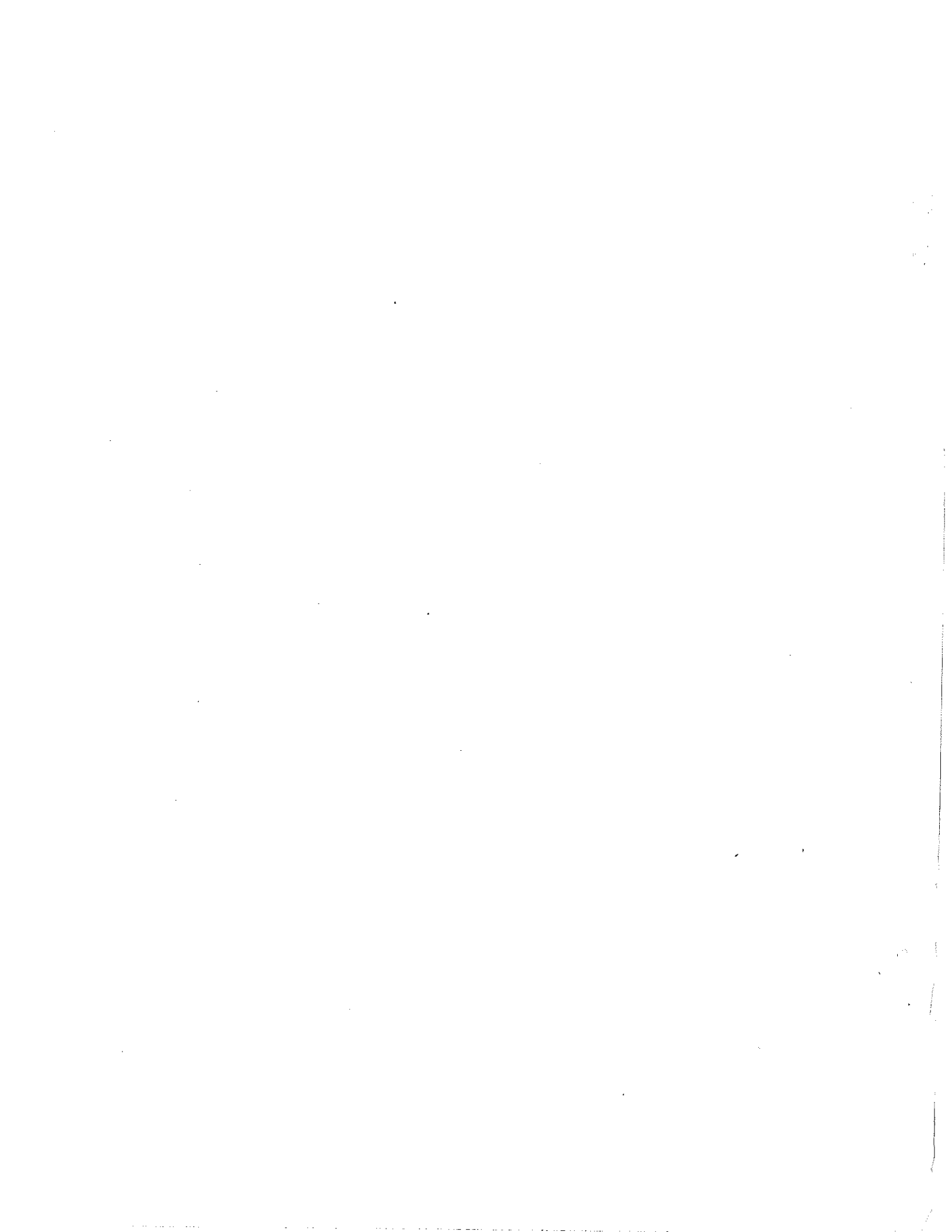




**HUMAN RIGHTS
IN THAILAND REPORT**

September - October 1979



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Cover : Old Kampuchean refugee at Sa Kaeo refugee camp, Aranyaprathet, Thailand

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To our Readers

The Human Rights in Thailand Reports editor would like to apologize to our readers for the delayed publication of the Human Rights in Thailand Report, September-October 1979.

In this issue we continue to appeal to our readers to give urgent assistance on 3 more points :-

1. On behalf of all defendants in Udom-Pka-krong case, we would like to thank all our overseas friends for your continuous support and solidarity actions for their freedom. After over 3 year struggle the 11 defendants in this case were finally acquitted from all charges and set free. However, two defendants Vinai Boonwan and Chao Chairarong were rearrested on charges of narcotic drug and robbery respectively. (See page 5) CGRS is trying to find more details about this arrest, and would be very much appreciated if our friends could write to the Thai authorities and urge for clarification on the arrest.

2. Somboon and Vichai Banlusilp case will be finished in early January next year. We thus would like our friends to express your concern on the case to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence and the Judge Advocate General. (See Page 16)

3. On December 10th which is the Thai Constitutional Day and the International Human Rights Day, CGRS will submit a complaint letter to the Prime Minister against the assassinations and disappearances of some village leaders in the rural areas. CGRS has taken up 8 cases of such assassinations and disappearances as an example. CGRS has during the past year thoroughly checked this informations. The eight are the assassination or disappearance of Rod Thani, Abdulmani Abdulla, (HRTR July-August 78) Chanai Chutai, Pew Sapsaichol, Chamrong Raksa (HRTR March-April 78) Somchit Morasilp (HRTR May-June 79) Chamras Muang-yam and Prayoon Kaewpraju (HRTR July-August 79). Our overseas friends are requested to join us in this campaign by writing to the Prime Minister, expressing your concern on these 8 cases and the misuse of power by government officials in the rural areas.

As always we would like you to keep us informed of any actions you might take.

We thank all of you for your interest in and solidarity with our struggle.

The Human Rights Situation

Human Rights in Kampuchean Refugee Camp



We applaud the Thai government for having changed its policy towards the Indochinese refugees from pushing back the refugees to their homelands to accepting all refugees into Thailand on a temporary basis. Up to October 11th this year there were 150,000 Kampuchean refugees in Thailand, excluding other 300,000 people under the leadership of the Khmer Sereikar. These latter groups of people are scattering along the Thai-Kampuchean border, and are urged by the Thai government to settle in the refugee camps inside Thailand. Large scale relief operations by the international community has enabled Thailand to continue with its policy of providing humanitarian assistance to people fleeing from their homelands. However, even though we see the importance of this medical and food aid to refugees, we see it more important for the international community to help the Kampuchians to find political solution to their problems. We want to see the Kampuchians be able to determine their own future, to choose their own government, without being forced by any "warlords" or any foreign powers. We want to see the Kampuchians be able to solve their problems through political and non-violent means, rather than military, which will only cause even more deaths and suffering.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees figure, until September 30th, 1979 Thailand has accepted up to 286,909 out of a total of 565,808 refugees from three Indochinese countries, namely Laos, Vietnam and Kampuchea. Out of the 286,909 persons accepted by Thailand, 116,395 persons were moved to resettle in third countries, and other 168,897 persons still remain in 17 refugee camps from North to South - Thailand. This number excludes the Kampuchean refugees who fled into Thailand after the strong attacks of Vietnam in Kampuchea in October this year.

The strong attacks of Vietnam in the dry season in October 1979 was followed by massive influxes of starving, sick, war-weary, Kampuchean refugees into Thailand. Even before the change of the Thai government's policy towards Indochinese refugees on October 19th, there was up to 90,000 Kampuchean refugees in Thailand. These refugees had great difficulties because of the push back policy. The most tragic incident was in June 1979 when the Thai government saying that it could not bear the burden any longer since the world was only interested in the boat people, forced over 40,000 Kampuchean who entered Thailand at Aranyaprathet back into their country at Kao Praviharn. It was reported later on that about half of these people were killed in the war or died of hunger and sickness after the push back. This sad and terrifying incident has however successfully drawn the world interest towards these "land refugees". Shortly after the incident, a group of 1,121 Kampuchean at Ban Mairood in Trad province, which the Thai government had threatened to be the second group to be pushed back, was welcomed by 3 third countries.

According to the Thai government's new policy, these displaced persons are classified as illegal immigrants (not refugees) and are allowed to stay temporarily in Thailand. A three-step plan was adopted. Once the Kampuchean arrive in Thailand, they will be provided temporary refuge in the border areas for two or three days during which they will be given food and immediate medical treatment. Then, they will be moved to stay in three camps, located far from the frontier, for up to three months. The three camps are located at Ban Kaeng in Sa Kaeo district of Prachinburi province, at Ban Prasat in Surin province and in marine-controlled areas in Chantaburi or Trat province. After that, they will be moved to a national refugee centre at Ban Mairut. This center will be capable of accomodating 200,000 to 300,000 refugees who will stay here until they can return home or are accepted for resettlement in third countries.

The government has been trying to induce the 300,000 Kampuchean under Khmer Sereikar to resettle in the refugee camps situated far from the border inside Thailand. The Thai government finds it is difficult to control the border situation when hundreds of thousands of civilians are gathering there under various leaderships of about twelve warlords. However, to bring these problems under its control implied bringing the independent Sereikar forces under control as well. Therefore, such a policy of the Thai government is not welcomed by the Sereikar leaders.

The Thai government then tries to break the morale of the ^{Sereikar} settlement populations. Gradually the Thai side of the black market was closed down, driving up prices inside the settlement and causing serious food shortages. In addition, it prevents the residents from taking water from sources outside the perimeter (and water sources in the camp is now not sufficient for the needs of the population). The Thai army commanders

warned the Sereikar commanders that any incidents involving Thai and Sereikar soldiers might force the Thai to shell the camps. In early November, following a series of incidents involving Thai and Sereikar soldiers, the Thai pumped more than one hundred mortar and artillery shells into one of the settlements, killing more than one hundred residents.

Turning to the camps inside Thailand, misuse of power including rape, robbery and murder occurred from time to time, both by Thai soldiers, VDV's, and even civilians who sneaked into the camps. The attitude of many Thai local officials towards refugees is that of hatred and insult. In early September this year at Mairut camp in Trad province, a group of about 15-20 VDV's gang raped the Kampuchean women residing there. Those who resisted were stabbed and many were injured. The VDV's destroyed the water tanks with their knives. Many foreign volunteers from international organizations witnessed the incident. But none dared to interfere.

A Thai woman volunteer from another camp said " Many Khmer refugees have been beaten to death. Some were shot only because they cut the trees in the land that belongs to the Thais. I have seen with my own eyes a Khmer man who was shot at his legs with 10 shots, and a woman shot at her chest. Lucky enough the man is not lame and the woman is still alive. "

Some refugees were brought out of the camp to work. " One day a green lorry which took 12 Kampuchean and a group of Thai workers to work had a road accident. The Thais were taken to the hospital, while the Kampuchean were left on the road. These Kampuchean were later on taken to the hospital by some Thais who passed by ", reported the some Thai woman volunteer.

Another incident was in Chantaburi province. A 12 year old Kampuchean girl who was adopted by a Thai family was arrested. While she was detained at the police station, she was raped by a Thai policeman. Complaint against mistreatment of the police was lodged to the inspector in charge of the station, but the complainer was again mistreated by the police.

It is possible that the number of the Kampuchean refugees in Thailand will increase from 150,000 to 300,000 - 400,000 and these people will have to stay in the camps as long as the war in Kampuchea continues, and as long as there is not a real effort to stop the war there. By that time Thailand will have the biggest concentration camp in the world.

Political Prisoners

Release of Udom Pka-krong and 10 Co-defendants

Following the decision the Criminal Court of Bangkok on November 20th, 1979, Udom Pka-krong and his 10 co-defendants were all acquitted of charges of attacking and robbing military camp, killing and trying to kill government officials and committing arson. However, only 9 of them were set free, because two prisoners Chao Chainarong and Vinai Boonwan were rearrested on charges of robbery and narcotic drugs respectively.

Actually Vinai Boonwan did not possess the drugs. The accusation was brought against him by a prisoners' leader who had a personal conflict with Vinai. The incident took place on November 28, 1978 (last year) when the prisoners' leader who was generally known as "Chai" took a small amount of heroin from a hidden place in the prison and accused that it belonged to Vinai. There was an investigation, but there was no evidence or witness to prove that the heroin belonged to Vinai. ~~*We were detained in the same cell as criminals.~~ Prison is a big heroin market. Everybody knows that the prison officials have a hand in this business, by selling heroin to prisoners", said one of the prisoners in this case.

The officials have used the incident which took place almost a year ago to rearrest Vinai. At present Vinai is ~~is detained in~~ Ladyao prison. The officials are empowered to detain him for the maximum of 91 days, and after that the case has to be brought to the court.

As for Chao Chainarong he was sentenced to 18 years on charges of robbery by a different court. At present he is detained at Ladyao prison. CGRS is trying to find more facts about this case.

At present the 9 released persons have gone back to their home in the southern province of Nakornsrithammarat. These people have gone through severe torture and have lived in jail for 3 years and 6 months, until it was finally proved in court that they were innocent. All of them have strong hope to start a new life outside prison, eventhough some of them have lost their wife (Pracha), children (Sarn) and land (Banchob), and eventhough they cannot be sure how they will be treated by the local authorities who arrested and tortured them 3 years ago, or whether the severe local suppression tactics in their hometown have changed or not.

Incident leading to the arrest

In April-May 1976 the ISOC and the Fourth Region Army held a Village Defence Volunteer Training (arm and military training for civilians against communists) for 120 selected villagers at Ban Songpraeg school in

Tambon Huatapan, Tosala District, Nakornrithammarat province. The training lasted 45 days. At night of May 15th, a group of about 100 CPV guerrillas attacked the training camp. A patrol tank near a school building was exploded by the gunfire, making the whole school building on fire. Finally the government officials surrendered. After a short "reeducation" the guerrillas took the 120 guns, a radio set, a typewriter, 3 motorcycles, 19,800 Baht cash (\$US990) and many other things with them. On the government side, 12 persons were killed and 22 injured, including women and children who stayed in the school building.

The attack was one of the biggest attacks at that time and gained much interest from the press and public. In order not to lose face, the local government had to arrest the guerrillas who attacked the camp, but it was not easy to do so. Therefore, they simply arrested anybody they wanted.



Sarn Boonpeng, Udom Pkakraong, Jeng Sae-ton at Bangkok Court

- May 21, 1976 Fuchong Kaewsuan and Vinsai Boonwan were arrested.
- May 22, 1976 Chuai Chulapakdi was arrested.
- May 23, 1976 Udom Pke-krong, Sarn Boonpeng, Jeng Sae-ton, Banohob Chuaipan, Pracha Taweeuang were arrested.
- June 7, 1976 Naeb Dokbus, Moonong Kanchanapakdi were arrested.
- July 10, 1976 Chao Chainareng was arrested.

Real Reason for the Arrest

The arrest of Udom, Sarn and Jeng reasoned from the fact that these 3 persons have opposed and disclosed the malpractice and corruption in Tan-

bon Huatapan Council. Udom, the secretary of the Council, Sarn and Jeng had led the 995 villagers in the protest against the corruption and thus had conflict with the district chief of Tasala and many other local government officials. Banchob, the 4th defendant, was arrested 20 minutes after he had had a quarrel with 4-5 Border Patrol Policemen who took liberty on his wife's sister. Other persons were arrested because their houses or their plantations were near the attack place. Chuai Chulapakdi was arrested when he went to Jeng's house to ask for some coconut leaves to cover his young tobacco trees from the sun and accidentally met the soldiers who were searching the house. " Two soldiers came to me, carrying 2 pistols. They asked whether the pistols belonged to me. I refused, and said that I only had a knife to cut the coconut leaves. They suddenly arrested me without giving any reasons ", said Chuai in his statement to the court.

Confession out of Torture

At first all the arrested denied the charges. But after they had gone through the joint military-police investigation, five of them confessed in order to save their lives. They stated in the court that they had been severely tortured. The officials chained their hands or covered their head with a sack, or put them in a hole in the ground, then beat and kicked them until they fainted. They put iron chains around their neck and pulled at both ends. Some of them were taken on a helicopter and threatened to be kicked down.

" At 1 pm. the military and the police officials took Puchong and me in a helicopter and flew over the sea. The officials then put a lot of questions to me. They threatened that if I did not confess they would kick me down. I refused to confess and hold their legs tightly. After they had failed to get the confession out of me, they took me to Tasala police station, and threatened that two of the arrested had already been tortured to death, " stated Vinai Boonwan in the court.

Pra Tim Roop-O, an old monk at Tonhong temple in Tambon Chankiri, Promkiri sub-district, who was one of the defence witnesses gave a statement to the court that the military camp was about 100 metres from the temple. At night the military ordered the monks not to walk on the temple lawn, unless they got a permission from the military. In May 1976 while he was staying in the temple, he heard the voice of a few men crying out of pain. The voice came from the military camp. Therefore in the morning he went to the camp and heard those men crying for blankets. He took the blankets to the military camp, but was at first not allowed in; he persisted and finally was allowed to enter the place. In the camp he saw Udom Pka-krong Sarn Boonpeng and Jeng Sae-ton lying in pain with wounds from the torture.

Long-drawn Trial Proceeding

On August 11, 1976 the 11 persons were prosecuted at the court of Nakornsriathammarat. The 11 defendants denied all the charges. They had

three defence lawyers (Tongbai Tongpao, Suttipong Laocharoen and Suriyan Worasiri). In 1977 the case was transferred to Bangkok. The trial proceeded very slowly with lots of post ponements. It took 3 years for the 20 prosecution witnesses to give their statement in the court. The three most important prosecution witnesses, who attended the Village Defence Volunteer training, had claimed to the court that they were at the camp when it was attacked by the guerrillas; and he saw Udom and Jeng amongst the guerrillas. However, when they were cross-examined by the defence lawyer, they made a very contradictory statement, and could not point out, when they were asked by the lawyer, who Mr. Udom Pka-krong was. Another prosecution witness fainted in the court, when the defence lawyer could prove that he was making a false statement.

On November 20th, the Judge acquitted all of them from all charges, due to lack of evidence. In the evening of that day, all of them were released. But two were rearrested on other charges.

" On behalf of all defendants in this case, I wish to thank everybody inside and outside Thailand who have followed our case with interest and have dedicatedly worked for our freedom ", said Udom Pka-krong after the release.

25 November 1979

Dear friends,

I have arrived at my home already. My wife and my children cried with gladness when they saw me, except my youngest kid who cried because he was afraid of me. He cannot recognize me, and always cries when I hug him. It makes me feel so sad.

Time has proved to me that in time of trouble, there is nobody except the justice loving people who will help each other with sincerity. For me I cannot find sincerity even from my own relatives. They insult and take advantage from me and my family. But I do not blame them for that, because they have not yet understood the social problems as it is. Trouble and difficulties in life make them become selfish and have wrong ambition. It makes them forget to care for other people, or to work for the sake of the others.

I have been thinking about this problem all along my journey by train back home. Tears came to my eyes



Victory of the Innocent

Front row: Banchob, Fuchong, Sam, Udom, Tong Back row: Chao, Noonong, Naeb, Vinai

when I thought of all the help I get from the justice loving people and you during my detention. Without this help my wife and children might have starved to death. I could not help sighing when I saw the rice field through the train window. Now my family and I can no longer look at the rice field with pride that they belong to us, because we have lost our land during my detention.

However, I am glad that I am still alive, and still have a chance to continue to work for peace and freedom. The freedom I gained after the release is not a perfect freedom. I want a real freedom which everybody in this society could share.

Yours Sincerely,

Banchob Chuaipan

REPORT FROM UP - COUNTRY

Klongplasoi Village - 200 Thais arrested for fleeing from Laotian refugee camp.

At 1 am. of July 6th, 1979, a group of crime suppression policemen and Special Operation Unit policemen led by ISOC (Internal Security Operation Command) officials, all armed with M. 16, carbin and M.2, raided the village of Ban Klongplasoi in Klong-lan district, Kam-paengpet province. At 5 am. of the same day, the officials arrested the 200 people living in that village. The arrested, including old people and children, who took with them some of their farm animals, were put onto 4 lorries. They were taken to Kampaengpet Technical College and were detained there for 2 weeks. After that they were sent to a Laotian refugee camp in Utaradit province. They were all accused of being Laotian refugees who fled from a refugee camp.

Klongplasoi village comprises about 40 houses. Some families have been living here for over 40 years, and others for 20 years or not less than 4-5 years. The language spoken is the northeastern dialect, which is the same language spoken in Laos. Most of the people are farmers who grow rice and corn. When they were arrested, it was almost time for the harvest.

At the refugee camp, only 5 families whose names were on the camp list, were accepted to stay there; the rest of the people had to stay in front of the refugee camp. The reason for this was that these 5 families have actually fled from the camp, with the help of the officials, and came to live in Klongplasoi village. One of the ISOC officials agreed to make false ID cards for one of these families, which had 9 members. The family had to pay him a total of 4,500 Baht (500 Baht = \$25 per head). But after the family had successfully fled from the camp and resettled in Klongplasoi, they refused to pay the bribe. Therefore, the ISOC official led the police to arrest them.

In addition, the officials could gain more interest when all the villagers were moved from the village by force. Klongplasoi is situated near a teak forest. There is an official plan to enlarge the florest by growing young teaks on the land of the people in Klongplasoi. But since the land belongs to the villagers, the government has to pay them a compensation or arrange a new place for them to live. The arrest has solved the problems, and has also enabled the officials to take whole of the official money that should have been paid to the villagers.

The third that might be the reason for the arrest is that, according to some villagers, tin was found in one of the villagers' land, and in a nearby billage sapphire was found. Much profit can be made out of these national resources.

Yang Saikamtok, deputy village headman of Klongplasoi village, said that when the policemen arrested him, at first he thought they were robbers in police uniform. "I have not committed any crime. I have been living in the village for 48 years. They arrested everybody in the village. My 7 kids were also arrested", said Yang.

Amongst the 200 people arrested, 5 men were sent to the Third Region Army as they were accused of being communists, whilst other 3 men were released because they have already been recruited in the Thai Army. The rest of the people have been kept in front of the refugee camp.

The fact that the villagers have been living in Klongplasoi for a long time, that everybody has Thai ID card and that the village has its leader officially elected and appointed, should be a proof that they are not Laotian refugees as accused. Their arrest has shown so clearly how the government officials have used their power to gain interest for themselves, without thinking how much the ordinary people would suffer from their deeds.

MISUSE OF GOVERNMENT POWER

Four Men in Uniform Killed a Farmer

Kanchanaburi : On July 14 while Rueng-rong Vilairuengsuwan was carrying his baby in front of his home in Tambon Nongri, Bauploi, district, two men came to see him and asked him to go to see an influential person of the district, to make a 'negotiation and a good understanding', but he refused.

Soon after that came 4 men in green uniform into the house. Seeing this, Rueng-rong ran away with his baby. The four men shot at him. His wife who heard the gunfire and the cries of the baby ran out to help, but one of the gunmen dragged her away, and the others shot at Rueng-rong until he died.

Rueng-rong was before his death a sugarcane farmer. One month before he was killed (in June 1979) his 3 nephews were killed and burnt by a group of policemen and 'volunteers for village development and protection' who accused them of being gangsters. After his nephews' death, Rueng-rong had voiced complaint to the deputy provincial governor and the Crime Suppression Division. Shortly before his death a group of policemen searched his house, but found nothing.

Asked by reporters about the gunmen in green uniform, Kanchanaburi provincial governor said that those men needed not be policemen or government officials.

Three Policemen Killed a Farmer

Nakornpathom : On October 8 three policemen arrested Prasong Nisunarat (40), a farmer at Tambon Tungnoi, Central District, and accused him of possessing illegal woods. The police asked for money from him in exchange for his freedom, but Prasong refused. The police took him in the police car.

Prasong's wife then hurried to the police station, and learnt from the inspector in charge of the station that there was no order for that arrest.

On the next day, the dead body of Prasong was found in a river in the nearby province of Rajburi. One policeman, Chanjit Siriruum, was arrested, whilst the other two policemen are still at large.

Prasong had once run a small wood selling business, but had to stop because the police frequently asked for money from him. In addition, in October last year, Prasong stood for a village-headman election, and gained much support from the villagers. But it turned out that he was not elected. The villagers then voiced complaint to the provincial governor that the election was unfair. The case is still under investigation at the governor's office. It was suspected that Prasong was murdered because of these 2 reasons.

Police Captain Charged of Leading a Robbery Gang

Prachuap : Pol. Cap. Aduldej (or Vinyu) Kongket was arrested with 5 civilians on charges of robbery. Pol. Cap. Aduldej confessed that he had carried out many robberies in various places. In each robbery he had his gang members dressed in police or soldier uniform, which would enable them to enter the house easily.

Pol. Cap. Aduldej was before the arrest an investigating officer at Hua Hin police station in Prachuap province.

Three Village Defense Volunteers Robbed and Killed a Farmer

Kalasin : Sawat Krutri, a farmer at Tambon Bua-yai, Yangtadlad district, was shot dead in a farm hut where he stayed overnight to look after his buffaloes. At 2 am. of July 2 three village defence volunteers attached to the ISOC - Kalasin province region robbed him of his money (390 Baht = \$19.5) and his wristwatch, and shot him dead with their

M. 16, and then fled.

Police later arrested VDV. Tongtip Unathen; two other V DVs are still at large.

Civilian Shot Dead by Insane Policeman

Pattani : On July 15 while Prapas Sompong (37) was watching television at his home near a market in Nongchig district, a policeman from the district police station walked into his house, at shot him dead with his .38 pistol.

The policeman, identified as Sergeant Akavas Puwanno was later arrested. According to police report, Akavas has been insane for a long time and has not yet been cured. He is always afraid of strangers., fearing that they will kill him. However inspite of this he was allowed to continue with his profession as a policeman, carrying a pistol around.

ARRESTS AND RELEASES

(Sep-Oct 79)

Arrests

5/9/79

A student from Ramkhamhaeng University in Bangkok, Mr. Nopadol Sangkhamanee, was arrested while he was noting down specifications of naval ships anchored in front of a navy dockyard at the Bangkok Naval Station on Tha Chang Road. He was charged with spying on the navy's secrets, and was sent to the Special Branch police for further interrogation. (Nation 6/9/79)

18/9/79

Third Region Army Commander disclosed that sixteen Hmong refugees were arrested for escaping from a refugee camp and illegally cultivating maize on a plantation in the northeastern province of Loel. The commander speculated that the refugees were given financial support by a group of people for the cultivation. (Nation 19/9/79)

22/9/79

Police disclosed that fifteen Cambodians from Thai Samat refugee camp and a Thai national (Samrit Chankluan - 38) was arrested at Bannoi Parai in Aranyaprathet district on charges of violating an official ban on trade with Heng Samrin and Vietnamese soldiers inside Cambodia. The goods and medical supplies

were being carried by a caravan of 77 men escorted by a gang of armed men. Police were unable to apprehend the rest of the men in the caravan. (Bangkok Post 23,27/9/79)

26/9/79 Six village volunteers who helped supervise a refugee camp in Aranyaprathet district were arrested by Klong Luak Police for allegedly allowing Cambodian refugees to leave the camp to trade with Heng Samrin troops in Cambodia. The arrest was made after 15 refugees from Thai Samat Camp and a Thai national were intercepted while they were transporting goods to Sri Sophon and Battambang. The six volunteers were, according to police report, acting as "recruiters" but the real masterminds were a group of influential merchants who operated a smuggling racket in this district on the Thai-Cambodian border. (Bangkok Post 27/9/79)

25/9/79 A CPT guerrilla, Chad O-in (23), surrendered to the government at Trang province. (Matichon 29/9/79)

12/10/79 Forty-nine Laotian refugees were arrested at Don Sawan refugee camp in Nongkhai province for being illegal immigrants. Police said that the Laotians slipped across the border from their country at night and were later spirited into the refugee camp with the help of some corrupted camp officials who charged the Laotians between 3,000 - 5,000 Baht per head (\$150 - \$250 per head).

According to the arrested Laotians, they had bribed camp officials in the hope that they would get a chance to be resettled in third countries.

All the arrested, including several women and children, were sent to Central District police station, and will soon be sent back to Laos. (Bangkok Post 14/10/79)

Releases No release is reported.

ACTIVITIES OF CGRS

The Coordinating Group for Religion in Society (CGRS) is composed of priests, laymen and young activists from the Buddhist, the Catholic and the Protestant Religions, who share a common belief in non-violence, and feel that religion and spiritual value have a central role to play in development of Thai Society. CGRS was founded early in 1976 but has become actively involved in Human Rights since the October 6th, 1976 Coup d'etat. For almost three years CGRS has carried out its activities openly, inspite of repressive governments and Martial Law. During this period the activities of CGRS have expanded considerably from merely helping political prisoners and their families and others suffering from conflicts in the society, to exposing misuse of government power and campaigning for its victims, for the release of all political prisoners and for abolishment of unjust laws; helping form other groups prepared to struggle for justice and human rights; supporting indigenous rural development groups and coordinating religious organizations.

All the efforts of CGRS are directed at tackling the injustices and oppression that exist in society using religious principles as the basic method. In all these activities CGRS hopes to play a catalytic and coordination function, rather than doing everything directly itself.

Activities of CGRS during September - October 1979

1. Visiting, Helping Prisoners and their families

During this two-month period CGRS continued with its regular work of visiting and helping political prisoners and prisoners facing injustices, and their families both in Bangkok and up-country. On its visit (at least once a week at every prison in Bangkok and on a less regular basis at the prisons in the country side), CGRS provided prisoners with necessary assistance such as clothes, sandals, soap, toothpaste, medicine, books, etc., and also with moral support and encouragement. It also gave regular assistance to poor families of some prisoners, and from time to time arranged for the families to visit the prisoners or attend the trial hearings in Bangkok.

2. Providing Legal Aid

CGRS has been trying to ensure justice to political prisoners and prisoners facing injustices, that at least they should have legal protection, legal representatives and fair trials in just courts. CGRS has not only given direct assistance such as finding experienced defense lawyers for the prisoners, helping raise and arrange bail, etc., but also has given assistance to

lawyers defending political cases, help organize lawyer groups, organize campaigns for the release of prisoners and against unjust laws, and so on.

Eleven defendants in Udom Pka-krong case were acquitted from all charges on November 20th, and nine of them were set free, whilst two defendants were remanded under other charges. (See page 5.). CGRS has arranged for the accomodation for all of them after their release, and also arranged for their trip back to their home in the southern province of Nakornsrithammarat. Before the case was finished, CGRS also arranged for the travel and accomodation for all defense witnesses in this case. In addition, CGRS made urgent request for cable campaigns from overseas friends on this case.

The hearings of prosecution witnesses in Somboon and Vichai Banlusilp case was finished on November 16th. The hearings of defense witnesses are expected to last only 2 days, on December 26th - 27th this year, and the case will be closed. Consequently, the sentence date should be around early January 1980.

We therefore would like our friends all over the world to take immediate action on this case.

URGENT ACTION NEEDED

To ensure justice to be done to Somboon and Vichai Banlusilp, please send letters and/or telegrams expressing your concern and urging that the two brothers get all the injustices to :

P.M. Kriengsak Chomanan	Gen. Prem Tinasulanonda
Thai Ku Faa Building	Minister of Defence
Bangkok	Sanamchai Road
Thailand	Bangkok, Thailand

Judge Advocate General
Lt.Gen. Pratin Pattanatham
Ministry of Defence
Sanamchai Road
Bangkok, Thailand

Some Facts about Somboon/Vichai Banlusilp Case

The case of Somboon Banlusilp is a good example of how conflict with local influential people can lead to the arrest of the innocent on political charges.

Somboon Banlusilp (38) is a farmer leader from Ubonrajthani province. In 1975 general election he stood for an election under the Free Social Democratic Party, to which he was a leader.

Vichai Banlusilp (32) was an employee of the Telephone Organization of Thailand and a law student of Ramkhamhaeng University in Bangkok.

In 1975 the Kukrit Pramoj government allocated the 'Tambon Development Fund' to various tambons in poor rural areas, with the hope to solve the problem of poverty by this money. (The Tambons were encouraged to carry out some 'development project', using the labour of the farmers who would be paid with the money from the fund.) The Hua Ruer Tambon Council decided to build a road to a school with this money. Somboon was elected a leader of the workers (farmers). The Tambon Headman named Daeng wanted to pay the farmers only 15 Baht (20 Baht = \$US1) a day, so as to spend the rest of the money to hire a tractor. Somboon was strongly against this idea. He thought that they should not use a tractor, so that more farmers could work with higher wages. His idea was supported by the villagers. But still Daeng insisted to do what he wanted. Finally the farmers demonstrated to a district office to petition to higher authorities. Daeng then went to the provincial office and accused Somboon of inciting people to rise up and to be communists.

Shortly after the coup in October 1976, Daeng led the officials to search Somboon's house. The officials found only some books and 14 letters written to him by his brother Vichai. The officials did not arrest him. On the following day (15 Oct. 1976), Somboon came to see his brother in Bangkok, and was arrested by Bangkok policemen who waited for him at Vichai's house. The police had got a letter from Ubonrajthani province, telling them to arrest Somboon.

On the following day, Vichai went to visit Somboon at the prison and was also arrested. It was until three days later (19 Oct. 1976) that a charge of Endangering Society was filed against them. On 23 Sep. 1977 they were released from this charge but were suddenly rearrested on communist charges.

At present Somboon and Vichai are being tried in Bangkok Military Court.

Political Cases in Up-country

The hearings of the last prosecution witness in the case of Sombat Charaskul will be on December 3rd. This case has lasted for over 3 years, eventhough there are only 7 prosecution witnesses.

The hearings of the first prosecution witness in the case of Sakorn Wongnun will be on December 4th. (See details of this case, and Sakorn's letter in HRTR - July-August 1979)

Five out of nine prosecution witnesses in the case of Prasit Boonrak have given their statement in court. The next hearings will be on November 27. His lawyer hopes that he can cross-examine all the rest prosecution witnesses on that day.

Pralon Kaewsuwan, the eleventh person arrested on the same charges and incident as the 11 defendants in Udom Pka-krong case, was bailed out from Nakornsriathammarat Central Prison on August 27th. On that same day he was rearrested and sent to Bah Cha-ien Detention Camp under ISOC's control, and was released after more than one month imprisonment.

There are 22 prosecution witnesses in this case, and only two have given statement in court. The prolonged trial proceeding/^{was} due to the fact that the witnesses did not come to the court.

3. Campaign on the Death of Chamras Muang-yam

CGRS feels extremely concerned with the death of Chamras Muang-yam, a leading farm leader who was assassinated on July 1st, 1979. The assassination was politically motivated, aiming to stop the movement of the Thai peasantry. (See details in HRTR July-August 1979)

On October 29th, 1979, CGRS together with Chamras' wife and relatives held a religious ceremony for Chamras (one hundred days after death's ceremony). The ceremony is meant not only for Chamras but also for 28 other peasant's leaders who were murdered before him. Invitation cards were sent to friends, farmer and peasant groups, labour unions, student unions, the Press, MPs, Police Department and the Prime Minister. More than one hundred people joined the ceremony which was held at Monk's Hospital in Bangkok. Mrs. Ranong Muang-yam and her children and relatives were also present at the ceremony. There was however none from the government authorities (except for a few secret agents). Two newspapers have reported on this ceremony.

The book "In Memorial of Chamras Muang-yam" was distributed in the ceremony. The book, published by CGRS, discloses what is behind the death of Chamras Muang-yam, the assassinations and attempted assassinations of 35 Thai farm leaders since 1974, the history of the Thai peasantry's movement including the establishment and development of the Farmer's Federation of Thailand, and the land problem in Thailand.

4. Organizing a Seminar on "Mass Media and Child Development"

Realizing the importance of children and the role that mass media has on the development of children, CGRS together with the Journalist Association of Thailand, the Press Association of Thailand and the Reporter Association of Thailand, held a seminar on "Mass Media and

Child Development " on October 13-14, 1979 at Pakchong district, Nakorn-rajshima province.

About 80 people joined the seminar, including representatives from the mass media (radios, newspapers, children's and women's magazines, publishing house), free cartoonists, children organizations, social workers, intellectuals, rural and urban teachers, etc. The seminar looked at the problems of mass media, and tried to find the solution to these problems, in order to encourage mass media to have more positive role in social and child development. The report on the seminar was sent to various government authorities, MPs, newspapers, radios, TVs, etc., and has gained much public and press interest.

The follow-up committee was set up during the last plenary; two persons from CGRS were elected to this committee. The committee is now working actively and has set up the "Mass Communications for Children Promotion Group"

4. Campaign on Malnutrition Problem

A part of CGRS's rural development work is on the malnutrition problem. According to the Nutrition Research Institute, Mahidol University, a total of 55,000 Thai children under 5 years old die each year from malnutrition; and a total of 4.2 million Thai children are now suffering from it.

So far CGRS has been assisting and supporting anti-malnutrition project in 3 villages. In order to conscientize the general public on this problem, its cause and solution, both short and long term, CGRS, together with the Nutrition Research Institute, Foundation for Children and the Buddhist Club at Mahidol University held an exhibition "For Our Malnourished Children" on December 15-16 this year at the Ministry of Justice, Bangkok. During the exhibition there will be two panel discussions, theatre, film and slide shows, poetry reading, etc. There will also be a free charged service for health checking and a demonstration of how to cook cheap high-protein food.