

## Appendix C: Timeline of Arrests and Harassment of Burmese Migrant Workers in 2003

December 17, 2003: Thai security forces arrested and deported 269 Burmese garment workers who had gone on strike against Nasawas Apparel Company in Mae Sot. They were protesting the dismissal of twenty-five workers for demanding raises in pay from 55-90 baht a day up to 133 baht.<sup>104</sup>

September 29: Local labor and immigration officials in Mae Sot informed Dr. Cynthia Maung that Burmese staff at Mae Tao Clinic would not be able to renew their work permits, putting into limbo the legal status of the clinic and more than 100 medics and school teachers who work there. The warning came after the August 2003 cabinet resolution prohibiting 12,161 registered migrant workers from renewing their work permits. The clinic is the main provider of healthcare services to asylum seekers and migrants on the Thai-Burma border.<sup>105</sup>

September 23: The manager of the Siriwat Garment Factory in Mae Sot fired seventy-eight Burmese migrant workers after they organized to demand better working conditions. The workers, who often had to work fifteen-hour days, were paid far less than the legal minimum wage and denied access to medical care. Local police threatened to arrest and deport the workers if they did not comply with the managers' demands.<sup>106</sup>

September 11: The owner of the JP Knitting Factory in Mae Sot, Somchai Thongdi, refused to pay two months of overdue wages to 131 Burmese migrant workers, after the factory closed on August 15. The Labor Ministry's Welfare Department responded only to the appeal of the five Thai workers affected.<sup>107</sup>

September 11: The San Papao Temple in Chiang Mai was raided and police detained Burmese monks and novices without proper documents. These individuals were later released through the intercession of a respected abbot.<sup>108</sup>

August 29: The Thai Labor Ministry reportedly ordered the arrest and deportation of monks from Burma "who had come to work in Thailand in disguise." Police announced plans to target 189 temples in nine provinces.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Supamart Kasem, "Striking Burmese deported," *Bangkok Post*, December 2003. "Thai Authorities Deport 200 Myanmarers After Strike," Associated Press, December 18, 2003.

<sup>105</sup> Dr. Cynthia Maung is a recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership. See "Thailand: Do Not Close Burmese Refugee Clinic," Human Rights Watch press release, October 3, 2003.

<sup>106</sup> "Siriwat Garment Factory: Another Case of Slave Labor in Mae Sot," Young Chi Oo Workers Association, September 23, 2003.

<sup>107</sup> "Thai Boss Cheats Workers," *The Irrawaddy*, September 11, 2003.

<sup>108</sup> Shan-EU, "Weekly Digest No. 60," quoting a report from Shan Herald Agency for News, September 7-13, 2003.

<sup>109</sup> Penchan Charoensuthipan, "Abbots told to crack down or face action," *Bangkok Post*, August 15, 2003. "Buddhist Monks Disrobed and Deported," Kao Wao, September 1, 2003.

August 28: Thai authorities arrested, disrobed, and deported fifty-seven ethnic Shan and Mon monks and novices at Wat Nongkham in Bangkok.<sup>110</sup>

August 4: Fourteen members of the Community Addiction Recovery and Education Project (CARE) were arrested at their office in Mae Hong Son. The raid was conducted as a joint operation by Border Patrol Police, local police, the Third Army, and the Immigration Department. They were fined and returned to the refugee camp.<sup>111</sup>

June 23: At the King Body Concept Factory in Tak Province, more than 300 Burmese migrants with work permits were fired and deported on June 23 after attempting to negotiate for a wage increase.<sup>112</sup> While under the law, the workers had seven days to find another job, police instead immediately deported them. The factory owner reportedly gave the SPDC officials in Myawaddy the names of some or all of the deported workers.<sup>113</sup>

May 28: The *Bangkok Post* reported that the burnt remains of six Burmese construction workers who disappeared on May 14 were found in a forest close to Huay Kalok village, Tak Province. The six were last seen handcuffed and in the custody of uniformed Thai officials.<sup>114</sup>

April 23: Twenty-six Burmese workers who were in the process of suing their employer, were arrested and deported to Myawaddy holding center in Burma just days before their court hearing in Thailand. The workers were suing the owner of the Nut Knitting factory for a total of 4.6 million baht (U.S. \$107,000) in unpaid wages and compensation.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Shan-EU, "Weekly Digest No. 60," quoting a report from [www.shan-tai.org](http://www.shan-tai.org), September 7-13, 2003.

<sup>111</sup> Report from NGOs in Mae Hong Son, August 2003.

<sup>112</sup> Amy Kazmin and Panvadee Uraisin, "Burmese workers find life brutal in Thailand," *Financial Times*, August 4, 2003.

<sup>113</sup> "Over 300 Myanmar Workers Deported from Thailand after Wage Dispute," Xinhua, June 24, 2003.

<sup>114</sup> "Inquest Delay Threat to Ties with Burma," *Bangkok Post*, May 28, 2003.

<sup>115</sup> Amy Kazmin and Panvadee Uraisin, "Burmese workers find life brutal in Thailand," *Financial Times*, August 4, 2003; "Burmese Workers Sue for Unpaid Wages," *Irrawaddy*, April 28, 2003.