

transparency and to handle refugees in a way that is acceptable to the international community but BBC concerned this could backfire and be used as alternative purposes by the Thai army. The Thai army would like to move all refugees way away from the border, about 100km inside. They want UNHCR to build a camp and look after refugees in that place. But the dangers are obvious. At the moment, there is access to the border and a chance of getting into Thailand for the refugees. If these camps were located far inside Thailand, the chances would not be there and the Thai army could completely close off the border and asylum would become a real problem. At the moment, camps are relatively small and run by refugees themselves and they have a degree of ordinary life. They are living close to their homes and living in areas that are refugee-friendly. If the camps are moved and shoved far inside, they will lose all of that. The people will become “sitting refugees” and thoughts of what the international com-

munity can give them will predominate rather than thoughts of going home again. There are concerns about the strong pressure of involving UNHCR. The UNHCR should be involved but in the right way and for the right reasons. UNHCR should see that camps which are really at risk be moved further inside (Wangka and Maw Ker camps).

The roles of UNHCR should be to

- Provide protection and this is what international community should be pushing for and what UNHCR should be defining.
- Monitor new arrivals and have access to the border and preventing the army from pushing refugees back.
- Ensure that all returnees are voluntary and not forced and to work towards durable solutions for the future.

The Thai authorities want this as well. They know that they need to involve UNHCR for political purposes and are looking at providing them access but to restrict that as carefully as possible.



*Refugees on Thai-Burma border*