



# Thailand Burma Border Consortium

## Issue No.10 June – July 2010

### TBBC ANNOUNCES SUSPENSION OF MUNG BEANS IN THE CAMPS

TBBC starts almost every year short of funds but continues fundraising throughout the year to address these shortages. In the past we have usually been able to raise the necessary funds although there have been several crises when we have had to make programme cuts.

We started this year about 11% short of funding for 2010 but were successful in getting additional funds from the USA as well as benefiting from marginally lower rice prices. Unfortunately though, foreign exchange rates have gone against us and the result is that we have not been able to close the funding gap.

Regretfully we have decided that we must make some programme cuts now to ensure that we can get through the year. Altogether these will make up about 6% of our budget. The most serious cut will be the suspension of any further purchase of mung beans this year. This will affect refugee rations but at different times in each camp as current contracts are fulfilled. This suspension will lower the nutritional value of the food basket to just under 2,000 kilocalories / person / day which is 5% below international standards for emergency situations.

To protect the most vulnerable however, beans will continue to be provided in supplementary feeding programmes. Temporarily removing mung beans is the only change to food rations, and a key reason for choosing this item is that the market price for beans has doubled since the end of 2009.

### New TBBC pilot project in Mae Ra Ma Luang and Tham Hin Camps

2010 is a year of change for TBBC. This year we are focusing more on programmes that increase self-reliance and reduce aid dependency for the refugees by promoting and supporting additional livelihood opportunities. In July/August, TBBC will start a pilot project focusing on micro/small business development in Mae Ra Ma Luang and Tham Hin Camps. The selected applicants will participate in a five-day training on Business Development and Management. This training together with a small grant will help people start and expand micro or small businesses. As a pilot programme, this will include 400 people from Mae Ra Ma Luang Camp and 100 from Tham Hin for training, grants and other support.



Tham Hin Camp , March 2010

### Population in camps along the border (From TBBC data base)

*As of May 31, 2010*

The total verified population eligible to receive rations in all camps in Thailand was **140,094**.

### Resettlement

*Source IOM*

*As of May 31st, 2010*

**4,670** people from camps border-wide have left for resettlement so far during 2010. In 2009, **16,685** people left for resettlement to the following countries: USA (12,826); Australia (2,323); Finland (202); Canada (828); Netherlands (9); U.K (5); Norway(280); New Zealand (79), Sweden (118), Denmark (11).

Almost 60,000 people have been resettled since 2006



Leaving for resettlement at Site 1 ( Ban Mai Nai Soi), June 2009

## Pilot needs-based shelter approach in Tak province camps

Following the arrival of a Swiss Agency for Development & Cooperation (SDC) seconded shelter expert at the beginning of this year, extensive discussion between field and programme staff took place related to future implementation of TBBC's shelter programme. It was felt that beneficiary families should be more involved in the shelter process and have the opportunity to decide and request shelter materials they need for projects they want to carry out. In addition and recognising the tremendous efforts undertaken by the camp communities since the inception of the camps, carpenters and builders from the camps should support and oversee construction work that will lead to better shelter quality in the camps.

A needs-based shelter approach has been developed and will be piloted in Tak province camps in the next programme cycle. Preparations are underway to involve all the partners and to proceed with shelter material needs assessment for each beneficiary family. Over 70 carpenters and builders from the camps will participate in this shelter pilot and ensure that sufficient support is given to the refugee families.

If this new approach proves to be successful, the needs-based approach shall be introduced border-wide in all nine refugee camps during the next shelter programme cycle.



Refugee at Mae La camp fixing his home - April 2010

## Support refugees from Burma

From basic food rations, shelter and household necessities, to giving refugees skills to earn an income, your gift can make a difference. Our goal is to provide not only humanitarian aid but also to support long-term self-reliance of the refugees. Find out more about how you can contribute by visiting [TBBC's gift catalogue](#)

## Eastern Burma Situation Update

After months of instability, the SPDC appear to have relaxed demands for ethnic ceasefire parties to transform into Border Guard Forces prior to the elections.

New arrivals from Shan State report that the SPDC deployed heavy artillery and soldiers into border areas near to United Wa State Army (UWSA) during April. However tensions appear to have eased with most of the affected Wa villagers having returned from the border back to their homes by the end of May.

Karenni community based organisations report that the Karenni National People Liberation Front (KNPLF) are already transforming into two Border Guard Force battalions based in Mehset and Bawlake. Yet SPDC patrols continue harassing villages in Shadaw township, which has resulted in two villages being abandoned in May and over 200 people fleeing to Thailand.

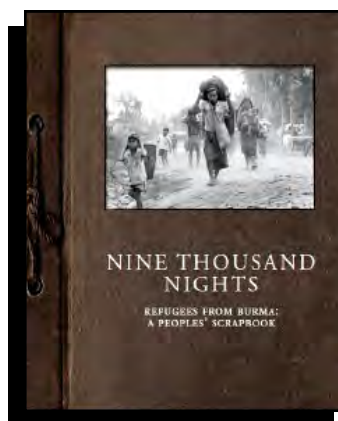
In Karen areas, while the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army's (DKBA's) #999 brigade has already transformed into a Border Guard Force to the north of Myawaddy, the other DKBA brigades continue to operate independently. Meanwhile, SPDC patrols and restrictions on movement have undermined coping strategies and induced displacement for thousands of villagers in Thandaung, Kyaukgyi and Papun townships since April.

After the New Mon State Party (NMSP) rejected the ultimatum to become a Border Guard Force, over 600 villagers moved to the Thailand border as a precautionary measure in April. As the ceasefire has been maintained, most of these villagers subsequently returned to their homes. There remains no guarantee for security however, and villages in the Three Pagodas Pass area are reportedly building bomb shelters in case hostilities resume.

## Nine Thousand Nights : Refugees from Burma: A People's Scrapbook"

This unique publication, 'authored' by many hundreds of people, collects together a rich array of insights, memories and images to provide a deeply human and intimate portrayal of the life and experiences of refugees from Burma over a quarter of a century. Many individual stories here may move, outrage, enlighten, or surprise the reader-collectively, the perspectives of so many contributors come together to provide a rare 'peoples' glimpse into an extraordinary place and a period of history that will one day pass and be gone.

Find out more about how can you order/purchase this book from TBBC website.: [www.tbbc.org](http://www.tbbc.org)



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