

Media Note
Office of the Spokesman
Washington, DC
October 19, 2006

The Department of State Decides Material Support Inapplicable to Chin Refugees from Burma

The Secretary of State, on October 11, exercised her discretionary exemption authority under the Immigration and Nationality Act, so that Chin refugees from Burma living in Malaysia, Thailand, and India can resettle in the United States even if they have provided "material support" to the Chin National Front (CNF) or Chin National Army (CNA). The applicants must meet all other eligibility requirements for resettlement -- including that they pose no danger to the safety and security of the United States. This determination will allow the Department of Homeland Security's United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to approve otherwise eligible Chin refugees for admission to the United States. The Department of Homeland Security is the agency responsible for adjudicating refugee applications for the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. Exercising the exemption authority allows the United States to resume significant processing of the thousands of extremely vulnerable ethnic Chin refugees living in Malaysia and elsewhere.

The Secretary of State has twice previously exercised this same inapplicability authority with respect to Karen refugees in camps in Thailand who were found otherwise eligible except for having provided material support to the Karen National Union or the Karen National Liberation Army.

2006/944

Released on October 19, 2006