



Border Situation Update July 2nd 2009

Site Situation

As the reports of fighting around the area of former Ler Per Her IDP camp continue, it is becoming clear that organized return for displaced people currently living in 6 displacement sites in Thailand is still impossible.

On 25th June, Tha Song Yang District Authorities and Blank Rangers organized a joint assessment visit with UNHCR and focal agencies for food & shelter, water & sanitation and health, to the Ti Nu Ko area, which was initially identified as a potential relocation site for displaced families. The assessment showed that the site had potential to accommodate up to 1,500 people and, although access was difficult, it had good shelter facilities (old Eden Valley Academy School). However, security was recognized as a major concern since the site was easily accessible through narrow mountain passages to armed groups thought to be on the other side of the border.

Whilst the Thai Military was willing to negotiate with cross-border military factions to ensure the safety of the new site, the security situation deteriorated after an ambush attack on the DKBA on 26th June, when several members were killed, including one of their commanders. This sparked the fear of possible retaliation and the District Authorities put any movement of displaced people on hold. A District Committee is now being formed, and any decision will also involve the Provincial Authorities.

Meanwhile, difficulties of access, security and obstruction of Monastery activities at the two largest sites, Nuh Bo Monastery area and Mae U Su (behind the mountain caves) remain unresolved. District Authorities and the Thai Military, in cooperation with UNHCR and Focal NGOs continue to search for alternative solutions.

The Thai Military have conducted a registration of all people staying at the 6 official displacement sites, the total being 2,318 persons (392 families). This number, however, does not include people staying in nearby Thai villages with host families, and it is estimated that the total case-load of displaced persons who have crossed the border and are staying in Thailand is at least 3,500 or more.

TBBC, in collaboration with other international NGOs and Karen Community Based Organizations continues providing basic food rations, plastic sheeting for shelter and other non-food relief items.

Voluntary Return

Reportedly, 7 families (34 persons, including women and children) have voluntarily returned to their villages on July 1st. Their departure from Nuh Bo village was observed by local Thai and Karen village leaders, District and Military officials, UNHCR and TBBC. Some returnees were interviewed before boarding the boat, and have confirmed that they are going back voluntarily in hope to either rejoin with their family members on the other side, or find and save whatever is left of their rice fields and livestock. The Thai authorities have assured them of re-entry to Thailand, should they find the situation in their village to be unsafe.