	Village [R]	30	26	11	9
19	Village [S]	52	43	27	21
20	Village [T]	30	25	15	12
TOTAL		1902	1563	805	631

Table 5: Distribution Chart, July 2009

Date	Village	Total households	Total Households Receiving Aid	Total population	Total No. of People Receiving Aid	Aid Provided (in bags)	Aid Provided (in 1,000 kg.)
27/6/09	Village [A]	69	55	362	287	25	4.35
26/6/09	Village [B]	51	25	267	131	10	3.81
21/6/09	Village [C]	72	42	375	219	20	4.5
16/6/09	Village [D]	39	30	263	218	10	2.2
28/6/09	Village [E]	41	28	221	147	10	3.40
29/6/09	Village [F]	12	12	75	75	3	2
14/6/09	Village [G]	36	20	250	160	8	2.5
17/6/09	Village [H]	19	19	93	93	5	2.6

24/6/09	Village [I]	20	20	93	93	6	3.22
30/5/09	Village [J]	84	59	429	343	19	2.76
29/6/09	Village [K]	16	16	101	101	3	1.485
22/6/09	Village [L]	77	58	380	290	22	3.7
22/6/09	Village [M]	58	45	347	282	18	3.19
20/5/09	Village [N]	29	22	164	128	10	3.9
23/6/09	Village [O]	90	59	379	246	20	4.06
18/6/09	Village [P]	20	10	108	104	8	3.8
15/6/09	Village [Q]	25	20	110	92	6	3.2
30/6/09	Village [R]	13	13	71	71	7	4.52
19/6/09	Village [S]	20	20	89	89	7	3.9
25/6/09	Village [T]	12	12	67	67	3	2.23
TOTAL		803	585	4244	3236	220	11,000

Appendix E: Donors of Community-Based Relief Efforts

CHRO recognizes the generous contributions of all those who have supported the work of community-based relief teams providing much-needed food aid from the India-Burma border to affected areas of Chin State in 2008 and 2009. Your assistance provided great comfort and aid to Chin communities struggling with extreme food shortages in Chin State, Burma. We hope you will continue to support the critical work of the relief teams.

US\$20,000 +

Czech Republic Foreign Affairs/ HART
 Norwegian Church Aid/ BRC
 Norwegian Mission to the East (Norway)
 Open Society Institute (OSI)

US\$10,000 to US\$19,999

Australia Chin Communities (Mautam Concert)
 Chin Communities (Mautam concert in Norway, Denmark, Germany)
 Children On the Edge (UK)
 Primate World Relief and Development Fund (Toronto, Canada)

Under US\$9,999

Adelaide Chin Christian Fellowship (Australia)	Global Health Access Program (USA)
Aust-agder Chin Fellowship (Norway)	Global Refuge International (Thailand)
Burma Relief Centre (Thailand)	Indiana Chin Church (USA)
CCFM (USA)	Jenny Lasim Bang family
Chin Christian Fellowship (Germany)	Josepfa Buhzem (Aizawl)
Chin Christian Fellowship (Perth, Western Australia)	Lai Baptist Church (Washington DC)
Chin Christian Fellowship (Thunder Bay, Canada)	Lai Christian Church Melbourne (LCCM)
Chin Christian Fellowship of Canada (CCFC)	Ottawa Baptist Association (Women)
Chin Community in Singapore	Partners (Thailand)
Chin Humanitarian Relief Committee	Pi Sylvia Lynn (Thailand)
Chin National Day Lawmbawm (AZL)	Pi Urunii (Thailand)
Chin Refugee Committee (Donation Box)	TCCF (Norway)
Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW)	Victoria Chin Baptist Church (Australia)
Churches/ Individuals in Mizoram	WACCF (Norway)
Free Burma Ranger	

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CHRO would like to thank the community-based organizations and relief teams who have dedicated considerable time, energy, and personal resources to provide much-needed food aid to affected areas of Chin State. In particular, CHRO would like to acknowledge the work of the Chin Famine Emergency Relief Committee (CFERC), the Chin Humanitarian Relief Committee (CHRC), the Chin Public Affairs Committee (PAC), and the Women’s League of Chinland (WLC). These organizations have contributed greatly to this report. CHRO also appreciates all the individuals from the Chin community who generously shared their time, energy, and personal experiences to aid in the production of this report. Special thanks go to Benny Manser his contributions to this report as well as for his love and concern for the Chin people. CHRO also thanks the many government actors, donor groups, church communities, individuals, and others who have expressed their concern and support for the Chin people through their actions, statements, donations, and prayers.

Villagers toting much-needed food aid provided by community-based relief teams to their homes. (© CHRO, 2009)



End Notes

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