

Empowering Burmese Migrant Workers

Htoo Chit

THE PAST FIVE YEARS brought changes to Burma that would have been previously unimaginable. But despite some progress, such as the release of political prisoners, many serious problems remain. The road to reform is lengthy and challenging.

Burma's economy is one of the least developed in the world; its current condition is the result of decades of poor productivity, mismanagement, and seclusion. Key industries have long been controlled by the military, and corruption is rife. Labor rights violations are common, and the rule of law is exceptionally frail.¹

The establishment of labor unions still faces many problems with workers continuing to be harassed during strikes. Union leaders are regularly dismissed after protests and arrests because public assemblies are all too frequent. In May 2016, about two hundred police officers arrested a dozen striking factory workers and activists as they marched for labor rights² near Myanmar's administrative capital, Naypyidaw.

Despite progress in some areas, Burma remains an awful place for children. Decades of military rule have driven families into Thailand, internally displaced tens of thousands of families, and left children orphaned or begging on the streets.

Homeless children, street children, and children affected by armed conflicts or disasters are extremely vulnerable, and have an unacceptably high risk of being exploited. It has been well documented that these children are routinely subjected to dangerous and hazardous working conditions with low wages, and are forced to work the same hours as adults. There are no systematic labor inspections to prevent abuse or to protect their rights.³

In Burma, it is illegal to employ children younger than fifteen years old, and according to the colonial-era Factory Act, it is illegal to require employees aged from fifteen to eighteen years to work more than four hours a day. However, few underage workers benefit from protections provided for in the legislation, and youth laborers are routinely forced to work well in excess of the statutorily mandated limit. In October 2013 the Burmese Government committed to signing an agreement with the International

Labor Organization (ILO) to work toward the elimination of child labor in the country. A 2015 study revealed that⁴

Child labour is widespread in Myanmar resulting from household poverty, little knowledge about the issue and lack of programmes and services for poor children. The phenomenon is supported by societal attitudes, which see child labour as an antidote to household poverty, and a 'necessary evil' for keeping children occupied and out of trouble in cases where they cannot attend school.

Knowledge about the short term and long term perils of child labour is limited, as is knowledge about child rights among adults. Children interpret their situation through the lens of family obligations, with poor children feeling obliged to help their families financially. Awareness of child labour is higher among parents of children who are not child labourers in all areas, except Chaungzon in Mon State, where parents of child labourers showed high awareness, following awareness-raising activities by a local NGO.

Additionally, although the parliament appointed a commission to investigate land confiscation in 2012, the practice continues throughout the country to this day. Land confiscation; forced displacement and forced resettlement without informed consent or adequate compensation, has been driven by business interests, and continues to be a major human rights issue. The main players in the confiscation, displacement and resettlement activity have been local private companies linked with the military and multinational companies in joint ventures with State-owned enterprises or local businesses.⁵

The current government that took state power on 1 May 2016 seems to be trying to improve the freedom of expression situation. But it is still severely restricted under current laws. There is a need to amend the laws regarding the media⁶ so that it can help inform the public about relevant issues and encourage public debate on them. Such public debate should include the voices of the different ethnic groups in the country.

Migration into Thailand

As previously mentioned, poverty, lack of job opportunities, and human rights violations as well as the lure of higher incomes in neighboring coun-

tries, have significantly contributed to the migration of millions of people into Thailand. In 2015, the Thai Ministry of Labor registered almost two million Burmese migrants. It is estimated that an additional two to four million Burmese have entered Thailand illegally, and have not registered with the government. This situation has created multiple opportunities for human traffickers to lure their victims into Thailand with lies and false promises of a better life.

In northern Thailand, the Burmese can cross the bridge to Mae Sot. One-day passes are available at official checkpoints, and it is also possible to walk across the river during the dry season. Irregular migrants simply travel to Thailand on a one-day pass and do not return home. In the south, a major flow of migrant workers is maintained through Ranong province. In the Mae Sot area in the north, migrants find work in garment and textile manufacturing plants, and in agriculture. In the south (Phang Nga, Ranong, Phuket and Surathani provinces), many migrants find work in rubber plantations, fisheries, construction sites, hotels and restaurants, or in private homes as domestic servants. Due to labor rights situation in Thailand, the European Union will maintain its threat of a seafood import ban on Thailand because the nation still is not doing enough to improve its fisheries and labor practices.⁷

Work Permits

Burmese migrant workers enter Thailand in a variety of ways. Some come legally with work permits and stay for the duration of the registered time. More frequently, however, Burmese migrants enter Thailand illegally. In many of these cases, the migrants end up with huge debts to the smugglers who help them get into Thailand. There is a large trafficking network involved in this issue.

In 2015, half of the Burmese migrant workers in Thailand were undocumented; while in 2016 the Thai government is trying to provide legal documents, but only for renewal. The application for a work permit requires payment ranging from 3,800 Baht (approximately 105 USD) up to 5,000 Baht (140 USD), which covers registration, health insurance, and the work permit.

Undocumented and 3D Jobs

Despite the relative economic security of the Thai labor market, Burmese migrants remain in a highly vulnerable position. Approximately 80 percent of all migrants in Thailand are Burmese, and because most of them are undocumented, they live and work in Thailand illegally. Burmese migrants tend to do the “3D or Dangerous, Dirty and Difficult” jobs that Thais refuse to take. Most migrants live in constant fear of arrest and deportation back to Burma. Thai employers complain that it is becoming harder to find and recruit Thais into low-wage, labor-intensive work. Yet rather than upgrading workplace safety and improving wages, working conditions, and management practices, these same Thai employers turn to Burmese migrant workers who offer a fully flexible and cheaper workforce willing to do dirty, difficult, and dangerous jobs.⁸

Because of their desperate financial situation and illegal status, it is common for employers to exploit their workers by paying them lower than the minimum wage, holding back payment and forcing them to work long hours, often in very unsafe working conditions. Some employers also knowingly use child labor. Female workers, particularly domestic servants, are also extremely vulnerable to sexually motivated attacks. Many Burmese migrants have experienced discrimination and racially motivated violence or attempted murder, these crimes have, on occasion, proven to be instigated by their employers. While illegal Burmese migrants are often too scared to seek help, which in any case is almost impossible for them to access due to a lack of legal assistance and knowledge of the Thai legal system, human and labor rights continue to be violated and abused daily.

Poor access to health services is a fundamental concern for the Burmese migrant community. Burmese migrants, working under difficult, dirty and dangerous conditions, are not covered by insurance for lost earnings caused by workplace accidents and injury; they are also rarely compensated by their employers. Many migrant workers live and work in remote areas that are far from a health care facility. Even when migrants manage to secure a work permit, a prohibitively expensive health-card fee bars access to health services for most. This situation is in contrast to the free access to health care to which Thai citizens are entitled. Thailand has signed the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, but has not yet ratified it. Article 28 of this Convention provides for the right of migrant workers to medical service.⁹

Discrimination

Gender discrimination adds a significant dimension of vulnerability for female migrants to Thailand, and results in a twofold marginalization. First, Burmese women are pushed to flee Burma and migrate to Thailand for a number of gender-specific reasons, including sexual violence, domestic abuse, traditional responsibility for family support, and lack of educational opportunities in Burma. Additionally, women are pulled by gendered employment opportunities in low-skilled occupations in factories and private households. Many of these work situations involve severe exploitation (working for extremely poor pay, or working as slaves, with no pay at all), confinement, psychological abuse, and physical and sexual violence.

Some Thais still believe that Burmese migrants are highly dangerous, and represent a threat to Thai civil society, a perception that is perpetuated by the Thai media in news coverage and ongoing reminders of tension and conflict in historical Burmese-Thai relations.¹⁰ Thais often believe that Burmese migrants take Thai workers' jobs, failing to recognize that Burmese migrants most often work in industries and jobs largely rejected by the Thai workforce.

While Burmese and Thais sometimes share a common workspace, there is little interaction between the two communities. The social divisions between Thais and Burmese aggravate misconceptions and misunderstandings, which, in turn, act as sources of violent confrontation, property-crime and sexual assault among the communities. Certain government and local policies also inhibit the long-term integration of Burmese into Thai society, exacerbating marginalization and legitimizing discrimination.

Foundation for Education and Development

The Foundation for Education and Development (FED) was the first Burmese-led non-governmental organization (NGO) registered in Thailand. FED has over fifteen years of experience in implementing projects designed to aid the Burmese migrant community's struggle for recognition of their basic rights in Thailand.

FED provided legal aid to Burmese migrant workers who were living in parts of southern Thailand that were affected by the 26 December 2004 Tsunami. At that time, the Thai community and authorities ignored the

Burmese migrant workers. All affected migrants had no source of livelihood, were isolated from any social services, and were suffering from the trauma of the tsunami. Even though some international and Thai NGOs and communities became aware of and sympathized with the plight of Burmese migrants after the tsunami, many migrants still faced human rights violations in these areas. Some Burmese migrants have been killed, tortured, raped, forced to work unpaid, robbed, trafficked, and some migrant children became child workers and were forced into becoming sex workers. Most of them do not know their rights or how to contact Thai NGOs or the relevant Thai government offices for help. Many were so afraid to contact government authorities or NGO staff because of their residence status, language barrier, cultural misunderstanding, and the cost involved.

Currently, FED is focused on advocacy for migrant workers' rights, capacity building for member organizations, and safe migration in Thailand.

In view of the change in 2006 on Thai policy regarding work permits, FED has been providing migrant communities with information regarding this policy change. FED predicts that the number of undocumented workers will increase in 2016. Burmese migrants generally earn about 6,000 to 8,000 Baht (200 to 250 US dollars) per month. With their low income, the new policy caused many more problems to them. Previously, employers paid for the registration fee, then deducted this from the daily wages of the workers. In the process, the employers confiscate work permits to avoid workers running away before their debts are fully paid back.

Advocacy is an essential part of the process of finding solutions to migrant issues.

The lack of available networks for migrants inside and outside of Burma and of knowledge relating to the situations in host countries mean migrants are unaware of the potential human rights abuses they may face. FED strongly believes that labor rights exploitation and human trafficking would be reduced by making information more accessible to the migrant population. FED is now providing pre-departure programs in Burma for migrant workers, family members, community leaders, and local authorities in the country.

Migrant Development Program

FED adopted the Migrant Development Program in order to provide legal aid to Burmese migrants in Thailand. The program targets different seg-

ments of the migrant communities; women, youth, community leaders, and community activists, among others. The program activities engage and empower migrant communities to take the lead in organizing themselves effectively and in taking responsibility in securing justice and social inclusion for their members, and in raising awareness of their rights towards a significant increase in utilization of the legal system to protect those rights. In addition, FED strives to raise the awareness of Thai civil society regarding the situation faced by Burmese migrants in Thailand for the purpose of cultivating a peaceful society in Thailand, and a unified civil society promoting the human rights of Burmese migrants in Thailand.

Since 2012, FED and international partner CCFD-Terre Solidaire³³ have been implementing a human and labor rights empowerment project funded by the European Union that aids Burmese migrants in ten Thai provinces. The project has the following mission statement:

To facilitate a community-based education of Burmese living inside and outside Burma concerning the obstacles and opportunities for establishing a society that respects human rights, democracy, social justice, and a gender perspective based on the rule of law.

The project has trained a network of over two hundred fifty migrant Community Leaders (CL) with the skills and knowledge to identify and address human rights violations in their communities.

With the help of the CL network, FED has provided legal assistance on 698 cases of rights violations against migrants benefiting 8,921 migrants including the rescue of 675 Burmese from human trafficking from April 2012 through March 2015. As a result of this action an estimated 500,000 migrants have been impacted.

Specific activities

FED started a migrant workers' rights awareness project in 2005, with the overall objective of increasing the awareness of the Burmese migrants on migrant workers' rights in order to mobilize and empower them in addressing migrant-related issues. The project has the following specific objectives:

- To provide information packages for migrants preparing to go abroad;
- To provide legal assistance to migrants, who are facing human rights violation;

- To advocate for support for migrants whose rights are abused in southern Thailand;¹²
- To document human rights violations and abuses against Burmese people in Burma and Thailand;
- To provide legal aid to Burmese migrants in southern Thailand;
- To conduct a widespread campaign on Safe Migration Mechanisms and work towards assisting victims of human trafficking and labor exploitation;
- To educate Burmese migrants in Thailand about the rights of individuals (human rights, women's rights, children's rights, labor rights) and how to protect themselves from abuses that are inherent in a non-democratic society;
- To train a new generation of migrant leaders and community activists.

The following activities are being undertaken as part of the project:

- Assistance to community leaders in holding workshops within their own community;
- Dissemination of information on telephone numbers of FED legal teams and government hotline that they can call to get legal assistance;
- Establishment of system for legal consultation and advise by lawyers through phone call or visit by migrants;
- Maintenance of an information system on Thai community health care system;
- Publication of materials with contact numbers that are being distributed in migrant communities and community library or given to community leaders and volunteers' houses that the migrant can contact;
- Holding of public forums in different provinces whose results are shared with provincial and national government departments to lobby for policy change;
- Use of radios, newspapers and social media to highlight migrant's rights and situations;
- Visit to communities by the project team to provide educational activities on gender and women's issues;

- Preparation of booklet on women's issues for community use as handbooks to change the women's role;
- Organizing of health care system workshops in the communities in cooperation with the local government health care center to develop health history form that helps both the migrants and government hospitals and health care centers in understanding the appropriate treatment;
- Capacity-building training for migrants to enable them to understand their rights;
- Networking together with a Thai trade union with migrant community-based organizations and community leaders;
- Assistance to migrants' membership application in Thai labor unions;
- Facilitation of dialogue between migrant workers and Thai government authorities and Thai employers to lobby for better laws for migrants;
- Sharing of updates on migrant laws to authorities, employers and the migrants for the enforcement of the laws;
- Assistance to migrants in making suggestions to improve labor policies;
- Conduct of research and survey in migrant communities to update the information for advocacy use before provincial and national governments, and ASEAN.



Public forum on domestic workers' rights.

FED provides capacity building for communities with the following activities:

- Visiting different areas of migrants communities and meeting with the migrants;
- Selecting local leaders and training them to become trainers;
- Preparing for pre-test and post-test to check of local leaders' knowledge about human rights, gender, Thai labor rights, leadership, and community organizing.

FED also provides the Training of Trainers (TOT) to migrant community leaders who are outstanding and dedicated to contribute his/her time for fellow migrants. It is providing training to migrant leaders on the following issues:

- Human rights;
- Gender;
- Thai Labor rights;
- Leadership;
- Community organizing;
- Publishing handouts with Burmese language as a guide for leaders to train other migrants;
- Giving awards for local leaders who are working hard and doing a good job; and
- Publishing flyers and brochures for community awareness about the project. The project has an advocacy component to translate suggested policies into laws.

I lead all training programs of FED and also the training of trainers program for FED's senior staffs, partners and migrant community leaders. FED staff also attend national, regional and international training programs in order to learn more systematically about human rights education, international laws and community organizing.

Over the past three years FED has successfully managed and implemented a human and labor rights empowerment project funded by the European Commission aiding migrants across ten provinces of Thailand. This project has trained a network of over 200 migrant community leaders with the skills and knowledge to identify and address human rights violations in their communities. Through these community leaders, FED's legal team has provided legal assistance on 510 cases helping 5,597 migrants to realize justice.

အပိုင်း(၆)

လူပိုင်ခွင့်များကိုမိမိတို့ အလုပ်လုပ်ရင်းတွင် အလုပ်လုပ်သူအားပိုင်ခွင့်ရှိရမည်။ အခြေခံခွင့် မှတ်တမ်းကိုထုတ်ပြန်ပြီး အထောက်အကူပြုရန် ကာကွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့သည်

အပိုင်း(၇)

မြို့ပြဒီမိုကရေစီအဖွဲ့(ပ) လူပိုင်ခွင့်များကိုပိုင်ခွင့် သက်သေပြုရန်အတွက်အထောက်အကူပြုရန် တွင် အလုပ်လုပ်သူအား ပိုင်ခွင့်ရှိရမည်။ အလုပ်လုပ်သူအား ပိုင်ခွင့်ရှိရမည်။ အလုပ်လုပ်သူအား ပိုင်ခွင့်ရှိရမည်။ အလုပ်လုပ်သူအား ပိုင်ခွင့်ရှိရမည်။

အပိုင်း(၈)

လူပိုင်ခွင့် အလုပ်လုပ်သူအားပိုင်ခွင့်ရှိရမည်။ အခြေခံခွင့် မှတ်တမ်းကိုထုတ်ပြန်ပြီး အထောက်အကူပြုရန် ကာကွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့သည်



အပိုင်း (၉)

လူပိုင်ခွင့်အဖွဲ့ အတွက်အထောက်အကူပြုရန် အထောက်အကူပြုရန် အထောက်အကူပြုရန် အထောက်အကူပြုရန် အထောက်အကူပြုရန် အထောက်အကူပြုရန် အထောက်အကူပြုရန် အထောက်အကူပြုရန်

အပိုင်း(၁၀)

မိသားစု ကာကွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့အားပိုင်ခွင့်ရှိရမည်။ အခြေခံခွင့် မှတ်တမ်းကိုထုတ်ပြန်ပြီး အထောက်အကူပြုရန် ကာကွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့သည်

အပိုင်း(၁၁)

လူပိုင်ခွင့်အဖွဲ့အားပိုင်ခွင့်ရှိရမည်။ အခြေခံခွင့် မှတ်တမ်းကိုထုတ်ပြန်ပြီး အထောက်အကူပြုရန် ကာကွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့သည်

အပိုင်း(၁၂)

လူပိုင်ခွင့်အဖွဲ့အားပိုင်ခွင့်ရှိရမည်။ အခြေခံခွင့် မှတ်တမ်းကိုထုတ်ပြန်ပြီး အထောက်အကူပြုရန် ကာကွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့သည်



အပိုင်း(၁၃)

လူပိုင်ခွင့်အဖွဲ့အားပိုင်ခွင့်ရှိရမည်။ အခြေခံခွင့် မှတ်တမ်းကိုထုတ်ပြန်ပြီး အထောက်အကူပြုရန် ကာကွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့သည်

အပိုင်း(၁၄)

လူပိုင်ခွင့်အဖွဲ့အားပိုင်ခွင့်ရှိရမည်။ အခြေခံခွင့် မှတ်တမ်းကိုထုတ်ပြန်ပြီး အထောက်အကူပြုရန် ကာကွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့သည်

အပိုင်း(၁၅)

လူပိုင်ခွင့်အဖွဲ့အားပိုင်ခွင့်ရှိရမည်။ အခြေခံခွင့် မှတ်တမ်းကိုထုတ်ပြန်ပြီး အထောက်အကူပြုရန် ကာကွယ်ရေးအဖွဲ့သည်



FED Mae Sai Office
P.O Box 164, Mae Sai Post Office
Tah Province 63116, Thailand
Phone: 085542163
Email: fed.mae06@fede.org
Web: www.fede.org

Flyer on economic, social and cultural rights.



Training activity.

Women Empowerment Program

In 2006, FED established the Women's Empowerment and Development Association (WEDA), an association of migrant women leaders in Southern Thailand. WEDA has become a focal point among the Burmese women

in southern Thailand and is collaborating with some women's organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), and NGO networks. WEDA offers a counseling service, and organizes different activities to promote women's empowerment. WEDA organizes workshops about health education, family planning, domestic violence, and women's rights. In addition, WEDA offers different types of vocational training courses, which not only give the women employable skills, but also offers the women safer, more reliable alternative means to earn income to support their families. Once women learn these working skills, they can work on these activities at home or at the temporary shelter supported by FED. These income-generating activities also serve to maintain the center so that WEDA can continue to operate as a self-sustained association.

With funding support from CCFD-Terre Solidaire and the European Union, WEDA members started, in 2012, to conduct regular rights-based gender-related workshops in districts with heavy migrant population. As part of the gender-related workshops, the four main topics are: access to health care, women's rights, labor rights, and violence against women. Each topic is aimed at improving community awareness and empowerment. Accordingly, WEDA members conduct two community visits per month to these migrant communities to both maintain awareness and connection with the needs of the women, as well as to suggest answers to their problems with appropriate



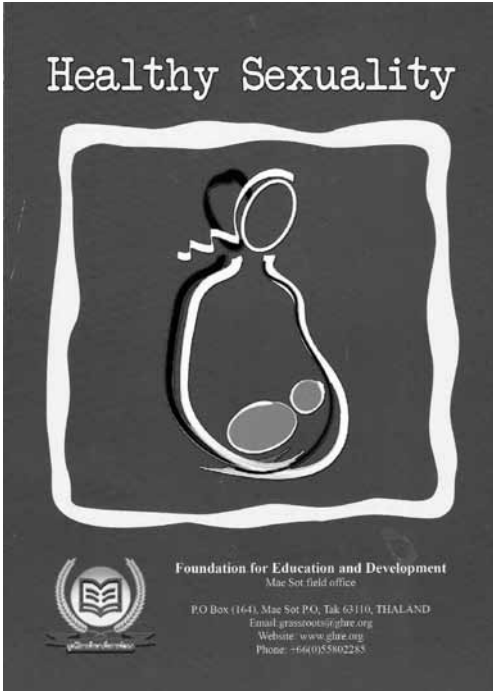


(This page and opposite page) Training for women.

actions. Materials expanding awareness on gender and rights-based migrant issues are being distributed. The visits also provide the opportunity to document and report cases of abuse.



WEDA works very closely with FED's migrant's development team. WEDA's methodologies are also very similar with FED's. They both try to work with grassroots people and organizations. WEDA's representatives are also well-trained women leaders and activists who have learned from different national, regional and international organizations. They also invite guest speakers or resource persons for some issues such as women leadership, counseling victims, and CEDAW's training.



Health and domestic work pamphlets.

The Future

I strongly believe that awareness, advocacy, and community organizing for human rights and migrant worker’s rights are vital roles in the protection and promotion of migrant workers in the region.

Networking is necessary for migrant workers. They can work together in order to find solutions to their problems. Therefore, we intend to fill the gap for Burmese migrant workers who need assistance and a coordinated network while they are living in Thailand. Most importantly, both the Myanmar and Thai governments have to work together in order to provide legal assistance. We hope that migrants would be more protected if government agencies, NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) were systematically and harmonically working with migrant communities in Thailand. We will be continuing to encourage collaboration among migrants as well as concerned governments in the region. Currently, we are working very closely

with the Thai Royal Government in human trafficking within the seafood industry. We have even collaborated with the Government in some anti-human trafficking operations. At the same time, we are trying to encourage the Myanmar Government to more actively and systematically protect migrant workers abroad. As everybody knows, the Myanmar Government is very new and has limited knowledge of safe migration. It is very difficult to comment on the new Government and sometimes we need to advocate for them. As an elected Government, the Myanmar Government needs to pay attention to migration and follow the below recommendations:

- Myanmar Government must provide legal assistance to migrants;
- Related Myanmar Government agencies must collaborate with NGOs, CBOS, and migrant communities, which are working on migrant issues;
- Myanmar Government should display interest in migrant issues;
- Myanmar Government needs to approach the Thai government using diplomatic methods;
- Myanmar Government needs to have migration agenda, policy and implementation systems.

Endnotes

1 Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2012, Myanmar Country Report, www.bti-project.de/fileadmin/Inhalte/reports/2012/pdf/BTI%202012%20Myanmar.pdf. Retrieved on 28 September 2016.

2 "Myanmar Police Arrest Protesters Marching For Labor Rights," Radio Free Asia, 18 May 2016, www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/myanmar-police-arrest-protesters-marching-for-labor-rights-05182016170326.html.

3 For a discussion of the different issues affecting children in Burma as of 2011, see Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), "Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations: Union of Myanmar," CRC/C/MMR/CO/3-4, 3 February, 2012, www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/co/CRC_C_MMR_CO_3-4.pdf.

4 *Myanmar: Child labour knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) study in Yangon, Ayeyarwady Region and Mon State*, International Labour Office, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) / Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS) - Geneva: ILO, 2015. Full report available at www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_IPEC_PUB_27675/lang--en/index.htm.

5 "Parliamentary Committee: 6,000 Land Confiscation Complaints Yet to Be Addressed," *The Irrawaddy*, 27 April 2016, www.irrawaddy.com/burma/parliamentary-committee-6000-land-confiscation-complaints-yet-to-be-addressed.html.

6 See for example the analysis of the 2014 Media Law of Myanmar which shows the positive elements of the law and also those that do not comply with international standards on freedom of expression, *Myanmar News Media Law*, 2014, Article 19. Retrieved from on 2 May 2016, www.article19.org/data/files/medialibrary/37623/News-Media-Law-Myanmar-EN.pdf.

7 “EU to maintain ‘yellow card’ sanctions on seafood exports,” *Bangkok Post*, www.bangkokpost.com/news/general/942153/eu-to-maintain-yellow-card-sanctions-on-seafood-exports.

8 Human Rights Watch, *From the Tiger to the Crocodile*, retrieved from www.hrw.org/en/node/88580/section/5 on 8 May 2011.

9 See United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, <http://indicators.ohchr.org/> on the status of ratification of the convention by Thailand. Article 28 of the convention states:

Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to receive any medical care that is urgently required for the preservation of their life or the avoidance of irreparable harm to their health on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned. Such emergency medical care shall not be refused them by reason of any irregularity with regard to stay or employment.

10 “Thai media ‘skewing reality’ for refugees,” DVB, 16 May 2011, www.dvb.no/news/thai-media-%E2%80%98skewing-reality%E2%80%99-for-refugees/15665.

11 For more information on CCFD-Terresolidaire, visit <http://ccfd-terresolidaire.org/>.

12 FED is the current chair of the Mekong Migration Network (MMN), a network of more than twenty regional and national research partners in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), doing advocacy work at local, national and regional levels. Visit www.mekongmigration.org/ for more information.