



Chin National Front
General Headquarters
CHINLAND

**Statement on Burma's military junta's destruction of a Christian Cross in Matupi,
Chin State**

Freedom of religion, freedom of speech and expression and freedom of organization are fundamental democratic rights in a free society. It has been the policy of Chin National Front to put into practice the exercise of these fundamental human rights in Chinland. The Front firmly believes that only when people of all different religious and cultural background are able to enjoy these rights, can we build a society of peace and freedom.

Religious freedom has come under increasing attack in Chinland when the current SPDC Prime Minister Lt. General Soe Win took charge of Northwestern Command following the 1988 military coup in Burma. Since then, the replacement of symbolic Christian crosses with Buddhist pagodas, force-conversion of Christian children to Buddhism, prohibition of construction of new churches, collection of illegal tax from Christians for construction of Buddhist pagodas and forced labor, to name only a few, have become commonplace in Chinland.

The Chin National Front categorically condemns the destruction on January 3, 2005 of a symbolic Christian cross on top of Mount Boi near Matupi town. Colonel San Aung, Chief of Tactical Command (2) is responsible for ordering the destruction of the cross, which was erected by multi-denominational churches in Matupi. We stand firmly behind the decision of students in Matupi to organize a peaceful demonstration in protest of this latest destruction. The Chin National Front is highly concerned about the well-being of Chin refugees currently in Malaysian custody, apprehended for their peaceful protest against religious persecution in Chinland. We to appeal to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to intervene in the crisis in order to ensure that these people are not sent back to Burma.

The Chin National Front warmly welcomes calls by Chin Human Rights Organization to observe an international day of prayer on January 30 for persecuted Chin Christians in Burma. We urge all Chin people to wholeheartedly join in this global action.

We urge the military junta to immediately abandon its policy of persecution against religious minorities in Burma. We call on the United Nations and the international community to conduct an independent international investigation into religious persecution in Chinland, including the latest destruction of the cross in Matupi.

**Central Committee
Chin National Front
25 January 2005**