

Monthly e-Letter

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Thailand Burma Border Consortium
ไทยแลนด์-เบร์มา บอร์ดเดอร์ คอนซอร์ติียม

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TBBC welcomes you to the first TBBC e-letter!

This monthly E-Newsletter aims to keep TBBC's donors, partner organisations and other stakeholders up to date on the situation of displaced people from Burma along the Thai - Burma border. Additionally the e-Letter will provide an insight into our ongoing programmes and activities. We trust that you find the e-Letter useful and encourage readers to contact TBBC with feedback and suggestions.

Cyclone Nargis

Cyclone Nargis made landfall in The Irrawaddy delta area of Burma on the 2nd of May and caused the deadliest natural disaster in the country's recorded history. The delta region suffered major damage from the cyclone with the largest number of deaths and destruction. Burma's commercial capital, Rangoon also suffered extensive damage. The cyclone weakened into a tropical depression as it moved east across Burma. Some camps were affected by strong winds and heavy rain, resulting in a relatively small number of injuries and to some houses being damaged or washed away. Northern Mon State, Eastern Pegu Division and northern Karen State were designated disaster zones by the SPDC. TBBC have received reports of damage to houses across the coastal areas of Mon state and in Mergui. While reports have not yet been received from

remote border regions in the east, it is anticipated that there will be damage to housing and crops in these areas. There are many ethnic Karen people living in the cyclone affected areas and thus, people in the camps are concerned about their relatives in Burma.

Cyclone Nargis has contributed to further price rises for every day goods, especially rice. This creates additional challenges for those living in cyclone-affected areas. These challenges raise the possibility of increased numbers of people crossing the border into Thailand as a survival strategy. To which extent this will have an effect on the camp populations remain to be seen. A possible scenario is that survivors will seek shelter with their relatives and families in the camps.

The real cost of the food crisis

The increase in global food prices has been recognized as an emergency world wide and described as 'the silent Tsunami'. Rice prices have increased by over 100% this year, which has had a serious impact on TBBC's food budget. The real cost of increasing food prices however, will be human suffering.

Further cuts in the food rations would have serious consequences for the refugees, who are expressing deep concern for the food security situation in the camps. Children, pregnant women, and the elderly are at the highest risk of malnutrition. TBBC is now appealing for more funds to be able to deliver food to Burmese refugees.

Learn more about how you can contribute with a [donation](#)

Read more about TBBC's [food basket](#)



Stockpiling achieved for the rainy season

The nine refugee camps along the Thai/Burma border are located in remote, mountainous areas. Now that the rainy season has started, some of the camps have become inaccessible to delivery vehicles. Supplies are therefore being stockpiled for periods between six to eight months. This is a major logistical exercise, which involves delivery and receipt of large volumes of supplies. Stock is then carefully managed in order to maintain supply to the camp populations until the end of the rainy season. As a result of increased rice prices, some suppliers withdrew their contracts with TBBC in the last minute. Despite this, TBBC managed to complete the stockpiling of affected camps prior to them becoming inaccessible – largely thanks to the hard work of the procurement department and field staff.



Personal stories from the camps

These are the stories of two young people, who recently arrived to a refugee camp in northern Thailand. Despite their different backgrounds, they are both survivors of the ongoing brutalities committed by the state military regime (SPDC) in Eastern Burma. The names are fictitious for protection reasons.

"My name is Maya. I am 21 years old. I grew up with my uncle and auntie in a village in Karenni state. We were farmers. When I was a child, my father used to work as portier for SPDC. He was shot dead when he tried to flee. My mother got sick and died.

In our village, there was not enough rice for the villagers. So we had to grow rice on the mountain hills. One day I saw SPDC soldiers coming in to the hut were my uncle was. They came to punish us because we were growing rice outside the village. I heard my uncle shouting to me that I should run away never come back. So I run off to the jungle.

I crossed the Salween river by boat together with a group of 20 other people. When I came to the camp, I went to the clinic for medical check up, and I got the food ration and blankets.

The people left in my village don't know what happened to me. Now that I am here in the camp, I hope that I can work as a teacher."



"I am Myo Aung. I am 24 years old. I am a deserter from the Burmese army.

Before I became a soldier, I used to work in my village in Pegu division. Work - meaning anything that crossed my way that could give me an income for the day. One day in 2002 I was approached by a SPDC commander. He told me to come with him to join the army. If I didn't, I would have to go to jail. So I had to go with him.

They put me in a training centre with other people and taught us how to shoot a gun. After the training, I was sent to a military camp, close to the border. I had to fight in the jungle against Karen soldiers. They also made us patrol villages.

I have tried to flee three times before. I don't want to be a soldier! Every time I was caught and punished. One time they put me up in a cell six days. But this time I was successful. I had to walk three days alone in the jungle to reach the camp.

I think of my father and my sisters back home. I cannot go back to Burma. It's too dangerous. I am still afraid that SPDC soldiers will come after me. I will try to go for resettlement. Perhaps to America!"

(For protection reasons, we can not include a picture of Myo Aung)

Population and resettlement figures

The total feeding population in April was 140,611. For more detailed information, please visit [TBBCs updated population map](#)

1666 individuals from camps border wide left for resettlement during April. Since January 2008 up to date, 5230 individuals have resettled to the following countries, according to IOM statistics: USA (4168); Australia (626); Finland (193); Canada (108); Netherlands (79); U.K (29); Norway (14); New Zealand (13).

TBBC in the media

TBBC: [Food prices threatens refugees right to food](#)

Ottawa Citizen: [As the price of rice rises and refugee rations decrease, a vulnerable people will starve](#)

Forces Migration Review: [Burma's displaced people](#)

Contribute to a better life for the refugees of Burma!

From basic food rations, shelter and household necessities like mosquito nets, blankets and cooking stoves, to giving refugees skills to earn an income, cultivating kitchen gardens and supporting refugee workers to take care of their communities - your gift can make a real difference. For more information, please visit [TBBC's gift catalogue](#)

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