



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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28 April 2003

### BUR41315.E

Myanmar: Update to BUR34203.E of 19 April 2000 on the treatment of supporters, including financial supporters, of the Chin National Front (CNF) (1999-present)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Several documents reported the arrest of Pastor Gracy, an ethnic Chin Baptist minister, for her alleged support of the Chin National Front (CNF) (AI 2002; *ibid.* 26 July 2001; UN 10 Jan. 2002; CHRO 10 July 2001). According to an Amnesty International Urgent Action appeal, Gracy was initially arrested on 13 February 2001 and detained at the Haka military camp (AI 26 July 2001). On 6 July 2001 she was found guilty of accommodating the CNF and was sentenced to two years hard labour (*ibid.*). The *Amnesty International Report 2002* stated that Gracy had been found guilty of passing information to the CNF (AI 2002). On 18 July 2001 she was transferred to the Mawlaik-Kalay Akhin Htawng labour camp near Kalaymyo in the Sagaing Division (*ibid.* 26 July 2001). Gracy's brother, Pu Hoi Mang, was similarly sentenced to two years' hard labour in 2000 for supporting the CNF (*ibid.*).

A May 2001 article reported that the Myanmar army had arrested all the village headmen from Vuang Tu areas in Chin state (*The Burmanet News* 18 May 2001). According to the article, the arrests followed a clash between the Chin National Army (CAN) - "the armed wing" of the CNF (Mizzima 9 Sept. 1999) - and Myanmar troops near the village that resulted in the death of a Myanmar army sergeant (*The Burmanet News* 18 May 2001). Reportedly, the commander of the Myanmar forces interrogated and tortured the village headmen and accused all Vuang Tu Villages of being supporters of the CNF (Mizzima News 9 Sept. 1999).

An article in the November-December 2000 issue of *Rhododendron*, a publication of the North American-based Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO), published a list of 34 civilians who had been arrested in 1999 for supporting the CNF (*Rhododendron* Nov.-Dec. 2000). According to the article, those arrested, most of whom were from the Thantlang area of Chin State, were detained by the Myanmar Military Intelligence Service (MIS) and charged under the "Unlawful Association Act," according to which individuals can be sentenced to long-term jail sentences with hard labour (*ibid.*).

Reporting on the use of civilians in the repair of the Falam-Rihkhawdar road in September 1999, a February 2000 International Labour Organization (ILO) document reported that those villages that refused to provide labourers would be considered supporters of the CNF (ILO 25 Feb. 2000). An order issued by the Myanmar military, entitled "'Invitation for Voluntary Labour'" reportedly stated that a "'defaulter village will be considered as active supporters of [the] CNF and severe action will be taken for defiance of order'" (*ibid.*). Twenty villages each provided some 15 to 30 labourers to undertake the repairs (*ibid.*). The workers were unpaid and had to bring their own tools and rations for three days (*ibid.*).

The document further reported that 32 residents of Tlangpi village were accused of supporting the CNF and were arrested on 25 August 1999 and sent to forced labour camps (ILO 25 Feb. 2000).

A September 1999 article reported that, following the arrest of a member of the CAN in Tlangpui Village

in Chin state, the Myanmar army interrogated the village's residents in order to identify supporters of the group (Mizzima News Group 9 Sept. 1999). When the villagers refused to provide information, the army arrested six people, accusing them of providing shelter to CAN members (ibid.).

No reference to the treatment of financial contributors to the CNF could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

Amnesty International (AI). 2002. *Amnesty International Report 2002* . "Myanmar." <<http://web.amnesty.org/web/ar2002.nsf/asa/myanmar!Open>> [Accessed 23 Apr. 2003]

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Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO). 10 July 2001. "A Female Pastor Sentenced for Two Years with Hard Labour in Haka." *2001 Religious Persecution Report* . <[http://www.chro.org/chro\\_HTML/CHRO\\_resources/Religious\\_persecutions/chro\\_Report2001.htm](http://www.chro.org/chro_HTML/CHRO_resources/Religious_persecutions/chro_Report2001.htm)> [Accessed 23 Apr. 2003]

United Nations. 10 January 2002. Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). "Question of the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in Any Part of the World: Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar." Prepared by Mr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, in Accordance with Commission Resolution 2001/15. (E/CN.4/2002/45) <<http://www.hri.ca/forthecord2002/documentation/commission/e-cn4-2002-45.htm>> [Accessed 25 Apr. 2003]

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*Rhododendron* . November-December 2000. Vol. III, No. IV. "List of Civilians Charged with 'Unlawful Association Acts' in 1999." <<http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA160202001?open&of=ENG-MMR>> [Accessed 25 Apr. 2003]

#### Additional Sources Consulted

IRB databases

NEXIS

#### **Internet sites, including:**

Asian Human Rights Commission

BBC

European Country of Origin Information Network

Freedom House

Human Rights Watch

International Crisis Group

Reliefweb

World News Connection

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