

and their families have fled to Burma's neighboring countries of Bangladesh, China, India, Malaysia and Thailand in search of asylum. Burma's refugee crisis has a regional impact and the number of refugees from the country is believed to be more than one million.

As the military takes control of new territory in ethnic areas, it initiates development projects and exploits natural resources, which displace more civilians. The forced migration of civilians is ongoing even in ethnic states, such as Mon and Kachin, where political leaders have signed ceasefire agreements with the central authorities. According to a Burmese asylum seeker interviewed by Refugees International in Thailand, "The outside world thinks that just because a cease fire has been signed between the Mon and the SPDC, it is safe for us to live in Burma. But we continue to face abuses on a daily basis. The military confiscated all my orchards and my family could barely survive. We still tried to stay but had to leave when the military tried to recruit my teenage son."

The Karen National Union, the indigenous political leadership in Karen State, has not entered into a ceasefire agreement with the SPDC and conflict and displacement are not new phenomena there. However, the intensity and spread of the Tatmadaw offensive in recent months are estimated to be the worst in more than a decade. The attack is linked to the military's attempt to consolidate its control over parts of Karen State and the districts of Toungoo, Papun and Nyaunglebin have been particularly hard-hit by the offensive. According to a community-based organization assisting the internally displaced, the recent attacks differ from previous ones in that the military did not withdraw during the 2006 rainy season but continued to attack the same areas repeatedly.

In order to protect themselves, Karen communities have been trying to establish early warning systems. Villagers are constantly on watch to be able to anticipate Tatmadaw attacks and whenever possible, the Karen ethnic army has been warning villagers ahead of an attack so they can go into hiding. At present there remains a lack of an adequate number of communication tools for advance warning.

The military has planted a large number of landmines in and around villages so people are unable to go beyond a certain area, and at the time of harvesting many do not have access to their crops. In some parts of Karen State the army has set rice fields on fire. According to the estimates of a community-based organization assisting the internally displaced, 25,000 people have lost their harvest for the entire year, and in Lerdoh Township alone, 2,800 civilians are believed to have been taken away from their villages and fields by the Tatmadaw to relocation sites where they are being forced to dig trenches and build fencing. Since 2006, the military has also placed a prohibition on trading in some areas of Karen State and prevented villagers from selling or buying certain products around harvest time. After harvest time, villagers are allowed to sell their products, but at half the normal price and only to the military, contributing to food insecurity.

Besides food, the displaced are in urgent need of shelter and medicines. The displaced in Karen State are being assisted largely through cross-border assistance, coming from agencies based in Thailand, and a few community-based organizations inside Burma. This aid is helping people cope with their situation and preventing large numbers from fleeing to Thailand as refugees. Although in recent years donors have allocated more funds for aid to internally displaced people, both for cross-border operations and

those inside Burma, the number of vulnerable people has gone up significantly with the latest offensive in Karen State and it is critical that donors respond accordingly.

In terms of medical assistance, Karen internally displaced people are relying largely on traditional curative techniques or on mobile teams, back pack health workers, and Karen medical units who may be able to access them only after navigating their way through heavily militarized territory.

Organizations based in Thailand and Burma that are assisting the internally displaced from across the border and inside the country have improved communications in recent months, but there remains a need to strengthen information sharing on the activities being undertaken by both sides.

Many of those displaced in the recent attacks in Karen State who have been able to reach the Thai-Burma border are living in settlements on the Burma side. One of these, the Ei Tu Hta camp, set up in April 2006, is home to 3,000 persons mostly from Toungoo district. Approximately 5,000 recently displaced Karen have also crossed the border into Thailand. Some of them have entered refugee camps, are recognized as asylum seekers, and are awaiting approval from the Provincial Admission Boards, the Thai Government's entities for processing new arrivals. This has largely been the case in Mae Hong Son Province. In Tak Province's Mae La camp, however, none of the new arrivals are recognized and they are living unofficially in the camp.

The Thai Government is concerned that recent efforts to resettle Burmese refugees in third countries is drawing recent arrivals to camps. The Governor of Tak Province has announced that no food or accommodation would be made available to new arrivals in the camps in that province. Further, the Provincial Admission Boards are not fully functional in each of the provinces, and there remains a void for processing new arrivals in certain areas.

The Burmese internal displacement and refugee crises are linked to the regime's policy of targeting civilians. All regional and local initiatives to urge the SPDC to stop attacking civilians and protect its people have failed. The non-binding Security Council resolution introduced by the U.S. in January 2007, which included a call to the SPDC to cease attacks on the country's ethnic minorities, was vetoed by China and Russia. Until such time that all members of the UN Security Council acknowledge that the SPDC must be held accountable, and develop a united approach to address the government's failure to protect its people, the worst internal displacement crisis in Asia will persist.

Refugees International, therefore, recommends that:

The Burmese military immediately halt all attacks on civilians.

The UN Security Council members reach consensus on a strategy to pressure the SPDC to stop its abuse of civilians and hold it accountable for its failure to protect Burma's people.

Donors support initiatives to assist internally displaced people by agencies doing cross-border work and agencies operating inside Burma, with funding directed to the most vulnerable.

Donors support initiatives to enhance IDP protection through early warning systems.

Agencies based inside Burma and organizations operating out of Thailand continue to improve coordination and collaboration through regular meetings and information sharing forums.

The Government of Thailand allow new asylum seekers from Burma official access to all camps and ensure that the Provincial

Admission Boards are functioning consistently so the new arrivals can be processed.

IN LASTING MEMORY OF HELEN BRADLEY

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Helen Bradley, a woman who spent a lifetime giving back to the community she loved dearly through her dedicated service as Jefferson County clerk. She was a true treasure to Pine Bluff and Jefferson County, and her honorable service will never be forgotten by the State of Arkansas. She passed away May 11, 2007, in Pine Bluff, AR, at the age of 59.

I am grateful to have known Helen Bradley and to have had the privilege to call her a personal friend. She spent her life and career making her community a better place for all who called it home.

Mrs. Bradley's lasting impact on Jefferson County will be remembered forever. Her selfless and devoted career began after graduating from what is now the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, when she was hired as deputy county clerk for Jefferson County. She held that position for 22 years before she was elected to serve as Jefferson County's first African-American county clerk. During her career, she also served as secretary for the Jefferson County Quorum Court and the Equalization Board. Mrs. Bradley was also a member of the International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers, the West Pine Bluff Rotary Club and she was a proud member of the Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church. As a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP, she received the distinguished Pine Bluff Branch NAACP Dove Freedom Award in October 2006.

My deepest condolences go to Mrs. Bradley's husband, Sylvester Bradley, Sr., of Pine Bluff; her two sons, Sedgwick McCollum of Flint, MI, and Brandon Bradley of Piano, TX; her daughter, Tarnisha Gibson of Columbia, SC; her two brothers, James Edward McClinton of Flint, MI, and John Albert McClinton of Pine Bluff; her sister, Cecile Blade of Pine Bluff; and to her 9 grandchildren. Mrs. Bradley will be greatly missed, and her contributions to the city of Pine Bluff, Jefferson County and the State of Arkansas will never be forgotten.

INTRODUCING THE CHARITABLE REMAINDER PET TRUST ACT

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today, Representative RAMSTAD and I are introducing legislation that revises the Internal Revenue Code, IRC, to treat pet trusts in a similar manner as charitable remainder annuity trusts, CRATs. It will allow estates and donors with CRATs with a pet, or its guardian as