



# *Driven Away*

*Trafficking of Kachin women on the China-Burma border*

# Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT)

## Background

Changes in the environment, political, economic and social situation in Kachin State, near Kachin people, mainly young men and women, have left their homeland and migrated to foreign countries.

The number of Kachin people coming to Thailand for various purposes is increasing year by year. Problems in the Kachin community in Thailand have also increased accordingly. Recognizing the urgent need for women to organize themselves to solve their own problems, the Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT) was formed in Chiang Mai on the 5th December 1997.

## Aims

- To develop the skills of women
- To promote children's rights
- To empower women to be more involved in leadership positions
- To promote women's awareness of gender and women's rights
- To promote women's awareness on how to manage and protect the environment

## Introduction

As in other parts of Burma, reports of trafficking of women from Kachin area have become increasingly frequent in recent years, and the trend shows every sign of continuing. This is an issue of increasing concern for the Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT). Although some international attention has been raised about the trafficking of women from Burma in general, particularly into Thailand, there has been little focus on trafficking from Kachin areas and consequently little analysis of the exact nature and scale of the problem. KWAT therefore decided to document the issue on the ground in order to contribute to a better understanding of the problem and to seek effective ways to address it.



# **Driven Away**

**Trafficking of Kachin women on the China-Burma border**

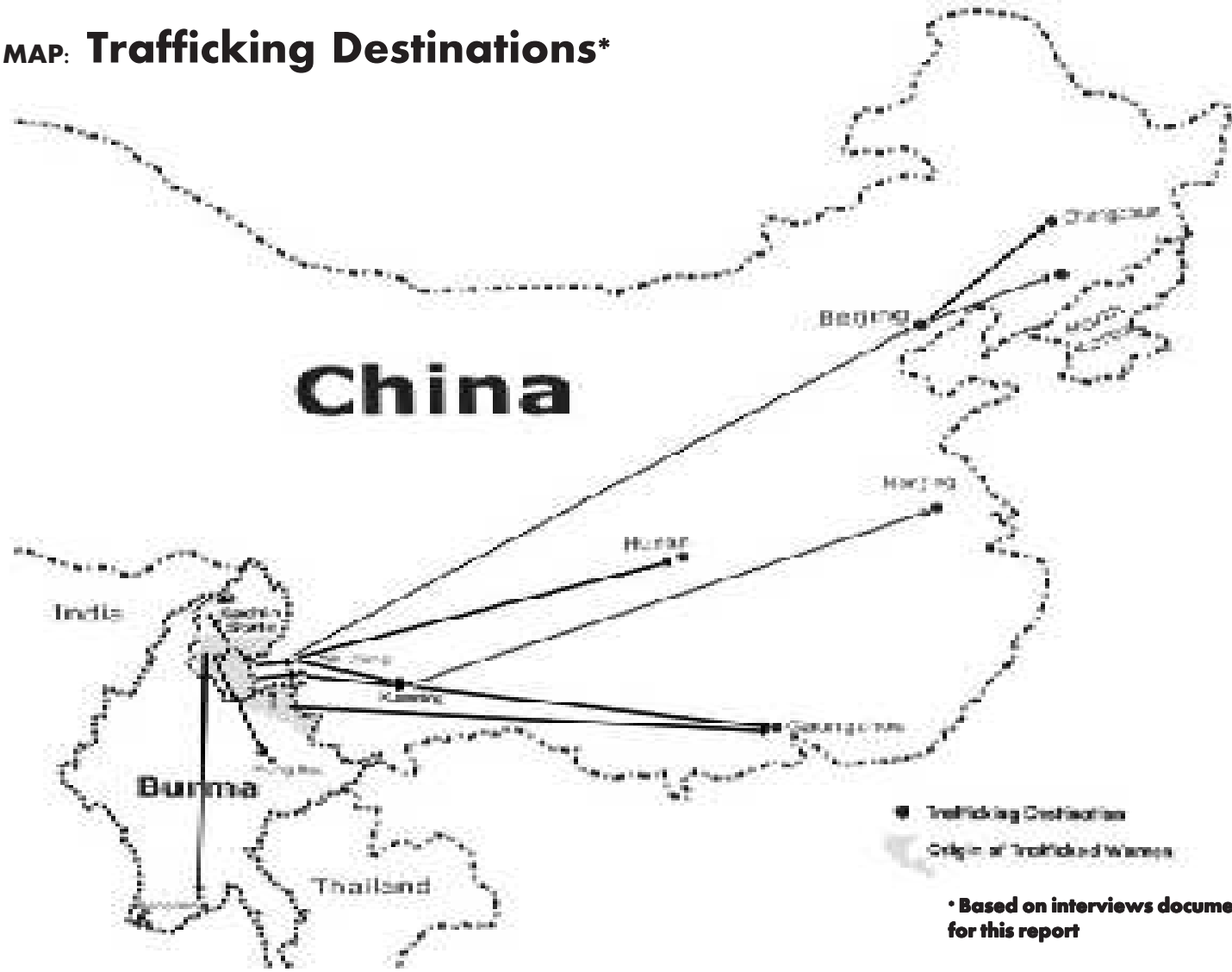
*A report by the Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT)*

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# MAP: Trafficking Destinations\*



# Executive Summary

An alarming trend is developing in ethnic Kachin communities of Burma. Growing poverty, caused by failed state policies, is driving increasing numbers of young people to migrate in search of work. As a result, young women and girls are disappearing without trace, being sold as wives in China, and tricked into the Chinese and Burmese sex industries. Local Kachin researchers conducted interviews in Burma from May-August 2004 in order to document this trend.

*Driven Away: Trafficking of Kachin women on the China-Burma border*, produced by the Kachin Women's Association Thailand (KWAT), is based on 63 verified and suspected trafficking cases that occurred primarily during 2000-2004. The cases involve 85 women and girls, mostly between the ages of 14 and 20. Testimony comes primarily from women and girls who escaped after being trafficked, as well as relatives, persons who helped escapees, and others.

About two-thirds of the women trafficked were from the townships of Myitkyina and Bhamo in Kachin State. About one third were from villages in northern Shan State. In 36 of the cases, women were specifically offered safe work opportunities and followed recruiters to border towns. Many were seeking part-time work to make enough money for school fees during the annual three-month school holiday. Others simply needed to support their families. Those not offered work were taken while looking for work, tricked, or outright abducted.

Women taken to China were most often passed on to traffickers at the border to be transported farther by car, bus and/or train for journeys of up to one week in length. Traffickers used deceit, threats, and drugs to confuse and control women en route.

Women were transported as far as provinces in north-eastern China for the purpose of being sold as wives to Chinese men. Others were trafficked into the sex industry in Chinese border towns or deeper into south-western Yunnan province. Half of the women involved in those cases have disappeared altogether. Only about 10% of the cases involved domestic trafficking, mostly to karaoke bars and massage parlours in the mining areas of Kachin and Shan States.

Most of the cases cited extreme poverty and a lack of employment opportunities in home areas as the main reason for migration. Under the ruling military regime, the State Peace and Development Council or SPDC, Burma's economy has suffered a devastating deterioration. The regime continues to prioritize military expenditure while its spending on health and education remains negligible. As communities must struggle to provide these services for themselves, by, for example, paying spiralling school costs, families are forced to seek income outside their own communities.

Even after a ceasefire agreement with the Kachin Independence Organisation in 1994, the number of Burma Army troops in Kachin State has tripled, with over 50 Burmese battalions now stationed there. This increased militarization has intensified hardship for local people. Abuses such as land confiscation, forced labour and extortion further impoverish the population.

Against this backdrop of general abuse and impoverishment, Kachin State has been undergoing rapid changes due to large-scale natural resource extraction. Since the ceasefire agreement in 1994, the regime has authorized the exploitation of resources including timber, jade, and gold to be sold mostly as raw products to China. Huge profits have been earned by the Burmese military and Chinese investors, but few benefits have been gained by local communities. There has been no development of resource-based industries to provide long-term sustainable livelihoods. In addition, the "boom town" reality of resource extraction areas encourages the concentration and growth of the sex industry which in turn fuels trafficking.

The regime's drug eradication policies in northern Shan State have also driven many villagers into poverty. Since 2002, in order to gain international support and funding, the regime has forced farmers in this area to stop growing opium but has not provided them with any alternative means of earning income.

A significant factor that facilitates trafficking is the state's failure to ensure the provision of identity cards to all citizens in Kachin State. Women and girls without ID cards are denied their right to travel or migrate legally and thus they become vulnerable to trafficking.



While the regime has claimed that it is making efforts to curb trafficking, it is not addressing the root causes that force women to migrate nor the factors that allow trafficking to flourish. Instead, it focuses on anti-trafficking legislation and imposes greater travel restrictions on women. Given that legitimate migration by women is not validated and that corruption has become endemic in military-controlled Burma, travel restrictions and other measures will not only continue to be ineffective, but in fact will facilitate trafficking by forcing women to rely on brokers when they migrate to work.

In just a handful of cases documented for this report were traffickers prosecuted, owing again to corruption and the poverty of the women seeking to press charges. Appeals to the state-sponsored Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation to assist with prosecution of traffickers have been ineffective.

Women and girls showed a remarkable degree of resourcefulness in managing to escape from situations of trafficking, often thousands of miles from home. Several women were able to return home from eastern China with the aid of Chinese police. However, there does not appear to be a standard procedure for the protection of those trafficked in China. The collusion of local police, lack of language skills and other obstacles to repatriation make safe return very difficult. Upon return, women face penalty by Burmese authorities at the border, and community censure in their hometowns.

There is an urgent need to strengthen community networks that can help raise awareness about issues related to migration and trafficking and to provide services to those that have been trafficked.

It is clear that the problem of trafficking of Kachin women cannot be addressed without challenging the state policies of militarization that are driving communities in Burma into poverty and denying women their basic human rights. Unless there is political reform and restoration of these rights, current inequitable and unsustainable development policies will continue to impoverish local populations, forcing women and girls to migrate to work under conditions that render them vulnerable to trafficking.

## Recommendations

KWAT therefore makes the following recommendations:

### *To the Burmese military regime (the State Peace and Development Council or SPDC):*

- To immediately implement a nationwide ceasefire and withdraw all Burma Army troops stationed in the ethnic areas.
- To immediately begin tripartite dialogue with the National League for Democracy and genuine representatives of the ethnic nationalities, to begin a meaningful process of political reform.

### *To China:*

- To exert political and economic influence on the Burmese military regime to begin a process of genuine political reform that will enable China's future relations with Burma to contribute to stability and sustainable, equitable development in Burma, and help prevent social problems such as human trafficking that are impacting China.
- To ensure that women and girls who have been trafficked to China have access to effective assistance programs that protect and promote their human rights.

### *To the international community:*

- To pressure the SPDC to implement a nationwide ceasefire, withdraw all Burma Army troops stationed in the ethnic areas, and begin tripartite dialogue.
- To review anti-trafficking strategies being implemented in Burma to ensure that they are addressing the root causes of the trafficking problem and are not being used to legitimize the regime in any way.
- To provide support for effective community-based initiatives to raise awareness about trafficking and provide services to women and girls who have been trafficked.



# Background



*Traditional Kachin manau post*

## **Historical and Political Background of the Kachin**

The Kachin people, comprising a number of different ethnic sub-groups, live mainly in north-eastern Burma, as well as parts of China and India. The Kachin in Burma are estimated to number between 1 - 1.5 million. Traditionally hill dwellers subsisting on rotational cultivation of hill rice, they used to be ruled by village and clan chiefs. During British rule of Burma (from 1886 to 1948), most Kachin territory was specially administered as a frontier region; Christianity spread among the Kachin at this time. When Burma gained independence in 1948, the northern mountainous extremity of Burma was designated as Kachin State, with an area of 34,379 square miles. Kachin people also live in Shan State.

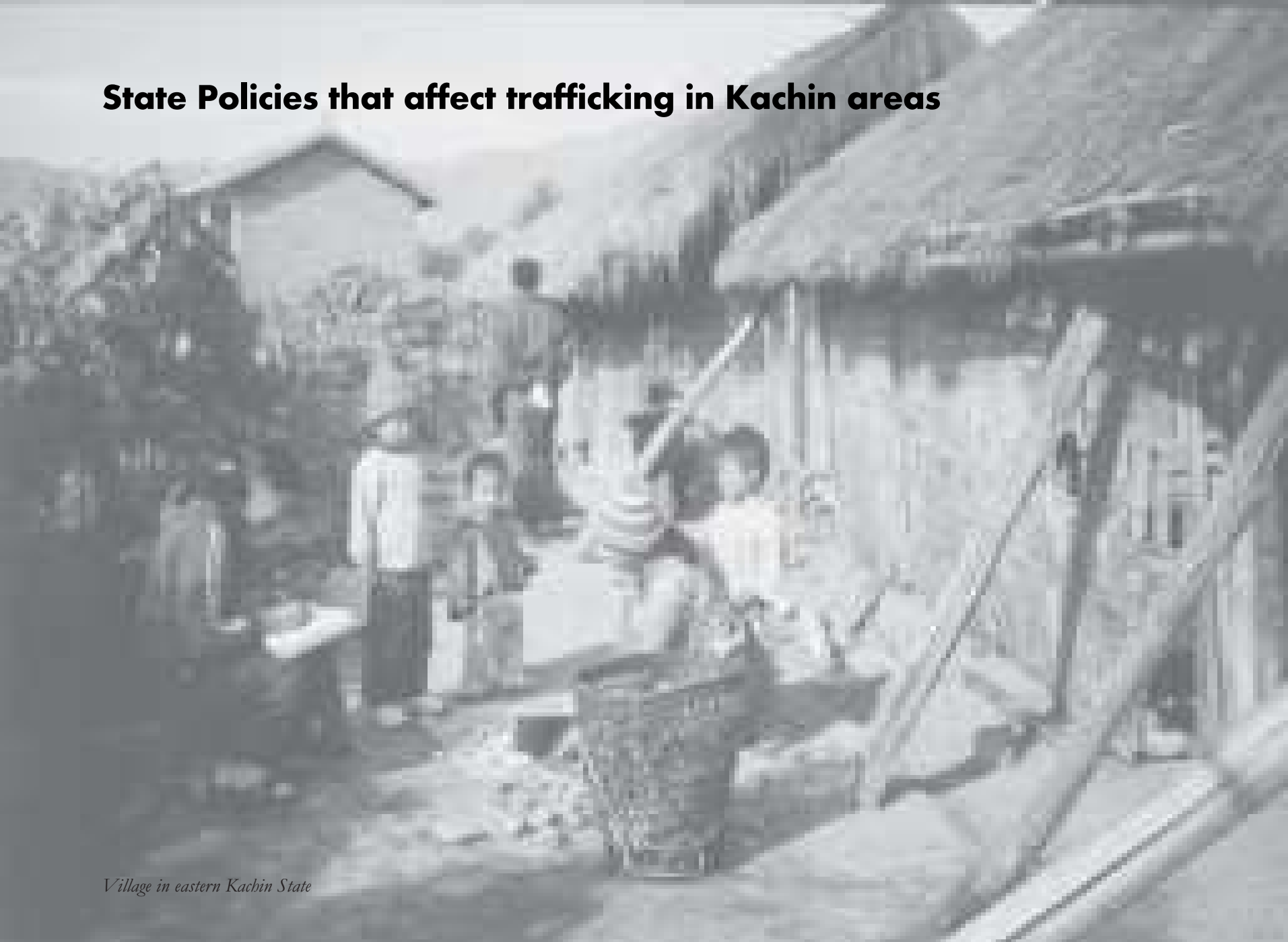
After independence, many Kachin grew increasingly dissatisfied with the discriminatory policies of the central Burmese government. This led to the launch in 1961 of a Kachin armed resistance movement, which grew into one of the largest ethnic resistance forces, the Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO). Several decades of armed conflict ensued, causing displacement of many of the highland Kachin population down to the lowland areas of Kachin State. Today, over 80% of the state's population live in the plains.

In 1994, the KIO signed a ceasefire agreement with the Burmese military regime, and was granted the right to continue maintaining its own administrative and military infrastructure in certain areas. Two other Kachin armed groups also have ceasefire agreements with the regime: the New Democratic Army (Kachin) (NDA-K), formerly part of the Communist Party of Burma, which operates on the northeast Kachin-China border, and the Kachin Defence Army (KDA), in northern Shan State, which broke away from the KIO in 1991 to make a separate ceasefire agreement with the regime.

The ceasefire agreements have unfortunately not led to a resolution of the political grievances underlying the decades-long conflict. Kachin State, like the rest of Burma, remains under military dictatorship, its people denied the democratic right to choose their government. The regime has taken advantage of the ceasefire agreements to increase its military presence in Kachin State. The number of Burma Army troops has tripled since 1994, with over 50 Burmese battalions now stationed in Kachin State. Burmese troops have increasingly been deployed in areas close to KIO military bases. The growing Burma Army presence has placed increased burdens on local populations, who have suffered land confiscation, extortion, forced labour and other abuses by Burmese military personnel.

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**State Policies that affect trafficking in Kachin areas**



*Village in eastern Kachin State*

## **Increased border trade**

The decades of civil war and the isolationist policies of the Burmese socialist regime between 1962 and 1988 meant that there was little border trade between China and northern Burma. The signing by China and Burma of agreements on border trade in 1988 as part of the regime's new "open-door" economic policies and ceasefire agreements that began in 1989 changed things dramatically. A boom in trade along the northern Shan State border began, with huge amounts of timber pouring out of northern Shan State to fulfil China's increasing demands for wood products and manufactured Chinese goods flowing into Burma. Similar developments took place on the Kachin State-China border following the KIO ceasefire in 1994, with not only large amounts of wood, but also jade and gold being exported to China.

The increase in border trade led to a swelling of population at border crossings such as the northern Shan town of Muse, linked by road to Mandalay in the central Burmese plains. On the Kachin State border, one of the main towns which has flourished in recent years is Laiza. In the early nineties, Laiza was a small border village with a population of about 1,000 people. Today, with improved road infrastructure linking it directly to Myitkyina (the capital of Kachin State), its population has grown to well over 50,000, straddling both sides of the border.

Women from different parts of Burma have migrated to these border sites in search of employment. While some work is available at restaurants, shops or guest-houses, the biggest demand is for sex workers. Wages for sex workers on the Chinese border are also comparably higher than for sex workers inside Burma.

## **Widespread resource exploitation**

Prior to the KIO ceasefire, owing to the civil war and lack of infrastructure, there was only minimal exploitation of the rich natural resources in Kachin State. After the ceasefire, the regime began selling off concessions throughout the state, particularly to Chinese investors, leading to rapid infrastructure development and rampant resource exploitation. Jade and gold mining sites became "boom-town" areas, attracting migrants from throughout Burma, and China, to work on the mines, as well as to find jobs in the settlements that had sprung up around the mines. For example, the population of Hpakant, the most famous jade mining area in Kachin State, was estimated to have soared to half a million by the mid-nineties.

**While some work is available at restaurants, shops or guest-houses, the biggest demand is for sex workers.**



### **Gender roles in Kachin communities**

Traditional Kachin society is male-dominated, with men holding leading positions in political and religious areas of village life. To this day, village leaders and pastors in Kachin communities are all men.

Women are expected to marry and serve their husbands, performing all household tasks such as cleaning, cooking and childcare. The fact that many Kachin families no longer carry out their traditional livelihoods as subsistence farmers and have migrated to urban areas or lowland villages has created a double burden for many women. Both husbands and wives need to seek work outside the house to make ends meet, but it is still women who are expected to do all the household work.

In addition, decades of civil war have left many women as heads of households and the levels of drug and alcohol addiction among men are rising. These two factors have created further burdens for women as the sole breadwinners for their families.

Women's traditional role as care-givers within families creates a strong sense of duty for daughters to support their parents and siblings. In times of financial crisis they feel an intense obligation to seek supplementary income to support their families, even if it means migrating to seek work, thereby becoming vulnerable to exploitation or trafficking.

Kachin women are expected to be chaste before marriage, and premarital sex is considered an act bringing shame on the whole community. If an offending couple is caught, it is usually the girl who receives more blame, and ceremonies have to be performed to "cleanse" the community and avert bad luck. Thus, trafficked women and girls returning to their communities find they are subject to moral censure, irrespective of the circumstances under which they were trafficked.



Today an estimated 13% of Kachin State is being excavated for gold mining<sup>1</sup>, but fewer and fewer local people are able to gain benefit from the excavation, much of which is now mechanized. Much of the land used for the mines has been confiscated from local owners.

As economic conditions have continued to worsen in other parts of the state, increasing numbers of women have migrated to work in karaoke bars and massage parlours serving the mining and logging communities. The booming sex trade and high rates of drug addiction in these areas, as well as at the border trade crossings, has caused the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS.

### **Lack of spending on public services**

The military regime has continued to prioritize military expenditure, doubling the size of the Burma Army to over 400,000 soldiers since 1988. Over 40% of the national budget is spent on the military<sup>2</sup> while IMF figures estimate that under 1% of GDP is spent on health and education combined.

The failure of the regime to adequately fund public services has caused serious deterioration of Burma's education and health systems. There are insufficient schools and public health facilities, particularly in rural areas. Where they do exist, they are understaffed and poorly supplied. Low salaries (the average starting pay for a primary school teacher in 2004 was 4,500 kyat, or US\$4.50 per month) have sapped morale and fuelled corruption.

School costs have risen sharply during the past few years, with parents being forced to pay not only for registration, textbooks and stationery, but all school operational expenditures. On top of this, if students want any sort of quality education, they must pay for additional private tuition classes held by teachers who need to supplement their low salaries. In 1998, the cost of attending the 10th standard (the final year of high school) in Myitkyina was about 100,000 kyat. Today, 10th standard students must pay at least 300,000 kyat, not including obligatory tuition costs of a further 200,000 kyat. Given the fact that labour wages are only about 500 kyat a day, these costs are prohibitive for most families.

High education costs, the falling quality of education, and the lack of job prospects upon graduating have led to high drop-out rates. According to UN figures, 98 percent of Burmese

**Over 40% of the national budget is spent on the military<sup>2</sup> while IMF figures estimate that under 1% of GDP is spent on health and education combined.**

## **The Burmese military regime and the issue of human trafficking**

students drop out before finishing high school. Denied access to education, increasing numbers of young people have been forced to migrate in search of work as unskilled labour, which has rendered them vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking.

The Burmese military regime appears keen to show the international community that it is seriously addressing the problem of human trafficking. In recent years, Burma's state-controlled media has given frequent coverage to the regime's anti-trafficking programs.

A National Plan of Action for Trafficking Women and Children and a National Task Force were set-up in 1998. The state-sponsored Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs (renamed the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation in 2003), led by wives of SPDC officials, has played a leading role in these efforts. Burma became a signatory to the *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* on March 30, 2004.

The regime states that it is combating trafficking using a "multi-sectoral approach involving prevention, prosecution, protection of victims, as well as cooperation with the international community."<sup>3</sup> However, its focus has been mainly on law enforcement and prosecution. In press conferences, the regime usually cites numbers of traffickers arrested, numbers of women prevented from leaving the country illegally, and numbers of women officially repatriated from other countries, as evidence of its commitment to tackling trafficking.

The regime has come under criticism by international human rights organisations for failing to address the root causes of the trafficking problem in Burma, and specifically for failing to provide women with adequate protection of their basic human rights.<sup>4</sup> Restrictions imposed since 1997 by the authorities in Eastern Shan State on young women between the ages of 16 and 25 travelling to the Thai border have been strongly criticized for not only being ineffective in stemming trafficking but actually contributing to the problem:

*"These (anti-trafficking) regulations can be circumvented through bribery; in fact they encourage human smuggling and facilitate trafficking by making it necessary for women to*

*be accompanied — thereby increasing the likelihood that they will be targeted for deception and exploitation.”<sup>5</sup>*

Endemic corruption also fuels the trafficking problem and has not been addressed:

*“Public officials at the local level benefit from trafficking and smuggling of persons, and thus have an incentive to allow the trade to continue impeded. At every checkpoint on the roads leading to the border traffickers and smugglers must pay bribes to corrupt officials to be allowed passage.”<sup>6</sup>*

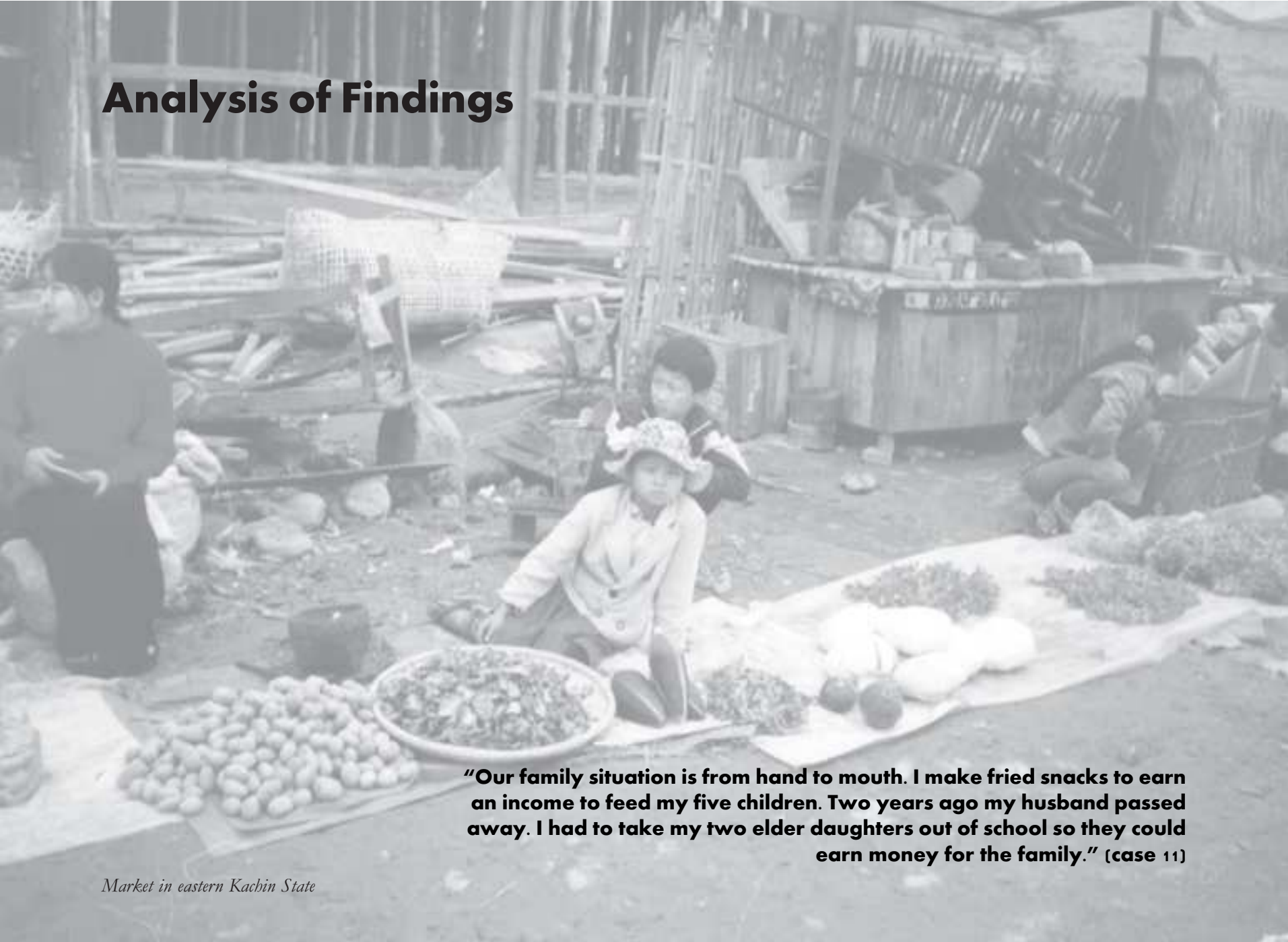
Burma was again designated at Tier 3 in the US Trafficking in Persons Report of June 2004, which stated that *“The government of Burma does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so.”*

Nevertheless, the regime has gained support from various UN agencies, foreign governments and NGOs for its anti-trafficking programs, and in October 2004, the regime hosted the meeting of the six-nation Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking (COMMIT) in Rangoon.

**Women’s rights advocates have emphasised the need to address the root causes of the trafficking of women:**

*“The lack of rights afforded to women serves as a primary causative factor at the root of both women’s migration and trafficking. The failure of existing economic, political and social structures to provide equal and just opportunities for women to work has contributed to the feminization of poverty, which has led to the feminization of migration, as women leave their homes in search of viable economic options. Further, political instability, militarism, civil unrest, internal armed conflict and natural disasters also exacerbate women’s vulnerabilities and may result in an increase in trafficking.”* - Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, 2000

# Analysis of Findings



**“Our family situation is from hand to mouth. I make fried snacks to earn an income to feed my five children. Two years ago my husband passed away. I had to take my two elder daughters out of school so they could earn money for the family.” (case 11)**

## Methodology

Most of the information for this report was collected by local researchers from May–August 2004. They travelled to Myitkyina, Bhamo and Laiza in Kachin State as well as Muse and Kutkai townships of Northern Shan State. KWAT relied on local networks to identify trafficking cases, and conducted interviews with women and girls who had been trafficked, their family members, and community members who had witnessed incidents of trafficking.

Owing to shame and fear of community censure, many women and girls are unwilling to speak out about their experiences of being trafficked. It is therefore likely that the cases documented for this report represent only a small portion of the actual number of trafficking incidents that have taken place in the areas studied. The fact that research was only conducted in a few selected areas and not throughout Kachin State should also not be taken to mean that trafficking is absent in other parts of the state.

### Age

According to the interviews conducted for this report, the most common age for girls and women being trafficked was between 14 and 20. About two-thirds of those trafficked were within this age range. About one quarter were under the age of 18. The women over 20 who were trafficked were mostly in their early twenties.

### Place of origin

About two thirds of the women and girls trafficked were from Kachin State, mostly from the townships of Myitkyina and Bhamo. About half were from the actual towns of Myitkyina and Bhamo, and about half were from villages, either near to Myitkyina, or close to the Chinese border (see map on page 21). About one third of those trafficked were from northern Shan State, mostly from Kachin villages in the township of Kutkai.

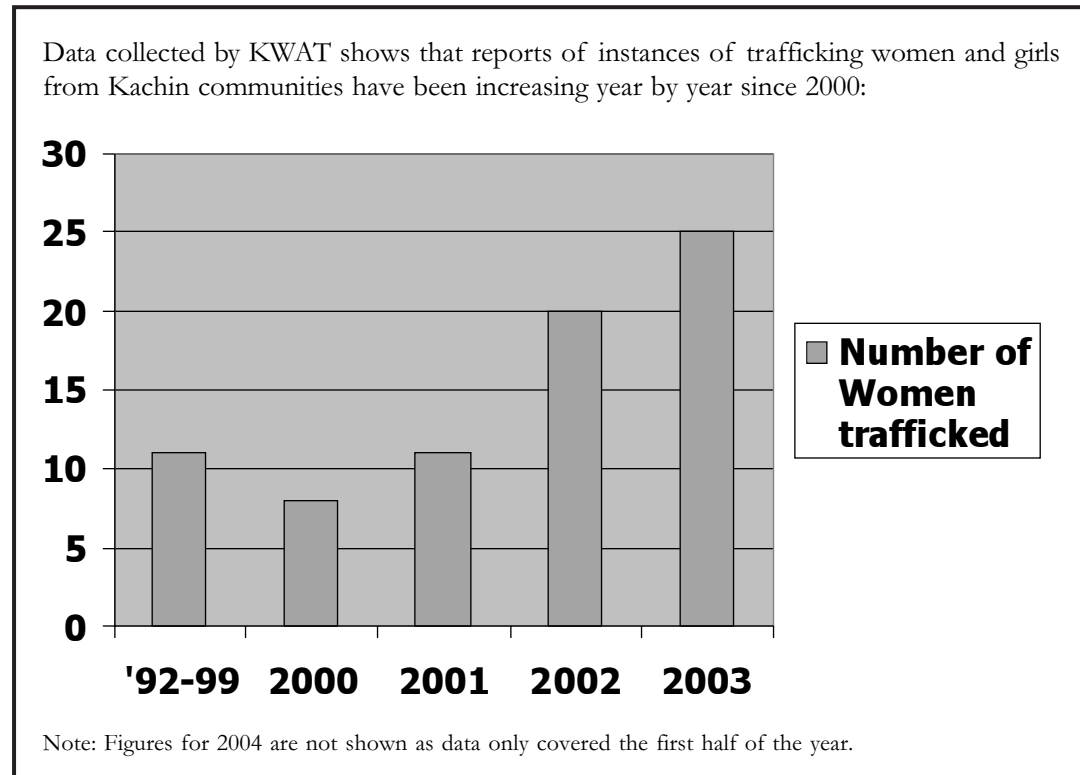
As the researchers were focussing on Kachin communities, almost all the trafficking cases involved ethnic Kachin women. However, some cases involved Burmese and Shan women living in Kachin State. In one case, when a woman was trafficked to Changchun in north-eastern China, she found Burmese women there from the towns of Myingyan, Shwebo and Meikhtilar. This shows that it is not only women from the Kachin border areas who are being trafficked deep inside China, but also women from areas of central Burma.

## Who are being trafficked?

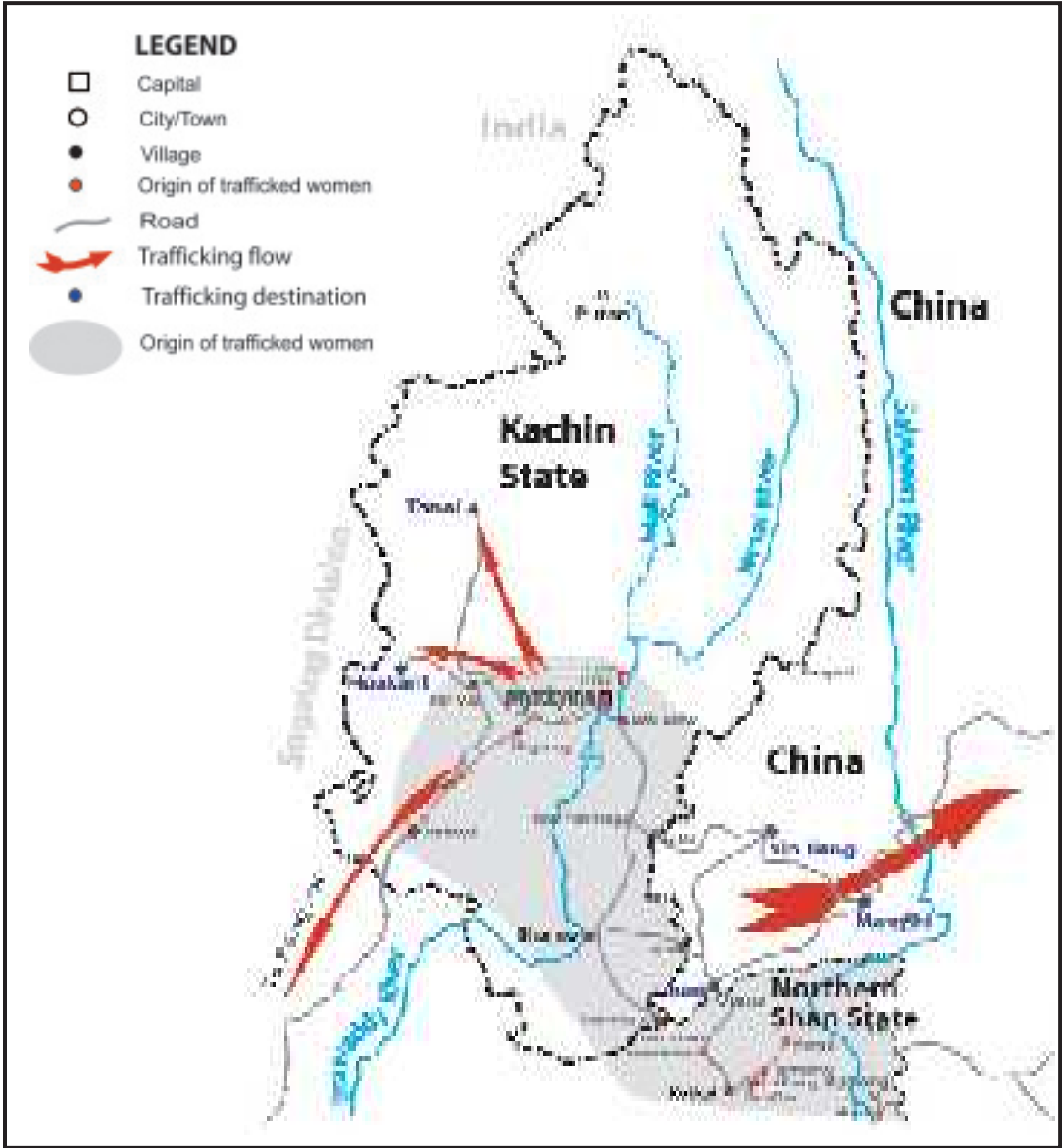
## Trafficking: a growing trend

### Livelihoods

The majority of the girls and women trafficked had been living with their parents; most others were staying with relatives. Many of the younger girls were attending school and hoping to earn money during their school holidays. Older girls and women were doing various kinds of work to supplement their family's income, such as farming, sewing clothes, collecting wild vegetables or fishing.



**MAP:  
Trafficking Flows**



## Causes of Migration or “Push Factors” as identified by the women

### Poverty and lack of employment opportunities

The overriding factor cited as forcing women and girls to migrate to work, and thus become vulnerable to trafficking, is poverty and the lack of employment opportunities in their home towns or villages. Whether from agricultural communities or urban areas, the interviewees frequently mentioned that their families were “very poor” and finding it difficult to survive.

*“Our family is very poor. I have 6 children. My husband smokes opium. I work in the paddy fields when it is paddy growing time, but I only get 500 kyat per day. It is not enough to feed 8 people. My children go to the forest to find vegetables to sell. They also go to the stream to catch fish to sell.” (case 25)*

Many of the girls and women mentioned that they had been forced to migrate because there were “no jobs” where they lived, even those from Kachin State’s major towns of Myitkyina and Bhamo. It is therefore evident that the thriving trade with China during the past decade has generated few work opportunities outside of the logging and mining areas or the actual border crossing points. The natural resources that are being extracted in other parts of Kachin State are simply passing straight out to China or Lower Burma, and no manufacturing industries are being developed in Kachin State’s densely populated lowland areas to provide jobs for local people. (See Appendix 1 for a summary of the reasons for migration).

### State drug eradication policies

Interviews from northern Shan State reveal that the military regime’s opium eradication policies have had a direct effect on levels of poverty in the area. Since 2002, in order to gain international legitimacy and funding, the regime has launched a much publicized War on Drugs, which has mainly involved forcing farmers to stop growing opium in certain showcase areas, particularly in Northern Shan State. However, the regime has not provided former opium-growers with any viable alternative source of income, which has driven many families into severe hardship. This appears to have directly caused an increase in trafficking of women, as described by a 19-year-old girl from Tarmoeyne:

*“Near Tarmoeyne we had grown opium until 2001. In 2002, after the military government forbade us to grow opium we didn’t do it. So there were many more jobless people than before....Many people were trafficked to China.” (case 26).*



## Denial of the right to education

Many interviews reveal that the high (and rising) cost of education is causally linked to the incidence of trafficking in girls and women. The regime's neglect of the education sector is thus not only denying these girls their right to education but also directly fuelling the trafficking problem.

Some parents take their daughters out of school after only a few years because they cannot afford to pay the school fees: *"When I was in third standard I dropped out of school and I did odd jobs because my family was very poor."* (case 53)

If the daughters are the eldest of the family, they are often expected to help the parents earn money for the other siblings' school fees: *"My friend (aged 16) was very poor. She had 5 younger sisters and brothers. So she had to look after them as a duty to her family. She didn't have a chance to go to school after she passed the sixth standard."* (case 52) Leaving school early, such girls have fewer options for work, and are more vulnerable to trafficking, particularly if they are under the obligation to support younger siblings.

However, it is not only girls who have left school who are being trafficked, but also girls who are still at school or attempting to continue their education. In twelve of the cases documented for this report, girls had sought work to earn money for their own school or university fees. For those girls still at school, it is common to seek work during the 3-month summer holiday between March and May.

In another testimony, a woman from Myitkyina revealed why she agreed to let her 16-year-old granddaughter go and work at the border:

*"In April 2003, a woman took my granddaughter to the border to find a job. She wanted to earn money for her school fees next year, so I gave her permission to go. I didn't want her to, but I couldn't afford her school fees. School fees are increasing year by year. I only sell vegetables in the morning market..."* (case 46- the granddaughter has not been heard of since)

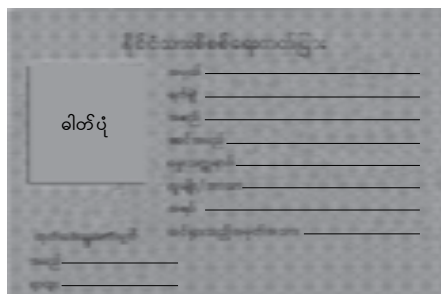
***"My daughter said that she wanted to go (to work at the border). She said that if she did that job, she could earn enough for her siblings' school fees. So I allowed her to go."*** (case 11)

# Identity Cards, Corruption and Trafficking

Since the outset of military rule in 1962, all Burmese citizens have needed ID cards to travel inside the country. Cards must be presented when purchasing tickets to travel long distances and at the frequent police and military checkpoints along main roads. Those wishing to pass a checkpoint without an ID usually need to pay a bribe, or if they are young, must be accompanied by an older person with a card.

## *The Situation – a lack of cards and corruption in issuing cards*

Although all citizens of Burma should by law be issued with national registration cards (i.e. identity cards), many people in remote rural areas do not possess them. This is partly due to the decades of conflict that has isolated many parts of the country from state infrastructure. However, despite the cessation of fighting in Kachin State and northern Shan State for over ten years, it has remained difficult for those without ID cards in these areas to obtain them without paying bribes to local officials at every level. One Kachin girl in northern Shan State explained: “I didn’t have an ID. To make an ID I had to pay at least 10,000 kyat. I am a hard worker but I only got 500 kyat a day so I didn’t have enough money to make an ID card.” (case 16) In some rural areas of Kachin State, it is estimated that as many as two thirds of the population do not have ID cards. This situation, coupled with strict travel restrictions, fuels and facilitates trafficking of Kachin women and girls in a number of ways.



## *Reason for Migrating*

The hope of earning enough money to buy an ID is one motivation for girls and women to migrate in search of employment. Girls are keen to obtain an ID not only because they want to travel but also to further their education. While it is possible to attend school without an ID, anyone wishing to take the high school final exams, which also serve as university entrance exams, must possess an ID.

## *Lack of ID creates dependency and vulnerability to traffickers*

A lack of ID usually means that girls or women have not travelled from their hometown before, and thus have not had the opportunity to gain the travel experience that might protect them from being trafficked. In several cases in this report, girls were tricked about where they were being taken, because they were not familiar with routes or towns outside their home vicinity (see case 4 as a good example). Girls without ID are entirely dependent on others, who can wind up being traffickers, to arrange their travel. Those people either bribe

checkpoint officials or pose as a relative or guardian. As explained by one 15-year-old girl: “I didn’t have an ID, but at the checkpoints when the immigration officers checked me, xxx said I was her daughter, so they gave me permission to pass the gate.” (case 38)

A Burmese ID is necessary to obtain a proper travel pass for China. Once traffickers have smuggled women or girls into China, they become vulnerable to arrest by the Chinese authorities for illegal entry without proper travel documents, thus making them more dependent on their traffickers.

### ***Lack of ID cards hinders escape and rescue efforts***

Exposed to the possibility of arrest in China as well as upon return (being liable to punishment by the Burmese authorities for leaving the country illegally) makes escape more risky and difficult.

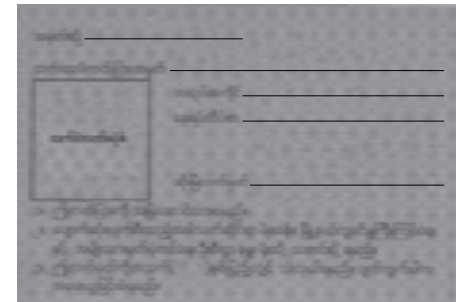
Parents who themselves have no ID are hindered in travelling in search of their daughters who have been trafficked. The mother of a 19-year-old girl from northern Shan State trafficked to China was unable to cross the border legally to look for her daughter: “I went to the border town but I didn’t have an ID so I couldn’t make a border pass; I went illegally by ferryboat instead.” (case 9)

### ***Corrupt issuance of ID cards makes prosecution of traffickers difficult***

Conversely, traffickers who can afford to buy multiple ID cards are able to evade prosecution for trafficking. One woman was unable to bring charges against her trafficker: “...His name was xxx, but I don’t know if that was his real name or not because after I escaped I tried to trace him, and I learned that he had 4 or 5 ID cards and names.” (case 10)

### ***Confiscation of ID cards as a means of control by traffickers***

Despite the fact that possession of an ID is likely to reduce a woman’s vulnerability to trafficking, it should also be mentioned that due to the restrictions on travel in Burma, even if women possesses an ID card, traffickers can use the method of confiscating their ID card as a means of control. One 20-year-old woman trafficked to a brothel had her ID taken away: “When they reached Rangoon, she stayed in a room on the top floor of a five-storey building. She couldn’t go out; her ID card and possessions were taken from her.” (case 34)



# The Trafficking Process

## Recruitment and travel to the border

The usual method of recruitment is to offer women some form of employment. In the case of trafficking to China, women are usually offered a job on the border rather than inside China as this appears more familiar and less dangerous than travelling across the border. However, in two cases, women were offered work in Yin Jiang, a town only about 70 km inside China. In one case, a girl returning home during her school holiday was approached by a woman in the Rangoon railway station who offered to accompany her back to Myitkyina for safety, but ended up trying to sell her to Thailand.

The jobs which the girls are commonly offered include work in restaurants or shops, or else as domestic workers. Wages offered ranged from 5,000 (US\$5) kyat a month as a housekeeper on the border, to between 18,000 and 30,000 kyat (US\$18-30) a month working as a waitress on the border or in Yin Jiang.

In several cases the method of recruitment was to offer the girls or women a chance to visit China or the Chinese border. *“One day at the end of April 1994, my Auntie came and talked about visiting China. I’d never been to China before so I decided to go with her.”* (case 2 – a 20-year old woman from Kutkai who was sold to be a wife of a Chinese man)

In a few cases, interviewees mention that they think the recruiter put some kind of “medicine” in their food to make them more willing to accompany her:

*“She told me that I could work during the summer holiday at her friend’s shop. At first, I didn’t believe her because I was afraid I would be trafficked. But when I ate Shan noodles, I really wanted to go with her. I think she fed me some medicine in the noodles.”* (case 48)

Recruiters also try to assuage relatives’ concerns:

*“In 2002, xxx from Tarmoeyne took my granddaughter to Ruilli (Shweli) to find a job. She told me she would find a good job for my granddaughter and she would get 30,000 kkyat a month. She said again and again that I shouldn’t worry about her.”* (case 22)

Some families are too desperate to be entirely discerning. Said one mother *“I needed the school*

*fees for her young sisters and brothers, so I agreed to let my daughter go.” (case 19) Other parents knew and trusted the recruiter: “They gave me permission to go with my aunt because they trusted her.” (case 2)*

## **Persuading women to travel across the border to China**

Once women have been tricked into travelling to the Chinese border, it then becomes easier to persuade them to cross over into China. In several cases, they were told on arrival at a border town that there were “no jobs” there and that they should cross the border to find work. They are also told that salaries are higher on the Chinese side.

*“When they reached the border they stayed at a low-quality guest house. xxx then said to them that there were no jobs, but that in Yin Jiang (in China) there were many more jobs, and they would be able to earn four or five hundred yuan\* a month.” (case 37 – about a 25-yr-old woman from Myitkyina who was sold as a wife to a Chinese man)*

In at least 7 cases, the girls or women were handed over by their initial recruiters to other traffickers. In only one case did this take place shortly after they left Myitkyina (see case 4 in Appendix). In the other cases, they were either handed over at the Chinese border, or once they were across the border. From there some were taken to Yin Jiang and some much farther away, to eastern China.

Once across the border, traffickers usually took women in buses or cars to larger towns within Yunnan province. If they were travelling long distances to other provinces of China they then took the train from Kunming (the largest city in Yunnan). Some women reported the train journey as taking between 3 and 7 days to their final destination.

## **The final transaction**

The last stage of the trafficking process is when women and girls are handed over to their future “employers”, Chinese husbands or in-laws.

In the case of sex work, women were delivered over directly to the place of work: *“When we arrived at the border town, she sent me to a massage parlour where I was forced to work.” (case 57)*

\* Yuan is the Chinese currency. 8 yuan is approximately US\$1.

In the case of being sold as wives, the future husbands or future mothers-in-law usually came

to a meeting point (most often at or close to the Burmese border) to collect the women before taking them back home.

**“When they were at the border, she arranged to sell my daughter for 6,000 yuan. She talked to one Chinese man who said he wanted someone like my daughter, and that he would be happy to take her to his home. When my daughter heard what they were saying, she ran away.” (case 55)**

*“When they reached Yin Jiang, her friend was sold for 2,000 yuan to someone from one of the nearby villages. After that she was sold to a Chinese man for 12,000 yuan (US\$1,500). Then he took her to his house in Hwa Htin. They travelled for many days by car and by train to get to his home.” (case 37)*

Sometimes the final handover is the point at which the women and girls finally realize they have been sold: *“After travelling for half a day, we arrived at one town. There she (the trafficker) told me to follow a Chinese man, who she said was to be my employer. I realized then that I had been sold to him.” (case 40)*

However, in some cases, even after being handed over to their future husbands, the women were not yet aware they were being sold:

*“At that house (in Yin Jiang) we stayed three or four days. One day a strange man appeared and told me that he was a shop owner and I should go with him. We travelled by train from Yin Jiang. After three days we reached a village and then he told me to come into his house. He told me I was to be his wife. When I refused, he said that he had paid for me and then he forced me to be his wife.” (case 7)*

### **Treatment by traffickers during passage**

In most cases, traffickers tried to keep up pretences during the journey, either of finding legitimate employment for the women and girls, or of taking them to “visit” places, so that they did not run away before reaching the destination. However, in some cases, the traffickers dispensed with pretences quite early on and started exercising power over the women while travelling. For example in one case, soon after leaving Myitkyina traffickers began behaving aggressively: *“...When my sister protested, the trafficker hit her face and kicked her. She was crying, but she had to follow the man who had come to take her because she was so afraid.” (case 4)* In other cases, women were raped (case 10) and drugged (case 53) even before reaching their final destination.

# Trafficking destinations

In most of the cases in this report (56 out of 63 cases, or 88% of the total), the trafficking destination was a town on the Chinese border or within China. These include all but one of the 27 cases in which one or more of the women or girls have disappeared, showing that disappearance is more common for women trafficked to the Chinese border.

In only 6 cases was the final destination inside Burma (including three mining areas in Kachin State, one in Shan State, and a brothel in Rangoon). In the other case, the girl was taken to Meiktilar and was to be sold in Thailand.

## Sale as wives in China

Out of the 56 cases involving trafficking to the Chinese border and within China, in half of the cases it is not known what the girls or women were being trafficked into, either because they have disappeared or because they escaped or were rescued in time. In the other half of the cases, most of the girls or women were sold to be wives in China.

While a few of these cases took place as long ago as 1992, showing that the demand for wives in China is not a new phenomenon, the cases appear to have become more frequent in recent years, with many more cases in 2003 than in previous years.

The amounts paid to the traffickers for providing a wife appear to vary from 5,000 yuan (US\$625) to 15,000 yuan (US\$1,875). However, in one case, the man claimed to his “wife” that he had bought her for 50,000 yuan (US\$6,250).

The testimonies of women and girls who escaped from being wives of Chinese men do not reveal many details of the conditions they endured. However, it is apparent that the men seek to restrict the movements of their wives closely so that they do not escape.

*“The man who bought me locked me in the house all the time. I appeased him in many ways so that he would take me outside.” (case 10)*

It is not described how much work wives were expected to do in the households, but they were clearly expected to produce children. In cases in this report where women did not run away from their husbands within the first few months, they bore children for their husbands.

### **Pull Factors**

It is clear from data collected for this report that there is a high demand for women in the Chinese sex industry and to be wives of Chinese men. While it is beyond the scope of this report to analyze the reasons for this, one of the women trafficked to be a wife in eastern China attributed the demand for wives directly to the Chinese government's single-child policy and the practice of aborting female foetuses (see case 37 in Appendix 2).

It is apparent that the families of the Chinese husbands collude in the efforts to purchase a wife. In several cases, it was the man's mother who collected the woman from the trafficker. However, in one case, the man's mother allowed the woman to return home when she discovered that the woman had been coerced into marrying her son.

*“After three days, they discussed holding a marriage ceremony for me and her son. I was very frightened but I could not say anything. So I prayed to God. I prayed that if God really existed, He should save me from this trouble. After that, the Chinese woman asked me what I wanted. I replied that I wanted to go home, and that I had just come for a visit, not to work. When she knew that I had been sold, she took pity on me. She told her son to let me go back to my home. Also she didn't demand back the 5,000 yuan that my Auntie had taken from her. I was so happy and prayed my thanks to God.” (case 2)*

This suggests that although Chinese families “order” brides for their sons, some may believe that the women are voluntarily choosing to have a Chinese husband.

### **Trafficked into sex work**

Of the 15 cases where it is known that women or girls were trafficked to be sex workers, 8 of the destinations were in China, 5 in Burma, and one in Thailand.

#### ***In China***

Sex establishments in China included brothels just across the border, massage parlours in towns in Yunnan, and a brothel in north-eastern China. Two other destinations were not specified. The ages of the girls and women trafficked into sex work in China ranged from 14 to 23.

In two cases it is mentioned that women were forced to repay from their earnings the debt incurred by payment to the trafficker. One woman was told that she would not be paid because the trafficker had taken 5 months' salary as an advance. Another woman trafficked to a brothel in Jegaung in March 2002, finally started sending money to her mother in 2004 because she had only just managed to pay off her “debt” to the brothel, incurred by the payment given to her trafficker.



In most of the cases involving sex work, the interviews provide few details of conditions in the sex establishments. The exception is one woman who was sold into a brothel in northeastern China, who gives a horrifying account of her treatment there on the following pages.

### ***In Burma***

Of the women trafficked into sex work in Burma, the majority were trafficked to mining areas: three to mining areas in Kachin State (two to gold mining areas and one to the jade mining area of Phakant); two were trafficked to the ruby mining area of Mung Hsu in Shan State. One was trafficked to a brothel in Rangoon. The ages of the girls and women trafficked ranged from 16 to 20 years old.

The sex establishments in the mining areas to which the women were sold included karaoke bars and massage parlours. One woman was told she would earn 20,000 kyat (US\$20) a month in a karaoke bar in a gold mining area, but discovered that the “friend” who had found her the job had taken 6 months of her salary in advance:

*“She had to work at one of the karaoke bars where many kinds of alcohol were sold....Her friend had already taken 6 months of her salary (120,000 kyat) in advance. But she didn’t know at the time because her friend had told her that she would only be able to take her salary when she returned back home. After that she didn’t see her friend any more.” (case 27)*

This woman was forbidden from leaving by her employer, and was apparently too scared of the employer’s influence in the local community to attempt to escape.

In the same way, girls sold to a massage parlour in Mung Hsu found themselves unable to run away:

*“When we were at Mung Hsu, we did not get work as a waitress or helping sell things. We were pressured to work as prostitutes at a massage parlour instead. We stayed there about 4 months. We were threatened in several ways. We could not stand it any more and tried to run away but were not successful.” (case 29)*



**case 10**

**When Ms. Xxx (age 24 at the time) went to the Shwe Thar Laung Pagoda Festival in 2000 with a friend, she met a Chinese man who owned a jade mine next to her uncle's in Pha Kant. This is her story:**

*Red light district in Ruili, China*

“That Chinese man had lived in Kachin State for a long time and came to my uncle’s house very often. He told me that he would go to sell jade in China, and asked me to go with him. He would be responsible for everything. My friend (who was 19) and I decided to visit Yin Jiang. My other friends from Myitkyina also wanted to go with us but he took only my friend and me.

We rented a car from Mogaung to Loije, a border town in Burma. From there, we went to Jang Fung, which is a frontier town. We stayed at his uncle’s house for three days while they made passports for us. After that we travelled with two different Chinese men who were from Jang Fung. The two men couldn’t speak Burmese and we couldn’t speak Chinese. We rode the train for a long time. We still didn’t realize that we were being sold. Now we know that the uncle who owned the house where we stayed in Jang Fung was head of a trafficking gang.

I think that for 4 or 5 days we rode the train, and then we reached a town. We stayed in a hotel. There they put us in one room and locked it from the outside. At that time, we suspected that we were being sold and we were afraid and worried.

They took us one by one and we were raped in many different ways by 4 or 5 men. After that they separated us. And then three men took my friend in a saloon car. The next day, they put me with two different men. After that, I didn’t see the two Chinese men who came with us from Jang Fung town. We rode the train for three days or four days and we reached another town. There, many men came and raped me as they liked. Finally one man took me to his house to be his wife. We crossed many mountains to reach his home. This man was a little bit better than the others.

I was terrified and shocked by my situation. I was very afraid and worried about how I could escape, where I was and what would happen next. The man who bought me locked me in the house all the time. I appeased him in many ways so that he would take me outside. Finally, he took me to the market in a wheelbarrow but I was not allowed to get out of the wheelbarrow.

One day, while we were staying at home, a policeman came. Suddenly, I came out and I asked him by gesturing to arrest me. He was very surprised and left. In the evening, when the man who bought me came back, he was very angry with me. He wrote down the number 50,000 and said through sign language that he had bought me for as much, and if I ran away he would kill me.

**“...then three men took my friend in a saloon car....”**

**“I had gotten some disease and I was getting thinner day by day....They thought that I had AIDS...”**

The next day he took me by car to where he had first bought me. He handed me back to the people who had abused me before.

There, they called a Burmese translator for me. The translator asked me why I had behaved like this, and that from here there was no way to escape. If I ran away, they could get me back, and they would kill me. The translator told me that now we were in the Changchun area very far from Burma. There were many other girls there who came from Burma. They had been there for 8-10 years. Three girls were from Myin Gyan, Shwe Bo and Mekhtilar. They had babies already. I couldn't run away, so I stayed.

They brought me to Changchun City. I had to stay in one room which was surrounded by many dogs. Many men came and raped me daily. I could not eat and sleep because it was cold, and I was very depressed and frightened. I had gotten some disease and I was getting thinner day by day. I could not run away because when I moved a little bit the big dogs barked at me. I thought that they were afraid of me because I was growing gaunt. They thought that I had AIDS and left me in a little hut alone. They gave me food like a pig.

One day, in their garden, they made a party with guests from outside. They looked at me just one time and then no one appeared. At that time, I tried to escape and then I went outside very quickly. When I reached the road, I tried to stop all the cars. Finally, I could get one to stop. The driver asked me where I wanted to go. But I didn't understand so he was angry with me and then he left me alone. I worried that people from the brothel would find me, so I ran onward. I was very tired because I was ill and hadn't been sleeping. I couldn't run anymore. No car stopped for me because the night was very late. I had no idea and then I stood in front of the traffic and waved my arms. A car which had 3 women and a driver stopped and took me. I said to them by sign language that I wasn't Chinese, I was from Burma, and they took me to the nearest police station. They took me to the police station of Changchun city.

At the police station, I had a medical check-up. They gave me food. I stayed one week there and they checked on me. They asked me how I felt. They were very gentle and they did what I wanted. When I wished to go home, they prepared it for me. They sent me from Changchun to Beijing by airplane. When I reached Beijing, I kept going, and flew to Mangshi. I reached Mangshi, and the police who were from Mangshi took me to Jang Fung town by car. From there they

sent me to Loiye on the Burma side of the border.

When I got to Loiye, the soldiers who were on duty there were getting drunk. They sent me to a Shan woman's house which was near the checkpoint. They said to me that the next day they would check me. The Shan woman asked me my ethnicity. When she knew that I was Kachin, she advised me to go to Mai Ja Yang (Kachin village), because many girls who were sold and returned back had to pay fines or go to prison. She suggested that I run away.

During that night, I ran to Mai Ja Yang which was a KIA camp. I went to the KIA communication office and told them about what had happened to me. I stayed in the hospital and then they checked me. When I told them about the trafficker from Jang Fung where I was sold the first time, the KIA reported it to the Chinese police. And then the police arrested the trafficking gang and impounded the house. I could remember that house where xxx sold me.

I was too shy to go back home. Even here in Mai Ja Yang people belittled me, and said that I was a prostitute. I couldn't bear people blaming me. Every day I would suffer. I drank alcohol and when I had no money, I tried to get more by gambling. I lived like a boy and drank everyday. And then I got girlfriends. After that event in my life, when I saw that women were oppressed, I turned against all men. I loathed the thought of marriage with men. Now, I have become a nurse. I haven't returned back home.

I tried to find xxx who had sold me, but he had 4 or 5 ID cards so I couldn't trace him. I don't even know if that is his name or not."

**"...many girls who were sold and returned back had to pay fines or go to prison..."**

## Cases of escape

### Escape during transit

Sometimes, parents or relatives were able to follow the women or girls and stop them before they had travelled too far. In several cases, the parents found their daughters at guest houses or noodle shops along the way. In one case, an uncle caught up with his 15-year-old nieces by racing after them on a motorcycle, and finding that the car they were travelling in had broken down before reaching the border.

In several cases women or girls were able to escape before reaching the trafficking destination. This was usually because they had been alerted to the fact that they were being trafficked by the behaviour of their traffickers.

*“When we reached Yin Jiang, we stayed at one of the guesthouses in the outskirts of the town....The next day, a Chinese woman and the trafficker left the guest house together, talking about something. The Chinese woman gave the trafficker some yuan and I heard her say she would send another girl. I realized then I was being sold, so I decided to run away....When they had gone out, I quickly took 100 yuan from her wallet. When they came back I asked permission to go to the toilet; I left and rented a taxi. I didn't know where I should go, so the driver took me to one of the Kachin villages near Yin Jiang. When I got there I told them about what had happened to me. They told me many girls from Burma had been tricked in this way.” (case 18)*

Other women and girls who escaped were helped by people living along the trafficking route who were kind enough to lend them money to return to their homes. Several of the testimonies are from people who had helped trafficked women in this way. In one testimony (case 49), a Kachin woman travelling by bus from Yin Jiang to the Burma border paid the bus fare of a young woman passenger who was fleeing from two Chinese women traffickers. If she had not paid, the bus driver would have thrown her off the bus, leaving her at the mercy of the traffickers.

In some cases women managed to escape because they were alerted by other people along the way to the fact they were being trafficked.

*“When we reached Laiza, we were told this was not Laiza, and we had to ride in a car for one more day. The next morning we all went to eat noodles. I wanted to go to the toilet so I requested to go back to the guest house. There I met one nice man and he asked me where I was going. I replied that I would go to Laiza. He said that this was Laiza and then asked again who I had come with. I replied that I had come with xxx. He said that she would sell me in China, and then he brought me back to the Burma side.” (case 63)*

**“In May 2004 we rescued my niece who had been sold in China, but she passed away within one week....She was in a bad mental state.” (case 61)**

### **Escape after being sold as wives in China**

Most of the testimonies about being sold as wives in China are from girls or women who managed to escape. Their stories show a remarkable degree of resourcefulness in attempting to escape despite the obstacles of being illegal, without money, and unable to communicate in a foreign country sometimes thousands of miles from their homes.

One 15-year-old girl had the presence of mind to escape from her “husband” almost immediately after being sold:

*“She told me to follow a Chinese man, who she said was my employer. I realized that I had been sold. That Chinese man took me away with his car. I said to him that I was very hungry. So he gave me 20 yuan and stopped the car in front of a shop. I pretended to order food. When the Chinese man was bending over something, I ran away. Fortunately the bus was ready to leave and I got on the bus. I gave the driver only the 20 yuan I had, but he didn't say anything because I was just a child.” (case 38)*

One method used by several women to facilitate their escape was to communicate to their husbands that according to Kachin custom there were grave penalties for men who did not request permission from a woman's parents before marriage. The Chinese men were then persuaded to take the women back to their homes to receive their parents' approval, and the women were able to escape en route.

*“(Her husband) lived near the North Korean border....She tried many different ways to be sent back. She said that in her culture, if a woman who was married didn't pay homage to her parents, compensation would have to be paid in the future. The Chinese man became very afraid and agreed that they should pay homage to her parents. When they*

*reached Yin Jiang they stayed at a hotel. She said to the Chinese man that she was going to the market. After that, she didn't return back to him and ran away.” (case 44)*

It appears that once women have given birth, husbands are less concerned with their escape.

*“I decided to try to go back to my home, but they (the husband's family) watched me all the time. After we had got a son, they didn't watch me as much as before. On Chinese New Year in 2001, when they were holding a party, I ran away. I left my child with them.” (case 7)*

### **Escape from sex work**

In one case, a 14-year-old girl trafficked to a brothel in Jegaung was helped to escape by one of the women already working there:

*“The owner sent me to one room and then went away. After a few minutes a lady came to my room and she asked me why I had come there. I told her I wanted to work. And then she gave me 50 yuan and told me to run quickly away. So I ran and escaped.” (case 16)*

In several cases in Burma it was only after outside intervention, either from friends or influential Kachin authorities that women or girls were able to escape. In the following example, a KIO officer relates how he assisted a woman who had been trafficked by a “friend” to work at a karaoke bar at a gold mine in Danai, Kachin State:

*“I met with xxx when I came with two traders to Nam Khyi gold mine.... She couldn't leave because she had to work for 6 months there (to repay the amount paid to the trafficker). We talked to her employer but her employer didn't allow her to go. Then we threatened her employer that if she was not allowed to leave we would report the employer to the police. Finally she was allowed to come with us.” (case 27)*



## Problems with prosecution of traffickers

### ***In China***

According to the interviews conducted for this report, there does not appear to be a standard procedure for Chinese police to deal with Burmese girls and women who have been trafficked into their country. This sometimes results in inadequate protection to ensure that the women can return safely to their homes, due to local police collusion with traffickers and inappropriate repatriation routes.

In at least one case the Chinese police were able to assist a family in finding their daughter deep inside China (case 37). However, the high number of disappearances in China shows that there is no comprehensive system of tracing those who have been trafficked. In addition, there are serious deficiencies in coordination mechanisms and communication between the Burmese and Chinese authorities.

In several cases documented for this report, the Chinese authorities took action to prosecute traffickers. However, such prosecution was usually at the request of KIO authorities, for example, in case 10 (see page 39). It appears that without the authority of armed groups such as the KIA, ordinary citizens from Burma feel powerless to bring charges against traffickers who are Chinese.

### ***In Burma***

*“I didn’t report this case to the authorities because if you want to file a report, you have to give money to them first.” (case 14 – a woman whose granddaughter disappeared in 2000)*

It is very difficult to bring charges against traffickers in Burma. Only in very few cases was it reported that traffickers were arrested. The main problem appears to be the prevalence of corruption among authorities and law enforcement officials. This necessitates bribery by complainants to proceed with prosecution, and means that bribery by traffickers can prevent legal proceedings.

*...continued on page 45*

**“On March 2, 2003, I filed a complaint at the police station against xxx and xxx for trafficking me and my friend into sex work, but no action has been taken. We don’t have money so we can not do anything.” (case 29)**

# Barriers to Escape

## case 53



**This case highlights the numerous obstacles that a woman must overcome to escape her predicament after being trafficked, including facing fines and imprisonment upon return to Burma.**

*Customs checkpoint near Ruilli*

*Trafficked through deceit and drugs*

“On December 15, 2003, my parents said that since Christmas was coming soon we shouldn’t go anywhere but stay and do chores at home. I washed all of my family’s clothes. While I was washing, my uncle came and talked about going to the border town. At first, I didn’t want to go, but since my Aunt was there I decided to go with my uncle. When we reached the town, I met with a friend who was my classmate. He said that he had opened a restaurant in Yin Jiang, so I should help him for a short while. I said to him that I didn’t have any ID to go to Yin Jiang. When I said that, my uncle said that if I worked and got money I could get a Burmese ID or Chinese ID, so I shouldn’t worry about it and he would do it for me. After that they decided to take me to Yin Jiang. They said that night we should sleep in town and the next day we would go to Yin Jiang. And then they rented a room for us. But I said to them I would go to sleep with my aunt. When I said that, my uncle said he would be there so I should sleep with them. I replied that my uncle was a man. And then I went to sleep at my aunty’s house.

The next morning, we three went to Yin Jiang at 6:00 am (Chinese standard time) and then reached Yin Jiang at about noon. When we arrived in Yin Jiang, a woman, about 40 years old, paid for the car fees and then she took us to Thai Hpyin (U Khut) by motor cycle. We stayed at her house for about 10 days but they never said anything about a job. So I told my uncle that if we stayed like that, I would return home. My uncle said that since I had already arrived there I should be patient and wait until I got a job. And then I should work hard, save money and send money to my parents. When he said that, I felt that since my family was very poor, if I could work and send money I would be able to support them. So I decided to stay.

After I had stayed there for about three days, I don’t remember anything. I just remember that they took me to a vegetable market to go shopping. Maybe they put some medicine in my food. They didn’t give me medicine openly. After I ate some food, I wanted to sleep. I remember that they bought a bus ticket in Kunming. I didn’t know what was happening to me. I slept the whole journey. I was carsick so I just ate sour snacks and drank some water. I don’t remember anything about travelling to the place everyone called Dong Be\*.

I had been sold to a man who was over 30 years old and living near Dong Be. His house was a brick house. There were six people in his family. Two were women and four were men. I don’t know what job the family did.

**“My name is xxx and I’m 20 years old. When I was in third standard, I dropped out of school and I did odd jobs because my family was very poor.”**

\* “dong bian” means “east side” in Chinese. The interviewee thought “Dong Be” was the name of the town where she was taken.

The weather was very cold in Dong Be and the fog was very heavy like it was raining. If I went outside the house the fog would cover my whole body. The weather was very cold and I got malaria. After one week I asked to return home. I said that my parents didn't know that I had come here. The man said that he didn't have money now, and that we would go in 2 months' time. I said that I couldn't wait until then. I had a headache and I couldn't stand the cold. I decided to run away whatever happened. On 5<sup>th</sup> January 2004, at midnight, I ran away. In the meantime, since I had left home my mother had been searching for me."

#### *Local Help*

"From the house I walked for two hours. That night the moon was shining. I hadn't walked for a long time so my legs hurt. I got sores on the soles of my feet. I went to Chin Se Hotel and I told a old driver that I was from Yunan (Yin Jiang), I was Kachin, and I could not speak Chinese very well. I said I had come there with my friends but now they had left me alone. I couldn't go back so I asked for some help. I didn't know where he took me. At last, the old driver gave up. He drove me to one of the guesthouses, and told me to sleep there one night and the next day to go to Yunan by myself. He gave me 10 yuan and left. I was exhausted and slept."

**"I hid while waiting for the bus. At that time, the Chinese man who had bought me, his relatives and the police came to look for me."**

#### *Pursuit by "husband" and local police*

"I had only slept for a few minutes when the dawn arrived. I wanted to go to the bus station but I did not know where it was. Fortunately, I met an old couple. They told me that they would go to Sin Jang. I said that I was also going there and I bought a bus ticket. I hid while waiting for the bus. At that time, the Chinese man who had bought me, his relatives and the police came to look for me. But they didn't see me. After they returned back, I got onto the bus. After we had driven for one hour, we reached a place (I don't know the name). There I saw the Chinese man who had bought me and the police looking for me again. I was very scared. I hid again so they didn't see me. After they went, the bus left. After a few minutes, we arrived in Sin Jang. I didn't know where to go from there. I went to the bus station, and then the police asked me where I was going."

#### *Taken by Chinese police/beginning of miscommunication*

"I replied that I was from Yunnan province and I was Kachin. I said I'd gotten separated from my friends and I didn't know where I was going. Then they asked me if I had any ID. I replied to them that I didn't have any ID. They took me to a police station downtown and left me at a

three-storey hotel. I think that they ordered the hotel owner not to allow me to go out, because when I tried to go out, the owner said that the police didn't allow me to go out. The next day at 10:00 am, they interviewed me, recorded the information, and then bought me a bus ticket. Then they sent me to another town but I didn't know where it was. From that town, they phoned to the border police station. That was when my parents learned exactly what had happened to me. The police at that station called a translator for me because I couldn't speak Chinese. That translator asked if I was with the police. When I replied that I was, she told me not to be discouraged and that I would be able to return home soon. I stayed about a week in that town because they said that I could only return when my father picked me up."

*Loopholes, Jail in China, and Endless Bureaucracy*

"After a week, nobody had picked me up so they allowed me to go. When I got to Thar Gong, I continued on to Beijing. When I was in Beijing, they put me in jail because I had no passport or Chinese ID. I stayed two months in jail. Everything was o.k. in jail. I didn't have to work. Before I was put in jail, they put me in contact with someone from the Burmese Embassy. I couldn't say anything at the time because they had woken me up while I was fast asleep. After three days in jail, they interrogated me again. At that time, they called a Kachin woman for translation. I had to write Burmese because they wanted to know if I was really from Burma. I had to write my parents' name and my name, age, address and the name of my headman and they sent my writing to the embassy.

**"When I was in Beijing, they put me in jail because I had no passport or Chinese ID."**

People from the embassy came again to check up and record information. Then they gave me three phone numbers for the man at the embassy. He was going to send my records to Mandalay and have them checked to see if I was really from Burma and if my parents were there. If my parents were really in Burma they would give me a border pass but if my parents weren't there I couldn't enter Burma. At first, when they checked in Myitkyina, they didn't get any information because my family list was not there. After that, when they asked in Wai Maw township, Myitkyina Division, they endorsed my information."

*Sent to the wrong border pass and facing penalty in Burma*

"Finally the Chinese police got notice from the Burmese Embassy that I was really from Burma and my parents were waiting for me so they sent me to Ruilli(Shweli). I had never been to Ruilli (Shweli), so when I got there I told the Chinese police that I couldn't go back home that way.

**“On the Burma side....They said that since I had gone to another country without a passport I would have to pay a fine of 60,000 kyat. If I didn’t pay I would have to go to prison for four years and four months.”**

**“They told me that she had sold me for 7,000 yuan (US\$875).”**

But they said that they had sent me to this place, so I had to pass. I went to the Burma side.

On the Burma side, people from immigration checked me. I said that I had gotten separated from my friends. They said to me that since I had gone to another country without a passport I would have to pay a fine of 60,000 kyat. If I didn’t pay I would have to go to prison for four years and four months. I had no money but I didn’t want to go to jail. I told them that I had faced many problems in China, and it was only by good fortune that I had managed to return. When I said this, they went to talk to their superiors. While they were talking, I had to sit in their office for a long time. I became bored of sitting, so I walked around outside. While I was walking around, I saw the Chinese policemen who had brought me to the Burma side. I ran to them and told them what was going on. They were happy to see me and gave me 50 yuan as travel money. I decided to go back to my home via Yin Jiang. From Ruilli (Shweli), I continued on to Mang Shi. I had to pay 20 Yuan for taxi fees. From Mang Shi to Yin Jiang I had to pay 30 Yuan for taxi fees so I had spent 50 Yuan, which was all that I had been given. When I got to Yin Jiang, the time was midnight.”

*Back at the trafficker’s house – vulnerable again*

“I couldn’t continue on anywhere and I didn’t know where to go so I decided to go to the house of the woman who had sold me. I rented a taxi to go to Thai Phyin (U Khut). At that time she had gone to Myitkyina to fetch some more girls. Her husband had gone to their field. In their house, there was only a little girl. I didn’t have money but I had rented the taxi because I wanted her to pay the taxi fees. But there was nobody there so I couldn’t pay the driver. The driver was very angry. He uttered all kinds of curses, and then he left. Then some of the neighbours came and asked me how much I had been sold for. It was only then that I realised I had been sold. They told me that she had sold me for 7,000 yuan. Her husband told me that I had been sold for 6,000 yuan. I spent 10 days in Yin Jiang waiting for her to return. She was very surprised to see me back already. When I returned my home, she gave me 250 yuan. I had to pay 50 yuan for my bus ticket. So in this way I was able to reach my home. I don’t know where my uncle ran away to. I didn’t find him anywhere. I couldn’t bring charges against the woman who sold me because she is a Chinese citizen.

Now I am helping my family. My neighbours were happy that I was able to return. I was also very happy because I could get back to my native town.”

In one case, the mother of a woman who had been trafficked did not dare bring charges against the trafficker, who was from the same town, because the trafficker was linked to the SPDC military:

*“I didn’t dare to report (the trafficking incident) anywhere because the trafficker was doing business with some SPDC soldiers. I didn’t know what business...I only knew that whenever we saw the soldiers we felt afraid.” (case 54)*

## Problems with prosecution of traffickers

*... continued from page 39*

Due to the lack of rule of law, local people are often unwilling to act as witnesses: *“I wanted to report the case to the village headman, but he said that I needed to have a witness. My neighbours said they didn’t want to go to court as a witness, so I was not able to take legal action against her (the trafficker).”* (case 20 – mother whose daughter has disappeared since 2001)

Sometimes the girls or women trafficked are themselves reluctant to press charges because they have been threatened by the traffickers not to do so: *“...He threatened me, saying I shouldn’t tell anybody that I had been forced to sell my body.”* (case 29 - a 17-year-old girl forced into sex work in Mung Hsu)

Another problem preventing prosecution is that some of the traffickers simply disappear; the fact that it is possible for them to have several Burmese IDs is one factor that prevents them being traced (see earlier section on Burmese ID cards).

### Recourse to customary law

*“Xxx’s parents and her husband went to the Kachin traditional court and a traditional judge ordered that the trafficker should pay the family 400,000 kyat.”* (case 52)

In one incident described in this report, the family of a trafficked woman resorted to having the case tried according to Kachin customary law rather than the official state legal system. While such a procedure is clearly quicker and less expensive for those wishing to take legal action, this example suggests that penalties imposed in such courts may not suit the severity of the crime. In this case, the woman in question had been sold by the trafficker for one million kyat, so the trafficker was still able to earn a sizeable profit.

**“Her father reported it (the abduction and sexual abuse of his 8-year-old daughter) to the village headman, but the headman didn’t take action because the trafficker had given him money as a bribe.” (case 45)**



## The Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs

The MNCWA (renamed the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation or MWAFF) in December 2003) was set up in 1996 by the SPDC. One of its main aims is to combat trafficking of women and children. It has established working committees at state, division, district, township and village levels throughout the country, which are usually led by wives of SPDC personnel. In two of the cases documented for this report, appeals were made to the local Myanmar Committee for Women's Affairs to assist in ensuring that traffickers were brought to justice, but in neither case did the MNCWA take any action.

*"On April 4, 2003, in the evening, my 16 year old granddaughter was taken by xxxx and xxxx when I was not at home. I learned this from my neighbours. My granddaughter is very bright She had told me she needed money for the 10th standard examination. We are very poor. The last information I've heard about her is that she has been sold into sex work at a gold mine. I complained to the Myanmar Women's Affairs Committee but nobody has taken any action."* (case 43)



To: Chairperson  
Myanmar Women's Affairs Committee  
Myitkyina, Kachin State  
Date: April 2003

Subject: **Disappearance of a girl from her house**

1. In connection with the above subject, my granddaughter Ma xxx (from Du Kathaung), 16-years-old, was taken by Mg xxx and Mg yyy on April 4, 2003 in the evening from Myitkyina Bus Station and then she has not been seen since.
2. Therefore, I respectfully want to request your help to look for her in connection with this case.

Requested by  
U xxx  
Du Kathaung, Quarter, Myitkyina

Copy: Chairperson, Women's Affairs Committee Du Kahtawng, Myitkyina



There was no response from the MCWA, and in November 2003, the man learned that his granddaughter had died:

To: Chief Officer  
No.1 Police Station  
Myitkyina

Date: 2003 November

Subject: **Death of a girl who had disappeared**

In reference to the above subject, Ma xxx (now 17), granddaughter of U xxx staying at Du Kathaung Quarter, Myitkyina was tricked and taken by Maung xxx and Maung yyy who stay at Pa La Na No.1 on the evening of April 4, 2003 from Myitkyina Bus Station and she has not been seen since.

U aaa and U bbb, neighbors of myself, tried to collect information about the girl. They said that according to the driver of trailer G called U ccc, on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003 ***“He met with Maung xxx two months ago and the girl had died already.”***

We know that Maung xxx, who has run away from the crime, is the son of U zzz and Daw zzz (Pa La Na No.1).

Therefore we want to request to the police station to take action in connection with the above subject.

Requested by,  
U xxx  
Kathaung Quarter, Myitkyina

Copies:

1. Chairman (Du Kathaung Quarter)
2. Chairman (No.1 Pa La Na Myitkyina)
3. Chairman (Myitkyina)



In another case (4), a woman who actually sits on the local MAAF herself submitted testimony to the committee on behalf of her granddaughter who had been trafficked. Action has yet to be taken, and the granddaughter is suffering intimidation by the traffickers for bringing the case to court (see case 4 in the Appendix).



## Challenges faced by women after return to their communities

### Community censure

One problem faced by women who have been trafficked is that, because of prevailing gender attitudes, they tend to be branded as “bad women” and stigmatized upon their return. Tragically, a woman who had suffered severe sexual abuse for several years in China found herself suffering blame instead of support when she returned to Burma (case 10).

*“When I returned to Myitkyina I told my mother what had happened to me. I didn’t say anything to my neighbours or anyone else because I was afraid if they knew what had happened to me they would look down on me.” (case 38 – a 15-year-old girl)*

### Lack of support

Testimonies in this report highlight the need for support services to assist women and girls who have been trafficked. In several cases, the women and girls trafficked were in urgent need of medical care.

A woman who had suffered several years of sexual slavery in eastern China had to be hospitalized at the border on her return (case 10). So too did an 8-year-old girl who had been raped daily by the man to whom she had been sold:

*“...Her parents had been looking for her. She was very afraid so she didn’t tell her parents. She was very sick and her parents only discovered she had been raped when they tried to heal her with acupuncture. Then they took her to hospital.” (case 45)*

In both of the above cases, the medical care was either provided or facilitated by local KIO authorities. There are no emergency medical services provided by the state in Burma, let alone other forms of emergency services for women who have suffered violence.

Two women returned home pregnant after being forced to be wives of Chinese men (case 1). One woman suffered “gastritis and a heart condition” by the time she returned home. This was aggravated when she tried to prosecute her traffickers, and found herself being harassed and threatened in return (case 4).

The challenges faced on returning to their communities, together with the trauma caused by

the trafficking ordeal itself combine to cause extreme psychological stress for women who have been trafficked. Testimony reveals an urgent need for psychological support and counselling.

It should also be noted that in several cases, women who were forced to bear children for their Chinese “husbands” had to abandon their children when they escaped to return home. Despite the circumstances of their “marriages”, forced abandonment and separation from their children is another source of trauma.

Based on the information collected for this report, KWAT is concerned that trafficking of women from Kachin communities in Burma is a growing problem. Interviews revealed that poverty as well as the high cost of education are forcing Kachin women to migrate and become vulnerable to trafficking. These factors are directly linked to the Burmese military regime’s mismanagement of the economy, failed development policies, and excessive military expenditure.

Despite high levels of border trade and the large-scale extraction of Kachin State’s rich natural resources during the past decade, wealth is not being fed back into local Kachin economies. Funds are not applied to develop basic social services and industries that would ensure sustainable livelihoods for the general Kachin population. On the contrary, the resulting “frontier/get rich quick” mentality of these policies has created boom towns along the border and in mining areas that attract those seeking employment and fuel the sex industry as traditional community structures are weakened.

Given the socio-economic situation of Kachin areas and endemic corruption in Burma, law enforcement measures and travel restrictions being imposed by the regime to combat trafficking are not only ineffective, but in fact facilitate trafficking by forcing women to rely on brokers when they migrate to work.

In order to seriously tackle the root causes of human trafficking in Kachin areas, the systemic problems fuelling it must be addressed. For this to happen, state policies and the current pattern of economic development must be objectively examined and challenged. This can

**“I was too ashamed to go back home....people belittled me, and said that I was a prostitute.” (case 10)**

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

only take place if there is political reform in Burma.

Meanwhile, KWAT sees an urgent need to strengthen community networks that can help raise awareness about issues related to migration and trafficking, and to provide services to those that have been trafficked. KWAT urges support to be given directly to community-based organizations that can carry out this important work.

**KWAT therefore makes the following recommendations:**

***To the Burmese military regime (the State Peace and Development Council or SPDC):***

- To immediately implement a nationwide ceasefire and withdraw all Burma Army troops stationed in the ethnic areas.
- To immediately begin tripartite dialogue with the National League for Democracy and genuine representatives of the ethnic nationalities, to begin a meaningful process of political reform.

***To China:***

- To exert political and economic influence on the Burmese military regime to begin a process of genuine political reform that will enable China's future relations with Burma to contribute to stability and sustainable, equitable development in Burma, and help prevent social problems such as human trafficking that are impacting China.
- To ensure that women and girls who have been trafficked to China have access to effective assistance programs that protect and promote their human rights.

***To the international community:***

- To pressure the SPDC to implement a nationwide ceasefire, withdraw all Burma Army troops stationed in the ethnic areas, and begin tripartite dialogue.
- To review anti-trafficking strategies being implemented in Burma to ensure that they are addressing the root causes of the trafficking problem and are not being used to legitimize the regime in any way.
- To provide support for effective community-based initiatives to raise awareness about trafficking and provide services to women and girls who have been trafficked.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *At What Price? Gold Mining in Kachin State, Burma*, Images Asia Environment Desk and Pan Kachin Development Society (November 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Selth, Andrew, *Burma's Armed Forces: Power without Glory*, Norwalk CT: Eastbridge 2002:135)

<sup>3</sup> SPDC Coordination meeting on prevention of trafficking in persons, May 19, 2003

<sup>4</sup> Physicians for Human Rights, *No Status, Migration, Trafficking and Exploitation of Women in Thailand: Health and HIV/AIDS Risks for Burmese and Hill Tribe Women and Girls* (June 2004).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Altsean Burma, *Burma Briefing Issues and Concerns Volume I* (November 2004).

**Photos courtesy of Salween News Network (SNN)**

**KWAT would like to thank all those who volunteered their time to assist with the compilation of the report.**

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## Appendix 1

### Summary chart of trafficking cases



*Looking out at the border checkpoint: Muse/Jegaung*

#	Age	<i>Ethnicity</i>		Date trafficked	Reason to migrate/travel	Trafficking destination	Summary of Case	Source
		Hometown						
1	20, 18, 22	<i>Kachin</i> Bhamo Town		1992	Families very poor	Hu Nan, China	Were called to carry goods to Loiye, but were tricked and sold to Chinese men as wives in Hu Nan. After 8 months they escaped. Two of the girls were pregnant.	Man who helped them
2	20	<i>Kachin</i> Mung Si, Kutkai		April 1994	Wanted to visit Yin Jiang	One day's journey from Yin Jiang China	Was sold to a man for 5,000 yuan (US\$625); luckily his mother felt sorry for her and let her go home.	Woman herself
3	20	<i>Kachin</i> Man Win Gyi, Bhamo		1995	n.a.	China	Was sold in marriage to a Chinese man; had a child and later returned to Man Win Gyi and trafficked many other girls to China.	A man from Man Win Gyi
4	25, n.a, n.a.	<i>Kachin-Burmese (2)</i> <i>Burmese (1)</i> Yuzana Ward, Myitkyina		1997	Families very poor	Nanjing province, China	Were offered work in Laiza, but sold to men in China; one was sold to a man and lived with him for 6 yrs had son; returned; sister disappeared; family took up the case in court, but traffickers threatened them.	Woman herself & grandmother
5	18	<i>Kachin</i> Loi Khan, Kutkai		October 1997	Abuse at home, her father was a drug addict	Muse	Was taken to Muse to find a job. Disappeared since then.	Friend of the girl
	14	<i>Kachin</i> Loi Khan, Kutkai		1999	Unemployed so wanted a job	China, via Muse	Was taken to Muse to find a job, but was sold in China. Disappeared since then.	Friend of the girl

#	Age	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Date trafficked	Reason to migrate/travel	Trafficking destination	Summary of Case	Source
		Hometown					
7	25	<i>Kachin</i> Ding Khun, Bhamo	June 5, 1999	Father sick and needed money for medical care	A village 3 days from Yin Jiang, China	Promised work, but sold to a man for 8,000 yuan (US\$1,000); bore him a son, then ran away in February 2001.	Woman herself
8	19	<i>Kachin</i> Myitkyina Town	2000	Unemployed so wanted a job	Somewhere in China	Was promised work in China, but ended up being sold to a Chinese man for 5,500 yuan (US\$688). Ran away. A man helped give her money to return to Myitkyina.	Man who helped her
9	19	<i>Kachin</i> Mawharn, Kutkai	March 2000	Unemployed so wanted a job	Ruilli (Shweli)	Went to be a babysitter in Ruilli (Shweli), but disappeared. Mother went to find her, but found no trace.	Mother
10	23, 19	<i>Kachin</i> Mogaung Town	September 2000	Wanted to visit China	Changchun, China	Were transported across China to a brothel. One woman then sent to a brothel in Changchun; from there sold to be a wife for 50,000 yuan; when tried to escape, sent back to the brothel and badly abused. Able to return to Burma with help of Chinese police. Friend taken by men and not seen since.	One of the women herself
11	20	<i>Kachin</i> Kachin Su Ward, Myitkyina	October 2000	Needed school fees for her sibling	Laiza	Was offered a job as a waitress in Laiza; then disappeared. Her mother reported the case to the authorities, but nothing has happened.	Mother



#	Age	<i>Ethnicity</i>		Date trafficked	Reason to migrate/travel	Trafficking destination	Summary of Case	Source
		Hometown						
12	20	<i>Kachin</i> Myitkyina Town		November 2000	Unemployed so wanted a job	China, across from Laiza	Was promised work in Laiza but sold as a sex-worker; fled when forced to sleep with a man; was able to return home.	Woman who helped her
13	6, n.a. n.a.	<i>Kachin</i> Wah Sough village, Hopan		2001	Wanted to go to school	Chin Shwe Haw (China)	The trafficker promised to take them to school, but sold them at Chin Shwe Haw (China). Intelligence officers arrested them, and put them into prison for 10 years but could save only one child.	Woman from Ho Pan
14	22	<i>Kachin</i> Dumare Ward, Myitkyina		2001	Unemployed so wanted a job	Laiza	Offered work in Laiza, but has disappeared; grandmother wants to raise case but has no money for bribing officials.	Grandmother
15	23	<i>Kachin</i> Alam village, Myitkyina		February 2001	n.a.	Laiza	She met a woman in a noodle shop who persuaded her to visit Laiza. Has disappeared since then.	Aunt
16	14	<i>Kachin</i> Tarmoeyne, Kutkai		March 2001	Abuse at home	Jegaung, China	Was promised a job as a house-maid. Arrived in Jegaung, but was helped to run away. Returned home.	Girl herself
17	20, n.a, n.a, n.a.	2 <i>Kachin</i> 2 <i>Shan</i> Kyun Pyin Thar, Myitkyina, Mo Nyin (2) & Na Mawn		March 2001	Unemployed so wanted jobs	Chinese massage parlour	Were promised jobs and then sold in Ruilli; a KIO leader reported this to the police. All rescued by Chinese police and sent home. Trafficker was arrested by the Muse police.	A KIO leader

#	Age	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Date trafficked	Reason to migrate/travel	Trafficking destination	Summary of Case	Source
		Hometown					
18	20, 18	<i>Kachin</i> Bhamo Town	Summer 2001	Unemployed so wanted jobs	Yin Jiang, China	Friend was sold to a man, she herself ran away; trafficker is still in Bhamo; she feels scared when she sees the trafficker.	Woman herself
19	19	<i>Kachin</i> Garayang, Sama, Wai Maw	May 2001	Needed school fees for her sibling	Yin Jiang, China	Offered work as a waitress (200 yuan/month) but in fact sold to a Chinese man for 2,500 yuan (US\$312). Disappeared since then.	Mother
20	19	<i>Kachin</i> Nam San Yang, Bhamo	July 7, 2001	Unemployed so wanted a job	Somewhere in China	Disappeared; mother tried to take action against trafficker, but not enough evidence.	Mother
21	17	<i>Kachin</i> Man Win Gyi, Bhamo	December 2001	Unemployed so wanted a job	China	Taken by woman to find work in China, disappeared since then.	Woman who helped her
22	16	<i>Kachin</i> Yan Lu Hkon, Tarmoeyne	2002	Unemployed so wanted a job	China	Was promised a job, but was sold in China. Has disappeared.	Grandmother
23	16	<i>Kachin</i> Dukathaung Ward, Myitkyina Town	February 2002	Unemployed so wanted a job	Yin Jiang, China	Mother heard she's working in a 3-storey building in Yin Jiang (as a sex-worker) but has no money to try and get her back.	Mother
24	16	<i>Kachin</i> Man Win Gyi, Bhamo	March 2002	n.a.	Yin Jiang, China	Was trafficked to Yin Jiang; father went and brought her back.	Woman from Man Win Gyi

#	Age	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Date trafficked	Reason to migrate/travel	Trafficking destination	Summary of Case	Source
		Hometown					
25	14	<i>Kachin-Chinese</i> Myoma Su Sii, Kutkai Town	March 2002	Father drug addict; wanted to work to earn money for school fees	Muse Town	Girl offered job in Muse, but has disappeared.	Mother
26	19	<i>Kachin</i> Tarmoeyne, Kutkai	March 2002	n.a.	Brothel in Jegaung, China	Was sold to brothel in Jegaung; started sending money home in 2004. Has not yet returned home.	Friend
27	20	<i>Kachin</i> Mohnyin Town	April 2002	Went to look for her brothers at a gold mine	Nam Khyi gold mine, Mohnyin Township	Came to Nam Khyi to find her brothers; sold by a friend to a karaoke bar. Had to repay 6 months salary advanced to the friend. A KIO leader helped her leave by threatening the employer.	A KIO leader
28	19	<i>Kachin</i> Nam Ya gold-mine, Hpakant	April 2002	Intended to open a shop with another woman	A massage parlour in Phak Kant	Was sold to a massage parlour; a friend helped her escape. The trafficker was arrested.	A KIO leader
29	17	<i>Kachin</i> Myitkyina town	Sept 9 2002	Unemployed so wanted a job	Mung Hsu (Shan State)	Wanted to be a waitress, but forced to be a sex-worker in Mung Hsu; tried to run away many times; finally one of her captors brought her back (24/1/03), she tried to charge him, but no action was taken and she has no money to follow up.	Girl herself

#	Age	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Date trafficked	Reason to migrate/travel	Trafficking destination	Summary of Case	Source
		Hometown					
30	20	<i>Kachin</i> Banggai, Nampaka,Kutkai	October 2002	Needed school fees	China	Went to work in a restaurant in Muse, but was trafficked to China.	Friend
31	18	<i>Kachin</i> Sam Pai, Wai Maw	October 2002	On her way home to visit her family	Thailand	Tricked by trafficker who promised to travel together with her back to her home but instead took her to Meikhtilar; stole all her money and gold. Forced into marriage with trafficker's son. While arranging to sell her to a Thai man for 170,000 kyat, trafficker arrested by police.	Woman from Laiza
32	17	<i>Kachin</i> Dapkaung Ward, Myitkyina	Nov 2, 2002	n.a.	Laiza	She was taken to Laiza and has disappeared; the mother has reported the trafficker to the police.	Mother
33	29, 32, 23	<i>Burmese</i> Mogaung town	Nov 11, 2002	Families very poor	Intended to go to China	Men promised them they would receive 300,000 kyat per month in China; the father found them in a guesthouse before they left.	Father
34	20	<i>Kachin</i> Dukathaung Ward, Myitkyina	December 2002	No job in Myitkyina, wanted a job	Rangoon	Was offered work in Rangoon, but was locked up in a brothel; became afraid and ran away; helped by Kachin Baptist Convention.	Man who helped her
35	18	<i>Kachin</i> Tarmoenyé	December 2002	Unemployed so wanted a job	China	Went with Burmese woman to find a job in Muse. Has disappeared.	Sister

#	Age	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Date trafficked	Reason to migrate/travel	Trafficking destination	Summary of Case	Source
		Hometown					
36	23	<i>Kachin</i> Namshang village, Karmai	Estimated 2002	n.a.	China	Was taken to find a job in Ruilli (Shweli). Drugged and then put on a train. When she woke up on the train, she was able to alert a policewoman. The traffickers were arrested and she was sent back to the border.	Woman from local community
37	25	<i>Kachin</i> Alam village, Myitkyina	January 11, 2003	Family very poor	Yin Jiang, China	Offered job in China for 4-500 yuan a month but sold to a Chinese man for 15,000 yuan; taken to Yin Jiang and made his wife; parents managed to contact with help of Chinese police and told husband she needed parents' approval for marriage, he agreed to meet them; in Yin Jiang met parents and the man ran away.	Man who helped her
38	15	<i>Kachin</i> Dukathaung Ward, Myikyina	February 2003	Needed school fees for her sibling	Place in China a half day's journey from Laiza	Offered house job in Laiza, crossed to China and sold to a man; ran away and reached home; hasn't told others because fears blame.	Girl herself
39	14, 15	<i>Kachin</i> Yuzana Ward, Myitkyina	February 2003	Unemployed so wanted a job	Laiza	Were promised work in Garayang, but were taken to Laiza. Met one Kachin woman who rescued and sent them back to their hometown.	Woman who knew about this case
40	15	<i>Kachin</i> Kong Khar, Kutkai	March 2003	Unemployed so wanted a job	Muse	Girl told neighbours she would work in Muse; has disappeared.	Father

#	Age	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Date trafficked	Reason to migrate/travel	Trafficking destination	Summary of Case	Source
		Hometown					
41	18, 20, 19 n.a,n.a	<i>Kachin</i> Sitapru,Washawng, Myitkyina	Early 2003	Needed money for university fees	Brothel in Laiza	Offered work in Laiza but sold to a brothel. Parents complained to KIO who brought charges against brothel owner and rescued three of them..	A KIO leader
42	21	<i>Kachin</i> Ding Ga Yang, Sadung	April 2003	Unemployed so wanted a job	Somewhere in China	Has disappeared.	Neighbour
43	16	<i>Kachin</i> Dukathaung Ward, Myitkyina Town	April 4, 2003	Needed school fees for next school term	A gold mine	Taken by 2 men to be a sex worker at a gold mine; grand-father reported to MCWA in same month, but no action; then in November 2003 again wrote complaint, because heard girl had died.	Grandfather
44	22	<i>Kachin</i> Bandong, Namsanyang, Bhamo	April 6, 2003	Family very poor	Northeastern China (near North Korea)	Was offered work in China, then sold to a man for 11,000 yuan (US\$1,375); tricked him to take her back to parents, then ran away.	Woman from local community
45	8	<i>Kachin</i> Bandong, Bhamo	April 19, 2003	Abducted	Hkan Gong village	Abducted from her home and sold to a Burmese man for 30,000 kyat who raped her for a week. She was then sent back to her home. A KIO officer arrested the trafficker.	Woman from Laiza
46	16	<i>Kachin</i> Dukathaung Ward, Myitkyina	April 2003	Needed school fees for next school term	Laiza, China side	Went looking for work in Laiza and has disappeared.	Grandmother



#	Age	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Date trafficked	Reason to migrate/travel	Trafficking destination	Summary of Case	Source
		Hometown					
47	15, 15	<i>Kachin</i> Dukathaung Ward, Myitkyina	April 2003	Needed school fees	Intended to go to China	Taken by trafficker from uncle's house, but he followed and found them in time.	Uncle
48	19	<i>Kachin</i> Karmai Town	April 2003	Wanted to earn school fees during summer holiday	Massage parlour in Yin Jiang, China	Went to work at a barber's in Laiza then was sold to a woman who took her to a brothel in Yin Jiang. Was rescued by a Kachin man.	Woman herself
49	22	<i>Kachin</i> Laiza	September 2003	n.a.	Yin Jiang, China	Tried to escape by taking a bus back to the border. The traffickers tried to stop her but she was helped by another woman on the bus to escape.	Woman who helped her
50	16	<i>Kachin</i> Sitapru Ward, Myitkyina	October 2003	Needed school fees for her sibling	Guangdong, China	Disappeared after going to look for work in China.	Friend
51	16	<i>Kachin</i> Nampaka N Shan State	October 2003	Father sick and needed money for medical costs	Ruilli (Shweli)	Promised work but was sold to Ruilli (Shweli).	Friend
52	22	<i>Kachin</i> Namtaung village, Muse	November 2003	Wanted to visit Wan Din	Wan Din, China	Sold to a Chinese man in Wan Din for 1 million kyat; the parents raised case with Kachin authorities who fined the trafficker 400,000 kyat.	Woman from Dima

#	Age	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Date trafficked	Reason to migrate/travel	Trafficking destination	Summary of Case	Source
		Hometown					
53	20	<i>Kachin</i> Namsanyang village, Bhamo	December 15, 2003	Very poor; persuaded to visit Laiza by uncle	Laiza, Yin Jiang, then northeastern China	Offered restaurant work in Yin Jiang but drugged and sold to a man. On 5/1/04 ran away; ended up in Beijing; jailed, met Burmese embassy, sent to Ruilli (Shweli); Burmese border officials threatened to fine and arrest her; escaped to Laiza.	Woman herself
54	19	<i>Kachin</i> Nampaka village, Northern Shan State	December 2003	Unemployed so wanted a job	China	Promised a job in a restaurant in Muse but sold to China and has disappeared; mother doesn't dare bring charges because trafficker is doing business with local SPDC.	Her friend
55	20	<i>Kachin</i> Kawa Hka Myitkyina Town	January 2004	Family very poor	Laiza	Offered work in Laiza but sold to a Chinese man for 6,000 yuan; able to run away; broker later complained, daughter left home to go work elsewhere so as not to get blamed.	Mother
56	18	<i>Kachin</i> Ding Ga Yang, Sadung, Wai Maw	January 2004	Unemployed so wanted a job	Via Laiza to China	Taken by a woman to China (didn't tell parents); disappeared till now; parents tried to find her but can't.	Woman (from same village) knew this case
57	29	<i>Kachin</i> Dapkaung Ward, Myitkyina Town	January 3, 2004	Unemployed so wanted a job	Massage parlour in Laiza	Didn't get paid; (had to pay off debt of 5 months salary paid by massage parlour to broker); ran away after 1 month.	Woman herself



#	Age	<i>Ethnicity</i>	Date trafficked	Reason to migrate/travel	Trafficking destination	Summary of Case	Source
		Hometown					
58	18	<i>Kachin</i> Madiyang, Namsanyang, Bhamo	January 2004	Unemployed so wanted a job	China	Was persuaded to work in China. Her mother followed her and found her in time.	Mother
59	19	<i>Kachin</i> Sitapru Ward, Myitkyina Town	March 2004	n.a.	China	Was sold in China for 5,000 yuan (US\$625). Has disappeared.	Mother
60	17	<i>Kachin</i> Kongkhar, Kutkai	March 2004	Wanted to find school fees during holiday	Headed for China	Was persuaded to work in Muse; mother followed her and caught up with her in Kutkai. Trafficker later caught by KDA and jailed.	Girl herself
61	18	<i>Kachin</i> Madiyang, Namsan Yang,	May 2004	n.a.	A brothel in China	Was sold to a brothel by her aunt (a drug addict). Her family helped her escape, but she died a week after returning home.	An aunt
62	16	<i>Kachin</i> Madiyang, Namsanyang, Bhamo	June 2004	Family very poor	Yin Jiang, China	Was promised work in China, but in Yin Jiang was urged to marry a Chinese man. She was able to run away and return home.	Girl herself
63	18, n.a., n.a.	<i>Kachin</i> Kyaut Paung Gyan Ward, Myitkyina Town	July 2004	Unemployed so wanted a job	China	Were invited to work in a noodle shop in Laiza, then travelled across the Chinese border; one girl was helped to escape by a friend. The other 2 girls disappeared.	The girl who escaped

# Appendix 2

## Selected Interviews

### Case 38

At the end of February, 2003, a woman called yyy took me to the border to find a job. I was told I would be cooking at someone's house. She said that I would be able to earn some money for my sisters' school fees when the school opened. Yyy and my mother are friends, so my mother trusted her and gave me permission to go with her. I didn't have any I.D., but at the check-points, when the immigration officers checked me, yyy told the immigration officers that I was her daughter, so they gave me permission to pass the gate.

When we arrived in Laiza, she said that there was no job there so we had to go to China to find a job. I told her that China was very far from Myitkyina so I didn't want to follow her. But she tried to dissuade me from returning, saying I would have to pay my own way back home. I didn't have any money so I had to follow her to China. After travelling for half a day, we arrived at one town. There she told me to follow a Chinese man, who she said was my employer. I realised then that I had been sold.

That Chinese man took me away with his car. I said to him that I was very hungry. So he gave me 20 Yuan (approx US\$2.40) and stopped the car in front of a shop. I pretended to order food. When the Chinese man was busy bending over something, I ran away. Fortunately, the Laiza bus was ready to leave. So I rode on the bus and just gave the 20 Yuan I had. Even though it wasn't enough the driver didn't say anything because I was a child. When I reached Laiza I didn't have any money. I requested one Kachin family to sleep at their house for one night. They took pity on me and they offered to pay my bus fare home. When I returned to Myitkyina, I told my mother what had happened to me. I didn't say anything to my neighbours or anyone else because I was afraid that if they knew about what had happened to me they would look down on me.

Name	xxx
Age	15
Ethnicity	Kachin
Religion	Christian
Marital Status	Single
Education	Third Standard
Occupation	Dependent
Living Status	Poor
Address	Du Mare (Myitkyina)

Name	xxx
Age	25
Ethnicity	Li Su
Marital Status	Single
Education	Sixth Standard
Occupation	Farmer
Living Status	Poor
Address	A Lam, Myitkyina

\*\* The storyteller is the man who helped rescue her.

### Case 37

Xxx lived in A Lam village and she had to look after her family. Although they worked on a farm, they had to struggle financially because of the poor state of the economy in the whole area.

One day, a woman called yyy came and offered her a job as a shopkeeper. She replied that she was interested and would go because of her family situation. So on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2003, they left the house. xxx lived in Chyunpinta (Myitkyina).

One of xxx's friends also went with them. When they reached Laiza, they stayed at a very low-quality guest house. Yyy then said to them that there were no jobs in Laiza, but that in Yin Jiang there were many more jobs, and they would be able to earn four or five hundred Yuan per month. The next day, yyy brought along one broker (a woman) who took the two girls to Yin Jiang.

When they reached Yin Jiang, xxx's friend was sold for 2,000 Yuan (approx US\$243) to someone from one of the villages near Yin Jiang. After that, xxx herself was also sold to a Chinese man (she didn't know his name) for 12,000 Yuan (approx US\$1,461). Then the Chinese man took her to his house at Hwa Htin. They travelled for many days by car and by train to get to his home. On 29<sup>th</sup> January, they reached his home.

When her parents heard what had happened to her, they went to Laiza and searched for her. They then appealed to the Chinese police to help look for her. Finally, they were able to contact the Chinese man who had bought her. They told the Chinese man over the phone that in their culture, after marriage a couple should pay their respects to the bride's relatives. If not, they could sue for compensation. The Chinese man therefore decided to pay his respects to them.

So on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2003, she and the Chinese man left their home. After six days, they reached Phiyon city. With the help of the Chinese police we were able to find xxx. When the man realised what was happening, he ran away. After that he phoned from another town to say that he didn't want her anymore and that he would return to his home. Finally we sent her back to her home.

Xxx explained that there was a shortage of women in Hwa Htin. This was because of the Chinese policy that families could have only one child. When women became pregnant, they would have an ultrasound, and if the unborn baby was a girl, they would have an abortion. Therefore women had become highly valued. If they were taken to market or anywhere else, they would be wheeled around in a trolley, in case they got lost.

She said that in that city they ate only dumplings. They didn't eat any rice or curry.

### Case 34

A broker came and took xxx to go and find a job in Rangoon. She told xxx that some friends would go to Rangoon and she would send xxx with them. Xxx decided to go with them because she couldn't find any jobs in Myitkyina. She went to Rangoon with two other women. She had never been to Rangoon.

When they reached Rangoon, the two women sent her to stay with a woman called yyy. They stayed in a room on the top floor of a five-storey building. She couldn't go out and her ID card and possessions were from her. For two weeks, she stayed there without being given a job. She became frightened and ran away. In the street she saw a taxi driver and told him that she was Kachin and had never been to Rangoon before, so he sent her to the Kachin Baptist Convention Church. The Pastors asked her about what had happened to her and then sent her to stay with one of the Pastors.

She told them that she thought she would be sold to a brothel because at night many girls staying around her on the fifth floor would beautify themselves and then go out. When she asked them about this, one of the girls told her that she could earn a lot of money by working at night, so it wasn't tiring. "You'll soon be doing this too," the girl told her.

\*\* The storyteller is a clergyman who took her to Myitkyina from Rangoon. The case happened in December 2002.

Name	xxx
Age	20
Ethnicity	Kachin
Marital Status	Single
Education	Eighth Standard
Occupation	Dependent
Living Status	Poor
Address	Du Kathaung (Myitkyina)

### Case 29

Yyy who lives at Manhkring Quarter arranged that I and my friend would work as waitresses or helpers selling things in Mung Hsu Township. It was arranged on 15/9/02 early in the morning at 8:00 A.M. She said that the payment was good and it was not very hard work. Then we agreed to go and work there. My friend and I were taken on that day by express train from Myitkyina to Mung Hsu. On the train a man called zzz came together with us.

When we were at Mung Hsu, we did not get work as a waitress or a helper selling things. On September 18 (2002), we were pressured to work as prostitutes at a Massage Parlour. We stayed there about 4 months. We were threatened in several ways. We could not stand it anymore and tried to run away but we were not successful.

Finally, on January 18<sup>th</sup> (2003), we were taken out from the massage parlour. We did not have enough money to go back to Myitkyina and stayed at a tailoring shop by request. Then

Name	xxx
Age	17
Ethnicity	Li Su
Religion	Christian
Marital Status	Single
Education	Middle School
Occupation	Dependent
Living Status	Middle class

the same man who originally took us on the train sent me back to Myitkyina. On January 24<sup>th</sup>, we arrived in Myitkyina at night and he threatened me, saying I shouldn't tell anybody that I had been forced to sell my body.

My friend was left behind in Mung Hsu. I did not tell anyone about what had happened to her. I was confused to tell anybody around me about what had really happened to me. Only finally I revealed what had happened to people, and I was urged to bring charges against our traffickers. On February 3 (2003), I filed a complaint at the police station against zzz and yyy for trafficking my friend and me into sex work. But no action has been taken. We don't have money so we can not do anything.

### Case 31

Xxx is from San Pai village, Wai Maw Township. She attended school in Rangoon. She missed her parents so she wanted to return home. She returned home without telling them. She went to the Rangoon railway station. While she was there one Burmese woman, about 50 years old, asked her: "Where are you going, are you alone and is nobody with you? If you go alone it is not good and may be dangerous. So you should go with me." So that Burmese woman took xxx, but she didn't take her to Mandalay directly. She said she had to go to Meikhtilar. So she took xxx to Meikhtilar.

In Meikhtilar she took xxx's money and gold from her and didn't allow her to go anywhere. She was held at the woman's house for many days.

She wanted to go to Church and she asked the neighbours. They told her where to go. She met with a Christian family. In that family, there was a 20-year-old boy she had already seen because that boy had shown a religious play in the countryside one or two times. She told them about why she was in Meikhtilar.

The Burmese woman had arranged to marry her to her son. They forced her to sign a marriage contract. The neighbours also knew that women were always being brought to that house. However they didn't have proof so they didn't report it to the police station.

Name	xxx
Ethnicity	Kachin
Address	San Pai village, Wai Maw Township

\*\*the story teller is a woman from Laiza

## Case 4

To: Chairperson, Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation  
Myitkyina, Kachin State

Subject: The testimony of xxx who was sold to China 6 years ago

Respectfully,

On 27<sup>th</sup> March 2004, Daw NL and her daughter xxx (who was suffering from gastritis and a heart condition) came to me. Five or six years ago, xxx and two other women from Yan Gyi Aung were sold to China. They have brought charges against a Lisu man who sold them. He has been detained. His relatives have come and offered a lot of money to call off the case. If not, they have threatened to make a lot of trouble. The woman is frightened and is relying on help from her Grandmother.

I am her Grandmother. This report is the real experience of xxx, for which you can take action if necessary.

The sister of xxx is still in China and we have not got any information about whether she is dead or alive. Xxx's sister is a strong-minded woman and she was beaten by the Lisu man who is detained. She could recognize the Lisu man well because she was with him for about 20 days. She could also recognize his minor wife.

Respectfully,  
(Signature)

Copy to:

1. The wife of Division Commander
2. State Police Officer, Myitkyina.
3. No.8 Intelligence Stockade, Myitkyina.
4. Daw xxx and Ma xxx, Yuzana, Myemyint, Myitkyina
5. No. 2 Police Officer.

Name	xxx
Age	25
Ethnicity	Kachin and Burmese
Religion	Christian
Marital Status	Married (with one daughter)
Occupation	Dependent
Living Status	Poor
Address	Yuzana, Myitkyina

**Report of Experience:**

1. My name is xxx, 25 years old. I don't have an I.D. My father is a retired sailor. My mother is a housewife. The address is Yuzana Quarter, Myitkyina.
2. I stay with my husband. We have one daughter. Now she is 7 years old. We stay with my husband's parents.
3. 6 years ago, I, my sister and another woman, were sold to China. So I appeal to the Court.
4. The traffickers were (1) yyy, (2) zzz, (3) bbb, and (4) a Lisu man who is in jail now and his second wife.
5. I have only just returned back. I don't know where my sister is or whether she is alive or not. The other woman is now the wife of a Chinese man. Now she has already got one child.
6. One day, yyy and zzz who lived in Mye Myit came and talked about getting a housekeeping job which would earn 5,000 kyat per month. If the Boss liked your ability, you would get more. When I asked my husband, he also agreed so I prepared to go and do this job. They gave me 3,000 kyat as an advance. I consulted with my mother and I called my sister to join.
7. On 8<sup>th</sup> June 1997, yyy and zzz came and picked us up. Then at Wai Maw ferry site, they handed us over to bbb. We rode a motorboat with bbb. When we reached to Wai Maw we were handed over to a strange man. The woman and the man (who is now in jail) took us to China and sold us. He was a Lisu and the woman was his minor wife. They told us they would take us to Laiza. We had never been to Laiza. They said that the journey would take two hours but it took many days. When we asked them where they were taking us, they told us not to ask so many questions, and that if we wanted to go back we could. We couldn't go back, as we had no money to return and we were very frightened. So we just had to do whatever they said.
8. One woman (I don't know her name) took us to one of the houses by the ferry dock. There one man was waiting for us.
9. That man and woman took us to the station where we could take a bus to Laiza. We all rode on a bus to Laiza. On 8<sup>th</sup> June 1997, at 6:00 pm we reached Laiza.
10. When we reached Laiza, we arrived at what looked like a guest house, and we were locked into a room. Soon the man and woman came to call us and then we went to take a bath. After that we ate some food. We slept in Laiza for one night.
11. The next day at 8:00 am five of us (the man who has been charged, the woman and the three of us) rode together in a car.

12. In the afternoon we reached Yae Chin Town. We reached there at 3 pm and then we continued to travel by bus. On the way, we arrived at a town. We five people slept in only one room of a guest house.
13. Next day, all five people continued our journey by car. At 11:00 pm we continued by train. After three days, at 6:00 am we reached Nan Kyin Railway Station. From that station, we rode again in a bus and then reached Tong Shyi village.
14. In Tong Shyi village, we stayed at one house (I think it belonged to an acquaintance of the Lisu couple who sold us). Many people came and looked at us. I think that they had been told in advance about us.
15. Many people came and looked at us. Men chose us. At that time my young sister was young and stoutly built so they chose her first.
16. When my sister protested, the Lisu man hit her face and kicked her. My sister was crying, but she had to follow the man who had come to take her because she was so afraid.
17. My sister was very strong-minded. She ran away from the man three times. So they let the third woman (from Yan Gyi Aung) take the place of my sister.
18. Then they sent my sister somewhere very far away. Since that day I haven't seen or met with my sister. I don't know whether she is alive or not. I have had no information about her.
19. One man chose me, and called me away, so I followed him. His legs were crippled as a result of a wrong injection when he was young. I stayed with him and we got one son.
20. I stayed 6 years with him in Kyau Tsut Du Yit village, Nan Kyin province. My son's name is Shin Yit. Now he is five years old.
21. In March 2003, I asked the Chinese man if I could go back home just for a short while. When I reached home, I learned that my sister hadn't come back yet so I went to Laiza to look for her. I noticed the Lisu man sitting in front of me. When I saw him, I remembered what had happened. I was filled with resentment. I was so angry it made my heart beat fast.
22. I pretended to forget my ID and I told the car driver that I needed to go and get my ID and asked him to drive to my mother's house. When we arrived home, I reported the man to the headman and he was arrested.
23. When we asked him where my sister was, he told me that I shouldn't speak to him like that as he could arrest me. He said he used to be a KIA soldier.
24. On 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2004, my mother reported what had happened to the local SPDC headman and then the Intelligence and Police caught him.



25. We knew that No.2 Police Station had sent the records to the court already. In the court, the Lisu man and his relatives shouted at me so I felt sad and afraid. I was already suffering from a heart condition. Eventually the court hearing was postponed.
26. A teacher and someone who seemed to be her husband from Nan Kyi village came and asked me how much money I wanted for compensation, and to reach a settlement with the accused. She also said that the accused was a relative of her husband and if I didn't reach a settlement with him, they would press charges against me.
27. The teacher came and negotiated with me to accept compensation, but I wouldn't accept any money.
28. One of the police a relative of the Lisu man (who is also a policeman) said to me: "What are you doing? Do you want to go to jail?" I was very afraid and went to tell my grandmother.

### **Case 25**

Our family is very poor. I have 6 children. My husband smoked opium. I worked in the paddy fields when it is paddy-growing time. I also work in corn fields during the corn season. But I just got 500 kyat per day. It was not enough to feed 8 people. And then I had to pay money to my husband to buy opium if he didn't have money. My children went to the forest to find vegetables to sell. They also went to the stream to catch fish to sell.

In March 2002, a Chinese woman took my eldest daughter to Muse to find a job. She said to me that she would send back my daughter after she had worked for 3 months when the school re-opened. I thought that my daughter could earn her school fees during the holidays. So I agreed that she could go there. But my daughter hasn't returned back until now. The Chinese woman who called my daughter to Muse also hasn't returned since then.

Name            xxx  
 Age             14  
 Ethnicity       Kachin + Chinese  
 Religion        Christian + Buddhist  
 Marital Status   Single

\*\* Interview with Mother of xxx

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *At What Price? Gold Mining in Kachin State, Burma*, Images Asia Environment Desk and Pan Kachin Development Society (November 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Selth, Andrew, *Burma's Armed Forces: Power without Glory*, Norwalk CT: Eastbridge 2002:135)

<sup>3</sup> SPDC Coordination meeting on prevention of trafficking in persons, May 19, 2003

<sup>4</sup> Physicians for Human Rights, *No Status, Migration, Trafficking and Exploitation of Women in Thailand: Health and HIV/AIDS Risks for Burmese and Hill Tribe Women and Girls* (June 2004).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Altsean Burma, *Burma Briefing Issues and Concerns Volume I* (November 2004).

**Photos courtesy of Salween News Network (SNN)**

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**Kachin Women's Association Thailand**  
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As Myanmar's political and economic reforms erode Kachin communities in Burma, increasing poverty, fuelled by failed state policies, is driving increasing numbers of young people to migrate in search of work. As a result, young women and girls are disappearing without trace, being sold as wives in China, and tricked into the Chinese and Burmese sex industries. Local Kachin researchers conducted interviews in Burma from May-August 2011. This report documents their results.

*"...then three men took my friend in a silver car..."*



*"...a woman took my granddaughter to the border to find a job. She wanted to earn money for her school fees so I gave her permission to go...I couldn't afford her school fees. School fees are increasing year by year. I only sell vegetables in the morning market..."*