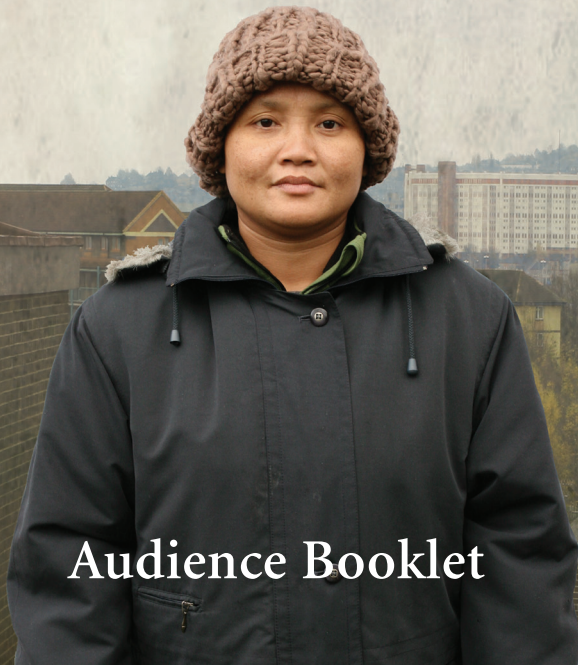




# MARS OT GNIVOW

A MILLION MILES FROM BURMA



Audience Booklet

## Our NGO partners

For more information about anything mentioned in this booklet, please contact our NGO partners, listed below:

### **City of Sanctuary**

A campaign to build a culture of hospitality in UK cities  
[www.cityofsanctuary.org](http://www.cityofsanctuary.org)

### **Refugee Action**

an NGO that works with, supports and campaigns for refugees in the UK  
[www.refugee-action.org.uk](http://www.refugee-action.org.uk)

### **The Refugee Council**

an NGO that works with, supports and campaigns for refugees in the UK  
[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

### **STAR—Student Action for Refugees**

A national student organisation that supports and raises awareness of refugee issues  
[www.star-network.org.uk](http://www.star-network.org.uk)

### **Burma Campaign UK**

Leading the campaign for justice in Burma  
[www.burmacampaign.org.uk](http://www.burmacampaign.org.uk)

### **Amnesty UK**

Supports justice for refugees, the campaign for justice in Burma, and many other human rights issues  
[www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)

# Five things you can do

## **1—Host a Screening for your friends or organisation**

We want Moving to Mars to show people a different side to the refugee experience. If you're interested in hosting a screening for your organisation, please contact [info@codedpictures.com](mailto:info@codedpictures.com) for more information.

## **2—Help make your city a City of Sanctuary**

City of Sanctuary is a national movement to create a culture of hospitality for those seeking sanctuary in UK cities. Could your organisation get involved?

## **3—Mentor a Refugee**

Adjusting to a new country and way of life can be a lonely and difficult experience for refugees. Through Refugee Action and the Refugee Council, you could mentor or share skills with refugees in your area.

## **4—Offer Work Experience to a Refugee**

Work or voluntary work is a hugely positive influence for refugees. If your business or organisation could offer a placement to a refugee, please contact Refugee Action or the Refugee Council.

## **5—Join the campaign for justice in Burma**

To find out more about what's going on in Burma, why ethnic minority groups like the Karen are being forced into exile, and how you can join the campaign for justice in Burma.

**For more information please visit [www.movingtomarsfilm.com](http://www.movingtomarsfilm.com) and click 'What you can do'.**

# The Karen People

The Karen tribe is one of the largest ethnic groups in Burma, making up around 7% of the population. Successive military dictatorships have persecuted the Karen people, forcing them from their homes and denying them basic human rights. Although the Burmese army claim to only target 'rebel' groups, they often attack and destroy Karen villages, forcing thousands of Karen people from their homes.

The situation for the Karen has greatly worsened since the rise of the military junta in 1962. Since 2005, Amnesty International reports that "more than 140,000 Karen civilians have been killed, tortured, forcibly displaced, sexually violated, forced to work, or otherwise subjected to widespread and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law".

Thousands of Karen live as Internally Displaced People (IDPs), hidden in the jungles of Burma and vulnerable to attacks from the military. Many others have crossed the border into Thailand, where they live in large refugee camps like Mae La (the refugee camp in *Moving to Mars*) without hope of being able to return home.

A new wave of attacks began as recently as 2009, creating a further 6000 Karen refugees. As NGOs continue to report serious and widespread human rights abuses by the Burmese army, it seems unlikely that the Karen will be able to live in peace under the current regime.

# The Crisis in Burma

Burma is home to 47 million people, but their lives are brutally controlled by a dictatorial military regime. Since the military-backed Burma Socialist Programme Party took control in 1962, the freedom and human rights of Burma's people have been severely compromised.

In August 1988 during a student-led protest the Burmese army opened fire into the crowd killing as many as 5000 people. Many more were imprisoned. Amnesty International estimates that around 1500 prisoners are still kept under harsh conditions in Burma's jails. The military responded to the 1988 protests by creating a new regime, 'The State Law and Order Restoration Council' (later renamed The State Peace and Development Council). So-called 'free' elections were held in May 1990. Despite the opposition party winning 82% of the vote, the junta discounted the result, arresting new MPs, while many others fled into exile.

Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma's democratically elected leader, has been under house arrest for 13 years. In 2009, she was accused by the military regime of breaking the terms of her imprisonment when an uninvited visitor arrived at her compound. She was subsequently sentenced to a further 18 months of house arrest. The junta's generals continue to imprison, torture and intimidate all potential opposition. Protests by monks and civilians in September 2007 were brutally crushed by the army, freedom of speech is curtailed, and brutal attacks on Burma's ethnic minorities, like Karen people, are prevalent.

## Resettlement and the Gateway Protection Programme

Thai refugee camps (like Mae La in *Moving to Mars*) are already stretched far beyond capacity, and more refugees are arriving all the time. With the refugees unable to return to Burma or enter Thailand, the Thai government is working with the UNHCR to find permanent homes for them. Resettlement is an option only provided to the most vulnerable 1% of the 10.4 million refugees worldwide known to the UNHCR, and strict assessment criteria must be met before an individual is accepted for resettlement.

International resettlement from the Thai camps began in 2004. By June 2009, 50,000 refugees had been resettled from the region, with 18,000 departures expected throughout 2009. Refugees have been relocated to the United States, Canada, Australia, UK, Finland, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden.

The UK Home Office joined the resettlement scheme in 2004 by establishing the Gateway Protection Programme, which grants 500 (now 750) vulnerable refugees asylum in the UK each year. The International Organisation for Migration facilitates the resettlement itself, while various NGOs, including the Refugee Council and Refugee Action, support the new arrivals during their first year in Britain. Sheffield City Council were the first local authority to accept Gateway refugees, and now 14 other councils have followed their lead. As a result, 2000 vulnerable refugees have been offered sanctuary in the UK since 2004.

# Feedback Form

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Name

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E-mail

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Company/Organisation

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After watching the film, I would like to...

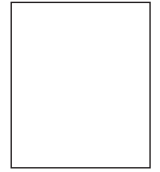
- Sign my group or organisation up to support City of Sanctuary
- Host my own screening of the film
- Volunteer with Refugee Action/the Refugee Council
- Join the mailing list for Burma Campaign UK
- I am a student, and I would like to join STAR

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I have another idea, and it is:

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Please tear off and post to the address overleaf  
Thank You!



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