

# 700 protesters vow to fight Saw Maung

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by Bangkok Post reporters in  
They Baw Bo, southeast Burma

ABOUT 700 Burmese students and protesters from four organisations at this Karen camp opposite Phop Phra District of Tak Province have agreed to form an umbrella organisation to fight Rangoon's military regime led by Gen Saw Maung.

Karen and student leaders said the agreement to form the organisation was reached on September 24.

Announcement of the

new resistance body coincided yesterday with a plea by Rangoon Radio urging parents to stop students fleeing to Burma's border areas to join guerrillas waging a war against the military government.

Karen National Union  
(KNU) Vice President

Saw Than Aung said they have received reports that so far about 700 Burmese students and protesters — including monks, lawyers, teachers and government officials — had arrived near the Thai border since the September 18 "coup" by Gen Saw Maung.

He said the students and protesters are now scattered among various rebel camps opposite the Thai border from Mae Hong Song in the North to Three Pagodas Pass opposite Kanchanaburi Province.

Saw Than Aung said the students and protesters belong to the Burmese Youth Liberation Front, the All Burmese Student Union, the People's Democratic Front (made up mostly of lawyers and government officials) and the Burma Democratic Student Front.

The Karen leader said representatives of the four groups agreed to form the Burma Democratic Student Front (BDSF) and have chosen a temporary leader — Aung Naing, a fifth year medical student from

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## Burma fight

Rangoon University.

Although Aung Naing was not present at They Baw Bo camp — about four kilometres from the Thai border and housing about 2,000 Karens — about 250 students and protesters met reporters at the camp yesterday, accompanied by senior Karen leaders.

Among those who met the press were Hla Aung, a final year medical student from Rangoon University, Kwaw Tun and Wan Howe, also students of Rangoon University.

The three told said attempts are under way to bring together the various groups of fleeing students and protesters already at the border.

"We will try to collect together the groups to fight against the government and to train as soon as possible," they said.

They said contacts have already been made with overseas sympathisers for assistance.

The students said that although an umbrella organisation had been formed, another meeting would be held to elect a committee that would be responsible for negotiating and dealing with the Karen rebels and outside organisations.

The students, who claimed that 2,000 students and protesters had been killed since the Sept. 18 coup, said the Rangoon regime has already started plans to "eliminate" the students.

They claimed the military regime has classified students into three categories:

Class A students — leaders whom soldiers can shoot on sight; Class B — who are to be arrested, interrogated and killed; and Class C — who are to be arrested, interrogated and jailed.

The three students said they have been declared Class A students.

Despite statements and assurances by the Rangoon regime, the students said they did not believe that changes are underway, and that the government would not last long.

Maj-Gen Tamlabaw, KNU vice chief-of-staff who will be responsible for the students' military training, said training would be in full swing "very soon."

He said students and protesters were arriving from Pa-an, Moulmein and Rangoon, adding that "if they know that it is safe here, more will come."

Capt Law Kwa, area commander of They Baw Bo, said villagers have volunteered to house the students.

"They just have to be prepared to live the same way the villagers live," the commander said.

Some of the students who met the Press yesterday covered their faces.

Asked why they still had to hide their identities, the students said they wanted to remain anonymous because they planned to return to Rangoon once their military training is complete.

Meanwhile, Burma's acting Education Minister Pe Thein and Army Commander Lt-Gen Than Shwe asked parents to help stop students from going underground.

The appeal was broadcast by Rangoon Radio last night and monitored by the Associated Press.

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